



The Beacon

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

October 2023

Changes and Chances

by the Rev. Abigail Crozier Nestlehutt

This is the time of year when the natural world reminds us how very beautiful and multi-faceted change can be. We see this most obviously in the turning of the leaves, but it is evident in less colorful ways as well—the shifting tilt of the earth that creates new patterns of light, the smell of the air, one final tomato ripening on the vine. It is said that the only person who likes change is a baby in a soiled diaper, but change is not all bad and does not necessarily mean loss or discomfort.

A recent trip to New Hampshire reminded me of the fundamental and reassuring constancy of life despite change. My sister and I spent a night in an inn where my father and grandmother had summered ages ago; the desk clerk serendipitously put us in a room across the hall from where they had stayed eight decades earlier. At sunset we sat by the lake where my father once swam, and in the morning we hiked up the mountain he had hiked from his youth until neuropathy kept him from reaching the summit. Opening the screen door to the inn's porch, I imagined my dad as a boy, running past to head off on an adventure; standing on the dock, I pictured the canoes that have been replaced by paddle boards. Pausing to look up at the mountain, I took in the peaceful landscape my father adored, knowing that it did not look exactly as when he was a boy but still marveling at its beauty.

Just as we cannot stop time, we cannot avoid change. And we do well to remember that change is often for the better. Improvement involves adding things here and taking away things there, tweaking or reworking, depending on the need. Imagine how stagnant life would be if everything always stayed the same! Still, it is true that change is not always easy. Indeed, two collects in the *Book of Common Prayer* acknowledge this and also remind us of the stable, consistent, ever-present nature of the divine.

Grant us, Lord, not to be anxious about earthly things, but to love things heavenly; and even now, while we are placed among things that are passing away, to hold fast to those that shall endure; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Be present, O merciful God, and protect us through the hours of this night, so that we who are wearied by the changes and chances of this life may rest in your eternal changelessness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The circumstances of my life have changed measurably over the past several months, most recently when my youngest child left for college. Maybe this fall has brought changes for you as well. At St. Peter's we experience the differences associated with each liturgical season. Additionally, this program year we have re-introduced offerings like Women on the Hill and are trying out a new approach to youth ministry by coordinating with two other churches in our deanery. This month we welcome our new organist and choir director, and we are engaging in conversations about the Sunday experience to remind ourselves of all we are doing well and to learn about ways we might improve. You can read about these things and so much more in the pages that follow. Whether we are continuing familiar, tried and true methods or considering adopting new ideas, we do so as people committed to the changeless love of God, freely offered to all.

Welcome to St. Peter's, Steven Patchel!

October 1 is a busy first Sunday at St. Peter's. Not only do we worship all together at 10 a.m. and then bless our various and sundry pets later that afternoon, but we also welcome our new organist and choirmaster, Steven Patchel, as he begins his music ministry with us. So be sure to attend the 10 a.m. service and to greet him in person at the reception that follows.



Originally from Kennett Square, Steven comes to us from Immanuel Highlands Episcopal Church in nearby Wilmington. During his career as a church musician, he has directed liturgical music programs for congregations in Ohio and Massachusetts as well as Delaware. He has performed organ recitals at the Princeton University Chapel, St. Thomas Church and Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York, and the Longwood Gardens ballroom, as well as abroad at the Kelvingrove Museum, Glasgow, and St. Paul's Cathedral, London. He also accompanies chamber musicians and choirs, including the Center City Chorale of Wilmington.

He began his organ studies at St. John's Cathedral in Wilmington and went on to earn degrees from the Oberlin College Conservatory in Ohio and the New England Conservatory in Boston. He has studied organ with William Porter, David Boe, Garth Peacock; harpsichord with Lisa Goode Crawford; and choral conducting with Daniel Moe and Donald Teeters. An active member of the American Guild of Organists, he enjoys teaching piano and organ students of all ages.

Blessing of the Animals



Bring your animals—whether furry, fuzzy, scaly, stuffed, or photographed, but definitely caged or leashed!—for a St. Francis Day blessing at 4 p.m. on Sunday, **October 1**. We will gather on the front lawn of the historic church for a brief service, a special blessing, and treats for all. This event offers a wonderful opportunity to invite friends and neighbors to St. Peter's, even at the last minute!

Bishop to Visit October 22

Bishop Daniel G.P. Gutiérrez will visit St. Peter's on Sunday, **October 22**, at 10 a.m. He will preside and preach in the single parishwide service, confirm and receive young people and adults into our faith, and bless adults reaffirming their baptismal vows. Following the service, we will welcome Bishop Daniel at a reception.



This important day in the life of St. Peter's is not to be missed, so please plan to join us. Hearing from our bishop is always a blessing, and it is wonderful for him to be greeted by a full church!

If you wish to be confirmed or received, or to reaffirm your baptismal vows before the bishop, please contact either Abigail (abigail@stpetersgv.org) or Jeff (jeff@stpetersgv.org) by **October 5**.



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The Beacon is produced monthly by St. Peter's Church in the Great Valley
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Submit articles to beacon@stpetersgv.org
Publication date: First of month
Deadline: 15th of month preceding
Staff: Trudi Graves (editor), Charlotte Mark, David Graves

St. Peter's 2025 Holy Land Pilgrimage

Would you like to experience Jerusalem and the Holy Land as a pilgrim, not just as a tourist? If so, Abigail has reserved ten spots in the course, "The Footsteps of Jesus," that is scheduled for March 18 to 28, 2025 at St. George's College in Jerusalem. She and Jeff will accompany our group of pilgrims attending the course, a ten-day study pilgrimage that focuses on the Scriptures, sites, and landscapes associated with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The College website summarizes the course this way:

Emphasizing the lived experience of pilgrimage as Christian formation, the course encounters the land of Jesus' ministry, engaging the biblical narratives in their physical, historical, and archaeological contexts. The course roughly follows a chronological arc of Jesus' life. Some attention is given to the Old Testament landscapes and narratives as well as to the commemorations of Acts. "The Footsteps of Jesus" has an appreciation for pilgrim traditions over the centuries, while engaging the contemporary Living Stones of Israel and Palestine.

The \$2,750 cost of the course includes housing and three meals a day beginning with dinner the night before course begins through breakfast the morning after it ends; it also covers all field trip transportation, admission fees to sites and museums, and other costs directly related to course activities.

Abigail has scheduled a preliminary information session via Zoom for **5:30 p.m. on Thursday, October 19**. Should parish interest exceed those ten reserved places, we may be able to increase our numbers. If you want more details about the course and the college before the meeting, you can visit www.saintgeorgescollegejerusalem.com/footsteps-of-jesus.

To request the Zoom link for the informational meeting, please contact Abigail (abigail@stpetersgv.org or 610-644-2261).

Jazz Sanctuary Returns Again!

One enjoyable way to spend the third Wednesday of the month is to come to the barn for supper and a concert by Jazz Sanctuary! Although early sunsets and brisk temperatures force us indoors in the fall, the music, the shared meal, and the opportunity to welcome friends both old and new to St. Peter's remain as rewarding as they were in August.

So plan to join us on Wednesday, **October 18** for a spirited, uplifting evening. The combo begins playing at 6 p.m., everyone breaks for supper and conversation at 6:30, and the music resumes at 7 for another thirty minutes. It helps our planners if you let us know via the sign-up sheets in both gathering spaces or the links in Keynotes that you plan to attend. We invite you to invite a friend, to bring a super-simple dish to share if possible, and to come at the last minute even if you forgot to sign up!

What Is Your "Sunday Experience" at St. Peter's?

As a result of last year's vestry survey of the parish to learn about people's experience of St. Peter's and their hopes and dreams its future, we are dedicating adult forum on **October 29** to an open discussion of your "Sunday experience" at St. Peter's. Hearing directly from you at this forum about your thoughts and feelings, especially about worshipping together as one community of faith, is one way for the vestry to achieve its goal of providing an inspiring Sunday experience that brings the community together. So please make every effort to attend adult forum at 10:20 on October 29, regardless of which service you usually attend. (For more details, please see the adult forum article on p. 4.)

We hope to see many of you there and look forward to this process of exploration together. If you have questions, please contact Abigail (610-644-2261 or abigail@stpetersgv.org).



Adult forum, which runs from 10:20 to 11:05 a.m., offers two very different topics this month.

On **October 8** and **15**, Pastor Roy Almquist will lead us in a consideration of the life and work of theologian Reinhold Niebuhr. The profound influence of this leading twentieth century theologian on political and theological discourse continues to be felt today. Niebuhr was a major moral voice in America during the prosperity of the 1920s, the depression of the 1930s, and the movement toward war and the Atomic Age in the 1940s and 1950s. His most significant work, *Moral Man in an Immoral Society*, continues to raise a profound question for us to reflect on in 2023. Although theology can be a dry—even boring—topic, Roy plans to keep the discussion relevant and engaging by focusing on Niebuhr’s contributions as they relate to our times.

The first session on October 8 will provide an overview of Reinhold Niebuhr and his era. On October 15, Roy will focus on Niebuhr’s wisdom, inviting us to make connections between some of his core ideas and the challenges we face today.

On **October 29**, the parish is heartily invited to come together at adult forum to share our reflections on how we experience Sundays at St. Peter’s. Last month, an article in the *Beacon* reminded everyone that the vestry is exploring the “Sunday Experience,” a topic that featured prominently in the parish survey. This forum gives us an opportunity to reflect as a community on what Sunday morning feels like, from the time we arrive on campus to when we leave after the service. What makes Sunday at St. Peter’s special? What could make it more so? This discussion will be part of the large picture of worship that the vestry is compiling through conversations with the commissions and with individuals and groups of parishioners.



Youth Confirmation Retreat

Interested young people in eighth grade or higher are invited to attend this retreat on **Saturday, October, 7 and Sunday, October 8**. For more information, please contact Abigail (abigail@stpetersgv.org).

We’re Hosting This Month!

On **October 29**, it will be our turn to host our friends from St. John’s Church in Concord and St. Francis in the Fields in Malvern, with whom we are partnering for fun events on the last Sunday of each month. So please reserve this date on your calendar and keep an eye out for more information. Thank you!

Come Hear about the Wharton Esherick Museum

At 7 p.m. on **October 2**, our Women on the Hill group will hear from Ethan Snyder, Public Programs & Collections Manager of the Wharton Esherick Museum, located near St. Peter’s. The museum preserves the legacy of American sculptor Wharton Esherick, whose works appear in major museum collections here and abroad. Working primarily in wood, Esherick created furniture, furnishings, utensils, interiors, and buildings (including the one that houses the museum).



All women in the parish are always invited to Women on the Hill events and to bring friends as well. For this event, men are also warmly invited to participate. Refreshments will be served.

Multiplying God's Love

“Multiplying God’s Love” is this year’s theme for everything stewardship, which includes giving of time, talent and treasure, all of which we are committed to sharing. Embracing our theme, we have much to celebrate this church year—among them, calling a new organist and choir director, fielding a new team of beekeepers, and fulfilling the 2005 goal of creating a full kitchen in the barn to serve both our parish and the surrounding community.



The logo we selected for our activities this year, the five loaves and two fishes that multiplied to feed 5,000 people (John 6:1-14), speaks directly to this year’s campaign. St. Peter’s has multiple plans in the works as we look to you to pledge for 2024, and your pledges are the key element that lets us develop a realistic yearly budget. This year the stewardship campaign is active alongside a capital campaign to fund the completion of the barn kitchen, some of the funding for which we have already received (and will continue to receive, we hope) from external grants and from gifts. We hope and pray that we will be able to multiply our loaves and fishes to meet *all* of our goals!

To help us multiply God’s love, the stewardship commission plans to send pledge cards later this month to everyone whose mailing address is in our files. This year’s mailing will also include information about using Realm to submit a pledge (the preferred option).

Thank you for all you do in dedicating your time, talent and treasure to St. Peter’s—it is greatly appreciated.

Popcorn Theology

Popcorn theology resumes at 6 p.m. on Monday, **October 9**, after a summer hiatus. “The December of Life,” this fall’s overriding theme, will focus our exploration of the joys, challenges, and losses experienced in the late stages of life on earth. If, as has been said, “our circumstances do not define us, they shape us,” these three films will provide context for our spirited Zoom discussions on the next three second-Mondays:



- **October 9: *Living*** (2022, PG-13; Bill Nighy, Aimee Lou Wood, Tom Burke, and Alex Sharp)
An ordinary man, reduced by years of oppressive office routine to a shadow of existence, makes a supreme effort at the eleventh hour to turn his dull life into something wonderful.
- **November 13: *A Man Called Otto*** (2022, PG-13; Tom Hanks, Truman Hanks, Mariana Treviño, and Manuel Garcia-Rulfo)
A grumpy widower who no longer sees purpose in his life has his plans interrupted when a lively young family moves into his neighborhood.
- **December 11: *Still Here*** (2012, PG-13; James Cromwell, Geneviève Bujold, and Campbell Scott)
The film is based on the true story of a New Brunswick farmer who ran afoul of local building regulations when building a suitable home for his wife who was suffering with Alzheimer’s.

There are no prerequisites for joining popcorn theology! Just watch the films at your convenience before the discussion; you can stream them on Netflix, Apple TV, Amazon Prime Video, Hulu, Google Play or borrow a DVD from your local library. Then use the Zoom link in the Keynotes that you receive the Sunday evening before each meeting to join a lively one-hour conversation about the moral, ethical, spiritual, and cinematic aspects of the film. All are welcome! For more information, contact Mark Nestlehutt (mark.nestlehutt@gmail.com) or Steve Ockenden (steveock@verizon.net).

Outreach

The Work of Darby Mission

Our food ministry to Darby Mission is about more than providing hot meals. Of course, we served a warm meal to the families attending its annual September back-to-school event, thanks to much cooking and baking by parishioners. But our ministry to Darby Mission provides far more than nutritious meals.

The larger work of the mission is about building community. Although the families who come to the mission for dinner can afford to eat at home, dinners at the mission give them an opportunity to “eat out,” enjoy an evening off from cooking, and sit down together as families and neighbors. Most importantly, Darby Mission helps strengthen community ties through relaxed conversation among the adults while the children work together on their homework. The Grace said at the beginning of the meal gives thanks not just for the food but also for the fellowship.

The food ministry team thanks everyone who supports Darby Mission by cooking and delivering these more-than-just-food dinners.

St. Peter’s September blood drive netted forty-five registrations and thirty-five units of donated blood, bringing our year-to-date total to ninety-two units. Those who came to donate experienced samples of St. Peter’s vibrant faith: pamphlets describing the work of the outreach commission, jars of homemade blackberry jam on offer, free CD recordings of the 2020 *Stabat Mater*, the needlework ministry’s prayer squares. All were warmly greeted by Suzanne Casey, who also briefed curious donors about our parish history, facilities, and programs.

As a recent *New York Times* article pointed out, the need for blood is great: blood donations have fallen by 25%, even as climate disasters spike the demand for biomedical and humanitarian support. St. Peter’s has the chance to help turn that tide during our blood drive from 1 to 6 p.m. on November 22. It’s not too early to invite family members, colleagues, and acquaintances to plan to give the life-giving gift of blood on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving!



Share the Love in a Prayer Shawl

If you know someone who is grieving or facing a serious illness, you can support that person with the love knitted into a prayer shawl or lap blanket. The needlework ministry creates these items and packs them in a gift bag along with a prayer square and a booklet of interdenominational prayers. Simply take one of these bags from the coat closet in either worship space to bring God’s healing love to someone in need.

Get Ready for Trunk or Treat!

For a fifth year St. Peter's is hosting "Trunk or Treat" on **October 29**, from 5 to 6 p.m. At this now annual St. Peter's event, a safe version of traditional trick-or-treating, children visit festively decorated car trunks to collect their treats. Trunk or Treat is also a delightful opportunity to gather as a community and to bring friends and neighbors to campus. Please plan to join us and to invite your friends, family, and neighbors too.



We can't successfully pull off this event without your help, though! So please sign up to decorate and host a trunk of treats, using the link in Keynotes or contacting Abigail (abigail@stpetersgv.org or 610-644-2261). Every family or individual who hosts a trunk is eligible to win the "St. Peter's Perpetual Trophy" for the best trunk. Will 2022's winners, the Evans family, hold onto their title, or will they relinquish the trophy to a new winner? Come and see! For more information contact Abigail (abigail@stpetersgv.org).

Communion Instruction for Our Youngest Members

Kindergartners through second-graders are invited to join Abigail for conversation and information about the sacrament of the Eucharist. Since all ages are welcome to receive communion at St. Peter's, we want to give our young worshipers the opportunity to learn and ask questions. We will gather in the historic church at 4:30 p.m. on Monday, **October 9**. Please contact Abigail (abigail@stpetersgv.org) if you have questions.

Cold and Flu Season

Cold and flu season is upon us, which means it is time to remind everyone that some people prefer to pass the Peace with a nod and a smile rather than a handshake. Also, if you are not feeling well, please worship with us via livestream, and do let us know if there is anything you need while you recuperate. Thank you.

Partnership with Robert Ryan Catering

For nearly five years we have been partnering with Robert Ryan Catering for the management of events, primarily wedding receptions and corporate parties, at the bank barn. Should you encounter employees of Robert Ryan giving tours or preparing for events on campus, please greet them with your usual friendliness. If you have any questions, please contact Abigail (610-644-2261 or abigail@stpetersgv.org). Thank you!

Green Stewards

Churches worldwide are celebrating the Season of Creation right now, with its 2023 "Let Justice and Peace Flow" theme. If you wonder about the connection between faith and the environment, the St. Peter's green stewards invite you to explore these resources: the Anglican Communion Environmental Network (acen.anglicancommunion.org) and the Episcopal Church Ministry of Creation Care (www.episcopalchurch.org/ministries/creation-care).

Locally, Interfaith Power and Light (in which some of our parishioners participate) is offering a free virtual Green Summit from October 8 to 11. A variety of seminar topics is planned, including the intersection of justice and environmentalism; for information, visit www.greenteamsummit.org.

- Everyone who helped refurbish the preschool’s outdoor playhouse;
- Diane Martineau and Susy Baum for their work on the magnolia garden;
- Nick Allen, Katie Franz, Linda Holden, Kate Mallon-Day, Luci Russell, and Melissa Shaner, who served on the search committee for a new organist/choir director;
- All who helped prepare and serve food at Darby Mission’s Back to School Night;
- Judy Jones and Sarah Goller, who organized the Sunday school pizza and ice cream social;
- Pat Harvey for arranging for Bruce Glenn’s retirement reception;
- John Conahan for serving as guest organist twice in September;
- Susy Baum for making black raspberry and crabapple jelly to support the work of the Bad Boys & Girls for Jesus;
- Brenda Grove, who coordinates the book club discussions;
- Melissa Shaner for her talk at the September Women on the Hill gathering, and Gail Guthridge and Holly Hardester for hosting the reception;
- Martin McElroy, Suzanne Casey, and Michael Smith for their work on the September blood drive, and all who donated blood or recruited donors from the community.



Save this November Date!

Sunday November 12, from 3 to 6 p.m.

for

The Music of James Taylor

performed in concert by

Ray Adkins and the One Man Dog Band

Funds raised at the concert will benefit our outreach work.

Watch for more details in Keynotes, the leaflets, and the November *Beacon*.

A note about the band: Organized locally in 2019, it performs many of James Taylor classic songs along with deeper cuts from his extensive catalog. It is directed by lead singer and acoustic guitarist Ray Adkins, who has mastered the nuances of James Taylor’s arrangements and technique. Backing Ray up are talented instrumentalists and vocalists, several of whom have toured with major artists including Brian Wilson, Tom Jones, and Taylor himself. The band’s arrangements showcase the “J.T. vibe” as they play both Taylor’s popular hits and some of his lesser known treasures.

October 1

Holy Eucharist
10 a.m.

Reception for Steven Patchel afterwards

Blessing of the Animals
4 p.m.

October 2

Women on the Hill
7 p.m.

October 7

Needlework ministry
10 a.m.

October 7 and 8

Youth confirmation retreat



October

October 9

Communion training
4:30 p.m.

Popcorn theology
6 to 7 p.m. (Zoom)

October 18

Jazz Sanctuary
6 to 7:30 p.m.

October 19

Holy Land pilgrimage meeting
5:30 p.m. (Zoom)

October 22

Bishop's visit
10 a.m.
Reception follows

October 29

Youth group
4 p.m.
Trunk or Treat
5 to 6 p.m.

A Heads-up about November Book Club Selection

The book club selection for November 13 is journalist David Grann's *Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI*. His intriguing account of a conspiracy of theft, terror, and Native American genocide fills in gaps in our knowledge of how we White Americans behaved toward the indigenous peoples, and it has implications for us today. The book is available in adult and young adult versions. Please contact Brenda Grove if you would like to borrow one of the ten library copies she has reserved for us; those library copies will be available beginning October 14. A film adaptation of the book will be released this month as well.

August Financial Snapshot

	August	Year to date	Year-end forecast	2023 Budget
Parish Contributions	\$ 42,396	\$370,360	\$545,224	\$530,504
Other Income*	7,423	89,776	194,950	208,637
Total Income	49,819	460,135	740,173	739,141
Total Expenses	54,524	429,716	712,974	739,141
Surplus / (Deficit)	(4,705)	30,419	27,199	0

**Interest, rentals, endowment distributions*

As of August, total income projections continue to track slightly above forecast, benefiting from receiving higher yields on interest income. Our total expenditure forecast for year-end are also under budget, largely because we did not need to use the funds allocated for snow removal in first quarter and because of other savings so far this year. —*Dave Lockner for the finance commission*



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The Rev. Abigail Crozier Nestlehutt, Rector
 The Ven. Jeff Moretzsohn, Deacon
 Steven Patchel, Organist and Choir Director
 Rachel Martin Swartz, Parish Administrator
 Erinn White, Preschool Director
 Gail Malcolm, Event Coordinator
 Mario Delano, Weekend Facilities Manager

*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*

The deadline for the
 November *Beacon*
 is **October 15.**

Weekly Offerings at St. Peter's

First Sunday of the Month

10 A.M. Holy Eucharist, Rite 2**

All Other Sundays

8 A.M. Holy Eucharist, Rite 1*

9 A.M. Enriching Our Worship & Sunday School**

10:20 A.M. Christian Formation**

11:15 A.M. Holy Eucharist, Rite 2*

Fellowship follows all services

Monday thru Thursday

12 NOON Noontday Prayer***

Wednesday

10 A.M. Morning Prayer & Bible Study***

Thursday

10:30 A.M. Intercessory Prayer Group***

Friday

8 A.M. Gathering of Men***

* Church

** Barn

*** Virtual

Parish office hours: Mon. thru Thurs., 9 A.M. to 4 :30 P.M.

A Busy September for All Ages



Sunday school social



Youth group meeting at St. John's



Jazz Sanctuary and supper