

The Beacon

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

September 2019

Community and Conversation

by the Rev. Abigail Crozier Nestlehutt

The shift from “How is your summer going?” to “What did you do this summer?” is upon us. It is time to bid farewell to the simple joys of July and August and welcome September, which at St. Peter’s means the start of a new program year. We signal its beginning with the “fantastic fall fest” on Friday, September 6 and two days later with a celebratory ministry fair on Sunday, **September 8**, when we also welcome back our choirs and return to our three-service schedule with worship at 8, 9, and 11:15. St. Peter’s is active in every season, but the pace picks up in the fall, and the pages that follow are full of good news about ministry in and around this wonderful place. I encourage you to attend services on Sunday and to consider getting involved in something new.

This fall I also invite you to join the vestry and me in being intentional about conversations. We will make it easy for you by presenting a suggested prompt each week to facilitate new interactions during coffee hour. Another nudge toward new conversation will be an opportunity to “ask your clergy” questions. Wondering what the church has to say about creation? Curious about how we prepare the altar? Interested in knowing more about prayer? Place your question in the “clergy question box” and we will do our best to answer. More generally, I will be encouraging each of our commissions to seek input from parishioners by discussing its particular ministry.

Beyond these somewhat structured opportunities, you will find an increased emphasis on more open-ended conversation. Do not be surprised if a fellow parishioner invites you for a cup of coffee with no agenda other than to listen and to talk. Developing relationships is a foundational aspect of living a life of faith, and listening to each other will help us to better discern the ways God is calling us to serve. This will both strengthen St. Peter’s and also equip us to make a difference in a world in which civil discourse is increasingly strained. There is power in connecting with and learning about one another. By listening to the cares, concerns, hopes, and dreams of our neighbor we will begin to move towards resolving the increasingly complex problems of our world.

You might be someone who welcomes conversational interaction, is energized by lively discussion, and appreciates it when someone listens. The idea of talking to someone new is not daunting in the least. Or maybe you are someone who prefers to sit quietly with your own thoughts and does not wish to engage, who is rejuvenated by time away from others. Wherever you are is right for you. There are a variety of ways to build connections. The important thing is to know that we are called to connect and to honor one another in our similarities and in our differences and to remember that God desires to be in relationship with us.

I am excited about the program year ahead. I look forward to returning to some of our usual patterns, to doing some new things, and to continuing to discern the ways in which Jesus is calling us to join him in ministry. What did you do this summer and what are your hopes for the months ahead?

Ministry Fair Coming on Kick-off Sunday

by Eileen Klein



We look forward to celebrating all of our ministries during an energetic and spirited launch of the new program year at our annual ministry fair on Sunday, **September 8**. Weather permitting, the fair will take place in the rector's grove alongside the parish house after all three services, with representatives of our many ministries staffing the tables. Refreshments will be served after all services, and outdoor games and activities will be available for the children after the 9 o'clock service.

We have organized this year's fair around the "Way of Love" practices identified by Presiding Bishop, Michael Curry, "**Turn, Learn, Pray, Worship, Bless, Go, and Rest,**" all of which are familiar practices that our ministries embody. The fair is an exciting opportunity to learn from those deeply involved in our ministries.

Come celebrate St. Peter's Church in the Great Valley at the 2019 ministry fair! See you all there!

Winter Retreat Opportunity

Why go on retreat? The Society of St. John the Evangelist in Cambridge, Mass., gives this answer on its website:

"Taking a time away from the demands of everyday life, to be quiet, to pray, to worship, to read, rest, and relax, allows us to refocus our lives on what is most important to us. Some people come on retreat at moments of transition, where they feel the need for particular discernment. Others come on retreat simply to refresh and renew their spirit. Our relationship with God, like all human relationships, needs attention and care to grow. Times of retreat allow us to turn our whole selves to God, to listen and be attentive to the voice of God. Many people experience retreats as times when God seems particularly near."

Last Advent a group from St. Peter's visited SSJE for retreat, and a second group will go this coming January. Please consider signing on for this wonderful opportunity to go on retreat from January 9 to 12. To learn more, please contact Abigail (abigail@stpetersgv.org or 610-644-2261) or visit ssje.org. Thank you!



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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

Late September Holy Hike

On our third holy hike this year on **September 29**, we will once again attempt to discover the beauty of Okehocking Preserve in Newtown Square. Since everyone says, "Third time's a charm," we will try for the third time to visit this hidden local gem (thunderstorms canceled both of our previous attempts to do this hike!)



Holy Hiking

We will meet in the parking lot off route 3 on Delchester Road at 4 p.m., hike and celebrate Eucharist along the trail, and enjoy simple refreshments and fellowship at the end. Sturdy shoes, a hat, water, sunscreen, and bug repellent are suggested for this trail that is not overly shaded and somewhat hilly in places. Please let Abigail know (abigail@stpetersgv.org) if you plan to attend, so that we don't leave without you!

Children's and Youth Formation

by the Rev. Chris Exley

The program year is upon us. Our ministry fair on **September 8** showcases the depth and breadth of all that this wonderful St. Peter's community does, including our formation offerings for children and youth, which are vital for the individual, the church and the world.

- Sunday school, youth group, and children's chapel are all geared to learning about our faith and providing a foundation for living into the world. Each week the lessons in Sunday school mirror those read during that day's liturgy.
- The form and structure of children's chapel parallel the worship service, so that everyone, regardless of age, experiences a similar liturgy. On September 8, when children's chapel resumes, the children will discover its new location downstairs.
- In youth group formation, the young people discuss topics that explore tough questions that we all face from time to time, but that also bring the foundation of hope on which our faith is built. (We also seek to have fun together.)

With all these offerings, we need more people to prayerfully consider lending some time and energy to them. Please contact Rev. Chris (Chris@stpetersgv.org) to learn how you can help.



Ten Things Every Child Needs from Faithful Parents

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1. Parents who are at home with their faith, who feel comfortable using God language, reading the Bible, and praying with their children.
2. Caring adults who can help children make connections between faith and life.
3. Participation as a family in the life of a congregation (attending worship together), making commitments to keep Sabbath. Honoring Sabbath, a day of rest, helps children learn about rhythms of life, work, and rest. Sabbath can be observed in simple ways such as doing things together as a family.
4. Parents who can support connections between church school, worship, and the life of faith at home by retelling Bible stories, singing songs and hymns, and saying prayers.
5. Experiences with other faithful adults. The reality of many people today is that they live apart from their extended family. Seeing relatives across the life span often happens only occasionally.
6. Opportunities for experiences with people of other cultures and faith traditions. Growing up and experiencing and appreciating difference rather than shutting oneself off from it is essential for living in today's world.
7. Keeping/living the faith at home, following the liturgical calendar, rituals of faith and learning. Making a home for faith assumes that practices and meanings of the church year can be reinforced at home.
8. Books to read and to be read from.
9. Time/space for questions, wonderings about the mystery of God, opportunities for creative expressions – music, art, drama, words.
10. Time, patience, and love.



Time to Come Back to Sunday School!

by Holly Hardester



The teachers are looking forward to seeing the children in their classes when Sunday school resumes on **September 15**. Each Sunday's lesson is based on one of that day's scripture readings. We approach the scriptures through storytelling, play-acting, writing, art, and games; most lessons focus on the gospel reading and lead each child to know the love of Jesus; we also explore how to pray. Occasionally we do excursions around the church and the grounds, outdoor activities, and outreach projects in which the children participate.

In addition to what the children learn from their Sunday school experiences, they also form strong and enduring friendships. While family schedules frequently prevent regular attendance, rest assured that children are welcomed whenever they can attend. They always enjoy Sunday school more when more of them share in the experience!

Sunday school for children in pre-K through fifth grade takes place on the lower level of the barn. (This year, sixth graders are joining the youth group, which meets downstairs in its own room on the first floor of the barn.) Parents are invited to attend the adult forum during this time span and then to collect the children their classrooms at 11:05.

Registration for Sunday school can be completed online (www.stpetersgv.org – Education, Children & Youth, Sunday School) or on the first Sunday a child attends. All children are heartily invited to participate in Sunday school; family membership in St. Peter's is not a requirement. Contact Holly Hardester (SundaySchool@stpetersgv.org or 484-319-6323) if you have questions or want more information about Sunday school.

September Adult Formation

by Melissa Shaner

After the ministry fair on **September 8**, the new adult formation year begins in earnest the following week. All are invited to come to the barn from 10:20 to 11:05 a.m., armed with a cup of coffee and curiosity. Join us in deepening our relationship with our faith and our communities.



On **September 15**, we will sit down and talk with our deacon, the Rev. Chris Exley. He says, "This time will be spent learning a bit about my background and generally getting to know the basics about my life, my family, my call to ordained ministry, and my passion about youth and family ministries." He will also talk about his role as coordinator of discipleship. "What does being a disciple of Jesus entail? What are we supposed to do? We will explore the basic understanding of life as a disciple of Jesus and how to live that way in the world. The life of being a disciple involves discerning what the Holy Spirit is calling us to do in St. Peter's, our community and our world. As coordinator of discipleship, my goal is to assist everyone in this discernment process."

On **September 22**, some of the young people and chaperones whom Abigail led on the June mission trip to Chicago will tell us about their experiences (and share some of their photos with us). They spent a week working with a series of food ministries, seeing some sights, meeting many interesting people, and exploring their call to service.

On **September 29**, the Rev. Canon Shawn Wamsley will visit to kick off stewardship season. As Canon to the Ordinary for Evangelism and Administration, Shawn's role is to help answer questions about the operations of the diocese; guide congregations to resources and support within the bishop's office; answer questions about policy and procedure within the diocese; and provide direct support for evangelism ministries, initiatives and programs.

In the beginning of October, while Abigail is away, visiting priests will lead our sessions. For a preview of their topics and of the whole adult formation series through December, be sure to pick up the adult formation brochure at the ministry fair or at any other time in the barn and church gathering spaces.

The Community Barn Dance Returns

by Laurel Veitch

Our community barn dance has been so much fun that we are hosting it for a third year, and we hope you will join us on Saturday evening, November 9! We again want to invite our friends, neighbors and the surrounding community to come together for an evening of dancing, conversation, dining and good old-fashioned fun—in the barn, of course!

Dancing begins at 5 p.m., when callers Chloe and Rick Mohr will provide some basic instructions. They will walk you through some easy moves and will have you dancing in no time! To keep our energy levels high, Robert Ryan catering and design will provide a kicked-up barbecue dinner, and a silent auction will run throughout the evening.

Tickets for the barn dance are \$25 (adults), \$10 (children 12 and under), and \$65 (for a family of four or more). Tickets can be purchased using the form included in this issue or through our website (www.stpetersgv.org); they will also be sold after Sunday services in October.

For this event to succeed, *we need the help of the entire parish*. Here are some of the many ways you can assist:

- Invite family, friends, and neighbors to join us on November 9, and encourage them to bring others.
- Distribute postcards detailing the event to individuals who may be interested in joining us and also to your favorite establishments.
- Donate items to our silent auction directly or solicit them from a favorite local business. We are compiling a list of items to offer on their own or as part of a gift basket: for instance, a merchandise or services gift certificate you solicit from a favorite restaurant, store, or sports center; your unused gift cards or credit card points, or just simple cash. (Donors receive full tax-deductible credit and recognition at the event.) We will gladly pick up donations if desired.
- Become a sponsor of the event at any level.
- Create something for the auction if you are an artist or artisan, or donate a painting, special craft or collectible for someone else to enjoy.
- Donate a case of beer or wine—that would be great too!

November will be here before we know it, so please start thinking about how you want to get involved in this parish-wide event. *We cannot do it without you!* The barn dance always gives us a great opportunity to work together *and* to welcome guests to St. Peter's. We anticipate about 200 guests for dancing and dinner, and the funds we raise will support the ministries and missions of St. Peter's in the local community and beyond.

Thank you in advance for taking this opportunity to strengthen our parish community and bringing friends and neighbors to St. Peter's! Please direct questions to Paige Infortuna (pinfortuna@msn.com or 610-608-2093).



Barn Dance Wine Pull

New this year, a wine pull at the barn dance! Everyone who participates in it will win a bottle of wine! Here's how it works. Chances for a bottle of either red or white wine (you choose the color) will sell for \$20; there will be a variety of wines, each with a minimum value of \$20 and some much more; the bottle you win will be randomly chosen, and you take it home with you that evening. This will be fun, and everyone who takes part wins a bottle of good wine.

As we prepare for this, we need your help. Will you contribute a bottle of wine with a minimum value of \$20 and put it in one of the collection spots in our usual gathering spaces. (Alternatively, will you contribute money towards our wine purchases?) For more information contact Holly Hardester (hahardester@gmail.com or 484-319-6323).

Build St. Peter's



It will soon be time for us to pledge for 2020. So much has happened this year and the stewardship commission thanks you for the ways you participate in and support St. Peter's. We are all part of the exciting, loving and vibrant community that is St. Peter's Church in the Great Valley. We are growing in every way. We offer a variety of spiritual, enriching, thought-provoking, and just plain fun-filled activities. We build the sense of community and gratefulness that is St. Peter's when we send our youth out to serve those in need in Chicago, provide food for the hungry, maintain our lovely campus, enjoy a hike, or discuss issues of the spirit and the world during our education programs.

Our stewardship kick-off celebration is September 29. So as we begin to move into fall, please consider how your financial pledge can strengthen our ongoing programs and enable new opportunities in our faith community.

Regrouping Time for Foyers

Fall is the time when we rearrange our Foyer dinner groups for the coming year, so if you haven't participated in Foyers in the past this is the time to give it a try. These small group meals are a pleasant, easy way to get to know other parishioners over a shared meal. The Foyer concept is simple: after you let us know you are interested in participating and answer a few questions, we create groups of six to eight by needs and location. It helps us to know, for example, if your home is child-friendly and how many it can seat comfortably for a meal, and whether you have any mobility issues or food and pet allergies.

Once we have all the information, we put together groups and email the information to the Foyer groups. Each group works out its own details, like when and where to meet. Some choose to meet monthly, some quarterly; some opt for dinner, others for brunch or lunch. Typically, the host serves an entrée and the others provide salad, dessert, appetizer; everyone brings a beverage of choice.

To join a Foyer group, simply contact Lynn Mander (lsmander@gmail.com or 610-613-5358). If you already participate in Foyers, we will email you to ask if you wish to continue – and we hope you will tell other parishioners how much fun these groups are!

Reserve Now for Women's Weekend

Now in its tenth year, our women's weekend will again take place at the Temenos Retreat Center, West Chester, from Friday, October 11, to Sunday, October 13. This year's theme is "Joy," a feeling of great pleasure and happiness that is synonymous with delight, jubilation, triumph, exultation, glee, bliss, ecstasy, radiance As you can predict, we will have much to explore, since joy has so many different connotations.



It is a weekend of laughter, getting to know each other better, and good eating. We hope you will consider joining us this year if you haven't done so before, and we look forward to seeing returning attendees again. The time is fast approaching, so we encourage you to sign up now. Temenos can accommodate only twenty overnight guests, but can accommodate any number of Saturday-only guests. Since Temenos is so close, we encourage women who cannot commit for the whole weekend to join us for the day.

The \$200 cost for the whole weekend includes lodging and four meals; the \$90 cost for Saturday includes three meals. As in the past, scholarships are available and we are also happy to provide funds for a babysitting voucher. Since there is no Friday evening dinner, we again ask everyone to bring some munchies and a beverage of choice (wine and alcohol are permitted at Temenos). To sign up or learn more about the weekend, please contact Lynn Mander (lsmander@gmail.com or 610-613-5358).

Outreach News and Notes

Chester Children's Chorus Singing Here Next Month!

The St. Peter's outreach commission and choirs are pleased to announce that the Chester Children's Chorus is returning again this year to present a concert in the barn on Saturday, October 12, at 4 p.m. CCC presented a marvelous concert at St. Peter's two years ago, and will again fill our barn with their glorious sound next month. Following the concert, St. Peter's will provide a light dinner reception, enabling the singers and us to get to know each other.

The program will include arrangements from a variety of musical traditions, and the children will again join forces with our own choir in selections from *Messiah* which they worked on during their intensive summer camp. CCC artistic director John Alston strives to introduce these talented young people to some classic choral anthems and is excited about blending our voices with theirs. John founded CCC in 1994 because the city of Chester reminded him of the tough Newark neighborhood where he grew up. Because joining the Newark (NJ) Boys Chorus changed his own life, the Swarthmore music professor was determined to use his talents to offer children growing up in nearby Chester a similar opportunity to change their lives through music.

We are excited about sponsoring this concert by the CCC, one of St. Peter's core outreach ministries. Tickets are not required, but there will be a free-will offering. Watch for more about the concert and reception in *The Beacon*, Sunday leaflets, and Keynotes. If you are able to help set up the pre-concert snack, post-concert reception, or barn seating, please contact Kate Mallon-Day (610-613-8965 or kantakate@aol.com). And please spread this news to friends beyond St. Peter's, so that we can share this wonderful evening with many others in the area!

Reflections on a Day at St. James School

by Eric Lien

My wife Winnie and I spent a day visiting St. James School, one of St. Peter's core outreach ministries. The school in Philadelphia's Allegheny West section serves a poverty-level population; one of its admission requirements is that families must be eligible for the federal free or reduced-cost school lunch program. Until last year, St. James offered fifth through eighth grades, but when it became clear that its entering students are two full years below grade level, this year the school added a fourth grade class to begin the catch-up process earlier. While visiting a fourth-grade geography and a seventh-grade science class we were impressed by the diligence of the students and by the loving care the faculty and staff have for the students.

From its inception, the school places high priority on placing its eighth-grade graduates in academically challenging high schools, and during the day we had opportunities to observe how the school works to achieve this goal. The fact that its graduates now attend a substantial number of excellent area high schools is a testament to the school's success. Furthermore, St. James offers its graduates support after they move on to high school, and many of them return in the afternoon to study and to be tutored if necessary.

As a pediatric nutrition researcher, I was quite interested in the school's nutrition and food prep program, an area that it focuses on and that the nurse practitioner discussed with us. Initially St. James just brought in prepared lunches, but the generosity and leadership of De Bruno Cheese (whose CEO is on the school's board) helped create a fully equipped kitchen where all lunches are now prepared. When a number of students expressed an interest in cooking, a cooking club was formed.

Over a family-style lunch (served by the older students), I chatted with my new friend Britt, a lively fourth-grader. She was working on a report about Australia and was excited to learn that I

[Cont. on p. 10]

September 1
 Holy Hike
 (Valley Forge Park)
 4 p.m.



September 8
 Ministry Fair
 after all three services

September 5
 Choir supper and 1st rehearsal
 6 p.m.

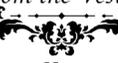
September 6
 Fall Fest
 6 to 8:30 p.m.

September 28
 Kairos Outside
 9:30 a.m.

September 7
 Needlework ministry
 10 a.m.

September 29
 Holy Hike
 (Okehocking Preserve)
 4 p.m.

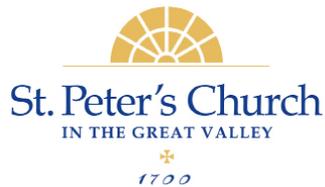
- The parish young people who worked so hard on the grounds this summer;
- The Rev. Elizabeth Eisenstadt-Evans for filling in as rector during Abigail's vacation;
- Everyone who participated in the vestry summer suppers;
- Gail and Larry Malcolm for their gift of a lawn mower;
- Wilson Smith, for leading the way, with the support of the vestry, during last month's drive to pre-fund the assistant rector position;
- Susan Dovey for her long service as head shepherd and for her gentle handling of the sheep during their final days with us;
- BB&G4J for maintaining the graveyard after the departure of the sheep;
- Robert Ryan Catering for being a great partner with St. Peter's, and going "above and beyond" in the barn by painting the sanctuary, replacing more than sixty lightbulbs there and repairing broken light fixtures, buying a large dance floor, landscaping the exterior of the barn with new plantings, decorating the bride's room, and donating the dinner for the November barn dance;
- Everyone who contributed to the St. James backpack drive, and leaders Brenda Grove and the outreach commission;
- Gail Guthridge and her team for orchestrating the church picnic at the end of July;
- Beth Hacker and Ryan Battin for substituting at the organ during Bruce Glenn's vacation;
- Abigail for organizing the pet-friendly ice cream social event and for serving lunch at her home to twenty-four people who worked on the church grounds over the summer.
- In addition, Chris Exley expressed thanks to all of St. Peter's parishioners because he continually sees God at work here every day.


Thanks
from the Vestry

for All You Do

July Financial Snapshot

	July 2019	Year to Date June	Year-end Projection	Budget 2019
Parishioner Contributions	\$ 25,123	\$284,432	\$485, 510	\$482,449
Total Income	36,357	351,568	650,713	634,485
Total Expense	50,700	384,141	659,934	634,485
Surplus/ (Deficit)	(14,343)	(32,573)	(9,221)	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
 October *Beacon*
 is **September 24.**

Every Week at St. Peter's

Sunday (beginning 9/8)

8 A.M. **Holy Eucharist***
 9 A.M. **Holy Eucharist****
 (Nursery care available**)
 10:20 **Christian Formation, all ages****
 11:15 A.M. **Holy Eucharist***

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

["Reflections," cont. from p. 8]

had been there several times. Had I ever seen a kangaroo? Are koalas really as cuddly as they appear in pictures? Where is the capital? What's the climate? How can Australia be both a country and a continent at the same time? We had lots to talk about, and she was fully focused on our conversation.

Since we visited on a Thursday, chapel day at St. James, we experienced a glorious service that included a full Eucharist and singing by the school's choir led by Kyle Babin (with whom we spoke briefly afterwards). I was quite surprised by the attention even fourth graders paid to the service, as was Winnie, who knows them well, having taught elementary school for thirty-seven years. The priest's sermon and the reverence of the service were inspiring. As a full-time staff member, the priest is a very helpful counselor for the boys.

At the end of a full and rewarding day, Winnie and I realized how unique the school is. Everyone there focuses on the development of the whole child, and the school is filled with not only teaching and learning but also with excitement and love.