

# ST. PETER'S WAVE DECEMBER 2023

### St. Peter's is a community called to Love, Worship, Proclaim, and Serve.

Dear Parishioners and Friends,

"In the beginning..." are the first 3 words in the Bible- Genesis 1:1. St. John knew this, so he started his Gospel, "In the beginning..." For John, Jesus is the new creation. As God gave us the created world, so God gave us the "second creation," Jesus Christ.

The start of John's Gospel does not give us any accounts of Jesus' birth as Matthew and Luke do. Rather, the first chapter of John, "The Prologue," is a celebration of the "word made flesh.... Full of grace and truth..." John reflects theologically upon the meaning of Jesus' birth, the Incarnation.

This birth, this incarnation is what Christmas celebrates. How will we prepare for and celebrate the light, the grace, the truth of Jesus in the weeks ahead?

The opening 14 verses of John's Gospel were so important to the church for centuries that they were recited at the end of every Eucharist. These verses are known as the "Last Gospel."

We don't recite or read them anymore at every Eucharist. We will on Christmas Eve. Jesus' birth, his beginning, reminds us of our beginnings. John's opening verses remind us that we, too, are "Children of God."

I hope you have a wonderful Advent and a Blessed Christmas. Please join us on Sundays to celebrate "the word made Flesh..."

Grace and Peace,

Bob





Christmas and Epiphany

The title "Christmas" is the old English Medieval name for "Christ mass" the celebration of Holy Communion for the birth, nativity, of Jesus Christ. Christians in Rome began celebrating Christ's birth in the 4<sup>th</sup> century.

December 25<sup>th</sup> was chosen for the celebration because this date was near the Roman pagan celebration of the "Sun God." Days in late December begin to have more sunlight, thus once Christianity became the religion of the Emperor Constantine in the early 4<sup>th</sup> century, the faith began to take over pagan celebrations and dates.

Epiphany is derived from the Greek word for "manifestation" or a "showing." Rather than the birth of Christ, the baptism of Jesus was seen in the eastern Christian churches as a more important celebration.

Slowly the two celebrations became linked together. Epiphany, on January 6<sup>th</sup> became an opportunity to celebrate the visit of the Magi, 3 kings, to conclude the 12 days celebrating Christ's birth. The Sunday after Epiphany was set to celebrate Christ's baptism.

Another important "Epiphany" for the early church was Jesus' first miracle at the wedding in Cana as St. John records in his Gospel. We only hear this story in year C of the lectionary. One of the great hymns of the church celebrates all 3 Epiphanies- Jesus' birth, Baptism, and First Miracle –(#135) "Songs of thankfulness and praise." The hymns of Advent, Christmas and Epiphany celebrate God's gift to us in Jesus Christ.



The vestry approved the hiring of a new diocesan auditor for 2024 – Betsy Blagdon.

The rector's salary for 2024 was approved.

Our Vanguard account is up and running.

We have received 47 pledges.

We are still waiting for Open Cape to install new internet lines.

Alan is looking into a new computer program – Breeze – specializes in church programs.

We have to be careful - diocese does not allow games of chance in the church,

We have about 10 people interested in a knitting group – this will start in the new year.

People have expressed an interest in restarting Women's Bible study – we have a couple of people willing to chair. This will also probably start in the new year.

Our crafters have a table at St. Margaret's Christmas Fair – December 9 from 9:00 – 3:00.

The new heating system will be installed the week after Thanksgiving.

We need the new internet lines before we can install the camera security at the back and front doors.

We will be putting the Cataumet gift tree starting with Advent.

The Search Committee is updating the profile for the search.

We were asked to look into a solar system as the new heating system is electric.

The next meeting will be December 19, 2023 at 6:30.

Although not discussed at the vestry meeting – here are the times for the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent/Christmas services:

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent - Sunday morning 8:00 and 10:00

Christmas Eve – 4:00 and 7:00



As we come to the end of 2023, I want to thank everyone who has made a financial contribution to St. Peter's during the year. Your annual letter detailing your donations/pledges will come to you in early January. Along with this letter I will also send you a tax receipt which should be used to support any tax deductions that you take for the 2023 tax year. I will explain how we record and treat all your donations and pledge payments.

For pledgers, all monies received in a pledge envelope count towards your pledge, whatever the notation on the envelope denotes. This is because we do not have separate funds for buildings or heating. They are treated as normal operating expenses in our accounts. Also, once you have fulfilled your pledge any further monies you gave are treated as "donations" in our accounting systems. This can result in a donation being split between the category "Pledge" and "Donation". Where this occurs, your check will show as two items on the year end letter and tax receipt, one with the suffix .1 for the pledge portion and another with the suffix .2 for the donation portion. Where cash is given two separate amounts will be shown in the report, one a pledge and one a donation with both adding to the cash you actually gave.

We treat all donations according to the IRS rules for obtaining a tax deduction. Thus, donations are recorded when we receive them, not on the date of your check or the pledge envelope date. The only exception is if you mail a donation postmarked by December 31<sup>st</sup>. The IRS will accept that it was made in the prior year if so postmarked. Otherwise, all donations and pledge payments we **receive** in 2024 will count as 2024 payments, whatever the check or pledge

envelope date shows. This means that you cannot fulfil your 2023 pledge by making payments in 2024. All pledge payments received in 2024 will count towards your 2024 pledge.

We will be making the 2024 envelopes available from Sunday December 10<sup>th</sup>. They will be put out at the back of the Stephenson Hall. Please do pick yours up as soon as possible. If you have not yet made a pledge for 2024, I urge you to do so as it helps the Vestry to plan and budget for 2024.

If you would like to help with managing our money, <u>I would be very pleased to have a few more</u> <u>counters.</u> This job is an important ministry. It only takes a few minutes after the service. Please let me know if you would like to join our team or talk to one of the team who can be found counting immediately after services. Any extra help would be gratefully received. On behalf of the counters, I would ask you please not to seal pledge envelopes with tape. Tape just makes it more difficult for the counters to open the envelopes.

If you do have any questions for me, please call me on 508 224 4018 or email me at alan.kershaw@gmail.com. Also, please do remember to put 2024 on your checks next year!

Alan Kershaw



#### CHRISTMAS FAIR ST. MARGARET'S CHURCH Sat., Dec 9

Mark your calendar for Sat, Dec 9 and plan to drop by the Christmas Fair at St Margaret's Church 9am - 3pm. Our St. Peter's Crafters have been working since last May to create beautiful Christmas decorations including many new items created since their "Christmas in July" display. Come by to support this fundraiser. All craft supplies were donated so 100% of the proceeds will go to St Peter's.

# Happy Autumn from Friendly Kitchen.

After noticing changes in the needs of our community, FK2GO has made a successful transition to the Friendly Kitchen outreach ministry in providing food to The Carnage House, a homeless shelter that serves women in children. To date, we have made an impact. Our ministry is delivering individual cereals, applesauce/fruit cups, and peanut butter crackers. One of our youth volunteers to deliver the monthly outreach services. We will continue to provide this ministry as we focus on the message of giving and focus on the needs of the underserved in both the local and wider community.

Peace, Melissa



Our second breakfast was held on November 4<sup>th</sup>. We had 9 attendees and the conversation continued to be varied and lively!

**Please note that our next breakfast will be the second Saturday of December**. That will be **Saturday, December 9th** at 8:30 AM. As usual, we will gather at Persy's Place, 3198 Cranberry Highway, East Wareham. If you would like to attend, please add your name to the sign up sheet posted in the narthex. If you forget to sign up, don't let that prevent you from coming. However, a phone call or text would be appreciated. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Jim Hankey at 781-534-2604. I look forward to seeing you at Persy's!

Jim Hankey



**Report on Diocesan Convention October 2023** 

The theme of the convention was Collaboration "In Christ, called to collaborate." St. Peter's was represented by our two delegates: Ken Lihzis and Margery Buckingham.

After dinner on Friday night we heard from a panel of four pairs of partners in collaboration:

- 1. Westborough and Hopkinton share a priest across two dioceses. The biggest problem was giving up the 10 o"clock service. Joint wardens' meetings facilitate the smooth running of the collaboration.
- 2. Emmanuel church shares space with a Jewish community. The Rabbi sat on their search committee.
- 3. South coast defines itself as "One Church, Four Altars." The parishioners have shared 16 years of joint retreats at BCH Camp and Conference Center. They share outreach work with migrants in the Fall River/New Bedford area.
- 4. Lawrence and North Andover began mutual ministry during and after the natural gas explosions. The North Andover clergy person is a Unitarian Universalist pastor.

In an evening keynote address, the Rev. Katie Nakamura Rengers, Staff Officer for Church Planting for The Episcopal Church, challenged and inspired convention-goers to think and talk together about collaboration in terms of being in solidarity and mutual, co-creative relationship with their neighbors.

"Collaboration is a deeply spiritual practice," she said. "Spiritual transformation always involves some kind of inversion of power...and God wants that for us."

Saturday morning Eucharist was in both Spanish and English. The Sanctus was the version that we often sing at St. Peter's: "Santos, Santos, Santos."

The Report of the Racial Justice Committee was illustrated by two congregations who are engaging in cross racial and cross cultural work. Good Shepherd has an ongoing book study group with members of Ba'hai faith. Their most recent book was "Waking Up White" St. John's Westwood and Holy Spirit Mattapan have been sponsoring joint service trips to Honduras for more than 10 years.

A resolution calling for Continued Commitment to Racial Justice Work in the Diocese and Cathedral Staff was approved.

The most controversial topic was Canon 14 regarding intentional communities. There were multiple procedural votes on amendments and postponement. Some people were concerned that the resolution came too late to be properly considered. People involved in the intentional communities felt that postponement went against the working of the Holy Spirit. At one point a close vote required an individual count. That resulted in three failed attempts to count the votes. Then the voting cards themselves were collected and tabulated. The motion to postpone was defeated. In the actual vote on the resolution it was required to vote by orders. The resolution passed by both orders.

A resolution supporting Healthy Congregations passed with no opposition. Three people spoke about how hard it was to be honest about ongoing mental health issues.

The last vote was on a response to the Bishop's annual address. It passed unanimously.

We heard from Life Together about their plans for a year of Sabbath to restructure the program in light of declining enrollment. We were introduced to the five current participants. The program started in 1999 as MICCA. It became Life Together in 2009.

The director of the Barbara C. Harris Camp and Conference Center showed slides of the demographics of the campers and noted that this is the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of BCHCCC.

At 4:30 the Standing Committee reported on their work to date and the schedule for further procedures to get us to the October 2024 consecration of the next bishop of the Diocese of Massachusetts. The vote will happen in May 2024.

The convention adjourned at 5:35pm.

Respectfully submitted, Margery Buckingham



#### Substance Abuse Prevention Group: Update for December

Thank you everyone for your continuing support. We are taking a short break for the holidays and will re-group after the first of the year. Our next meeting will be Mon., Jan. 8th at 3:33pm. Please Join us.

Larry H., Jim H., Celeste H., Kathy L, Jim L., Jane L., Donna Bob S. Dianne B. or Nancy S.

Here are some resources that are available in our area:

**WAREHAM CONNECTS:** This is a youth coalition in Wareham similar to the Bourne Substance Free Group and provides prevention and training programs they can be found on Facebook @WarehamConnects

**RICHIE'S ROAD TO RECOVERY:** Weekly recovery walk and talk meets every Friday at 9:00am at the Lyman Reserve on Head of the Bay Road by the Wareham/Bourne/Plymouth Town Line for a leisurely 20-40 minute stroll through nature as they chat about paths to recovery. No RSVP is required but feel free to Contact Richie Newbert at 339-832-5387 or richiesroadtorecovery@gmail.com

YARMOUTH SUBSTANCE AWARENESS COMMITTEE: Monthly Resource Drop-In Night offers resources for people and families dealing with addiction ans assorted issues. Counseling and education will be available. EVERY LAST WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH 5pm to 7:00pm 1338 Route 28, S. Yarmouth at the Family Table Collaborative. Questions at <a href="mailto:ysac@yarmouth.ma.us">ysac@yarmouth.ma.us</a>

Massachusetts Substance Abuse Hotline1Learn to CopeMAA Zoom4

1-800-327-5050 <u>www.learn2cope.org</u> 425-436-6360 Access number 422932

#### PRAYER FOR A NEW RECTOR/SEARCH PROCESS

O God, you know us better than we know ourselves. Guide us in our search for a new clerical leader. empower each one of us to use our unique ministries, to share openly and honestly our thoughts, to respect the opinions of others, and to encourage humility, patience, and joy. Instill in us a vision of the Church's family; that guided by your Holy Spirit, we will be united in love and joyfully accomplish this mission of discovering the one you have called to serve with us as our rector. All this we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.* 

#### **RECURRING EVENTS**

Sundays: 8am - Holy Eucharist Rite I 10am - Holy Eucharist Rite II w/music (unless otherwise noted) Tuesdays: 11am - Bible Study Thursdays: 8:30am - TOPS 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday, 8:30am - Men's Breakfast \*\*\*DEC. 9 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday, 3:33pm - Substance Abuse Team – no Dec. mtg. 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday, 6:30pm – Vestry

## **DECEMBER EVENTS/SERVICES**

Dec. 9, 8:30am Men's Breakfast @ Persy's

Dec. 9 9-3 Christmas Fair @ St. Margaret's

Dec. 24 4pm & 7pm - Nativity of our Lord

#### ST. PETER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH-ON-THE-CANAL 165 Main St., PO Box 265 Buzzards Bay, MA 02532

Email: <u>saintpeters@verizon.net</u> Website: <u>www.saintpetersbb.org</u>

Staff

The Reverend Robert Malm, Interim Rector 703-772-7667 Lisa Platanitis, Director of Music/Choir Liesl Crehan, Pianist/Organist Kimberly Leahy, Parish Administrator Robin Higgins, Newsletter Editor

#### Vestry

Celeste Hankey, Sr. Warden...617-710-5346 Alan Kershaw, Treasurer...508-224-4018 Robin Higgins, Clerk...413-329-4651 Dianne Cartmill...774-269-4348 Jack Kennedy...508-291-138 Donna Tripp...508-264-1515 Mark Taylor, Jr. Warden...508-863-1259 Kathy Letzeisen, Asst. Treasurer...617-755-9357 Donna Beers...508-759-8283 Len Hathon...774-678-0169 Patti Metcalf...508-685-5582