

# The Peppercorn

St. Peter's Newsletter

November 2011

Dear Friends in Christ,

There's always a temptation in a November newsletter to write about Thanksgiving themes: gratitude, blessings, and all those good things with which God has enriched our lives. I was prepared to do that until one morning surfing the web I read this story. I'm quoting a blog by Peter Enns, a Biblical scholar, but the story was familiar to me because it was the second time I had heard it in less than a month. I found it profoundly moving.

*In 1975, the Jesuit philosopher, John Kavanaugh, went to work for three months at the "house of the dying" in Calcutta with Mother Teresa. He was searching for an answer to some spiritual struggles. On his very first morning there, he met Mother Teresa. She asked him, "And what can I do for you?"*

*Kavanaugh asked her to pray for him. "What do you want me to pray for?" she asked.*

*He answered with the request that was the very reason he traveled thousands of miles to India "Pray that I have clarity."*

*Mother Teresa said firmly, "No. I will not do that."*

*When he asked her why, she said, "Clarity is the last thing you are clinging to and must let go of."*

*When Kavanaugh said, "You always seem to have clarity," Mother Teresa laughed and said, "I have never had clarity. What I have always had is trust. So I will pray that you trust God." The point of the dark helpless place is to strip us of absolutely everything so that only surrender and trust remain. That is the daily and severe Christian calling*

We are so accustomed to avoiding difficulty, doubt, and the dark side that when our life's journey takes us through such times we tend to think that God has abandoned us. Yet the greatest saints of the faith have gone through such times. St. John of the Cross, a priest, writer, mystic and spiritual director of the 16th century spoke of the dark night of the soul as a particular gift from God, an experience that leaves us empty before God and ready to hear God's voice. Mother Teresa herself, it was revealed after her death, went through times of darkness, doubt, and profound despair. Even Jesus himself used the words of the psalmist at his hour of death, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

So those dark times of difficulty are not the opposite of faith or loss of faith: they are times in our Christian spiritual journey that prepare us for deeper spiritual connection with God. St. Paul writes these words to his beloved brothers and sisters at the Philippians Church: (3:10) "I want to know Christ and the power of his

resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead." Death and life. Suffering and Resurrection. Darkness and Light. Both are part of the Christian life. It is, as they say, a package deal. If your faith has no room for darkness, or doubt or difficulty, then you have something different from authentic Christianity. You have, instead, something that takes its place in your life among other things -- like a job and a hobby, something soft and comfortable. Call it religion, call it spirituality, even call it Church if you must. But it is certainly not a Christian faith that has the kind of depth and resilience that gets us through all of life. Doubt and difficulty and darkness -- these are God's tools to prevent us from being left with mere religion.

So here's my Thanksgiving word to you, from the Book of the prophet Habakkuk (3:17-19a) *Though the fig tree does not blossom, and no fruit is on the vines; though the produce of the olive fails and the fields yield no food; though the flock is cut off from the fold, and there is no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will exult in the God of my salvation. God the almighty is my strength.*

Happy Thanksgiving, my dear friends. And may God bless you with a rich and profound faith.

Frank+

### **Anti-Bullying Workshop**

Mark your calendars for Thursday, November 10<sup>th</sup> from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM!

St. Peter's is pleased to announce that we will offer an anti-bullying workshop for parents, guardians, and other adults who work with youth. This special program is designed to help concerned adults in our community deal with the increasing problem of bullying among children and adolescents. You'll learn a variety of strategies to help support our young people who encounter different types of bullying behavior.

Kathy Megroz-Foley, LCSW, is a licensed clinical social worker and the Senior Clinical Supervisor of Family & Community Services of Somerset County. With more than twenty-five years of experience, Kathy specializes in school-based social work with children and adolescents. Additionally, she is a seasoned therapist who works with families and adults.

While the program is free, we ask that you RSVP to the Parish by calling the office at 732-431-8383 or emailing [office@stpetersfreehold](mailto:office@stpetersfreehold) to reserve a seat and packet of materials.

We hope you can join us for this special evening.



### **Community Thanksgiving Service**

On Sunday evening, November 20, the faithful people of Freehold, from churches, synagogues, and mosque, will gather to celebrate our national and spiritual holiday of Thanksgiving, at the annual Freehold Community Thanksgiving service. Familiar hymns and special music will be presented, scriptures from each of the religious traditions will be read, and prayer in many forms will be offered. Please join your friends, neighbors, and faithful believers of many traditions at St. Rose of Lima Church at the corner of McClean and South Street in Freehold Boro at 7:00PM for this inspiring event.



### St. Peter's Thanksgiving Service

Before you gather with your own family around the dinner table on Thanksgiving Day, November 24, you are invited to gather with your family in Christ, around the table of the Lord at 9:00AM in the chapel at St. Peter's Church for a brief but meaningful service of Holy Eucharist . As you may know, the word *Eucharist* actually means 'thanksgiving,' so what could be a better way of marking this special day than celebrating the Lord's feast at the Lord's table.

### Donating

*Your ReSource* is a Non Profit “store” in Trenton that sells refurbished, used medical equipment to people at affordable prices. It was started by a woman named Geri LaPlaca, who as a physical therapist, realized how often people who have a need for medical equipment use it for a short period of time and then have no more need for it. Yet it is still in great shape. There are also many people who have no or not very good insurance and yet have need for medical equipment for a short period of time or for the remainder of their lives, yet don't have the resources to acquire what they need. Ms.La Placa started *Your ReSource* to collect and refurbish medical equipment and then sell it to people who need it, at affordable prices.

*St. Peter's Thrift Shop* collects used items, mostly clothing and small household items such as dishes, lamps electronics, sheets, towels etc. Many people also donate used medical equipment. The *Thrift Shop* has limited space and not a lot of demand for medical equipment. When several wheel chairs, potty chairs, shower seats accumulate they start to take up space, so the majority of these items are taken to Trenton and donated to *Your ReSource*. If people have need for medical equipment that the Thrift Shop doesn't have available, they can be directed to *Your ReSource* in Trenton.

Sylvia Johnson, who manages the *Thrift Shop* has had to find ways to pass along items that aren't big sellers. It costs to have a dumpster and many places that used to pick up items now charge for the pick-up so finding ways to pass along items that there isn't a great need for in the downtown Freehold area has been an on-going challenge. It is a pleasure to find an outlet such as *Your ReSource* to pass items along to.

Items can be donated to the back door of the *Thrift Shop* Mondays to Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. If you have used medical equipment, this too can be donated, though most of it will be passed along to *Your ReSource*. Should you have need for medical equipment and would like to purchase something used at a reasonable price contact Your ReSource, 8 Industry Court, Ewing, NJ 08638, 609-530-1513, [ww.yourresourcenj.org](http://www.yourresourcenj.org).



*Verily, I say unto you that the King James Version of the Bible (also known as “the Authorized” version when it was first published) is 400 years old! To celebrate this significant milestone in the history of the Christian Church, we at St. Peter's will use the KJV texts in our readings during our Eucharistic celebrations on Bible Sunday, November 13, 2011.*

*King James I of England assembled over 50 experts in Greek, Hebrew, and biblical scholarship for the new version of the Bible in 1604. When it was published in 1611, the KJV was regarded as a more accurate version than both the Roman Catholic and Protestant versions that existed at the time. Since its first edition 400 years ago, the King James Version of the Bible has become the best-selling book of all time, outselling every other version of the Bible to date!*



### **Vespers Service at St. Peter's**

Come to St. Peter's for a brief, meditative service featuring the sound of [Vox Fidelis](#) on Sunday, November 6 at 5:00 PM. The 35 minute candle-lit service (actually a Compline service) will feature this New Jersey-based professional choir, led by Timothy Smith. Vox Fidelis specializes in sacred Renaissance polyphony, its cultivation, and its place in traditional sacred liturgy. Join us for a moment's respite from the hectic pace of the modern world! Admission is free - although donations are greatly appreciated.

### **New Look Narthex**

A big 'thank you' to Jack Kriska for his hard work in preparing for painting the walls of the narthex, the foyer or entrance vestibule of the Church. Jack, over the course of a week, did the tedious work of filling in holes, covering over cracks, spackling and sanding. Once the narthex is painted, the room will be much more attractive and welcoming to our own parish family, as well as to guests and visitors who enter our building not only for worship for the first time, but also for those who attend concerts, recitals and events at St. Peter's.

Now the next step is to **Clear away the clutter**



Please check the narthex table, shelves, and coat rack for any item of yours that you may have left there inadvertently. Fair warning: on Monday November 15, any unclaimed items (sunglasses, scarves, books, gloves, jackets, etc.) left behind

will be taken away to be sold at the Thrift Shop or thrown away with the trash.

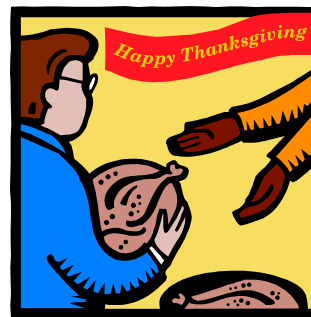
### **Special Parish Meeting**

During the week of October 18, our bishop, the Rt. Rev. George E. Cuncell, announced his retirement, effective Spring of 2013. Accordingly, the Diocese of New Jersey is to proceed at once with a process leading to the election of a new bishop. The first step in that process is to form the Episcopal election Committee. The members of that Committee are elected at special Convocational Meetings to be held throughout the diocese on Sunday afternoon, December 11. There are eight convocations (regional groupings) within of the diocese of New Jersey, and each will elect one cleric (priest or deacon) and one lay person to serve on the committee.

### **At our [Special Parish Meeting of St. Peter's Church on Sunday November 13 at 10:15AM](#) we**

will gather to elect 6 (six) delegates to the Special Convocation Meeting of December 11, who will in turn elect two members of the Episcopal Election Committee. The ultimate aim -- 18 to 24 months in the future -- is to elect a new bishop in a fully participatory, open, and (as much as possible) democratic process.

If you are interested in serving as one of the six delegates to the special Convocation Meeting, please contact the parish clerk, John Winfrey by email at [jwinfrey@optonline.net](mailto:jwinfrey@optonline.net) or by phone at 848-299-6266.



### **For a Happy Thanksgiving**

Each Thanksgiving, Open Door, the ecumenical social service agency supported by St. Peter's Church and over a dozen other houses of worship

in the Freehold area (Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish, and Muslim) distributes Thanksgiving dinner baskets to the needy of the Freehold community. Last year, 475 dinners were distributed, and Open Door expects to serve more families this year. The following food items can be brought to St. Peter's Church on Sunday, November 6, November 13, or November 20: potatoes (instant or fresh), stuffing, gravy, canned vegetables, sweet potatoes, cranberry sauce, canned fruit, coffee, tea, juice, cocoa mix, muffin mix, pie crust mix, canned pie filling, cake mix, and frosting mix. Do not bring turkeys to Church! **Frozen turkeys may be brought directly to the Open Door at 39 Throckmorton Street on Sunday afternoon November 20th between the hours of 12noon and 5PM.** Your generosity will enable someone to have a very happy holiday.

### **Women of St. Peter's**

Seventy-five years ago it was 1936 and the first event that was to become the annual holiday bazaar was held at St. Peter's by the women's group. Granted it was a small group and most of them were accompanied by their children, but it was the beginning of a tradition. The women sold homemade cakes and aprons to raise money for the church and its ministries. Now it is 2011, and the Women of St. Peter's will be holding their major fund-raising event, the *Annual Holiday Bazaar* on November 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>! Although there will be lots of items to look at, you will still find cakes and aprons for sale. Some things never go out of style!

At our *meeting on November 2*, we will be doing the final planning for the event. Please feel free to join us at noon, downstairs in the Parish House, Classroom A. We have lunch, everyone brings a favorite dish, and hold our meeting.

For the bazaar we are, as usual, counting on the members of the parish to help us with homemade items for our baked goods table. You may get a phone call or be asked to sign up. Suggestions for items are available. Our best-sellers are: quick

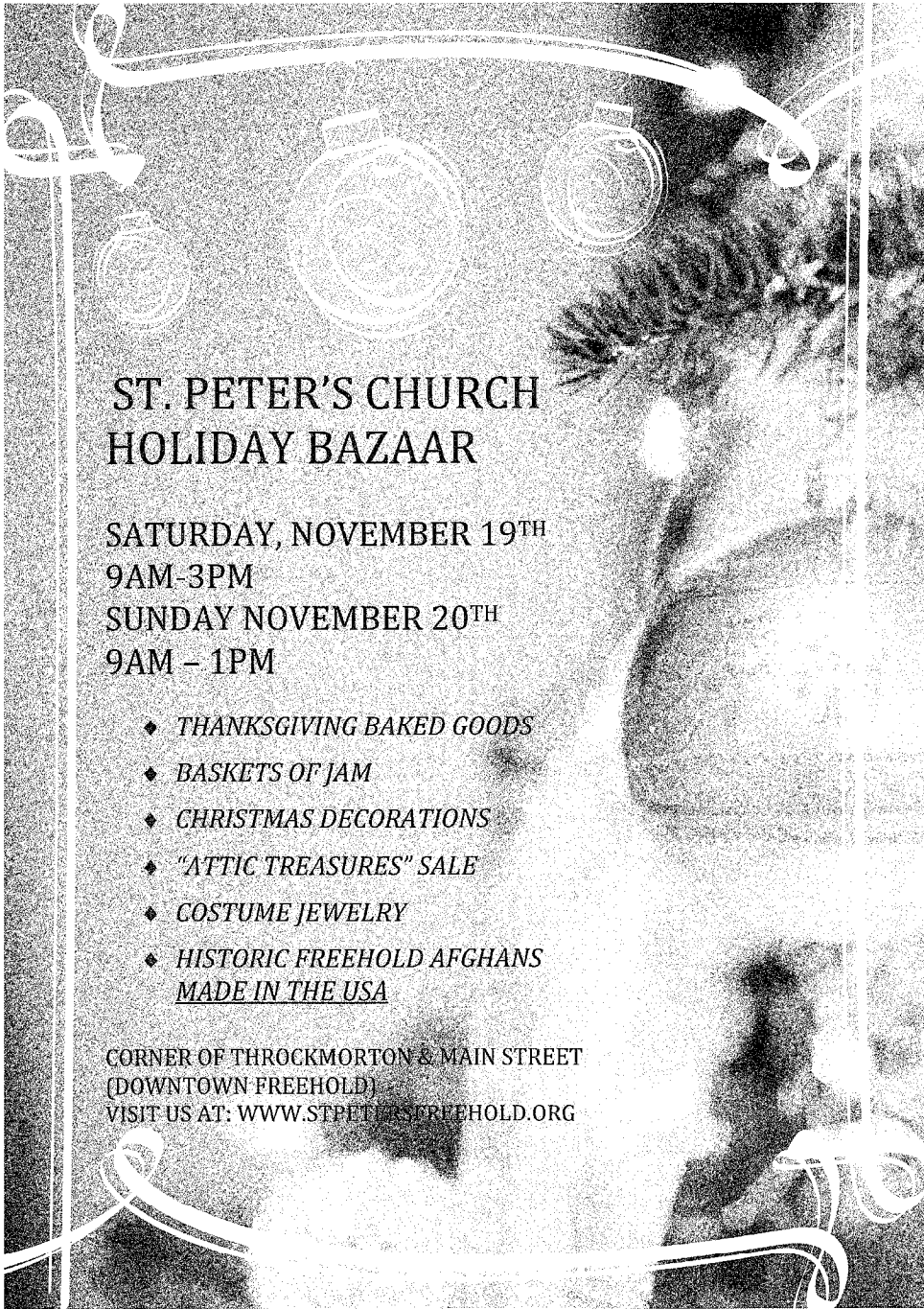
bread - banana, cranberry and pumpkin; cookies - just about any kind you make; pies - pumpkin are popular the week before Thanksgiving; bar cookies such as brownies; and yeast breads.

Women of St. Peter's members, Linda Boyle and Dot Davis, will be selling handmade crafts this year for the first time at our annual bazaar. Dot has many colorful items which are great gifts for children. Among these are fabric crayon bags with coloring books, colored pencil and crayon rolls. And she also has IPOD bags, pillow cases, and angel Christmas ornaments. Linda has made quilted Christmas motif table runners and placements, and aprons as well as hand-knitted scarves and shawls. Add to that the small wallets with key chains, needle cases and sewing kits, pin cushion wristlets and cookbook page weights and you are ready to stuff a great stocking! Come and bring your list to get started on your Christmas gift shopping. If anyone has handmade items they would like to donate for this table please bring them in.

We will need quite a lot of help at about 12:30 on November 13<sup>th</sup> setting up the room, readying it for the bazaar. And, when it is all over, on Sunday November 20<sup>th</sup> at 1pm, many willing bodies to put the room back to rights.

Now we need to send out a plea - if you have any "upscale" Attic Treasures such as Lenox, Spode, crystal, Christmas china ware, or gifts you received that you were going to "re-gift" please send these our way. If you bring them to church on Sunday you can leave them upstairs on one of the tables with a paper saying "Bazaar" and someone will gratefully retrieve them.

The most important thing you can bring to the bazaar is yourself, your family and friends. We look forward to seeing you as we try to put the "FUN" in fundraiser.



ST. PETER'S CHURCH  
HOLIDAY BAZAAR

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 19<sup>TH</sup>  
9AM-3PM

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 20<sup>TH</sup>  
9AM - 1PM

- ◆ *THANKSGIVING BAKED GOODS*
- ◆ *BASKETS OF JAM*
- ◆ *CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS*
- ◆ *"ATTIC TREASURES" SALE*
- ◆ *COSTUME JEWELRY*
- ◆ *HISTORIC FREEHOLD AFGHANS*  
*MADE IN THE USA*

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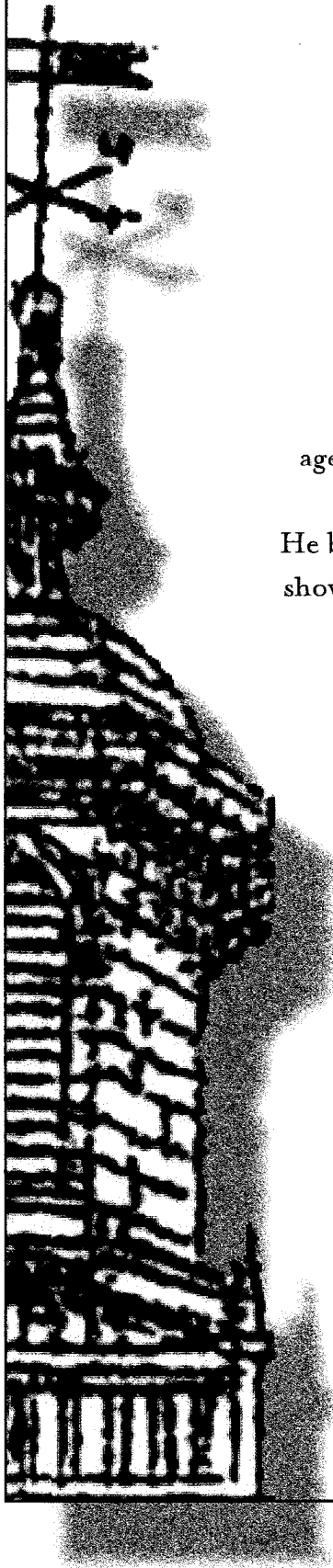
November 19, 2011  
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*The Diocese of New Jersey*

THE RIGHT REVEREND GEORGE EDWARD COUNCELL, D.D.

October 21, 2011

Dear Friends in Christ,

*Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

I write to inform you that, after prayer and consultation with family, friends and advisors, I intend to resign the office of Bishop of New Jersey and retire in the fall of 2013.

Please be assured that no crisis or sudden deterioration in my health has driven me to this decision. By the grace of our God I plan to continue to serve as your Bishop for at least the next two years – that is, until I complete ten years in this ministry and reach the age of sixty-four. Since the process leading to the call and consecration of a new bishop usually takes eighteen to twenty-four months, I hereby call for the election of the Twelfth Bishop of New Jersey. Note that this call is for the election of a diocesan bishop to succeed me immediately upon her or his consecration and not for a coadjutor bishop.

I have informed our Presiding Bishop of these plans and the Standing Committee and I have recently consulted with the Rt. Rev. F. Clayton Matthews, Bishop for Pastoral Development. Guided by our Constitution and Canons and with such help and consultation as the Standing Committee may seek from the Office of Pastoral Development, we are beginning an orderly transition to a new chapter in the history of our Diocese under the care of a new chief shepherd. Information about next steps in the episcopal election process will soon be forthcoming from the Standing Committee.

My heart is filled with gratitude to God and to the Church for calling me to be your Bishop eight years ago. It has been both more challenging and more blessed than I could have ever imagined. I look forward to these next two years with you all as we love and follow Jesus Christ together and continue “Right Onward” in mission for His sake.

*Lord, in your mercy, make New Jersey new. Amen.*

Faithfully yours in Christ,

The Rt. Rev. George E. Councell, D.D.  
Bishop of New Jersey

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