

# The



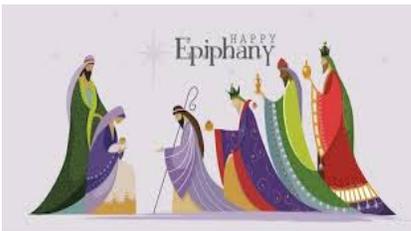
# Rock

St. Peter's Episcopal Church

January 2022

## From the Pastor's Desk

Dear People of St. Peter's,



The season of Epiphany is about the revelation to the world of the divinity of Jesus Christ, "Emmanuel," as the prophet Isaiah calls

him, with all of that Hebrew word's comforting and challenging implications: "God *with* us." And the first Sunday after the Epiphany is the Feast of the Baptism of Our Lord. For many over the years, Jesus's baptism has been perplexing. Why did *he* have to get baptized, and by John, no less, who preached a "baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins," when Jesus had nothing to repent from? For me, however, Jesus's baptism hasn't been particularly perplexing. I just find it deeply moving.

There's something about Jesus, the Son of God, the Savior of the world, getting in line with all the sinners and getting baptized just like them that's truly touching. It conveys in its own way what the Birth of Christ conveys, what Jesus' dining with the tax collectors conveys, what the Crucifixion conveys. Jesus is determined to be right there alongside each of us, and among all of us, no matter the circumstances. He never stands apart.

That's a profound lesson for the Church. To put it in clichéd terms, we're all in this together (*whatever* "this" happens to be!). No one stands apart. I might offer any number of examples or ways to illustrate this point, but the one I want to

focus on briefly is one that we all accept but don't always reflect on: Holy Orders.

As you probably know, there are four Orders in the Episcopal Church, each with its own biblical origins and each with a distinctive role to play: laypersons, deacons, priests, and bishops. If you look in the *Book of Common Prayer*, you'll find there's an ordination rite for each. The rites for ordaining deacons, priests, or bishops are easy to find. The rite for ordaining laypersons is maybe harder to recognize because it's the most common: baptism—or the rite that says, "we're all in this together."



Obviously, there's no deacon, priest, or bishop who isn't also a member of the one really *essential* order, the lay order. In other words, no deacon, priest, bishop, or layperson stands apart.

Now, you might say, "You *do* kind of stand apart, Father Dan." Yes, unlike most people, priests wear a collar and a certain kind of stole during worship, and we do have a leadership role in the Church. But that's not a matter of "apartness," or even "uniqueness" (there are plenty of lay leaders in the Church, thanks be to God), so much as *distinctiveness*. There are certain things distinctive about my ministry as a priest, as there are about the ministries of deacons and bishops.

One thing all of those three orders have in common is that *each* of them serves as a distinct sign for what *all* of us are called to be. Deacons signify the servanthood to our neighbor

which Christ modelled, and we're all called to emulate. Priests signify the "priesthood of all believers," the worship and prayer which we're all called to offer to God. Bishops signify the (ultimate) unity of the Church and the Church's mission to bring the Gospel to the world, which we're all called to do.

And, of course, none of those three orders can exist without the lay order, of whom all orders, all ministries, are a part. It's something like the Trinity, really. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Three in One, and One in Three. Laypersons, deacons, priests, bishops, four in one, one in four.

I've taken the opportunity to share this "mini-lesson" on Church orders in response to Deacon Joanne's beautiful contribution to this issue of *The Rock*. One of the things I love about St. Peter's is that it is a community that really understands and practices what mission and ministry are all about. I'm convinced that's in no small part because we have been blessed with deacons who have stood as signs of how that is to be done. Deacon Joanne has been one of them, and she has served as our deacon while remaining a member of Calvary, Williamsville. Now, while she will still be a deacon, she will no longer be *our* deacon (because retired). But, by transferring her membership to St. Peter's, she will still be right there with us, serving her Lord, and thank God for that!

Thank you, Deacon Joanne, and Deacon Tom, and all of you, for all of your ministries, for being there for one another and for your neighbors, for not standing apart!

Yours in Christ,  
Fr. Dan+

Dear People of St Peters Episcopal Church,  
Egbertsville

I have informed Father Dan and Deacon Tom, that as of 1/1/2022, I will no longer be a serving deacon at St Peter's Egbertsville. Although I had requested and received permission from Bishop

Bill Franklin to fully retire as he left the Diocese of Western New York, I was asked to stay on, though retired, at St Peter's to assist Deacon Tom and all of you with the refugee ministry. During the next few years, I am proud to say that this ministry did thrive and grow through the efforts of all of us to follow our Baptismal Covenant to seek and serve Christ in all persons and Jesus's dictum reported in Matthew 25 to welcome the stranger.

For many of us, the current pandemic, entering its third year, has created a lot of anxiety, confusion, and distress in our lives. For those who have lost friends and loved ones to Covid, even tragedy and despair. You might be surprised to learn that, for some of us, myself included, something positive also happened. The pandemic offered a time of reflection that I never would have had otherwise. Covid's enforced "leisure time" and self-isolation meant that I could not use "being overly busy" my favorite coping method for escaping the reality that my 80<sup>th</sup> birthday was just around the corner and changes in lifestyle and independence were inevitable. More "being" and less "doing" which for me, Miss Energizer Bunny, was inconceivable. All my life I had been a Martha, organizing and making things happen. Pretty soon, I was to be, I thought, *only* a Mary, *just* sitting and listening. But, with nothing else to distract me after hours of sewing face masks and surgical scrub caps – the house was spotless and the garden weeded and watered – I thought it might be nice to form a telephone prayer partnership with my friend Carol, something that we had talked about for 20 years but never got around to doing (Why is it that our spiritual needs always have to make do with leftovers!).

We would study a few verses of Scripture on the 5 weekdays, discuss, and pray to understand what God was laying on our hearts. If it hadn't

been for Covid, I would have been in the car on the go doing errands with no time for such conversations. It was while rereading the story of Martha and Mary for one of these telephone conversations that it happened! That I not only read in Luke 10 that Jesus said to Martha, "Mary has chosen the better part," I heard Jesus say this same thing to me. What a shock!! And, also personally embarrassing. How many times had I heard this story and yet remained prideful and willful. For years I had held to the idea that Martha should have been praised and Mary scolded for not helping her, though I was aware of other interpretations. I had probably secretly looked with scorn on people who tried to argue Mary's corner. Thank you, Lord, for the wake-up call. Out of His goodness and mercy, our Lord let me know that without a change in my perspective to one of valuing all aspects of human activity that give praise to God and bring His Kingdom into being (and, yes, doing), I was going to have a miserable time adjusting to the inevitable losses, appreciating the good that I had done in God's name, accepting the good things that other people had contributed to my life and, finally, finding meaning in my existence. The saddest people that I met when I was a social worker with the elderly were those who believed that their life had had no positive meaning. And that is not all. God confirmed for me that He can make good come out of even the worst situations IF WE LET HIM. Surely Covid qualifies as such a disaster.

My own increasing limitations due to the progression of Parkinson's Disease (PD) is always the number one factor in the decisions that I make in choosing what gets accomplished, meaning how much energy I have available. My beloved husband, Chuck and my much-loved dog, Bonnie, died during this past year and one-



half. These are life events that require time to process. Allowing as much time as is necessary for reflection and reorganization is critical for successful adjustment to the reality that life on earth is finite. Depending on speed of PD progression, this alone may consume all the energy I can count on in any given time period. It would be unreasonable to offer myself for leadership positions and to expect to carry on as a deacon, bringing the needs of the world to the Church.

I have believed for some time, that God is "working in me a new thing". This is also a process which takes place in God's time, not ours. I will be remaining at St. Peter's as a member of the congregation because I have come to know that I will find loving companionship for my journey. I will still be involved with our refugee ministry: Bazaar and Refugee Corner in the Linen Pantry for the foreseeable future. I would also like to continue to co-host the online Seekers group with aging and death and dying as our next two 5 -week Zoom sessions.

Though you will find that you will no longer be praying for me as a member of St Peter's clergy during Prayers of the People, I ask for your personal prayers for me for patience and peace during this time of transition.

I wish you all a Happy New Year full of peace, hope, and joy. You all are daily in my prayers as are your families, our wonderful St Peter's community spirit, our Wardens, Vestry, Clergy and, of course, our ministries. You may still call me Deacon Joanne, as a person cannot be un-Deaconed, even though they retire permanently (Finally! )

With love,  
Deacon Joanne



## What are we Waiting for?

The word Advent comes from the Latin **adventus** meaning arrival or “coming”.

If God has already come to us this advent, what are we waiting for? If God has already become incarnate in Jesus- what are we waiting for? We are done with the waiting, the anticipation of Jesus “coming”, so what are we to do now?

We are called to awaken to what is already in our midst. We are called to a new consciousness of God; already loving us into something new, into something more whole. We are not in a sense WAITING for something that is NOT there; we’re in a sense ATTENDING to what is ALREADY there. Jesus is here among us- look for him in the eyes of others; in the action of others; in the attending to others.

The other portion of Advent is that God is waiting for us to wake up! As if we are asleep in the manger, and nor Mary’s baby boy. What if we are so fallen asleep, so unconsciously asleep, that God is sort of looking for someone (us) to “get up and help bring the gifts into the world?”

Let us awaken to what God is doing in us and what God is seeking to become in us.

***Adapted from an article by Franciscan theologian Ilia Delio***

*Deacon Tom*

## Warden’s Report

Just a note to all that our in-person annual meeting is Sunday, January 16<sup>th</sup>. It will be immediately after church. It will be held in the Nave of the church. Please plan on attending, we plan to sit safely apart and we will be masked of course.

It not too late to consider running for Vestry. Many of our members spoke last Sunday about

the benefits of serving on the Vestry. I can personally say that my experience has been nothing but positive. Everyone works beautifully together, and there are many to lend a hand. We are also Blessed to have a caring, supportive, and organized Priest. This really does make our jobs easier.

It has been a wonderful 2 years and I wish Lee McElhinny and our new Jr Warden to be the best!

Shalom,  
*Lois Tripp*



## Refugee Report

Although somewhat limited due to our continuous dealings with the Covid-19 virus and its variants, we have managed to continue working with refugees on two fronts:

**Front #1** – we continue to support our “adopted” family from the Congo, the Moises. I have periodically helped them with monetary donations from our refugee account- mostly directed towards food for a family of nine people. I especially have given them help around the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. Several others in the congregation have donated clothes, toys, and food. You may also remember that we collected back-to-school supplies for the six children who are currently enrolled, and food from the In-Gathering. Our retired Deacon Joanne, continued her elf-like manner by donating Christmas gifts to each family member individually- she being the anti-Grinch! The family appears to be doing as well as can be expected.

**Front #2-** More than a few of you have donated, one way or another, to the Afghan Evacuee effort in WNY. Your monetary donations, along with a \$1200 donation from our refugee account,

will assist the 5 WNY agencies in creating housing opportunities for these displaced souls. We are also working with one of those agencies, Journey's End, to furnish five (5) apartment rooms for a single family. We are set to go with these "Welcome Boxes" after the first of the year. Volunteer coordinators for the collection of items for each room are: **Linda Pike** (bathroom); **Carolyn Bonggi** (dining area); **Merrie Hill and Katia Sanchez** (laundry closet); **Elizabeth Ann Schascheck** (bedrooms); and **Tom & Lois Tripp** (kitchen). With God's help, we may be able to continue such donations later in the year.

Thanks to all contributors who continue to proclaim our Gospel message of "**Welcoming the Stranger**" and "**Loving our Neighbor.**" Blessings to you all- you know who you are. And thank you for all the prayers for this ministry.

*Deacon Tom Tripp*

## Just a Helping Hand" Blessing Box



There has been a tremendous need for food, pet food, paper products and personal items this December. Thank you to all of you that have contributed! Many

neighbors also stop by frequently to add items to the box or leave inside the TOH hallway. We have added some hats, gloves and warm socks when available.

I can assure you that the need is great. Individuals and families are hungry; they need help with simple items like shampoo, toilet paper, diapers, all personal items, too. Those of us that refill the box can see it. People perceived to be taking advantage, are few and far between.

Thank you to Jerry Mohr, Gary Donhauser and Ed Hill for trying to winterize the Blessing Box. The doors had been damaged and blown off a couple of times. I suggested that perhaps we need to shut down during the bad weather. Gary Donhauser and Alison Mohr were quick to tell me that the need is too great; we need to find a way to make repairs. They were quickly done.

I thank Gary for his tremendous dedication to shopping and refilling the blessing box. Gary was there Christmas Eve and Christmas Day! He said someone showed up on Christmas, while he was there, to get a couple items. Alison and Jerry frequently stop by to refill all of the items within the Blessing box too. They shop the Pet food sales and have purchased large bags of pet food and re-bagged and labeled smaller portions for distribution.

We have attempted to get other organizations to partner with this project, but have not been successful so far. If you have an hour a week, and would like to help with this ministry, please call Gary Donhauser. We'll be happy to train you.

God Bless,

*Gary Donhauser, Alison and Jerry Mohr, Lois Tripp*

## Secret Santa Update

On Saturday, December 18<sup>th</sup> we had 34 people participating in our parish's Secret Santa Christmas Party. Most participated in-person with exchanging gifts. Elizabeth Ann provided a competition game giving clues as to the history of various Christmas carol. When identified we all sang the carol. We ended the game in a tie.

Thank you to Katia Sanchez for organizing the Secret Santa and to Linda Pike and Carolyn Bonggi for decorating and setting up the food. Thank you also to Elizabeth Ann for the musical fun.



## The Roof

Buildings always present some problems. The latest in the past several months is several roof leaks. The first was in the Oculus, the round window over the Altar, which was repaired. There is some inside painting needed from this leak.

The next was a leak in the new roof over the Sacristy, this was repaired under warranty from the spring replacement. While the roofers were on site they also repaired a small leak at the parking lot entrance. They repaired that leak for free while they were on site.

The final issue is the roof on the Mission House, Threads of Hope. There is a leak at the Chimney. Some shingles are missing on the front portion of the roof. The Diocese has been approached for a possible grant to help replace this roof in the spring. There will be additional information in the coming months on the grant status.

We will be preparing for some minor spruce-up spring projects. Enjoy the winter and prepare for the spring.

Ed Hill  
Building And Grounds

## A Word from the Treasurer

I would like to thank everyone for their continued financial support. I am happy to report that we finished in the black for 2021. The switching from only online services to in-person service has been a distraction to the mission of St. Peter's. The Church Family has remained strong with the continued support of Refugee Resettlement, Blessing Box, Threads of Hope and food pantries.

Despite COVID St. Peter's remains strong. Thank you again.

Ed Hill  
Treasurer



*Tithes and offerings*

## Linen Pantry Update

During the month of December, the Linen Pantry served 24 families from 13 agencies. In addition, we sent Christmas cups filled with candy to 3 food pantries, hats, mittens and scarves to 2 food pantries and many small gifts to 1 pantry. Around late January we will be sending another supply of hats, mittens and scarves to the food pantries.



We wish to thank Mike and Sharon Taube and Carolyn Bongi's Needlecraft group for supplying us with many items we sent to the food pantries.

The Linen Pantry always needs Twin and Queen sheets, towels, Dashes' Market receipts, hats, mittens, scarves and Christmas cups (for next year).



## Tornados in Kentucky

*Bishop Terry White of the Diocese of Kentucky, is reeling after the terrible tornadoes that ripped through the western part of that state several weeks ago. The storm was likely the worst ever to hit Kentucky, and it left at least 76 people dead, including 12 children and thousands of people homeless. Many people in the Diocese have lost their homes, cars possessions and communities, and many are grieving friends and families who have died or been injured.*

By **donating** to Bishop White's discretionary fund, we can help make it possible for him and his staff to get funds to churches that were in the path of the storm and need immediate help.

**Donate to the Diocese of Kentucky online** or send a check payable to "Diocese of KY Bishop's Discretionary Fund" with "tornado relief" in the memo line and mail to:  
The Episcopal Diocese of Kentucky  
425 S. 2nd Street Suite 200  
Louisville, KY 40202



## Prayers of the People

**Long Term:** Becky P, Jim G, Kristie P, Ann Marie, Ron B, Suzanne and family, Gino L, Alfred, Bob R Sue and Don, Joann, Lucy, Lee & Jessica M, Judy E, Florence K, Ellen, Amy P, Ray B ,Dave L, Tim M, Wayne J, Joanne U, Cathy, Paula, Rick and Kristen, Tom and Joyce, Sharon H, Marilyn and Bob S, Jim M, Dan T, Brady, Renee B, Joe P, Bob M, Alyssa and family, Beth, Frank B, Joe M, Jenny R, Bob S and Dorothy G

**Short Term:** Monica, Sue & Dave S, Michelle, Dusty, Alissa, Carlene B, Jamie H, Kathy B, Deacon Joanne, Chris , Alisha, Monika S, Beth, Olivia, Lisa S, Don N, Sherie & Dale, Jenna, Anne M, Mary, Sarah M, Monica and Jane, Sister Mary Judith, Kelly and her unborn baby, Gary and Marty D, Andrea W, Fran, Gary K, Dennis M, Mary, Vicki, Jeff, MM, Isabelle, Missi L and family and Cheyenne..

**Home bound:** Sue W and Betty J.

**Military:** Ben H, Ben M and Aiden

Please contact me with requests, updates, corrections and please Thanksgivings.

Sue Gunn



01/01 Susan Gunn  
01/03 Melissa Lopat  
01/06 Deacon Tom Tripp  
01/10 Greg Palmer  
01/20 Carolyn Bongj  
01/29 Tori Paradise  
01/30 Kristen Tripp-Kelly



01/23 Deacon Tom and Lois Tripp



