



Three New Year's Resolutions to Encourage Personal Growth

Some of the most common New Year's resolutions involve starting an exercise routine, trying a new diet, losing weight, or giving up smoking. These resolutions are important, but it's time to refresh those goals and focus on other objectives that will lead to greater happiness. Here are three resolutions that will encourage you to take better care of yourself, leave bad habits behind, and feel more fulfilled.

Cultivate Mindfulness

Mindfulness allows you to become more aware and therefore more present in your daily life. Living in the present means letting go of the pain of the past and the worries or expectations of the future, and focusing on what you have now. Mindfulness helps you choose what you focus on and helps direct the mind to stop letting the past shape the future. The biggest advantage of mindfulness is that you can avoid unnecessary anxiety and stress. In mindfulness there's more joy, clarity, creativity, and energy. The best way to cultivate mindfulness is through meditation. You stop the obsessive thinking, and start responding mindfully instead of reactively.

Create Space and Time to Take Care of Yourself

In your daily life, it's easy to become overwhelmed with all the to-do lists, responsibilities, and demands. Your interactions with others—loved ones and strangers—can produce stress and sometimes even anxiety. If you have to take care of the kids, your partner, the house, your career, or an aging parent, it can be difficult to find time and space for yourself. But this is really important because it helps you to flow through your day with fewer struggles. If you want to have time to take care of others and be present for the things that matter to you the most, you have to take care of yourself first. This will give you the energy to stay centered and present, and enjoy life more.

Develop an Attitude of Gratitude

It's easy to take the seemingly ordinary blessings in your life for granted, but gratitude is a powerful tool that can help you focus on what matters most in life. An attitude of gratitude has been linked to greater inner peace and joy, less anxiety, and the ability to respond calmly instead of reacting with stress to life situations. Plus, counting your blessings connects you with the abundance in your life, and attracts more prosperity and fulfillment. It's always inspiring to remember that being healthy and growing older are privileges not everybody has. Surround yourself with what you think is beautiful, and be grateful for it.

Adapted from:

<http://www.chopra.com/ccl/3-new-years-resolutions-to-encourage-personal-growth>

January Calendar Highlights

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR UPDATES

WWW.STPETERSMEDFORD.ORG

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| Jan. 1 | The Holy Name, Holy Eucharist 10 a.m. |
| Jan. 10 | St. Paul's Breakfast Program, 7:45 a.m. |
| Jan. 13 | Vestry Meeting, 7:00 p.m. |
| Jan. 18 | Caps & Laps, 12:00 p.m. (Ruth Hedden's) |
| Jan. 31 | Finance Meeting, Williams Hall, 9:00 a.m. |

FROM PULPIT TO PEW

by The Reverend Canon Donald J. Muller

On Sunday, December 14, 1980, The Right Reverend Paul Moore, Bishop of New York laid hands on me for the second time in six months in the Parish of Christ the Redeemer, Pelham, NY and said these words

“Therefore, Father, through Jesus Christ your Son, give your Holy Spirit to Donald; fill him with grace and power, and make him a priest in your Church. May he exalt you, O Lord, in the midst of your people; offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to you; boldly proclaim the gospel of salvation; and rightly administer the sacraments of the New Covenant. Make him a faithful pastor, a patient teacher, and a wise councilor. Grant that in all things he may serve without reproach, so that your people may be strengthened and your Name glorified in all the world. All this we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. “ (the people in a loud voice respond) Amen.

That was 35 years ago. In that time, I have served as a Curate in the Parish of Christ the Redeemer (6/80-6/82); Rector of Church the Divine Love, Montrose, NY (7/82-1/86); Rector of Holy Innocents’, Beach Haven, NJ (2/86-7/96); Rector of St. Stephen’s Pro-Cathedral, Wilkes-Barre, PA (8/96-4/2004); and Rector of St. Peter’s, Medford (5/2004 to present). I have learned much in each of the parishes to which God has called me. There were people and situations who called forth in me more than I knew I had. There were new learnings all along the way. The Church and her ministry has changed drastically during these 35 years, but God has not. God is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. But, because our culture has changed, the Church has had to change, and will continue to do so. We have to hold on to what is essential, and change what isn’t. But that is a discussion for another column.

Over more than these 35 years I have been blessed by mentors in the faith and ministry. Beginning with my parents (and my older brothers) who shared with me their faith and their full participation in the life and ministry of the Episcopal Church in the three places we lived when I was growing up. My parents, Ed and Edith, served as Sunday School teachers most of their lives, and youth group advisors when I was a teenager. My dad also sang in the choir his whole life, even though he never learned to read music (as well as stints on the Vestry and parish treasurer). My mom, served on the Mission Board of St. Anne’s, Washingtonville and even as a Warden. There was never a discussion, Sunday morning we went to church (sometimes in three or four cars). My brothers and I sang in the boys choir, then as acolytes, and in the adult choir. There were a number of years when we were the “Three Kings” doing the solos in that great hymn.

There were the priests who mentored me. Fr. Richard Elting was the Vicar of St. Anne’s during my teenage years. When I began working on my “God and Country” Award for Boy Scouts, he handed me a copy of the Synoptic Gospels – I never did earn the award. I transferred to Manhattan College (a Roman Catholic Christian Brothers school) he made a point to make sure I knew I was an Anglican Catholic and knew how to spell that out. It was his death that forced me to hear God’s call to the priesthood.

Archdeacon Bob Willing led me to Nashotah House for my seminary formation (he remained a true friend and mentor until his death). Fr. Christ Wolf was a supply priest at St. Anne’s and later was my supervisor for a summer of internship at Holy Innocents’, Highland Falls and St. Mark’s, Fort Montgomery. After ordination I was Curate to Fr. David Hoag who taught me so much about how to conform my life as a priest of the Church. There were many other priests and still are who have helped and are helping me be a faithful priest. *(continued on page 4)*

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Don

KIDS' CORNER

By the time you read this article we should be in the full swing of the Christmas season. You may even be wondering how much longer that fresh Christmas tree is going to last. You might be dreading the end of Christmas and the post-Christmas let down. But don't despair. We have the season of Epiphany to look forward to in the month of January and it does help to meditate on what that season can mean for us.

The word Epiphany means "showing forth" or "manifestation". Epiphany is a season with themes of light (a welcome addition to an otherwise dark time of the year), anointing and commissioning for public ministry. It is the celebration of the proclamation of Christ to the world. It's an opportunity to reflect on our own Baptism and rededicate ourselves to the ministry of spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ. The theme of discipleship is the initial focus in the readings for the Sundays after Epiphany.

Epiphany is also about the Wise Men or Magi who sought Jesus, the baby King. They were not Jews or followers of what was to become "The Way", the name of the early group of people who were followers of Jesus. They were gentiles, non-Jews, and probably worshiped their own gods. But, we read in the Gospel of Matthew that they followed a mysterious star for many, many miles, perhaps up to a year, to find this new born king, bringing gifts with profound meaning. Then the Wise Men went home another way and tricked King Herod, who then sought to kill this child king to save his own kingdom from the potential threat. So, after Mary and Joseph stayed in Bethlehem for a while, they became refugees and traveled to the country of Egypt until it was safe to go back to their home in Nazareth. (You can read this story in Matthew 2)

We might wonder what it was about the birth of Jesus that caught the attention of the Wise Men. Perhaps we could take the time to wonder what has touched us about the birth of Jesus and what it says about us that we choose to be his followers.

Blessings and peace,
Sue Legnani
Director of Christian Formation

Celebrating Epiphany at Home

- Read the story of the Wise Men from the gospel of Matthew in the bible or from a children's bible. (Matthew 2)
- If you're like me, you need something to replace all of the Christmas decorations that have been taken down. To celebrate Twelfth-Night, January 6th (also the date of Epiphany), make some stars to hang around the house to represent the star that the Wise Men followed.
- Go out for a walk in the evening and look for stars. As you head home, take a slightly different way like the Wise Men and think about what that long journey to find the child Jesus meant to them.
- Find some ways to be a "light" to someone else.



Body and Soul

By Edith Green, RN

Every year in December, I wonder if I should bother with a tree and ornaments and all the rest of the decorations that Christmas brings. And every year I drag out the totes I keep the decorations in and bring them out. Only, of course, to reverse the process when Christmas has come and gone. I truly try to wait for the whole twelve days before dismantling the tree and putting it all away for another year. Most often, New Year's Day is spent doing that chore.

This year was no different. I shopped in stores to see wreaths and lighted trees and watched neighbors put lights around their houses outside. And, feeling guilty, I dragged out my decorations and put up the tree (artificial at this point in my life and also pre-lit). The ornaments, however, still waited in the boxes. I was thinking that I may not get around to putting them on the tree, after all. I might just leave them in the box and that would save me time.

Then something changed. I looked at the tree, brightly lit, and thought it looked lonely. It admonished me for leaving it nearly naked. I started taking the ornaments out of the box and really looked at each one. As I put them on the tree, I remembered some that I had from years ago when my kids were still young. A black angel dressed in white with gossamer wings. The dress is no longer white and the wings are somewhat bent. But, there she sits on the top of the tree still smiling. As I put her up there, I wondered what would happen to her when I was no longer here. A few ornaments I brought back from travels; a woman dressed like a Costa Rican woman, a nurse whose face is mutilated from years of wear. Some ornaments depict Charlie Brown and his compadres that the kids loved. I have a small angel with my mother's name on it. She's been gone now for 13 years. There are some new ones too; ones that I saw as I shopped last year after Christmas during the sales. I now have a leg lamp like the one in A Christmas Story, my favorite Christmas movie.

I know I'll have to take them all down and put them away in less than a month. But somehow, this doesn't bother me this year. Maybe Christmas is about reflecting upon Christmases past, about family members; those who are here and those who've already gone. Maybe it's about hope for the coming year, about promises God has made to us. Maybe the trees and lights help us to celebrate the birth of Him who saved us so we could have all the Christmases ahead. Maybe, just maybe.

And Finally on a lighter note:

A Jew and a Christian were talking. The Jew said, "Well, you know we gave you the Ten Commandments." And the Christian replied, "True, but you can't

Pulpit to Pew (continued)

(Continued from page 2) There were the Bishops along the way, some with just a little bit of influence, others who taught me so much. My father-in-law Bishop Albert VanDuzer was incredibly helpful, generous, humbly giving advice along the way. Bishop Paul Marshall in the Diocese of Bethlehem, inspired me to continue to grow in ways I hadn't thought of before. Of course, there were the seminary professors and fellow seminarians. Every experience is a chance to grow, to find Christ, and to serve Him.

Thanks to all at the Parishes I grew up in and have served. You have all taught me so much and given me the opportunity to serve God through and with you.

In Christ,

Fr. Don

Thank you...

Thanks to Mary Allan, Ruth Hedden, and Deacon Helen and Mike Orlando for hosting the Covenant Players in their homes during the weekend of December 11-13.

Thanks to Steve and Leslie Haines for putting up the Creche scene in front of the Church and overseeing the many volunteers who helped decorate inside and outside the Church.

Thank you to all who made a Pledge of their financial resources to God through St. Peter's. You help people's lives be transformed. (If you haven't made a pledge, please consider doing so!)

Thanks to all who made our Christmas Services so wonderful: Church staff, choir, acolytes, altar guild, readers, ushers, our children, etc.

Prayer for the New Year:

O God our Creator, you have divided our life into days and seasons, and called us to acknowledge your providence year after year: Accept your people who come to offer their praises, and, in your mercy, receive their prayers; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

DEACON'S BENCH

The MDGs – What Happens Now?

Fifteen years ago, the Episcopal Church, Episcopal Relief & Development, and the Diocese of New Jersey joined world leaders beginning a targeted effort to eradicate extreme poverty via the Millennium Development Goals. The eight MDGs, due to end as on December 31, 2015, sought to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, achieve universal primary education, promote gender equality and empower women, reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, combat HIV/AIDs, malaria, and other diseases, ensure environmental sustainability, and create a global partnership for development with targets for aid, debt relief, and trade. Using the MDGs as our guidelines in responding to our Lord's call to serve the poor, St. Peter's supported the work of Millennium Villages in Mayange, Rwanda from 2008-2013 and has been in a companion relationship with Redemption School, a private Episcopal school serving children in the area of Gonaives, Haiti, since 2014.

While none of the eight goals has been fully realized in every country, use of the goals has sparked definite improvement in several areas. Worldwide, the proportion of people living on less than \$1.25 a day has decreased from 47% to 22%, the percentage of undernourished people has decreased from 23.6% to 14.3%, enrollment for primary education has increased from 88% to 90%, especially among girls, and the number of children who die under the age of five has decreased from 99 to 53 for every 1,000 live births. This is all good news! Yet, one billion people still live on less than \$1.25 a day and more than 800 million people still do not have enough food to eat. Women still fight hard for their rights and millions of them still die in childbirth.

Our youth know that there is more to be done. Several months ago, a discussion of the MDGs led one of our J2A class members to ask: "The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are supposed to end on December 31, 2015. What happens after that?"

"After that", world leaders recognized that while the MDGs did a good job of focusing attention on the issues of worldwide poverty, their scope had been too narrow to address those issues effectively. So, beginning in January of 2016 (and ending in December 2030), continued anti-poverty work will be guided by 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) shown below.



Continued on the next page

Gift Market Results

Thank you for your Support!

On Saturday, November 14, St. Peter's welcomed approximately 175 people, most of whom may never before have darkened our doorstep, to do their holiday shopping at our First Annual International Gift Market. There they found a lighted Christmas tree decorated with ornaments for the taking, tables covered with Nativity scenes from around the world, jewelry, housewares, baskets, scarves and mittens, coffee, tea, chocolate, and stocking stuffers. If customers didn't find what they wanted on our tables, we invited them to place orders from any of three different catalogues. By Saturday, December 12, when the last catalogue orders were picked up by their purchasers, the Market had not only helped provide fair wages to the many artisans who had made the items offered for sale, but had also raised over \$1,000.00 to support the ministry of Redemption School, Haiti.

The MDG Team, sponsors of the Gift Market, offers hearty thanks to all of you who helped publicize the Market and to all who shopped the Market, often bringing friends with you. We specifically thank the following, whose many hands made light work of this event:

Kris Adler, Mary Allan, Laurie Barbato*, Geri Blum, Al and Marilyn Borrell, Sue Crawford, Cindy Cullen, Enrique Dominguez, Abby Floyd, Sandy Follman, Dottie Gaither, Kathy Gehris, Edie Green*, Ruth Hedden, Mandy and Brian Hunter, Ben and Betty Jones*, Barb LaRue, Sue Legnani*, Pat Lusk, Lynn Muller, Tiffany Myers*, Josie Nealis, Mike Orlando, Sue and Joe Santangelo, Michelle Scarpulla, Beverly Scollay, Cynthia Sosnowski, and Tina Sunlitis. We also thank all who, at the spur of the moment, stayed late after church services to make the lawn signs that were placed on our grounds and along Medford roadways, Laurel and Dave Smith, who lent their beautiful Christmas tree for the event, Susan Fanjoy, who lent the Christmas Tree used to display our scarves and mittens, and all of you who have given us suggestions to make the Second Annual International Gift Market an even bigger success. (Starred names are those of MDG Team members.)

Deacon's Bench (cont.)

Continued from page 5

Widening the lens beyond the original eight MDGs, the SDGs address economic development, justice and equality for all, particularly in relation to gender inequality, and the importance of environmental sustainability and climate change as root issues of poverty. Where the original eight MDGs stressed the help that "rich" countries would give to "poor" countries, the SDGs now require all countries not only to assist others as possible, but also to develop specific plans to address poverty within their own borders.

Why should we care about the Sustainable Development Goals? You will recall that Jesus began his public ministry by claiming for himself the anointing of the Holy Spirit to bring good news to the poor (Luke 4:16-19). It is now our job to proclaim that same Good News. The SDGs are our 21st century guidelines for how to do so.

In His service,
Deacon Helen

remind

Everyone needs a **remind**-er every now and then. We are using this message service to contact Sunday School parents about events or in the case of inclement weather, the cancellation of Sunday School.

Please text @stpetersme to 81010 or @stpetersme to (609) 269-2654.

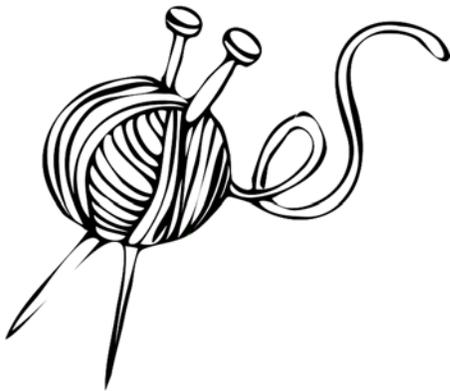
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PARISH NEWS

Come and Join Caps & Laps as we
kick off a new year of knitting!

January 18th at Ruth Hedden's house
for lunch. All are welcome. We have
patterns and yarn and will teach you!



Epiphany Sunday, January 3, 2016
Wait!!! Don't put that Nativity set away
yet. We invite you to bring it to church
on January 3rd and place it on one of the
tables around Williams Hall for everyone
to enjoy during Coffee Hour. This will be
our way to celebrate Epiphany and the
tradition of putting Christmas decorations
away on Twelfth-Night (January 6th). If
your set is too big to bring please bring
the Holy Family and perhaps two or three
other pieces for us to see.



PARISH REGISTER

BAPTISMS

None

WEDDINGS

None

BURIAL

Carol Cunzeman, December 16, 2015

Annual Finance Meeting

9 a.m.

January 31

This official meeting is being held in order
to inform parishioners of our current fi-
nancial status and proposed 2015 budget.

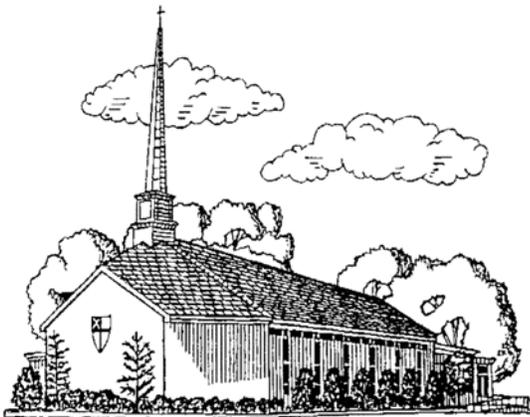
Watch your bulletins for further infor-
mation and plan to attend this important
meeting.

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 Miner, Parish Administrator Eleanor Meyer, Director of Music Sue Legnani, Director of Christian Formation
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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.



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.

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