



# *St. Peter's Press*

**St. Peter's Presbyterian Church - Spencertown, NY**  
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## ***Greetings from my couch – by Sandy Fischer***

Dear St. Peter's Community,

The last two months have certainly been a challenge as we all navigate the leaving of both Pastor Lynn Horan and administrative assistant Shelly Robinson. This isn't how any of us expected the year to end, and I know I have had a difficult time wrapping my head around what IS, what needs to be done, and how to move forward. In those early days of Lynn's leaving, I was filled with emotions of quitting; of giving up on what I felt was a failing community. When I talked to my father about it, he said to me (and I paraphrase now) "Sandra, Dyslins do NOT quit. When times get tough, we pull up our bootstraps and we work harder. This is the time when we are needed most and have the most and hardest work to do. And I will not let you quit now." Sigh.... he was so right. And over the last two months I have been astounded by all the pulled-up bootstraps – the coming together and the digging in. Our church community is alive, and we are working collaboratively towards healing and growth. We have managed to accomplish quite a bit in this short time –renewing bruised relationships, successful fundraising efforts, and inspiring lay-led sermons. As Elder David Pearce said: we have been here for over 250 years, and we will be here for another 100 years. I truly believe this now, more than ever. And in this time of Advent – in facing the increasing darkness until we reach that light of birth – St. Peter's, too, is in this ebb and flow. We've faced the darkness. And now we are moving into the light of new birth. God bless all of you in this special faith community. You restore my soul and foster my spiritual growth.



# December Worship

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

The theme for the lay-led sermons will be reflections on the Advent Season. We would love to have you share your reflections with us – either live during a Sunday service or one sent to us, and we will gladly read it aloud. Please contact Sandy Fischer at [sfischer68@live.com](mailto:sfischer68@live.com) if you would like to contribute.

**1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent, November 28<sup>th</sup>**  
Nancy Ordman

**2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent, December 5<sup>th</sup>**  
Communion -Rev. Kathi Jones

**3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent, December 12<sup>th</sup>**  
Kathy Geddie

**4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent, December 19<sup>th</sup>**  
Sunday School Pageant

**Christmas Eve, December 24<sup>th</sup>**  
Lessons and Carols  
5pm

**Sunday, December 26<sup>th</sup>**  
Prerecorded service from the Synod of the Northeast with choirs and musicians from across the Synod. ZOOM only



## December 2021 Revised Common Lectionary for Sundays and Festivals

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)

**12/5/21 Second Sunday of Advent**  
Malachi 3:1–4 Luke 1:68–79 Philippians 1:3–11  
Luke 3:1–6

**12/12/21 Third Sunday of Advent**  
Zephaniah 3:14–20 Isaiah 12:2–6 Philippians 4:4–7  
Luke 3:7–18

**12/19/21 Fourth Sunday of Advent**  
Micah 5:2–5a Luke 1:46–55 or Psalm 80:1–7  
Hebrews 10:5–10 Luke 1:39–45 (46–55)

**12/24/21 Nativity of the Lord / Christmas-Christmas Eve**  
Isaiah 9:2–7 Psalm 96:1–13 Titus 2:11–14 Luke 2:1–14 (15–20)

**12/25/21 Nativity of the Lord / Christmas**  
*Christmas Dawn*  
Isaiah 62:6–12 Psalm 97:1–12 Titus 3:4–7  
Luke 2:(1–7) 8–20  
*Christmas Day*  
Isaiah 52:7–10 Psalm 98:1–9 Hebrews 1:1–4 (5–12)  
John 1:1–14

**12/26/21 First Sunday of Christmas**  
1 Samuel 2:18–20, 26 Psalm 148 Colossians 3:12–17  
Luke 2:41–52





# 2021 Stewardship Season



## “A Time of Great Consideration”

~ Luke 12:27 ~

*Adapted from Ian Wing’s article from the November 2020 newsletter that still rings true today. And in paraphrasing:*

During the past two months our church family has experienced **great change, great uncertainty, and great affirmation** in God’s continued blessing and guidance over our community of faith! Thanks to your faithful leadership and support, we have been able to continue regular worship, maintain prayerful communication with each other, complete several successful fundraising efforts and bolster our local outreach mission of living a life of faith fully in our communities at large. As we continue the 2021 Stewardship Season, we lift up Jesus’ invitation to “Consider the lilies” found in the Gospel of Luke. We often think of this passage as a call to relax and not worry, but the word “consider” in this context is extremely pro-active, meaning to **fully observe** or **completely attend to**. As we continue to navigate through this Covid-19 pandemic, we are rebuilding our relationships with each other, practicing health and safety considerations to keep our vulnerable well, and reestablishing a new normal practice of worshipping and celebrating together. As we draw **to fully observe** together during this Stewardship Season, we have the opportunity to also consider our community of faith and acknowledge the great joy of calling St. Peter’s our church home, **and to completely attend** to each other’s needs and the needs of the larger community. Join us as we celebrate the gift of God’s grace and our faithful commitment to our ministry together at St. Peter’s!

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Pledges may be mailed to the church at PO Box 24 Spencertown, NY 12165 or offered in person during worship.

*We have been including a “minute for stewardship” during each of our Sunday sermons throughout November and will continue during this month of December.*

### **A note from Co-Treasurer Wendy Diskin:**

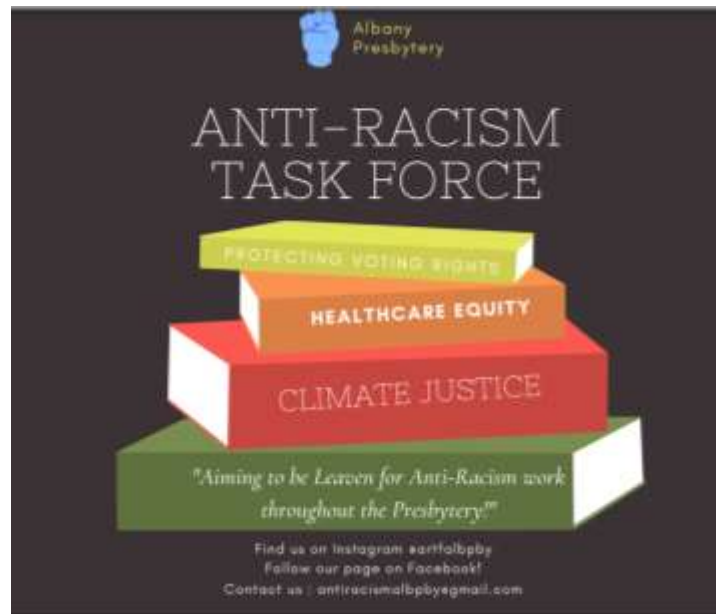
The past year has brought many challenges and changes not only to our world, and our country, but also to our small community of faith here at St. Peter’s. We started 2021 with a \$30,000 deficit budget, but thanks to a PPP loan and a generous bequeath coupled with fundraisers and donations, we have been able to survive financially ... but just barely.

We are at a new crossroads as Council will need to approve another budget in December. This time we will not be able to rely on the PPP program and donations are unknown. Last year pledges totaled \$52,000 (25 pledges), and the previous year was \$70,000 (39 pledges). To date we have 19 pledges totaling \$44,820. We need to increase this amount in some way to maintain what we have.

If you have not pledged yet or let the church know of your intentions to donate on a regular basis, please do so soon. We need this information as it will drive our ability to plan. Thank you to all who support our church in various ways. We are grateful for all you do and give to our church.

In Christ, Wendy Diskin

## The Anti-Racist Task Force – Mary Anne Davis



Late last year after the BLM banner kerfuffle, Rev. Lynn suggested I join the Anti-Racist Task Force of the Albany Presbytery. I said yes and was asked to chair the group by Judy Hartley and Rev. Kathryn Beilke. Judy is the current moderator of the Albany Presbytery, our mother organization which governs over 60 churches in the Capitol District. Rev. Kathryn Beilke is the minister of 1<sup>st</sup> Presbyterian Church of Hudson, currently the only installed Presbyterian minister in Columbia County. Rev. Molly Dowell Baum, Rev. Donna Elia, Peris Tushabe, Linda O'Malley, and our own Teresa Barendsfeld are all active members of the task force as well as myself. Molly helps co-chair the group with me.

The ARTF has been meeting twice a month via Zoom since early this year, discussing ways that we as a denomination might effectively help to dismantle structural racism. We discerned the three major areas we can focus on as voting rights, medical equity, including access to vaccinations and climate justice. Structural racism is not going away by edict or by praying, although praying is clearly a good practice! But, in our own small way, our bi-monthly conversations help us orient toward a more considered approach to helping in the fight for equality.

One of our initiatives is a survey we have been collecting data from ministers, clerks of councils and congregants. I have attached the survey here and urge you to take it. It is fast and easy and will help us become more self-aware as we move forward. <https://forms.gle/brrD1uyY7FELRnr26>

Last month we shared a 30 minute presentation with the entire Albany Presbytery at the last Presbytery meeting of 2021. The task force has been an enlivening and vital part of my faith journey. I hope to share more details and meditations in the coming months.

# IT'S CELEBRATION TIME!

*Since we did not have a newsletter for November, we very much wanted to recognize and celebrate our November birthdays too!*

## *November Birthdays*

- Mary Wambach 11/1
- Evan Young 11/1
- Nona Lange 11/6
- Kathy Geddie 11/6
- Doris Jean Stalker 11/7 A
- Aleric Culley 11/11
- Denise Davis 11/15
- Sarah Katan 11/15
- Arlene Lareau 11/21
- Sharon Wing 11/30



## *December Birthdays*

- Hester-Luna Culley 12/2
- Emma Jensen 12/10
- Richard Light 12/10
- Shirley Newsome 12/12
- Emma Tillotson 12/20
- Lucy Tillotson 12/20
- Isla Coalter 12/22



Did we forget your birthday? If you would like to be added to our birthday list, please contact one of the Deacons to be added to the list.

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***Saturday, December 18<sup>th</sup>***  
*Outside Community Sing 3:30 pm Spencertown Green*

## **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](mailto:tbarenfeld@gmail.com)

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## **CLARA GOTT FUNDAPPLICATION DEADLINES**

The Clara Gott Fund application deadlines are: Mar. 15<sup>th</sup>, June 15<sup>th</sup>, Sept. 15<sup>th</sup>, and Dec. 15<sup>th</sup>. Applications for assistance from the Fund are available at all times on the church bulletin board in the narthex or on our website at [saintpeterspc.org](http://saintpeterspc.org). Church members are urged to call this to the attention of those who might want to apply. Our next application deadline is December 15<sup>th</sup>.





## What Are Chrismons?

(Adapted from Dec 2017 newsletter; author Wendy Diskin)

Each year we have celebrated the Christmas season with a tree beautifully decorated with the white and gold Chrismons so lovingly made by women of our church community. Chrismons are a combination of the words *Christ* and *monograms* and are designed to represent Christian symbols. They were first

developed by Frances Spencer and the women of the Ascension Lutheran Church in Danville, VA, in the 1950s to create appropriate decorations for the church Christmas tree. Spencer fashioned centuries-old symbols into white and gold tree decorations representing majesty and purity.

This tradition was introduced to our church community nearly 40 years ago by Helen Ames, wife of our former Pastor George Ames. Some of those original ornaments still adorn our tree – made with Styrofoam (recycling), pearls, and gold beading. Over the years they have been replaced by many of what you see today, and smaller versions (and kits to make) have been sold at our Christmas Bazaars.

As you gaze at the ornaments that adorn our tree, offer a prayer of thanksgiving to the women who so lovingly created them. Marion Ulmer found the following primer of the symbols and their meanings (see next page).

### **St. Peter's Transition Team**

Deacons: Kathy Geddie, Joel Dyslin, Jennifer Thompson, Mary Anne Davis

Council: Nancy Ordman – Clerk, Teresa Barenfeld, Barbara Conkling, Wendy Diskin, Sandy Fischer, Larry Massimo, David Pearce, Jeff Kiplinger

Trustees: Kurt Barenfeld, Randy Ezinga

Co-Treasurers: Wendy Diskin, Jeff Kiplinger

Administrative Team: Wendy Diskin, David Pearce, Jere Wrightsman

## THE SYMBOLISM OF OUR TREE

Our tree is decorated with "CHRISMONS." A Chrismon is a MONogram of CHRist. They are made in white and gold symbolizing the purity and perfection, the majesty and glory of the Son of God. By using the following interpretations you will be able to "read" the message of our tree as it proclaims the Saviour and we hope you will be blessed with the true meaning of Christmas.

### Crosses



The Latin cross, the most widely used form of the cross.



The "Tau," or "T" cross. An ancient Judean cross.



The Greek cross which has four equal extensions.



The Celtic cross which includes the circle of eternity.



The Jerusalem or Crusader's cross made up of four Tau crosses.

### Greek Letters

X

"Chi" the first letter in the word CHRist.

XP

"ChiRho" the first two letters in the word CHRist, written as a monogram they became



I

"Iota" the first letter in the word Jesus combined with X becomes



X

combined with the cross becomes



IHC or IHS

"Iota Eta Sigma" the first three letters of Jesus (the "sigma" can be written as either "C" or "S")

A and



"Alpha and Omega" the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. God being the beginning and the end.

### Other Symbols

Stars have many meanings, the primary one being the "Star of Bethlehem." The sun stands for the greatness and power of the giver of life.



Eternity. The timelessness and singularity of God.



The Trinity.

Crown

The majesty and rule of God, the King of Kings.



Signifies Hope. A cross is formed in the structure of an anchor.

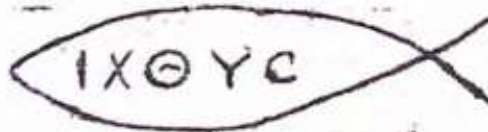
The Dove is a symbol of the Holy Spirit.

The Butterfly suggests Resurrection.

The Rose is a prophetic symbol of the Nativity.

The Fish is one of the most ancient symbols of Jesus.

The Greek word for "Fish" is IXΘYC (pronounced "ichthys") makes the acrostic on the first letters of the words "Jesus, Christ, God's, Son, Saviour."

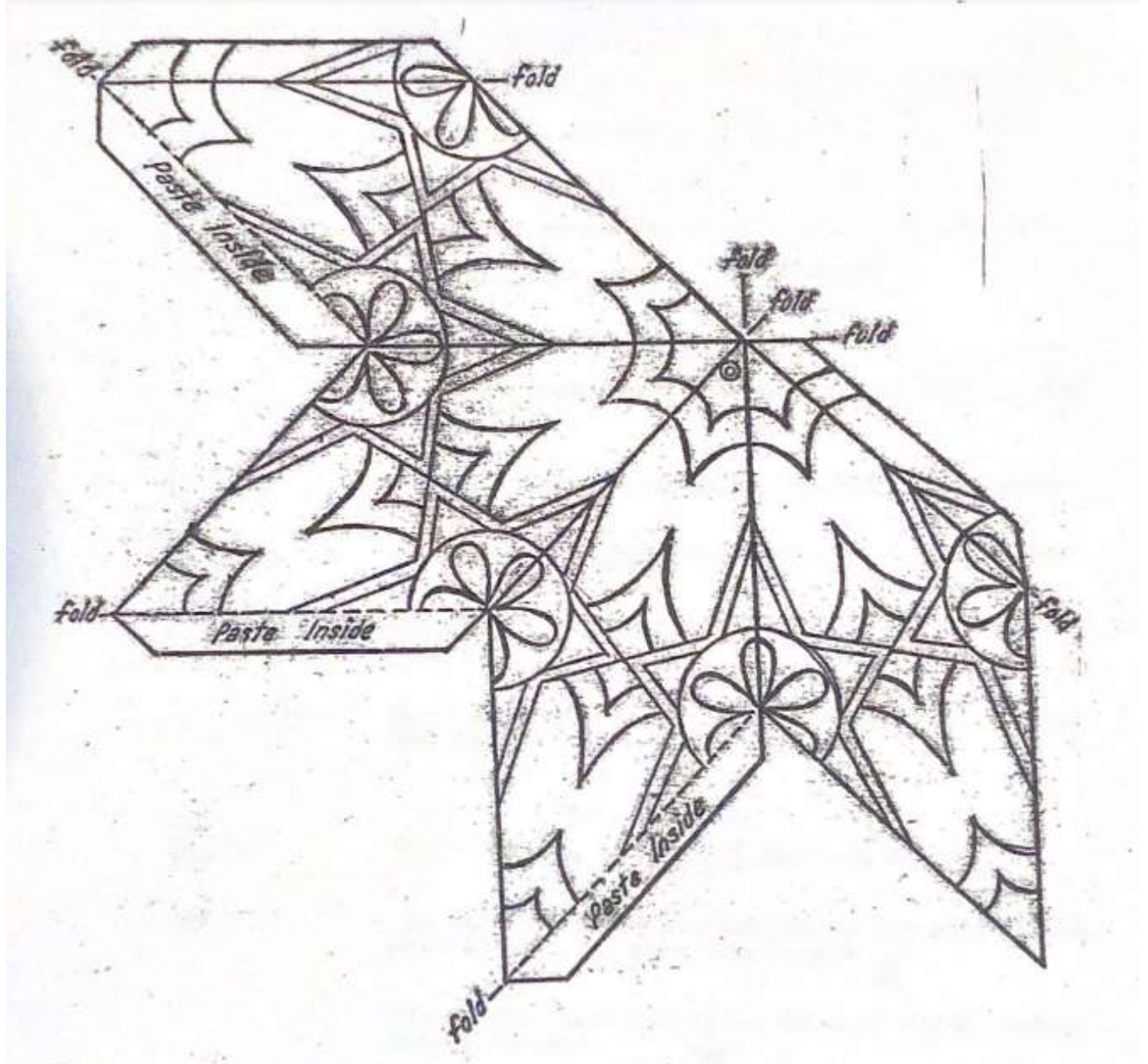


MAY THESE SYMBOLS CONTINUALLY REMIND YOU OF GOD'S GREATEST GIFT TO US ALL,

JESUS CHRIST



From Marion Ulmer – a Christmas Ornament Craft 😊



Color and cut out the ornament. Paste it together and use a piece of pretty ribbon or colored string to hang it on your Christmas tree.



## Arts & Faith Advent Series

Virtual Event: 4 Wednesday evenings, Dec. 1, 8, 15 and 22 at 7pm, on Zoom.

Prepare for Christmas and deepen your experience of the Advent season this year with Arts & Faith: Advent. Each Wednesday evening we'll watch a video commentary produced by Loyola Press about a work of art inspired by the Sunday Scriptures. We'll use these videos to take a new look at this season of hope and preparation through the lens of sacred art.

Each video features the commentary of Daniella Zsupan-Jerome, assistant professor of liturgy, catechesis, and evangelization at Loyola University New Orleans. She holds a bachelor's degree in theology from the University of Notre Dame, a master's degree in liturgy from St. John's University in Collegeville, a master's degree in religion and the arts from Yale Divinity School, and a Ph.D. in theology and education from Boston College. Her unique background in faith and art brings to life a new way of celebrating Advent and understanding the season on a more personal level.

This series is sponsored by the Creating Space Collective, offered by the Canaan Congregational Church to cultivate an openness to the sacred, and encourage people to communicate with one another through the medium of artistic expression.

All are welcome. Registration is required. To register, please visit



<https://www.creatingspacecollective.org>. After you register, the Zoom link will be sent to you a few days before the first session.



Wassily Kandinsky, The Last Judgment

# Holiday Raffle Celebrates St. Peter's Church in Spencertown 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Weather vane Inspires Unique Sun and Moon Pendants  
14K gold with diamond embellishments  
Designed by Rita Van Alstyne



Tickets are \$25 - 100 to be sold  
Available at RH Van Alstyne Jewelry Store  
Main Street, Chatham  
Or send your check to:  
Friends of St. Peter's Church, PO Box 278,  
Spencertown, NY 12165

Or visit: [Friendsofsaintpeters.org](http://Friendsofsaintpeters.org)

Drawing Saturday, December 4  
One winner receives the sun pendant.  
One winner receives the moon pendant.





# CANDLELIT CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

ST. PETER'S CHURCH  
5219 CO RD 7  
SPENCERTOWN

SATURDAY DECEMBER 4  
4-7PM

CHILI & CORNBREAD TO GO  
JEWELRY SALE  
COOKIE WALK  
DAVISTUDIO SECONDS SALE  
MARKETPLACE & RAFFLE

FOR THE BENEFIT OF  
ST PETER'S CHURCH

