



THE Cornerstone

January 2025

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

"Luke the beloved physician greets you, as does Demas." — Colossians 4:14

Beloved of God,

We're about to spend a year with Jesus through the eyes of Luke. Our Sunday gospel readings for most of 2025 will be from his pen.

Luke is an interesting Gospel writer. Unlike Matthew and John, he wasn't one of the twelve apostles who were able to tell first hand stories about what Jesus did. Luke is also unlike Mark, who supposedly got a lot of his Jesus stories firsthand from St. Peter.

Instead, Luke was a traveling companion of Paul in his missionary journeys. The Scriptures also describe him as a doctor, and some scholars think he may have even been a Gentile.

Also, Luke seems to have gotten his stories about Jesus from a variety of eyewitness interviews. He writes at the beginning of his gospel, "In as much as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, just as *those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses* (my emphasis) and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught." (Luke 1:1-4).

You can see from the above passage that Luke interviewed many eyewitnesses of Jesus' ministry to write this account. He did the same thing to write the book of Acts, although Luke did witness some events in that book firsthand.

So what can we expect from Luke's version of the life of Jesus? Luke — perhaps because of his work as a physician — records many of Jesus' healings and miracles. He also tells many stories of Jesus reaching out in compassion to the poor, the marginalized, and the outcast (including Gentiles). Luke's gospel also emphasizes the importance of the Holy Spirit and of women in Jesus' ministry.

Some passages found only in Luke are among those people listed as their favorite Jesus stories, including the parables of the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son, the account of the Annunciation, the visit of the shepherds to Jesus on Christmas night, and the disciples on the road to Emmaus on Easter Day.

A final question: who is this Theophilus guy? You may have noticed in the above quote from Luke 1 that the gospel is written to Theophilus (Acts is written to him as well). He's apparently someone who Luke wanted to give this well-researched account of Jesus' ministry so that Theophilus could be certain in his faith.

Scholars and church historians have — you guessed it — many theories about who Theophilus was. Some believe he was a Jew from Alexandria or an important Roman official. Others think he was a Jewish high priest (Caiaphas' brother in law) or Paul's lawyer during his Roman imprisonment.

A final theory is that Theophilus wasn't a real person at all. The name "Theophilus" means "friend of God," and so we could think of this gospel and Acts as being written to anyone who is a friend of God and who wants their faith to be strong and certain.

So get ready, friends of God. We're in for some wonderful stories.

Grace and peace in Christ Jesus,

Mtr. Christina+



The Epiphany

St. Peter's Happenings

The Epiphany

On Monday, January 6th, we will be celebrating "The Epiphany of our Lord Jesus Christ" at 12:05pm with Holy Communion.

Vestry Meeting

The next Vestry meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 14th at 5:15pm.

Rock and Root Hikers returns January 19

Our hiking club, the Rock and Root Hikers, will resume our monthly hike with a trek on Peebles Island at 1:30 pm on Sunday, January 19. Contact Mtr. Christina at (518) 423-4891 with questions.

Walking with Peter

Our adult education course, Walking with Peter, will meet on Sunday, January 12, at 12pm for about 45 minutes. This month, we'll be reflecting on the story of Peter depicted in the window that is second to the right of the main altar, the "Healing of the Lame Man" in the Temple. That scene is also part of the of the bottom center pane of the Dexter Memorial Window, in the middle of the west aisle. Using these beautiful images as starting points, we'll explore how Peter's story intersects with our own stories of faith.

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 mlvennard@gmail.com.

Again, thanks to all!

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.

Teen Breakfast Club

The Teen Breakfast Club will meet on Sunday, Jan. 5 to discuss Armor of God New Year's Resolutions. This club meets the first Sunday of each month from 9:30 am to 10:10 am in Mtr. Christina's office for food, a spiritual discussion, and prayer. All teens are welcome to attend.

Child AITs (Acolytes in Training)

Any child aged 7 or older is eligible to become an AIT (Acolyte in Training) at St. Peter's. Acolytes assist in age-appropriate tasks during Holy Communion services that include assisting Lay Eucharistic Ministers and the priest at the altar, helping with the offering, and carrying processional candles. Interested? Email Mtr. Christina at priest@stpeterschurchalbany.org or call the church office.

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.

Flower Memorials

During the year, our Flower Guild arranges flowers to bring beauty to our sanctuary and joy to our congregation. Those wishing to make a donation for flowers for a memorial, thanksgiving or celebration should call the Church Office to confirm available dates. During Advent, we use only greens; during Lent, the altars are bare. Other Sundays, we welcome contributions. Cost of flowers: Main Altar is \$50, St. Mark's Altar is \$35, and the Tower Altar is also \$35. All requests are payable in advance.

Loaves and Fishes & South End Children's Café

Loaves and Fishes

Saturday, January 11th and 18th ~ 11:00am to 1:00pm

Every month on Saturday (dates for this month are listed above), Laura Saffares, along with other volunteers are committed to preparing and serving lunch to the people at Loaves and Fishes (formally known as St. Francis Mission), located at 498 Clinton Avenue in Albany. The number of adults and children we serve keeps growing. This is such a well received outreach for the children! You are welcome to come and witness this amazing outreach program anytime you can, we are there from 11am-1pm. For information or to let Laura know you are coming please call her at (518) 368-4284.



- Thank you to our community outreach committee for donating
- money to purchase gifts for the children of the Loaves and Fishes
- Soup Kitchen. So many children were given wrapped gifts for the
- holiday!



Winter Clothing Collection: St. Peter's will continue to collect gently used or new coats for children and adults in need at Loaves and Fishes. Please drop off your donations in the green barrels located in the Pumpelly Room or at the back of the church and upstairs in the Sunday School Room. We are also collecting hats and gloves/mittens for children and adults. And as always, if you need a pick up just give Laura a call at 518-368-4284.

Blessings to all that can help and Thank you to all for the donations already received!



The children getting ready to decorate the Crèche on Christmas Eve



Outreach

CHRISTMAS DINNER AT THE DAMIEN CENTER



A big Thank You to all the parishioners that cooked for our Christmas dinner at Damien Center. It was a huge success. Thank you to Sharon Debonis for organizing this wonderful community outreach


Pledge Cards

Pledge cards for 2025 have been mailed out to all parishioners. If you did not receive a pledge card please call the church office. It would be greatly appreciated if you could please take a minute to complete your card and return it to the church office or place it in the offering plate during the service. Pledges can also be made on the St. Peter's website at www.stpeterschurchalbany.org by clicking on the "Get your pledge card" button. You may also call the church office and we would be more than happy to complete a card for you. Thank you to those that have promptly completed and returned their pledge card or pledged online.

We wish you a Happy and Healthy New Year
2025
From All of us at St. Peter's Church

January 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
			1 The Holy Trinity New Year's Eve Office Closed
5 The Second Sunday after Christmas Day 8:30am - Holy Communion 10:30am - Holy Communion	6 The Epiphany of our Lord Jesus Christ 12:05pm - Holy Communion	7 4:00pm - Treble Rehearsal	8 12:05pm - No Service
12 The First Sunday after the Epiphany: The Baptism of Our Lord Jesus Christ 8:30am - Holy Communion 10:30am - Morning Prayer 12:00pm - Walking with Peter	13	14 4:00pm - Treble Rehearsal 5:15pm - Vestry Meeting	15 12:05pm - No Service
19 The Confession of Saint Peter The Apostle (transferred) 8:30am - Holy Communion 10:30am - Holy Communion 1:30pm - Hike at Peebles Island	20 Martin Luther King Day Office Closed	21 4:00pm - Treble Rehearsal	22 12:05pm - No Service
26 The Third Sunday after the Epiphany 8:30am - Holy Communion 10:30am - Morning Prayer 12:00pm - Annual Meeting Tea and Hymn Sing	27	28 4:00pm - Treble Rehearsal	29 12:05pm - No Service

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>oly Name</p> <p>ear's Day</p> <p>e closed</p>	<p>2</p> <p>5:00pm - Treble Rehearsal</p> <p>5:30pm - Full Choir</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p>
<p>Monday Prayer</p>	<p>9</p> <p>5:00pm - Treble Rehearsal</p> <p>5:30pm - Full Choir</p>	<p>10</p> <p>6:00pm - Moran/Félimé Wedding Rehearsal</p>	<p>11</p> <p>10:00am - Moran/Félimé Wedding</p> <p>11:00am - Angels in Training</p>
<p>Monday Prayer</p>	<p>16</p> <p>5:00pm - Treble Rehearsal</p> <p>5:30pm - Full Choir</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>18</p> <p>11:00am - Angels in Training</p>
<p>Monday Prayer</p>	<p>23</p> <p>5:00pm - Treble Rehearsal</p> <p>5:30pm - Full Choir</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25 The Conversion of St. Paul the Apostle</p>
<p>Monday Prayer</p>	<p>30</p> <p>5:00pm - Treble Rehearsal</p> <p>5:30pm - Full Choir</p>	<p>31</p>	 <p>Wish you and your family a joyful, bright, healthy, prosperous and happiest new year ahead. !!</p> <p><i>Happy New Year!</i></p>

Capital City Rescue Mission and St. Peter's Episcopal Church Overnight Men's Shelter



Partnering together for Winter Emergency Shelter since 2009

Volunteers will assist Mission and Church Staff with hospitality, ministry, and oversight of all guest needs. Specific duties include explaining shelter guidelines, serving snacks and drinks, and settling in guests for the night. Additional time may be spent exchanging stories and enjoying Christian movies. Volunteers may choose to volunteer a few hours a night, or volunteer for a full night, Overnight Volunteers have the option to sleep in reclining chairs provided by the Church.

Thank you for considering! The rewards of serving the homeless far outweigh the sacrifices!

For more information, please contact us today!

To volunteer through the Mission, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator!

Hope Smith Office # 518-462-0459 ext. 237 vcoordinator@albanymission.com

To volunteer through St. Peter's, please call or email one of the following:

Ruth Manss, Office # 518-434-3502 x 2 or email receptionist@stpeterschurchalbany.org

Mtr. Christina Hunter, Office # 518-434-3502 x 1 or email priest@stpeterschurchalbany.org

Or Jim Chenot, cell phone 518-669-3096

For St. Peter's Shelter and Mission Operations, please contact the Mission's Intake Coordinator

Lance Rowland, 518-462-0459 ext. 246 (office) or (cell) 518-320-5758

or email Lrowland@albanymission.com

Thank you for considering joining us this winter!

**May Jesus Christ our Lord richly bless you as you work with us as His hands
and feet to the needy people of Albany!**

What's Your Favorite Hymn?

St. Peter's Annual Meeting Tea and Hymn Sing

Jan. 26, 2025

Each year, Episcopal parishes hold an annual meeting of church members. The meeting is the time when we elect wardens and Vestry members and hear budget and ministry reports and updates. The rector's opening speech states our parish mission for the coming year.

To vote in the Annual Meeting, a parishioner must be 18 years of age, must be baptized, and must have been in regular church attendance during the previous calendar year, as well as a contributor to the church's support through time, talent, and/or treasure.

A Hymn Sing and Tea are two features of our Annual Meeting at St. Peter's Church. We're asking parishioners to submit their favorite hymns -- with one or two sentences about why it's a favorite -- by sending an email to priest@stpeterschurchalbany.org or calling the church office. The day of the meeting, four hymns will be selected at random and sung.

Child care will be available during the Annual Meeting.

Here is the schedule for this year's meeting:

9:20 am:

Polls Open (at the conclusion of the 8:30 Eucharist).

Annual Reports Available (beginning at 9:30 am).

11:45 am:

Tea and Sandwiches available (at the conclusion of the 10:30 service).

12 Noon:

First Hymn

Rector's Annual Address

12:15 pm:

Polls close

Second Hymn

Treasurer's Report

12:30:

Third Hymn

Senior Warden welcomes questions/comments from parishioners

12:45:

Fourth Hymn

Election Results

Blessing and Adjournment

Closing Hymn

**MINUTES FOR THE VESTRY MEETING
ST. PETER'S PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

November 19th, 2024

Present: Mtr. Christina, J. Chenot, D. Spath, P. Benson, 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, October 8th, 2024

The vestry minutes from the October 8th, 2024 meeting were approved on a motion by M. Lundberg, seconded by W. Pettit, then unanimously approved by the vestry.

2 Rector Report – Mtr. Christina

Pastoral updates:

- 1 Led our second Teen Breakfast Club on Sunday, Nov. 3. Topic was Horror and Holiness: A Reflection on Halloween and All Saints Day.
- 2 Did two home visits with pet blessings and two other home visits without.
- 3 Officiated Mari Bennett's memorial service on Nov. 2.
- 4 Officiated at a memorial service for Col. George Munro on Nov. 2. (About 30 folks attended, many of them new to St. Peter's).
- 5 Officiated the funeral and burial of John Cerniglia on Nov. 3.
- 6 Prepped Anna Barnes for First Holy Communion, which she received on Nov. 3.
- 7 Celebrated the Eucharist on All Saints' Day, Nov. 1, with John Davis preaching.
- 8 Awarded ice cream cards to two children for October's ABCs Bible Memory Challenge.
- 9 Led the Rock and Root Hikers outing on Oct. 20 at Thatcher Park. A dozen of us enjoyed the fall colors. Led another hike on Nov. 17 at Fox Preserve with seven hikers participating.
- 10 Co-led "Walk with Peter" studies with John Davis on Oct. 13, Oct. 27, and Nov. 10. The classes have been well attended with good discussion in the group. John has also led shortened sessions on each of the class dates after the 8:30 service.
- 11 Making progress on our web redesign.
- 12 Took an overnight study retreat on Oct. 18.
- 13 Was installed as the Albany Diocese chaplain of the Daughters of the King at the yearly assembly at Christ the King Center and preached at the closing Eucharist on Oct. 26.
- 14 Participated in the annual Priest Retreat on Nov. 13 and 14.
- 15 Met with my spiritual director on Nov. 6.

Big Picture and Mission/Vision work:

- 1 This Sunday is our Friendship Sunday and All Parish Breakfast welcoming event. I'd love to have 1-2 of these per year – both to bring in guests and to encourage our parishioners to be in the mindset of inviting friends to church.
- 2 St. Peter's will be participating in the Albany Hot Chocolate Stroll on Saturday, Dec. 7 from 11 am to 3 pm. We'll have up to 750 people coming into our church that day to sample "St. Peter's Spicy Dark Cocoa: Try a cup of our decadent spiced hot chocolate, blending rich cocoa with flavors of cinnamon, nutmeg and chile. Enjoy with the optional topping of whipped cream, chocolate shavings and – for the daring – a shake of cayenne." I thought this was a great outreach opportunity for us, especially with our Advent/Christmas offerings so near.

SAVE THE DATE:

Friendship Sunday and All-Parish Breakfast – Nov. 24

Handel's Messiah – Dec. 15

Lessons and Carols/Hanging of the Greens – Dec. 22

3 Sr. Warden's Report – J. Chenot

We are starting this November's vestry meeting a week later than we would have planned, postponed due to last week's election day. The extra bit of time putting my notes together gave me a bit more time to reflect on a great deal of services and activities that have been going on right up to this past weekend.

When reflecting on last month's notes in October, it was apparent that we were all preparing and getting ready for our upcoming busy Advent season. But, before I get started, I wanted to report just a few things that occurred during October. We were able to send out the third quarter statement to our parishioners. The week following, a Stewardship letter was sent from our treasurer George Scala, including a pledge card. Thank you for all your help with this George, including all the other financial reporting you do for us is immeasurable – thank you for your love and service to St. Peter's. The office has already begun receiving pledges for next year and we will have George inform us where we currently stand in his report. Thank you to those who have already pledged recently, as well as those who have in the past. Your financial contributions are so important to the life of the church. We are extremely fortunate to have an endowment to help supplement our budget each year and not invade the principle. There are times though, when emergency repairs are needed, which in those times your financial contributions are a blessing to all of us.

I want to mention the three memorial services that we just recently celebrated the first weekend in November. Saturday morning, November 2nd, we had a memorial service for a past member of St. Peter's and choir member Mari Bennett. Saturday evening, a service was performed honoring Col. George Munro, interred at St. Peter's. The following day, All Saints Day, we remembered our loved ones who have passed before us, as well as some celebrating First Holy Communion during the morning. That afternoon, we had another wonderful service for another past member of St. Peter's and longtime choir member, John Cerniglia. The choir performed the Faure' Requiem during the service, a musical piece John was very fond of. Finally, John was brought home to his final resting place. Many thanks to Mt. Christina and Danial Romero for coordinating all these meaningful services beforehand. A few extra rehearsals and homilies were needed, over and above preparing for the upcoming Advent season – so thank you both. The Faure' Requiem service for John was beautiful. Our choir, with many others, joined in performing in the service, many of whom had sung with John in the past. Also, I would like to mention and thank Emerson Fang for accompanying the choir with strings during the Faure' – you were wonderful. An incredible reception was held after John's service in our parish hall, which was very well attended. Thank you to Janice Chenot for putting this event together for all of us to celebrate and remember John – he would have loved all the food and drink for sure.

The following day, November 4th, we opened our doors once again to the homeless overflow shelter at St. Peter's serving those from the Capital City Mission. This year, as in the past, we will be hosting gentlemen in the evening who need shelter during the cold winter nights in our Parish Hall. Thank you to those who continue to support this important outreach mission we extend helping our immediate neighbors. Please know that your donated food, snacks, and drinks are very much appreciated. We are also looking for monetary donations for those who cannot shop for items but would still like to contribute. Financial donations are used to supplement a void in food donations when necessary, as well as, support the Mission volunteers and mentors staying with our guests overnight.

This past Saturday, November 16th we hosted our annual Pre- Thanksgiving Dinner, an annual tradition we have done for some years now. The dinner was a tremendous success with many parishioners and friends attending. Many thanks to everyone who participated in preparing all the side dishes for the Thanksgiving feast, as well as those who cooked all the turkeys beforehand at their homes. It was a great evening for all with great food and hospitality for all to enjoy. The following day, this past Sunday, our Sunday School Children baked pumpkin bread for our congregation, which will be blessed and given out this upcoming Sunday for all to enjoy.

Christmas Season is approaching with many festivities and services during December. On Sunday, December 15th, at the 10:30 service the Sunday school will be performing their annual Christmas Pageant. Once again, I want to thank Laura Rulison and the entire Sunday school staff for their commitment to our younger upcoming generation, as well as those who help in the nursery. Following that same day in the afternoon at 3:00, our choir will perform Handel's Messiah with chamber orchestra. Thank you to Danial and the entire choir for their commitment and musical gifts they offer to all the upcoming musical events that will be performed in the next few weeks.

Sunday, December 22nd, Lessons and Carols will be performed by our choir at the 10:30 service, followed by our annual Hanging of the Greens at 12:00, including the luncheon served during the event. We hope that everyone will be able to attend this traditional event which brings the congregation together in fellowship and beatifying the church for Christmas Eve.

Please keep the clergy and office personnel in your thoughts and prayers as we move into this busy season as everything moves into high gear. I hope everyone is looking forward to all the upcoming events as I, as well looking forward to our Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services.

Happy Thanksgiving to all! Jim

4. Sunday Attendance - The Average Sunday Attendance is 85.3 (as of December 6)

5. Finance – G. Scala - Treasurer's Report Highlights/Summary – Oct 2024

	OCT	YEAR-TO-DATE
OFFERINGS	\$12,063	\$187,440
EXPENSES	(\$44,146)	(\$424,775)
GAIN/(LOSS)	(\$32,083)	(\$249,118)
WITHDRAWALS FROM ENDOWMENT TO FUND SHORTFALL	\$8,687	\$221,195

Endowment Return (Merrill Lynch)

October: -1.30%

Index Calculated Return: -1.76%

Initial 2025 Pledges:

5 for a total of \$45,840

YTD Offerings through Oct '24 are \$9,678 higher than '23

6. Property –

The stoves in the Guild House kitchen have been replaced with new stoves.

The hot water tank in the Guild House stopped working this past week. It will be replaced on Thursday.

The floors in the church were shined in time for All Saints' Sunday.

7. Outreach – Our Giving Tree will be going up on Sunday. This year we are working with The South End Children's Café to provide the children with gifts. We continue to collect winter clothing for the adults and children of the St. Francis Mission. Any donations can be placed in the green baskets located in the church and guild house.

8. Old Business – The Vestry has nominated Ashley Spath and Robin LaPlante to fill our 2 current vacant positions. They will finish out the terms previously held by S. Debonis and F. Hershey.

9. New Business – The Vestry discussed going forward with live streaming our Sunday services. This will be a great addition to our redesigned website and a great resource for those unable to make it to worship in person.

The 2025 budget was presented to the Vestry for review and questions.

We are working on hiring a new security ambassador to help with foot traffic during Sunday morning services.

10. Adjournment - A motion to adjourn was made by C. Gordon and seconded by D. Spath, 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 ScalaTreasurer

Pete Benson, Christie Gordon, Samuel Hartt, Maria Holden,
Mark Lundberg, William Pettit, Jeff Russom

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)

ST. PETER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

107 State St.

Albany, New York 12207

