

The Peppercorn

St. Peter's Newsletter

November 2010

Dear Friends in Christ,

“What shall I return to the Lord for all his bounty to me?” the psalmist asks. (Psalm 116:12)

What indeed...In ancient Israel thankfulness was a major motivator for all kinds of temple offerings. People came from all over not just to pray at the temple, but to give away tangible goods in gratitude for all that God had given them. Some of the offerings were simply grain or wine or oil. More costly offerings were sometimes made, though, including birds, lambs, goats, or even a whole bull.

In the New Testament, Paul urges the Corinthians to be generous by reminding them of “the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Corinthians 8:9) He also sums up his instructions on generosity by exclaiming “thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!” (2 Corinthians 9:15) Paul’s point is that God has done so much for us that our generous giving is a natural response.

As we look forward to Thanksgiving Day, it’s important to consider those two examples. They point out the spiritual reality that giving need not be grounded in emotions, which can change so quickly. Giving is a lifestyle, and giving generously is a lifestyle choice. Most lifestyles are outward reflections of inward philosophies, and deeply held internal convictions. Christian giving, generous giving, extravagant giving is inspired by the belief that God is faithful, and God has graciously provided everything we need.

I am always inspired that the first Thanksgiving observance was held in the year after the pilgrims landed and established their new community – after a winter so harsh that nearly half of the original settlers had died of disease and malnutrition. When the leaders of the colony first considered holding a religious observance to mark their first year in the New World, it was suggested first that they hold a day of penitence and mourning. Finally, the idea of a day of Thanksgiving prevailed. Even though they had sacrificed so much and lost so many, they knew held firmly to their belief that God was good, and faithful, and gracious. Thanksgiving was not just a day, it was their philosophy and their lifestyle.

It can be so for us, too. We can adopt disciplines that express the attitude of thanksgiving. One discipline might be the prayer discipline of offering thanks every day for every blessing received. Maybe you are familiar with an old-time Gospel hymn with the lyrics, “count you many blessings, name them one by one.” For most of us, that would be a very long list. Another spiritual discipline that expressed the attitude of thanksgiving is the action giving generously, lavishly, and extravagantly to the work of God. Our time – a precious commodity in this day

and age – enables the work of Christ to be accomplished. Our abilities – the special interests and abilities that each one of us has been given – can reshape and renew so many situations if we but take the risk. And our money – and St. Peter’s has been so generous in so many ways over the past year – directly impacts the quantity and the quality of God’s work done in this place.

The point is this: thankfulness is not about whether we *feel* grateful or not. Thankfulness is an action, a discipline, and an expression of our core beliefs.

“Oh give thanks to the Lord, for He is good.” If you believe that, do something about it.

Peace and Blessings,

Frank+

Women of St. Peter’s

Here comes the Annual Holiday Bazaar

The Annual Holiday Bazaar is coming soon and something new has been added. Friday evening shopping! Yes, we will be open for business Friday evening, November 9th from 6pm to 9pm. Have your Christmas list ready to go whether you come on Friday or during the traditional shopping hours Saturday from 9am to 3pm, Sunday from 9am to 1pm.

We Need Your Help

In order for our bazaar to be a success we need the help of our parish family members. This is especially true for the baked goods tables. Get out your favorite recipe and bake away! We especially need cookies, brownies, quick breads, yeast breads and pies. Since Thanksgiving is the next week, pumpkin pies are always popular. You can bring your home baked goods on Friday evening (and then shop if you wish) or before 9:00 AM on Saturday so the tables can be arranged to best display the efforts of our creative members.

We hope to have the baked goods and jam tables laden with tempting delights for gifting or just

gobbling down! June Vawter has been hard at work creating old favorite jams as well as her prize winning designer ones. From the Women of St. Peter's comes our ever popular cookbook *Therefore Let Us Keep the Feast*, the Historic Freehold afghans (made in the USA), hand painted wooden churches, and porcelain church ornaments. Of course we have the Attic Treasures area where we attempt to bring you quality items at reasonable prices, such as fine china, crystal, Christmas serving ware and decorations. You already know that it is a good spot for kids to Christmas shop for family gifts.

Soldier Boxes for Christmas and Chanukah

You can help bring Christmas Joy to service men and women serving in Afghanistan and Iraq.

In cooperation with Hope Lutheran Church, St. Peter’s will begin collecting Christmas and Chanukah novelties, snacks, and personal hygiene items for military personnel from October 24th through November 20th.

If you have a loved one who will be in Iraq or Afghanistan at Christmas please let Deacon Catherine know their name and the mailing address to which a box of goodies may be sent to them in time for the holidays. You can email the information to deacon@stpetersfreehold.org.



Community Thanksgiving Observance

The Freehold Clergy Association will be presenting its annual celebration of Thanksgiving on Sunday, November 21 at Temple Shaari Emeth on Craig Road in Manalapan (just up the street from Best Buy at the corner of Route 9). The service, which is sponsored by fourteen houses of worship – Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish, and Muslim is a very special opportunity to gather with neighbors and friends to learn about each others' traditions and to offer thanks to God in a spirit of unity, harmony, and peace. Members of St. Peter's Church are invited to attend what will be an inspiring and beautiful even.

Thanksgiving Eucharist

Before you gather around your own table to give thanks and to celebrate, gather around the Lord's table to celebrate and give thanks. Our St. Peter's parish Thanksgiving Eucharist will be held on Thanksgiving morning, Thursday, November 25 at 9:00 a.m. It's the perfect time to take a break and reflect on the true meaning of this day with your brothers and sisters in Christ. Thanksgiving service will be held in the chapel.

Stewardship Presentations

"Glorious Things and Great Plans" is the theme of these presentations that have been prepared by a team of members from St. Peter's Church. Please join your brothers and sisters in Christ to hear more. Four identical presentations will be offered:

Saturday, November 13 at 9:00 a.m. in the Parish Hall

Sunday, November 14 at 10:10 in the Parish Hall

Sunday, November 14 at 4:30 in the Hein Room

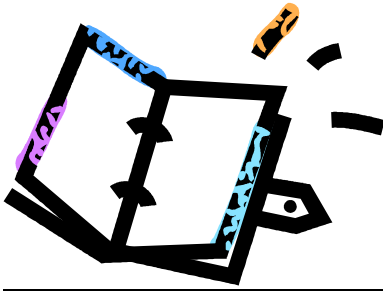
Thursday, November 18 at 7:30 p.m. in the Hein Room

Please call the Robin Stewart, Parish Administrator at the office at 732-431-8383 to sign up.

Honoring our friend Fr. Gideon

Sunday, November 28 will be Father Gideon's final Sunday with us at St. Peter's before he begins his new call at St. Alban's Episcopal Church in New Brunswick. At 10:10 that morning, at coffee hour between the services, a special celebration will be held in his honor. If you would like to contribute towards a cash gift for Father Gideon, you may send a check in any amount made out to St. Peter's Church (memo: Father Gideon) to the Church by mail, by bringing it by the office any weekday between 9AM and 2 PM, or by dropping it in the offering plate Sunday November 7, November 14 or November 21.

If there are any parishioners who can donate gently used furniture for his family to use in their new home, they can contact Deb Turi-Smith at dturismith@optonline.net or Robin at the church office @ office@stpetersfreehold.org. Bedroom furniture would be especially appreciated – especially a full or queen size bed, and bureaus.



Church on Saturday, December 4 at 11:00 a.m. This occasion will be all the more joyous since she will be ordained here at St. Peter's – the first ordination here in over ten years! We have been praying for Lisa for the whole time she has been in seminary, so this is something we have all been anticipating for some time. If you have never been to a service of ordination, you will be blessed by this richly moving and beautiful event.

Save the date

Lisa Hoffman, a life-long member of St. Peter's Church, will be ordained a deacon in the Episcopal

MY JOURNEY SO FAR....

Dear People of God, one of the Jesus' teachings on love without boundaries are summarized in the recently concluded five practices of fruitful congregation initiated in this Church – Passionate worship; Radical hospitality, Extravagant generosity, Risk-taking mission and service; and Intentional faith development. In Matthew 25: 35ff, Jesus declared that, *"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world. For I was hungry, and you fed me, I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home'".* This is true religion, as I believed that Christianity is life. Life lives in the way of Christ, as the early followers of Christ was called Christians first in Antioch because of their life style. Acts 11:26.

I flee from persecution and arrived in this land of my sojourn without knowing any church or people. I was a total stranger but you brought me into your community and made me a friend. Prior to my coming to this land, I was ordained into the ministry of Christ's religion in June 2002 and have been carrying out my ministry to the best of my ability through the grace of God. I'm a man who loves mission and working among the vulnerable and less privilege people in the society. As you've known, I was led to sell my car and most of my household property in order to care for people in the community of my last service in my home country who are mostly orphans and widows. My ministry amongst these vulnerable led to so many threats and persecution to me and my family even at gun point, but the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who knows the thoughts of humankind preserved and saved my life because I haven't finished the work he sent me to do in my life time.

In His infinite mercy and goodness, he led me to Israel which happens to be the beginning of new things and good step in the right direction as my mother, wife, kids, missionary children and myself believed. We believed wholeheartedly it was the manifestations of the plan of God. From Israel to the United States of America, and not just U.S.A but in this Church where I believes the gospel of Jesus Christ is live. My coming to your church here to be a part of you is divinely ordained. You opened your hands widely and accepted me.

You didn't only accept me but take up my concerns. The poor and orphans your generosity has affected positively through the "ELEVEN SEEDS" program will ever remain grateful to God and you throughout the rest of their life.

Today, you've made my entire family both nuclear and missionary part of your family, community, love and kindness. This is living out the gospel of Christ. What am I without you? Where would I have been without you? What would have happened to my missionary kids who depended on me wholeheartedly, without you? What would have happened to my poor mother who lost her husband and three grown up sons in the hands of the wicked villagers, without you? How would I have taking care of all my dependants, without you? These are the gospel we're called to live up to. Jesus declared that, *"the King will say, 'I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!'"* This is the gospel.

I also believed that my coming to the Episcopal Church may be another away that God may use to bridge the two provinces together. I was a stranger, but you brought me to your home and made me a friend. In his hymn, "I come with joy to meet my Lord", The Hymnal 304, Brian Wren says in the second and third stanzas:

**I come with Christians far and near
to find, as all are fed,
the new community of love
in Christ's communion bread.**

**As Christ breaks bread and bids us share,
each proud division ends.
That love that made us makes us one,
and strangers now are friends.**

I come from a far away land, country and continent as a stranger to meet this beautiful and godly community of St. Peter's Church, Freehold, NJ, and now you've made me a friend, and not just me but my entire household.

As I leave this community to answer my new call and cure at the Church of St. Alban's in New Brunswick, NJ in December 1, 2010, I thanked the good Lord who has made this community my foundation and home in this land of my sojourn. There is nothing I can do in this land without communicating it to you as my home. The people in New Brunswick will surely know that Freehold is my Church home. Thank you very much indeed for letting me in and giving hope and happiness once again.

In Christ Service to Humanity,

Fr. Gideon+