

The Rock

St. Peter's Episcopal Church

September 2021

Dear People of St. Peter's,

If you think about it, "love your neighbor as yourself" pretty strongly implies that drawing a hard line between "self" and "neighbor" is what Jesus calls us *not* to do. With that in mind, please read and reflect prayerfully on this rather long, but very important, column.

I want to tell you all about our day-long Vestry retreat led by Father Earle King on July 31st, because, with your help, the work we did that day will shape our mission going forward. We had good, frank, and spirited discussions centered around three questions: who we are, who is our neighbor, and what is God calling St. Peter's to do at this point in our journey.

As for the question of who we are, it's pretty clear. Spiritually, St. Peter's is a fundamentally healthy community. You are committed to one another, and to God's mission. You are a generous and faithful people, and financially St. Peter's is on solid ground. You've proven yourselves adaptable in very challenging circumstances, and steadfast in hope. Generosity, simplicity, and hospitality, as well as inclusiveness and diversity, all mentioned in our mission statements, remain both characteristic of us and ideals we strive for.

We are also, like so many parishes, an aging congregation, and some among us are facing more persistent and limiting health issues. Moreover, many parishioners take on multiple responsibilities and ministries. Many parishioners are beginning to feel stretched a bit thin, and burnout is a growing concern. *What this means is we all need to be honestly and prayerfully discerning what we may be called to let go, what we may need help with, and how some of us might be called to help in new ways.*

Now to the second question of our retreat: who is our neighbor? Father Earle presented demographic and socio-economic data about people living within a two-mile radius of our church, data generated from a provider called

MissionInsite to which our diocese subscribes. Among much important information, two things stood out. First, the community around us is projected to get gradually younger. So, the average age of our congregation is going in one direction, and the average age of our community is going in another. Second, well over 60% rate "Community Involvement and Advocacy Programs" as very high on their list of personal priorities. In other words, we are a caring community, and we are located within a wider community that seems to care.

So, let me put all this together. We want to continue the commitment to community outreach and mission that's intrinsic to St. Peter's identity, but we need to do so in ways that avoid overextension and burnout. And we may well be located in a community in which many people have themselves an energy and



passion for community involvement. If we can pursue that goal in a way that taps into that surrounding reality, we might develop a synergy with our community will both help

sustain our mission and connect us more deeply to the very neighbors we are called to love and serve. Accordingly, we will be reaching out to our neighbors to see if we can learn even more about how we all might work together.

Which brings me to two particular outreach ministries we discussed at the retreat. First, let me be clear. All ministries are important, and nobody is demanding any be abandoned. Far from it. Feed others in whatever ways that feed you. That said, we each need to be asking what God might be asking us to lay aside, and what new or different ministries God might be calling each of us to.

First, the Linen Pantry. It has been a major outreach ministry of St. Peter's for a long time. It works with dozens of different social service

agencies who refer clients to them so the Pantry can provide towels, sheets, and other necessary household items. It is staffed by just a few dedicated volunteers, and *they need help*. The need keeps growing. I encourage all of you to discern whether your own mission work might be directed to help with the Linen Pantry. Contact Carma Miccoli if you think you might be called to that ministry—one that connects us directly to our immediate community.



Second, the Blessing Box, which just opened this year. Its success has taken us all by surprise, and we are grateful. Many in the community are benefiting from it, and it is a powerful sign to our neighbors of who we are and what we're about. One thought the Vestry had: because the Blessing Box has been so successful, instead of splitting food donations between the Blessing Box and the University Presbyterian Food Pantry, we would refocus all food donations and other goods to the Blessing Box in order to continue to build on what has already been a successful new endeavor. Contact Allison Mohr or Gary Donhauser if you think you might be called to that ministry—one that connects us directly to our immediate community.

What both the Linen Pantry and the Blessing Box have in common is they are sites/sights of ministry immediately visible to our neighbors, threshold places where our community can reach us, and we, them. It's famously not easy for many people to cross the threshold into a church. But when the threshold is right there by the sidewalk, an open cabinet saying take what you need, or when it's "just another house on the street" staffed with people helping people who need help—those are thresholds people may be more likely cross, both to get help, and to be of help. We believe the Linen Pantry and the Blessing Box may well be the best ways for us to build bridges with our community, find ways to partner with people beyond our walls, and tap into new energies for mission to help us answer God's call. No doubt other ways will present themselves, too, and if you have ideas, please don't



hesitate to let me know, as we seek to deepen our relationships with our community and continue to love our neighbors as ourselves.

Yours in Christ,
Fr. Dan+

Deacon's Corner (Good Power versus Bad Power)

Most of you know that Richard Rohr is one of my spiritual guides through the ups and downs of being a Christian. He and his literary friends provide much wisdom for the masses. Recently, his daily meditations spent a whole week on the topic of POWER, that I'd like to share with you in summarized form.

Jesus tells His disciples before the Ascension that ***"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. Then you will be my witnesses...to the very ends of the Earth."*** (Acts 1:8) That, is GOOD Power.

He also tells the Pharisees in Mark 7:9, ***"How ingeniously you get around the commandment of God in order to preserve your own traditions!"*** He was scolding the religious leaders of Judaism for misusing tradition to enhance their own power. That, is an example of BAD power.

Biblical scripture is rife with many critiques of the misuse of power, from Old Testament to New; from Genesis to Revelation. Bad power consists of "domination hierarchies" in which power is used to protect, maintain, and promote oneself or one's group at the expense of others. Rampant ambition and greed, sexism, racism and other "isms" are all examples of the bad power we live with today.

Good power, on the other hand, emanates from that same Holy Spirit, abiding in us as it did with the first Apostles. It is the power infused with love, humility and justice that Jesus displayed to the "poor in Spirit", the meek, and the powerless of His community. It's the power that gave rise to the Threads of Hope Linen Pantry, the Blessing Box, and our Refugee Ministry.

Bad power says, ***“I am I, by virtue of being not-you”***.

Good power says: ***“I am I, by virtue of being in-you/with-you/for you, not outside you and not against you- not even separate.”***

If you haven't already done so- open yourselves up to the Good Power of the Spirit, and empty yourself of the bad. It's like breathing. You know... in with the good air, out with the bad.

Blessings,
Deacon Tom

Refugee Update

On Thursday, August 19, Lois and I delivered all the school supply donations to the Moises family, our “adopted” Congolese refugees. It was wonderful to see their smiling faces, their growth spurts, and to converse with them again. They appear to be doing well, and speaking more English than ever.

I also delivered a gift card for food, and one for back-to-school clothing- thanks to generous donations made to the refugee account. We also left them a bunch of masks to use.

We inquired as to their vaccination status and discovered that the father is the only one vaccinated. We made ourselves available to help transport the three eligible children and the mom as needed.

Many thanks for your inquiries as to their situation; your generosity in reaching out to them; and for your congregational support to this outreach ministry.

Blessings,
Deacon Tom

In a society that has you counting money, pounds, calories and steps, be a rebel and count your blessing instead.



News

Our Blessing Box is a huge success! This is great news! The community is really appreciative and supportive. We have neighbors who contribute to it too. We have been called angels numerous times. Gary, Lois, Jerry and I add more items to it multiple times a week. We have given away so much food and helped so many people.

I have spoken to a couple of people who have come up to the box, while I was adding items. I asked them to tell me what items they needed, to see if we had them in our storage spot. They told me they needed toilet paper, diapers, personal hygiene products and cleaning products. These items do go very quickly, when we put them in the box.

The other items that we cannot keep up with the demand for is pet supplies. We currently do not have any. Just to give you an idea, we have given away 161 cans of cat food, 24 pounds of dry cat food, 83 cans of dog food, 62.6 pounds of dry dog food, dishes, toys, grooming items, leashes and collars. In the past I have taken our pet food donations to a food pantry, but I now just put them in our box.

Thank you to all of you that support this mission. Picking up an extra item, while you are shopping and donating it, is all it really takes to become an angel in someone else's eyes. Who doesn't want to become angel?
Alison Mohr



Always pray to have eyes that see the best in people, a heart that forgives the worst, a mind that forgets the bad and a soul that never loses faith in God

St. Peter's Parish/Faith Community Nursing and the Wellness Team

I have informed our Vestry and Fr. Dan, earlier this year, that I will be retiring from my Parish Nurse position in November, 2021. It has been my pleasure and a gift from God, to serve as your Parish Nurse for the last 13 years. I took the Parish Nursing course in January of 2009 at Christ the King Seminary, but had begun the work prior to that date. The ministry had actually been active at St. Peters for 3-5 years prior. The program was introduced to St. Peters by Sue Gunn, thank you Sue!



PARISH NURSE
MINISTRIES

Fr Dan and I have been in discussion of how to continue this ministry at St. Peters. I am so pleased that Fr. Dan wants to continue on with the position and we are in the process of discussing how this should be done. We are attempting to hire

or find an interested RN that would fit our church. He or She would not have to be an Episcopalian, but would need to respect and understand our church and practices. Other non-medical duties can certainly be shared by others. If you know of an RN that may be interested, please let us know.

For our newer members, *"Faith Community Nursing (or Parish Nursing) is a **specialized practice of professional nursing** that focuses on the intentional care of the spirit as well as on the promotion of ***wholistic* health and prevention or minimization of illness within the context of a faith community." We try to take care of our patients' body, mind and spirit. We feel that healing cannot completely take place without all three. The practice is recognized by the American Nurses Association; and we have our own Scope and Standards of Practice books.

Our Wellness team has also been active and promoted many health-care programs. We have offered flu shot clinics and Health Fairs for the church and community as well as a Neighborhood Outdoor Movie night. Speakers

for Diabetes, Hospice, Violence prevention, Nutrition, How and why to complete your Health Care Proxies. The list goes on and on. We have purchased a New AED with the help of our St. Peter's family. Workshops for smoking cessation, "Stop the Bleed", Narcan training, CPR and AED certification, and End of life planning have been offered. Our Covid restriction have prevented much of the programming to continue since early 2020. I'm looking forward to the future where the Wellness team can begin to meet and plan some events. Our Wellness Team members have been Sue Gunn, Chairperson, and members: Linda Pike, Carolyn Bongji, Kirsten Reitan, Missi Lopat, Dawn Rezabeck, Deacon Joanne Frake, Lois Tripp and Sharon Hill. Kristie Payne has retired, but was very active at one point. Thank you to all that have worked on this through the years. What a Blessing this has been to our parishioners and community.

More to come on this transition. I am confident that all will go well.

Shalom,

Lois Tripp, RN
Faith Community Nurse

*<https://westberginstitute.org/faith-community-nursing/>

**Wholistic is a word used to help represent the "Whole" person. It is not misspelled.



An Invitation

You may have recently read the Diocesan Summer newsletter dated Aug. 11, which announced a new (the second) offering of the Sacred Ground Program to people of the two dioceses. I would strongly encourage you to enroll in this monumental educational and reflective series that delves deeply into the root fibers of racism in this country.

The course is all run on Zoom, is free of cost except for the purchase of two curricular books; and is facilitated by people of the diocese. It will be offered every other Tuesday evening, beginning on September 7, and will

run through Feb. 15, 2022 (leaving time off for Christmas busyness). You may register from the Partnership Website, directly from the newsletters that Lee McElhinny forwards to us, or call Gabriele Atchison at the WNY Diocesan Office.

Each session runs from 7-8pm, and includes a mixture of prayer, personal reflections on the materials assigned for that week, and discussions in “breakout” periods. Curricular materials you need to digest range from books, targeted magazine articles, and video presentations- all to be viewed in the two-week span between zoom sessions.

The Bishops of the Episcopal church had to take the very same course this past year. I count myself fortunate to have taken it in the tumultuous year of 2020, when emotions were very raw. I found the course to be extremely informative, enlightening, and emotional; yet hopeful, encouraging, and spiritual as well. It heightens Christ’s call to “love our neighbor”.

Again, I would encourage all of you who have computer access to consider taking this course. It is a wise and generous offer from the Diocese to help us live into the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Peace,
Deacon Tom

Flu vaccination is especially important for the 2021 flu season!



Our Flu Season is approaching. It is very important that anyone over 6 mo. of age receive their flu vaccine beginning now.

The **single best way to prevent seasonal flu is to get vaccinated each year**, but good health habits like avoiding people who are sick, covering your cough and washing your hands often can help stop the spread of germs and prevent respiratory illnesses like flu. There also are antiviral drugs that can be used to treat the flu. Remember, to get the best benefit from the antiviral drugs, you need to contact your Dr.,

ASAP after developing flu like symptoms. <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/different-flu-vaccines.htm>.

St. Peters will NOT be providing a flu clinic this year. I inquired recently and had only 10 parishioners interested but both Rite Aid and Wegmans who have come to the parish in the past, needed 25 to do a clinic on site. Your Dr. may provide them, call to check. If you need and convenience and time is an issue, there are many other places to receive your influenza Vaccine. Most pharmacies do not charge a co-pay for this. Many allow you to preregister to avoid wait times. Here is a tool to help you find the closest resource for you: <https://www2.erie.gov/immunizewny/flu-clinic-listing>.



Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine with Other Vaccines

Per the CDC, you can get a COVID-19 vaccine and other vaccines at the same visit. You no longer need to wait 14 days between vaccinations. Experience with other vaccines has shown that the way our bodies develop protection, known as an immune response, after getting vaccinated and possible side effects of vaccines are generally the same when given alone or with other vaccines. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/expect.html#:~:text=Getting%20a%20COVID%2D19,14%20days%20between%20vaccinations>.

If you are having difficulty or face barriers to getting a flu vaccine, please contact me. Don’t forget to get your Flu shot!

Sue Gunn
Health committee, Peter’s Episcopal Church



St Peter's Friendship Partnership Bazaar Reopens!

As St Peter's continues to return to normal (albeit a "new" one) after the Covid-19 pandemic which caused us to halt all our in-person activities both worship and social, we Bazaar merchants have been busy, too. We have inventoried existing merchandise, reconditioned or repurposed some items and are in the process of making new cards and gifts to set out when we reopen. We are doing some minor rearranging and redecorating our space in the church hall for a fresh look without losing the ambiance of our pre-Covid "shop." A significant new feature will be Creation Care, a display of gifts and cards made from recycled materials.

With refugee resettlement in the Buffalo area expected to increase substantially under the Biden administration this Fall, our refugee ministry team led by Deacons Tom and Joanne, is hoping that the Bazaar will continue to be an important source of funding in our work with Journey's End Refugee Services, especially in providing household items to set up apartments. Refugee Corner in our Linen Pantry does receive donations of these items but there are always things in short supply that need to be purchased.

We are thankful for the generosity of our members in purchasing our crafts and cards as well as your interest and concern for our new neighbors who are escaping death and destruction in their countries of origin and seeking security and a future for their families in Buffalo. Please pray for them and for our opportunities to minister to them.

Many Thanks,
Deacon Joanne
Marcia Scime



Linen Pantry Update

During July, Marcia Scime and I filled 12 requests for household supplies for various clients from a number of agencies. That may seem like a lot. However, during August, we doubled it and filled 24 household requests. This meant we double the number of items the Linen Pantry gave out and as a result we depleted items we usually have in our inventory. Some of these items are not things we have asked the parish to donate before because they are small and we have managed to simply purchase them when needed.



The following "Wish List" may seem odd to you but we give out these items almost daily. Pots and pans are still at the top of the list. Especially 1 qt and 2 qt sauce pans with or without lids. Also casserole dishes of any size. Baking pans or cookie sheets toasters, pot holders, facial wash cloths, hand can openers, colanders and mixing bowls. Twin and queen bedding, and towels are always needed

If you find you have extra items at home that you are not using and wish to downsize your drawers a little, please pass those items to us. Even the smallest items are appreciated. If you want to help but don't want to shop, give a donation to St. Peter's Linen Pantry and we will shop for you.

Thank you on behalf of the Linen Pantry volunteers and mostly for the clients who benefit from all they receive.

Carma Miccoli

SAVE THE DATE

As part of the Season of Creation, an event will be held at **St. Paul's Church in Springville** on Sunday, September, 19th from 2pm -4pm. An opportunity to walk the labyrinth, a time for prayer and meditation, and a short service honoring nature will be offered. See Deacon Tom for more information if interested.

Prayers of the People

Long Term: Kathy & Bill, Becky P, Jim G, Gary & Marty D, Deacon Joanne & Chuck, Kristie P, Ann Marie, Ron B, Suzanne & family, Gino L, Alfred, Kerri & family, Bob R & Dawn, Sue & Don, Carol, Joann, Lucy, Lee & Jessica M, Judy E, Bryan, Jeff, Florence K, Ellen, Amy P, Kevin S, Ray B, Dave L, Tim M, Wayne J, Cheryl, Joanne U, Sharon H, Cathy, Paula, Rick and Kristen, Tom and Joyce.



Short Term: Patti T, Jim and Michelle, Lette, , June M, Marilyn and Karen S, Joe P, Bob M, Alyssa and family, Dwayne, Jenny R, Frank B, Marie, Bob S, Dillon, Joe M, John P, Pete, Harry, Gayle, Lucas, Dori, Monica, Julia, Harry, Sue & Dave S and Amy D

Home bound: Faith, Sue W

Armed Forces: Richie, Brandon G, Ian F, Ben H, Ben M & Aiden

Thanksgiving: Harold O, in remission



09/03 Linda Pike
09/07 Maria Pinti
09/10 Ruth Palmer
09/13 Damon Piatov
09/15 Dominic Passarella
09/21 Marilyn Schultz
09/26 Florence KilamboKalumbu
09/28 Jerry Mohr



09/24 Robert and Marilyn Schultz
09/24 Michael and Sharon Taube
09/26 Alfred and Barbara Price



St. Peter's Episcopal Church

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The Rev. Dr. Daniel J. Pinti, Priest-in-Charge

The Rev. Thomas N. Tripp, Deacon

The Rev. Joanne Coury Frake, Deacon

Generosity, Simplicity, Hospitality

Sunday Mornings In-person at 8am and 10am and on Zoom

Coffee Hour 11am In-person and on Zoom

Parish Office Hours

Phone No. 716- 832-9764

Wardens: Lois Tripp and Lee McElhinny

Vestry Members: Mike Taube, Linda Pike, Missi Lopat

Dawn Rezabek, Merrie Hill and, Katia Sanchez

Clerk of the Vestry: Sharon Hill

Parish Treasurer: Edward Hill

Organist: S. Elizabeth Ann Schascheck

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