



The Beacon

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

August 2019

Where is God?

by the Rev. Abigail Crozier Nestlehutt

Depending on where you count the start and finish of summer, we are sort of in its midst. Labor Day is closer than Memorial Day, which means we are nearing the end, but if you turn away from the “back to school” section in a store and head straight to the watermelons, you can continue to enjoy these hazy days. And I wonder how yours are going. More specifically, I wonder where you have noticed God at work this summer.

The vestry is becoming increasingly intentional about understanding the ministry we all do in terms of joining Jesus, rather than as work we somehow must accomplish on our own. This is in concert with becoming increasingly intentional about making time for conversations and for seeing what God is doing and inviting us into here at St. Peter’s. It is a faithfully fruitful way to approach the ongoing strengthening of our parish and our lives. We are joining with Jesus, in relationship with God, to make a difference in the world as Christians.

When considering evidence of God among us, it is easiest to begin with what is beautiful and works well. The hand of the divine is abundantly apparent during a much-needed family vacation without WiFi but with perfect weather and activities of interest to all. It is harder for us to discern God at work in the laundry and email facing us upon our return. But finding God at work is not a game of “Where’s Waldo?” requiring us to search a crowded scene for a tiny red-and-white-striped hat. It is an ongoing practice of noticing, listening, and being open to possibilities.

This summer at St. Peter’s we welcomed our new assistant rector, the Reverend Chris Exley, whom God called into ministry with Jesus and with us. He will focus on children, youth, and families, but more globally he will join me in the ministry of discipleship making. This is ministry that provides opportunities for the people of St. Peter’s to deepen their understanding of what it is to be a person of faith and also propels us toward growth.

Also this summer we experienced the joy of vacation Bible school, made possible by a team of dedicated volunteers and enjoyed by over twenty children from St. Peter’s and beyond. It was particularly wonderful to get to know the families who walked over to VBS from Atwater each morning.

Eight members of our youth group traveled to Chicago at the end of June to volunteer with various organizations that minister to some of the city’s homeless and hungry. Each day required us to cooperate and to enter into new experiences and roles. Look for some photographs in this issue, and I hope you will also come to adult forum in September to hear about their experiences.

I encourage you to read the pages that follow with wonder and openness, remembering that God is at work in all that we do and are as we live what we believe. And I am interested in knowing where God has been for you this summer. How have you been? What have you celebrated? What has been difficult? What have you done in response to the joys and the challenges? I will look for opportunities to engage you in conversation and invite you to engage me and others. Perhaps these last days of summer, before the rush of fall begins, will provide some time to connect in new ways or simply to enjoy one another and God.

Mud Row: Continuing the Conversation about Race:

This summer's production of Dominique Morisseau's *Mud Row* at People's Light and Theater Company has given us a unique opportunity to continue the conversation about race that we began in adult formation this past year. On **Wednesday evening, August 7**, parishioners who have seen the play – which is inspired by and set in West Chester – will gather at 7:30 in the parish hall to discuss the play. Those who missed the production but would like to learn more about it are invited to join this session led by Abigail. Please let her know (Abigail@stpetersgv.org or 610-644-2261) if you plan to attend.

"... We All Scream for Ice Cream!"

This month we offer three opportunities to indulge St. Peter's shared love of ice cream. Please join us at whichever ones appeal to you:

- **August 9 at 7:30 p.m.:** At a dog-friendly ice cream social in the rector's grove alongside the parish house, frozen treats and fellowship for people and pets will be on offer.
- **August 21 at 7 p.m.:** A Sunday school ice cream social takes place on the patio behind the barn. Details appear on page 4.
- **August 25 after the 10 a.m. service:** We will observe "Sundae Sunday" on the lawn of the historic church, enjoying fellowship after church and building our favorite ice cream sundaes!

August Holy Hike



Holy Hiking

On **Sunday afternoon, August 25**, we will walk along the mostly level, shaded Valley Creek trail paralleling route 252 in Valley Forge Park. We will stop intermittently along the way to hydrate our bodies and to worship. Meet at 4 p.m. in the Yellow Springs Road parking lot just west of the covered bridge; sunscreen, insect repellent, and water are recommended! Simple refreshments will round out the afternoon.

Please let Abigail know (Abigail@stpetersgv.org) if you plan to attend, so that we don't take off without you – or so that she can notify you if inclement weather threatens to cancel the hike!

R.I.P., Robin, and Godspeed, Rory

St. Peter's has been home to sheep for a number of years, and we have been blessed by their gentle presence as a particular reminder of Jesus, the Good Shepherd. At the end of July the time came for us to bid farewell to Robin and Rory. Robin reached the end of her life, and Rory retired to a beautiful sheep farm near Carlisle where she will have the companionship she needs.

One job of the sheep was to help "mow" the grass around the historic headstones in the churchyard. Since they did this job with some diligence, but not perfection, our BB&G4J carefully used a small push mower to ensure that the grass was maintained properly. Although the sheep are no longer here, their mowing ministry will continue, thanks to our volunteer mowers and summer youth assistants.

A dedicated team of shepherds has tended to the day-to-day needs of our sheep, led by head shepherd Susan Dovey, who brought skill, compassion, and tremendously thoughtful care to her role. Gratitude and love to them all.

If you have questions, do not hesitate to contact Susan Dovey (484-678-5040 or srdovey@verizon.net) or Abigail (610-644-2261 or abigail@stpetersgv.org).



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The Beacon is produced monthly by St. Peter's Church in the Great Valley
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Christian Formation: An Overview

by the Rev. Chris Exley

In our baptismal covenant we affirm that we will “continue in the apostles’ teaching and fellowship” (BCP, 304). This means that at all ages and stages of our lives, we have a responsibility to continue to explore our faith and study scripture, contemplating what it means to be Christian, how our Christian views intersect with the world, and how we put our Christian beliefs into practice. We are excited about the upcoming 2019-2020 program year, and encourage you to participate and to invite others to join us as well. Here is a brief outline of some of our regular offerings.

- **Sunday school for Kindergarteners through 6th-graders:** This curriculum, coordinated by Holly Hardester, follows the lectionary cycle so that the chapel lessons match the readings in church each week.
- **Youth group for 7th- through 12th-graders:** The program blends fun activities with exploring faith in the context of growing into adulthood; throughout the year there are special events and fundraisers to support mission/pilgrimage trips, and social gatherings as well as serious discussions of tough faith questions on Sunday morning.
- **Adult forum:** From 10:20 to 11:05 on most Sunday mornings, adult forum, coordinated by Melissa Shaner, explores a wide variety of topics. See the article below for a preview of the topics planned for September.

In addition to our Sunday morning programs, we offer classes where both young people and adults can explore their faith more deeply and learn about the Episcopal Church.

- **Confirmation class:** Designed to prepare youth to make a public pronouncement of their faith before a bishop, this class explores the beliefs, history, worship, and structure of the Episcopal Church and allows for discussions of doubts and questions.
- **Inquirers’ class:** If you are new to St. Peter’s or to the Episcopal Church, or if you have been an Episcopalian all your life but are curious about the church, this series is designed for you. Bring your questions about faith, the structure of the church, the liturgy, or anything else, and we will explore and learn together. Watch for more information in September about meeting times.



When the bishop makes an official visitation, he confirms candidates and also formally receives into the Episcopal Church those who have already made a public pronouncement of faith in another Christian denomination. In addition, the bishop offers reaffirmation of faith to those who, for various reasons, wish to recommit publicly to being a member of the Christian community. As we move through life, seeking where our gifts can meet the needs of the church and the world, reaffirming our beliefs can be a profound experience.

For more information about Sunday school, please contact Holly Hardester (hahardester@gmail.com); about adult formation, Melissa Shaner (myshaner@verizon.net) or the clergy; for any of the other offerings, Chris Exley (chris@stpetersgv.org).

A Preview of Adult Formation in September



Plan to stop by the adult formation table at the ministries fair on September 8 to pick up a brochure that details the first half of the program year, and then join us on as many mornings as you wish between 10:20 a.m. to 11:05 a.m., coffee and questions in hand. On September 15, you can look forward to hearing Chris Exley explain what being a deacon entails. The following week our youth group missionaries will talk about their June service trip to Chicago. On September 29, the Rev. Canon Shawn Wamsley will help us kick off our 2020 stewardship season.

Help Wanted in Sunday School

by the Rev. Chris Exley

As the dog days of summer wear on, we are planning for the coming year in one of St. Peter's most vital ministries, nurturing the faith of its youngest members. Sunday school is not merely a supervised place for the kids while the adults attend the forum and coffee hour upstairs; it is the place where children begin to explore what it means to be a Christian and to learn about the amazing God we serve.

A pair of teachers leads each of our three Sunday school classes, which are divided into three "terms" between September and May. Thankfully, most of last year's teachers will continue this year, and at the moment most classes have at least one teacher in place. But both the class for 2nd- through 4th-graders and the class for 5th-&-6th-graders still need a second teacher. Preparation time is minimal, since we provide the lesson plans and materials, and the teamed teachers share the job of leading classes from week to week.



In addition we need volunteers to serve as substitute teachers on those (usually rare) occasions when a teacher plans to be absent. And Holly Hardester, our faithful, dedicated, and organized Sunday school coordinator, is seeking an assistant to help her primarily on Sunday mornings.

Our goal is to provide effective programs for our children without overburdening any one person. The time commitment is mostly confined to Sunday mornings. I encourage you to consider prayerfully participating in this vital ministry this year. Contact Holly Hardester (hahardester@gmail.com) or me (chris@stpetersgv.org) for more information.

Children's Chapel Needs You!

After the 9 a.m. processional, some of our youngsters (roughly 3- to 7-year-olds) head downstairs for their own child-oriented service that contains many of the same elements as upstairs: a liturgy that includes the same lessons as upstairs, prayers, a short homily, and the passing of the peace. Usually the children do a craft before rejoining their parents for the Eucharist, and also enjoy snack time together.

We need volunteers of all ages – with or without a child in children's chapel – to help provide this ministry. Thankfully, the concise, user-friendly curriculum entails minimal prep time, and the only requirement is the desire to make a difference in the faith life of those who are the future of the church. With as few as six volunteers, each leader serves only once every six weeks. For more information please contact Chris Exley (chris@stpetersgv.org) or Dan Houston (jdanielhouston@gmail.com).

Blessing of the Backpacks

As the new school year starts, some children will step onto a school bus for the first time, and this year's high school graduates will pack more than a backpack for their first year of college. And in between, all the other children will enter a year of new experiences and promising opportunities for learning, growth and friendship. All the children and young people of the parish are heartily invited and encouraged to bring their backpacks to the 9 a.m. service on Sunday, August 28, to receive a special blessing and a tag intended to serve throughout the school year as a reminder of that blessing.

WHAT: Sunday School Ice Cream Social
WHO: Children in pre-K through 6th grade, their friends and family
WHY: Come enjoy ice cream with toppings and fun activities
WHEN: Wednesday, August 21, 7 to 8 p.m.
WHERE: On the patio behind the barn
Rsvp (optional) 484-319-6323



*MORNING, NOON, AND NIGHT ON THE YOUTH MISSION TRIP
CHICAGO, JUNE 2019:
A PHOTO NARRATIVE*



Helping prepare and serve lunch at the Episcopal Church of our Savior, near Lincoln Park which places high value on fostering community through its Circle of Friends program.



Learning about Edible Garden, a sizeable urban agriculture educational outreach project in Lincoln Park Zoo's Farm-in-the-Zoo. Some of the produce grown here is donated to the Lakeview food pantry where we volunteered.



Getting in some sightseeing at the renowned Art Institute of Chicago on Saturday morning, before heading to the airport at the end of a rewarding week.



Distributing 150 hoagies, sides, and beverages from the Night Ministry bus on Chicago's South Side.

GLIMPSES OF A BUSY SUMMER ON THE HOLY HILL (IN CASE YOU MISSED ANY OF THIS)



Telling stories of God's love at VBS



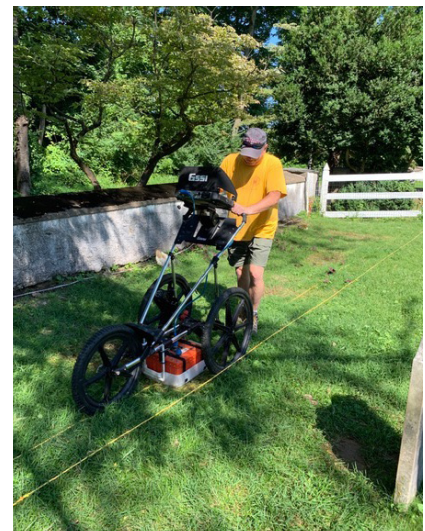
Exploring nature ... especially bees and hives



Time out for a Camp Get-Along photo op



Thanks for the great lunch and great books!



On July 15 and 16, Prof. Laura Sherrod, a Ph.D. geophysicist at Kutztown University, and her graduate student used ground penetrating radar and a magnetometer to study the suspected burial site of a British officer and soldiers killed at the Battle of Paoli in September 1777. If you'd like to know more about the project and their sophisticated equipment (pictured above), be sure to talk to Tony Morris or Steve Mark. We thank former parishioner Roger Thorne for facilitating the study.

Photo credits: Jeanne Martino and Steve Mark

Come One, Come All, to Fall Fest

Our annual fall gathering returns on Friday, September 6, from 6 to 8:30 p.m. and everyone is invited. Whether you're new to St. Peter's or have been here for years, whether you are an adult or a child, we hope you'll come and join us for Fall Fest, a parish favorite full of fun and fellowship for all ages that officially marks the beginning of our program year. Weather permitting, we will gather on the front lawn of the historic church; weather not permitting, we will just move the event inside.

We hope you'll bring the whole family to exchange stories of summer adventures and to anticipate the many exciting events coming up at St. Peter's this fall and to enjoy the variety of foods on our tables. Families are asked to please provide an *hors d'oeuvre* for eight to ten; we provide the beverages. Please help our planning committee by letting us know at your earliest convenience how many will attend; all it takes is an email to RSVP@stpetersgv.org or a call to the church office (610-644-2261).



The planning committee is asking for volunteers to assist at this year's family fall fest. If you are ready to volunteer now, chairs Paige Infortuna and Gail Guthridge would love to hear from you sooner rather than later! They will also be happy to answer any questions you may have about fall fest. You can reach Paige by email or by phone (pinfortuna@msn.com or 610-608-2093) and Gail by phone (610-331-6521).

We look forward to a great turnout on September 6, so please put this not-to-be missed event on your September calendar now. See you there!

The Green Stewards: Why?

The environmental efforts of the newly formed Green Stewards respond to God's call to be faithful stewards and recognizes our dependence on the creation that makes all life possible. We will respond to this call and to the current environmental crisis both through education and action, with guidance and collaboration from the broader church. The Episcopal Church supports a network and range of efforts to protect Creation (visit www.episcopalchurch.org/creation-care for more on this) and handles advocacy through its government relations office. Specifically, the Church calls for policies that mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, promote sustainable energy and the safe and just use of natural resources, and support communities affected by insufficient environmental stewardship.

St. Peter's green stewards began by providing useful information, a refreshed recycling effort, and a day devoted to exploring nature. We look forward to your input as we determine our next steps, which we hope will include adult forums, guest speakers or videos. We also encourage you to act individually and take the creation care pledge promoted by Bishop Curry, because 40% of greenhouse gas emissions in the U.S. result from choices made by households.

For more information, please contact Brenda Grove (brenda.grove@villanova.edu) or sign up for alerts and newsletters from the Episcopal Church, the Episcopal Ecological Network, and our diocese.

Exploring Nature

Thank you to all the volunteers who served the more than twenty folks who attended the Green Stewards' inaugural event. They helped us to see the connection between our faith and nature and to learn about the importance of pollinators, native plants, and protecting against Lyme disease while outside.

If you missed the event but are curious, you are invited to visit the refurbished butterfly garden just beyond the labyrinth and to pick up the devotional booklet, *Caring for Creation*.

Save the Date

Women's Weekend, October 11-13
at Temenos Retreat Center, West Chester.
Watch for details next month!

Outreach News and Notes

Will You Help Fill a St. James School Backpack?

With your help, financially challenged St. James School middle-schoolers will begin the school year fully prepared with school supplies. The outreach commission has bought sixteen backpacks that await filling through your generosity. The list below, divided according to last name, lists about twenty dollars' worth of supplies. If you wish to spend less, simply buy whatever you choose from anywhere on the list.

- **A to C:** index cards; black or blue pens; packets of highlighters
- **D to F:** composition notebooks; whiteboard markers; colored pencils; Ticonderoga® pencils
- **G to J:** wide or college-ruled loose leaf paper; pink erasers; PlayDoh®
- **K to N:** for boys a black leather belt, 18" to 28" long; for boys or girls athletic socks or black or maroon dress socks
- **O to R:** boxes or individual packets of tissues; hand sanitizer; paper towels (for use in the classrooms)
- **S to Z:** crayons (24-pack or larger); Crayola® markers; glue sticks; rulers

In order to fill and deliver the backpacks before school opens, your donations must be at St. Peter's no later than **Sunday, August 18**. Thank you for your help.

The "Back to School" Darby Dinner – Can You Help?

The "back to school" Darby dinner is always a joyous afternoon event; it celebrates Darby's children and families by providing them with information about library, computer, tutoring, and other local services, as well as lively music, before our dinner even begins. Vicar Doris thoroughly researches and assembles representatives of all kinds of services available to Darby residents. Local barbers even treat the children of the borough to free back-to-school haircuts on a real barber chair – what a fun way to start the new school year!

To top off this afternoon of fun on **Tuesday, September 3**, St. Peter's food ministry will serve the ever popular "back to school" dinner as well. Our menu is a Darby favorite: meatball sandwiches with sauce and cheese, green garden salad with ranch dressing, fresh summer fruit cup, and Hershey® kiss cookies. The number of guests continues to increase each year, and next month we expect to top last year's record of 161 hungry guests! We would certainly welcome and appreciate more help, either on site or at home!

For Darby, we do all the prepping, cooking, and baking in our homes and then transport the food to the borough's community center. We can use help with prepping fresh fruit for the fruit cups, readying mixed greens for the salad bowls, and baking dozens of yummy cookies. As always, we need help setting tables and serving at Darby, and also joining our guests' in conversation at the dinner tables. To conserve fuel and to enable as many as possible to be part of the food ministry, we meet at the Paoli Acme and then carpool to Darby, so getting there and back is not a problem.

Please join us for this most enjoyable opportunity to be in community with our friends at Darby! Contact Eileen Klein (eileenklein@live.com) to sign up and give this ministry a try!

SAVE THE DATE

**THE CHESTER CHILDREN'S CHORUS
IS TURNING 25—
JOIN US TO CELEBRATE OUR
ANNIVERSARY!**

Saturday, October 26, 2019

Cocktails and Dinner | 6:30 - 10 pm

The Matchbox
Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, PA



August 3
Needlework ministry
10 a.m.

August 7
Discussion of *Mud Row*
7:30 p.m.

August 9
Dog-friendly ice cream social
7:30 p.m.

August 18
St. James school supplies due

August 21
Sunday school ice cream social
7 to 8 p.m.

August 24
Kairos Outside
9:30 a.m.

August 25
Blessing of backpacks
"Sundae Sunday"
10 a.m.
Holy Hike
4 p.m.



September 6
Fall Fest
6 to 8:30 p.m.

September 8
3-service schedule resumes
Program year kicks off
Ministries fair

- The Green Stewards and Brenda Grove for organizing the "explore nature" event;
- The choirs and the Christian formation leaders this past year;
- Greg Bright for recording the May vestry minutes;
- The Rev. Chris Exley for accepting St. Peter's call;
- Jacqueline Cvinar, Susan Dovey, Donna Fabius, Linda Holden, and Eileen Klein for providing the reception after the June evensong;
- All the volunteers who led VBS in June;
- Shannon Mannon and Holly Hardester for planning the summer solstice labyrinth event;
- All who participated in the sheepecote clean-out: Bud Coleman, Donna Fabius, Jim Fulton, Brendan Hickey, Doug Jones, Mary Ann Morgan, Helen Ockenden, Trey Phillips, Scott Quillman, Lilly Shaner, Colin Shannon, and Dave Tatum;
- The eight young people and four adult leaders who went on the youth mission trip;
- Gail Guthridge and the parishioners of all ages who helped host the Camp Get-along youngsters and counselors;
- All those who volunteer in our food ministry.


Thanks
from the Vestry

for All You Do

June Financial Snapshot

	June 2019	Year to Date June	Year-end Projection	Budget 2019
Parishioner Contributions	\$ 53,360	\$259,309	\$485,622	\$482,449
Total Income	75,772	315,211	652,898	634,485
Total Expense	66,959	333,441	661,230	634,485
Surplus/(Deficit)	8,813	(18,230)	(8,332)	0

*[The finance commission has reviewed this snapshot.
Please direct any questions to its chair, Eric Lien.]*



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The Rev. Abigail Crozier Nestlehutt, Rector
 The Rev. Chris Exley, Assistant Rector
 Dr. Bruce Glenny, Organist/Choirmaster
 Susan House, Parish Administrator
 Elizabeth Dwyer, Parish Secretary
 Leigh Pavoni, 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
 September Beacon
 is **August 15.**

Every Summer Week at St. Peter's

Sunday

8 A.M. *Holy Eucharist**
 10 A.M. *Holy Eucharist**
*(Nursery care available**)*

Monday

11:30 A.M. *Rector's Atwater Walks****

Wednesday

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

Thursday

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

Friday

7 A.M. *Gathering of Men****
 12 NOON *Parish office closes*

* Church
 ** Barn
 *** Parish House
 **** Bellingham

**COMMUNITY
BARN DANCE**

**SATURDAY
NOV 9 2019**

5:00 to 9:00 PM

Everyone welcome!

- Dancing, Instruction, and Live Music
- Featuring Chloe & Rick Mohr
- Auction
- BBQ

\$25.00 per person
 \$10.00 children 12 and under
 \$65.00 per family of four or more

For more information or tickets go to
www.stpetersgv.org

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