

# The



# Rock

St. Peter Episcopal Church

Established 1953

February 2024

## From the Pastor's Desk



Dear People of God,

As you know, we have four canonical Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Each tells of Jesus's ministry, death, and resurrection, but no two are exactly the same. There's plenty of overlap among them, sure, but there are plenty of significant differences.

It has always seemed to me a great blessing that the story of Jesus was never limited to any single, supposedly definitive, version, even in the Bible. Four Gospels collectively testify that no one person can ever “nail down” what Jesus was all about. (In fact, one thing all four Gospels do have in common is they show the people who thought they had Jesus quite literally “nailed down” once and for all found out they'd failed—and thanks be to God!) The story of Jesus has always been a living story, *retold* in an amazing variety of ways: in countless languages, across cultures, and in every form imaginable—children's books, films, poetry, comics, sculpture, painting, and on and on.

This is as it should be. “There is one Lord, Jesus Christ” (1 Cor 8:6), but there's no one way to bear witness to him. Many ways to tell the story, all reminding us that we each are called to tell it in our own way. And Lent, which begins this month with Ash Wednesday on February 14, offers a wonderful chance to renew your relationship with God by being more deeply involved in the Jesus story and thereby more inspired to share it in the way that is unique to you.

There are many ways to deepen your spiritual roots and in doing so find renewed life during Lent. Beginning a new prayer practice, daily Scripture reading, giving up some food or activity for Lent, doing some intentional act of kindness or generosity with no one knowing but God—each of these and more is worth considering and committing to. And there is also participating in the Lenten program Deacon Diana and I have been preparing this year!



On February 25, March 10, and March 24 (the second, fourth, and last Sundays in Lent), during our coffee hour fellowship, we will be sharing artistic images of the Jesus story of all kinds, traditional ones, contemporary ones, radical ones, to see which ones resonate with you, to generate conversation and faith sharing, to help all of us think about how these artistic ways of telling the story might help us find our ways to tell the story. No homework, no outside-of-Sunday time commitment, no pressure—just a chance to gather, gaze, and gab 😊 I cannot tell you how much I'm looking forward to this!

I hope you all can participate. And I hope that you will be able to find the time this year to participate in other Lenten activities coming up this month and next: Ash Wednesday services (10 a.m. and 7 p.m., plus Ashes to Go out in the parking lot from 7:30 to 9:00 in the morning), Holy Week services, Stations of the Cross. More information will be forthcoming on all of these. We've got a week or two still

before it begins, but it pays to start planning for Lent now.

Because we've each got a unique story to tell of Jesus, and Lent comes around to help us learn how to tell it.

Yours in Christ,  
Fr. Dan+

## Diakonia Musings

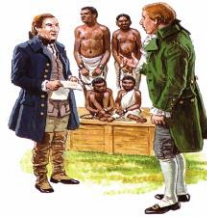
These past few weeks, I have been concentrating on working with other co-facilitators to design some Racial Healing Circles at other churches. We are moving towards the goal of holding twelve circles within a year. For me personally, it is exciting to be able to do something small to contribute to the building of a beloved community, one circle at a time.

January 16-20, while you were all home-bound due to the storm, I managed to fly out of Buffalo with 18 other people from the Partnership and make our way to Montgomery, Alabama. We met up with the Bishop and three others from Pennsylvania at the hotel when we finally arrived after many air delays. Our pilgrimage group, then spent our days in the chilly south, learning about the international slave trade, the Domestic American slave trafficking that continued even after slave TransAtlantic trade was outlawed, the slaves were freed, the fight for the rights of blacks to actually gain the freedom they were promised, and the enslavement of people that continues to evolve under the guise of incarceration.

We went to Selma and walked over the *Edmund Pettus Bridge*, just like the freedom marchers did on that bloody Sunday as they tried to make their way to the state capital to speak with the governor about voting rights. We visited the *Legacy Museum* that was an interactive experience telling the story of Enslavement to Mass Incarceration. *The National Memorial for Peace and Justice* was a place like no other. We walked among hanging slabs that had known names of black men, women, and children etched into them. Those names allow us to remember the people that were lynched in a Jim Crow South. Other

states, from North to South (including NY) where whites harbored enough hatred to look the other way when the KKK and white supremacists falsely accused and executed at will, are included in the exhibit.

The actual Greyhound Bus station where the young *Freedom Riders* protested about segregation and were locked in the bus as it was set on fire, is now a museum. We visited there and the *Rosa Parks Museum* also.



I walked where the slaves were auctioned as animals, stayed in a hotel that had been a cotton warehouse, and saw the river stop where boats and trains brought slaves from the North. I had no idea that New York City was a big shipping port for slaves. Along with Rhode Island, Massachusetts, the Carolinas and Virginia, we contributed to the trafficking of almost 10 million people.

St. John's Episcopal Church in Montgomery is the old, rich, "white" church. They had "blacks" worship in the galley, separate from the white parishioners that owned them or for whom they worked. In 1899, St. John's decided to be charitable and build "those people" their own church. It is a cute wooden church, not too far from St. John's. We had dinner and a service at both churches. Members of The Church of the Good Shepherd joined us for the eucharist and then served us a soul food meal. We laughed and enjoyed Southern hospitality and left feeling like we had made new friends.

If you have the opportunity to visit Montgomery, Alabama, GO!! I can't wait to go again.

"When we listen to the stories of others, we develop empathy, and when we have empathy and can feel, we are the ones who are forever changed."

Deacon Diana





## Souper Bowl Sunday

Well, it's time to pick your super bowl favorite for February 11, and help stock our **Blessing Box** at the same time

We're asking all of you to bring in a can of soup and place it in one of two boxes (or bins) that will be awaiting you in the narthex Sunday, **February 11th**. Will you choose the Kansas City Chiefs, led by Taylor Swift and her entourage; or will you choose the San Francisco 49's commandeered by the leagues last guy chosen in the 2023 Draft (Mr. Irrelevant)?

If you can't abide by the Bills' losing, or you hate football altogether, bring **two** cans and put them outside either box so we can feel your pain.

I will playfully announce this straw (I mean soup) poll down at coffee hour- all for a great cause. Thanks in advance for your generosity.

*Deacon Tom*

## A Story of Humans

I recently read an e-book by Brian McClaren titled *The Seventh Story*. It's a tale of how THE PEOPLE (humans) came to live and interact with one another throughout time. I'll give you the condensed version:

One of the people a long, long time ago took a shiny object from another and said, "*Because I have a shiny object, you have to listen to me*". Thus, the first story was to rule over others.

### **DOMINATION**

People became unhappy that rulers oppressed them, so a second story was invented. Let's overthrow the ruler-**REVOLUTION**. This didn't work well because it just shifted the oppression in a different direction.

Then came **ISOLATION**. Revolutionaries withdrew into isolation spaces, used the same olde stories to run themselves, competing to be in charge and dominating each other. Domination and isolation then had a merger. If they could just get rid of people they didn't like, or looked, acted, and spoke differently from them, then it would fix things. The 4<sup>th</sup> story of **PURIFICATION** was born.

The people still weren't happy, so they convinced themselves that **ACCUMULATING** things like money, toys, or nations would make all well.

People kept hurting, and hurting each other, so they would make sure that no one would ever forget that they were victims; that suffering was their identity, and that no one had suffered as much as them. The 6<sup>th</sup> story was one of **VICTIMIZATION**.

Finally, a poet came to town- a storyteller who knew that all the prior stories were destined to fail, because they all pretend that THE PEOPLE should be in some form of competition.

His new story planted the seed of **RECONCILIATION**, where human beings are no longer the protagonists of the world. With reconciliation we still get to win, just not at anybody else's expense. The new protagonist is **LOVE!**

We recently celebrated the appearance of this poet in his birth, baptism, and glory on a mountaintop. In 40 days or so, we will celebrate his extraordinary return to us (forever) in resurrection.

I would like to suggest that we all study carefully the first six stories of the human condition in these 40 days Lent, so that we can fully rejoice in the 7<sup>th</sup>.

Peace and blessings,  
*Deacon Tom*

## Blessing Box Update

We begin the New Year thanking everyone for your support this past year. St. Peter's always steps up to the needs of the community.

As you know we are now self-supporting. Our efforts, along with our neighbors help us to fill the box. We continue to obtain gift cards from businesses, and to take advantage of low-cost food and snack items from local agencies.

We have stopped the paper products and personal need portion of our Blessing box. Those items are precious to the people that

use the Blessing Box as they would have to pay cash to purchase at the store. On a trial basis, St Peter's will offer a Donation Day, during coffee hr., with Personal products, Soap and Paper products. The users of the Blessing Box may come down to the undercroft to choose a few items they might need Gary Donhauser and Lois Tripp will do coffee hour that week and be available to help with the donations. We will also offer them a cup of coffee, tea, and snacks. It will give us an opportunity to meet and greet. Our first **Donation Day will be Sun., February 11<sup>th</sup>.**

We still feel that we must feed the hungry first, so in February **we ask for donations of a hearty can of soup** and if you are able to also contribute **1 personal care item: soap, detergent, or toilet paper item** that will be put toward the special donation day. Our **pet food donation item of the month is canned cat or dog food or treats.**

God Bless you everyone!

*Gary Donhauser, Lois Tripp, Alison Mohr and Tori Paradise*



**February 14th**

- 7:30am 9am Ashes to Go – in church parking lot (Weather permitting)**
- 10:00am Holy Eucharist and Imposition of Ashes**
- 7:00pm Holy Eucharist and Imposition of Ashes**

## Our Little Roses Lenten Donations



During Lent we will be collecting money for Our Little Roses (OLR). For those of you who are unfamiliar with this Diocesan charity, it is a home for about girls in San Paulo

Sulo, Honduras. It provides a loving home for abandoned and neglected girls from infancy to adulthood. OLR focuses on developing spiritual, emotional and intellectual, wholeness for each of the girls. OLR provides the right educational programs for each girl depending on need. All the girls are given an opportunity to participate in extra-curricular activities such as dance, music and cultural arts. There is a need to support these educational programs but with over 65 girls this can be expensive. Whether a girl is in pre-school, elementary, high school or college level, educational support is needed.

Diana Fride, founder of OLR, suggested we request **our Lenten donation be used to help support the educational programs** for the girls. Educating these girls is one of the fastest and most effective ways to end poverty and injustice towards women in Honduras, the 2<sup>nd</sup> poorest country in our hemisphere. It will make a better life for a future family.

Lois and Allison Carter and I have been to OLR Honduras and have stayed at the home many times. We know dollars spent to support this effort are used wisely as OLR has many successful young women who are contributing to making the Honduran Society a better place. Many have gone to college and graduated as teachers, secretaries, engineers and one is a dentist. The girls with bi-lingual skills can easily get a good paying job.

To contribute to the Our Little Roses fundraiser, make your check out to St. Peter's indicating Our Little Roses or OLR in the memo section.

*Merrie Hill*



## Annual Meeting

Our annual meeting was held after church on **Sunday January 28<sup>th</sup>**.

Twenty-five parishioners were present. The meeting was also available to watch on YouTube.

The 2023 Annual report was available for all to read. Please take the time to read the reports and get a sense of everything that has gone on at St. Peters this past year. Several copies are left in the undercroft, and I would think it could be forwarded to anyone via e-mail on request.

Several were thanked for their generosity in volunteering their time and talent. Fr. Dan was also recognized for his five years of excellent spiritual direction and leadership as our Priest in Charge.

**The Election for Warden and Vestry was held after the following slate was read.**  
**Warden: Lois Tripp - Jr Warden (Mike Taube will be Sr Warden 2024-25)**  
**Vestry: Pauline Talbot -3-year term**  
**Kathy Bates-2-year term**  
**Carma Miccoli-3 yr. term**

*No further nominations from the floor, and the Slate was approved without opposition.*

Lee McElhinny, Katie Hilleke, and Mary Jane Campas will remain on Vestry to complete their terms. Thank you to Merrie Hill and Dawn Rezabek for serving on Vestry and completing their terms. Many thanks to Alison Mohr for stepping in to fill an unexpected Vestry vacancy these past few months.

## Election for Convention delegates

The one day Convention for the Episcopal Diocese of WNY & NW Pa (October) will be held in Erie, Pa. The following delegates and alternates were approved to represent St. Peter's by election.

### Delegates:

1. Elizabeth Ann Schascheck
2. Sharon Hill
3. Mike Taube

### Alternates:

1. Lois Tripp
3. Missi Lopat

*Lois Tripp*

### Voice from the Pew

Sitting down Monday morning after the Annual Meeting with a cup of tea and carefully read the 2023 Annual Report which was very meaningful. The in-person meeting is time limited of course. It is always truly amazing to read in print all that is accomplished. St Peter's is a very special family.

*Linda Pike*

## Linen Pantry Update

In January we served 12 families from 5 different agencies. The numbers are down from the last couple of months but we had a snow storm that kept the Linen Pantry and some agencies either closed.

We are happy to report we received money in January from Dash's, parishioners and a "friend" of the Linen Pantry:

The Linen Pantry is self-sufficient. We don't receive any money from the church's budget. The church does pay for heating and electrical bills and maintain the building. We exist from physical and monetary donations.

We can use most household items except furniture and clothes. We always need twin & queen sheets and comforters, bath towels, wash clothes, lamps, new shower curtains and rings. More and more of our clients do not have a stove in their apartment . So, we need microwaves, electric frying pans, and hot plates.

The agencies are hurting for money so they are supplying their clients less and less. They are turning to us to supply cleaning supplies. If you donate new cleaning supplies to the Linen Pantry, put them on the Mission House front porch. If they are for the Blessing Box, put them in the box on the front pew, the shopping cart in the back of the church or in a box near the Bazaar in the undercroft.



**Long Term:** Jim G, Kristie P, Lee & Jessica M, Francis & Judy E, Joanne U, Jason, Bill, Finnegan M, Emma B, Kelly, Marilyn S, Kathy and family, Rickie P , Becky P, Giada F, Olive P, John D, Rachel, Jean, Dick and Maria W, Sharon H, Michael Curry, Kristy G., Scott, Lynda C, Sue H and Dan D.

**Short Term:** Florence, Kelly T, Carma, Rick B, Nicole, Elaine M, Bob P, Dan T, Donna Art and Sheila W, Wallace and Angel, Ronald N, Zach I, Alisha, Melissa and family, Suzanne S and Allie G.

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

Please alert me to any corrections, updates or thanksgivings.

God Bless!  
Sue Gunn



2/03 Megan Smith  
2/04 Suzi Coury Ferreire  
2/05 Jane Cushman  
2/13 Michael Kankiewicz  
2/24 Edward Hill III  
2/15 Mary Jane Campus



2/14 Conroy Clarke and Maria Sanchez Clarke

I WOULD GIVE UP  
**CHOCOLATE**  
BUT I'M NOT A QUITTER