



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





LITURGICAL NOTES

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 4th century.

December 25th 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 4th 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 6th 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.



VISIBLE

VESTRY

November 21, 2023

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 4th Sunday of Advent/Christmas services:

4th Sunday of Advent - Sunday morning 8:00 and 10:00

Christmas Eve – 4:00 and 7:00



A note from your Treasurer – January 2023

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 31st. 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



Our second breakfast was held on November 4th. 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 20th 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

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
1st Saturday, 8:30am - Men’s Breakfast *****DEC. 9**
2nd Monday, 3:33pm - Substance Abuse Team – no Dec. mtg.
3rd 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

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Liesl Crehan, Pianist/Organist
Kimberly Leahy, Parish Administrator
Robin Higgins, Newsletter Editor

Vestry

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