

# The



# Rock

St. Peter Episcopal Church

March 2023

## From the Pastor's Desk

Dear People of God,

I owe you an apology. For various reasons, I have found myself a bit over-committed recently and unable to prepare and lead a Lenten study program for St. Peter's this year. What I had hoped to offer--and still hope to offer in the near future—is a short study on Celtic spirituality. The roots of Celtic Christianity can be traced the 5<sup>th</sup> century and the earliest Christians in the British Isles, evangelized by the famous missionary, St. Patrick. It's very much a creation-centered spirituality, one that sees the material world and our experiences in it as infused with the presence of the divine. In lieu of the fuller program I'd intended to offer, let me recommend to you just three concepts important for the Celtic tradition.

First, **thresholds**. These are the “spaces between,” when we move from one time to another (think, for instance, sunrise) or one place to another (for example, when we walk through a doorway. Thresholds are boundary places, “edge” places, places when we enact the movement from something old to something new, and they can be occasions for gratitude and opening oneself to a sense of renewal. Set your mind toward becoming more conscious of the thresholds of your day. They're right there all the time, each and every one an opportunity for a little rebirth.

Next, **encircling**. This is the prayerful practice of asking God for protection, to “encircle” and protect us, shield us, for the Lord is our refuge. You may well know this prayer attributed to St. Patrick, which we sing in our Hymn 370: “Christ be with me, Christ within me, / Christ

behind me, Christ before me, / Christ beside me, Christ to win me, / Christ to comfort and restore me, / Christ beneath me, Christ above me, / Christ in quiet, Christ in danger, / Christ in hearts of all that love me, / Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.” That's an encircling prayer. Take time to ask God to draw you nearer to Him, and “hide you in the shadow of His wings” (Psalm 17).

Finally, **learning by heart**. Coming out of the life and work of the Celtic monks, for whom books were relatively few and exceedingly precious, the memorization of Scripture was a powerful spiritual practice. What we memorize really does shape our minds and souls, and having God's word in mind brings us closer to God. A good place to start is the book of Psalms. Begin by taking just one or two verses that resonate with you, and make them your own by committing them to memory and meditating on them. Here's a good one, which is also an encircling prayer: “You, Lord, are my hiding-place; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with shouts of deliverance” (Psalm 32:8).

As you know, a holy Lent does not only involve giving something up. It can be even more important to “take something on”—that is, to try a new spiritual practice, one that draws you closer to the presence of God, which is really what Lent is all about. I commend these practices to you as we each pursue a holy Lent, and I assure you of my continuing prayers. God's peace be with you all!

Fr. Dan+



## Diakonia Musings

We are once again in the season of repentance and prayer, otherwise known as Lent. Most of the time, we cringe at the idea of being solemn for over 40 days while waiting for the alleluias to return. It is a time of feeling uncomfortable, looking inwards, being called out. It is a time we must engage in if we are to truly understand the message of the cross.

One of the hard issues we should think about, is that of the Church, our denomination, and our role in acting with superiority over people of color and accepting the untruth that some people are not as human as others. Jesus never told anyone, not a government, a religious belief, a culture, or a territory, to be exclusive. Just the opposite; Jesus modeled how to include everyone in the kingdom of God. He called his disciples out on their cultural and religious biases and He calls us out today.

As we engage in our prayer life throughout Lent, make a concerted effort to at least occasionally enter into a conversation with yourself and God, and ask that your heart be opened to the truth. Let the spirit move through you as we confront our many biases and prejudices in the coming year.

I have been trained as a facilitator of "healing circles", a tool used to gather diverse people together to explore hard topics with each other. Our dioceses will be organizing opportunities for "healing circles" to be held in response to the TOPS shooting. I will be one of the organizers and facilitators of these circles and will be including St. Peter's in the process. Please pray for me, the commission, and all the people that will be touched through the healing conversations. We hope to make a difference in the city of Buffalo, WNY, and our partnership dioceses, one person at a time. Shalom,

*Deacon Diana*

**This Lent keep the chocolate and give up  
Bigotry, Judgement, Misogyny,  
Hatred, Bias, Divisiveness**



## Our Little Roses Fund Raiser

Our Little Roses Home for Girls in Honduras is a charity of our Diocese which St. Peter's has been supporting for over 10 years.

This year during Lent, we will be asking for donations to be put towards Our Little Roses Capital Funds Project of expanding the second floor of their bilingual school. This will better accommodate the 300+ students who now attend the PreK – 8 school. The more affluent parents in San Pedro Sula, Honduras see the advantages of having their children (mostly boys) taught in a bilingual private school setting along with the girls in the Home.

The total cost for the Capital Funds Project is \$300,000. The first phase was started in the summer of 2022 at a cost of \$60,000 which was raised. They are currently raising money for Phase 2 which is \$40,000. Phase 3 will be \$100,000 and Phase 4 and 5 will be \$50,000 each.

In the past St. Peter's has collected needed items to be sent to the Home. But, because of the cost of getting it there, we now send only monetary donations to the main office in Miami. Honduras is the second poorest nation in our hemisphere. (Haiti is first.) The Home purchases the requested items and employ workers. This in turn helps to support the Honduran economy.

In the back of the church is the white "Angel Tree". Please put your donation in an envelope and put it into the collection plate. If paying by check, make it out to St. Peter's and list OLR Fund in the memo section of your check.

Please make a decision to not only give-up something for Lent but to take on a something for Lent like a donation to Our Little Roses.

If you have questions regarding Our Little Roses Home for Girls or you are interested in sponsoring one of the girls, speak to Merrie Hill.

## Celebrating 35 Years of Our Little Roses

Our Little Roses Home for Girls began 35 years ago. To celebrate this milestone there is a Buffet Dinner and Basket Raffle at The Grill at the Dome in Tonawanda on Wednesday, March 29<sup>th</sup>. Doors open at 5:30pm, dinner at 6L30pm. Tickets are \$35 and a cash bar is available. See Merrie Hill if interested in tickets.

### Linen Pantry Update



Between February 7<sup>th</sup> thru 28<sup>th</sup> we provided household goods for 17 families from 7 agencies. We delivered to each of

the 3 Food Pantries another large bag of hats, mittens and scarves. Also, each pantry received 20 mugs filled with a tea bag, a package of hot chocolate and a package of Cup of Soup and a piece of chocolate.

Last Monday a woman came to the Linen Pantry with three large bags of knitted hats, scarves and headbands. I asked her if they came from an organization or a church. She said “no”. She said her name was Maryann and she had made all of these items. She stated she had heard about the Linen Pantry at a garage sale she was helping at. A man was there and had put a number of household goods together. He told them about the Linen Pantry he was purchasing these items for. I knew right away that that man must have been Mike Taube. I know he and his wife Sharon love going to garage sales, flea markets, etc. They bring to the Linen Pantry all sorts of gently used items. Thank you, Mike and Sharon.

Besides Carolyn’s needlecraft group, at various times we have had others making hats and scarves for us. Our 85 year old knitter died a couple of years ago and now our current knitter is unable to assist due to severe health issues.

Thru Mike, the Lord has provided us with another crafter to make these needed items we give away to the three food pantries, our clients and the Blessing Box.

*Merrie Hill*



### Power of Prayer

There are a number of people who pray daily for those on St. Peter’s prayer list. The beginning of January I put my

friend’s name on our prayer list because her brother, who lived in Tennessee, died suddenly. Now her 96year-old mother who lived with him for 20 years now had to come to Buffalo to live with my friend. This was a drastic change in life styles for both of them because the mother and daughter never had a strong bond.

My friend told me every time things got tough and she got frustrated; she would say to herself “the people at St. Peter’s Church are praying for me”. Then she would feel better and then tackle the situation. Unfortunately, her mother died peacefully last week and her funeral was on her 97th birthday.

My friend thanks those at St. Peter’s for praying for her. Our prayers gave my friend the strength to keep going through this trying and difficult time.

*Merrie Hill*

### Blessing Box Update

The Blessing Box record keeping has moved into the 21st century. Gary Donhauser’s son has created a computerized accounting system. All donated items are logged in and out with-in 4 different areas. The program can even give totals as to the number of cans of peas, corn, etc. on hand.

Here is the tally for the total number of items we distributed in February for each of the 4 categories: Food – 355, Baby – 52, Toiletries – 126, Cleaning - 45



## Blessing Box- Stepping Up

The weather this month has given us many challenges. Food had frozen and seeped out of cans.

Snow and ice made the blessing box inaccessible. As you know, church was canceled, decreasing our donations. Even with these challenges, the need for food, personal products, cleaning products and pet food was still huge. We struggled to keep food on the shelves.

In addition to our weather and food shortage, we also need additional help filling the box. Fran and Lee stepped up last year when I had to have surgery to help out. They were great but had to stop helping us fill the box. The past couple of months have been hard on Gary and Lois, although you won't hear them complain. Both have done so much for us and had to step up for me once again. My family had a couple of health issues and have had to deal with some very personal deaths. We have also been out of town some too. **Basically, this is a plea for others to help us with this mission.** As you know from our previous Rock articles, there is a huge need in our community for this mission. Gary will be providing us with more details in this Rock. It takes less than a half an hour to look in the box to see what is needed, go in the church to get the supplies and put them out in the box. If you have a half an hour a week, you can help us, and we would really appreciate it.

Thank you for your donations. Please see Gary, Lois or me if there is any way you can step up and help us. Thank you so much.

*Alison Mohr*



It is hard for me to believe that the pet pantry has been part of our church now for ten years. Each year our members have donated more food and supplies than in the previous year. It always amazes me how generous our church members are. I just wanted to thank all of you

for all that you have done to support this mission.

For our tenth year, I thought maybe we could focus on one item a month to help build up stock for the box. In March, I would like to ask for donations of canned dog food. Please consider donating canned dog food this month. We will, of course, gladly accept other donations of food and pet supplies too. Thank you so much.

*Alison Mohr*

## Chili Cook-off Update

St Peter's Annual Chili Cook-off was held on February 12<sup>th</sup>. There were 8 varieties of chili to sample. The votes were all counted and the winner was Edward Hill IV (son of Ed Hill III, our Treasurer). Second place was Maria Pinti and third place was Gary Donhauser.

Past first place winners have been Ed Hill, Sharon Hill and now Edward Hill. Between now and next February perfect your chili recipe. We need to break the Hill cook-off dynasty.

## Save the Date

3/12 *Soup Sunday- Soup served after 10am service*

3/14 *Vestry Meeting, 6:30pm on Zoom*

3/21 *Rockettes Dinner, 5:30pm Family Tree*





Once there were three trees on a hill in the woods. They were

discussing their hopes and dreams when the first one said “Someday I hope to be a treasure chest. I could be filled with gold, silver and precious gems. I could be decorated and everyone could see my beauty”.

Then the second tree said, “Someday I will be a mighty ship. I will take Kings and queens across the waters and sail the world. Everyone will feel safe because of my might hull”.

Finally, the third tree said, “I will grow and be the tallest and straightest tree on this hill in the forest: People will see me and look up to my branches and think of the heavens and God and how close to them I am reaching. I will be the greatest tree of all time and people will remember me.

After of a few years of praying their dreams would come true, a group of woodsmen came upon them. When one came to the first tree, he said, it looks like a strong tree and it could be sold to a wood carpenter”. The tree was happy because he could be turned into a treasure chest.

At the second tree the woodsmen said “it looks strong and can be sold to a shipyard.” The second tree was happy because he knew he would become might ship.

When the woodsmen came to the third tree he said t looks good”. He just cut it down. The third tree knew his dream would not come true.

When the first tree went to the carpenter it was made into a feeding box for animals and filled with hay. It was placed in a barn. The second tree was made into a small boat. His dreams of being a mighty ship and carrying Kings came to an end, The third tree was cut into small pieces and left alone in the dark.

The years passed by and the trees forgot about their dreams. One day a man and a woman came to the barn. She had a baby and

placed him in the hay in the feed box that was from the first tree.

The man wished he had made a crib for the baby but the manger would have to do. The tree could feel the importance of this event and knew it had held the greatest treasure of all time.

Years later, a group of men got in the fishing boat made from the second tree. While they were out on the water, a great storm arose and the tree didn’t think it was strong enough to keep the men safe. The men woke the sleeping man. He stood and said “Peace” and the storm stopped. The tree then knew he carried the King of Kings in his boat.

Finally, someone came and got the third tree. It was carried through the streets as the people mocked the man who carried it. When they came to a stop. The man was nailed to the tree and raised in the air to die at the top of a hill. When Sunday came the tree realized that it was strong enough to stand on the top of a hill and be as close to God as possible, because Jesus had been crucified on it.

The moral of the story is when things don’t seem to be going your way, always know that God has a plan for you. If you place your trust in Him, God will give you great gifts. Each of the trees got what they wanted but not in the way they imagined.

We don’t always know what God has for us. We just know that His ways are not our ways, but his ways are always best.

*Germmain*



*an Episcopalian’s  
second chance on  
failed New Year’s  
Resolutions.*

# Prayer Requests

**Long Term:** Becky, Jim G, Kristie P, Ron B, Gino L, Alfred, Lee & Jessica M, Judy E., Joanne U, Beth, Sue & Dave S, Ron and Susan W, Lynda C, Dominic, Lindsey V., Jason, Bill, Finnegan M, Nicole, Dan & Sue H.

**Short Term:** Lori W, Marianne & family, Chris G, Joanne F, Marilyn S, Damar H and family, Michael M, Larry, Emma B, Kimm, Kathy and family, Bill and Cynthia G, Jerry M

**Military:** Ben, Brandon, Richie and Quincy

**Thanksgiving:** Diane G.

Please send me additions, corrections ad prayers of Thanksgivings

Sue Gunn



- 03/01 Karen Miller
- 03/02 Rose Amato
- 3/02 Samuel Scime
- 03/03 Pauline Talbot
- 03/06 Anabel Paradise
- 03/09 Robert Miller
- 03/10 Michelle Hill
- 03/16 James Gunn
- 03/18 Greg Lavis



03/19 Edward Hill III and Sharon Hill

