



St. Peter's Press

St. Peter's Presbyterian Church - Spencertown, NY
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January 2022

Greetings from my couch – by Sandy Fischer

Happy New Year St. Peter's Family! 2021 has left the building and I, for one, am looking forward to a new year; with the hopes and promises of health and happiness. My dogs have been battling a stomach bug this last week and so sleep has been fleeting. Last night I was excited to get to bed early and FINALLY get that long awaited sleep. But it was New Year's Eve, and I found myself awake at 11:59PM anticipating the clock turning to 12:00AM.



And then I lay there hoping that the Culleys would parade through town as they have done for so many years. THEY DID! And it was a wonderful sight – and the songs were joyful (and so well sung!). And as I hung my head out the bedroom window, I couldn't help but feel wrapped up in celebration and the love of community. It was the perfect way to ring in a new year.

This Sunday (1/2/22) I will be at the pulpit talking about Epiphany, which is this coming Thursday (1/6/22). In my research on these 12 days of Christmas from Christmas Day until the 12th night on January 5th I have discovered so much that I hadn't known or truly understood. Epiphany is traditionally the day that we acknowledge the three magi making their journey to Bethlehem to pay homage to the Christ child. On their way, they meet with King Herod, who wants the wise men to return to him with their findings. Scripture tells us that the wise men are warned to not go back the way they came, and so they return to their homes via a different road. This warning is the focus of what I will be talking about on Sunday.

Once we have seen the Christ Child, born in a manger, we are forever changed. We can't take the same road home again but must find a different path. We must make space for God to speak to us; we must look for and anticipate God's presence in the beautiful world around us. And we are encouraged to offer gifts to God and our church – our gifts of time, fellowship, song, story, money, and compassion for one another.

Let us ring this new year of 2022 in with songs of great joy and hearts open to hear God's call to us.

Blessings,
Sandy



January Worship

Worship will be held in-person (please wear a mask) and on ZOOM. The Zoom link is available in the weekly email.

Sunday, January 2nd
Lay led – Sandy Fischer

Sunday, January 9th
*Rev. Donna Elia Preaching
Communion*

Sunday, January 16th
*Rev. Kathi Jones Preaching
Congregational Meeting following
service*

Sunday, January 23rd
*Rev. Ted Wright Preaching
Missions- local and international
ZOOM ONLY*

Sunday, January 30th
Lay led – Jere Wrightsman

January Lectionary Readings

These Scripture readings are from the three-year Revised Common Lectionary as provided in the Presbyterian Book of Common Worship (Westminster John Knox Press, 2018)

- 1/2/22 - Jeremiah 31:7–14, Psalm 147:12–20, Ephesians 1:3–14, John 1:(1–9) 10–18
- 1/6/22 **Epiphany of the Lord—** Isaiah 60:1–6, Psalm 72:1–7, 10–14, Ephesians 3:1–12, Matthew 2:1–12
- 1/9/22 **Baptism of the Lord—** Isaiah 43:1–7, Psalm 29, Acts 8:14–17, Luke 3:15–17, 21–22
- 1/16/22 Isaiah 62:1–5, Psalm 36:5–10, 1Corinthians 12:1–11, John 2:1–11
- 1/23/22 Nehemiah 8:1–3, 5–6, 8–10, Psalm 19, 1 Corinthians 12:12–31a, Luke 4:14–21
- 1/30/22 Jeremiah 1:4–10, Psalm 71:1–6, 1 Corinthians 13:1–13, Luke 4:21–30





ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Sunday, January 16th, 11am

Following worship in-person OR on Zoom

This has surely been an usual year but we've also been able to continue our ministry together in some amazing ways! God has shown us new ways to worship, support and serve one another and the larger community! Join us for our annual congregation as we celebrate with grateful hearts the ways in which God has sustained our community of faith and how God is calling us to serve in 2022.

Together as a community of faith we will:

- ❖ Receive the 2022 church budget
- ❖ Hear from our ministry teams and discern where God is calling us
- ❖ Nominate church officers to serve on our Board of Trustees and Clara Gott Fund



MINISTRY TEAM ANNUAL REPORTS

Due January 11th



Ministry teams are asked to write a brief overview of the year and where you feel God is calling us in the coming year. Our annual report will be shared at the congregational meeting on January 16th.

Please email Sandy your report/reflection by **January 11th**,
saintpeters.spencertown@gmail.com or
sfischer68@live.com

Church Family Directory 2022

It's time to update the church family directory. If any of your contact information has changed please let the church office know
saintpeters.spencertown@gmail.com
or 518-392-3386. Thank you!

St. Peter's Finance Update for December 2021

We usually report on the finances of the church with specifics and with a month lag. For instance, November's report is based on October's bank statement and workbook. Since this newsletter is due later in the month and we are at the end of the year, we feel we can confidently give a positive general year-end report. (There will be a more comprehensive report as well as a presentation of the new budget at the January annual meeting). We (collectively, all of us) did it. We ended the year not having to borrow money and having a positive balance in the checkbook. This was something we had some doubts about when taking over the treasurer position and a deficit budget. We could not have predicted what the year would be like, including all the highs and lows but in the end, prayers were answered, and we did not have to dip into our reserves or borrow from the Clara Gott Fund. There were times however, that it crossed our mind that we would have to take some drastic action but then there would be a successful fundraiser or an unexpected donation or just a general uptick in contributions. Despite our differences, loss of staff, loss of some members and not least of all, navigating a pandemic, we continued to adapt and evolve. We hope and pray that we can continue this momentum into the next year as we have a great deal of work to do while healing , finding new leadership and continued growth. Thank you to all who contributed to our community of faith through pledges, donations of time (all our volunteers who make services possible) and money as well as those who worshipped with us on zoom, in person when available and those at home whom we continue to hold in our thoughts and prayers despite not being able to worship with us in person. Happy New Year!

Wendy and Jef

NEWS FLASH

We are so excited to welcome Mary Langley, retired Pastor, to help us during this time of transition. Mary will be taking over the monthly newsletters beginning with the February edition. Please email submissions to mary@langleycrations.com or drop off at the church and Sandy will scan and send to her.

A note from Marion Ulmer

On the Sunday before Christmas, I took the opportunity to say a few words connecting bird populations with St. Peter's. It was just off the top of my head, so I thought I might do better to put it in print.

For many years, I have taken part in the Christmas Bird Count along with people all over the US and beyond. Willard had filled the feeders the night before, put out suet, and scattered seed on the ground. Even so, hardly any birds showed up. Species numbers are dropping noticeably as I can attest to, as I think back over 80 years of birding. There are lots of reasons - loss of habitat, the over-use of insecticides, roadkill, and pollution. When a species population drops below a critical mass, that species is threatened with extinction.

Now think about St. Peter's. Some Sundays, I find only a few people in church, and that's counting those in the choir and those on Zoom. Where have they gone? Where are the Sunday School children? I feel that we may be approaching a critical mass. Can we blame it entirely on Covid? I think not. Other factors have also come into play - the faithful elderly dying, controversy, or too many working wives with family time and energy hard to find.

Like bird populations, it takes a critical mass of people to support a church, and by support I don't just mean the money to take care of the phone, the heat, and the electricity. What would our building look like without The Friends of St. Peter's? We have had some recent successful events - the Election Day take-out dinner & the Christmas Bazaar come to mind.

At present St. Peter's is blessed with a core of faithful people, especially those on Council, the Deacons, and the Trustees. They see to the jobs that must be done and the meetings that must be attended. Without the guidance and support of a pastor or secretary, they are seeing to the newsletter, the bulletin, the budget, the bill paying, the cleaning, and the phoning or visiting the sick or the elderly.

Does the word burn-out come to mind? It certainly does for me. For some positions we find ourselves recycling the same people with only a year off in between. So, what are we to do? I think personal contact could really help - just a word in passing, a note card, an e-mail greeting.

When the 10 o'clock church hour has been usurped by something else, it takes a lot of effort to change it back. We need more people in church or on Zoom - that critical mass idea again. Let's not let St. Peter's go the way of the ill-fated Passenger Pigeon.

Marion Ulmer

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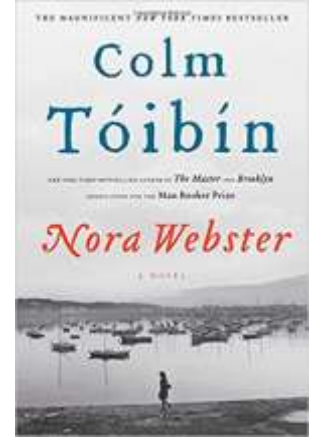
Women Unabridged Book Group

We welcome any woman in the church and friends. We usually meet the **third** Monday of the month. We are currently meeting via Zoom. For questions or information on how to join the Zoom call, please contact Teresa Barenfeld at (518)755-3273 or at tbarenfeld@gmail.com

The book pick for January is *Nora Webster* by Colm Toibin and is Irene Young's pick. There are many copies available through the library system, including book on CD and Audiobook.

Nora Webster by Colm Toibin- (Review from Amazon. com)

Set in Wexford, Ireland, Colm Tóibín's magnificent seventh novel introduces the formidable, memorable, and deeply moving Nora Webster. Widowed at forty, with four children and not enough money, Nora has lost the love of her life, Maurice, the man who rescued her from the stifling world to which she was born. And now she fears she may be sucked back into it. Wounded, selfish, strong-willed, clinging to secrecy in a tiny community where everyone knows your business, Nora is drowning in her own sorrow and blind to the suffering of her young sons, who have lost their father. Yet she has moments of stunning insight and empathy, and when she begins to sing again, after decades, she finds solace, engagement, a haven—herself.



Nora Webster “may actually be a perfect work of fiction” (*Los Angeles Times*), by a “beautiful and daring” writer (*The New York Times Book Review*) at the zenith of his career, able to “sneak up on readers and capture their imaginations” (*USA TODAY*). “Miraculous...Tóibín portrays Nora with tremendous sympathy and understanding” (Ron Charles, *The Washington Post*).

CLARA GOTT FUND APPLICATION DEADLINES

The Clara Gott Fund application deadlines are: Mar. 15th, June 15th, Sept. 15th, and Dec. 15th. Applications for assistance from the Fund are always available on the church bulletin board in the narthex or on our website at www.saintpeterspc.org. Church members are urged to call this to the attention of those who might want to apply. Our next application deadline is March 15th.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Watch anytime on YouTube ~ click below



January Birthdays

IT'S CELEBRATION TIME!

Daphne Coe	1/2
Bonnie Mesick	1/5
Charlotte Coalter	1/8
Arlene Newton	1/15
Cheryl Roberts	1/15
Anne Mae Cashen	1/16
William Culley	1/16
Rev Lynn Horan	1/16
Marion Goodrich	1/17
Patricia Meess	1/18
Kevin Lippert	1/20
Frances Culley	1/23
Ian Wing	1/26
Terry Buck	1/28
Isabella Waldorf	1/28



A Winter's Walk

by Dorothy L. Putz
submitted by Mary Wambach

Snow was quietly, gently falling down
As I walked on the outskirts of a small village town
Bright glowing lights receded from view
But tho' disappearing left behind a rainbow hue
That gleamed and danced as it lingered there
On fluffy white flakes quickly flying thru the air.
Trees and hedges were soon bending low
Under their burden of frosty glittering snow
Rooftops sparkled, like diamonds bright
Or thousands of stars ~ on a wintery night
A Church bell was softly ringing near by
And I thought of the beauty god sends from the sky.

Did we forget your birthday?

If you would like to be added to our birthday list, please contact one of our deacons to be added to the birthday list.



Christmas Poinsettias Memorial

In loving memory of:

Matt Stalker.....from Doris Jean and family

Our parents and granddaughter Valeska Kozak..... from Bill and Pat Mees

Sandy Dyslin.....from Sandra Fischer and family

Ann Pearce..... from David Pearce

Our parents..... from Willard and Marion Ulmer

My father, Albert Hill..... from Nancy Ordman

Phillip Patterson.....from Justin Lange

Ray and Mary Lange & Fred and Margaret Lewis... from John and Nona Lange

Walter and Marjorie Schoonover... from Ellen Schoonover

Rhoda Southall and Elaine Mansall....from Carole and Tom Reamer

My friend Helen Rivenburg...from Barbara Smith

Sandra Dyslin, Bob & Caole Dyslin, Sally & Dick Goodman, Robert & Beverly McCanna, and Addie and Stosh Ostrowski....from the Joel Dyslin family

In Memory of Loved ones:

from Jean Brower

from Larry Massimo

from Mitzi Lobdell