



The Beacon

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

March 2024

The Lenten Journey

by the Rev. Abigail Crozier Nestlehutt

Designing our trading shirts was an annual ritual for my high school rowing team. Back then, the boys in the losing boat stripped off their shirts at the end of a race and handed them to the victorious crew right there on the water at the finish line. We girls returned to the dock to fetch specially designed shirts to award to the girls who rowed in our seats in the opposing boat. At regattas we wandered around after our races and traded those same shirts with rowers from schools around the region. The shirts served both as trophies and also as billboards, since each bore a pithy proclamation of toughness alongside the school logo. John Dryden's bold assertion, "Sweet is pleasure after pain," which we put on one particular trading shirt, seems especially apropos at this time of year.

Spring comes to Chester County in the form of wooded areas carpeted with yellow flowers. The countryside becomes a visual feast when the daffodils and forsythia join in. Temperatures do not become reliably mild until almost summer, but around this time of year we begin to believe that winter will finally end. We gobble up fleeting whiffs of soft air like breadcrumbs leading from fast to feast.

Given the timing of Easter, the awakening of the natural world proceeds in tandem with Lent as if it is journeying with Jesus, just as we are. Our Lenten observances strengthen the roots of our faith, open our hearts, and renew us. We begin in mid-winter stillness and with each passing week the landscape around us shows increasing signs of life just as our interior landscapes are transforming.

This beautiful season need not be painful, but it is best if it is intentional. The joy of Easter is sweetest if we have taken the time to consider, really consider, what comes before the empty tomb. Over the years I have listened to a variety of preachers on Good Friday and have witnessed some succumb to the very natural desire to get to the other side of the cross—to acknowledge Jesus' despair but then move on to the assurance of God's love. While nothing can dim the brightness of the resurrection, if we do not take time to feel the weight of Jesus' death we cannot feel the full glory of his triumph over it.

In March our Lenten journey brings us to Holy Week with its dramatic liturgies and ends with Easter alleluias. I encourage you to continue participating in our seasonal programming—or to begin now, since it lasts for another four weeks. I also invite you to make note of our Holy Week and Easter schedule of services on page 5. Please consider not only attending your annual favorites, but also trying something new. I know that intentionally walking the final steps to the cross will be meaningful for you. Wave palms at the triumphal entry. Remember Jesus' last meal with his friends. Recall his betrayal. Pray at the cross. Then return on March 31 for a glorious celebration of the resurrection. You might even consider inviting a friend at this special time. All are welcome. Always.

Prayer Opportunities throughout Lent

Tuesdays, 9:15 p.m.

Compline via Zoom

Join our clergy in the end-of-day prayers of the church.

Wednesdays, 1:30 p.m.

Contemplative prayer in the historic church

Join the clergy in the historic church for 20 minutes of silent, centering prayer.

Thursdays, 9:15 p.m.

Compline via Facebook & YouTube

Join Abigail, Jeff, and former assistant rector Chris Exley for compline.

Walking the Stations of the Cross

“The Stations of the Cross” that American artist Jauneth Skinner created for St. Peter’s over a decade ago, are mounted in the barn. Following coffee hour on Sunday, **March 3**, we have the opportunity to walk the series of etchings together. They will remain up throughout Lent, and you are invited to walk the stations on your own whenever the parish office is open.



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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

Popcorn Theology Lenten Series

Our “Music and the Search for Perfection” series winds up on the first three Monday evenings of this month. Join us in exploring how the characters in these films achieve—or fail to achieve—a blessed life through popular music, jazz, and classical music, respectively:

March 4—*Begin Again* (2013)

March 11—*Whiplash* (2014)

March 18—*Tár* (2022)



Simply watch any of these films before 6 p.m. Monday and then join us on Zoom for an hour of stimulating discussion about its moral, ethical, spiritual, and cultural themes, using the link that arrives via Keynotes the Sunday before the meeting. Each week’s discussion is self-contained, so feel free to attend for the first time on any Monday that fits your schedule!

Try Your Hand at “Pysanky”

This month we have an ideal opportunity to learn a new craft in time for Easter! Ukrainian *emigré* Anastasiia [sic] Lunova will join Shannon Almquist and Bonnie Michael in a workshop devoted to creating our own Ukrainian Easter eggs, or *pysanky*, from 9:30 to 12 on Saturday, **March 9**, in the barn. We will learn how to “write” the traditional, symbolic forms that have graced these beautiful eggs for centuries; the designs on these harbingers of Easter and spring are “written” because their name derives from *pysaty*, which means “to write.”

Everyone 12 and older is invited to participate in this artistic adventure. Simply call Bonnie (610-937-5677) or email Shannon (shannonalmquist@verizon.net) to reserve a spot. We can provide about twelve people with a stylus, so if you can bring one of your own, please let them know as well.



Musical March



This musical month at St. Peter's begins *pianissimo* on the evening of March 3 and ends *fortissimo* on Easter morning.

- At 7:30 p.m. on Sunday, **March 3**, the serene compline service in the historic church features music from Taizé, plainchant, and choral selections that invite us to end the day in peace.
- At the regular morning services on **March 24**, there will be special music for Palm Sunday.
- At 4 p.m. that afternoon, the choir will offer choral evensong for Palm Sunday and then perform Giovanni Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* (1736) in concert. (Learn more about this below.)
- On Easter Sunday, **March 31**, we will welcome our traditional brass quartet and timpanist, whose jubilant accompaniment highlights our worship on the day of the resurrection, and the choir will sing selections from Handel's *Messiah* (1741).

(Coincidentally, both Baroque masterpieces we are performing this month were composed during the infancy of St. Peter's Church in the Great Valley!)

More on Pergolesi's Stabat Mater

Italian Baroque composer Giovanni Pergolesi was twenty-six when he composed his *Stabat Mater*, which contains a dozen short movements, for soprano and alto singers. After its publication, many composers throughout Europe (Johann Sebastian Bach among them) arranged, copied, and performed this beautiful, emotional masterpiece that infuses church music with oratorio and operatic styles. Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* is still widely performed, usually by strings and women's chorus. On Palm Sunday, our full soprano-alto-tenor-bass choir will perform it, accompanied by strings and soloists.

At the remaining two adult forums in Lent, we continue to examine church art and artisans, reflecting on how objects used in worship affect our experience of the service and our relationship with God.



On **March 10**, Holly Hardester will discuss altar frontals and other paraments used in worship: their evolution, their variety in design and color, and their contribution to the worship experience. Using some of St. Peter's unique paraments, we will learn about their conception and about the creative experience itself; we will also learn about the Eucharistic pottery designed and created in 2005 by former parishioner Jenny Sanderson for the new worship space.

On **March 17**, Dr. Fran Altwater of the University of Hartford will lead us behind the rood screen that dressed the medieval altar. From chalices and patens to gemstone *ampullae* and hanging metal doves, the medieval altar served as a fascinating layout of Christian art for the practice and theology of the Eucharist. We will compare church service ware from small boroughs and villages with some of the most elaborate, extravagant art designed for wealthy Gothic cathedrals.

Adult formation will be on recess on Palm Sunday and Easter and will resume in April.



Our Wednesday evening Lenten soup suppers on the topic of "Just War Theory" continue on **March 6, 13, and 20**. On the 6th and 20th, we will gather at St. Francis in the Fields from 6 to 8 p.m. We will host them on the 13th in our parish hall, also from 6 to 8. If you are able, please sign up to provide soup or bread on March 13 and March 20.



WHO: Helpful, joyful parish volunteers
WHERE: The historic church and the barn
WHEN: Saturday, March 23, 9 a.m. to noon
WHY: To spiff up our buildings for Easter!
WHAT ELSE TO KNOW:

1. We supply cleaning materials and light refreshments!
2. We welcome your rags and favorite cleaning aids!

Contacts: Gail Guthridge (guthgirl60@gmail.com)
Sandy Mannix (610-469-8745, sdamannix@aol.com)

Easter Flowers

Easter memorials are a meaningful way to remember loved ones or celebrate family milestones like weddings, births, and anniversaries. All gifts “in thanksgiving” or “in memory” will be listed in the Easter leaflets. The minimum suggested contribution is \$30. Please notify the parish office of your gift and the names of those you wish to remember, **no later than March 21.**



*Easter
Flowers*

Pivotal Moments

Three centuries ago, the founders of St. Peter’s wisely set aside sixteen acres for their church home in the Great Valley, a legacy that has enabled the parish to thrive over the years. By the early 2000s, the parish had grown so much that more space for worship and programming was needed. So in 2005 we broke ground for our spacious multi-use building that would enable us to do so much more to serve the parish and the community than ever before, but we were unable to complete the kitchen. The time has come to fulfill our plan.

As you learned at the 2022 annual meeting, we created a kitchen committee. As you learned this January at an adult forum presentation, the committee has since met twice monthly and produced a detailed plan, that includes blueprints and cost estimates and also meets all design requirements for Health Department certification as a commercial kitchen (one that serves food to the public). The committee selected Warfel Construction Company in Paoli to complete the project and also began applying for external funding. To date, St. Peter’s has received grants from Pew Charitable Trusts and the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania and is awaiting decisions from W.W. Smith Charitable Trust and Chester County Community Foundation.

St. Peter’s has a strong culinary history! Since 2016, our food ministry has provided thousands of meals for Darby Mission, CYWA (Coatesville), and St. Peter’s Episcopal Church and *Alianzas* (both in Phoenixville). We have cooked multi-course, nutritious dinners in the certified kitchen at St. Peter’s in Phoenixville and served them on porcelain plates at tables dressed with a tablecloth and fresh flowers; each summer we prepare full-course dinners in our homes and serve them at Darby Mission; we prepare homemade lunches and deliver 175 of them to CYWA each month. Likewise, on the home front, we have known for quite a while that we can expect to enjoy delicious food at many parish events and programs. For both area residents experiencing food insufficiency and parishioners, shared meals and hospitality enhance activities and demonstrate God’s love. Having a certified kitchen will further expand St. Peter’s food ministries and hospitality opportunities.

In the coming weeks, keep an eye out for information about how you can learn more about and be a part of this exciting kitchen project that will fulfill our original vision and plan for the barn. (If you have questions, please contact Eileen Klein.) Like the building of the barn in 2005, installing a full, certified kitchen is truly another pivotal moment in the life of St. Peter’s.



HOLY WEEK AND EASTER 2024

March 24

Palm Sunday

Holy Eucharist

8 a.m. (church), 9 a.m. (barn), & 11:15 a.m. (church)

Choral Evensong and Pergolesi *Stabat Mater*

with choir, soloists, and strings

4 p.m. (barn)

March 28

Maundy Thursday

Holy Eucharist, foot-washing, and stripping of the altar

7:30 p.m. (church)

Maundy Thursday watch begins

9 p.m.

March 29

Good Friday

Maundy Thursday watch ends

Good Friday liturgy (with music)

12 noon (church)

March 31

Easter Day

The Great Vigil of Easter

6 a.m. (church)

Brunch follows—watch for details

Family Easter Eucharist with brass and timpani

9 a.m. (barn)

Easter egg hunt follows

Festal Choral Eucharist with brass and tympani

11:15 a.m. (church)



One Quiet Hour

On our journey together through Lent, we are invited to experience silence and discover this way to be present with God. On the eve of his crucifixion, Jesus invited a few of his disciples to accompany him to the Garden of Gethsemane to be quiet and present with God in prayer. St. Peter's offers us too the opportunity of solitude to wonder, pray, or perhaps relax into slumber while keeping watch over the altar of repose in the historic church on that night. Parishioners are invited to be present before the stripped altar for an hour of their choosing between the end of the Maundy Thursday service and noon on Good Friday. Deacon Jeff will remain in the church throughout the night for everyone's safety. Sign-up sheets are available in the gathering spaces.



Red Cross Blood Drive

Sunday, March 3
9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
in the parish hall

The need is great! Please register to give the gift of life either by visiting stpetersblooddrive.com or by using this QR code.



God Bless You!

The outreach commission thanks all the pre-school and Sunday school children who decorated the fifty *Gesundheit* bags for patients at the Phoenixville Free Clinic suffering from winter ailments, and also the parishioners who generously provided the variety of soothing items that went into the cheerful bags. Truly an intergenerational effort!



Sharing Easter Joy with Darby Mission

As in the past, we are again joyfully sharing the abundance of the Easter season with forty families at Darby Mission families selected by Vicar Doris Rajgopal by providing the ingredients for a full and festive Easter dinner. To participate in this loving outreach project, simply pick up a bag in either gathering space after worship in the next week or two; attached to each bag is a shopping list of non-perishable items listed on each bag. Then shop for those items, place them in the bag (or bags) you took, and return them to St. Peter's **no later than March 17.**



After that, the food ministry will use outreach funds to add a chicken, a pot of Easter flowers, and an Easter card to each dinner bag before volunteers deliver the dinners to Darby Mission on Good Friday.

Getting to Know St. James School

If you have never been to St. James School or its newly expanded campus complex, its "Volunteer Saturdays" are a good reason to spend some time in Philadelphia. They offer you both a wonderful opportunity to "pay it forward" and to learn first-hand about the school and community. Volunteer Saturdays include a wide variety of ways to help for people of any age, including for young people. If you are interested in learning more, please contact Brenda Grove.

News Flash!

Please watch for news about how and when you can donate the free Easter ham that some area supermarkets (maybe yours) have announced they are giving their "frequent buyers." We will again deliver these gifts to our friends at *Alianzas de Phoenixville*.

Re-Use and Re-cycle . . . and Benefit the Preschool!

It's back, the preschool rummage sale! This always popular fundraiser is fast approaching, just as many of us are doing our spring clean-outs at home. The big day is Saturday, **April 13**, from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. During the week before the sale, from Monday, April 8 through Friday, April 12, we will gratefully receive sort, and price your donations as they arrive at the barn.



We need volunteers both to help with the tasks with the weekday tasks related to setting up the sale and to help staff the sale on Saturday. We will soon post sign-up sheets so you can select the time you prefer to volunteer. If you have questions, please contact Erinn White (preschool@stpetersgv.org, 610-644-2261) or Mike Harman (michaelharman1956@comcast.net, 610-495-6439).

As you declutter this month and next, please set aside items (except clothing and shoes) for us to resell to benefit St. Peter's Preschool! While we gladly accept *almost* anything—including small pieces of furniture, workshop and gardening tools, antiques and collectibles, toys and portable sporting goods, baby paraphernalia, books, and sundry household gadgets—there are some items that we simply cannot accept:

- items that can't be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected (e.g., mattresses, bed pillows, stuffed animals)
- items that are subject to prior damage by impact (e.g., car seats, helmets)
- items deemed hazardous by the EPA (CRT television and computer monitors, paint)
- items that require costly, time-consuming certification for resale (e.g., cribs & cradles)
- items that other charities do not accept (VHS tapes, undergarments, large exercise equipment like treadmills and weights).

Please hold on to your treasures until the week of April 8-12, since we do not have sufficient storage space for them at St. Peter's.

Thank you for letting the preschool turn your cast-offs into someone else's new-found treasures and for benefiting the school in this ecologically sound way!

Women on the Hill



“Speed Meeting” is back by popular demand as the program for the March meeting of Women on the Hill! Participants move from table to table, asking or answering prepared questions to learn more about one another. All the women of the parish are invited to come to the parish hall at 7 p.m. on **Monday, March 4**, and enjoy both fast-paced fun and light refreshments.

Since popcorn theology meets from 6 to 7 p.m. every Monday evening in Lent, we will provide a Zoom connection in the parish house to enable those who wish to participate in both offerings to do so.

At 10:20 a.m. on Sunday, **March 24**, the youth of the parish will fill plastic eggs with treats for the Easter egg hunt the following week, and on Easter Sunday will help run the egg hunt after the 9 a.m. service on Easter. Check your email for more information!



- Heather Edelblute and Tim Hepp who organized the Newcomer Brunch that welcomed those who have come to St. Peter's since the fall of 2021 with delicious food and conversation;
- All who shared their gifts at the Candlemas Compline: Steven Patchel, the choir section leaders, oboist Adella Brady, and the readers;
- The youth group, Deby Harrison, and Aleta Ross for hosting the Shrove Tuesday pancake supper with the vestry, and Steve Ockenden for refereeing the pancake races;
- Our February adult forum presenters: the Rev. Paul DeWitt Reid, Diana Whitener and Paige Miller (Natural Medium Sacred Arts), Paige Infortuna (barn kitchen committee), and Dave Kasievich (who also preached that day), Soozung Rankin, Dale Ayton, Martha Heuser, and alumnus Jonathan (St. James School);
- Linda Huggler for leading the *Gesundheit* bag project, the preschool and Sunday school children for decorating the bags, and the parishioners for generously filling them with much appreciated items.



Pledging Season Wrap-up



The pledge campaign has ended, and the final tally is in. The stewardship commission has received 120 pledges to date for approximately \$417,214.00, or 96% of our \$435,000 goal. Thank you again to all who have pledged! We have seen how we can Multiply God's Love through our community. We are still a bit short of our goal, so if you have not pledged and are able to contribute, please faithfully consider giving. Pledge cards can be found in all the gathering spaces.

At coffee hour after the 10 a.m. service on March 3, the stewardship commission will gratefully mark the official end of this year's pledge campaign with a celebratory cake.

Coming in May: Family Photo Fundraiser

The preschool's very own Liv Rothfuss will offer family photo sessions at St. Peter's on Saturday, May 11. For the discounted price of \$75, each family will have a 10-minute mini-session with Liv and receive one complimentary photo, with the option to purchase additional ones. In addition to discounting the price, Liz will donate a generous portion of the proceeds to the preschool! And this happens just in time for Mother's Day! To sign up or get more information, contact Liz at **St. Peter's Preschool Spring Fundraiser | Liv Rothfuss Photo.**



March 2
Needlework ministry
10 a.m.

March 3
Red Cross blood drive
9 a.m.- 2 p.m. (church)
Stations of the Cross
11:45 a.m.
Compline
7:30 p.m. (church)

March 4
Popcorn theology
6 to 7 p.m. (Zoom)
Women on the Hill
7 p.m. (parish hall)

March 6
Soup supper
6 to 8 p.m. (@ St. Francis)

March 9
Pysanky workshop
9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

March 10
Daylight saving time begins

March 11
Popcorn theology
6 p.m. (via Zoom)

March 13
Soup supper
6 to 8 p.m. (parish hall)

March 17
All Darby grocery bags due

March 18
Popcorn theology
6 p.m. (Zoom)

March 20
Soup supper
6 to 8 p.m. (@St. Francis)

March 23
Spring cleaning
9 a.m. to noon (barn & church)

March 24
Palm Sunday
Morning worship
8, 9, & 11:15 a.m.
Youth group
10:20 a.m.

Choral Evensong & *Stabat Mater*
4 p.m. (barn)

March 28
Maundy Thursday liturgy
7:30 p.m. (church)
Vigil begins
9 p.m.

March 29
Vigil ends at noon
Good Friday liturgy
12 p.m. (church)

March 31
Easter Sunday
The Great Vigil of Easter
6 a.m. (church)
Brunch follows
Family Easter Eucharist
9 a.m. barn
Easter egg hunt follows
Festal Easter Eucharist
11:15 a.m. (church)

January Financial Snapshot

	January 2024	Year to Date	Year-end forecast	Budget 2024
Parish Contributions	\$35,808	\$35,808	\$497,733	\$494,526
Other Income*	3	3	133,518	137,615
Total Income	35,811	35,811	631,251	632,141
Total Expenses	47,220	47,220	631,508	632,128
Surplus / (Deficit)	(11,409)	(11,409)	(257)	13

**Interest, rentals, endowment distributions*



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E-mail: parishoffice@stpetersgv.org Web site: www.stpetersgv.org

The Rev. Abigail Crozier Nestlehutt, Rector
 The Ven. Jeff Moretzsohn, Deacon
 Steven Patchel, 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*

Deadline
 for the April *Beacon*:
 March 15

Weekly Offerings at St. Peter's

Sunday

8 A.M. Holy Eucharist, rite 1*
 9 A.M. Family Eucharist & Sunday School**
 10:15 A.M. Adult Formation**
 11:15 P.M. Holy Eucharist, rite 2*
First Sunday of the Month
 10 A.M. Holy Eucharist, rite 2**
 Sunday School & Adult Forum follow
 Fellowship follows all services

Wednesday

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

Thursday

10:30 A.M. Intercessory Prayer Group***
 12 NOON Noonday Prayer***

Friday

8 A.M. Gathering of Men***

- * Church
- ** Barn
- *** Virtual

Parish office hours: 9:30 to 4:30, Monday thru Thursday



Holy Week & Easter Services at a Glance

March 24

Palm Sunday

Holy Eucharist
 8 a.m. (church), 9 a.m. (barn), & 11:15 a.m. (church)
 Choral Evensong and Concert
 4 p.m. (barn)

March 28

Maundy Thursday liturgy
 7:30 p.m. (church)

March 29

Good Friday liturgy
 12 noon (church)

March 31

The Great Vigil of Easter
 6 a.m. (church)
 Family Easter Eucharist with brass and timpani
 9 a.m. (barn)
 Festal Choral Eucharist with brass and tympani
 11:15 a.m. (church)

(Details inside.)