

# The Peppercorn

St. Peter's Newsletter

May 2011

Dear Friends in Christ,

How's this for a quick Bible study? I read the following recently, and thought I had to share it with you. It's called *The Bible in 50 words*:

God made, Adam bit, Noah arked, Abraham split, Joseph ruled, Jacob fooled, bush talked, Moses balked, Pharaoh plagued, people walked, sea divided, tablets guided, promise landed, Saul freaked, David peeked, prophets warned, Jesus born, God walked, love talked, anger crucified, hope died, Love rose, Spirit flamed, Word spread, God remained.

It's a cute poem, but it's so short that it leaves out an important part of the story:

**IT'S OUR STORY!!!**

The Bible is not just the narrative of what happened 'way back then.' It is not a just source of doctrine for the Church. And it is certainly not just some kind of 'instruction manual.' The Bible is something like a photo album -- crammed with snapshots of family members and friends, each snapshot capturing a moment in time, a person loved, or a place that needs to be remembered.

I have several photo albums of my family gathering dust in a corner of the spare room upstairs in my home. (I hope your Bible isn't gathering dust in the corner!) It has been a while since I viewed those albums, but I know what's in them and I know WHO is in them: my grandparents, now deceased; my father once active and athletic, now feeble and infirm; my cousins as little children, now grown with children and grandchildren of their own.

It occurred to me that if you were to find my personal photo album and look at it on your own, it would raise more questions than it would answer.

*Who is that wearing a rainbow afro wig?*

*Where is that white house?*

*What is that child doing?*

Without context, without interpretation, and especially without connection to the people, the places, or the things in the photographs, none of it would make sense or have meaning for you. We Christians are people of the story -- the Great Story of God's redemption of the world through Jesus Christ. We need to keep hearing that story, and so we gather Sunday after Sunday, week after week not only for the family meal of bread and wine but to hear the family story told.

This Easter season, we will hear the story of the resurrection as it was lived out in the earliest days of the Church. That story is found in the Acts of the Apostles, and we will hear excerpts it for each of the 8 Sundays of Easter Season. It is not the story of 'way back then.' As we listen to the stories, we realize that this is the story of our Church, our spiritual family, and our heritage. We learn from our spiritual ancestors how to be Christian, how to spread the Gospel's message, and how to fulfill the work that the Risen Christ has passed on to us.

Peace and Blessings,

Frank+

## **Light and Fire, Candles and Easter**

Fire has long been a sign of God's presence. The Old Testament is full of examples: the burning bush on Mount Sinai, the pillar of fire in the desert, the tabernacle lamps, and the sacrificial fires on the altar of the temple in Jerusalem. Early Christians rather naturally viewed the kindling of new fire as a symbol of the presence of their resurrected Lord, the new pillar of fire.

In Jerusalem, the earliest Christians blessed and lighted candles every Saturday night. By at least the fifth or sixth century, the custom had become associated with celebrations of the Resurrection, and paschal candles had found their way into the liturgy of the Western church.

In the medieval church, allegorical meaning was ascribed to every aspect of the paschal candle. Unlighted, it represented Christ's death and burial; lighted, it represented the splendor and glory of Christ's resurrection. For us, the symbolism of Christ's triumph over the darkness of sin and death is preeminent. This symbolism is most apparent when the paschal candle is introduced each year to the congregation in the Easter Vigil on Easter Eve. When the Vigil begins, the church is dark, symbolic of the darkness of the sepulcher that held the crucified Christ. A new fire is kindled, and the paschal candle is lighted, representing the Risen Christ, the Light of the world. Symbolically, this is the fire from which all light is ignited.

As the candle is carried in procession into the dark nave, so Christ lights our way out of darkness. During this procession, the bearer of the candle lifts it high and sings, "The light of Christ," to which all respond, "Thanks be to God!" Christ is present in the midst of the assembly. We are not pretending to reenact Christ's physical resurrection. We are not simply recalling an ancient event when Christ was present. The reality in the message of the resurrection is that the Risen Christ is present here today, with and for us. The ancient Easter proclamation, sung by the light of the paschal candle, says it clearly: "O night truly blessed which alone was worthy to know the time and the hour wherein Christ arose again from hell!" We are gathered in darkness to wait and look for the resurrection. Gradually we enter into the reality that Christ is risen and is present among us.

Throughout the fifty days of Easter, the paschal candle traditionally stands near the altar as a symbol of the resurrection. It is lighted for each liturgy during the great fifty days of Easter. (Easter is not over until Pentecost, the fiftieth day!) After the Day of Pentecost, the paschal candle is placed on its stand near the baptismal font as a visual reminder that in our baptism, we are crucified and resurrected with Christ. The candle is lighted at each celebration of Baptism, at which time small baptismal candles are lighted from it for presentation to the baptized or sponsor. This act is a visual reminder of the integral connection between Baptism and Easter. For funerals, the paschal candle is lighted and placed in its stand at the head of the casket during the funeral rite. In a visual way, the paschal candle visually proclaims the message of Romans 6:3-5 (used at the beginning of the burial liturgy): "In our Baptism we have already died and been raised with Christ."

*adapted from the ELCA website*

### **Welcome our Deacon-Intern**

Beginning this month, and for approximately the next year, Ted Foley will be joining us for worship, fellowship, and outreach here at St. Peter's. But most important, Ted will be learning about and experiencing first-hand the ministry of deacons as an intern. You will see Ted serving at the altar, participating in the outreach ministries of the Church, and joining in other activities. This is the last step before Ted is ordained a deacon in the Episcopal Church sometime in the Spring of 2012, after which

A resident of East Brunswick, Ted worked for many years in the Health Care industry in research and development, and currently does consulting work for companies that develop medical devices. A member of St. Peter's in Spotswood, he has served on vestry, assisted with community suppers, and served on the Board of Directors of the Community of Hope Ministries. Ted's work in the diocese includes work with Oasis Ministries, which offers outreach and support to Gay and Lesbian Christians, and the Red Door, which is an anti-bullying initiative. Ted is married and the father of two daughters.

Welcome, Ted!

## **Episcopal Relief and Development and Dioceses Respond to Storms in South and Southeast**

**April 28, 2011 (edited from an ERD press release)**

Nearly 300 people have died throughout the South and Southeast, as severe storms and tornadoes continue to batter the region, causing widespread damage to homes and civic infrastructure. This new wave of storms comes shortly after an earlier cluster of storms that barreled through the Southeast over the weekend of April 16<sup>th</sup>.

In response to the most recent storms, Katie Mears, Program Manager for Episcopal Relief & Development's US Disaster Program, has been in contact with the Episcopal Dioceses of Alabama and Atlanta. Several churches in the Diocese of Atlanta are providing temporary shelter and distributing food and supplies. The Episcopal Diocese of Alabama is still in the assessment phase. "We have been in touch and we are ready to assist them," Mears said.

In the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina fourteen parishes are involved in a diocesan-wide response effort which is being coordinated through the diocese. Emergency funds from Episcopal Relief & Development will be directed to the diocese for further distribution, according to the needs of the congregations involved in local disaster response.

In the Diocese of East Carolina, Episcopal Relief & Development is supporting relief efforts in Windsor and Newton Grove, two communities that suffered significant damage. In Windsor and the surrounding rural communities, tornadoes destroyed at least 67 homes and damaged 30 others. Many people were injured, and 14 local residents were killed by the storm. Located in an impoverished and rural area of the state, Windsor is home to many who are in need of assistance.

With support from Episcopal Relief & Development, St. Thomas' Episcopal Church in Windsor is responding to needs for basic household items, temporary shelter and pastoral care. St. Thomas is providing vouchers for the church's thrift store and other local vendors so families can purchase clothing, school supplies and other needed items. Motel vouchers and funds for small, emergency home repairs were also distributed. In addition, the church is providing pastoral care and financial assistance for funeral expenses to families who are grieving.

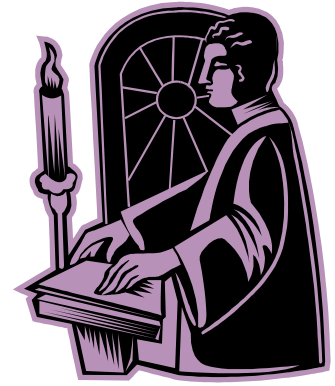
In Newton Grove the local Episcopal Church, La Iglesia de la Sagrada Familia, is responding to needs through its Episcopal Farm Worker Ministries (EFM) program. Sagrada Familia, with help from Episcopal Relief & Development, is providing vouchers to purchase clothing, food and household supplies to people in need, as well as temporary housing assistance and support for grieving families.

Wherever possible, Episcopal Relief & Development is helping congregations expand their existing outreach ministries to meet increased needs in communities impacted by the recent storms. To support these vital efforts, please donate to the [USA Disaster Response Fund](#) on Episcopal Relief & Development's website.

*Episcopal Relief & Development is the international relief and development agency of the Episcopal Church and an independent 501(c)(3) organization. The agency takes its mandate from Jesus' words found in Matthew 25. Its programs work towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Together with the worldwide Church and ecumenical partners, Episcopal Relief & Development rebuilds after disasters and empowers people by offering lasting solutions that fight poverty, hunger*



**Reminder:** If you wish to schedule any building space for an event, it must go through the church office. Please call the church office at (732) 431-8383 before planning an event. Thank you.



### **Lay Ministers for Sunday Morning Services Wanted!**

**Sadly for us, but happily for them: Several of our teen volunteers are graduating and going off to college in the fall. This will leave us with a few gaps in our service rosters for our Sunday liturgy schedules. So, we are looking for some folks to serve at each of our Sunday Services. If you feel called to one of the following service opportunities in our liturgy, please contact Fr. Frank at [rector@stpetersfreehold.org](mailto:rector@stpetersfreehold.org) Deacon Catherine at [deacon@stpetersfreehold.org](mailto:deacon@stpetersfreehold.org).**

#### **Worship Coordinators are needed for the 900 AM Service**

Worship Coordinators are older teens or adults who make sure that ushers, lectors, and oblationers at the 9:00 AM service are present and that those who are reading have a copy of the appointed scriptural texts. Worship coordinators should be individuals who have served as ushers in the past and who are juniors in High School or older.

#### **Ushers are needed for the 9:00 AM and 11:00 AM Services**

**Youth/Junior ushers must be in 4<sup>th</sup> grade; Senior Ushers must be in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade.** Ushers provide information and service bulletins to those entering the church. They receive the offerings of the congregation and guide the flow of the congregation to the rail during the Eucharist. Greeters provide welcome, information, and directions for visitors and new members. Together, they help maintain a welcoming atmosphere for all.

**Acolytes** are adults and young people trained to assist the priest and the deacon during the services of Holy Communion. They help with preparation for worship, lighting altar candles and assisting the deacon in setting the altar table. Acolytes take part in leading the worship of the people by carrying the cross, torches, and banner to lead the processions into the church at the beginning and out of the church at the end of worship services. Their work helps to preserve the beauty and dignity of the service. **If you are a youth who will be in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade in September (5<sup>th</sup> graders with special permission of the rector) and you are interested in serving as an acolyte, please contact Father Frank at [rector@stpetersfreehold.org](mailto:rector@stpetersfreehold.org) or Deacon Catherine at [Deacon@stpetersfreehold.org](mailto:Deacon@stpetersfreehold.org) and let us know you are interested in helping.**

**Lectors (Lay Readers)** can be as young as 7 years old if they are good readers. They serve by sharing the Old Testament and New Testament scripture texts at the service. We need competent teen or adult readers for our 7:45 and 11:00 AM services. We need good readers in the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade or higher for our 9:00 AM Service.

**Chalice Bearers** are individuals age 16 or older licensed by the Bishop to administer the consecrated wine during Communion. This is a position of special responsibility that requires a sincere desire to serve God and God's people in a spirit of reverence, maturity, and humility. Please see Fr. Frank if you believe you are called to serve in the capacity of Chalice Bearer.

A new roster for summer months will be produced by the first week of June. Please let the rector or the deacon know if you are unavailable during the whole summer season (Father's Day to Labor Day). Most acolytes, Lay Eucharistic Ministers, Ushers, and Lectors will be scheduled to serve only twice during the summer.

## Women of St. Peter's

Thanks to all the members of the parish who helped make our "Bakeless Bake Sale" a success. We had a wonderful response from our always generous congregation. The proceeds will help fund the cleaning of the carpeting in Classroom A, the nursery and the Parish Hall.

We want to give you all a "save the date" for the annual bazaar. Please put November 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> 2011 on your calendars for that parish function. Also, if you are a crafter and are interested in the possibility of renting a table to show your wares you can be in touch with Fran ([buildings@stpetersfreehold.org](mailto:buildings@stpetersfreehold.org)) for details about signing up. This year we are restricting display space to one 6 foot table per person to avoid overcrowding. Yes, we know it is a little early but planning ahead never hurts!

Join us for the May meeting, downstairs in Classroom A at noon on the 4<sup>th</sup>. Come in through the handicap ramp entrance and bring a dish to share. In addition to regular business, we will hear a report of the Executive Board meeting held recently concerning the bazaar. As always we will share in warm fellowship and some fun as well as lunch. Hope you can join in, all women of the parish are members of the group so you are more than welcome to come.

## Steeple

10 years ago on Tuesday, May 15, 2001, St. Peter's steeple was restored to its rightful place on the west gable end of our building to bring our multi-year restoration project closer to its conclusion. The steeple, designed by colonial builder-architect Robert Smith, was removed early in the restoration project due to its physical condition. It was taken down piece by piece, parts were numbered and the entire process was photographed in order to document it according to the Historic America Buildings Survey standards.

First the parts were put in a large container which was then transported to the Perth Amboy property of Bruce Edmonds storage. The next piece of the restoration process was a trip to Vermont, Greensboro Bend, to a workshop of the National Timber Framers Guild for those members that were seriously deteriorated to be replicated for use in the reconstructed piece. After this important step in the evolution it returned to Perth Amboy where it rested until we secured our second grant from the New Jersey Historic Trust. Then onward to Farmingdale, NJ, and

the workshop of Ira Matthews for the sections of the steeple to be rebuilt, and restored.

On Monday evening, May 14<sup>th</sup>, Ira and company brought the steeple, now in three assembled sections, back to its hometown. In the morning the middle section (with the louvered openings) had its bonnet put back on top. Then, with the help of a massive crane the 5 ton bottom section was lifted into place. Next piece was the 131 year old, 406 lb. bell, rescued from its time in the Narthex where it waited for the big day. It too was lifted by the crane and then re-hung. Next the crowning glory, the dome with its' standing seam copper roof was lifted into place and the weather vane, restored to the top with its golden ball gleaming in the afternoon sun. Cheers erupted from the crowd that had gathered across the street and a collective sigh of relief was heard from the members of the Building Restoration Committee.

## **RED Doors**

Sometimes changes are subtle. Sometimes they are barely noticeable. At other times, they are immediate and obvious. Several weeks ago, the exterior of St. Peter's Church building underwent one of those immediately apparent and obvious changes. The front doors are now **RED**.

The tradition of **RED** doors on a Church is actually quite ancient, although the origins of the tradition are somewhat obscure. **RED** doors on Churches are sometimes seen as a reference to Old Testament times when places of refuge were identified with **RED** doors. Others see in the **RED** door a reference to the shed blood of Christ, by which our salvation is procured and through which we enter into the eternal life. Either way, the **RED** doors add a touch of color and excitement, offering our historic building more 'curb appeal' and making us more noticeable to passersby.

Many thanks to those who did the tedious work of scraping and painting to beautify our spiritual home, especially Jere Bethune and Rob Mayer.

Now you've read the article about the **RED** doors.

### **Member news**

It's not always easy to keep up with what is going on with our beloved brothers and sisters in Christ. In an attempt to keep our membership informed, a new feature will appear on St. Peter's website. Within a few weeks, a new category on a separate webpage page will be added entitled "Member News." This will be a place where lifecycle events will be recorded for our members to share in the joys or concerns of our brothers and sisters in Christ. Information about births, baptisms, graduations, marriage, and deaths of our Church members and their families will be recorded 'blog style' on the website, which means that the information entered on the site will remain. To have your family news shared with St. Peter's Church family, you can call or email Robin Stewart at [office@stpetersfreehold.org](mailto:office@stpetersfreehold.org) or 732-431-8383. Let's keep in touch.

**The Daughters of the King** (DoK) will be offering a women's fall retreat at the Convent of St. John the Baptist in Menden. The dates are 9/30 to 10/2 and the cost will be around \$150.00. We are planning to have a retreat conductor for the weekend. Susan Hebert or Kathy Whall can give more information.

### **NOTES AND NEWS ABOUT PEOPLE**

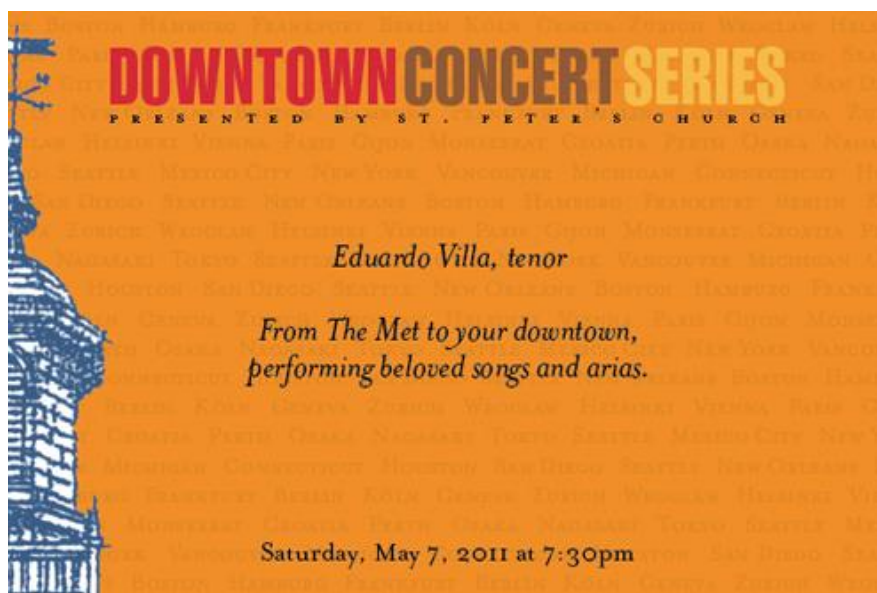
Congratulations to Matt and Monika Evans on the baptism of their son Elijah Mark in a joyous celebration of Resurrection and new life at the Great Vigil of Easter, Saturday, April 23.



During the month of April, St Peter's Church lost two long time members. Mary Johnson died on April 8. Mary was active in many ministries of St. Peter's, including the Thrift and the Women of St. Peter's. Services were held on April 11, and burial was in the family plot in Virginia the following week. Mary was the mother of Bill Johnson and mother-in-law of Sylvia Johnson, manager of St. Peter's Thrift Shop.

Rena Outcault died on April 9. Services were held on April 12, and burial was in Maplewood Cemetery in Freehold. Rena was a volunteer at the Thrift Shop and served as usher at the 7:45 service.

*"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, even so says the Spirit, for they rest from their labors."*



From The Metropolitan Opera, Opéra National de Paris, and Teatro alla Scala, internationally acclaimed tenor Eduardo Villa closes the Downtown Concert Series 2010-2011 Season performing works by Bizet, Donizetti, Puccini, Rodrigo, Tosti, and others on Saturday, May 7, 2011 at 7:30pm.

Mr. Villa is one of the world's most sought-after and versatile tenors with an unusually broad repertoire that ranges from Nemorino to Otello performed in leading opera houses throughout Europe and North America. This concert is a rare opportunity to experience his extraordinary artistry in a personal and intimate setting not often available to concertgoers. The acoustic excellence and historic significance of St. Peter's Church create a splendid backdrop for one of the finest singers in the world.

Following the performance please join us for an informal gathering to meet the artist at the American Hotel, located at 18 West Main Street.

Tickets for the concert are \$20, tickets for children thirteen and under are \$10.

Seating is limited, and tickets can be purchased at St. Peter's Church office, 33 Throckmorton St., Freehold, or by calling the church office at 732-431-8383.

For more information please visit [DowntownConcertSeries.org](http://DowntownConcertSeries.org)