



The Beacon

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

December 2022

The Word Made Flesh

by the Rev. Abigail Crozier Nestlehutt

At our afternoon pageant service on Christmas Eve, the children of the parish will tell us the story of Jesus' birth. In the evening at our 7 p.m. service of Lessons and Carols in the manner of Kings College, Cambridge, we will hear the account of God's saving deeds throughout creation, culminating in the birth of the Christ child. At our 9 p.m. Festal Eucharist, the traditional gospel will be proclaimed beginning with, "In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered." What we think of as the whole story—the journey to Bethlehem, the inn, the field of shepherds, the angel, the magi—is a conglomeration of details from the gospels according to Matthew and Luke. John's account in the prologue to his gospel, which we read at the very end of the final service of Christmas Eve, is entirely different. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." This is poetry that frees our mind to contemplate the wonder of the incarnation rather than imagine drafty stables or dusty mangers. Taken together, all of these accounts invite us to join their authors in imagining the origin of the incomparable Jesus. .

The last line of the portion of John's gospel that we read on Christmas Eve begins, "And the Word became flesh and lived among us." In *The Message*, Eugene Peterson translates it this way: "The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood." While I generally prefer the traditional, more accurate language, here we encounter a suggestion of how we might rethink a line we have heard so many times. Imagine walking to someone's home, casserole in hand as one does to be friendly, ringing the bell, and being greeted at the door by Jesus. What would it look like if God moved into the home next door? The thing is, God already has. We spend Advent preparing for this to happen even though we live as people with whom God already dwells, people called to bring the light of Christ into our neighborhoods. Think of this as a seasonal twist to our program year theme, "Called into Community."

At St. Peter's we worship, learn, serve, connect, and celebrate on our sixteen acres and, importantly, beyond them. We do this in our outreach efforts with coats, socks, pasta, gifts, meals, and more. We do this when we build relationships with our friends at Echo Lake. We do this when we partner with the parent group from Atwater. There are so many examples. As you read this issue of *The Beacon*, think about the Word made flesh living among us and the ways in which you are called to bear Christ to others.

Each year at this time I am abundantly aware that the demands of school, work, and family are intense for so many of us. For this reason we design our Advent and Christmas offerings to be meaningful, accessible ways to journey through these hectic weeks. I invite you to participate in Advent at St. Peter's. Find your intentional way to connect in the pages that follow. There is something that will work for you. Share the joy by bringing a friend. All are welcome. Always. May you find peace and light in these holy weeks ahead.

Advent Lessons and Carols



All are invited to come to St. Peter's at 4 p.m. Sunday, **December 4**, to experience a candlelit service of Advent Lessons and Carols in the barn. At St. Peter's we use the Advent in several ways to remind ourselves of the real message of Christmas, and the service of Advent lessons and carols enables us to hear the message through music and scripture. This service will feature an Advent procession and the choir performing works by contemporary English composer John Tavener and selections from Handel's *Messiah*. Dress comfortably, and think about inviting a friend or neighbor to come along with you for this lovely event at the beginning of Advent.



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The Beacon is produced monthly by St. Peter's Church in the Great Valley
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Submit articles to beacon@stpetersgv.org or fax them to 610-644-7967
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Staff: Trudi Graves (editor), Charlotte Mark, David Graves

Wednesday Evenings in Advent

DECEMBER 7, 7 TO 8:30 P.M.—CHRISMONS AND COOKIES

If you hang traditional glass ornaments, candy canes, and tinsel on your Christmas tree, do something different this year—create chrismons! These white and gold ornaments in the form of traditional Christmas symbols are all about the meaning of Christmas. No matter your age, come enjoy both the craft and the fellowship! We will provide the cookies and the supplies but invite you to bring your own gold or white sparkles, sequins, and cording.

DECEMBER 14, 7 TO 8:30 P.M.—QUIET EVENING OF PRAYER

Settle into the season with a contemplative evening of prayer in the candlelit historic church. Give yourself the gift of a little time to look toward the birth of Jesus.

DECEMBER 21, 6 TO 8 P.M. —SUPPER AND SINGING

Ryan Battin takes to the piano bench to lead us in a rollicking evening of Christmas caroling. A simple supper will be served, so you can eat, enjoy the fellowship and caroling and get home for bedtime, homework, or whatever else you need to do.

Doing Art to Open Advent Windows

We invite everyone to respond to the scripture lessons each week this Advent with the help of a written reflection, coloring a page, and writing prompt. Each week we will create our own Advent calendar, open its many windows, and discover the gifts and wisdom within our community. This new offering will no doubt feel a little unfamiliar, but please give it a try—no matter what your age or skills may be. Broad participation is key to its success, and in taking part in this you just might find that it helps keep you focused in the days leading up to the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Thank you!

Atwater Parent Group Activity

On **December 4**, parish families are invited to join families who are our Atwater neighbors to make holiday cards for service members. No reservation is needed—just come to the parish hall in our historic church building at 3 p.m. for this community event.

Christmas Flowers

Christmas memorials are a wonderful way to remember loved ones or to celebrate family milestones like weddings, births, and anniversaries. Your “in thanksgiving for” or “in memory of” gift will be listed in the Christmas service leaflets. Order forms are available in the Sunday leaflets and in the parish office; the suggested minimum contribution is \$30. On the order form, please include the names of those whom you wish to honor or remember; make your check payable to St. Peter’s Church and write “Christmas memorials” on the memo line. You can either place your order in the offering plate or mail it to the office. However you submit it, we must have it by Thursday, **December 14**. Thank you!



Christmas Eve Pageant

As Christmas approaches, we will begin rehearsing the pageant that the children will present at the 4 p.m. family Eucharist on Christmas Eve. We encourage all children to participate in the pageant, as it is always fun for the them and also lets them take the lead in telling the story of Jesus’ birth. We ask parents to please let us know if their children will take part by responding to the pageant email they received from sundayschool@stpeters.org, and we welcome parent participation as well.



Children need to attend at least two of the following rehearsals, so please save these three dates:

December 11 and **December 18**, in the barn after the 9 a.m. service,
December 21, in the barn before the carol sing

Picture Yourself as a Sunday School Teacher

We need winter and spring term teachers in both the pre-K-to-2nd-grade class and the 3rd- to 5th-grade class. Volunteers need not have children in the program. What is required is a love of God and a love of children.

Teacher responsibilities include previewing the lesson before Sunday, and leading it on Sunday morning. We provide all the materials needed for crafts or activities; they are stored in the Sunday school closet. Two or more volunteers may choose to share the class, working together as a team or teaching on alternate weeks. If you have questions, please contact Judy Jones (moms_taxi950@hotmail.com).



Adult Forum in Advent

On **December 4**, following the 10 a.m. service, we will have the opportunity to meet Pastor Karl Krueger, who will serve at St. Peter’s during Abigail’s sabbatical. Besides introducing himself, Pastor Karl will discuss “the 500th birthday of a best seller”—Martin Luther’s translation of the New Testament into German. When the 3000 copies that were published in September 1522 sold within weeks, the book was reprinted in December. His epic translation crossed the English Channel, caught the attention of Miles Coverdale and William Tyndale, major forces in the English Reformation, and shaped the English reading experience.



On **December 11** and **December 18**, the Rev. Roy Almquist, former interim rector of St. Peter’s, will facilitate a discussion of the texts used in the Service of Advent Lessons on Sunday, December 4. He will focus on the texts from the Hebrew Scriptures that constitute our Advent hope and expectation; this is a two-part series, beginning after the 9 a.m. service, because these rich and dense texts offer too much to deal with in one session.

Note: Adult formation will be on break from December 25 until January 8.

Christmas Outreach Opportunities

Coats For Coatesville

The *Farmer's Almanac* foresees a stormy winter with some extreme cold for our area, and the woolly bears are already planning for it! High food and fuel prices this year make the reality of a tough winter even harsher for Coatesville's underserved residents, for whom St. Peter's has provided new warm winter coats and socks in the past two years through the CYWA. Our friends in Coatesville appreciate being able to select a new coat and warm socks for themselves or a family member before Christmas.

This year we are running our coat and sock drive a little earlier to take advantage of pre-holiday sales. We invite you to purchase a warm winter coat in any size adult or child size yourself (Costco sells them for \$25 to \$35), or to donate funds and let us do the shopping for you. Please drop off your purchases at the parish house or send in a donation to the office marked for the coat drive before December 1. Thank you.

Giftng Tree Reminders

- It's not too late to select an ornament from our giftng trees—a few still are still on the trees.
- Gifts (unwrapped) must be left in the parish house no later than **December 8**. For Darby children's presents, please supply a gift bag.

Red Cross Blood Drive Ministry

This year, St. Peter's has facilitated the collection of over two hundred pints of blood and has drawn scores of non-parishioners to our historic campus. The Red Cross heartily thanks the many parishioners who planned, promoted, and hosted these drives throughout 2022.

Next year, we will again host blood drives—in March, May, September, and November. Each of us is a Red Cross ambassador, so please plan to be a donor if you are eligible, or to encourage your family, friends, and colleagues to donate if you cannot do so yourself.

Alternative Christmas

One way to celebrate Jesus' birth is by giving gifts that keep on giving. To help us do this, the outreach commission is again sponsoring its three-week "Alternative Christmas" market, through which you can honor family members and friends by making a loving donation to one of our ministries: Chester Children's Chorus, Church Housing, Community Youth and Women's Alliance, Habitat for Humanity, St. James School, The Clinic, the Red Cross, and our own food ministry. For your donation you will receive a lovely greeting card to give the person you are honoring with this gift and a description of the ministry you have chosen to support.

The "market" will be open after the 10 a.m. service on Sunday, **December 4**, and after all three services on **December 11**; it will also be open after the 9 and 11:15 services on **December 18**. Those attending services online are invited to send a donation to the parish office, noting on the memo line both "Alternative Christmas" and the specific ministry that is to receive the gift. Each ministry offers information about its work at the "market," and information is also available on our website's outreach and ministries pages. The outreach commission is grateful for your support and involvement with these ministries throughout the year.



STRONG VOICE • STRONG MIND • STRONG SPIRIT

Register at www.swarthmore.edu/chester-childrens-chorus

Christmastide Services at a Glance

December 24

CHRISTMAS EVE

Family Eucharist, Christmas pageant, and carols

4 p.m. (barn)

A Festival of Nine Christmas Lessons and Carols

in the tradition of King's College, Cambridge

Carols and traditional choral music will be featured.

7 p.m. (church)

Choral prelude and Festal Holy Eucharist with choir, organ and strings

9 p.m. (church)

December 25

CHRISTMAS DAY

Holy Eucharist

10 a.m. (church)

January 1

Holy Eucharist

10 a.m. (church)

January 8

FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY

Holy Eucharist at 8, 9, and 11:15

King cake celebration after all services



Epiphany 2022

The Feast of the Epiphany, which falls on January 6, signals the end of the Christmas season. Also known as “Christmastide” and as the “twelve days of Christmas,” Epiphany, the Greek word for “manifestation,” marks three “firsts” in Jesus’ life. The visit of the Magi, Jesus’ baptism in the River Jordan, and the miracle at Cana were said to have two remarkable features in common: all involved divine intercession and all occurred on the same day, though in different years. During the season after the Epiphany, between January 7 and Ash Wednesday, we celebrate the many occasions when Jesus’ divinity was disclosed to his followers and also to us in our lives today.



This year, we will mark Epiphany with our traditional King cake after each service on **Sunday, January 8**, so be sure to join us at 8, 9, or 11:15 a.m. for this special day.

Installation of the Reverend Christopher Exley

as Rector of All Hallows’ Church, Wyncote

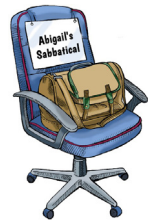
December 10, 11 a.m.

Your prayers are requested and your presence is welcomed.

Sabbatical Update

In preparation for our rector's sabbatical in February, March, and April 2023, our sabbatical pastor, the Rev. Dr. Karl Krueger, will be with us on Sunday, **December 4**, both to preach at the 10 a.m. service and to lead adult forum. (For information about his forum presentation, please see p. 3.) Then on January 29, Pastor Karl will attend all three services. This will give him an additional opportunity to meet people and will give us a chance to pray for him as he prepares to begin ministry with us at St. Peter's.

As always, please contact Abigail, wardens Dave Lockner and Melissa Shaner, sabbatical committee members Paige Infortuna, Steve Mark, Wilson Smith, and Sarah Tellefsen, or any vestry member if you have any questions. Thank you!



Important News from the Preschool



We've had a wonderful fall term and are looking forward to growing the preschool in the 2023-24 school year. We plan to offer an extended day program for our pre-K children, hire more classroom aides, and get out the word about this new addition to our program. Registration for the 2023-24 school year will begin at the end of January as usual. We invite parishioners to disseminate this information among their friends and neighbors! .

Also, we have posted a brief (1-to-2-minute) survey at www.surveymonkey.com/r/G7W6P99 to help us better meet the needs of our community. We would appreciate hearing from parishioners who have children between 0 and 7 years of age. Thank you!

- Everyone who participated in Trunk or Treat—those who decorated fifteen trunks, wore costumes, and provided treats for seventy-five children from the parish and Atwater;
- The choir members who offered the All Saints choral evensong;
- Erinn White, for proactively seeking ways to modernize the administration of the preschool and continuing to support its positive values and experiences for the children;
- Susy Baum for preparing jars of crabapple jelly to raise funds to cover the repairs in the magnolia garden;
- Brenda Grove, for coordinating with several agencies to set up the gifting trees by which parishioners fulfill the wish lists of children and adults;
- Holly Hardester, for developing outreach information for our newcomer hospitality packets and announcements;
- Dom Gerard of Philadelphia's Mazzoni Center who presented the "LGBTQ+ Power Hour" during adult forum, and Melissa Shaner, for working with the Mazzoni Center and the diocesan committee to educate parishioners about the LGBTQIA+ community and ways of actively welcoming its members;
- Everyone who has contributed pasta in response to the food ministry's "pasta month" drive;
- Eric Lien, for the annual finance commission presentation on the state of parish funding, pledges, and plans;
- Martin McElroy, for coordinating the November Red Cross blood drive.



A Stewardship Message in this Season of Sharing

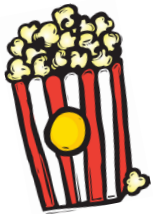
As we move through Advent, everyone will have many opportunities to share with and support our greater community, so let's demonstrate how we "Rise and Shine and Give God the Glory" this month! One of the ways we can do this is for everyone to complete a pledge for 2023. The rooster overseeing St. Peter's flock is cock-a-doodling that so far we are 65% of the way to our \$450,000 pledge goal for 2023. If you haven't already sent in your pledge, please bear in mind that by pledging you enable the finance commission to create a realistic budget for the coming year. Of course donations of any sort are always welcome, but pledging is the mainstay of the budget process! Submitting a pledge is as easy as using the **Realm mobile app** or visiting www.stpetersgv.org/giving/online-pledging; traditional pledge cards are also available in the gathering spaces and parish office.



Advent and Christmas are wonderfully important seasons in the Church that also bring the calendar year to its end. This year we have been celebrating everything the parish family does to share its joy by rising and shining in the greater community—via outreach in its many forms to all manner of our brothers and sisters, maintaining our campus for ourselves and our neighbors, participating in our parish and diocesan life, for example. Parishioners share their time and talent (as well as their treasure), and for that participation the parish leadership is truly grateful.

Popcorn Theology: The Pawnbroker

Our fall popcorn theology series on method acting movies concludes on Monday, **December 12**, with 1964's *The Pawnbroker*. Starring Rod Steiger, Jaime Sanchez, Geraldine Fitzgerald (and a young Morgan Freeman), the film chronicles the life of a German concentration camp survivor living in New York.



Join us on Zoom at 6 p.m. on **December 12**, to discuss the moral, ethical, spiritual, and cinematic aspects of the film.. which is available on Amazon Prime Video, Apple TV, YouTube, Vudu, Google Play Movies, and on DVD. For more information, contact Mark Nestlehutt (mark.nestlehutt@gmail.com) or Steve Ockenden (steveock@verizon.net).

Retreat Opportunity, January 20-22

We have the opportunity to participate in a retreat at Holy Cross Monastery in West Park, New York, on the weekend of January 20 to 22; we can choose to add a night before or after the retreat. Holy Cross is a community of Anglican Benedictine monks, whose guesthouse on the banks of the Hudson offers beautiful views in a serene setting.

Our time together will focus on the theme of Epiphany and will offer ample opportunity for individual prayer and reflection. For more information or to sign up, please contact Abigail (abigail@stpetersgv.org or 610-644-2261). Please indicate your interest **by December 11**. Thank you!

Tips from the Green Stewards for a Greener Christmas

- Consider supporting the environment by buying local during the holidays.
- If you are seeking a book for someone who loves a good read or is interested in the environment, consider one of these: *The Overstory* by Pulitzer Prize winner Richard Powers, which blends multiple tales involving trees, and Kinari Webb's *Guardians of the Trees*, about the founding of Health in Harmony, a non-profit that has improved the health of people and the environment in Indonesia.
- If you plan to travel over the holidays, consider minimizing the effect of your travel through the carbon-offset program at www.cooleffect.org/travel-offset.

LGBTQIA+ Committee Update

At diocesan convention, the following “Resolution Affirming LGBTQIA2S+ Welcome in the Life of the Church, and Promoting Dedicated Pastoral Care for the LGBTQIA2S+ Community” passed overwhelmingly: ‘RESOLVED: That we, as a Church, and as devout followers of Jesus Christ, affirm that all people are beloved children of God who have a full and equal claim upon the love, acceptance, and pastoral concern and care of the Church, including those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and/or questioning (including nonbinary, genderqueer, and gender nonconforming people), intersex, asexual, two-spirit, or any other non-cisgender, non-heterosexual self-identity (LGBTQIA2S+). The Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania commits to building cultures of affirmation and inclusion for LGBTQIA2S+ people, and to creating and providing skilled pastoral support for LGBTQIA2S+ people in every parish and across the diocese. RESOLVED: That the Diocese of Pennsylvania expresses its conviction that all people, including those who identify as LGBTQIA2S+, are entitled to equal protection under the laws of this nation concomitant with other citizens, and calls upon the U.S. government at all levels to guarantee such protections under law and enact them in daily life.’”

A number of parishioners and Abigail have been working with the diocesan LGBTQIA+ committee that sponsored the resolution to expand our knowledge base and activities to position St. Peter’s as an inclusive and affirming parish. So far this work has included vestry conversation; “LGBTQ Fundamentals” vestry training and “LGBTQ Power Hour” parish training by the Mazzoni Center; adult forum presentations in the fall, including a presentation by the LGBTQIA+ committee; conversation about the diocesan resolution; support and hosting of LGBTQIA+ committee events; one-on-one conversations.

The next steps include providing optional pronoun stickers for nametags and Episcopal shield pride flag stickers on the office door and our Church Rd. and Atwater walkway signs; renaming the single-occupancy parish house bathrooms as gender-neutral “restrooms”; training greeters and ushers; adding a flag and link to the LGBTQIA+ committee on our website; continuing support of LGBTQIA+ committee events; one-on-one conversations.

As the Episcopal Church says on its website, “We have a legacy of inclusion, aspiring to tell and exemplify God’s love for every human being. Ordination and the offices of bishop, priest, and deacon are open to all without discrimination. Laypeople and clergy cooperate as leaders at all levels of our church. Leadership is a gift from God and can be expressed by all people in our church, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression. We believe that God loves us all—no exceptions.” Please help us to exemplify this outlook and outreach at St. Peter’s as you interact with visitors and members of our parish family. If you have questions, please contact Abigail, or LGBTQIA+ committee members Heidi Fowler, Tim Hepp, and Melissa Shaner.

“Why Would I Put Pronoun Stickers on My Name Tag?”

St. Peter’s has ordered pre-printed pronoun stickers (she/her, he/him, and they/them) as well as blank stickers to be filled in as one chooses. These stickers are available outside both worship spaces.

Indicating your preferred pronoun set lets other people know how you wish to be referred to and also signals your willingness to pay attention to and respect the preferences of others. It is important to remember that someone’s appearance does not necessarily indicate gender identity, and demonstrating this awareness reassures trans or gender-nonconforming individuals that they will be safe and welcome in our church at St. Peter’s.

December 3
Needlework ministry
10 a.m.

December 4
Holy Eucharist
10 a.m. (barn)
Adult forum follows
Advent Lessons & Carols
4 p.m. (barn)

December 7
Advent program, Chrismons & Cookies
7 to 8:30 p.m. (church)

December 10
Chris Exley's Installation
at All Hallows'
11 a.m.

December 12
Popcorn Theology
6 to 7 p.m. (Zoom)

December 14
Advent Quiet Evening of Prayer
7 to 8:30 p.m. (church)

December 21
Advent Program: Supper & Singing
7 to 8:30 p.m. (church)



December 24
Christmas Eve
Christmas Pageant & Family Eucharist
4 p.m. (barn)
A Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols
à la Kings College, Cambridge
7 p.m. (church)
Choral Prelude & Festal Choral Eucharist
9 p.m. (church)

December 25
Christmas Day
Holy Eucharist, Rite II, with carols
10 a.m. (barn)

December 26 & 27
Parish office closed



January 1
Holy Eucharist, Rite II
10 a.m. (church)

January 2
Parish office closed

October Financial Snapshot

	October 2022	Year to Date October	Year-end Projection	Budget 2022
Parishioner Contributions	\$ 31,238	\$431,266	\$522,102	\$563,900
Other Income*	17,768	118,538	147,885	132,100
Total Income	49,006	549,803	669,986	696,000
Total Expense	58,800	530,842	653,175	696,000
Surplus / (Deficit)	(9,794)	18,961	16,811	0

**Interest, rentals, endowment distributions*

Pledge income for October was on plan and remains strong as we approach the end of the year. Thank you for your continued financial support and timely payments. Expenses for October were larger than expected because of necessary improvements to our facilities made that month. Since we had budgeted for either a part-time assistant rector or lay resource person but did not fill that position in 2022, those unused funds appear in the projected year-end surplus in this snapshot. Because we anticipate filling this position in 2023, however, parish expenditures will increase next year. If you have not yet made a pledge for next year, please do, so that we can plan for 2023. —*Eric Lien for the finance commission*



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The Rev. Abigail Crozier Nestlehutt, Rector
The Ven. Jeff Moretzsohn, Deacon
Dr. Bruce Glenny, Organist/Choirmaster
Rachel Martin Swartz, Parish Administrator
Erinn White, Preschool Director
Gail Malcolm, Event Coordinator
Mario Delano, 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
January mini-Beacon
is **December 15.**

Weekly Offerings at St. Peter's

Sunday

8 A.M. ***Holy Eucharist, rite one****
9 A.M. ***Family Eucharist & Sunday***
School**
10:15 A.M. ***Adult Formation*****
11:15 P.M. ***Holy Eucharist, rite two****
First Sunday of the Month
10 A.M. ***Holy Eucharist, rite two*****
 Sunday School
 Fellowship follows all services

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******

* Church
** Barn
*** Virtual

Parish office closed on Friday



December 4

Service of Advent Lessons and Carols
4 p.m. (barn)

December 24

Family Eucharist and Christmas Pageant
4 p.m. (barn)
Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols *
7 p.m.
Choral Prelude and Festal Holy Eucharist *
with organ, strings, and choir
9 p.m.

December 25

Holy Eucharist with carols
10 a.m.

* Livestreamed service