



The Beacon

*In thy light shall we see light.
Psalm 36:9*

May 2021

Born Free

by the Rev. Abigail Crozier Nestlehutt

Deer are a suburban reality, but this was not always the case. I recall laughing loudly the first time my mother told me that the hooved ruminants I associated with a particular Disney movie and with rural hunting were consuming her garden, but she was serious. The deer really moved into the neighborhood after I left for college and seminary. The proliferation of these flora-filching fauna was not a problem in the urban and rural communities I lived in after seminary, but it became a personal issue when I moved to Chester County, where my husband tapped the first uninvited visitor in our yard on the nose with a baseball bat to little effect. While our neighbors on Maryland's eastern shore ate venison after spending the morning in a deer blind, our suburban neighbors here feed the deer. Mostly I ignore them, and to be fair, lately they have not been dining on our floral delicacies.

On a recent run, I encountered a few deer that captured my imagination because they were, in a way, captured. They had made it past two layers of fencing a homeowner had installed to keep them off his property, but they seemed unable to get back out and huddled in a corner, with nothing but decaying brown leaves nearby. They were not eating—they were strategizing, I am sure. My presence startled them, and I ran on, all the while thinking about their predicament: they were confined, yet free to leave when they could find a way out.

Like some of you perhaps, I feel both confined and free this spring. Warm weather is wafting our way, and by the end of May the parish staff, my family, and many friends will all be fully vaccinated. There is no doubt that we can do more outside the confines of our homes this May than last, but the pandemic is not over. In this in-between time, we must find the right level of activities and expectations. We must discover what “normal” now means, knowing that its meaning will continue to evolve. On some days, I am tempted to skip this discovery step and leap over the fence into everything I have missed for a year because I want everything to be the way it used to be. On other days, I long to stay in my safe little corner, pretending that the rest of the world does not exist because I did not like the way everything was before Covid anyway. The tension between these feelings is both exhilarating and tiring; I am both in need of rest and eager to move forward. Moderation and balance are called for, and also willingness to try.

At St. Peter's we have anticipated this tension in our intentional approach to Eastertide, Pentecost, and beyond. Our Easter services under the tent were not only a joyful celebration of the resurrection—they were like a spring reunion. Visitors, newcomers, and longtime parishioners gathered for worship and enjoyed conversation as well. Easter kicked off something of a season of renewal. Youth group now meets outdoors regularly; the choir has socialized by the firepit; this month the women of St. Peter's will gather in person outdoors for the first time in over a year; and our holy hikes have resumed. On Pentecost, May 23, we will thank our choir during the 10 a.m. service and then enjoy a bring-your-own picnic with a few surprises. (See p. 5 for details.) Pentecost will be a particularly festive day, and more opportunities will unfold throughout the summer.

In the pages that follow you will find information about all aspects of parish life. I encourage you to read everything and to engage in whatever is of interest to you. Find your way out of confinement. Invite a friend. All are welcome at St. Peter's . . . always, and safely.

World Labyrinth Day, May 1

According to the World Labyrinth Day website, the day is intended to “bring people from all over the planet together in celebration of labyrinths as a symbol, tool, passion, or practice. Participants are encouraged to ‘Walk as One at 1’ in the afternoon to create a wave of peaceful energy around our planet as it turns in space.”



John McDevitt captured the serene beauty of the labyrinth.

You are invited to join the effort by walking our beautiful St. Peter’s labyrinth at 1 p.m. on **Saturday, May 1**, or at whatever time suits your schedule (it is always 1 p.m. somewhere on the planet). As you walk, please maintain a safe distance. Thank you.

A Multitude of Tongues for Pentecost

Parlez-vous français? ты говоришь по русски? Sprechen Sie deutsch? Unaongea kiswahili? あなたは日本語を話せますか? ¿Habla español? If you speak a language other than English, we would love for you to participate in reading the traditional Pentecost passage from Acts of the Apostles on Sunday, May 23 in that language. Please contact Abigail (abigail@stpetersgv.org or 610-644-2261) to let her know of your interest.



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Holy Hike at Jenkins Arboretum

Our second holy hike of the spring will take place at Jenkins Arboretum, a local treasure in Devon; we will meet there at 9 a.m. on **Saturday, May 15**. The timing should be right for us to enjoy Jenkins’ spectacular azaleas, which usually are at their peak in mid-May. This gentle springtime walk—on a mostly paved path that is somewhat hilly in places—will begin and end in prayer. To sign up, please use the link in Keynotes or contact Abigail (abigail@stpetersgv.org or 610-644-2261).



Holy Hiking

May Gathering of Women

Spring has sprung, bringing warmer weather, flowers, and increased access to the Covid vaccine. The women of St. Peter’s will capitalize on this and meet in person for the first time in over a year—outdoors, on the lawn in front of the church at 6 p.m. on **Wednesday, May 12**. It will be fun to catch up with each other in person after fourteen months!

Please bring a chair and your own beverage and snack, as well as a mask for when you are not eating or drinking or when you go inside for any reason. Should the weather not cooperate, we can move indoors and still be Covid-safe. Contact Lynn Mander (lsmander@gmail.com) if you have any questions.

Pub Theology

At 6 p.m. on the first and third Mondays of every month—this month on **May 3 and May 17**—we gather via Zoom to explore various theological topics in a safe space. Discussions currently “on-tap” for pub theology are sex in the Bible and our modern response (such as LGBTQ issues and women in leadership), and why the *Book of Common Prayer* is revised so frequently. So think about joining us!

Although so far we have had to meet virtually, we will begin to assess the safety of gathering around the firepit and of exploring both these questions and some local pubs as more of us are vaccinated. As always, Chris is eager to follow the path of the curious, so if you have ideas about topics we should pursue, please contact him (chris@stpetersgv.org).

Annual Meeting, May 2



We will hold our annual meeting via Zoom on **Sunday, May 2**, immediately following the single parishwide 10 a.m. service. We are offering worship via Facebook, YouTube, and our website, so that everyone can sign into Zoom swiftly and expeditiously after the service.

Please plan to join us for this important event in our parish life, at which we review the work of the year just ended and look forward to the coming year. We will recognize our retiring vestry class and commission chairs, and also elect the incoming vestry class of 2024. Short biographical sketches of Philip Cauffman, Kate Mallon-Day, Steve Ockenden, and Luci Russell appear below; they were proposed by the nominating committee (retiring vestrypersons Don Cheetham, Doug Jones, Eileen Klein, and Charlotte Tellefsen and at-large members Jenny Disque, Trudi Graves, Shannon Mannon and Luci Russell).

There is much good news to share and celebrate at this meeting, and we hope to see you there virtually on **May 2**.



Meet the Vestry Nominees

Philip Cauffman

In March 2017 my wife Marcia and I joined St. Peter's, where Marcia's family have been members since the late nineteen-forties. We were married here in January 2018 and regularly attend the 8 o'clock service. We enjoy participating in many of the programs the church has to offer.

After retiring in August 2020, I joined the Bad Boys and Girls for Jesus and enjoy reading, "beagle-ing," and spending time with our ten grandchildren. I am an active amateur radio operator and have made many contacts with people around the world.

Steve Ockenden

Steve and his wife Helen have been members of St. Peter's since 1989. A Vietnam veteran, former college instructor, and senior staff member of the U.S. Senate, Steve left government to work in industry. His corporate experience includes managing U.S.-funded international disarmament and pandemic planning projects in the former Soviet Union. He was an invited delegate to the 1996 Nobel Peace Prize ceremonies.

At St. Peter's, Steve has been an usher, lay chalcist, lector, and youth group leader. He has served on the outreach and communications commissions, the anti-racism initiative, and the vestry; has led several adult formation sessions; and was a delegate to diocesan convention. His wife Helen has chaired the outreach and stewardship commissions; their son Andrew resides with his wife Amanda in Philadelphia.

Kate Mallon-Day

When I arrived at St. Peter's to audition as alto section leader in 1994, I knew I was in the right place—and it has been my spiritual and community home ever since. Over the years I have sung for many services and other "churchly" entertainments. My husband Richard and I share our home in Paoli with two furry canine companions (and host sundry neighborhood wildlife in our yard).

During my twenty-seven years here, I have felt free to celebrate, question, doubt, challenge, and learn about my own spiritual path. For me, the true calling to follow Christ is to serve others and be a good steward of the treasures this life and earth give us. It has been a joy to serve on the shepherd guild, outreach commission, and choirs, and I hope to add an element of the wild and surprising to the vestry.

Luci Russell

Luci and her husband Clive Hammant visited St. Peter's in 2016 while exploring Chester County before relocating here from Bucks County. They found the church welcoming, especially the greeter who later helped them with their move to West Chester. They joined St. Peter's in 2017, and as relative newcomers very much enjoyed a vestry dinner in the historic church. The needlework ministry was Luci's first activity here, and she soon joined the family choir and participated in its 2018 residency at Westminster Abbey. Luci also works with Martin McElroy on ministry related to blood drives and sobriety. Her son, Luke Staisiunas, is an organ scholar who has played for services here.

After retiring in 2019 from a second career as a pharmaceutical development physician, Luci now enjoys spending time with family and friends and pursuing hobbies like photography, needlework, and cooking. She looks forward to post-pandemic worship and enjoyment.

Summer Sunday School

Sunday school in its current—primarily email—format will continue through the summer. The parents of every Sunday school age child in the parish will continue to receive emails with lessons and activities every Saturday. We are also hoping that our children and their teachers will be able to get together for some in-person fun a few times during the summer.



Wrapping Up and Looking Ahead

The 2020-2021 adult formation program year wraps up this month with two final presentations on Zoom following the 10 a.m. service:

On **May 9**, we will hear from Marnie Melvin, program director of Citizen Advocacy of Chester County, a non-profit that has served Phoenixville since 1980. “Our mission,” she says, “is to initiate and support a variety of long-term intentional relationships that provide advocacy for opportunity, protection from harm, sponsorship into community life, friendship, and justice for isolated people living with a disability.



We do this by spending time and getting to know someone who could use an advocate and then turning to the community to find someone with complementary qualities and characteristics. We are built upon the belief in the power and competence of the ordinary citizen to care and connect to others and to make a lifelong commitment to stand by, for, and with another person, through good times and through challenging ones.”

On **May 16**, old friends David Kasievich and the Rev. Andrew Kellner from St. James School will once again visit us and lead our forum. They will fill us in on how the highly unusual 2020-21 school year played out for their North Philadelphia students.

During the summer, we will work on plans for adult formation in the 2021-22 program year. At this point, we intend to return to the in-person format of the “good old days” of adult forum before the pandemic struck. If you want to suggest discussion topics or potential presenters for us to consider, or if you wish to give feedback about doing adult formation via Zoom this year, please contact Melissa Shaner (myshaner@verizon.net or 610-296-7621).



Youth Group

The youth group is now meeting in person around the firepit in the rector’s grove on Sunday afternoon, and thanks the Bad Boys and Girls for Jesus for preparing the area and the fire for them. All sixth- through twelfth-graders are invited to join their peers in service work, discussions on faith formation, and plain old fun.



Summer Reprise of Dismantling Racism

Young people 13 and over who missed the spring session of *Dismantling Racism* are invited to join this profound two-day training this summer. The dates are: *June 6, 1 p.m.* (information meeting); *June 17, 7 to 8:15 p.m.* (parent/caregiver meeting); *June 26, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.* (session 1); *July 17, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.* (session 2); *September 11, afternoon* (follow-up).

Diocesan Youth Jam

At the invitation of the diocese, St. Peter’s will host the first ever diocesan Youth Jam on **Saturday, July 10**. So reserve 12 noon to 4 p.m. that day on your calendar now, to be sure you will be free to attend this event, which the bishop, as well as young people from around the diocese, will attend. Planning is still under way, but BBQ and a DJ will definitely be part of the day’s fun. As the hosts of this event, we will likely need help handling some of its logistics and will no doubt ask the youth group and their parents to assist (but will welcome help from others too). For more information or to volunteer, email Chris (chris@stpetersgv.org).

Pentecost 2021!

On **Sunday, May 23**, the Feast of Pentecost celebrates the Holy Spirit, our stellar choir, and the end of the program year! Our dove kite, balloons, special music, and lots of red will make the service particularly festive. As always, we hope to see worshipers clad in red to celebrate the birthday of the Church. Picnic-perfect attire is just fine for those worshiping in person that day, as long as it contains some red (remember Abigail's red sneakers!)

After the service, the fun will continue, with a parish-wide picnic beginning at 11:30. Since pandemic restrictions about shared food are still in place, we invite you to bring your own picnic lunch, as well as a kite, if you want to take advantage of the spring updrafts. In addition to wide open spaces for kite-flying, we promise to provide games, mini-golf, cornhole, and more—as well as a special surprise.



So start thinking about the red you will wear and join us at this celebratory event. To help us plan, please sign up using the link that you will find in Keynotes or by letting Abigail know (abigail@stpetersgv.org or 610-644-2261). To learn more about the festivities or to offer to lend a hand before, during, or after them, please contact Abigail. Thank you!

A Message from Your Vestry Wardens

by Eileen Klein and David Graves

Do you realize that we have had an assistant rector for almost two years? Since his arrival, Chris Exley has become such an integral part of our parish life and activities that it seems he has been with us for much longer. He has increased our worship offerings, led the youth group, augmented our pastoral care, and contributed in countless other ways. And the technological expertise he brought to the position helped us move smoothly into the world of virtual worship and gathering during the pandemic. Having an assistant rector on board has made all the difference to St. Peter's, both in expanding our previous offerings and creating new ones.

As your wardens, we are reminding you of this now because the special fund to support the assistant rector position (as well as keep Chris with us) will run out at the end of 2021. The time has come for the parish to decide whether to maintain this position and if so, how to pay for it. In August 2019 we asked the parish to commit to funding the assistant rector position for the two years after the unused salary in the budget was depleted; in that appeal, we also promised that there would be no additional special solicitations.

So, if the position is to continue in 2022, it must now become part of the regular budget, which, as you know, is based primarily on pledge income. As your wardens, we believe it is important for us to reiterate this information now, so that everyone can participate in this discussion and all of us can prayerfully consider whether as individuals we can stretch our budgets for next year and as a parish identify additional sources of funds.

During the past year (admittedly a stressful and financially challenging one for many), our rector and assistant rector together have tirelessly led us, inspired us, and demonstrated God's mercy through their commitment. With God's help, we hope to continue and expand all that we do.

Members of the vestry and stewardship commission will be glad to hear your suggestions about how to increase our income for the coming year. Our parishioners have always been generous and understanding when the financial situation has been made clear, so we are hopeful that we can meet this difficult challenge.

Take a Well-deserved Bow, Graduates!



Each June, we are eager to celebrate our the high school and college seniors in the parish. This year we want to acknowledge the milestone the class of 2021 achieved, despite having had to experience a variety of learning modes (virtual only, hybrid, in-person, synchronous, asynchronous) since last March. But to do this, we need to know who you are! So if you are donning a cap and gown this month or next, please let us know (proud parents, you can do this, too). Just email the *Beacon* editor (beacon@stpetersgv.org), and tell her which school is conferring your diploma, any honors attached to it, and a little about your post-graduation plans (e.g., the college or grad school you will attend, your intended major, your post-college employment). Please send as much information as you can by **May 20**.

Youth Sunday

The youth of St. Peter's will lead Morning Prayer on **Sunday, June 6**, doing the readings, leading the prayers, and giving the sermon. That day we will also celebrate our Sunday school teachers and their tireless leader, Holly Hardester. Please plan to join us as we celebrate the youth of our parish, and thank our faithful Sunday school teachers and Holly for their dedicated service to our youngest members.



We had to reschedule the May 15th yoga retreat. Once we settle on the new date, we will announce it in Keynotes. *Namaste.*

Celebrating Susan House's Service to St. Peter's

Please, please save **June 13** so that you can help us honor our longtime parish administrator, Susan House. After more than twenty-five years of dedicated service to St. Peter's, she has decided to retire. Although we will miss her, we understand that it is time to put her 9-to-5 (and then some!) routine behind her and enjoy well-deserved free time.

Susan has served St. Peter's with great faithfulness, excellence, and cheer. I am grateful for her support of me as rector, and I know that many of you have appreciated her ministry as well. There will be more to say in the coming weeks, but for now, please reserve the morning of June 13 for special prayers during the 10 a.m. service and an event in her honor afterwards.

Easter Outreach at Darby Mission



Darby's finest came out to help unload and distribute the food.



Masks conceal everyone's smile, but everyone's eyes reveal the joy of the day!



May 1
 Needlework ministry
 10 a.m. (Zoom)
 World Labyrinth Day
 1 p.m. (outdoors)

May 2
 Holy Eucharist
 10 a.m. (virtual only)
 Annual meeting follows (Zoom)

May 3
 Pub theology
 6 p.m. (Zoom)

May 12
 Gathering of Women
 6 p.m. (outdoors)

May 15
 Holy hike
 9 a.m., Jenkins Arboretum

May 17
 Pub theology
 6 p.m. (Zoom)

May 23
The Day of Pentecost
 Services at 8 & 10 a.m.
 Pentecost picnic (outdoors)

- Florence Watson for talking up our ham donation drive among fellow residents of her apartment complex and collecting six free hams for our food ministry;
- The Sunday school teachers for their ongoing ministry with our youngest members and for sending them Palm Sunday cut-outs.
- The clergy, choir, technical team, flower guild, and all worship participants in all our Holy Week and Easter services, the four families who did the Maundy Thursday foot washing and Mario Delano who provided security during watch night;
- Kate Mallon-Day for lending us her hand-crafted table for use as the altar at our outdoor Easter services;
- Wilson Smith for coordinating the details for Robert Ryan’s recent catering events;
- Joe Herbst, Susan House, Paige Infortuna, Peter Kreek, Eric Lien, and the finance commission for their work on our transition to payroll and bookkeeping services and our application for a second Payroll Protection Plan loan;
- Adult forum leaders Cathryn Cheetham and Brenda Grove;
- Honor Nestlehutt for cleaning and re-organizing the youth room, and the youth group for creating giant Easter eggs for the egg hunt and for making up Easter baskets for the Sunday schoolers;
- Those who made possible the installation of the handcrafted Galatians sign and the stenciled Adirondack chairs along the exit driveway.



March Financial Snapshot

	March 2021	Year to Date March	Year-end Projection	Budget 2021
Parishioner Contributions	\$ 72,811	\$232,858	\$597,107	\$555,000
Other Income*	1,059	3,110	140,760	123,150
Total Income	73,870	235,968	737,867	678,150
Total Expense	68,786	188,255	692,441	678,150
Surplus/ (Deficit)	5,084	47,713	45,426	0

**Interest, rentals, endowment distributions, fundraiser, PPP funds*

St. Peter’s March income was strong for two reasons: parishioners’ payment of pledges and a \$50,000 Payroll Protection Program-2 loan that we received and will be able to convert to a grant. The PPL funds appear under “Other Income” in the snapshot; forty thousand dollars are for staff salaries and the remaining ten thousand dollars for preschool salaries. Currently we project a budget surplus at the end of the year, which will be a useful buffer when we start preparing the 2022 budget. –Eric Lien for the finance commission



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The Rev. Abigail Crozier Nestlehutt, Rector
 The Rev. Christopher W. Exley, Assistant Rector
 Dr. Bruce Glenny, Organist/Choirmaster
 Susan House, Parish Administrator
 Denise Nuttall, Preschool Director
 Gail Malcolm, Event Coordinator
 Liam Reid, Weekend Facilities Manager

*Our Mission:
 by the power of the Holy Spirit,
 to nurture people of all ages in the
 knowledge and love of God in Jesus Christ,
 and to make Him known
 in the wider community*

The deadline for the
 June Beacon
 is **May 15**.

Weekly Offerings at St. Peter's

Sunday
 8 a.m. *Holy Eucharist, Rite 1**
 10 A.M. *Holy Eucharist, Rite 2***
*Coffee hour/Adult Formation****
 1 P.M. *Youth Group***

Monday thru Thursday
 12 NOON *Noonday Prayer****

Wednesday
 10 A.M. *Morning Prayer & Bible Study****

Thursday
 10:30 A.M. *Intercessory Prayer Group****

Friday
 8 A.M. *Gathering of Men****

* In person (with sign-up)
 ** In person (with sign-up) and virtual
 *** Virtual

As pandemic precautions evolve, we expect the parish office to be open Monday through Thursday. Please note that for now the parish office is closed on Fridays. As usual, the rector is available via cell at all times.

TWO LIVESTREAMING NOTES

Livestreaming via YouTube

Those who prefer not to use Facebook now have the option of accessing our livestreamed worship services through our YouTube channel, **St. Peter's in the Great Valley – YouTube**. If you have difficulty using our YouTube channel, please contact Chris (chris@stpetersgv.org).

HELP WANTED: Videographers!

We need a few more videographers to augment the team now livestreaming our services. So now's the time to unleash your Francis Ford Coppola gene **and** your chance to help St. Peter's by joining our still small "camera crew." They stand ready to teach you to use our state-of-the-art equipment, no matter if you are 15 or 85!. Please contact Abigail (abigail@stpetersgv.org) if you want to give this a try! Thank you!