

# The



# Rock

St. Peter Episcopal Church

September 2023

## From the Pastor's Desk

Dear People of God,

I remember one of my first Sundays at my first parish after I was ordained to the priesthood. I had every conviction that God had put me where I belonged at that time, and that God had new and wonderful things in store for the congregation and me, so I preached about how God was beginning something new at the parish, and who knew what new and exciting things the Spirit had in store for us! After the service, one of the parishioners pulled me aside and politely but pointedly told me, "You should remember that people come to church because they want things there to be the same." My parishioner's point was, with the world being so full of change and uncertainty, people need church to be certain and stable.

I think of that conversation often. I understand that person's position, and I especially respect the willingness to share those thoughts with me directly. And to a degree I take the point: we all need some degree of stability in life, and why shouldn't church, especially if it's a parish we've attended for decades and has become a constant in our lives, be the place to expect that? But we should remember that it is Jesus Christ who "is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8), not the Church.

On August 27<sup>th</sup> we heard these words from Paul in his Letter to the Romans: "Do not be conformed to this world, but *be transformed by the renewing of your minds*, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect" (12:2). God is, to be sure, our "strong rock, a castle to keep [us] safe" (Psalm 31:3); God doesn't change. But *we do*. We worship God, in Paul's words, to be "transformed" and "renewed," and if we are continually transformed and renewed then the

Church itself cannot but be transformed and renewed. And it's through the Church's transformation, our transformation, that we find ourselves able to help the real transformation of the world which God intends.

Think about it for a moment. Is it really the world that changes all the time, or do we mostly see around us the "same old, same old"—the same injustices and animosities and destructiveness and greed? And how can that sameness be healed but by a transformed Church sharing the transforming love of God in Christ?

I write all this with this picture in mind. It's the 2023 first-year class at Yale Divinity School, where my daughter, Rachel, has begun her studies. I know it's small and you can't see it too clearly, but trust me, it shows 140 or so people, young, diverse, energetic, committed to the love of God and neighbor.



I'm not writing as a proud dad (although I am one). I'm writing as a grateful member of the Body of Christ. Because for me, and I hope for

you, this picture fills me with hope that the Spirit *is* leading us into all truth (John 16:13), that the Church does continue to change, and with that, so can the world.

Yours in Christ,  
*Fr. Dan+*



## Diakonia Musings

Some of you have been able to attend the Saturday retreats at the church in response to the Episcopal Church and our Partnership's call to talk about bias, prejudice and the way systemic racism has influenced our lives and the church without even realizing it. We have one more retreat coming up on October 28. To round out the year, we have one more opportunity in which you can participate.

On December 2, St. Peter's will be hosting a Racial Healing Circle. I have had the privilege of being trained as a co-facilitator for "circles", and I am very excited to bring this tool to our parish, as a way to listen to others stories, to deepen our understanding of the human race as God's children. My training has been through the Foundation for a Greater Buffalo. They received grant money from The Kellogg Foundation to train 20 people from ten different non-profits and then on top of that, Kellogg has granted each of the non-profit organizations grant money to host these circles as a response to the TOPS shooting!

Our sponsors want us to use the Racial Healing Circle name and format while using their grant money and I know it might make people think it is about white people being put on the spot so people of color can somehow heal because they have called out racism. This is not the purpose at all. The circle is a chance to have conversations with people of diversity; different cultures, orientations, economic backgrounds, and faiths, and recognize their common humanity and make connections. It is a way to plant seeds of understanding that promote personal and societal healing, one person at a time.

I will be co-facilitating with Denise Merriweather from St. Philips and we are looking for 12-20 people to work with us for 3 hours. We will start

at 9:45 so you can grab a coffee and officially begin at 10:00. The circle itself will take about 2 1/2 hours and then we will all eat lunch together.

If you are interested in this opportunity, put it on your calendar and I will have a signup sheet in November. I know it seems like so far away, but we all know how time is just flying by! We are looking for diversity within the participants so if we have a difficult time doing that through our own parishioners and friends, we can possibly invite people from St. Philip's. If we have more than 20 who want to participate, we can host two circles and pick a second date that works. For now, think about whether or not you can come. I am so excited about bringing this experience to the church and know you will not be disappointed when you participate.

*Deacon Diana*

## Summer Outreach Recap



Things have been quite busy this summer. Two donation drives have been fulfilled, one refugee birth, and another prison weekend is about to begin.

1. The second round of "welcome box" gathering for a refugee family has been collected and distributed to the Buffalo Refugee Partnership in the Tri-Main Building. Kudos and thanks go out to Linda Pike, Carolyn, Bongji, the Linen Pantry Crew (Carma Miccoli, and Marcia Scime), and Lois Tripp, for collecting the items. Thanks also go to Mike Taube who helped me deliver the goods (15 boxes and several bags of linens). The partnership was running very low of donations and heartily welcomed our efforts.
2. Our annual Back-To-School drive has also concluded, with delivery to the Moises and Balanovych families occurring the week of August 20. Again, thanks to the many people who braved the crowds to secure the school supplies for the 7 refugee children recipients, and our neighbor at the end of the parking lot.
3. The next CCM prison retreat will take place September 28-30 at Collins Correctional. I will be serving on the OUTSIDE team this time around with Missy Lopat, who be in charge of the kitchen and meal preparation.

Once again, I am putting the call out to our parish for support. Our needs are homemade cookies (I pledged us for 8 dozen), muffins (4 doz, pledged), banners, cards of encouragement, and placemats. Look for announcements in the church bulletins during September. The last day for collection of any items will be **Wednesday, 9/26.**

4. Our Congolese refugee mother just had her 8<sup>th</sup> child, the second one born here. His name is Arona, pronounced Aaron. The family put out a call for diapers and baby clothes. Carma and the Linen Pantry women responded, along with a few others. Deacon Joanne Frake secured a diaper service for the family.

We continue in the power of the Spirit, and are so blessed.

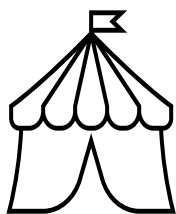
*Deacon Tom*

## Presiding Bishop Scheduled for Surgery



Presiding Bishop Michael Curry is resting at home after hospitalization to address a recurrence of internal bleeding. He will undergo surgery on September 8th, with an estimated 2-3 week recovery period, after which he is expected to resume his regular work. Please pray for the Presiding Bishop, his family and his entire medical team.

*(For those who don't know, Bishop Curry was raised in Buffalo when his father was the Rector of St. Philip's Episcopal Church)*



## ST PETER'S FRIENDSHIP BAZAAR

Your Bazaar merchants have been planning a refresh to our display area in the undercroft and new merchandise to offer you. We will have new handmade greeting cards, both original and recycled, new small gift items and the return of

our Buffalo Bills "Kiosk" (GO BILLS!!) that was so popular last year. We will be sending updates on merchandise, both general and holiday, via email from time to time.

Creation Season will soon be upon us. You may recall that last year, we offered dreamcatcher-style wall hangings made from vintage doilies and recycled fabrics. This year, we are asking for your help. We are pretty certain that you all dislike junk mail as much as we do. In keeping with our stewardship of our planet, we have found a way to recycle some of this mail to keep it out of landfills. Would you please save the envelopes, both outer and return mail, for us. If you would kindly open the outer envelope along one end by cutting off only a sliver to remove the contents, we can reuse them in our projects. We will provide a box in the Bazaar. Just drop them (envelopes only, no contents please!) in when you come to church during the month of September.

Many thanks for your marvelous support of this fundraising project for our refugee ministry efforts.

\*If you have ideas for inexpensive crafted items you would like to see available for sale or enjoy crafting and/or selling, please contact.

*Deacon Joanne*

## The 4 Generation Fade

1. Parents don't make church a high priority for their children.
2. Kids grow up and make it less of a priority for their kids.
3. Those kids grow up and make it no priority for their kids.
4. Those kids grow up with no concept of God.

Our priorities today effect generations



## Stella Niagara Retreat

It's almost here! St. Peter's Women's retreat will be held at The Retreat Center at Stella Niagara, NY on Friday, Sept 8 – Saturday, Sept 9<sup>th</sup>. We have a total of 12 attending the retreat, with the leader.

We will gather for prayer, guided meditation, discussion & relaxation with our retreat leader Suzy Shallowhorn. Suzy is a Deacon in the United Church of Christ faith and holds a certification in spiritual direction from the Haden Institute as well as a certificate in Spiritual Direction Training from the St. Joseph Center for Spirituality. She has recently retired from SUNY at Buffalo's Human Resource Dept. She has a long background working with groups. Reminder to those attending -*Bring a sacred object that has meaning for you.*

*Thank you to Fr. Dan, our Vestry, and the Meath fund, for their support and helping us keep our costs down. Thank you to Ed Hill for his coordination of our payments, and donations.*

Shalom,  
Lois Tripp



Stella Niagara's Labyrinth



## Flu Shot Clinic

Flu shots will be administered at St. Peter's on September 17 from 11am - 1pm by the Wegman's staff.

They are available to anyone, friends, neighbors, parishioners. Currently we have 21 signed-up but Wegman requires a minimum of 25.

Please **RSVP** Sue if you have not already done so. Please convinced additional family members, friends or neighbors to get their flu shot at our church. Most insurances cover the cost. so be sure to bring your health Insurance card with you.

Sunday, August 27th we held our annual family picnic at the Friendship House in Elliott Creek Park. We had beautiful weather, wonderful people and plenty of mouthwatering tasty food, made by many.

Thank you to all that attended whether you brought something or not it was nice to see your smiling faces in attendance. 25 people were there to eat hot dogs, Greek pasta salad, fruit salad, macaroni tuna salad, crabmeat salad, toss salad, baked cheese potatoes, peanut butter Bundt cake, strawberry cheesecake, pineapple cupcakes, brownies, watermelon, Mexican wedding cakes cookies. I apologize if I missed listing any other goodies that were on the table. Diana again this year put together a great little skit for us to act out for the audience in attendance.

I did appreciate all the help cleaning up without being asked. I am so blessed to belong to St. Peters and I appreciate and love my church family.

Yours in Christ,  
Michael, Taube, Jr. Warden



## St. Peters Family Picnic

## Linen Pantry Update



In July the Linen Pantry provided household items for 12 families from 7 Agencies. In August they provide items for 16 families from 9 agencies.

More and more clients are not only asking for household items but also asking for cleaning supplies. Most of the places they are moving into need a good cleaning. And these supplies can be expensive. We have used our limited funds to purchase some for them. If you have any new or unopened cleaning supplies such as Comet cleanser, dish washing soap, laundry detergent, sponges, wipes, household cleaner, plastic pail etc, If YOU would like to make some cleaning cloths, that would be helpful also.

A thank you to Mike and Sharon Taube for the garage sale items they find for the pantry almost weekly. Our shelves can never be too full. An order for a large family can empty our shelves for the basic items.

*Merrie Hill.*

## Online Sunday Service



The Pandemic has brought many changes in the way we live and our day-to-day activities. One of the most significant is the online

Sunday Service. Early on we searched for the most economical and effective platform to stream our services. Zoom seemed to fit our needs and with the purchase of a camera and microphone we were in business. Eventually it was found that zoom had limitations in the ability to reproduce music. The general audio was ok but during group prayers and response the audio was garbled. Three years after the start of the pandemic it became apparent that online service would be a permanent addition to the Sunday Service.

After researching several options, a vendor was asked to submit a proposal to install a much-improved system. This audio and visual configuration is used in many churches in Western New York including our own Cathedral. The proposal was presented to the Vestry and approved. Starting on September 5<sup>th</sup> the installation of the new equipment will be started and completed that week. Tentatively the 10 AM Sunday Service on the 10<sup>th</sup> will be live streamed via this new system. Directions will be distributed on how to access the live stream and view the recorded version. We are looking forward for this new and improved broadcast.

*Ed Hill*

## Summer Gratitude!

Thank you to all those who have maintained their donations in support of St. Peter's over the summer. With vacations and other activities, it is so easy not to continue to provide the necessary support that fuels St. Peter's.

*Ed Hill*



**September 10<sup>th</sup>**  
**In-person services**  
**upstairs in the church.**  
**No longer downstairs**



**Long Term:** Jim G, Kristie P, Ron B, Gino L, Lee & Jessica M, Judy E, Joanne U, Beth, Sue & Dave S, Ron W, Lynda C, Dominic, Lindsey V, Jason, Bill, Finnegan M, Nicole, Sue H, Joyce J, Emma B, Kelly, Marilyn S, Kathy and family, Mike, Billy F, Rickie P, Becky P, Giada F, Jordyn S. and Bray S

**Short Term:** Naomi, Olive P, Suzanne J, Stephen R, Alison M, John D, Linda P, Trim D, Joan J, Susan, Demian, Cynthia G, Maria and Dick W, Carolyn B, Joey, Paul L, Jean, Emily and Madilyn, Bishop Michael Curry

**Military:** Ben M, Brandon G, Richie, Quincy and John

Sue Gunn



9/01 John Lopat  
9/03 Linda Pike  
9/07 Maria Pinte  
9/10 Ruth Palmer  
9/13 Damon Piatov III  
9/15 Dominic Passariella  
9/21 Marilyn Schulze  
9/22 Ruth Lewis  
9/26 Florence KilamboKalumba  
9/28 Jerry Mohr



9/18 Benjamin and Jessica Lewis  
9/24 Michael and Sharon Taube

“Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.”  
(Luke 6:27-28 )