

# The Peppercorn

St. Peter's Newsletter

December 2010

Dear Friends in Christ:

Happy New Year!

??? Happy New Year???

Yes, it's December, but it's a New Year – it's Advent season, the beginning of a new Church Year. Even though the commercial world has already declared it's Christmas, the Church is in Advent, a time of preparation. One way to prepare is to place our lives next to the events of Bethlehem, knowing that in Christ we are reborn, and claimed as God's own beloved children forever.

So for the next four weeks, let us do more than decorate the house, bake the cookies, and get the shopping done. Let's take the time and make the effort to be born again. In what we say and in what we do let us proclaim to our families, our friends, our neighbors and the world around us that new life is available and possible.

Let me offer these words from a book of Advent meditations: *Now more than ever, we who love the Child Christ must remind our brothers and sisters that the reason for the season is the incarnation of Christ – the Word who 'was made flesh and dwelt among us,' or 'pitched his tent among us' – while remembering the promise of Jesus to return in glory.*

*To reflect on the historical birth of the Child and to await his coming has no value unless we nurture the birth of this Child in our hearts and world every day. Celebrating his birth invites us to participate in action that help in the fulfillment of God's mission to bring good news to the poor, to release the captives and all who are oppressed, and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.\**

There is much talk at this time of the year about 'the spirit of the season.' Most of the time such talk focuses on family togetherness and sharing, and the wonder of childlike joy. That is fine as far as it goes, but let us not forget that Jesus who was born as a child was sent into this world by his Father for a particular purpose and to accomplish a mission. Jesus came to proclaim and usher in the kingdom of God. Every time we make a donation of food to the Open Door Food Pantry, or volunteer to set up, clean up, or serve at a community dinner, or buy a gift for a child or a family in the Adopt-a-Family program or help at the intake program for the homeless we are participating in the work of the kingdom, and nurturing the birth of the Child in our hearts and in this world.

I pray that your preparation for this Christmas might bring the blessing of new birth to your lives and in your hearts.

Peace and Blessings,

Frank+



## Blue Christmas

### NOT FEELING 'MERRY' THIS CHRISTMAS?

. . . . Are you mourning a loss? Troubled by anxiety?  
Worried about the future?

So many concerns can crowd out the feeling of joy we are 'supposed to have' at this time of the year. Jesus who was born into poverty, who ministered to the needy and died in disgrace knows our hearts. You are invited to come to him, with everything you are feeling or not feeling on Wednesday evening, December 15 at 7:30PM for our third annual *Blue Christmas* to offer yourself and your concerns to God. There will be scripture readings, quiet music, prayers, and an informal service of Holy Communion.

This service is offered not only for our St. Peter's Church family, but for the whole community, so if you have a family member, friend or neighbor who might benefit from this service, please invite them.

### IMPORTANT CHANGE IN SERVICE TIME

On Sunday, December 26 *only* there will two services of worship:

7:45 Quiet service of Holy Eucharist

10:00 Service of Holy Eucharist and Music.

The regular weekly schedule of Sunday services at 7:45, 9:00, and 11:00AM will resume on January 2. Sunday School and Bible Café will resume the following Sunday, January 9.

### Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I just wanted to let you know that I will be away from St. Peter's for 3 months beginning January 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Over the past several months I have been struggling to hear God's desire for my ministry at St. Peter's and to the Episcopal Church. My hope is that by stepping away from St. Peter's for a short time, I will become a better listener when God speaks to me.

I realize that it must seem ironic to step away from Church in order to become more fully engaged in ministry. I think of this as a 3-month long spiritual retreat during which I will pray, explore, and learn God's will for me.

While most of my sabbatical will be spent at my home in Matawan, I do plan to visit Holy Cross Monastery in New York State for an 8 day retreat in March. I will also join the deacons of the Diocese of New Jersey on our annual Deacon's Retreat at Stella Maris Retreat Center in Long Branch in February. If circumstances permit, I also plan to spend some time with my sister at her home in Maine.

Please know that I love St. Peter's and I love all of you. This parish is my home and you are my family. I look forward to coming home on April 3<sup>rd</sup> and preparing to celebrate a glorious Easter with you.

Blessings and Peace,  
Catherine

### Advent Meditations

Daily meditations for you to read and react to are posted each day in Advent, Monday-Saturday, on

<http://stpetersadventmeditations.blogspot.com>

Visit the website each day for an opportunity to read and respond to meditations and reflections by members of our parish.

### ADVENT EVENT CANCELLED

Due to a number of extenuating circumstances, the Advent Event scheduled for Sunday afternoon, December 12 has been CANCELLED. Or better – postponed until next Advent.



### CHRISTMAS AT HUDSON MANOR

Thursday December 16 at 4:00PM

*Santa is looking for some elves...*

OK, not Santa, exactly, but Father Frank. And please don't tell me I'm starting to look like Santa – I know that with the white beard and the belly it's confusing, but...

One of St. Peter's Church Christmas traditions for the last few years has been to extend some holiday cheer and good will to the seniors residing at Hudson Manor in Freehold Borough. After an informal celebration of the Holy

Eucharist with carols, we have coffee, punch, Christmas cookies, and other goodies. Each of the residents in attendance is presented with a small Christmas gift as well.

Can you provide a plate of Christmas cookies, a bottle of punch, Christmas-themed paper plates or napkins or some other holiday goodies? Or can you join us in singing carols, distributing cookies, or cleaning up? For your commitment of 90 minutes or so, you could bring great joy to our brothers and sisters in Christ. Youth as well as adults are welcome to participate in this outreach event. (A good way for youth confirmands to earn service hours!) Please contact Fr. Frank, Deacon Catherine, or the Church office by email or phone to let us know of your availability.

Santa thanks you. So does Father Frank. And so will the residents of Hudson Manor.



### Emergency Housing Program

The Freehold Clergy Association Emergency Housing Program is a “stop-gap” program that provides night-by-night housing to homeless men in Monmouth County. For the men who stay with us, our program is the only thing that keeps them off the cold streets of area municipalities during the harsh winter months.

Last year the program served over 40 individuals. Some men stayed only one night until they could make other arrangements. Others made use of the program for most of its duration.

The Emergency Housing Program will run from December 1, 2010 through March 31, 2011. We are still in need of volunteers for all levels of service. Please contact Deacon Catherine at [deacon@stpetersfreehold.org](mailto:deacon@stpetersfreehold.org) if you can serve in any of the following volunteer roles:

**Intake volunteer:** One night per week from 6:00PM to 6:45PM in Classroom A in St. Peter’s Parish House; register new clients and provide a gathering space for the men as they wait for transportation to the hosting house of worship.

**Overnight volunteer:** As part of a volunteer team of two or three “chaperones,” stay overnight with the men in the host site. Help serve dinner and ensure safety and security for all participants. Transport men back to Downtown Freehold in the morning at 6:30AM.

Thank you for your support of this important program.



### CEB/Church School

Recently, I was approached by one of our Church School teachers who came up to me and just said "Thank you." I was startled and needed to ask for more clarification. "Thank you for asking me to do this." Being the skeptic or being cursed with that dominant sarcasm gene, I had to ask if they were really serious or were joking with me. It was totally serious.

It also got me thinking... About 11 or so years ago, someone asked me to do the same thing. All I could think of at that time was "what do I know and what could I possibly have to teach?" But the more experienced teacher doing the asking was more than supportive, offering to plan the lessons if I was a back up in the room. Since then, more Sundays than not, I have been in a classroom. As time went on, once in a while I would prepare a lesson and lead the class. Each week gave me reason to read and study a new reading of the Bible. It was in these rooms I got to know a whole lot of kids - YOUR KIDS! Once in a while, just when I thought I had prepared all aspects of the lessons and really thought I knew my stuff, one of the kids would offer a perspective on that reading that was totally different than the way I read it or the curriculum talked about it. I learned a whole lot about our Lord and the Bible. And most of all, for every lesson I prepared, every fact I shared, I swear I learned something back from those kids - YOUR KIDS!

One of the neatest things about our Church School hit me as we entered this program year. Both the Church School Superintendent and I, this year's CEB Chair, are not only past teachers in the program, we are both products of St. Peter's Church School! (Only it was called Sunday School way back then, and boy those classrooms seemed so much bigger back then!). Then something even more amazing hit me about this coming year. We will have another new teacher joining us this year. Again, this person was a product of our Church School program! But even more amazing, this new teacher was once one of my own students! How amazing is that to see this happen?

So it makes me realize, I owe a big "Thank you" to that teacher for asking me to join them in the classroom. Thank you because I have gained so much more than I have ever given. The gifts I have received in 11 years of this are priceless.

So how about you? Won't you join us in the classrooms with YOUR KIDS? We have a few openings for the next half that starts in January. Wouldn't you like to receive some of these gifts? These kids are so amazing. You will laugh, you may cry, you will learn so much. There are opportunities with very young and older kids. Please speak to Lori Itinger or myself if you would like more information or are interested in joining the fun!

Mark Willis



### **Annual Holiday Bazaar**

It is once again time to thank all those folks who helped make the Holiday Bazaar a success. Although it is sponsored by the Women of St. Peter's, it would not happen without the support and hard work of many people. Thank you to all who volunteered their time and talent. As usual the Brotherhood of St. Andrew responded to our request for assistance and their work is appreciated.

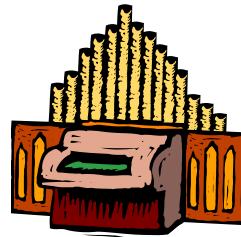
Our special thanks go to Carl Schwarzler who created and managed the Attic Treasures areas and designed this year's layout. With the generous cooperation of Sylvia Johnson, manager of St. Peter's Thrift Shop, the Attic Treasures tables were filled with wonderful gift items, jewelry, household pieces and decorative articles that proved very popular with our shoppers. We couldn't have done it without the support of the Thrift Shop and the hard work of Carl.

Our St. Peter's bakers stepped up and provided a great assortment of goods that flew off the tables. June Vawter's wonderful jams are a perennially popular offering requested by shoppers. Thanks to everyone who found the time to make something for this important aspect of the event.

Warm thanks to the members of our group who gave up their time to price, clean, set up, sell and clean-up. This year we asked for an additional 3 hour commitment on Friday evening and had plenty of help.

The money raised primarily goes to support the ministries of St. Peter's Church so we also thank those who shopped and all who made donations.

Cathy Weick and Nancy Chambers, co-chairs for the Women of St. Peter's



*"Trumpet and pipes! Loud clashing cymbals!*

*Sing to the Lord a new song!"*

You may have heard a "new song unto the Lord" in church this past Sunday – coming from the organ in the back of the church! This latest improvement is part of a multi-stage process of revitalizing the organ at St. Peter's. Some background first, though: As you may know, the organ is a large instrument, with over one thousand speaking pipes. The majority of this pipework lives in a small room above the organ console (above the hallway to the choir room). When the organ was installed in 1958, it was a much smaller instrument (originally only 10 ranks – where each "rank" represents a set of 61 pipes) and was soon deemed inadequate for the music program at St. Peter's. In the intervening years, it was carefully expanded to almost twice its original size to the present instrument. Part of the intended expansion involved the placement of a "division" (or section) of the organ in the rear of the church. The original plans called for the installation of a 7 rank unit in the balcony, however, funds ran out after much of the required equipment had been purchased. As an interim measure, 3 ranks were installed on a temporary basis. These are the pipes that have been in our balcony for the past twenty years.

An exciting opportunity presented itself this past summer, however – an organ project in a nearby church meant that a 7 rank unit was being dismantled and sold. The specifications for this unit exactly matched the equipment that had been purchased so long ago at St. Peter's (and stored in the basement all these years). Much like a car – organ parts are maker-specific, and cannot be easily swapped between "brands". This entire unit could be purchased and installed at our church using the equipment in our basement at a mere fraction of the cost of new pipework. After careful deliberation, the vestry approved the decision to move forward on this opportunity to bring the organ to "completion" of the original plans from forty years ago.

The installation of this division will occur in the summer of 2011 and be complete by September. As a sample of

what is to come, one badly damaged rank of pipes was replaced this past week –new “trumpet” pipes that have a slightly golden color. You may have noticed a bright brassy sound coming from them during last week’s services. This is only a small portion of what will be installed this coming summer, completing a long journey for one of the oldest serving members of our music ministry!

Blessing,

Mark Hyczko

*Did you enjoy the first two Downtown Concert Series events? If so - help organize future events with us!*

A tremendous amount of effort goes into producing events for DCS: everything ranging from selecting artists, creating published materials and marketing to running the event itself. We need your help! Any interested person is invited to join the The Downtown Concert Series committee. We will be meeting regularly on the first Tuesday of every month at 7:30 PM in the Choir Room. We will have our first meeting this Tuesday, December 7th. For more information contact Mark Hyczko at [music@stpetersfreehold.org](mailto:music@stpetersfreehold.org) or

(732) 979-7867 or (732) 979-7867. We look forward to your participation!



### **Christmas Memorials**

If you would like to order memorials this Christmas, please include this form with your check to St. Peter's Church. The Deadline for flower memorials is December 13th. We suggest a minimum contribution of \$20.00 per memorial.

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Your name:

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In Memory of :

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## ***Christmas Services at St. Peter's***

**Friday, December 24: *Christmas Eve***

4:00 pm Family Eucharist

with music from Peter's Rock, congregational carols, and a children's sermon.

7:00 pm Holy Eucharist,

with congregational carols and music from Jubilation Choir and Bellissima Ringers.

10:00 pm ***New Christmas tradition for St. Peter's.***

Festival of Lessons & Carols and Choral Eucharist

with congregational carols and music from St. Peter's Choir and King's Peal.

**Saturday, December 25: *Christmas Day***

9:00 am Holy Eucharist,

a quiet service in the chapel.