



THE Cornerstone

March 2020

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

From the Rector

Lent Adrift

(Ash Wednesday homily)



Perhaps the best Ash Wednesday sermon in my memory was one that talked about "drifting". "We drift" said the preacher. We lose our tether and our bearings in the things of God. To be too much of the world is "to drift." It is also very much the story of our times.

If we were to try to put our finger on it, we might first say that we are drifting as never before. We have a cultural problem with truth, especially religious truth. We are told in myriad ways not to be certain about much of anything. This isn't really about humility, but license. We don't want to be tethered down. We want to drift. If Lent is about one thing, it is to catch ourselves in the act -- the act of drifting from God. It is the act of drifting into the temporal over the eternal. It is the drifting into what is passing away and cannot give us life. It is the drifting that simply doesn't care.

We may also notice how we are never really "ready" for Lent. It seems to come out of nowhere. I wonder if that was always the case. Perhaps when life seemed more precarious, we were more receptive to Lent's call and Lent's truth. There was a time when life had harder edges. Softness and drift go together. Soft it is these days, or seems to be, for most of us. Still we complain. We have complaint down to a science. We drift into grumbling.

I can't remember when it was that I started to notice that the world I lived in and that of my Grandparents were not the same world. I don't mean the so-called "generation gap." I mean the tethered-ness of their spirit versus my own. They were largely unafflicted with "driftiness." Things were what they were. They did not wonder about what ought not to be wondered about. They knew what sin was and wasn't. Perhaps they were not always right, but they weren't constitutionally struggling with drift itself, life as it is, God as He is.

But there is Good News. Jesus came for the drifters. Drifters of all kinds. Those who were drifting away from religion and equally those who were drifting within religion, and mostly those who were drifting from the Kingdom of His Father. Jesus said, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news." (Mark 1:15.) And it is Good News. Good News for drifters of all kinds. If we've been drifting, the Good Shepherd is looking for us -- right now. He is looking for the lost and knows all the kinds of places sheep get into. Speaking of His sheep, Jesus says: "I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand." (John 10:28.) We must believe this. Jesus as our Good Shepherd is not only Biblical, it is the truth of what we need. Indeed, in the deepest part of us, what we want.

We often conceptualize Lent as a kind of battlefield. A battlefield of temptation. But it seems to me that Lent is more about confessing being adrift and reaching out to the One who can tether us again. Much like Peter going down in the sea, the hand of Jesus is outstretched, saying, "O ye of little faith, why did you doubt?" (Matthew 14:31.) Why indeed!

Lent. The thing about the Christian religion is that it knows what's up. Really knows, because it knows Jesus who alone knows what's up. With you, with me. So I join you as a fellow drifter. The mark of the drifter upon my and your forehead. "Remember that thou art dust and unto dust shalt thou return." Remember that your and my drifting has an expiration date and the time is now. "Repent and believe the Good News." Yes! "For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost." (Matthew 18: 11.)

Life is better in the flock. We know it. Lent seeks rest for our souls. I pray for us all a most holy Lent. *Amen.*

From the Associate Rector

The Minister invites the people to the observance of a holy Lent, saying...

"...I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word."

This "invitation" by the church is a profound one. In the quote above, several acts of piety are mentioned. Many people take this invitation as an individual one. Yes, each individual needs to choose their response. And yet, there is also a corporate quality to both the invitation and a holy response.

Coming together collectively in acts of public devotion and piety anchor us to the Christian call of community. We acknowledge the need of one another and the connectedness to one another. For example, we know that all sin, and therefore, all forgiveness, is truly a corporate act. I say this because sin has a ripple effect, going farther than the immediate parties involved. Forgiveness does as well - blessing farther than the immediate parties.

Just as we partake of the sacramental life together, we enter a Holy Lent together promising to uphold and support one another in this Holy walk. We also remember these words included in the Invitation to Lent: "the whole congregation is put in mind of the message of pardon and absolution set forth in the Gospel of our savior, and of the need which all Christians continually have to renew their repentance and faith."

In our Litany of Penitence on Ash Wednesday, each line begins with We, not I. Likewise, each response includes "have mercy on us, Lord". We have this invitation and opportunity to journey together, supporting and upholding one another. We lend strength to others as needed, and we lean on them when we are weak and in need of support. The corporate Christian walk is a beautiful blessing indeed.

Likewise, public acts of piety, done with godly intent and with true humility, are valuable and honorable to the wider community as they remind the world around us of God and point to His call and His promise. For example, ashes on our foreheads announces that Ash Wednesday is no ordinary Wednesday, but a Holy Day of fasting and repentance anchored in God's promise of Salvation. Church bells ringing remind people of the call to prayer. Yes, many of our corporate actions share our faith with the wider community.

And so, should we share, also, the Call to a Holy Lent? Yes! Like everything else in our faith, it is not ours alone, but is for us to answer and share with the world. How might you do this? Well, perhaps forgiveness begins close to home. Is there someone who has hurt you? You might initiate reconciliation with them, assuring them you have forgiven them. Or perhaps it is you who seeks forgiveness? Approach the person and tell them it is your heart's desire to mend things. Explain to them why and what Lent means to you.

Another way would be to invite someone to church during Lent. Especially for a lapsed Christian, Lent can be a very meaningful time to reconnect with one's faith. You can offer to drive them and perhaps have coffee or eat a meal afterwards so they can tell you about their experience.

You may also choose to fast during Lent. Remember that fasting often includes both doing without but also offering the surplus from your fast to others. So, we self-deny and then provide for others. What can you fast from that can benefit others? Who will you choose to bless? What can you tell them about why you are doing this?

Finally, enriching one's daily life with Holy Scripture is always a blessing but certainly a special part of the call to Lent. Perhaps you can read the Bible at dinner time with your family? Or, maybe you can read it in the lunchroom at work and be open to including a co-worker or even read the Bible on the bus during your morning commute? Public reading of Holy Scripture can open doors to sharing the hope of the Gospel with others.

I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy Lent. It is not only the church ministers that can extend that invitation. I hope each of you will spread the invitation as well. I'm excited about journeying with you as we learn and share about God's promise and hope for all.

A Blessed Lent,
Mtr. Sue Troiano



Upcoming Events

Daylight Savings



We “spring ahead” on Sunday, March 8th! Don’t forget to set your clocks ahead the night before so that you are prompt for church services that morning.

Lenten Day Evensong

Fridays: March 6th, 13th, 20th, 27th, and April 3rd. Please join us for our Lenten Evensong services which will be held every Friday evening during Lent beginning at 5:45pm.

Lenten Day Program

Please join us after the 10:30am service on Sunday, March 8th for an afternoon program on Prayer. Lunch will be provided by members of the Daughters of the King, followed by instruction and application of various prayer forms led by Mother Sue. The day will end with Stations of the Cross, led by Fr. Hartt.

Vestry Meeting

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

Outreach Meeting

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

Daughters of the King

The March DOK meeting will be replaced with the Lenten Day Program on Sunday, March 8th. If any Daughter can provide a lunch item for the Lenten Day Lunch, please email our President, Julie Hotmer Drao at hotmermurphy@gmail.com. Thank you.

The Thirst for Eternal Life: Near-Death Experience and Christian Hope with Carol Zaleski, PhD

Friday, March 27, 7 PM at The Cathedral of All Saints with art and music starting at 6:30 PM

Saturday, March 28, 10:30 AM at The Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception

Carol Zaleski is a renowned religious scholar and writer who received her PhD in the Study of Religions from Harvard University. Author of several acclaimed books on religion, journalist Lisa Miller called Zaleski “the mother of modern heaven studies.” Come listen to her speak on near-death experience and her book, *Life of the World to Come*.

2020 PARISH LEADERSHIP CONFERENCES

For the Episcopal Diocese of Albany Parish Leadership Conference, Spring 2020 we seek to disseminate and model the most recent materials for the Alpha Course from Holy Trinity Brompton to empower every parish in the Albany Diocese to effectively run Alpha and leverage diocesan resources for training, advertising and jointly held Holy Spirit Weekend retreats. We want to leverage every moment of the leadership conference to demonstrate the Alpha course culture, therefore rather than the conference structure being formed around liturgy throughout the day, the day will be shaped to most effectively convey “Alpha Culture” with a concluding Eucharist celebration to send us out. A synchronized schedule of continuing training and joint retreats will be disseminated at the conference as well as a plan for joint social media advertising of courses, primarily targeted for the fall of 2020 and spring of 2021. Options for “After Alpha” programs as well as other synergistic youth, marriage and parenting courses will be discussed. The team delivering the 3 iterations of the conference will consist of Father Paul Hartt, Father Nixon Macmillan, Fr. Derick Roy, Deacon Lynn Curtis, Father Dave Haige, and Father Scott Evans. The day begins at 8:30 am with sign-in and ends at 3:45 pm. In return for investing your valuable time, lunch and all breaks are free.

Registration can be made through the following link:
[March 21: Christ the King Center, 575 Burton Road, Greenwich 12834](#)

FOOD FOR THE POOR

A representative from Food for the Poor will be our guest preacher on Sunday, March 22nd at both services. Please pray about a donation to this organization which makes transforming differences, as a testament to our Christian faith, in communities throughout the world. More about this organization can be found at: www.foodforthe poor.org

PARISH SURVEY:

We want to hear from you! The Vestry’s Strategic Growth Committee has launched a parish survey to help us build on our strengths and build our congregation. Tell us what you love about St. Peter’s Church and what you would like to see changed. The web version of the survey is available at: <http://survey.constantcontact.com/survey/a07eguoodxmk58979sd/start>. The paper version has been included in this newsletter and is also available in the back of the church.

YOUR OPINION MATTERS!

Ministry News & Opportunities

St. Francis Mission Soup Kitchen

Saturday, March 21st ~ 11:00am to 1:00pm

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.



Healing Prayers

On the first Sunday of every month, prayers for healing will be offered *during* Holy Communion in the Tower Altar at the rear of the church. If you desire prayers and/or anointing, please join us in the Tower Altar after you have received Holy Communion.

Lay Eucharistic Ministers

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

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. The cost of flowers is: Main Altar is \$50, St. Mark's Altar is \$35, and the Tower Altar is also \$35. All requests are payable in advance.

Overflow Homeless Shelter draws to the close of its eleventh season this month. There are still openings on the March calendar if you'd like to volunteer. We consider this year a great success and know that the homeless men we housed are blessed beyond measure. The Capital City Rescue Mission greatly appreciates our space, donations and volunteers and how we strengthen their ministry to the homeless in Albany. To sign up to volunteer please contact Mtr. Sue, Ruth Manss or Jim Chenot.

March 28, 2020

In this one day, on-demand conference, you'll receive four video lessons from award-winning parenting author Dr. Paul David Tripp.



The cost is \$15 per person or \$25 per couple (which includes video teaching, study guide, lunch and snacks). Parents and grandparents are welcome! Brought to you by Argyle Presbyterian Church, Durkeetown Baptist Church and Glens Falls Church of the Messiah.

[Read More](#) [Register here](#)



COFFEE HOUR VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We are looking for volunteers to help with Coffee Hour following the 10:30AM service. This is a very well loved and cherished time for our parishioners to gather and enjoy each others company, but it cannot run without some helping hands! Anyone interested, please contact Caitlin Cehowski at caitlin.cehowski@gmail.com or at 518-669-3096. The hope is to get a few regular volunteers to create a rotating schedule.



Easter Lily Requests

Parishioners and friends wishing to place lilies on the altars at Easter to honor, show thanks, or remember loved ones are asked to complete the enclosed form and return it to the church office with your donation no later than Palm Sunday, April 5th. The suggested donation is \$25.

Youth Formation & Sunday School

Valentines for Veterans



The Sunday school will be doing THE LAST SUPER on March 29 during Sunday school. Please join us on sharing this amazing reenactment of Jesus and the disciples sharing their last Meal.

In April please keep these dates on your calendar:

April 5th the Sunday school will be coloring eggs for the Easter egg hunt. Please allow the children to wear older clothes. We also have many smocks just in case. And on Saturday, April 11th at the Rectory in Loudonville to hunt for all the beautiful eggs (11:00 am sharp rain shine or snow). Look forward to seeing all the families. If you have any questions or concerns please give me a call. God bless & Thank you, Laura Rulison (518) 368-4284.

Coming Soon

HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

April 5th: **Palm Sunday**

~ 8:30AM Holy Communion Service
~ 10:30AM Choral Holy Communion Service

April 6th: **Monday in Holy Week**

~ 12:05PM Noon Holy Communion

April 7th: **Tuesday in Holy Week**

~ 12:05PM Noon Holy Communion

April 8th: **Wednesday in Holy Week**

~ 12:05PM Noon Holy Communion

April 9th: **Maundy Thursday**

~ 7:30PM Holy Communion,
Stripping of the Altar

April 10th **Good Friday**

~ 12:00PM Liturgy;
1:15PM ~ *St. Matthew Passion* by

J.S. Bach performed by The St. Peter's Choir
with Chamber Orchestra

April 11th **Holy Saturday**

~ 8:00AM Service;
11:00AM Egg Hunt at the Rectory

April 12th: **Easter Sunday**

~ 8:30AM & 10:30AM ~
Choral Holy Communion Services

Beaver Cross Spring Break Camp:

Monday April 13th - Friday April 17th 2020

What better way to spend time off from school than at Beaver Cross Camp! Spring Break Camp, structured similar to our Day Camp program, brings the excitement of summer to the school year. Campers will have the opportunity to do all of their favorite camp activities including: archery, sports, ropes, crafts, field games, campfire and more! The cost of the program is \$150. Registration includes all programmed activities, lunch, and an afternoon snack. Early drop off with breakfast is an additional extra. More information at: www.beavercrossministries.org/spring-break-camp.

Men's Cursillo Weekend

The men's Cursillo weekend is April 24-26 at the Spiritual Life Center. If you are interested in knowing more about Cursillo, the website is www.albanyepiscopalcursillo.org or contact John Hyde at 518-376-9477

CROP Walk will be Sunday, May 3rd at 1:30pm (with registration beginning at 12:30pm). This Albany Walk joins other National walks to raise funds for feeding programs both locally and abroad. We are looking for a Coordinator volunteer to help disseminate information and organize a team of walkers from St. Peter's. Please let the clergy know if you are able to coordinate this Outreach activity.



March 2020

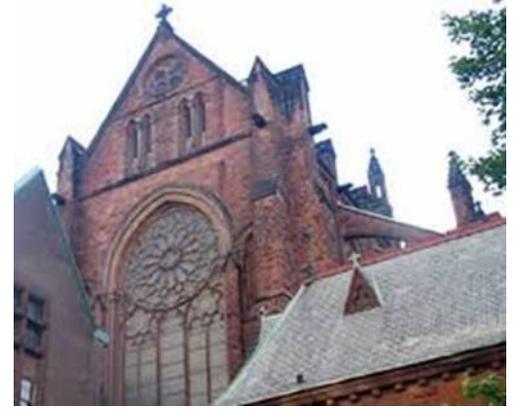


Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
<p>1 First Sunday in Lent Healing Prayers</p> <p>8:30am - Holy Communion 10:30am - Holy Communion</p>	2	3	<p>4</p> <p>8:45am - Top of 12:05pm - Holy C</p>
<p>8 Second Sunday in Lent Spring ahead 1 hour! 🕒</p> <p>8:30am - Holy Communion 10:30am - Morning Prayer 12:00pm - Lenten Day Program</p>	9	<p>10</p> <p>4:30pm - Outreach Meeting 5:15pm - Vestry Meeting</p>	<p>11</p> <p>8:45am - Top of 12:05pm - Holy C</p>
<p>15 Third Sunday in Lent</p> <p>8:30am - Holy Communion 10:30am - Holy Communion</p>	16	<p>17 Saint Patrick's Day 🍀</p>	<p>18</p> <p>8:45am - Top of 12:05pm - Holy C</p>
<p>22 Fourth Sunday in Lent Food for the Poor</p> <p>8:30am - Holy Communion 10:30am - Morning Prayer 3:30pm - The Collective Brass w/ Neil Keen, Organ</p>	23	24	<p>25 The Annun our Lord Jes</p> <p>8:45am - Top of 12:05pm - Holy C</p>
<p>29 Fifth Sunday in Lent</p> <p>8:30am - Holy Communion 10:30am - Morning Prayer Sunday School - Last Supper Reenactment</p> 	30	31	

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
the Hill Communion	5 4:30pm - Treble Rehearsal 5:30pm - Full Choir	6 12:30pm - Organ Concert 5:45pm - Evensong	7
the Hill Communion	12 4:30pm - Treble Rehearsal 5:30pm - Full Choir	13 12:30pm - Organ Concert 5:45pm - Evensong	14
the Hill Communion	19 Saint Joseph 4:30pm - Treble Rehearsal 5:30pm - Full Choir	20 12:30pm - Organ Concert 5:45pm - Evensong	21 Parish Leadership Conference 11:00am - Angels in Training
Association of Jesus Christ the Hill Communion	26 4:30pm - Treble Rehearsal 5:30pm - Full Choir	27 12:30pm - Organ Concert 5:45pm - Evensong	28
	 <p>A cartoon illustration showing a woman in a white shirt and dark trousers standing next to a dog. She is holding a bag of dog food. A speech bubble from her says "WELL?". A thought bubble from the dog says "BUT I'VE GIVEN UP DRY FOOD FOR LENT!". The artist's signature "Aldrich" is at the bottom left.</p>		 <p>A cartoon illustration of a woman sitting on a church bench, reading a book. On the wall behind her is a calendar with the numbers 6, 3, 1, 2, 7, 3, 9, 4, 1, 4, 6. Below the illustration, the text reads: "SHE COULD HARDLY BELIEVE SHE HAD WON ON HER FIRST VISIT TO CHURCH".</p>

Part III – Growth of the Episcopal Church in Albany

The period of the Revolutionary War (1775-1783) saw a serious decline in the Anglican church throughout America. During the war parishes lost their financial support (i.e. from the Society for the Propagation of the Bible), buildings and property were destroyed or lost and clergy and parishioners fled. It wasn't until after the revolution on December 25th 1787 that Saint Peter's Church in Albany led by Reverend Thomas Ellison celebrated its first service of Holy Communion.



Before the American Revolution there were no Anglican bishops in the colonies. They were not allowed by the British nor wanted by the colonists. But it was after the Revolutionary War that the establishment of an American episcopate took place. The first American to be consecrated as bishop in America was Samuel Seabury

Connecticut. Since there were no bishops in America to consecrate him he had to be consecrated in Europe. He was consecrated in Aberdeen, Scotland on November 14th 1784. In 1787 William White of Pennsylvania and Samuel Provoost of New York were elected to bishoprics in Pennsylvania and New York respectively. Both of the latter were consecrated in England. William White was largely responsible for the Constitution of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America.

After the revolution the Book of Common Prayer (BCP) had to be revised, especially to remove the words "God save the King" referring to the King of England to whom the American people no longer paid homage. The new BCP was revised at the General Convention of 1789 and issued August of 1790 by Hall & Sellers of Philadelphia. General use was to begin on the first of October 1790. Thus, it was on October 3rd of 1790 at Saint Peter's Church, that a service was held officiated by Reverend Thomas Ellison in which Holy Communion was administered to 36 parishioners and the new liturgy of the American Church was first used.

On September 11th, 1791 Samuel Provoost, the newly consecrated bishop of the Diocese of New York sailed up the Hudson River to make his primary visit to St. Peter's Church. He preached and then confirmed 147 persons. His visit excited much interest among the parishioners in Albany.

Because of the growth of St. Peter's parish, on January 26th 1802 a contract was signed between the Rector of St. Peter's Church and inhabitants of the City of Albany for the building of the Second Edifice of St. Peter's Church. This building would serve the parishioners until 1869 when a Third Edifice of the church would be completed. The Third Edifice was a handsome structure built by the famous architect Richard Upjohn.

It was also in 1869 that the rector of St. Peter's Church was selected and consecrated as the first bishop of the newly formed Diocese of Albany. This rector's name was William Croswell Doane. Doane's concept of the newly formed diocese was as a Cathedral Complex with schools and houses of mercy of every kind. St. Agnes School for Girls was founded by Bishop Doane on September 1870. The Cathedral General Chapter consisting of clergy and lay governance was instituted in 1875. The architect selected from a competition for the Cathedral of All Saints was Robert William Gibson. The cornerstone for the Cathedral was laid on June 3rd 1884. The building though unfinished was consecrated on November 20, 1888. (See picture above). The Cathedral was to be the seat of governance of the Albany Diocese, and the home of its bishop.

In the late 1800s St. Peter's Church under its rector Reverend Walton W. Battershall grew with many additions including beautiful stained glass windows mostly designed in Europe by such designers as Henry Holiday and Burne-Jones. Even into the 1900s St. Peter's was the church of the statesmen and governors at the State Capitol.

Other Episcopal parishes were also founded in Albany during this period including: St. Stephens which was founded in 1909 in Delmar and which began in an unused blacksmith shop and St. Andrews which was founded in 1832 at the home of Jacob Ludwig. It was moved to North Main and Madison Streets in Albany. St. Andrews is the home of many stained glass windows including a remarkable one depicting Bishop Doane, the Cathedral founder, in his British style shovel hat and gaiters with his faithful dog Cluny. (See a picture below of Bishop Doane and Cluny).

Thus, from the early Indian forts and simple church buildings and a few clergy, the Protestant Episcopal Church grew in Albany into the church organization we know today.



Bishop William Croswell Doane and Cluny

St. Peter's Music

CHOIR

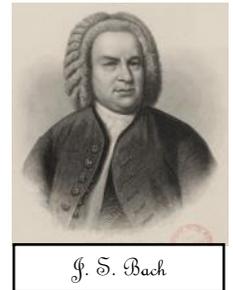
Choir rehearsals are on the following schedule:
Thursdays: 4:30pm - 6:30pm Trebles
5:30pm - 7:00pm Adult choristers
Sundays: 9:30am rehearsal for the 10:30am service
Please contact Neil Keen for more information at
(518)339-0137 or stpmus@gmail.com.

FRIDAY NOONTIME ORGAN CONCERTS

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



St. Matthew Passion. Our choir, accompanied by orchestra, will sing Bach's great *St. Matthew Passion* on Good Friday, April 10th, at 1:15pm, following the Noon liturgy. This Oratorio-Passion sets the biblical text of St. Matthew's Passion narrative, interspersed with hymns of the day and arias which set poetic commentary by Christian Friedrich Henrici (known as Picaner). Together they present a powerful telling of the story of Christ's Passion. There is no charge for admission, and listeners are welcome to enter and leave as their schedules permit.



J. S. Bach

EASTERN NEW YORK CHAPTER AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS PRESENTS **THE COLLECTIVE BRASS** with NEIL KEEN, Organ

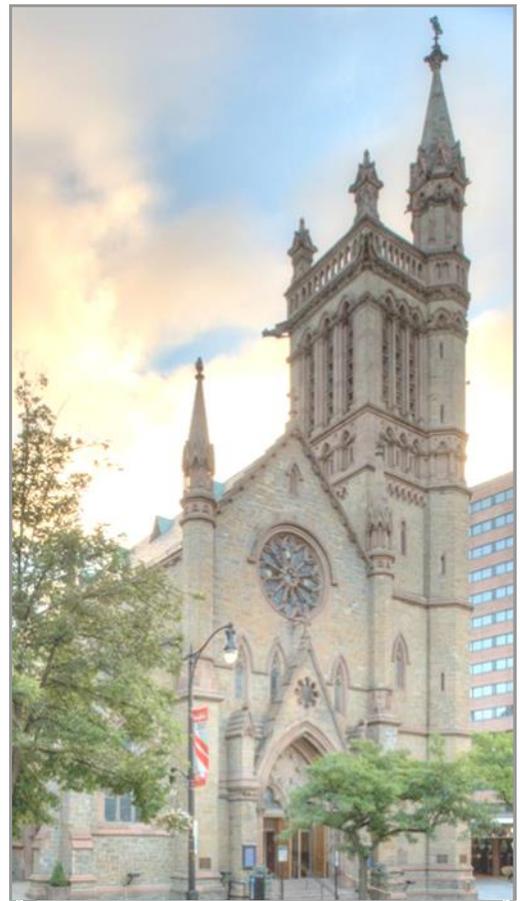


Sunday, March 22, 2020
3:30 PM
St. Peter's Episcopal Church
107 State Street
Albany, NY 12207

Admission \$10

Under 18 and Students Free with ID

A program of Brass Quintet, Brass Quintet and Organ and Organ works by Holst, Bozza, Bach, Hovhannes, DiLorenzo, Ewald, Gabrieli, and Bruckner.



ST. PETER'S CHURCH

MINUTES FOR THE VESTRY MEETING
ST. PETER'S PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH
January 14, 2020

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

Absent: None

Opening Prayer Led by Father Hartt

Approval of the Minutes of Vestry Meeting, December 10, 2019

The December 10, 2019 minutes were approved on a motion by J. Russom and seconded by A. Spath. The motion was unanimously approved by the vestry.

Warden Report –D. Spath

The wardens began their report by wishing everyone a Happy New Year. This past month of December was a great testimony to what Advent is all about and we are all so blessed to have such an incredible church family. The attendances at both Christmas Eve services were one of the larger showings in some years and reinforce us having a lively and loving church family. We celebrated our traditional Christmas Eve services at 4:00 pm and 10:00 pm with a choral prelude at 9:30 by the choir. Christmas Day we celebrated with one service at 9:00.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our choir director, Neil Keen and the choir for all their hard work and dedication with the preparation of all music that was performed during the Advent season, as well as, all the wonderful music performed at both the 4:30 and 10:00 Christmas Eve services.

During the Advent season in December as mentioned in the last warden report on December 8th, the choir led the season off with an incredible performance of the Handel's Messiah at 3:00 pm. The following Sunday, December 15th, the Sunday school performed their annual Christmas Pageant at the 10:30 service. Then on Sunday, December 22nd, we had a service of Lessons and Carols at the 10:30 service, followed with the Hanging of the Greens. The Hanging of the Greens again, was well attended and the church looked spectacular this year. Each year it is so encouraging to see everyone help beautify the Church, which has been a large part of St. Peter's and many families tradition for many years. We would like to thank Janice Chenot who headed up the luncheon, as well as those who helped in the kitchen afterwards for cleanup. It was truly a great day had by all.

We also want to thank both Father Hartt and Mother Sue for their preparation and spiritual leadership they offer each year leading up to and during the Advent season. Their love and commitment to all of us at St. Peter's means so much to all our parishioners, and we are so blessed to have such a wonderful clergy. Also, many thanks to all those on the altar guild, flower guild, the ushers, acolytes, and clergy for making this past Advent season a meaningful and joyful time for all of us. Again, we would like to thank Janice, Ruth, Pat and Ian for all their work and dedication they put forth before and afterwards, including the work required during each week preparing for all the services.

Our doors now have been open every night since December 1st, hosting and giving shelter to men in need for a warm place to stay at night in our parish hall. This is our eleventh year hosting this shelter for the homeless in conjunction with the Capital City Mission in Albany. Thank you again to those who have volunteered their time hosting during the evening, as well as those who donate food and contribute monetary gifts designated to this worthy cause.

Egan's Restoration has been contacted to move forward with the second phase of our interior restoration. They will begin the work beginning next week and hope to have a good portion of it complete by Easter. Many thanks to those who have committed to this second phase to this ongoing interior restoration campaign with additional contributions. The commitment and enthusiasm to the campaign has been incredible, and hope others that may not have contributed yet, know they still have the opportunity to contribute to this beatification of St. Peter's church and will help us to plan moving forward with the third and last phase later in the year.

Our annual meeting will be on the last Sunday of this month, January 26th after the 10:30 service. Vestry nominations have been posted – James Chenot will be running for his 1st two year term as Sr. Warden. Christie Gordon and George Scala will be running for their 2nd three year term and Fred Hershey will be running for this first three year term on the vestry. In the event James Chenot is elected as St. Warden, the vestry has resolved to appoint Deborah Spath as Junior Warden until the next Annual Meeting. We also want to thank George for all his dedication and hard work on the finance committee, as well as heading up stewardship drive. Your work and commitment to St. Peter's is very much appreciated and does not go unnoticed.

Looking ahead, Lent begins Ash Wednesday, February 26th and will enjoy everyone coming together at our annual Shrove Tuesday pancake dinner on February 25th in our parish hall.

The Vestry wishes everyone a Happy New Year.

Sunday Attendance – The Average Sunday attendance is 95.5

Rector's Report - Father Hartt

Father Hartt began by thanking Deb Spath for her excellent service to the parish as Sr. warden. Debbie has offered much wisdom and administrative ability to the position. Deb has decided to step down at this time and the Vestry has nominated Jim Chenot to his former seat as Sr. Warden. Jimmy has served us faithfully in both roles through the years. Deb has agreed to fill out Jimmy's term, should he be elected as Sr. Warden, and run for Jr. Warden at the next Annual Meeting. We thank Deb Spath for her good work and am delighted that she will continue to serve.

Things have been busy indeed since our last Vestry Meeting. We had a glorious Christmas and beginning of Epiphany. There were two weddings following Christmas on the 27th and 29th. Both reflected the best of St. Peter's, as many parish hands went into the services out of profound love for the couples involved. Mtr. Sue and Jimmy Troiano and Dan Closson and Ashley Spath made good use of the wonderful greens and Christmas decorations in the church. A glorious parish reception followed Mtr. Sue and Jimmy's wedding. Fr. Hartt thanked all for putting it together, especially Fred Hersey, Deb Spath, Jeffrey Hart, Nancy Cregan, and Donna Ohlman. Donna made a wonderful cake. Bishop love was present and provided the nuptial blessing for Sue+ and Jimmy. Fr. Hartt also thanked Janice Chenot for all of her work on the booklets for Ashley and Dan's wedding.

Fr. Hartt wished to thank the Choir and Mr. Keen as well for the spectacular music in the Advent and Christmas seasons. It appears that the choir is miraculously getting ever better and better. We gratefully receive and are blessed.

Sadly, things have been busy in other ways. Since last Tuesday and through this coming Saturday, there will be five funerals/committals in the parish. Dr. James Castleman, Jack Avakian, Margaret Chaloner, Roberta Cripps, and Rena Edwards. Our hearts and prayers go out to the grieving families.

Father Hartt expressed concern about church this Sunday. It is reported that a major snow storm will take place on Saturday through Sunday. Fr. Hartt has been in touch with the speaker from Food for the Poor. It is unclear what decision will be made about his presence as of tonight. We will need to reach out in our various ways should we need to cancel Services.

The Strategic Growth Committee has been hard at work on a parish survey. We will discuss tonight the plans for its dissemination. The work of the Committee will be highlighted at the Annual Meeting.

With the completion of Alpha for 2019, Fr. Hartt will be offering a follow-up course on St. Paul's Letter to the Philippians. It is clear that Sunday morning is the preferred time. We may be looking at Sunday morning offerings as a basic pattern for Fr. Hartt's study groups.

Fr. Hartt has been asked to be a presenter at the upcoming Parish Leadership Conference. Fr. Hartt will be co-presenting with others who have made use of the newer Alpha materials. The PLC's will be taking place at three locations, Oneonta, Greenwich and Malone in the North Country.

Fr. Hartt reported that all relevant staff have now received the trainings required for Godly boundaries/Safe Church and NYS Anti-Harassment. Fr. Gorchov came to complete the Sunday School staff trainings.

Fr. Hartt spoke of our need to get a better sense of our actual membership. We know who are presently active, but there is a large number of historic connections that we should have a better handle on at this point. This improved information will also help the Strategic Growth Committee. As always, our chief concern is regular Sunday attendance. The parish's vitality requires the strongest possible attendance patterns by all who consider themselves members. Our ASA for 2019 was 116.5.

Fr. Hartt thanked George, Deb, Fred, Maria, and Jim, for their work on Stewardship and restoration fund-raising. The present approach to each appears to be working well.

Fr. Hartt wished the parish a blessed 2020.

Finance – G. Scala - Treasurer's Report

George reviewed the Treasurer's Report for December. Offerings YTD for 2019 were \$213,323. While this fell short of the budgeted number of \$227,650, it did exceed the total offerings of 2018 which were \$205,705.

The investment/endowment accounts both showed gains for December and ended the year very strong. Merrill Lynch showed a return of +2.29% for the month and a YTD return of +21.61%. The Key accounts showed a return of +1.86% for the month and a YTD return of +19.32%. This leaves us with a positive budget variance in this area YTD of \$585,290. Both accounts performed favorably versus market indexes. Expenses YTD were \$30,793 over budget.

Pledges for 2020 continue to come in. We have received 38 pledges to date for a total amount of \$120,672.

Discussion occurred concerning the annual meeting and the presentation of the Treasurer's Report.

Property – None

Outreach – Mother Sue

The Overflow Homeless Shelter opened December 1st for the 11th year. The ministry is going very well this year. We had volunteers (7) nights during December. Volunteers are still sought for either hospitality (until 11pm) or overnight hours for the remaining months. Please contact Ruth or Mother Sue in the office, or Jim Chenot to volunteer.

A representative from Food for the Poor will visit the church and preach at both services on Sunday January 19, 2020. We hope you will consider donating to the worldwide work this organization does in support of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. (NOTE: Re-scheduled to 3/22/20 because of snow storm)

The annual Soup Sampler needs to be re-scheduled for Sunday 2/23 following the 10:30am service (not 2/9). Also, it will benefit the Capital City Rescue Mission overflow homeless shelter.

Old Business - None

New Business – None

Associate Rector's Report – Mother Sue

Advent and Christmas services, including the Children's Pageant and Lessons and Carols were astounding this year. The Greening of the church had a wonderful turnout with exceptional results. And Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services were very well attended, with the highest Christmas Day attendance in recent history. There are so many individuals who worked tirelessly to make these spiritual experiences exceptional for others – thank you to all.

We have experienced five deaths (and related pastoral support and services) these past few weeks. These events are always a strong reminder of the promise of our faith and the hope we live (and die) in. My prayers are with the families and loved ones of Larry Castleman, Jack Avakian, Roberta Cripps, Margaret Chaloner and Rena Edwards. May their souls, and the souls of all faithful departed through the mercies of God, rest in peace.

Thank you Father Hartt, Bishop Love, Fred Hershey, Deb Spath, Donna Ohlmann, and the entire congregation for making our wedding day the most joyous, blessed event it could be! We are so blessed and thankful to be part of this parish family and so loved and supported by all of you (Mtr. Sue & Jimmy)

Adjournment

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

Compline

Mtr. Sue led Compline.

Respectfully Submitted,
Christie J. Gordon

Clergy & Staff

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

Vestry

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

How to Contact Us

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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