

nerstone February 2025

Newsletter of St. Peter's Protestant Episcopal Church 107 State Street, Albany, New York

ST. PETER'S CHURCH RECTOR

Let us pray. O God, whose blessed Son hath taught us that the truth will make us free: Grant, we pray thee, that the Gospel may be so faithfully proclaimed in and through the parish family of St. Peter's Church, that Thy people may be free indeed. Bless all who labor for Thee, and may our hearts be lifted daily to that Temple not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, where Thou, O Lord God omnipotent, liveth and reigneth, world without end. Amen.

For those of you who weren't at the Hot Chocolate Stroll last December, you need to know something about it: It wasn't really about the hot chocolate.

I'm sure you'll remember that - on Dec. 7 - St. Peter's participated in the annual downtown Albany hot chocolate stroll. We saw more than 300 of our neighbors come into our doors to sample our spicy cocoa.

But like I said, it wasn't really about the hot chocolate. I watched as – person after person – men and women, younger and older, some with children in strollers, some with their dogs – turned their eyes upward as they walked into our church. Many of them, instead of hurrying away, found a seat in a pew and sat quietly, listening to the sacred music that was playing. I have no doubt that some of them – without expecting to – encountered the Crucified and Risen one who we worship in this place.

I'm sharing that story with you because it's just one example of what we're all about. For more than three hundred years, St. Peter's Church has been a place of divine encounter in this city. Our mission statement says it all: Worship in Beauty. Practice Mercy. Hope in Jesus Christ.

Now I want to remember, with you, the ways we've lived out our parish mission in the past 12 months, and I want to share some things we have planned in the months ahead.

First, Worship in Beauty. Giving glory to God is the call of every Christian, and it is a big part of who we are. Our attendance in worship has held steady this year – no small feat in our secular age – with particular growth in attendance at our 8:30 service.

All of you so faithfully give of yourselves to offer the most beautiful worship we can to God. Every leaflet handed to a visitor, every pot of coffee brewed, every flower arranged, every anthem rehearsed, every chalice polished, every diaper changed is an act of worship. Each of you – as you've been gifted by the Holy Spirit – is living out your vocation as a living sacrifice to God.

As a result of your faithful labors, we continue to worship Jesus in this magnificent church that's been entrusted to our care and to share its beauty with our city. This past year, we saw the return of some seasonal worship services like Lenten Evensongs and an Animal Blessing on St. Francis' Day. One new worship offering this year is the "Mass with the Masters" series, in which our choir will sing Mass settings written by famous composers during Sunday Holy Communion services to welcome newcomers to St. Peter's. Our first Mass with the Masters Sunday is scheduled for Feb. 16, featuring music by Schubert.

Second, Practice Mercy. The people of St. Peter's have always practiced their faith by rolling up their sleeves and helping others, and that work of loving our neighbors continues. You feed the hungry by volunteering at Loaves and Fishes, which served 405 meals on a Saturday earlier this month. You share the love of Christ by providing holiday meals and cookouts for the Damien Center. You donate food, school supplies and holiday gifts for Albany kids in need. Your giving makes it possible for a dozen homeless men to have a warm, safe place to sleep in our on-site winter shelter. Going forward, we hope to continue to bless area children by offering free musical education with pay for any kid who wants to learn singing as a part of our choir school.

Finally, Hope in Jesus Christ. I've seen many of you deepen in your hope and faith in Jesus this past year. I've seen it in our kids. Our younger kids have a hunger and curiosity about their faith that comes through in children's chapel and our children's Bible Memory Challenge on Sundays. They want to know about God and serve on the altar. Three of our teens prepared for and received Confirmation in the last year, and most of our teens meet each month for breakfast and a spiritual discussion. I've also seen it in our adults – in the journey some of us have taken alongside Peter this year in the Walk with Peter study, in participants in the seasonal Morning Prayer on Zoom, and in experiencing the wonder of God's creation on the Rock and Root hiking club. We've also experienced God's sacramental grace in great turning points in our lives – in the joy of first communions, the hallowing of marriages, and in the solemn hope of burial of the dead.

This coming year, we'll continue the work of the church: worship, mercy, and hope. We'll continue to pray that the Holy Spirit will guide us in how we are to invite our friends and neighbors to encounter the one who gives us hope, Jesus Christ. And, we'll trust that his words are true: that on the rock of the faith we share with St. Peter, Jesus will build his church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Grace and peace in Christ Jesus, Mtr. Christina Hunter+

ST. PETER'S CHURCH SENIOR WARDEN'S REPORT

I would like to begin my report by expressing my gratitude to this loving congregation, to our Rector Mother Christina, and to our Vestry. It is an honor and privilege serving as Sr. Warden here at St. Peter's Church and to be a member of the choir for 55+ years. And as I've mentioned before, as a choir member I have the advantage of sitting front and center each week allowing me the opportunity to look out towards our congregation to see those attending services, new and existing members and their families all worshipping together in our beautiful spiritual home. That is what it is all about being a church family.. (I also get the opportunity to see the smiling children that come up front each week for the Children's ABC's Bible Memory Challenge - it warms my heart).

This past year was quite a busy year. Upon finishing with our Advent and Christmas seasons last January, we held the Annual Meeting with a Tea and Hymn sing which was very well received by the congregation. Our focus then turned to preparing for all of our Lenten traditional events we treasure as a parish. We began with our Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, Ash Wednesday services, and Mother Christina's Early Morning Lenten Prayer on zoom every morning. Lent continued with Friday Evensong services, a Maundy Thursday service, a Good Friday service followed by a wonderful musical performance by the choir under the direction of our Organist and Choirmaster, Daniel Romero. Lent then concluded with the traditional Easter Egg Hunt at the Rectory on Holy Saturday, and then two wonderful Easter Sunday Morning services on March 31st.

With such a tremendous effort on so many fronts all working behind the scenes preparing for Easter - the faithful Clergy and Lay Eucharistic Ministers, the Altar Guild, the Flower Guild, the ushers, the dedicated choir, sextons and office staff, all looking forward to a little downtime after a busy Holy week and Easter. Unfortunately, there was no time for the weary. Just a week later, on April 7th, we had a grand celebration and service for The Rev. Christina Hunter who was instituted as the 24th Rector of St. Peter's Church by the newly installed Bishop, The Rt. Rev. Jeremiah Williamson. It was our honor to have Bishop Jeremiah celebrate this special day with us, allowing him to also meet many of our parishioners for the first time. Our prayers and love go out to both Mtr. Christina and Bishop Jeremiah and their families. God bless the both of you.

Moving along, just a month later on May 16th, Bishop Jeremiah returned to St. Peter's to celebrate Regional Confirmation. He confirmed three of our own teenagers along with several others from other churches within our diocese. Again, this was another memorable event that was full of love, energy and hard work from so many in this congregation.

In the month of June on Father's Day, we had our Teacher Recognitions, Sunday School Awards and Choir Awards during the 10:30am service followed by an ice cream sundae social. I would like to thank our dedicated Director of Christian Education - Laura Saffares, and our Organist and Choirmaster - Daniel Romero for heading up this celebration. I also want to take this opportunity to thank Laura and all the volunteers that work alongside her, either helping teach our young children in Sunday school giving them a solid Christian education, or caring for those in the nursery throughout the year. Additionally, I want to thank Daniel and the entire choir for sharing their musical talents (committing countless hours to rehearsals and performances each week) that enhance our Sunday services and special occasions throughout the year. Finally, thank you to our Choir Mother, Diana Martin for keeping the choir looking their best each Sunday.

During the summer in July, Daniel and Malcolm held a week long Summer Music Adventure for children ages 8 and up. The week included the introduction to singing, playing handbells and chimes, and learning about music and instruments. This program was to promote the church's music program and it is our hope to continue to offer these types of workshops to bring in new choir members that love and enjoy the traditional music we perform throughout the year. Thank you, Daniel for your efforts in helping the choir build upon their existing musical talents.

In addition, we need to recognize and thank Malcom Moran, our Assistant Director of Music, who assists Daniel on the organ each week. Malcolm, please know that the choir and the entire congregation are extremely proud of you and the hard

work you have put forth pursuing and perfecting your God given music talents here at St. Peter's. We are so thankful for all that you do for the choir and the church.

Our fall season started with our annual church picnic in September. In October we had a very well attended Pet Blessing service and a Hot Dog Roast to benefit the PAWS program at the Damien Center. We then began to focus on November's events: All Saints' Day services with First Holy Communion, a Requiem Funeral service for John Cerniglia, a memorial service for Mari Bennett, the opening of the Overflow Shelter, the Pre-Thanksgiving Dinner, Celebration of Friendship Sunday and an All-Parish Breakfast, followed by the beginning of Advent on December 1st.

On December 15th at the 10:30am service the Sunday school performed their annual Christmas pageant. Thank you to Laura and to all those that helped put on the much loved annual pageant. Then later that afternoon the choir performed Handel's Messiah with orchestra. Again, many were in attendance to enjoy this beautiful annual musical performance. I would like to thank Daniel and the choir for all their hard work and dedication with the preparation of the music performed, including all the music prior to and during the Advent season.

On the following Sunday, December 22nd at the 10:30am service, we had our traditional Lessons and Carols followed by our annual Hanging of the Greens. We had a great turnout for the Hanging of the Greens including many seasoned and new helpers. It was encouraging to see everyone working together to beautify the Church by taking part in this beloved and longtime tradition here at St. Peter's. Thank you to all that helped with greening, decorating, cooking, clean-up, or in any other way. It truly was a wonderful Advent Sunday enjoyed by so many. A special thank you to Pat and Wayne for making sure the church was spic and span in time for Christmas Eve services.

Our Outreach Committee deserves recognition for all the support they give to the local community. St. Peter's donates and volunteers at many organizations throughout the immediate downtown area, including the Damien Center, the South End Children's Café, Loaves & Fishes and our own Overflow Shelter which we host in our Parish Hall every year since 2009. Thank you to those who have supported these organizations financially and/or donated food and supplies to these worthy causes. Your time, gifts and generosity are overwhelming and we are so grateful to all who have been able to support these important ministries.

In this report, I felt it was important to review all of these events so that everyone can see how vibrant and active St. Peter's is and how important these traditions are to the life of the church. Time seems to pass by so quickly and we often forget all we do day in and day out - for the Glory of God. Back in October when discussing options at our vestry meeting on how to approach stewardship, my intention was to follow up with my own stewardship letter after our Treasurer George Scala sent out his wonderful letter regarding stewardship. But then pledges soon began coming in and I felt it wasn't necessary after George's message. My message was going to go something like this.....Looking back at the last year and seeing all the events the church has offered, hosted and participated in, all happening with a relatively new minister and a new music director in place, it was apparent that we were all moving forward, together in the same direction, as a loving congregation that honors our past heritage and history, and keeps the St. Peter's traditions that we all hold so dear. Today, I can honestly report that St. Peter's is moving ahead with a congregation that is adding new members, and that we continue to be financially sound.

Again this past year, we lost many loved ones from our parish. We must remember and honor the faith they brought to us by carrying on their legacies and traditions here at St. Peter's. Please remember them in your thoughts and prayers.

Thank you, Mother Christina for all you have done this past year. From Sunday and Wednesday services, special and holiday services, hospital and home visits, the new church website (the list goes on and on), to your never ending dedication in bringing fellowship outside the Sunday services with bible studies, Family Disciple Programs, hiking trips, the teen breakfast club, and really digging deep into our history and honoring those who have passed, we thank you for always going above and beyond. Thank you for all your love and commitment to all of us at St. Peter's, we are so blessed to have such a wonderful minister.

Our annual meeting will be held on the last Sunday of this month, January 26th, following the 10:30am service. Again this year, the meeting will include tea and hymn singing. I would like to once again thank our vestry for all their love and support. To Deb Spath our Junior Warden and George Scala our Treasurer, thank you for all your support. Unfortunately, we will be losing two vestry members this year as their two consecutive three-year terms have ended. Jeff Russom and Mark Lundberg, both dedicated and wonderful servants, have served faithfully on the vestry and will be truly missed by all - thank you both for your faithful service.

The traditions we have here at St. Peter's that we have all come to love, cherish and look forward to each year, are what makes St. Peter's unique. Without them, where would our church be? We need to make sure that this church is here for our children, grandchildren and generations to come. In closing, I want to thank everyone in this congregation from the bottom of my heart. You have all touched my life in one way or another as we are all family.

God Bless you and your family - see you in Church.

Jim

ST. PETER'S CHURCH PROPERTY AND RESTORATION REPORT

We were very fortunate to be able to get through last year without any major repairs, which kept our expenses down during the year.

Last year we were able to do a few upgrades at the Rectory, replacing the stove, refrigerator, dishwasher and microwave oven in the kitchen, a few that were in dire need to be replaced due to age and/or not working properly. We continue to address the electrical and lighting issues as present themselves occasionally, but overall, the major work was done with electrical upgrade the prior year when the Hunter's arrived.

Other than a few water heaters that were replaced again due to age and some small repairs, again there were no major issues to be addressed this past year regarding the physical church, including our Guild House. We were fortunate to have a member of the congregation donate a gas grill that is now in the church courtyard. In October we able to use it for the first time at our Hot Dog and Pet Blessing event which was well received by all, including the pets. We were also able to replace the stoves in our parish hall which needed to be upgraded due to age as well as comply with new city fire codes, making us compliant with the city of Albany. This work was done just prior to our annual pre-thanksgiving dinner in November and has been well received by many who have been able to use on many occasions since which are held in our parish hall. We also had to replaced the microwave in the kitchen upstairs near the parish hall.

Continuing to stay on top of the regular maintenance, preventing larger issues and repairs down the road.

Respectfully submitted, Jim Chenot

ST. PETER'S CHURCH MUSIC PROGRAM

2024 was a good and busy year for the Music Ministry at St. Peter's.

St. Peter's adult choir has performed admirably this past year. The choir now averages about 20 singers, with several folks who sing on an occasional basis. A couple former choristers have also rejoined the choir. I'm grateful for the choir's willingness to learn some new repertoire, including John Stainer's "The Crucifixion" as our Good Friday oratorio. In addition to new pieces, the choir sang many old favorites as well, including a great performance of Handel's Messiah in December.

This year, the choir sang memorial services for three former choir members, Jay Seiling, Mari Bennett, and John Cerniglia. For the occasion of John Cerniglia's memorial service, current and former choir members sang the Fauré Requiem.

We had several important milestones towards rebuilding our treble chorister program. In July, we hosted a music day camp for kids called St. Peter's Summer Music Adventure for Kids. For a week kids gathered to learn about music, singing, musical instruments, play games, and have lots of fun. My thanks to everyone who helped make this possible, especially Diana Martin, Maria Holden, Malcolm Moran, Patrice Malatestinic, Katie Brillat, Emerson Fang and Mtr. Christina Hunter.

In September, we officially restarted treble choristers with one chorister, Martha Hunter. She has learned so much about singing and music in a short amount of time. I'm very proud of her, and her skills will be very helpful when we have more kids join as treble choristers.

About two weeks after Easter, an important component of St. Peter's pipe organ, called the combination action (a device that allows the organist to change the sounds of the organ and the volume of sound quickly at the push of a button), ceased to function. Thankfully, Church Organ Systems of Delmar, was able to fix the problem for a significantly lower cost than we feared. Even though the organ has been working fine since, this problem is a sign that some major repairs to the organ will be necessary in the years to come. This is due primarily to the age of the instrument.

Finally to end on a positive note, I especially wish to express my gratitude to my Assistant Music Director, Malcolm Moran. He was already a very capable and talented musician when I arrived, but since then he has grown significantly as a musician. As an organist he has greatly improved in the last year and has excelled in accompanying the choir on the organ (allowing me to conduct more), hymn playing and organ repertoire. He has also grown in his skills directing the choir, and teaching them about singing and music in general. Having Malcolm's assistance has been a great blessing to this music program.

St. Peter's continues to be committed to maintaining the full breadth of the Anglican choral tradition. There are very few parishes in the Episcopal Church who get to experience sung morning prayer canticles, choral evensong, and choral communion services/masses all happening under one roof. This is truly a treasure, and I'm truly grateful to make these musical offerings to the greater glory of God!

Respectfully submitted, Daniel C. Romero

ST. PETER'S CHURCH ALTAR GUILD

St Peter's Altar Guild continued its devoted work through 2024. We now routinely set the St. Mark's altar for an 8:30 Holy Communion service every Sunday, and a noon Holy Communion service the first Wednesday of each month. The main altar is set for communion at the 10:30 service on the first and third Sundays each month. Our members set both altars for many additional services including Christmas, Easter, weddings, and funerals. Our members also undertake the laundering and pressing of our linens on a weekly basis.

The Guild set for approximately 100 services in 2024.

We continue to pursue behind the scenes work on our frontals and silver communion ware.

I appreciate the efforts of all our members. This is a faithful and caring group, and I am grateful for their care and devotion to our church.

Anyone who is interested in becoming a member of the Altar Guild can contact me (<u>cathschunk@aol.com</u>) (518-469-1146) or call Ruth at the church office (518-434-3502). Newcomers are welcome. Training will be provided.

Respectfully submitted, Catherine Schunk, Director

Members: Barbara Adams, Sharon DeBonis, John Davis, Pam Gerfin, Laura Grill, Catherine Gabriels, Barbara Kelly, Michele Lundberg, Diana Martin, Malcolm Moran, Donna Ohlman, and Gloria Vanderpoel.

ST. PETER'S CHURCH USHERS GUILD

St. Peter's Church is most grateful to all in the Ushers Guild who served during the past year, those continuing to serve and those who have recently joined the guild family. Ushers are the first faces of welcome and hospitality that people coming to St. Peter's Church encounter. In this post pandemic time, our ushers have welcomed back the congregation and visitors attending both morning services in our historic downtown church. Our ushers meet, greet, offer service bulletins, collect tithes, and guide visitors and congregation during each service.

Please join us in acknowledging the contributions of the following ushers:

Catherine Schunk, Sharon DeBonis, Bill Collins, Kevin Creagan, Dr. John Davis, Sam Hartt, Robin LaPlante, Mark Lundberg, Michele Lundberg, Ben Clark, John Kennedy and Deb Spath.

A special thank you to Cole Cehowski and Nathan Douglas who assisted at Christmas Eve service. The Ushers Guild is an excellent ministry of St. Peter's Church and we encourage anyone who may be interested in joining to contact Jeff Russom at 518-879-2388, <u>russomjeff@gmail.com</u> or any member of the Ushers Guild for more information.

Respectfully submitted, Jeff Russom

ST. PETER'S CHURCH FLOWER GUILD

This past year of 2024 we created weekly arrangements for the Main Altar, including poinsettias for the Christmas season, palms and lilies for Palm Sunday and Easter, as well as our traditional Thanksgiving altars of food given by the congregation and then donated to a local food pantry. This year that food went to the South End Children's Café Cabinets, the Albany Mission Overflow Shelter (here at St. Peter's church) and Riverview Missionary Baptist Church.

This upcoming year we are excited to welcome Deb Spath as a new member of the guild. We continue to be thankful for our talented and dedicated members who create such beautiful arrangements for our church. We would also like to express much appreciation to Ruth Manss, in the church office, for all her invaluable assistance during the year.

We are especially grateful to those who made donations of memorial, thanksgiving and celebration flowers during 2024. We would not be able to operate without the generous support of the congregation. If you would like to make a donation this year, please call the Church office to reserve a Sunday.

Respectfully submitted, Nancy W. Creagan, Chair

Sally Jennings, Ann Collins, Sharon DeBonis, Cathy Schunk, Laura Grill, Maria Holden and Catherine Gabriels.

ST. PETER'S CHURCH SUNDAY SCHOOL

Welcome to the New Year! I want to start my report on Sunday School by thanking the teachers: Kelly Welch, Sharon Vardabash, Ariana Saffares, and our young helper Ava Cehowski! The Sunday School is growing! This amazing team is essential to accommodate the children we serve each week. I would also like to thank Ruth, Janice, Pat, and Wayne for always supporting me and Sunday School. Thank you to all the parents and grandparents who bring our angels to church each Sunday. A huge thank you to Mother Christina, James Chenot, and the Vestry of St. Peter's. You are always there to support what God allows me to do upstairs with the children, for this I am blessed. Here are some of the highlights of what the children did in Sunday School last year.

Children's Chapel: This is held every 5th Sunday during the year. Mother Christina plays her Ukulele, sings with the children, talks of Jesus, and brings them the meaning of the Eucharist.

Valentine's Day: The children made special Valentine cards and sweet treat bags for the South End Children's Café.

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper: The children were invited to help with the Annual Pancake Supper. All enjoyed a wonderful meal and fellowship.

The Last Supper: We re-enacted the Last Supper which included the story of Jesus and his disciples, washing of our feet and taking part in the Most Holy Bread and Wine (juice).

Coloring of the Easter Eggs: On Palm Sunday the children colored over 300 eggs for the Annual Easter Egg Hunt.

Annual Easter Egg Hunt: On Saturday, March 30th many children came and participated in this annual tradition. A special prize was given to each child that found a golden egg!

Mother's Day: The children painted and decorated flower pots and filled them with flowers to give to all of the moms, grandmothers, and others in the congregation.

Ice Cream Sundae Social and Sunday School Awards: This is my favorite time of the year! The whole congregation was invited to take part in making their own sundaes after the 10:30am service where the teachers and children received recognition and awards.

Prayer Pretzels and Registration: The children were delighted to hear the Legend of the Prayer pretzels and also learned how they can pray each day.

Pumpkin Bread: We all joined in to make batches of pumpkin bread, pumpkin muffins, and pumpkin bites this year just before Thanksgiving. The joy on their faces of putting all the ingredients into a big bowl to make delicious homemade baked goods was so special. The children take great pride in making these wonderful goodies to be shared with family and the congregation for the holiday meal.

Advent Wreaths: The children helped decorate the Advent wreaths were available to the congregation on the first Sunday in Advent.

The Annual Christmas Pageant: This is a special time of year when the children of the Sunday School can show off their talents. The children get so excited to dress as a character of the Nativity scene, from Mary and Joseph to the Kings, shepherds, and Angels.

Blessing to all,

Laura Saffares, Director of Christian Education

ST. PETER'S CHURCH ARCHIVES

- 1. I wrote articles for the Church Newsletter, explaining the church exterior and the tower, the vestibule, St. Mark's Chapel, the narthex, the nave (including the stained glass windows), the bells in the tower and church traditions.
- 2. I did the routine filing of newsletters and service leaflets.
- 3. I reorganized folders and boxes to make additional room for new collections.
- 4. I answered reference questions about church members and former members. I also maintain a box for parish registry cards from baptisms, marriages and deaths.

Sincerely,

Connie Powell

ST. PETER'S CHURCH DAUGHTERS OF THE KING JULIA CHAPTER

During the 2024 year, the Julia Chapter of the Daughters of the King members were dedicated to the Rule of Prayer, Evangelism and Service. The members believe that we have been blessed to receive all of Mtr. Christina's support and guidance.

- 1. As President, I have updated a handout to represent the Julia Chapter of the Daughters of the King for the Annual Report at St. Peter's Church. The handout is be printed in early 2025.
- 2. The membership decided upon_a date to host a Coffee Hour during the spring of 2024. The membership spent time speaking and educating parishioners about the DOK and how we support our church. We anticipate sponsoring a coffee hour in 2025.
- 3. Susan informed the membership that even though Carly's Card's is not something related to the DOK, Dean Tessitori, St. Peter's parishioner, will be organizing the cards indefinitely. We are all grateful that Dean has agreed to volunteer his time to organize Carly's Cards.
- 4. Susan was invited to the DOK meeting at St. John's in Troy. She brought back good ideas to share with our membership. The Bi-Laws along with how proud we should be of our extremely organized and active Prayer List.
- 5. During the month of December 2024, the Daughters received funding from Janice, St. Peter's Church, and purchased items for Blessing Bags. Included in a Blessing Bag was: deodorant, hat, gloves, lotion, feminine products, tooth brush and paste, soap, shampoo, conditioner and kleenex. The Blessing Bags were organized and given to Laura from our church who has contacts with many organizations, such as a women's homeless shelter that are grateful to receive the bags. This time, we also organized gloves and hats for people that arrive in person at church for help. Mtr. Christina will make the decision as to who received the gloves and hats.
- 6. We continue to have conversations with women of the parish who might be interested in becoming a member of the Daughters of the King. However, unfortunately, we have not enlisted anyone.
- 7. The DOK membership assisted Laura before Easter 2024 to organize and stuff easter baskets for the homeless. All involved enjoyed volunteering for Laura. I believe we put together approximately 25 baskets this year.
- 8. At St. Peter's Church immediately following the second Sunday of each month, Mtr. Christina along with a Daughter, pray with parishioners who request it. When I assist Mother, at times, she asks me to pray over them as well. I feel honored!
- 9. The Julia Chapter members are proud of the maintained, tremendously organized Prayer List. We continue to update the list with requests for prayers from both parishioners' and other individuals. Due to the renovations within the church, the Daughters have not had a location for people who request prayers to submit a prayer card. Mtr. Christina ordered and set up a beautiful wooden box and table placed in the front of the church. Parishioners are now able to complete the prayer request cards and drop them into the new wooden box. The box is locked due to confidentiality. Thank you, Mtr. Christina for your assistance.
- 10. In order to assist in full filling, the DOK oath of Evangelism, President Susan Smith is not giving up on the proposal of organizing all chapters to meet monthly. She would like to invite chapters to become Christian Crafters and meet on a Saturday from10-12 at St. Peter' Church to create items such as knitting, crocheting, sewing, while bonding and discussing issue of the DOK smaller chapters. The membership has agreed to this task as well. However, we are experiencing some difficulties setting up this service. Hopefully in 2025, the proposal will be completed.
- 11. The Julia Chapter of the Daughters of the King did not have Bi-Laws to follow. As President of the chapter, I was given a copy and revised the Bi-Laws to meet the needs of the Julia Chapter. The Bi-Laws have been approved by the membership.

Respectfully submitted by Susan J. Smith, President

ST. PETER'S OUTREACH PROGRAM

It is an honor and privilege to serve St. Peter's Church as the Outreach Chairperson. The congregation of St. Peter's has helped me provide the many facets of our program. I can only do what I do because of you! I am truly blessed to have the support to help our downtown community. Here are some of the 2024 outreach activities:

St. Francis Mission Soup Kitchen (Loaves & Fishes): I now go on the 2nd and 3rd Saturdays of the month. The need to feed and clothe our community has doubled since last year. On average we feed from 400 meals a week! I will provide the yearly numbers when Gail does the end of the year numbers. We also provide goody bags with fresh fruit, toilet paper and baked goods for the people to take home. We buy in bulk from the Regional Food Bank, which allows us to have a shopping table with cereal, yogurt, drinks, milk, eggs and personal care products. I also have the honor of distributing clothing on the weeks I am there. The donations of coats, hats, gloves, clothes and household items are accessible to all that come in our doors. This year I was able to raise money from friends and family to buy 60 board games to give the children of the soup kitchen, Outreach also helped fund Mother's and Father's Day gift bags filled with personal items, sweets and playing cards to give out to our community. Thank you to everyone who donates items to St. Francis, every item makes a big difference to so many of our neighbors. I encourage anyone that can volunteer on either Saturday to come join us in our ministry. We are there from 9am to 1pm. The address is 498 Clinton Ave; come to the back of the parking lot and knock on the big grey door.

West Bugunda: Outreach provided scholarships for 3 girls from West Bugunda to attend school, totaling \$3,000.

Thanksgiving: A large collection of food donations adorns our altar at Thanksgiving. Thanks to Nancy Creagan and the flower guild members for arranging this glorious display. Some of the food was kept at church to assist with walk-in requests. Some was donated to fill the walk up food cabinets at the South End Children's Café and some was brought to the New Life Baptist Church here in Albany.

Damien Center Bowling for PAWS: On Sunday, March 10th the Damien Center hosted an afternoon of bowling and entertainment to benefit PAWS, which supports pet owners who are members of the Damien Center with food, veterinary care, and care for their animals when they are temporarily unable to care for them themselves. Several people from St. Peter's participated in this fun day.

Damien Center: This year we were able to serve the community of the Damien Center with a home cooked meal for Easter and Christmas dinner, as well as put on "cook outs" for Memorial and Labor Day. This was coordinated by Sharon DeBonis and Maria Holden. They reached out to the congregation to make pans of Turkey, summer salads, casseroles and desserts. A very special thank you to the volunteers that make it all happen: Sharon DeBonis, Maria Holden, Jeff Russom, Laura Grill, Cathy Schunk, Deb Spath, Mollie Flannery, Tanya Douglas, Diana Martin, Clark and Carol Daggett. We are also grateful to our friends Lucinda Collins, Elenor LaViolette, Lidiah Scholtes-DeBonis, Scott and Jenna Couch and the staff and members of the Damien Center for their assistance and support.

Crop Walk: Thank you to Maria Holden for organizing the CROP Walk.

Carly's Cards: Thank you Susan Smith for creating this outreach in honor of Carly Crewell. She just loved sending cards to everyone in our church! If anyone would like to help with this amazing outreach, please reach out to Susan Smith.

Daughters of the King: Thank you all for providing Blessing Bags to the women of The St. Francis Mission. I was able to hand out over 25 bags! Thank you all so much for all your help! The Daughters also helped with putting together 20 Easter Baskets for the Damien Center.

Church and Office Staff: Thank you to Ruth Manss who continues to provide outreach with the many daily "walk-ins" in need, during office hours. Thanks to all that made monetary donations, food and drinks to make this possible. A big thank you to Pat and Wayne who assist with keeping our church beautiful but also assist with people that come in our doors.

Backpacks: We collected over 70 "Back to School Backpacks" filled with school supplies for the children of St. Francis Mission. I even had enough to fill a "Gap" with the South End Children's Café! Thank you all so much.

South End Children's Café: For Thanksgiving this year we collected money from the congregation and Greenbush Tape and Label to fill 25 Thanksgiving day bags. Each bag contained a gift card to purchase a turkey, and the many Thanksgiving foods such as stuffing, potatoes, carrots, green beans, corn, pies and more. They were topped off with a Thanksgiving plated and napkins. Thank you Janice Chenot for helping me coordinate and shop for this amazing outreach! I will continue to collect food for the South End Children's Café walk up cabinets, please consider buying a few extra things at the market to help feed our community. The box is in the back of the church.

The Giving Tree: This year I talked with Tracey at the South End Children's Café to see what St. Peter's could do for the children during Christmas. She provided a detailed list with each child's name and what they wished as a gift. St. Peter's congregation answered all 40 requests! Thank you all for making so many children smile this year!

St. Peter's Overflow Shelter: It has returned to the upstairs auditorium after a brief hiatus due to COVID. In coordination with The Capital City Rescue Mission, we now house 10 to 20 men where they can safely sleep, grab a healthy snack and much needed peace. Thank you to Mother Christina and James Chenot for providing this service to our community.

I continue to be thankful and blessed by the generosity of St. Peter's Church. I need to thank the Vestry for all the support and encouragement they allow me to head this committee to help our community. I can only do this by the grace of God and the support of all of you.

Respectfully submitted, Laura Saffares

2024 VESTRY MEMBERS

SR. WARDEN:James ChenotJR. WARDEN:Deborah SpathTREASURER:George Scala

Pete Benson, Sharon DeBonis, Christie Gordon, Samuel Hartt, Fred Hershey, Maria Holden, Mark Lundberg, William Pettit, Jeff Russom

2024 PAROCHIAL REPORT FIGURES

86.3
0
3
1
5

2025 VESTRY ELECTION RESULT

Deborah Spath was elected Junior Warden for her third two-year term.

Annette Panzironi was elected for her first three-year vestry term.

Ashley Closson was elected for her first three-year vestry term.

Kevin Creagan was elected for his first three-year vestry term

Congratulations to all!

New Website Launched!



Check out our new church website!

You'll find expanded sections on our church's history, mission, ministries, and upcoming events.

Visit <u>www.stpeterschurchalbany.org</u> to check it out. Feedback is welcomed.

OFFERINGS

1. Total Offerings for 2024 were \$251,173. This exceeds the budget by 7.2% and compares to \$253,789 for 2023. It should be noted that we received a one-time designated gift in 2023 for \$25,000, so the numbers for 2024 are strong compared to 2023. We appreciate everyone's commitment to pledging and contributing to our church.

ENDOWMENT/INVESTMENT INCOME

- 1. Endowment/Investment income was \$428,237 for 2024. This exceeded the budget for the year by 120%. The returns for the year were +15.64% for our unrestricted portion and +9.82% for our restricted portion of our endowments. Our total principal balance of the endowments *increased* during 2024 by \$186,817, even with withdrawals of just over \$270,000 that were used towards operations. The principal balances as of 12/31/24 are as follows:
 - A. Restricted Endowment: \$1,667,955
 - B. Unrestricted Endowment: \$1,839,308

REVENUE/INCOME SUMMARY

Other incomes for the church are Columbarium fees and miscellaneous dividends that we receive from various funds that we are beneficiaries of. Our total income for 2024 was \$696,458 which was significantly higher than the budgeted amount of \$426,316.

*EXPENSES

Total expenses for 2024 were \$566,141 which was \$77,501 under budget.

*2025 BUDGET

- 1. Offerings/Revenue/Income the Budget for 2025 reflects total income of \$633,068, which while significantly higher than the 2024 budget is about 10% less than 2024 actual remaining conservative.
- Expenses the Budget for 2025 reflects total expenses of \$627,521, which is a \$16,121 *decrease* from the 2024 budget. This expense budget is a +10.8% increase from 2024 actual, incorporating increased amounts including building and capital improvements and repairs, health insurance and choir related among others.
- 3. The 2025 Budget reflects a Gain of \$5,547 which is just over a break-even budget. It is the first time in several years that our budget does not show a projected loss for the year.

*SUMMARY

The financial position/performance of our church right now is very healthy. Having said that, we are very reliant on market performance from our endowments. With uncertainty always a possibility with market investments, it is critical that our offerings remain strong. Now is not a time to be complacent due to a strong 2024 but rather a time to continue to appreciate and support our wonderful church to solidify it into the future. For those that have already pledged for 2025, we greatly appreciate it. For those that haven't please consider submitting a pledge for 2025. As I've previously mentioned, a pledge is not a contract but rather a commitment. Please also consider remembering St. Peter's in your estate planning. We might not be here today were it not for some very generous gifts that parishioners have left us through their estates over the centuries. Thank you.

Respectfully Submitted,

George Scala, Treasurer

ST. PETER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH - 2025 DRAFT BUDGET						
	20	024 Budget	2	2024 Actual	2	025 Budget
INCOME	_					
Offering Income/Pledged/Envelopes	\$	195,590	\$	209,852	\$	200,000
Offering Income/Loose	\$	3,500	\$	4,188	\$	4,500
Offering Income/Special Funds	\$	32,250	\$	37,133	\$	31,250
TOTAL Offering Income:	\$	231,340	\$	251,173	\$	235,750
Other Income						
Columbarium	\$	-	\$	3,500	\$	2.000
Interest, Miscellaneous Income	\$	1,000	\$	13,548	\$	3,500
TOTAL Other Income:	\$	1,000	\$	17,048	\$	5,500
Investment Income					1.	
Key Trust Return (Net of fees)	\$	99,072	\$	177,011	\$	165,456
Merrill Lynch Return (Net of fees)	\$	94,904	\$	251,226	\$	226,362
TOTAL Investment Income:	\$	193,976	\$	428,237	\$	391,818
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TOTAL INCOME:	\$	426,316	\$	696,458	\$	633,068
EXPENSES Outreach	\$	10,000	\$	8,237	\$	8,500
	Ψ	10,000	Ψ	0,237	Ψ	0,500
Fellowship	\$	9,000	\$	7,344	\$	5,250
Welcoming	\$	-	\$	-	\$	950
Music/Choir	\$	24,000	\$	22,238	\$	27,600
Pastoral Support	\$	6,050	\$	7,475	\$	7,884
Christian Education	\$	3,500	\$	3,298	\$	4,000
Altar Guild	\$	4,000	\$	276	\$	4,100
Flower Guild	\$	8,750	\$	1,913	\$	9,790
Clergy Payroll/Payroll Related	\$	120,355	\$	121,836	\$	127,437
Lay Staff Payroll/Payroll Related	\$	211,937	\$	199,703	\$	197,576
Administration/Office Expense	\$	153,700	\$	138,848	\$	148,434
Payroll Related Expense	\$	5,500	\$	6,773	\$	6,850
Facilities Expense - Church/Guild House/Rectory	\$	86,850	\$	48,200	\$	79,150
TOTAL EXPENSES:	\$	643,642	\$	566,141	\$	627,521
GAIN/(LOSS):	\$	(217,326)	\$	130,317	\$	5,547

Teen Breakfast Club

The Teen Breakfast Club will meet on Sunday, Feb. 2 to reflect on different kinds of love. This club meets the first Sunday of each month from 9:30am to 10:10 am in Mtr. Christina's office for food, a spiritual discussion, and prayer. All teens are welcome to attend.

Walking with Peter

Our adult education course, Walking with Peter, will meet on Sunday, Feb. 9 at 12pm for about 45 minutes. This month, we'll be reflecting on the story of Peter depicted in the third window to the right of the main altar in the chancel. This window portrays the story of the release of Peter from prison by an angel. Using these beautiful images as starting points, we'll explore how Peter's story intersects with our own stories of faith.

Lay Eucharistic Ministers

Are you looking to increase your religious experience? We are looking for members of St. Peter's who might be interested in becoming a Lay Eucharistic Minister. Experience the joy of serving God by assisting at both the Morning Prayer and Holy Eucharistic Sunday Services. If interested please call the parish office at 518-434-3502.

Coffee Hour

Thanks to all who have made coffee hour so enjoyable the past few months Well now it's time to fill up the calendar for January - March 2025. There is sign up sheet in the kitchen - Please don't be shy and help is always available. For more information please call Michele Vennard at 518-858-0525 or at <u>mlvennard@gmail.com</u>.

Again, thanks to all!

Vestry Meeting

The February Vestry meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 11th at 5:15pm, in the second floor meeting room.

Rock and Root Hikers

Our hiking club, the Rock and Root Hikers, will do a winter Peebles Island hike at 1:30pm on Sunday, February 16, weather permitting. This is a moderate trail with some ups and downs. Contact Mtr. Christina at (518) 423-4891 with questions.

Choir Rehearsals Schedule

Tuesdays: 4:00pm- 5:00pm - Treble Rehearsal

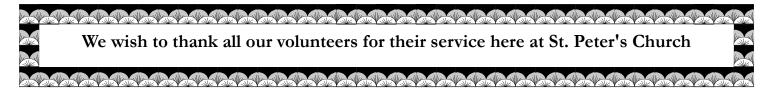
Thursdays: 5:00pm - Treble Rehearsal 5:30pm - 7:00pm Adult choristers Sundays: 9:30am rehearsal for the 10:30am service

We are eager to welcome boys and girls age 8 to grade 8 to join the Treble section of the choir.



On February 16, St. Peter's Choir will sing Franz Schubert's Mass in G at the 10:30am service. This is the most famous mass written by this famous Viennese composer. We will present this work in the context for which it was written, the service of Holy Communion. On this

day, Peter Krasinski, a world renowned organist, will be with us to play the Schubert Mass. Based in Boston, Peter is known for both playing organ repertoire, but also improvisation, the art of making music extemporaneously. He is especially well known for playing the organ for silent films and improvising all of the music for the length of the film. We get to experience Peter's excellent church service playing skills, including playing the Schubert Mass for the choir, but also improvising a wonderful prelude and postlude for us. Please join us for a day of great music that we offer to the glory of God!



February 2025





Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 Presentation of Jesus in the Temple Holy Communion Both Services 8:30am 10:30am 9:30am - Teen Breakfast Club	3	4 4:00pm - Treble Rehearsal	5 Holy Communion 12:05pm	6 5:00pm Treble Rehearsal 5:30pm Full Choir Rehearsal	7	8 Angels in Training 11:00am
 9 Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany 8:30am - Holy Communion 10:30am - Morning Prayer 12:00pm - Walking with Peter 	10	11 4:00pm - Treble Rehearsal 5:15pm - Vestry Meeting	12 Noonday Prayer 12:05pm	13 5:00pm Treble Rehearsal 5:30pm Full Choir Rehearsal	14 Valentine's Day	15 Angels in Training 11:00am
 16 Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany Holy Communion Both Services 8:30am 10:30am - Schubert's Mass 1:30pm - Peebles Hike 	17 President's Day Office Closed	18 4:00pm - Treble Rehearsal	19 Noonday Prayer 12:05pm	20 5:00pm Treble Rehearsal 5:30pm Full Choir Rehearsal	21	22
23 Seventh Sunday after the Epiphany 8:30am - Holy Communion 10:30am - Morning Prayer	24 St. Matthias the Apostle	25 4:00pm - Treble Rehearsal	26 Noonday Prayer 12:05pm	27 5:00pm Treble Rehearsal 5:30pm Full Choir Rehearsal	28	

* In observance of President's Day, the church office will be closed on Monday, February 17th.

MINUTES FOR THE VESTRY MEETING ST. PETER'S PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH December 10th, 2024

Present: Mtr. Christina, J. Chenot, D. Spath, P. Benson, A. Closson, C. Gordon, S. Hartt, M. Holden, M. Lundberg, W. Pettit, J. Russom, G. Scala

Absent: None

Opening Prayer Led by Mtr. Christina.

1. Approval of the Vestry Meeting Minutes, November 19th, 2024

The vestry minutes from the November 19th, 2024 meeting were approved on a motion by J. Russom, seconded by D. Spath, then unanimously approved by the vestry.

2. Rector Report – Mtr. Christina

Pastoral updates:

- 1. Led our third Teen Breakfast Club on Sunday, Dec. 1. Topic was "Do all Dogs go to Heaven?" it was a theology of pets and our work to care for Creation as Jesus followers.
- 2. Leading Daily Morning Prayer on Zoom for Advent at 6:30 am, Monday through Friday.
- 3. Have begun doing my yearly Advent calls where I try to contact each parishioner (or at least leave a message).
- 4. Completed the Friendship sermon series in November in preparation for Friendship Sunday on Nov. 24.
- 5. Concocted the "St. Peter's Spicy Dark Cocoa" recipe for the Hot Chocolate Stroll, using my husband, children, and parishioners as test subjects.
- 6. Awarded ice cream cards to two children for November's ABCs Bible Memory Challenge.
- 7. Co-led "Walk with Peter" on Nov. 24 that focused on Jesus' charge to Peter, "Feed my sheep." Participated in the Dec. 8 session of the class on Peter's Pentecost sermon.
- 8. Led a Thanksgiving Eve Noonday Prayer service on Nov. 27.
- 9. Beginning premarital preparations with a couple.
- 10. Making progress on our web redesign. Almost ready to launch new site.
- 11. Arranged to hire a member of the Albany Ambassadors team to help with safety on Sunday mornings for December.
- 12. Working with our lay leaders to encourage increased participation in the Hanging of the Greens this year.
- 13. Will be traveling Dec. 29 (after church) through Jan. 4 to Ohio to visit family during Christmastide.
- 14. Met with my spiritual director on Dec. 2.

Big Picture and Mission/Vision work:

- The Friendship Sunday and All-Parish Breakfast on Nov. 24 was a great event. We had one visitor who happened to come that day, as well as seven additional friends who were invited by parishioners. The breakfast which was delicious was well-attended. Thanks to every person who put work into continuing to welcome people into our church community.
- 2. Hot Chocolate Stroll: We participated in the Fifth Annual Hot Chocolate Stroll on Dec. 7. About a dozen of our parishioners volunteered for this event (including some kids), and we welcomed a little over 300 people into the church during the event (and distributed perhaps 60 flyers detailing our worship times and upcoming December events). Many visitors were awed by the beauty of our building and sat enjoying their cocoa while the listened to the organ playing or to recorded choral music. Overall, a wonderful welcoming event.

SAVE THE DATE:

Handel's Messiah – Dec. 15 Lessons and Carols/Hanging of the Greens – Dec. 22

3. Sr. Warden's Report -J. Chenot

We jumped right into the Advent season on December 1st. just coming off a remarkably busy month of November, mentioned in my last month's report. Last week we celebrated our second Sunday of Advent, and we are now starting many of our annual festivities which will lead us up to Christmas Day.

This upcoming Sunday of December 15th at the 10:30 service, the Sunday school will perform their annual Christmas Pageant. Many thanks to Laura Safaris and those in the Sunday School and nursery for all the coordination and rehearsing that went into this performance.

Following that afternoon, Handel's Messiah will be performed by our choir including orchestra, led by our choir director Danial Romero. This annual musical performance is always well attended hope this year will be no exception. The choir has been rehearsing for this performance as well as all the preparation of music that will be performed for Christmas services. Messiah party to follow for the choir at the Chenot's residence. Thank you all for all your dedication and hard work during this busy season.

Lessons and Carols will be performed the following Sunday, December 22nd at the 10:30 service followed by The Hanging of the Greens at 12:00. Lunch will also be served for all those helping with decorating and preparing the church for Christmas. We always look forward to this Sunday event each year beautifying the church for our Christmas services.

As the year comes closer to a close, we would like to thank all of those who have sent in their pledge cards already for next year and hope others will be able to fill out a card to help the finance committee properly budget for 2024.

During this time of year, there is an incredible amount of unseen extra work and time put forth that is needed as we prepare for the Advent and the Christmas season. The Vestry would like to thank the Flower Guild, Altar Guild and the Usher's who volunteer so much of their time during this busy time of year. We also would like to thank Wayne and Pat Shortall for keeping the Church and physical plant clean and tidy, especially during the Advent season. Finally, enough cannot be said to Janice and Ruth for all their work throughout the year and especially this time of year in the office. We are truly indebted to you both and thank you for all your dedication and hard work.

To end, we need to thank Mother Christina for all her tireless work preparing for this upcoming Advent Season. Her love and commitment to St. Peter's Church, as well as the work for the immediate community in outreach seems endless, ministering to all of us here at St. Peter's, as well ministering to those who come off the street for assistance.

Wishing everyone a Blessed and Merry Christmas and a safe and Happy New Year.

4. Sunday Attendance - The Average Sunday Attendance is 86.3. (as of January 10th)

5. Finance - G. Scala - Treasurer's Report

Highlights/Summary - Nov 2024

	NOV	YEAR-TO-DATE
OFFERINGS	\$24,297	\$211,737
MISC. INCOME	\$323	\$34,702
EXPENSES	(\$57,528)	(\$516,304)
GAIN/(LOSS)	(\$32,908)	(\$269,865)
WITHDRAWLS FROM ENDOW- MENT TO FUND SHORTFALL	\$34,687	\$255,882

Endowment Return (Merrill Lynch	.)
November:	+4.78%
Index Calculated Return:	+4.72%

Pledges:

20 for a total of \$79,180

YTD Offerings through Nov '24 are \$19,939 higher than '23

6. Property -

There was a radiator leak in the Vestry room that has been fixed.

A maintenance list has been created so that moving forward we are able to distinguish between larger projects that require more time and planning and necessary immediate tasks that are needed to maintain the church and guild house.

7. Outreach -

Gifts for the Giving Tree are due back to church this upcoming Sunday, November 24th. The Outreach committee will assist with Christmas Day dinner at the Damien Center.

8. Old Business -

We have hired a new ambassador from the Albany City Rescue Mission to assist with the safety of our parishioners on Sunday mornings. The 2025 Budget was approved on a motion by D. Spath, seconded by W. Pettit, then unanimously approved by the vestry.

9. New Business -

The Vestry began discussion for nominations for the upcoming Annual Meeting. M. Lundberg and J. Russom have both completed 2 3-year terms. The Vestry are thankful to them for their commitment and service.

10. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by A. Closson and seconded by M. Lundberg, then was approved unanimously by the vestry.

Compline was led by Mtr. Christina.

Respectfully Submitted, Christie J. Gordon

Clergy & Staff

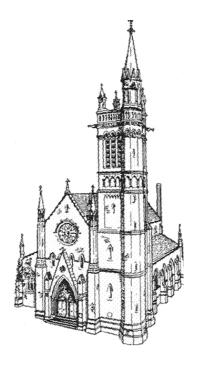
The Rev. Christina Hunter	Rector
Daniel Romero	Organist & Choirmaster
Malcolm Moran	Assistant Music Director
Laura Saffares	Director of Christian Education
Ruth Manss	Office Manager
James P. Shortall	Sexton
Wayne Hill	Sexton
Janice Chenot	Office Volunteer
E. Constance Powell	Historian & Archivist

Vestry

James Chenot	Senior Warden
Deborah Spath	Junior Warden
George Scala	Treasurer

Pete Benson, Ashley Closson, Kevin Creagan, Christie Gordon, Samuel Hartt, Maria Holden, Robin LaPlante, Annette Panzironi, William Pettit

ST. PETER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH 107 State St. Albany, New York 12207



How to Contact Us

Office Hours: Monday - Friday 9:00 am to 4:00 pm Telephone: 518-434-3502

E-Mail: Receptionist@stpeterschurchalbany.org Website: www.stpeterschurchalbany.org

Services

Sunday Holy Communion 8:30 am Holy Communion 10:30 am (1st & 3rd Sundays) Morning Prayer 10:30 am (2nd, 4th & 5th Sundays) Sunday School 10:30 am

Wednesday

Holy Communion - 12:05pm (1st Wednesday of the month) Noonday Prayer - 12:05pm (All other Wednesdays)