



Advent in the Digital Age

'Tis the season to...Catch the Life!

This Advent, the Society of Saint John the Evangelist invites you to join us in looking clearly and honestly at our lives and taking action.



There are a number of choices for how you can experience and share our beautiful, daily Advent Calendar:

Digital Advent Calendar: A daily word and meditation, accompanied by a stunning image, delivered daily to your inbox. Invite your friends to subscribe to a daily email so they can tune into the true meaning of this Christmas season.

Subscribe: www.SSJE.org/adventword



Pinterest Advent Calendar: Each day, we will reveal a special Advent word, meditation, and beautiful image, along with instructions for how to connect online to additional meditations. In partnership with The Episcopal Church @Iamepiscopalian. Follow: www.SSJE.org/pinterest



Instagram Advent Calendar: Be inspired by the daily Advent word, meditation, and beautiful image on Instagram, and create your own calendar by tagging an image that resonates with you. Tag: #adventword



And if you want to use an app, here is one for you. Based on the Living Compass work by Scott Stoner, the Living Well Through Advent app provides daily encouragement for the season of waiting by incorporating "heart, soul, mind, and strength" into a daily spiritual practice for all ages. Living Well Through Advent provides daily reflections, weekly Scripture readings, and a built-in journal for recording thoughts and experiences throughout the season.

Living Well Through Advent 2014 is compatible with iPhone, iPad, and iPod

Christmas Pageant

Christmas Pageant Rehearsal Schedule

" THE KING'S BIRTHDAY "

Director: Loren Manni

Music Director: Ryan Manni

Accompanist: Erica Porter

Nov.16th: song rehearsal in chapel @ 9:45 AM
Nov. 23rd: song rehearsal in Chapel @ 9:45AM
Nov. 30th: song rehearsal in Chapel @ 9:45 AM
Dec. 7th: Run Through rehearsal in Church @ 11:30AM.

Dec. 14th: music @ 9:45 / costumes after church @ 11:30AM

Dec. 20th: Dress Rehearsal 10:00-11:30 with Pizza lunch 11:30-12:00

Dec. 21st: "The Performance" / Cupcakes after Church

Please see Loren Manni for sign up sheets for adult help with food, costumes, staging , etc.

Thank You in advance for your help in making the pageant a success!

December Calendar Highlights

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR UPDATES

WWW.STPETERSMEDFORD.ORG

December 7 Big Band Express 5 pm
December 10 Vestry Meeting 7:30 pm
December 14 St. Paul's Breakfast program 7:45 am
December 17 Blue Christmas, 7 pm
December 20 Greening of the Church 1 pm
December 21 Christmas Pageant 10:15 am service
December 24 Christmas Eve Svcs. 5, 7:30 and 11 pm
December 25 Christmas Day Choral Holy Eucharist 9 am
January 1 The Holy Name, Holy Eucharist 10:00 am

FROM PULPIT TO PEW

by The Reverend Canon Donald J. Muller

I write this in the middle of November (deadlines), yet, Christmas is all around in the stores. Retailers are positioning themselves to be family friendly by not being open on Thanksgiving Day. Others are ignoring the family and opening their doors at 6:00 am on Thanksgiving Day. Black Friday has been extended a minimum of one day (see how many businesses talk about Black Friday sales now). Some of the movie TV channels are starting their marathon Christmas movies this weekend. Soon we will start to see the “Keep Christ in Christmas” posters/banners. What are we to do?

A little history from “Commentary on the American Prayer Book” by Marion Hatchett:

December 25: The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ

This title was new in the 1662 revision of the Prayer Book. In earlier books it had been “Christmas Day.” The name “Christmas” is an English term traceable to the twelfth century “Christ’s Mass.” The feast originated in Rome about the year 336. The earlier Romans had celebrated December 25 and several days following at the winter solstice as the birthday of the Unconquerable Sun (Saturn, bringer of the Golden Age). Christians countered with a celebration of the incarnation on this day. The feast spread throughout the West and was accepted by most of the Eastern churches, as well.

Eventually the season of Advent was created to tone down the revelry of the Christmas celebrations (because of the carryovers of the celebrations of the winter solstice). It varied in length, but was finally fixed at the four Sundays prior to December 25.

Can I be so bold as to suggest that we all might covenant with each other to keep Advent as a season of preparation before we celebrate Christmas? I am not so naive to think that we won’t shop or decorate or even attend parties. But we could utilize an Advent wreath and/or calendar to mark the season with prayer, Bible reading, and almsgiving. If we choose not to shop on Thanksgiving Day, perhaps even encourage our relatives, friends, and neighbors to do the same, perhaps next year the stores won’t open.

We cannot complain that our culture is becoming less and less God focused, if we ourselves are less so. Our culture doesn’t dictate how we live, especially what we do with our time, our talent, and our treasure.

In this newsletter you will find other ways to help keep the season of Advent. I encourage you to check them out and even adopt one for you and your family.

Come Lord Jesus.

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Don

From the Advent Lessons and Carols Bidding Prayer:

Dear People of God: In the season of Advent, it is our responsibility and joy to prepare ourselves to hear once more the message of the Angels, to go to Bethlehem and see the Son of God lying in a manger. Let us hear and heed in Holy Scripture the story of God’s loving purpose from the time of our rebellion against him until the glorious redemption brought to us by his holy Child Jesus, and let us look forward to the yearly remembrance of his birth with hymns and songs of praise.

KIDS' CORNER

By Sue Legnani, Director of Christian Formation

We have Saint Francis to thank for the Christmas Crèche. He gathered some folks in a small Italian village to play the parts of Mary, Joseph, the baby Jesus, and the various other characters in the gospel stories that tell of Jesus' birth. He also added some animals that would have been found in the barn behind the inn in Bethlehem. He arranged them all in a grotto and invited the village to come and see it. In those days, not many people could read, but they could learn the story by seeing it in person and the story became real for them.

Christmas pageants have been around for as long as any of us can remember. Some are very simple. Children may only walk on to the scene as the gospel story is read, building a tableau of the Manger scene. Other pageants are more ambitious with song, and sometimes dance numbers to accompany the gospel account. Some are set in contemporary times with Mary receiving texts from the angel Gabriel. No matter how you tell the story, though, it's still the same idea. God came to earth in human form as Jesus, to live among us. Jesus was born for everyone. He is the star of the pageant.

But, what happens after the glow of the pageant is over and the season of Christmas has gone on to the New Year? What does the story of Jesus' birth mean for those who only know that part of the story? We forget that after Jesus was born, he lived among us, performed miracles, told good news to those around him, and finally gave his life for us.

That's where Christian Formation plays an important part in the life of the church. All through the Church Year we hear the story of Jesus' life among us. The children, youth, and adults who gather at 9am on Sunday mornings learn the story of our faith beginning with the Old Testament and then the New Testament. We learn about Saints (both with a big S and a small s). We learn about the Church Year that follows the life of Jesus from his birth to his death and resurrection. We learn about the sacraments and how they form our lives as individuals and as a community of faith. We pray together for our own needs and those of others. We sing hymns that sometimes are contemporary, but also those that our foremothers and forefathers sang before us. We learn to do the work of Jesus among the people we live with. We pass on the "story" of our faith.

If you're wondering how to get involved in this story, let me suggest that it's never too late to join in. Sometimes adults think that their children won't know enough to come to Sunday School in the middle of the year. Don't worry. You can join in just about any place and catch up as you follow the story. The good news is that we repeat the story every year. The even better news is that the more you cycle through the years, the more you will get out of it. You can really begin to connect the dots as the Salvation Story is told over and over again, and as you mature as a person, and as a Christian.

The other part of our Christian Formation is being a part of worship at one of the three services each weekend (Saturday night at 5pm or Sunday morning at 7:45am and 10:15am). Sunday School gives us the story, but liturgy (the work of the people) helps put the story to use. We hear scripture, we pray, and we receive and connect with Jesus in the Holy Communion. We follow the story of Jesus and his work in the world. And let's not forget that it's important for children to see the adults in their life praying in church too.

We'll start the story over again this Advent and Christmas, but let's come together week by week to find out where that story will take us.

Body and Soul

By Edith Green, RN

On my list of things that drive me crazy is the Christmas decorations and songs in stores right after Halloween. Can't they wait until Thanksgiving at least?? I guess not. So as we all know, Christmas is not far away and we all have tons of things to get done before then. As I've said before, take time for yourself during this busy season to think about what Christmas really means.

So in that spirit, let me tell you a story about a little girl who lived a long time ago. She never believed in Santa Claus. Not because she was a skeptic but because her parents were very poor and they knew they'd never be able to afford presents for her. So, when Christmas came, Santa never stopped at her house. When her friends got presents from Santa, the little girl admired them but didn't have any presents of her own to show her friends. She felt sad but had accepted her situation.

But one Christmas after the little girl went to bed, Santa did stop at her house. When the little girl woke up and went down stairs, there in a Christmas stocking was an orange. Just an orange. Oranges were not readily available like they are now so this was a treat. The little girl was so thrilled, she smiled all day long. She told all her friends what Santa had brought to her house. They were kind and didn't make fun. All day long, the little girl smiled and felt very happy. There really was a Santa Claus; she knew because he had stopped at her house!!

Think about how Christmas has changed in the years since Santa stopped at the house of this little girl. Imagine how a little girl would feel today if Santa left only an orange; disappointment, maybe anger, maybe crying? We'll never get our children to accept a piece of fruit as a Christmas gift in today's world but maybe we can show them the real meaning of Christmas in ways other than expensive gifts.

The story about the little girl is a true story, the little girl was my mother.

I hope all of you have a great Christmas with family and friends. And please remember the real reason for this gift-giving season!!!

Mite Boxes

Advent Mite Boxes and Folders to Support Redemption School, Haiti

Help the Children Get to School, Lucy Kitch-Peck, Age 8

*Dear God,
Could you please help the children get to school
So they can grow up to be smarter and get a good job?
Then they can afford the things they need
and will have a better life.
So could you please help them, please?
Amen.*

Lucy Kitch-Peck, Age 8

The above prayer was written by an eight-year-old girl from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.* Your MDG Team invites you to help Lucy's prayer be answered for the children and youth of Haiti by taking and using an Advent Mite Box and/or Coin Folder beginning December 1st and continuing through the season of Advent. All proceeds will be used towards our pledge of support to the present and future students of Redemption School in Gonaives, Haiti (see photos on page 11).

Advent Mite Boxes were given out to all Sunday school families during our Family Advent Jesse Tree Ornament activity held on Sunday, November 23 and will continue to be available in Sunday school classes. Advent Coin Folders will soon be available on the narthex table. We invite you to offer your filled boxes and folders any Christmas Eve or Day service or soon thereafter.

*Quoted from: *Lifting Women's Voices: Prayers to Change the World*, Margaret Rose, Jenny Te Paa, Jeanne Person, and Abigail Nelson, editors. Published by Morehouse Publishing.

DEACON'S BENCH

By Deacon Helen Orlando



The Diocese of New Jersey Celebrates 75 Years of Ministry by Episcopal Relief and Development

Shortly after coming to St. Peter's as a newly-ordained deacon, Father Jim Moore asked me to assist in the planning and promotion of a mission trip to Honduras run by Episcopal Relief and Development. Shortly thereafter, I found that I would also be leading the group going on the trip! I had never been to Central America and didn't speak a word of Spanish, but that trip taught me that God doesn't need our words to speak his love through us. That experience is just one reason why I am happy to announce that the Diocese of New Jersey is officially beginning its celebration of Episcopal Relief and Development's 75th Anniversary during this Advent, 2014. We at St. Peter's will use photos and stories to celebrate and learn about the history and accomplishments of "ERD," pray for its work, and support its 75th Anniversary Campaign by making our own contribution towards our Diocese's goal of raising \$150,000.00 for Episcopal Relief and Development's General Fund during the coming year.

Support of Episcopal Relief and Development offers us a very concrete way to fulfill our baptismal promises "to seek and serve Christ in all persons" and "to respect the dignity of every human being," by reaching beyond ourselves to heal a hurting world. I invite you to watch future newsletters and bulletins for more news about the celebration.



Communion
for the
Homebound
and Hospitalized

Christmas Communion for the Homebound or Hospitalized

During the Christmas season, the clergy of St. Peter's make a special effort to carry Communion to those unable to attend services at St Peter's due to illness or long-term disability. If you, or someone you know, would like to receive Christmas communion at home or in a hospital or other facility, please contact Deacon Helen Orlando at dcnhelen@stpetersmedford.org or through the church office (609-654-2963, office@stpetersmedford.org.) Thank you.

E giving

Do you send your church offering in the mail? Does it get deducted from your account electronically? If so, then there is now a way for your contribution to get acknowledged and blessed during the service on Sunday. Simply pick up an acknowledgement card from the basket on the long table in the narthex and place it in the collection plate. Thank you for giving of your treasure to St. Peter's!

*I gave an offering electronically, and
I would like for my gift to be offered on the altar.*



Please place this card in the offering basket

Photography Series

We are having a photography seminar on Saturdays at 11:00 AM. We call it "The Art and Science of Photography." We have had six sessions so far and plan four more. Our sessions so far:

1. Looking at Our Cameras: Cell Phone to Big DSLR (Film Cameras Too!)
2. Flash, Lighting, and Available-Light Photography
3. Getting Pictures To the Computer and Photo Editing
4. People Photography: Posed, Casual, Candid and Snapshots
5. Camera Settings: Shutter Speed, F-Stop, Speed, and How they are Used to get Better Pictures
6. Potpourri: What do you Carry and When? How do I Pick a New Camera? What About Megapixels?

People, not all St. Peter's parishioners or even Episcopalians, come when they can. People bring their favorite camera (or cameras!) and photos to share or ask questions about. Each session stands alone. There are lots of side topics because people ask questions and others chip in, so we have interesting side topics. We have the Internet so we can go off and find answers and give examples.

The next topic hasn't been selected yet. You can ask for a topic (jkbeard1@verizon.net) or James Beard will pick one late in the week. I have a laptop, cables, and will bring CD blanks so I can take pictures off your camera or cell phone for you and give them to you on CD. I also have Photoshop on the laptop and can show you how to work with photos.

Everyone is welcome, so long as they don't have symptomatic Ebola, a loaded gun off safety and loose, or open warrants under the name that they are using that day.

James K Beard
(609) 654-6559
Cell (609) 980-7338
<http://jameskbeard.com>

PARISH NEWS

Christmas Flower Offerings

Remember a loved one or give thanks to God by making a donation towards Christmas greens and flowers. Envelopes are included in this issue of St. Peter's Good News. Please place your donation and filled-out envelope in the offering plate or mail or hand deliver it to the church office by Monday, Dec. 15th.

Christmas Toy Drive

As in past years, Community Ministries will be sponsoring a Christmas toy drive. Please take one or more ornaments, each of which represents a gift for a child, from the Christmas tree in the church and return it with a present. Gifts will be distributed by the Christian Caring Center. The deadline for gifts to be returned to church will be December 14. Thank you!

PARISH REGISTER

BAPTISMS

None

WEDDINGS

None

MEMORIAL SERVICES

William Scollay, November 10, 2014

Jack Lemke, November 11, 2014

New Members

Welcome to St. Peter's:

Lee Heine and Nancy Byrne of Cherry Hill

Dawn Frisco and Elizabeth Curry of Medford

*Scott Johndro & Stephanie Wilt and family of
Medford*

Welcome

Vestry Reports

At the services during the weekend of November 15-16, vestry members shared their faith stories. Not individual faith stories but a collective “our stories,” a report card on our work together as a vestry and as a parish. Below are the highlights of that report. First, in order to carry out our Lords work, we as a parish have to have the tools and structure to support it.

Marty Banecker our Buildings and Grounds Chair

- Capital Campaign – Spring 2014: Goal \$30,000. Pledged: \$40,000
- Jeff Moore oversaw the installation of steel I beams to hold up the roof over the office/Sunday School wing. Jeff also had soffit installed to beautify the outside roofline and the entrance to the Sunday school as well as install the vinyl fence to hide the trash and recycle containers.
- We have estimates on the cost of a new roof over Moore Chapel
- To extend the life of the parking lot we had all potholes filled and all cracks sealed
- We are repairing and painting the wall in the narthex as well as some outside doors
- The entrance to the office has been repaired so that rain water and snow melt do not enter under the outside door, but rather drain off to the storm sewer
- The church HVAC has been repaired and the church heater now works
- We had a grounds clean up in the Spring and spread mulch. Danny and Andrew LaRue are continuing the work as part of Danny’s Boy Scout project

Ben Jones, who is our Finance chair, would like you to know ...

- We are able to meet all of our expenses so far and our bills are paid
- Thanks to the success of the golf outing, our Diocesan assessment is up to date
- Although we have a deficit of \$9,767 it is well under our projected deficit
- Currently our pledge receipts only 86% of the amount pledged.

Joe Dinoto is our Stewardship Chair

- Of the 270 family units in our parish, to date we have received 96 pledges.
- 37 out of the 96 families have increased their pledges from last year.
- Thank you everyone who has pledged to date.
- Following a tradition established over the past several years, thank you letters will be sent out to all families who pledged. Thank you notes are sent out whenever we receive a member’s pledge card.
- The Church year began with a Ministry Fair this Fall 2014.
- The purpose of the fair was to emphasize that stewardship involves donating our time and talent to the church. Looking now at our community life and outreach to the community and beyond. (cont. on next page)

New Members and Evangelism – Cynthia Cullen

- We're beginning to plan our annual Blue Christmas celebration for December.
- For many folks, the Christmas season can be a difficult one- some are mourning the loss of a loved one, a job, or a change in a family situation.
- Our Blue Christmas service provides comfort and acknowledgement during this time.
- If you'd like to help with the service or provide snacks for afterwards, please see Cindy Cullen. Our active teens are preparing for Confirmation in May and our first visit from Bishop Stokes

Vestry Reports (continued)

Christian Formation chair, Loren Manni

- We are blessed to have Sue Legnani who organizes a large Sunday School Program.
- We currently have 99 children registered for Sunday School and although attendance is an ongoing challenge, our 31 teachers, assistants and support volunteers are ready and waiting for them each Sunday
- We are using three curriculums: Godly Play, Weaving Gods Promises for grades 1 – 6 and Journey to Adulthood for our 7TH grade and up
- Fr. Don leads bible study each Wednesday and we will be having a new adult bible study beginning in Advent on Sunday mornings in the chapel
- We are looking forward to our Family Jesse Tree Ornament making on November 23rd
- We are also gearing up for our Christmas Pageant on December 21st
- Our active teens are preparing for Confirmation in May and our first visit from Bishop Stokes

Community Ministries Barbara Kelly

- So far in 2014, St. Peter's has aided needy members of our community by donating:
- 80 bags of food to the Christian Caring Center
- 1,000 hot breakfasts at St. Paul's
- 100 pounds of gently used clothing
- 230 blankets and cold-weather items to the Code Blue shelter
- 40+ hand-stitched lap blankets for the elderly and caps for premature babies
- This outpouring of generosity does not include the Thanksgiving food drive and the Caps & Laps gift baskets for the Evergreens, both of which conclude in November.

Parish Life – Laurel Smith

- We are blessed to have all of you donating your time and talent to host coffee hour.
- Thank you also to those of you who quietly support all of us by baking delicious goodies on Sunday mornings. You ensure that there is always something in the freezer for days when we're short volunteers.
- This month I encourage you to visit Williams Hall, have a cup of coffee, and reflect on your blessings. Then take a minute to write them on a leaf and tie it on the Blessing Tree.
- We are looking forward to our first Thanksgiving Coffee Hour on November 30th after the 10:15 service. Please bring your "leftovers" and thankful hearts as you celebrate with your parish family.
- On December 7th we will be having a concert by Big Band Express. The free will donation from the concert will go to Wounded Warriors. We would like to have a refreshment table again. When you're baking your Christmas cookies, we'd love to have a few for the table.

To sum it up, we as a vestry along with dedicated wardens and Fr. Don welcome your ideas, questions, and thoughts. Most importantly, we welcome your prayers as we do our best to live out our mission statement.

Saint Peter's Church is a blessed community of Faith grounded in the power of God's transforming love, where Jesus Christ welcomes all to abundant life. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we follow Him in prayer and praise, study and service.

Advent Happenings

Shhhh. Don't tell the kids, but St. Nicholas is coming to St. Peter's on Dec. 7th. We would like the kids to bring an extra shoe to Sunday School that day so St. Nick can leave a treat for them while they are in class. Shoes will be left outside the classroom and will be filled with some little treats to help celebrate this Saint's Day. He may even make an appearance.



BIG BAND EXPRESS CONCERT – SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7 AT 5 PM

On the anniversary of the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 we will take up a free will offering to benefit the “Wounded Warriors” project. Come enjoy the concert of Big Band Jazz and help the wounded soldiers with your donation.

MORNING AND EVENING PRAYER

Each Advent, we invite you to join with others in our congregation as we pray Morning and Evening Prayer. The reading of the Morning and Evening Prayer (supplemented by Noonday Prayer and Compline), is both the privilege and duty of all Anglicans and Episcopalians. Remembering that “when two or three are gathered together in his Name [God] will be in the midst of them,” let us gather together in praise as we await the birth of our Lord and the coming of the fullness of God’s reign.

Morning Prayer is offered Monday-Friday at 9 am in Memorial Chapel. Evening Prayer is offered Monday-Friday at 7 pm, also in Memorial Chapel.



ADVENT ADULT STUDY

Incline your ear - Listening to the Word in Advent.

Beginning Nov. 30th Adult Education will practice listening to the Gospel lessons in Advent. Join us to prepare for Advent at 9:00 am every Sunday morning in Memorial Chapel.

PARISH PHOTO ALBUM



Saints of all sizes helped get ready to celebrate All Saints Day at St. Peter's on November 2nd.

(Photos courtesy of Chris McCrum and Sue Legnani)



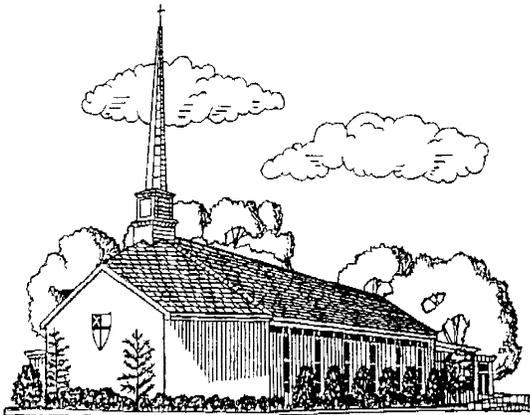
Above left, women of the Church St. Basil's Church (the parent church of Redemption School in Gonaives, Haiti), show hand-painted cloth which they offer for sale. Above right, Haitian Teen-Agers walk in a flooded street in Cap Haitien , 38 miles from Gonaives, Haiti. This flood occurred on Tuesday, November 4, 2014. The same area was flooded only 9 months ago. Please help support Redemption School through our mite box and coin folders.

St. Peter's Episcopal Church

One Hartford Road, Medford, NJ 08055
The Rev. Donald J. Muller, D. Min., Rector
The Rev. Canon Ronald Albury, Associate Priest
The Rev. Helen M. Orlando, Deacon

Lisa Minernd, Parish Administrator Eleanor Meyer, Director of Music Sue Legnani, Director of Christian Formation
Tel: 609-654-2963 Fax: 609-654-0401 <http://www.stpetersmedford.org>
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Service Schedule

Saturday Eucharist.....5 p.m.
Sunday Traditional Eucharist.....7:45 a.m.
Family Eucharist.....10:15 a.m.
Weekdays
Wednesday, Healing Eucharist.....10 a.m.
Morning Prayer (Monday-Friday).....9 a.m.

December 2014

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