

The Beacon

In thy light shall we see light.

Psalm 36:9



March 2021

Are We There Yet?

by the Rev. Abigail Crozier Nestlehutt

On one particularly tedious bus ride to a crew race, my teammates and I teased our coach by whining, "How much longer?" We were joking, of course. We were well past the age of such complaints, but apparently the temptation still existed. While youngsters tend to be impatient, we adults can be impatient as well. Eager to reach our destination or weary of where we are, we hear a little voice inside us asking, "Are we there yet?"

We are learning that "there" is hard to define in a pandemic. Even though more and more people are being vaccinated, just *when* we will reach the number required to achieve "herd immunity" is not yet clear. And scientists tell us that Covid-19 will never be entirely a thing of the past. We are not moving toward a place free of virus-related concerns. We are right here, in a new reality.

It is hard to define "there" in the church as well. Ministry never ends. A new roof gets completed. A fascinating formation program reaches a satisfying conclusion; an exquisite postlude draws to a dramatic close. A tender conversation reaches a natural stopping point. Dozens of coats are collected, cleaned, and given away. But our shared ministry is never finished, there is always more to do, and God continues to invite us into new opportunities. The contemplative, holy season of Lent is a perfect time to listen for where we are being called to make a difference. That is what the vestry and I are doing. We are praying about and planning for new ministries and programs for St. Peter's and the community. To be clear, our existing ministries are wonderfully vibrant, but there is also more that we can do as we become increasingly mission-oriented.

Our Lenten programs are united by the theme of prayer. You will find specific details in the pages that follow. I encourage you to participate in them or to find your own way to focus on prayer this season. Carving out intentional time for God will not necessarily yield a road map to "there" or tell us how much longer it will be until we arrive, but it will help clarify what we need to do.

I believe that as Easter dawns we will find ourselves a bit closer to where we want to be. The resurrection will bring a season of renewal. Improving weather conditions, wider distribution of vaccines, and increasing scientific understanding of Covid will open up opportunities for us to come together in person. Like the butterfly emerging from its protective chrysalis, we will spread our vividly decorated wings—slowly at first, but surely. And like the butterfly, we will not look quite the same as we did before. The always evolving world has experienced accelerated change, and the church has changed as well. Virtual offerings are here to stay, even as we do more and more on campus and in our buildings. Outreach is more important than ever; connecting is crucial. Joy matters.

The "there" of the church is the kingdom of God. Our mission is to bring about God's reign of justice and peace here on earth. I do not know when we will get there . . . maybe never. But every inch gets us closer, and we must continue the journey with all our hearts. Take time this Lent to ask God what you can do to make a difference. How much longer? That may be up to us.

KEEPING A HOLY LENT AT ST. PETER'S

Come, Pray: The Prayer I Need This Day

This Lent, we have accepted the invitation of the Society of St. John the Evangelist, an Episcopal monastic community with a rich tradition of daily prayer, to deepen our prayer lives. It reads, "After the last year, in which churches around the world have been closed and congregations scattered, the SSJE Brothers

invite you to 'Come, Pray.' Join us in the receiving the daily gift of prayer – at home or wherever you find yourself. Across the weeks of Lent, listen in as Brothers discuss the rich and varied ways we pray, together in church and in our personal prayer. Then join us for worship, exploring a rich array of live-streamed services, culminating in the glories of Holy Week. 'Come, pray in me the prayer I need this day.'"



Our virtual soup suppers begin with conversation at 6:15, and at 6:30 we watch a twenty-minute videotaped conversation in which the brothers explore diverse prayer practices. Afterwards, at 6:50, we begin a discussion of our own based upon what we have seen. Anyone who would like to preview the videos between Sunday evening and Wednesday, can sign up for the society's weekly email by selecting "Monastic Wisdom for Everyday Living" at **SSJE.org/subscribe**. The Zoom information will appear in Keynotes on Tuesday of each week. For more information, please contact Melissa Shaner (myshaner@verizon.net).





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The Beacon is produced monthly by St. Peter's Church in the Great Valley 2475 St. Peter's Road, Malvern, PA 19355 Phone: 610-644-2261 Fax: 610-644-7967 E-mail: parishoffice@stpetersgv.org Web site: www.stpetersgv.org

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Staff: Trudi Graves (editor), Charlotte Mark,

David Graves

Daily Prayer during Lent

Daily Prayer for All Seasons is a resource compiled by a diverse team of people as a guide for busy people who wish to order their days with prayer. It offers shortened versions of the Daily Office services in our Book of Common Prayer that follow the traditional Benedictine pattern of "hours." During Lent, Abigail and Chris are using the service for midday at the noonday prayer service that is broadcast via Facebook.

You are also invited to include the full cycle of prayers as part of your Lenten discipline. You can buy the book on Amazon or simply download it at https://episcopalchurch.org/files/documents/daily prayer all seasons eng final pages.pdf.

Stations of the Cross

At 7:30 on Friday evenings in Lent, we offer an opportunity for in-person prayer and contemplation using the Stations of the Cross mounted in the barn. This profound time allows us to enter into the journey Jesus took to the cross. Up to ten people can participate on any Friday, and we will follow all Covid protocols. Sign-up information is available in Keynotes and the leaflets. If you have questions, please contact Chris (chris@stpetersgv.org).



March 28

Palm Sunday services 8 & 10 a.m. In-person and live-streamed Lessons and Anthems (virtual) 4 p.m.

April 1

Maundy Thursday liturgy, 7:30 p.m. Watch night begins 9 p.m. (through 12 noon Friday)

April 2

Good Friday liturgy, 12 noon Stations of the Cross, 7:30 p.m.

April 4 Easter Day

The Great Vigil of Easter, 6 a.m. Easter Eucharist, 8 a.m. Festal Easter Eucharist, 10 a.m.



A Note about the Easter Egg Hunt

The diocesan Covid protocols currently in place rule out holding our traditional family Easter egg hunt on the lawn after the 10 a.m. Easter service. We are, however, working on plans for a fun-filled alternative for the children. Once the plans are firm, we will let everyone know about the event via Keynotes and the Sunday leaflets and in the April *Beacon*. If you have questions, please contact Chris (chris@stpetersgv.org).

Palm Sunday "Lessons and Anthems"

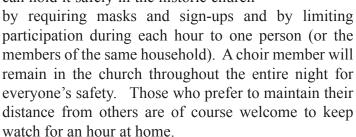
It is a St. Peter's tradition to gather on Palm Sunday for a beautiful choral evensong presented by the choir. Since gathering in person for a choral service is not an option this year, on **Palm Sunday, March 28** we will offer a virtual service of "Lessons and Anthems" instead.

As Holy Week approaches, we invite you to remember our shared journey through the season of Lent. Through lessons, prayers, and beautiful music, we will immerse ourselves in the reminder of our salvation that was bought for us on the Cross of Jesus. Please make use of this opportunity to allow your heart and mind to be quieted and to contemplate the word of God through scripture and song. This service will be aired at 4 p.m. on **Palm Sunday, March 28** via Facebook, our website, and YouTube.

Maundy Thursday Watch Night

We will keep watch over the altar of repose in the historic church throughout the night of Maundy Thursday and into the morning of Good Friday. Parishioners are invited to be present and to keep watch for one hour throughout the night. This is time when all is quiet. Sitting in the church before the stripped altar provides an empty space to be at peace or to be troubled, to wonder, to pray, to respond to stirrings of the Spirit, or perhaps to succumb to sleepiness as the disciples did. It is meaningful in the busy context of Holy Week.

Last year we shifted the watch into people's homes because of the pandemic, but this year we believe we can hold it safely in the historic church



So please set aside one hour **between 9 p.m. Thursday, April 1, and 12 noon Friday, April 2**. You will be able to sign up via Keynotes or by contacting Abigail (abigail@stpetersgv.org or 610-644-2261).

Lenten Adult Forum Series Continues

Our Sunday morning Lenten adult formation series continues with visits from Vicar Doris Rajagopal on March 7 and Gary Russell on March 14, followed by a wrap-up by members of our food ministry team on March 21. Please use the Zoom information in Keynotes to join us after the service and learn about those with whom our vibrant food ministry has partnered. Below are some preliminary comments about their ministries by our two guests:



- March 7: Darby Mission is, as the diocesan website describes it, "a church without walls set in a multi-generational community." But, says the Rev. Doris Rajagopal, "It's more than that. Between community dinners, afterschool programming, and prayer groups, Darby Mission serves between three hundred to five hundred people each week. We strive to introduce Jesus to the people of Darby and beyond."
- March 14: "The Phoenixville Ecumenical Meal Program is a partnership of nine local non-profit organizations comprised entirely of volunteers dedicated to serving those in need in the Phoenixville area," says Gary Russell. "Normally, we provide free lunches six days a week, as well as breakfast every Saturday and dinner on Monday evening. (The volunteers of St. Peter's in the Great Valley provide the dinners, which are very popular as a result of the delicious menu and generous portions). All who come are served and there are no eligibility criteria. Our guests are primarily homeless, elderly, unemployed, mentally challenged, or simply in need of a safe space where they are welcomed and not judged. During the pandemic, we cannot use our kitchen or invite our guests inside; therefore the meals we offer cannot be hot. These days, meals are prepared fresh every day by each organization and are served in the parking lot as a "to-go" lunch bag. Despite this unfortunate turn of events, our guests are still forever grateful that we have continued this ministry."



The youth group continues to meet virtually. The recent snowstorms have prevented us from getting together, but we are working on ways to gather in person at the church as the weather improves. However we meet, though, we continue to combine fun and fellowship with discussions about faith.

Last month, the youth group hosted the virtual Shrove Tuesday pancake supper. And at 8 p.m. on every Thursday in Lent, the young people are helping lead Compline, which is available on Facebook and our website.

2021 Stewardship Season Update

"The Abundance of St. Peter's" was our stewardship theme this season, and the St. Peter's family really stepped up to the plate. Although we did not quite reach our goal of \$461,000, we received a total of \$424,112 in pledges. Putting that another way, 128 parishioners pledged 92% of our goal. So, considering these most difficult times, we did well. Thank you! We are so incredibly grateful!

Even though this is a wrap-up report, we are still accepting pledges and will cherish every further pledge. Anyone wishing to pledge can do so by clicking on "Giving" at **www.stpetersgv.org** or by mailing a pledge card to the parish office. (Cards can be picked up at St. Peter's or requested by calling the parish office, 610-644-2261.)

Candlelight Yoga

Yoga instructor Lisa Werny will offer candlelight yoga at 4 p.m. on Sunday March 7 and March 21 via Zoom. In the candlelight yoga practice, which is less athletic and more holistic than other yoga styles, the intention is quite different. The focus is on mindful breathing and movement, and the warm glow of the candles helps the practitioner relax and prepare his or her body for rest. The light of the candles reduces exposure to artificial light (which overstimulates the brain), calms the central nervous system, and is a way to establish a deeper connection to the



relaxation response to minimize stress and anxiety.

Each week will have a theme and a

corresponding release of sensation in the body. Everyone is invited to join in, and no experience is necessary. The Zoom information will appear in Keynotes beforehand, and is also available from Lisa Werny (lisawerny@yahoo.com) or Abigail (abigail@stpetersgv.org).

Popcorn Theology This Month

On Monday, **March 8**, popcorn theology will discuss the ethical, moral and spiritual themes in *Quartet* (PG-13), a 2012 film directed by Dustin Hoffman. It follows the life of a group of



retired musicians and how past events come full circle and offer second chances and new opportunities.

Then on **March 22**, we will discuss the beautiful, albeit much darker, 2007 film *Atonement* (R), based on Ian McEwan's best-selling novel of the same title. The story, set against the backdrop of World War II, is put into motion by a lie that changes the lives of the three principal characters, and it illustrates the axiom that a lie is "like the cut of a saber; for although the wound will heal, the scar of it will remain."

Please join us from 6 to 7 p.m. on **March 8 and March 22** to explore these films. Both are available on multiple streaming services and also as a DVD or Blu-ray disc from Netflix.

Looking Ahead to Pentecost!

Now that warmer weather is on its way, we have started thinking about a return to outdoor offerings. Please plan to come celebrate the Holy Spirit on the afternoon of **May 23** for some kiteflying, a BYO picnic, and even a 5K fun run or 1-mile walk. Mark your calendar now and start thinking about your Pentecost red outfit! Even though pandemic precautions will remain in place in May, our sixteen beautiful acres give us plenty of space in which to spread out when we remove our masks to enjoy that picnic lunch!

Details will appear in upcoming Keynotes and the April *Beacon*. If you wish to help with planning the fun or with staging the gathering on the day itself, please contact Abigail (abigail@stpetersgiv.org).



Sign up via Keynotes or let Chris know you're coming.

Outreach News and Notes

Sharing Easter Joy with Darby Mission

Have you prepared or served dinner at Darby Mission, or have you heard about this outreach project from one of the many parishioners who have done so over the past several years? Then you know that Darby Mission is not a church in the conventional sense. It is the coming together of the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania, Episcopal Community Services (ECS) and Darby Borough. Using the facilities at the

Darby Recreational Center, Vicar Doris Rajagopal is building a multi-generational community: children and youth come to the center after school, and several hundred people come each week for programs and meals at the mission. While the pandemic prevented us from serving our usual meals there during the summer, this Easter we have a wonderful opportunity to share dinner with these Darby families.



Here's how Darby Easter works. Thirty sturdy grocery bags with grocery lists attached will be available in the church and barn on Sunday, March 7 and also in the church office during the week. (If you plan to pick one up on a weekday, please call the office beforehand to find out when someone will there.) Then just fill the bag with the listed items, such as scalloped potato mix, the makings for string bean casserole, and Easter candy.

Please return your filled bag to the church **no later than March 22**. Using some of the generous donations the food ministry received at Alternative Christmas, we will buy a ham or chicken each bag, and an Easter flower for all the bags before we deliver them to Darby Mission on Good Friday.

While there are many opportunities to give food at Thanksgiving and Christmas, there is no better way to share the joy of Easter than to provide dinners to the folks at Darby Mission. So please take one of the bags, return it filled with food and love, and share in this joy. Thank you. If you have questions, please contact Cathy Terlescski (jterlescki@aol.com).

"In the Spirit of the Spiritual"

To commemorate Black History Month, the Chester Children's Chorus created a special recital concert featuring its director, John Alston, and accompanist Jay Fluellen, co-minister of music at Philadelphia's historic African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas, where the program was recorded. In it John sings spirituals and reads from letters written by enslaved and formerly enslaved African-Americans. He selected both the music and the letters to demonstrate African-Americans' profoundly creative and exquisite response to enslavement and Christianity, and to depict firsthand their anguish and suffering.

The program débuted on YouTube on February 27, but if you missed its premiere, CCC invites you to experience *In the Spirit of the Spiritual* at your convenience, using the YouTube link at www.swarthmore.edu/chester-childrens-chorus.

Our Porch Food Collection

The food ministry thanks you for continuing to contribute food so generously to our local ministry partners in Coatesville and Phoenixville, who are ever so grateful for the outpouring of support from St. Peter's. Last month we delivered what you deposited in the bins on the parish house porch to our friends at Alianzas and will continue to do so through March. The folks in the diverse Latino community in Phoenixville that Alianzas serves are particularly delighted by the rice, beans, corn and flour tortillas, pasta (especially spaghetti), and tomato sauce they receive from us.

If you would like to volunteer to deliver the porch food collection to Phoenixville on occasion, or if you have questions about the food ministry, please contact Eileen Klein (eileenklein@live.com).

Come Celebrate St. James School!

You are heartily invited to attend 10 YEARS OF FAITHFUL PARTNERSHIP, a virtual celebration of St. James School on March 16! The keynote speaker will be the Most Reverend Michael Curry, Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church. The event celebrates St. Peter's and the other churches that have helped build and grow this thriving school serving children in Philadelphia's under-resourced Allegheny West neighborhood.

We at St. Peter's are blessed to have had the chance to help in many ways—helping to fund new classrooms, maintaining the school grounds, tutoring the students and furnishing them with school supplies and backpacks, giving them and their families hand-knit scarves and caps as well as providing food for the students and their community. Since we will be one of the churches recognized at the event, we hope many of us will attend!

Please reserve **March 16** at 6:30 p.m., and plan to be there for this joy-filled virtual event! Please RSVP at stjamesphila.org/BishopCurry. For more information about the school or the event, feel free to contact Brenda Grove (outreach@stpetersgv.org).

"Frequent Shopper" Follow-up

Now that Easter is about a month away, the food ministry wants to provide more information for those who frequent a supermarket that thanks its "frequent buyers" for their loyalty by awarding them a ham (or sometimes a chicken) at Easter. If you would like to participate in the food ministry by donating your free ham to a family in need, please make note of when this award promotion begins at your supermarket. Be aware that each retailer has its own procedure for claiming the reward: some require that the customer himself or herself must redeem a certificate in person, some merely want to see a frequent shopper card when at pick-up, and one simply subtracts the cost of the ham from the bill at checkout. So please make note of how you need to proceed.

Once you have acquired your award ham, please contact Doug Jones (dwj950@gmail.com) to arrange a time to drop it off at church. It will be stored there until food ministry volunteers pack up Easter dinners for our food ministry partners. Thank you for joining this effort.

Outreach News and Notes

How about a Toy Ministry While We Are Apart?

Do you enjoy woodworking, or would you like to learn how to make wooden toys? Or would the artist in you enjoy designing toys, or perhaps painting and decorating them once they're made? David Graves would like to try setting up a work-from-home toy ministry that creates wooden games, teaching aids, and skill-building items for disadvantaged children, and perhaps meet some needs or desires of our own preschool as well.

Even though Covid is still keeping us pretty much apart, it is possible for us to work together as a team on such a project, dividing up activities like designing, cutting out, drilling, sanding, painting, and wrapping durable and enjoyable items for young ones. We can pass the semi-finished

toys-in-process from person to person until they are completed. Our "group" would meet only online until it is safe for us to gather in person. Furthermore, if we start now, we would have plenty of time to finish a lot of toys before Christmas and surprise a lot of happy children.

If you are interested, have questions, or have ideas about how to proceed along these lines, please contact David Graves (davegraves41@gmail.com or 610-687-1242).

- Michael Trycieckyj for skillfully blending the individually recorded voices of our choir into a unified whole each week,
- From the Vestry
- The meaningful, deeply spiritual Advent and Christmas season that Abigail planned;
- Kate Mallon-Day and Brenda Grove for organizing the gifting tree;
- For all who participated in the Christmas pageant, and for the Epiphany Compline service;
- The planners of the December sledding event, and Eric Stoltz for building the cozy fire;
- Liam Reid for recording Lessons and Carols;
- The Rev. Canon Toneh Smythe and the diocesan team that negotiated with officials to move all clergy into the coronavirus vaccine 1(b) phase;
- The Rev. Kyle Boyer for preaching and leading adult forum on January 24;
- Nick Mosvick and Shannon Almquist for leading adult forum this winter, and Melissa Shaner for coordinating adult formation and scheduling interesting speakers;
- Ms. Soozung Rankin, from Church of the Holy Trinity in Rittenhouse Square, for presenting the "God is Art" module in *Dismantling Racism* as part of our ongoing conversations on race, and Chris for arranging her presence with us;
- Mary Ann Tatum for her dedicated leadership of the pastoral care commission;
- All who have purchased firewood from the Bad Boys;
- The Rev. Canon Betsy Ivey for leading the vestry retreat in January;
- Lisa Werny for leading two yoga sessions on Zoom;
- Chris Exley for leading pub theology;
- Kate Mallon-Day and Eric Stoltz for joining the live-streaming team;
- Kyle Brown for taking on the task of shoveling the sidewalks and paths, and Dave Tatum for all his faithful organizing of our snow removal efforts after Mr. Sabatini has plowed us out;
- Cliff Castle for his long service as leader of the gathering of men, and Rodney Platt for enabling the group to meet via Zoom and for taking on the leadership of the group;
- Reader Heidi Fowler and filmers Kate-Mallon Day and Liam Reid for braving the February 7th snowstorm to get to St. Peter's;
- Chris Exley for organizing the Shrove Tuesday pancake supper and Cathryn Cheetham for the King cake cupcakes she baked for it;
- Treasurer Peter Kreek for his ongoing guidance;
- Abigail Nestlehutt for her five years as our rector.

Calling All Budding Filmmakers!

Now's your chance to unveil the Francis Ford Coppolla gene concealed inside you . . . and also your chance to help St. Peter's in a new way! We invite any latent filmmakers to join our "camera crew"--the team of volunteers who live-stream our Sunday services. They will joyfully and painlessly teach you to use our state-of-the-art equipment. Please contact Abigail (abigail@stpetersgv.org) if you would like to join the team. Thank you!





March 6

Needlework ministry 10 a.m. (Zoom)

March 7

Candlelight yoga 4 p.m. (Zoom)

March 8

Popcorn theology 6 p.m. (Zoom)

March 14

Spring ahead—DST begins

March 20

Trivia night 7 p.m. (Zoom)

March 21

Candlelight yoga 4 p.m. (Zoom)

March 22

Popcorn theology 6 p.m. (Zoom) Easter dinner bags due at church

HOLY WEEK & EASTER



March 28

Palm Sunday services 8 a.m.* & 10 a.m.*** Lessons and Anthems for Palm Sunday 4 p.m.**

April 1

Maundy Thursday liturgy 7:30 p.m.*** Watch Night begins 9 p.m.

April 2

Good Friday liturgy 12 noon *** Stations of the Cross 7:30 p.m.*

April 4 Easter Sunday

The Great Vigil of Easter 6 a.m.*
Festal Eucharist 10 a.m.**

- * In-person only
- ** Virtual only
- *** In-person and virtual

January Financial Snapshot

	January 2021	Year-end Projection	Budget 2021
Parishioner Contributions	\$ 82,146	\$558,229	\$555,000
Other Income*	300	123,050	123,150
Total Income	82,446	681,279	678,150
Total Expense	55,119	677,278	678,150
Surplus/ (Deficit)	27,327	4,001	0

*Interest, rentals, endowment distributions, fundraiser

We are now in the second year of the Covid pandemic. Although a reduction in pledges has necessitated trimming our expenses for the coming year, we have successfully developed a balanced budget for 2021. January pledge payments were strong, and this will help ensure that we can meet our expenses and continue to serve the needs of our congregation and the wider world. Thank you to *all* who have contributed.—*Eric Lien for the finance commission*



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

Our Mission:

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

The deadline for the April *Beacon* is **March 15**.

Weekly Offerings at St. Peter's

Sunday

8 a.m. Sunday Eucharist*
10 A.M. Sunday Worship**

Coffee hour/Adult Formation***

5 P.M. Youth Group**

Monday thru Thursday

12 Noon Noonday Prayer***

Wednesday

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

Thursday

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

Friday

8 A.M. Gathering of Men***

* In person (with sign-up)

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

*** Virtual

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

Lenten Offerings at a Glance

Adult Forum

Sundays, 11 a.m.*

*Noonday Prayer*Mon. thru Thurs., 12 noon *

Soup SuppersWednesdays, 6:15 p.m.*

Compline
Thursdays, 8 p.m.*

Stations of the Cross Fridays, 7:30 p.m.**

* Virtual

** In person (with sign-up)