

The



Rock

St. Peter Episcopal Church

Established 1953

May 2024

From the Pastor's Desk

Dear People of God,

You may have seen this statistic. (I may have mentioned it before, in fact.) Over one in five Americans identifies as “spiritual but not religious.” But what is far more troubling to me as a priest—a “spiritual leader,” if you will—is that roughly one in five Americans identifies as “religious but not spiritual.” What can that possibly mean? It seems, heaven help us, that a significant number of Americans participate regularly (?) in religious rituals, but do so mainly because they find them obligatory, habitual, comforting, or whatever, not because it feeds their spirit or draws them closer to God.

And I can't help but think there's a relationship between those two statistics. For one thing, if there are that many people going to church regularly—“religious” people—who are nonetheless not spiritual, it probably feeds a perception by those not going to church that if they're looking for spiritual nourishment, they're unlikely to find it there. On top of that, I wouldn't be surprised if many, maybe most, of those “spiritual but not religious” Americans *have been baptized*, and if that's true, then of course they're spiritual! Why would they not be!? We religious folk baptize in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy *SPIRIT*, we thank God for raising the baptized to “a new life of grace” by the Holy *Spirit*, we ask God to sustain them with the Holy *Spirit* and give them a “*spirit* to know and love” God. Of course, they're spiritual. God made them so.

He just didn't make them religious. He never said He would, by the way. Religion—its

rituals, its rules, its symbols, its community—is something humans invent and develop in order to nourish people spiritually so they can grow in the faith. Please don't think I'm trying to say anything cynical or disparaging about religion per se. I think it's necessary, inasmuch as it's unavoidable—like family (and families can look to be families in many different ways) or politics (and politics can be good or bad, helpful or harmful). And because it's necessary, it's all the more necessary it be done well. But if religion is to be done well—if it's going to help people encounter and draw closer to the Holy One—it *must be infused by the Holy Spirit*.

Of course, I write this with an eye toward Pentecost coming later this month, the great feast day when we celebrate the gift of the



All of them were
filled with
the Holy Spirit!
Acts 2.4

Holy Spirit. Not to put too fine a point on it, but if what happened at Pentecost with the gift of the Holy Spirit was, as is often said, the “birth of the Church,” then the Church itself was pretty clearly born “spiritual but not religious.” As we read in the Book of Acts, at Pentecost, “All of them were *filled with the Holy Spirit* and began to speak in other languages, as the *Spirit* gave them ability.” Spiritual, absolutely. Not religious. The religious part came soon enough—organized prayer meetings in the first Christian households, new converts ceremonially baptized, the Eucharist celebrated in the earliest decades of the Church. And that was all to the good! But the religious part can only be *good* insofar as we who are the Church are just as filled with the effusive Spirit of God as those first disciples were.

I would argue that “spiritual but not religious” is shapeless, and always runs the risk of cultivating narcissism and individualism. But I

would argue “religious but not spiritual” is *empty*, and that may be worse, because it undermines what religion itself is supposed to help foster. I am so looking forward to celebrating Pentecost with you! And I am ever grateful that you at St. Peter’s are always open to the power of the Spirit, like the disciples at Pentecost who knew firsthand the power of that mighty wind that rushed into that house and into their souls. It’s what makes religion worthwhile: gathering each and every Sunday to be *filled*.

Blessings,
Fr. Dan+



I See Red and Green, But It’s Not Christmas!

When you read this, we should be rapidly approaching Pentecost Sunday and the long liturgical season that follows. The birth, death, and resurrection of our Lord now lies behind us, for now.

The celebration of Pentecost should be OUR celebration, as it is technically the beginning of the church. That’s us! And the appointed color for this important day is **RED**. **Red** of course signifies the flames of the Holy Spirit that came upon those gathered in the name of Jesus

But I am thinking of **red** as the stop sign red; or the traffic light red. Along with celebrating the bestowing of the flames of the Holy Spirit, we should just take time and **STOP**.

STOP, as in taking in the birth of Christianity. Begun by plain men (and a few women) who were inspired and graced by an incarnate God to go forth in word and deed and give people hope for a better life.

STOP, and take in the inner strength and courage of those humans who carried that Spirit forward through the 21 centuries since, and fought against the lures of “the world” as Jesus put it. Some were so remarkable they

were designated as Saints. We need to thoughtfully consider that lineage that carried the flame forward and laid it at our doorsteps. **WE** are the church.

The whole season that follows Pentecost Sunday is then marked by the color **GREEN**. That to me signifies **GO**. That signifies to me: after taking time for serious reflection of who we are and where we came from as a “church”, **WE** need to continually be **ACTIVE** in words and deeds.

We need to take the morality, principles, and integrity that Jesus demonstrated for us, along with the simple commandments he asks of us- to make the world a better place. I think we do a commendable job with our small but impactful gathering, but we can never be satisfied in this needy, hurting world of ours.

RED = contemplation of our roots and assignments

GREEN= keep on truckin

Happy Pentecost Everyone!
Deacon Tom

Diakonia Musings

On Earth Day, I had the privilege of facilitating a healing circle that focused on the theme of “healing the earth.” There were people from different backgrounds and involvement in creation care so the conversation was



enlightening. One of the things we did was to read the Native American Thanksgiving Address, a prayer litany of thanks for all of creation, the planets and stars, the water and land, the air and the plants, the animals that live on the earth and the humans who live inter connectedly with creation. A Native American facilitator spoke after the address and said that most of their people say this as soon as they get up in the morning, as a reminder that we are not alone and we must be mindful and voice our gratitude for all we have been gifted to us by the creator.

As the season slowly unfolds and displays all

the colors of the rainbow, smells of earth. the air and water, and sounds of our creature brothers and sisters, let us start our days with gratitude for all we have been given. I challenge you to take a walk-in nature, sit by a tree, take a ride and have a picnic by a body of water or just sit in silence. When we connect with nature, we are receiving this gift from God and once we connect with creation, we will be inclined to do some little steps towards healing the earth.

Save the date for Friday, August 2 to join me in East Otto for our third outdoor retreat. We will enjoy each other's company as we give thanks and gratitude while spending time in nature. Think about coming again or giving it a first try, as we pray, share, learn, create and of course eat as people of God.

Deacon Diana

Pop Bottles and Cans

Do you have a collection of empty pop bottle and cans you need to get rid of? If so, bring them to St. Peter's and put them in the hallway before you enter the kitchen. Now that Gary Donhauser is back from knee surgery, he will return them with the money going to the Blessing Box.



Books, Books, Books

Bring your books that you no longer want to St. Peters. They can include adult as well as children's books. Possibly by Sunday, May 12th Alison Mohr will put together a book sale. This will provide you with reading material for the summer and the proceeds will go to the Blessing Box Ministry.

Votive Candles

Near the Columbarium is the votive candle rack. There you can say a prayer and light a candle. As your candle burns, your prayers are ascending. On the front of the rack is a slot to put money for the cost of the candle(s) you burn. Many candles have been burned but there has been little or no money. Please pay at least 50 cents per candle if you are able.

Bishop Rowe's Visit – May 5th

Just a reminder, Bishop Sean Rowe, our Diocesan Bishop, will be visiting St. Peter's on Sunday, May 5th. He will be attending both the 8am and the 10am services. A pot-luck luncheon will follow the 10am service.

Rockettes Dinner- May23rd

The next Rockettes dinner will be on Tuesday, May 23rd at 5:30pm at Family Tree. Last month there were 17 of us enjoying each other's company. Reservations have been made for the private room. However, there is no guarantee will get it.

Save the Date

On **May 20th at 7:00pm St. Benedict Church**, 1317 Eggert Road will be hosting a **Holy Spirit Ecumenical Service**. Everyone is encouraged to join them for an evening of Song and Prayer. Refreshments to follow.



Linen Pantry Update

In April we provided household items for 16 families from 6 agencies. We received donations from Calvary Episcopal Church.

These were extra household item that were not needed for the refugee family whose apartment they helped set-up

We also received a large quantity of sheets and comforters from a "Buy Nothing" apt and a large donation of sheets and pillow cases found on the porch. We are grateful for all the donations we receive.



Blessing Box News

February -April have been busy and somewhat difficult months due to surgeries and illnesses within our families. Everyone did the best they could, and we managed to keep the ministry going. Many thanks to Carlene

Boisaubin for joining our group and filling in. Alison Mohr has stepped in to help keep the blessing box filled on some occasions. Deacon Tom helped me when I wasn't moving very well.

The surrounding community has stepped up and has donated several items. We have also had the help of our young adult church family. Shawn Mohr has graduated from college and lives out of state and Annabel Paradise is living in NYC as a college student. Shawn has purchased many canned and boxed food items and brought them home or his parents do when they visit. Anabelle donated several dog and cat items that can be very costly. We have received a donation from the Parish Nurse Ministry of New York, Inc as well as the VFW. It's difficult to name everyone, but there are many angels willing to help. Thank you notes were written by Alison, Tori, and myself to those that have contributed. There are several of St. Peter's family that contribute through food and financial contributions. Thank you all!

I don't know if you noticed but Gary and Carlene did a paper product, soap, cleaning products and toiletry give away on April 14th. A table was placed near the blessing box and 10-11 neighbors were given 5 items of their choice. Gary will continue this every third Sunday. We do not stock "Cash" items in the box anymore. (Cash items are those products that are not covered by SNAP).

Alison Mohr has been speaking about a book sale to begin after the Bishop Sean's visit. She hopes to have things set up and ready for the sale by Sunday, May 12th. We thank you for all your paperback and hardcover book donations. We are going to have many to choose from. The books will be very reasonable priced, beginning at .25 - .50 cents. Proceeds will be donated to our Blessing box fund.

This month requested donations are your choice be it human or animal food. Everything

is appreciated!

Shalom,
Gary Donhauser, Tori Paradise, Alison Mohr,
Carlene Boisaubin, and Lois Tripp



Prison Ministry- The 2024 Edition

On Friday, April 26, Collins Christian Ministries (aka CCM), once again went into Collins Correctional Institution to bring Jesus Christ to an assembly of 50 inmates. It was a much different situation than any other year, yet the constant that remained was the love and compassion, the forgiveness, and the transformation, that a partnership with Christ can bring these incarcerated children of God.

This program used to be a 3 ½ day "retreat", But now, due to the ramifications of Covid 19, correction officer changeovers, and facility policies, it has been whittled down to one day. The reduced retreat cut down many of the talks and activities, yet kept the intensity of Christian compassion and good works.

The Inside Team of 16 men, significantly reduced from other years, continued to supply the joy of music, listening skills, humor and camaraderie which has been its trademark and viability for so many years.

The Outside Team (with the significant impact of Missy Lopat), warmed the hearts and filled the stomachs of the inmates, with homemade meals at Lunchtime and Dinner. Not to mention the prayer support behind the day.

For the next month of Fridays, when regular "Grouping" takes place, we will continue with some of the talks and activities that the overall program used to have. The teaching and counseling continue.

Our CCM group is aging, as nature would have it. We are in need of new blood, younger blood, committed blood. If you, family members, or others you know, might be interested in serving the mission of Christ in

this fulfilling capacity, please talk to myself or Missy. We can use people on both Inside and Outside teams.

As I have said on many occasions, I have never seen Christ more vibrant in our world than through the eyes and transformations of these prisoners.

Peace and Blessings
Deacon Tom

Worry is a conversation you have with yourself about things you cannot change.

Prayer is a conversation you have with God about things He can change.

Message to Missy's Prayers Warriors

I would like to thank all my prayer warriors for their prayers for the Collins Christian Ministry Retreat at the Collins Correctional Facility. It was moving, emotional and full of God's love. 49 candidates participated with our 16 spiritual leaders



We had 3 "former" brothers who came to help the outside team to prepare the meal of spaghetti and a few hundred meatballs, at the Holy Spirit Church kitchen,

which included cutting veggies, washing dishes, and loading coolers and heavy roasters into the van for delivery to the facility. These 3 men who are now showing their gratitude to Jesus for their salvation, by serving as a mentor to other brothers who are coming out of the system into society.

A long-time incarcerated brother who had lived on the streets of NYC and had served in maxim facilities and then was moved to Collins, where he joined the then Kairos Ministry, which is now C.C.M. witnessed at the Holy Hour at

Holy Spirit Church, how he was converted by those in the ministry who taught him about Jesus and His Love, forgiveness and it gave him hope and a family who loved him. He too, is working with our brothers, who are coming out into society.

It was wonderful to see all the people who came to the Holy Hour to support our Ministry and who came to the fence afterwards to hold candles, sing and pray for each brother on the other side of that fence. There were tears of gratitude on the inside and tears of God's love and compassion on the outside. We all have sinned, small sins are no different than large sins, they are all beyond our ability to pay the debt for what Jesus did for us, but we can show our love for Him by loving him and with gratitude serving others.

Our team members are getting older and we need recruits to continue to grow this awesome Ministry. We are all part of the family of God. The pay is out of this world. The blessings come 10 fold. We have an extended family on the outside team and a whole bunch on the inside, who love and support us, in our times of weakness, despair and sorrow and celebrate together a lot of Jesus' joy

I have been so blessed by this ministry family for 9 years who have accepted me with all my mistakes and learning curves who have laughed with me and cried with me. I love you all so much and thank God for having you in my life. I hope you read this to the end, and will pray about serving this ministry in some way. If you are local and can, please join our team, we receive no outside funding and there is always, prayers needed. God bless and God's peace be with you! If you feel the spirit guide you to this ministry, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. There is no greater sin than ignorance. God bless you all.

Missy Lopat



Prayers of the People

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, Dan D, Kelly T, Donna, Mike & Gina K.

Short Term: Florence, Sam M, Conor, Ed H, Lois T, Gary D, David C, Carol M, Joel C, Riley, John M, Mike T, Mark M, Ava R, Don M, Christie J and family, Jim and Jackie, MJ & Peter, Gayle C, Bob R, Mary R

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

Departure: Ronald N

Please contact me with updates, corrections, thanksgivings, God Bless!
Sue Gunn



- 05/01 Merrie Hill
- 05/03 Giovanni Campus
- 05/10 Dan Coury
- 05/12 Kathy Frake
- 05/13 Dawn Rezabek
- 05/13 Aliah Sanchez-Clarke
- 05/21 Carma Miccoli
- 05/21 David Wagner
- 05/22 Myla Sanchez-Clarke
- 05/23 Trevor Lopat



05/18 Jerry and Allison Mohr



Catholic Memes

