

Good News

June 2020

Vestry Update

By Michelle Scarpulla

The past few months have been filled with anxiety, uncertainty, and sadness. Throughout this pandemic, one of my greatest concerns, besides the health and safety of my family, has been the health and safety of this parish. I have been distraught at the decisions Reverend Valerie, the vestry and I have had to make, starting with postponing Designer Bag Bingo (our second biggest fundraiser of the year), closing the building to physical worship, and finally putting three of our staff members on furlough.

There have been countless meetings happening behind the scenes involving Reverend Valerie, the Wardens, the Finance Committee, the vestry and the diocese. Please know we have prayerfully considered every decision we have made, keeping the health and safety of you all foremost in our minds.

As Senior Warden, I do not take lightly my responsibility to care for you all and ensure that St. Peter's remains a place that is spiritually, physically and financially healthy for us all to gather and worship. To that end, please allow me to summarize what has been done in each of these areas thus far and what is to come.

Spiritually: Reverend Valerie, Deacon Helen and Bruce, our deacon intern, have taken extraordinary measures to care for us all spiritually and pastorally. If there is anything else that any of them (or I) can do, please do not hesitate to reach out to any of us. When we are able to use our building again, we know some may still not feel safe to come and be among the public. For those in this situation, we will continue to record our services and provide for your spiritual needs as you need.

Physically: Bishop Stokes has appointed a task force to guide the parishes of the diocese on steps to take to re-open our buildings. Reverend Valerie is the chairperson of this committee, and I am also a member as a representative of the public health field. This committee will provide guidance to parishes on what needs to be done prior to re-opening, as well as what procedures we will need to put in place once we do open to ensure that everyone in our parish remains healthy. Some of these procedures may feel strange and foreign at first, but trust they will be in place in order to keep us all safe.

Financially: We started 2020 with a projected budget deficit. Once the church was forced to move our services online, we experienced a lapse in pledge income. Since then the vestry, wardens and finance committee have been working hard to figure out solutions, both short-term and long-term, to our financial situation. We have prepared a financial report for you which can be found on pages 7-8. We hope you will take the time to read it, digest it, ask questions and respond as you are able.

Let me end with this verse from Philippians 4:6-7: *Don't worry about anything, but in all your prayers ask God for what you need, always asking him with a thankful heart. And God's peace, which is far beyond human understanding, will keep your hearts and minds safe in union with Christ Jesus.*

FROM THE PRIEST-IN-CHARGE

By The Rev. Canon Valerie L. Balling

I doubt any of us imagined in March that we would be asked to stay home as much as possible until June. Almost overnight the way we interacted as a society changed to limit the spread of a microscopic virus. There have been many challenges and there are more to come as we consider how to safely interact with each other again. From my perspective, life in Stage I (or Phase II, depending on what model you are looking at), will NOT be that much different from what we are currently doing at St. Peter's. The Vestry and I will be working on a plan of how and when we will gather safely for in-person worship at the church, but there will be important protocols in place, like facemasks and social distancing. We will also continue to offer at least one service that is accessible on YouTube or Facebook each week. For those who do not want to come to the church building, we support you in that decision. I hope that we will be able to offer Eucharistic visits if desired, but there are logistics to decide.

As someone pointed out in a recent virtual Coffee Hour, coming to the church building when we have to remain distant from one another will make being at church feel strange. I absolutely agree. I feel like a kid being told, "Look, but don't touch!" Yes, being in the same space with others will feel a bit more like church as I like it to be, but it will also feel like a big part of what we do together will be missing. It is important to recognize this reality before it happens to be prepared for the strangeness. It will be almost like church, but not quite. I look forward to the day we can worship together in-person without such restrictions, but rushing back is dangerous, even deadly.

However, we KNOW that God is in the midst of us, whether we are in the building or at home. While worshipping in-person together is the preference, we make this loving sacrifice knowing it will not be forever. As I mentioned, the Vestry will be working on our plan for reopening. If you have any comments you would like to share with us, please let us know. We need and value your input. We will be having a **Church Town Hall meeting on Sunday, June 14th at 11 AM** to talk about our current status and answer any of your questions.

We do know there will be no in-person Vacation Bible School this summer. Parents, if you are interested in some biblical-based activities to do with your kids over the summer, we would be happy to offer you some ideas and material. During worship, there will be no congregational singing, which is a painful reality for those of us who love hymnary. We may have a cantor or other musical offerings in the interim. Until I know more about the recommendations for distributing Eucharist, I will hold off on saying what our practice will be.

As we live into this next phase of our lives, I remind you that while we cannot see COVID-19, we can see its effects. The same is true about God and God's presence in our lives. Our eyes may not see God physically manifest, but we can absolutely see God at work in our lives. We see God in the many face masks that have been made; we see God in the generosity of food given to Christian Caring Center; we see God in those who serve on the "front lines" in hospitals and care facilities; we see God in the dedication of those making sure we are fed physically and spiritual.

Finally, I offer my congratulations to all our college, high-school and 8th grade graduates this year. It is not the celebration you imagined or deserve, but it does not lessen your accomplishments. Congratulations! May God continue to bless and keep you.

With Easter Joy,
Rev. Valerie+

Church & Home

By Sue Legnani

Dear Friends,

This will be the last article I will write for the newsletter. As most of you know I am retiring from the position of Director of Christian Formation at St. Peter's. I want you to know that I have loved being a part of this ministry. I have had the privilege of getting to know so many of you over the years and I will miss all the parents, kids, and teachers I have worked with.

Pentecost is coming on May 31st. In this time of Covid-19 this could not be a better reminder of what our mission is in the church. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to his disciples and charged them to go into the world to preach the gospel and to baptize in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. I have tried to remind (probably nag) all of us to remember that parents are the first teachers of their children.

We cannot stop now! More than ever, while we cannot be together in our church building for Sunday School, do not forget to pray together, read the Bible together, and ask those hard questions that we all have about our faith. If you do not have the answers someone out there does (and there's always Google and Wikipedia). We also have wonderful clergy who are more than ready to help you find some answers too.

When our doors can finally open and we can have Sunday School please volunteer to teach a class, substitute for those who are teaching, bring in a snack for a class, and pray for the children and adults who are teaching. Be a part of this Jesus Movement that our Presiding Bishop is so excited about and wants us to be excited about too.

It all starts with adults who pass their faith on to their children and grandchildren, Goddaughters and Godsons, nieces, and nephews and so on, and we pray they will pass it on to the next generations too. You see, faith can be just as contagious as a virus, but in a good way!

I wish you a joyous and holy Pentecost.

Sue Legnani

PS: Wear something **RED** on Pentecost Sunday!

Body and Soul

By Edith Green, RN

Years ago, I belonged to a group which, as part of a Christmas celebration, exchanged names for gift giving. I will always be grateful to the woman who picked my name because she gave me a book entitled, **WOMEN'S UNCOMMON PRAYERS**. I have used this book many times since.

Here is a prayer from that book that seems appropriate for our times. Written by The Rev. Linda C. Smith-Criddle

In Times of Change

Assist us, Lord, in living hopefully into the future. In the face of change, help us to set unnecessary fears aside and to recognize our potential for creative response. Help us to develop a reasonable optimism when confronted by “the new” and to guard against our own defensiveness. Be with us as we remember and celebrate former times, and keep us from unreasonable yearning for them, which takes us from the work you have set before us in our time. All this we ask in the name of your Child, our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

And Finally: Things that are easy do not last long and things that last long are not easy.



Congrats to our Graduates

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2020 GRADUATES

College Graduates

- Grayson Myers
- Emma Moore
- Dalton Wu
- Jillian Floyd
- Krista Hoffman

High School Graduates

- Anthony Castiglia
- Elisabeth Cullen
- Grace McKinley
- McKenna Quinn
- Kylie Quinn
- Chelsea Richards
- Caroline Stein

Eighth Grade Graduates

- Elizabeth Adler
- Bankole Arole
- Nicholas Brown
- Jack Couture
- Daniel Frazier
- Sean Gaughan
- Christian Gosewisch
- Avery Hall
- Evan Lure
- Alex Rubano
- Joshua Trinity



DEACON'S BENCH

By The Rev. Helen M. Orlando, Deacon

Greetings!

As I write, it is seventy-two days since we have been able to physically gather for worship. During that time, clergy, vestry, and several of our parishioners have shared a ministry of making regular phone calls to each of you. More and more often, we hear how very much you miss being able to worship together. All of us miss uniting our voices in prayer and song, passing “The Peace” with a handshake or a hug, gathering for coffee and conversation after services. Many of us can’t wait to get back to “the way things were” or tentatively hope for a “new normal” that won’t be too different from the old one. Although I feel much the same away, I keep wondering God is shaking us out of our comfort zone in order to lead us into a new way of being church. On May 12, Bishop Stokes noted the many changes the need to protect ourselves and others from the Coronavirus had already made to our customs of worship. He reminded us that, no matter what, “as people of faith, we should continue to do what people of faith do: pray, worship, serve, and love our neighbors.” Two days later, Episcopal church buildings in the Diocese of New Jersey were closed. Have you noticed what has happened since? More people receive and use our prayer list. Several new people have committed to join the Prayer Vine and pray daily for those whose needs are brought to them.

Because we have been forced into using technology that we have never used before, those of us who have access to Zoom, YouTube or Facebook are learning that we can raise our voices from home with those leading the service, with those who usually sit next to us in the pew, and with many others whose health or work schedules have always prevented them from worshipping at a specific time and place. More and more, we are learning to value others. Through parishioner-to-parishioner phone calls, cards, and notes, we find ourselves caring for, praying with, and reaching out in love to persons we might never have spoken to without the temporary closing of our church building. As we witness doctors, nurses, medical personnel, police, ambulance crews, funeral directors, grocery store clerks, janitorial crews and others risk their lives and the lives of their families for our safety, many of us are becoming newly or increasingly appreciative of the hard and often risky work of those on whose services we depend. The death toll among our elderly, our poor, and those of different races, nationalities or ethnicities is God’s call to us to shake off our complacency and act on the promises we made at our Baptism: to “seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving [our neighbors as ourselves]” and to “strive for justice and peace among all people, [respecting] the dignity of every human being.” (BCP, p. 305)

Although I do not believe that our loving and forgiving God has caused the current pandemic, I rejoice that God can work through it for good. When the doors of St. Peter’s open once again, I pray that our prayer lives will have deepened and that we will continue to reach out to everyone in our worship community: those we have known a long time, those who walk through the doors for the first time, those around us whom we have never taken the time to know, and those to whom we must go. I pray that while we look for other ways to reach out personally, St. Peter’s will find a way to continue welcoming those who can only “come to church” via cell phone, iPad, or computer. And, I pray that we will grow in service to others – especially those whose value our society makes it only too easy for us to ignore. The church for which I pray is the one I believe God is now calling us to be. You may hear God’s call differently. Let’s keep listening and see where God leads us! AMEN.

PARISH NEWS

Dear Friends,

Bob and I want to thank you for all the prayers, cards, and kind thoughts that you have sent our way since the death of our son, Tim. We deeply appreciate all that you have done for us by keeping us in your prayers. This has been a great comfort during this difficult time. Sue and Bob Legnani

Worship Schedule: Currently, we are expecting to continue the live-stream schedule of our services though the month of June. If that changes, the congregation will be notified. We will also continue to gather at 11 AM on Sundays through Zoom for a virtual Coffee Hour. The Zoom link is <https://zoom.us/j/9194312541>. To call in, dial 1-646-558-8656, then enter the meeting ID 919 431 2541, followed by #.

Saturday, June 6th - 5 PM Spiritual Eucharist Rite II

Sunday, June 14th - 8 AM Spiritual Eucharist Rite I, 10 AM Spiritual Eucharist Rite II

Saturday, June 20th - 5 PM Spiritual Eucharist Rite II

Sunday, June 28th - 8 AM Spiritual Eucharist Rite I, 10 AM Spiritual Eucharist Rite II

ON SUNDAY, JUNE 14th at 11 AM, we will meet over Zoom for a Church Town Hall meeting to answer any questions members may have. The Zoom link is <https://zoom.us/j/9194312541>. To call in, dial 1-646-558-8656, then enter the meeting ID 919 431 2541, followed by #.

PARISH REGISTER

MEMORIAL SERVICES

Timothy Legnani, May 15, 2020

Jamie Ritz, May 26, 2020

The following parishioners will be celebrating birthdays during the month of June. Happy Birthday to them all!

June 1: Chase Winegar

June 22: Debi Moore, Anthony Rubano

June 2: Nancy Graham, Alexandra Rubano

June 23: Sean Gaughan, Christian Gosewisch

June 3: Adam Penque

June 25: John Steel, Lue Ehlman, Cassandra Seigel

June 4: Elizabeth Edwards, Beckie McCammitt

June 26: Beryl Jackson, Frederick Frazier

June 5: Pamela Fazio, Christine Hambrecht, Alexandra Krug

June 27: Lori Sears, Robert Albert, Al Perkins

June 6: Roger Norris, Tracy Davidson

June 29: Michelle Scarpulla

June 9: Jane Bersch

June 30: Cassandra Richards

June 11: Doris Glasgow, Jean Ricketts, Jennifer Cook, Stephen Meixner

June 12: Katie Walker

June 13: Barbara Kelly, Kristine Adler, Haley Clark, Lily Denn

June 14: Shirley Chiaradonna, Ted Balling

June 15: Andrew LaRue, Jacob Stout

June 16: Keira Rodden

June 19: Lillian Fink

June 20: Claire Nealis, Paul Andrews

June 21: Georgia Cohen

Financial Report


This purpose of this report is to provide a financial snapshot to the parish. Please contact any of the members of the finance committee with questions. Our contact information is at the end of this report.


We started 2020 with a projected budget deficit of \$49,455.33. When the church was forced to close in March, and thus no pledges were collected that week, we immediately saw the potential impact and realized we would not have the money needed to make payroll at the end of March. As a result the vestry took three immediate actions: (1) We made the painful decision to temporarily layoff three of our staff members: Sue Legnani, Brendan Moore and Mark Cantarella. (2) The diocese gave us \$22,000 to cover our expenses and provide a cushion in our account, which we are hoping to pay back. (3) We decided to temporarily stop payment on our diocesan assessment, Reverend Valerie's pension and Reverend Valerie's health insurance (which were all approved by the diocese and the companies that provide the pension and insurance).

Since then, after a few reminders from Reverend Valerie to send in pledges, you have all been so generous and kept us within \$1,000 of what we had anticipated for pledges. Unfortunately, we are still behind in our budget due to the postponement of the Bingo fundraiser as well as lack of donations from outside groups that use our facilities. As of the end of April, we would have experienced a shortfall of \$6,729.39 if we had not received the money from the diocese, however because of that, we were able to stay in the black by about \$15,000. Please keep in mind that we owe money on our diocesan assessment, pension and health insurance in the amount of \$7,105.69. Please see the following table for the breakdown of our actual and budgeted income from January 1, 2020-April 30, 2020.

Table 1: Income through 4/30/20

Item	Actual	Budgeted
Interest income	16.10	12.00
Pledge income	56,707.00	57,537.00
Non-pledge	15,295.00	11,138.56
Open offering	1374.25	2100.00
Special offering	899.00	900.00
Donations/	841.46	1666.67
Miscellaneous	-25.00	333.33
Designer Bag	-171.31*	6750.00
Facility usage	2,100.00	3,333.33
Flower memori-	755.00	750.00
TOTALS:	77,791.5	84,520.89
Money from diocese	22,000.00	
	\$99,791.50	84,520.89

 This is amazing! Thank you!

 This is also wonderful!

**Please note that the Cullens have purchased the handbags and permits for this event and have not yet been reimbursed. They are graciously "floating" this money to St. Peter's at this time.*

Financial Report, Continued

Since then, the CARES Act has been enacted that provides small business loans that are open to religious organizations. We have applied for one of these loans (the Payroll Protection Program [PPP]) through Republic Bank with the help and support of long-time parishioner, Rob Worley, and we hope to receive a loan of \$40,126.00 soon. In order to have this loan forgiven, we need to do a few things: (1) Hire back all employees by June 30, 2020 and (2) use the money only for approved items: payroll, pension, utilities in order to have the loan forgiven. We are hopeful that this money will make up for the loss of income from the two fundraisers, as well as allow us to pay back some of the money to the Diocese.

So where does this leave us? Despite all of this, we are still projecting a shortfall of \$37,500 for 2020. This is where we need your help with the following:

1. Continue to send your pledge. If you can no longer afford your pledge, we understand. Please let us know so that we can adjust our records.
2. If you can afford to increase your pledge, please consider doing so. If you decide to do this, please let us know.
3. Consider sending your pledge in electronically. You can set it up so that it comes automatically and you don't have to think about it. Also, when we return to the church building, we will not be able to pass the plate (to avoid contact between us all), so we will have to employ other methods to take up the collection. There are a few different ways to do this, and the finance committee can assist you with any of these that you wish to try.
 - a. You can set it up as an automatic payment from your bank account, similar to any other bills you may pay this way.
 - b. You can use PayPal. (When linked to a bank account, there are no fees.)
 - c. You can use FaithStreet.
4. Pray for vestry and the finance committee.
5. Attend our services, coffee hour, and other events throughout the year, and consider getting involved on vestry or on a committee.

Finance committee members and contact info:

Reverend Valerie, Priest-in-Charge: canonballing@stpetersmedford.org
Danielle Colaianni, Treasurer: daniellecolaianni@stpetersmedford.org
Jack Hobson, Finance Chair: jack.hobson@stpetersmedford.org
Michelle Scarpulla, Senior Warden: michelle.scarpulla@stpetersmedford.org
Andrew LaRue, Junior Warden: Andrew.larue@stpetersmedford.org