

# The Beacon

*In thy light shall we see light.  
Psalm 36:9*

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## September 2024

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### Hope and Act

*by the Rev. Abigail Crozier Nestlehutt*

Every vestry meeting begins with a “Question of the Month,” which each member takes a turn answering. I love this practice because the answers provide information to help us better understand each other. The most recent question was, “What is your prayer or hope today?” And so, I invite you to consider that question for yourself. Consult your heart. What is its deepest desire, its most tender longing? What is your prayer or hope today? And how might God be calling you to act in response?

As you will read in the pages that follow, the theme for the 2024-2025 Program Year is “Hope and Act,” which both builds upon previous years’ themes and connects with the language we will be using in worship this month as we focus on environmental stewardship, using the national church’s “Season of Creation” materials. Certainty in God’s love for us and for all creation means having hope as a person of faith. It is not quietly to wish something were different, but rather actively to join Jesus in making it so. With hope founded on God and with God’s support through the changes and chances of life, as we proclaim in Hymn 665 (“All our Hope on God is Founded”), we are positioned to engage as people of faith. To be a Christian is to work toward transforming our communities into places where all people are afforded justice, freedom and peace.

To act on our hopes requires us to be not only focused but also open. We must know what we believe and also see the position of others. We must strive to match the wideness of God’s mercy. Phoebe Griswold, wife of one of our former Presiding Bishops, wrote a prayer to help her remember this.

Dearest One,  
Increase the capacity of my heart.  
Take its edges and stretch them out  
To include all in me that I do not love,  
All in my family that I judge,  
All in my Church that I fear,  
And all in the world that doesn’t fit.

Your prayers and hopes range from privately personal to widely shared. Some you shelter tenderly in the quiet places of your heart and others you discuss freely. Consider offering all of them to God as questions,

with receptiveness to whatever answers might come. Your actions make a difference. Discernment with the divine will help guide you.

The start of the program year means a return to our three-service schedule, resumption of Christian Formation for all ages, and so much more. Please take the time to read about all that is happening at St. Peter's and beyond and consider getting involved in a new way. Together we will hope and act as people of faith called to make the world a better place for our having been here.

## **Program Year Theme - "Hope and Act"**

St. Peter's 2024-2025 Program Year theme will be "Hope and Act," building on previous years' programs. It also is the theme of our 2024 "Season of Creation" materials. "Season of Creation" is an ecumenical effort to raise awareness of the responsible use of the gifts of creation. The theme for "Seasons of Creation" is "To Hope and Act with Creation."

Beginning September 8 and for the following six weeks, St. Peter's will use a specific, Episcopal guide as one of the resources for designing liturgies and other programs. The theme for "Seasons of Creation" is "To Hope and Act with Creation." Adult Forum, Sunday School and Youth Group topics will be related to creation care. St. Peter's will extend the theme of "Hope and Act" beyond just creation-related matters. As a community infused with the light and love of Christ, we have hope, and we act.

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## **Stewardship: Act Today. Create Tomorrow.**

*by Steve Ockenden*

Stewardship is an intentional act of sharing in response to God's abundant love. It addresses both our present needs and our future hopes. It is manifested daily at St. Peter's—in the excellence of our Christian formation program, the hard work of the BB&G4J in enhancing our campus, the transcendent beauty of the weekly musical offerings, the professionalism with which our staff, vestry, clergy, and commissions approach their duties, and the faithful ministry of those who contribute to our many outreach ministries. It is expressed in the simplest of acts—the smile of a child proudly adding an offering to the collection plate, and the kindness and courtesy with which people greet visitors. Stewardship is the essence of how we live in communion with one another.

This year's stewardship campaign theme, "Act Today. Create Tomorrow," recognizes that every act of stewardship is both a response to present needs and an investment in the future. This year, more than most, we are facing both exciting opportunities and short-term challenges. The opportunities are reflected in one word: "growth." We are growing every day and, most importantly, our membership includes increasing numbers of young families. Our future is very bright. The challenges are temporary, but significant: we are transitioning out of a contract for rental of the barn that helped us to maintain and expand our outreach and other activities. We are about to replace that contract with another, but it will take time to reach our former levels of revenue.

We are therefore asking you to do three things. First, since stewardship goes far beyond money, please continue your extraordinary volunteerism, drawing on your individual gifts of time, skill, and passion. Second, please remember that pledging makes it possible for our Finance Commission to forecast available resources and to budget accordingly. A pledge is not a binding commitment, but, regardless of size, it is essential for sound planning. Finally, we ask you to reflect deeply on the amount you will pledge this program year, and to consider whether you can increase your previous generosity as we address our temporary shortfall.

Our stewardship campaign will be launched at all three services on Sunday, September 22, and will conclude on All Saints Day, November 3. You will receive a mailing in mid-September. Please plan to attend our kickoff and join us thereafter as we celebrate with cake. Thank you!

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## **We See Jesus in the Kitchen**

### **Capital Campaign Update**

**August 25, 2024**

What exciting news we have to share! We are currently on track with the necessary funds to begin the project in January 2025!

Fundraising for the Barn Kitchen Capital Campaign officially began in May 2024 intending to raise \$250,000 based on the project costs quoted by Warfel Construction in July 2023. In July 2024 Warfel reviewed these numbers and confirmed a small increase in the costs for the project (construction and appliances) to \$260,124. To reflect this increase and any contingency costs to complete the project, we have created a new stretch goal of \$300,000.

A second goal was set to encourage 100% parish participation, which would demonstrate our strong commitment to the project as a Third Place, and which would also be viewed favorably in future grant requests.

To date, we have received commitments from just under sixty parishioners/families and two grants that total \$279,600! This reflects \$94,775 applied (cash in hand), the Pew Grant of \$50,000 that can be drawn at any time, and approximately \$50,000 (or more) expected by year's end. We are very grateful that \$200,000 of the total on hand will allow us to begin the project early in January 2025. The remaining commitments will be satisfied through August 2026.

As this project comes closer to reality, we sincerely thank all who have made financial commitments to make this happen. The kitchen has been a dream since the completion of the Barn: a desire to expand our food ministry, providing opportunities for fellowship with parishioners and our neighbors. We will continue to keep you updated as the project progresses. If you have not had the opportunity to commit to this project you can do so here. <https://onrealm.org/StPetersInGreat/AddPledge/barnkitchen>.

Please reach out to Eileen Klein (eileenklein1@icloud.com) or Paige Infortuna (pinfortuna@msn.com) with any questions.

## July Financial Snapshot

	Month of July	July Year to Date	Forecast (year-end)	Budget (2024)
Parishioner Contributions	\$23,301	\$265,741	\$498,847	\$494,526
*Other Income	\$2,705	\$61,650	\$155,900	\$137,615
Total Income	\$26,006	\$327,391	\$654,747	\$632,141
Total Expense	\$42,055	\$366,333	\$646,610	\$632,128
Surplus/(Deficit)	(-\$16,049)	(-\$38,942 )	\$8,866	\$13

*\*Other Income: Interest, Rental, Endowment Distributions*

The parishioners of St. Peters can support the parish in many ways, and one of these is to keep their pledges up to date. Financial support is important at this time, as we expand our programs for both youth and adults with the addition of Seretha Curry, Assistant for Christian Formation and Communications, to our staff. Thank you! — Eric Lien for the Finance Commission

## Thanks from the Vestry

- All who have pledged or are considering pledging for the Barn Kitchen project.
- Brenda Grove and Janet Rich for their work for the Green Stewards, especially what was required to move St. Peter's to green energy providers.
- Joe and Mary-Helen Lewis, Abigail Nestlehutt, Jeff Moretzsohn, Steven Patchel, and Seretha Curry for presenting the Dinner and Hymn Sing as the Third Wednesday/Third Place Event in August.
- Mary Anne Morgan, for sharing her expertise to train readers for future services.
- Mark Clark, for rebuilding the signs at the entrances to St. Peter's churchyard.
- Mikayla Delano for playing the flute and Mario Delano, tenor, for singing in the Sunday Service, August 4.
- The Rev. Mark Nestlehutt and The Rev. Paul Reid for leading Sunday services on July 28 and August 7, respectively.
- All involved in the Food Ministry who meet monthly to make sandwiches and pack lunches to be delivered to Coatesville for distribution.

# Christian Formation

## Program Year Kick Off Information

### Sunday School Registration and Kick Off Party—September 4

On Wednesday, September 4, at 6pm St. Peter's will be hosting a Pizza and Ice Cream Party on the lower level of the Barn. Please join us for a fun activity for the kids, to meet the teachers, to eat pizza and ice cream, and to get your registration materials completed. If you cannot make it to this event but would like your child to attend Sunday School this year, please fill out this online registration form. **Please RSVP to [slcurry@stpetersgv.org](mailto:slcurry@stpetersgv.org) if you plan to attend.**

### Sunday School is Back in Session on September 8

Beginning at 9a.m., Sunday School will be held in the lower level of the barn. Join us as we start the program year with the Season of Creation.

### Youth Group Begins September 8

Youth Group also begins following the 9am service. The Season of Creation schedule is as follows:

- 9/8 Youth Group is in the Youth Room
- 9/15 Youth Group is combined with the Adult Forum for a talk and discussion, "The Image of God in the Garden of God."
- 9/22 Youth Group is combined with the Adult Forum for the Green Stewards' presentation, "Caring for God's World Outside"
- 9/29 Youth Group is in the Youth Room

We still need adult volunteers to help with Youth programming for the Fall. Please contact Seretha Curry ([slcurry@stpetersgv.org](mailto:slcurry@stpetersgv.org)) if you can assist or would like to learn more. Being available once a month would be especially helpful.

## Adult Formation September Schedule

Adult formation returns on September 8, when we resume our three-schedule service. As usual, it takes place in the barn from 10:20-11:05, fitting neatly between the two later morning services. Bring your coffee and your curiosity – all are welcome, and questions are always encouraged. Learning together is a wonderful way to deepen our community and our faith.

### September 8

#### *The Season of Creation*

Welcome to the 2024-2025 program year, which opens with environmental focus, using the "Season of Creation" as its theme. What does that mean? What does Christianity have to do with ecology? Why will some familiar language of the liturgy be different for a few weeks? Please join Abigail and Jeff in a discussion of St. Peter's participation in this ecumenical effort to highlight what it means to keep God's commandment to love all creation.

### September 15

### *The Image of God in the Garden of God*

An important element in Christian theology is understanding the connections between our image of God, our human personhood and our relationships with others, God and creation. Please join Seretha for a presentation and discussion of ways that Christians have thought about the calling to be made in God's image, and how that relates to taking care of Creation, the garden that God has given us to tend. This will be a combined Youth and Adult Forum.

### **September 22**

#### *Caring for God's World Outside*

The Green Stewards will provide an opportunity to learn more about how everyone can actively care for the natural world. The program will explore: a.) St. Peter's pollinator garden and landscaping; b.) how and why to support birds and other wildlife; c.) the importance of planting native species; d.) why and how to add water features; and e.) the importance of community gardens. This will be a combined Youth and Adult Forum.

### **September 29**

#### *Active Hope: Tips for Personal Environmental Actions*

The Green Stewards will continue their discussion of how individuals can make an impact as caretakers of creation.

## **The Sin of White Christian Nationalism**

By Paul Reid

At our recent National Convention of the Episcopal Church in Louisville, Kentucky, the Theology Committee of our House of Bishops issued a report that declared that "Christian Nationalism is a sin that distorts our relationship with God and with one another." It also noted that "Christian Nationalism in the United States has deep roots in white supremacy."

Christian Nationalism in our country today is the erroneous belief that our American nation was established by our founding fathers as a white, puritanical, Christian country; and the accompanying belief that the government should now take active steps in law and regulations to keep it that way.

Christian Nationalists are in fear that our multicultural nation is made "one out of many." Instead, they define "real American citizens" in a racist and religiously bigoted manner. In addition to its undemocratic proclivities, this cultural ideology of American Christian Nationalism damages all our Christian denominations, by giving us a bad name—"hypocrite"—among people of other faiths. It especially does so among secular humanists, who increasingly tar all Christians with the same brush.

On Sundays October 13 and 21 at 10:20 a.m. in the barn, the Rev. Paul Reid will lead a two-part adult formation series on the views, the roots, and very real and present dangers of Christian Nationalism. We will

consider why our bishops consider it to be sinful and will discuss its authoritarian aspects. You are invited to join these forums to express and discuss your own views on this critical issue.

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## **Fall Events**

### **Fall Fest September 6**

The beloved St. Peter's tradition of Fall Fest is back! Please join us at 5:30 p.m. for an elegant evening of beverages and hand-held bites for adults and a festive craft, movie, and supper night for children. Beverages and food for children will be provided. Please bring finger food for 8 people. To assist us with planning, please RSVP by using the sign-up sheet in the common room or the link in Keynotes. For more information, please contact Abigail, [abigail@stpetersgv.org](mailto:abigail@stpetersgv.org). To volunteer to help, please contact Gail Guthridge, [guthgirl60@gmail.com](mailto:guthgirl60@gmail.com).

### **An Evening with Jazz Sanctuary**

St. Peter's welcomes back Jazz Sanctuary on Wednesday, September 18, from 6:00-7:30 p.m. The evening will include wonderful music, good food, and a chance to connect with others. There will be sign-up sheets in each building and links in "Keynotes." Please bring a dish to share, if convenient.

### **Book Club**

The Book Club will meet at 7:00 p.m. on September 16 for a Zoom discussion of Amor Towles' best-selling *A Gentleman in Moscow*. The book choice for October 21 will feature a coming-of-age theme. On November 18 the group will share a more lighthearted/witty read. For further information, please contact Brenda Grove, [brendabgrove@gmail.com](mailto:brendabgrove@gmail.com).

### **Needlework Ministry Open House**

Everyone is invited to stop by the Historic Church Saturday, October 5, at 9:30 for a light breakfast and conversation with members of the Needlework Ministry. This is an excellent opportunity to thank the group for something that has been given or received, and/or stay to learn how to knit. The group is always open to new members from the Parish or the wider community. Members usually meet the first Saturday of each month at 10:00 a.m. to create items for people in need or for a special event. For further information, contact: [knitters@stpetersgv.org](mailto:knitters@stpetersgv.org).

### **Save the Date—Hayride and Bonfire Night**

Join us at Sugartown Strawberries on Saturday, November 9, at 6p.m. for a hayride and bonfire night! More details to come in the October *Beacon*.

## BB&G4J Can Collection

As part of the Season of Creation, the BB&G4J are collecting aluminum cans to crush and recycle, earning St. Peter's some money in the process. A collection container is available outside the shed if you wish to drop off (rinsed!) beverage cans for the cause.



## September Blood Drive

Did you know that every two seconds someone in the United States needs blood or platelets? The September blood drive will be on September 11 from 1-6p.m. in the Barn. Please stop by to participate in this crucial ministry. This is an amazing way to demonstrate your love of neighbor!

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## September Calendar

### September 4

Sunday School Registration and Pizza Party

### September 6

Fall Fest

### September 8

Program Year Kick Off  
Sunday School, Youth Group, and Adult Forum  
Begin

### September 11

Blood Drive

### September 16

Book Club

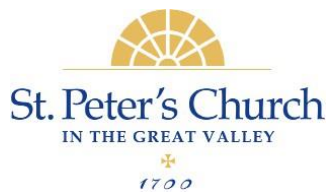
### September 18

An Evening with Jazz Sanctuary

### September 22

Stewardship Campaign Start





St. Peter's Church in the Great Valley  
 2475 St. Peter's Road, Malvern, PA 19355  
 Telephone: 610-644-2261  
 E-mail: [parishoffice@stpetersgv.org](mailto:parishoffice@stpetersgv.org)  
 Web site: [www.stpetersgv.org](http://www.stpetersgv.org)

The Rev. Abigail Crozier Nestlehutt, Rector  
 The Rev. Jeff Moretzsohn, Deacon  
 Steven Patchel, Organist/Choirmaster  
 Seretha Curry, Assistant for Christian Formation  
 Rachel Martin Swartz, Parish Administrator  
 Erinn White, Preschool Director  
 Gail Malcolm, Event Coordinator  
 Mario Delano, Weekend Facilities Manager

Deadline for the  
 October *Beacon*:  
**October 21**

***Our Mission:***  
*by the power of the Holy Spirit,  
 to nurture people of all ages in the  
 knowledge and love of God in  
 Jesus Christ, and to make Him  
 known in the wider community*

***Weekly Offerings at St. Peter's***

***Sunday***

8:00 AM *Holy Eucharist, Rite I\**  
 9:00 AM *Family Eucharist\*\**  
           *Sunday School\*\**  
 10:20 AM *Christian Formation\*\**  
 11:15 AM *Holy Eucharist, Rite II\*\**

***First Sunday***

10:00 AM *Holy Eucharist, Rite II\*\**  
*Fellowship follows all services*

***Wednesday***

10:00 AM *Morning Prayer & Bible Study\*\*\**

***Thursday***

10:30 AM *Intercessory Prayer Group\*\*\**  
 7:00 PM *Compline\*\*\**

***Friday***

8:00 AM *Gathering of Men\*\*\**

- \* Church
- \*\* Barn
- \*\*\* Virtual

*Parish office hours: 9:00 to 4:30, Monday thru  
 Thursday*