

KEYNOTES

June 2015

The Quarterly Newsletter of St. Peter's Church, Lithgow

Growing Up at St Peter's

"All trees fall, but life doesn't end, it only changes. The fallen tree keeps giving, and in all that grows around it, rises once more." So says Douglas Wood in his series of meditations collected in his book *The Things Trees Know*. It may seem odd to start this article about children and families with a reference to death. But, then again, it is a reference to resurrection and the season of spring. And it is also a song in praise of history and tradition. From its very beginnings, St. Peter's has been steeped in the tradition of providing mutual support and creative engagement in our little corner of Eastern Dutchess County. The Right Reverend Philander Chase, our founding vicar, was successful in planting St. Peter's only to the degree that his first wardens and parishioners were willing to support and share generously in parish life, to mark and honor the gifts given of each generation. The same is true today: Our growth and action can only continue if we carry on this essential quality of our common life. When our older children help to teach our younger children to carry the cross and serve at the altar as acolytes, or help to tell a



Jake Kuit helps the children pour the potting soil for the Scripture Gardens.

Bible story in Sunday School, or when on Memorial Sunday our church historian David Greenwood tells the stories of our fallen heroes bur-

ied in the cemetery, we are incarnating our common life. Our most recent intergenerational project of the "Scripture Gardens" symbolizes this well.

The architecturally beautiful planters that stand at the entrance to the parish hall were given to St. Peter's by former senior warden, the late John Whitworth. In late April, the children planted flora common to the



The finished product

Holy Land. This was a wonderful suggestion from Bindy Kaye, who served as our botanical consultant and who selected and contributed the plants for the project. Through this experience our families enacted a care for God's creation, with the seen and unseen saints of St Peter's. And this is who we are in essence: a people who gather together to share in our love of God and neighbor. We gather to give of ourselves and appreciate what is offered in turn. We gather to remember and celebrate those who have come before us, to appreciate that rich, foundational soil of faith, and to grow and grow up together, no matter how young or old, as a family of God.

Cam Hardy & Marie Scagnelli

Blessing of the Fields



On Saturday, May 20, Rev. Matthew Calkins of Grace Church led a group of clergy on a journey to renew an ancient service of the church called *Blessing of the Fields*. Here Rev. Albert Ogle blesses the Millbrook Vineyard.

From the Vicar's Desk



A Pentecost of Discovery

Dear Friends of God

The Parish Survey contains much valuable information about where we want to spend our time and resources at St. Peter's this coming year. I recommend reading the report (pages 10-11). I hope you will begin

noticing some of the ideas and recommendations we received from you.

As the early church began organizing itself without Jesus physically around, so we see the value of good organization and utilization of gifts God gives to each one of us for the common good. Paul's image of the congregation as a *body* can be helpful for us at St Peter's to discern where our passions, talents and experience can be best utilized. The long season of Pentecost (almost 30 weeks!) invites us to consider the gifts each of us brings to the altar and how important they are. As an intergenerational community, our celebrations, events and outreach foci will benefit from this process as we consider gifts and priorities this coming year.

Outreach Ministries

The Parish Survey underscored the need for Outreach to be locally centered. Many of our Outreach Committee, under the very able leadership of **John Allen and Catherine Howard**, will be creating a monthly focus on projects we already support and concentrating on how different generations of St. Peter's members can share in these life-giving projects. A new woven basket, first used at the Memorial Day Service, will symbolically offer our talents and treasure each month at the St. Peter's Altar. Over the year, it will contain food, knitted gifts for the Mission to Seamen, clothing, and checks to support our favorite ministries. Together with the bread and wine made holy, we are invited to bring the same transformed holiness to the world around us. Our contribution to this basket, month by month, is the tangible expression of our faith in action.

Last month (May) Jim Florack helped us focus on **Episcopal Charities** and June will be all about **Rural and Migrant Ministries** with **Rev. Richard Witt** returning to share his latest news on June 7th. As *Indaba Partners** with St Peter's and Trinity Church, Wall Street, we have entered into a sacred conversation with each other this year to understand

what we share in common in ministry in the Diocese of New York. Many of you have been quietly helping to build Rural and Migrant Ministries over the past 20 years into a million dollar ministry and their work is truly inspirational. So stay tuned in June.

What is going on?

Improving Communication

Our third focus in the coming months is to build an exceptional Communications Committee and to share more about what we are doing for families and others at St Peter's. Cam Hardy's excellent family monthly email and description of the Christian Education programs for our children and youth can all be seen on the updated website. Thanks to Lillian Corbin and Korcky Podmaniczky for the recent improvements. We want to give as much notice as possible so our members can plan ahead for special events like the Blessing of the Animals (Oct. 4th) or new ways to support local ministries. You can read about our upcoming **Distinguished Speakers Series** on the website with The Dean of Washington National Cathedral, **Gary Hall**, preaching at my installation as Vicar on June 6th. **Susan and Max Guinn** will be coming to talk about their amazing ministry to schools and environmental issues on September 10th-13th. **Dr. Brigitte Kahl** (Union Theological Seminary) will be speaking in October 16-18th about the Theology of Food and a potential pilgrimage to the historic sites of St. Paul in Turkey in 2016!

Pentecost is an invitation to hear about the wonderful acts of God "*each in our own language*" (Acts 2:8). St Peter's delights in the diversity of ways we hear and experience God in our world. For some of us, it is through intellectual sermons and discussions while others experience God through a ministry to the marginalized, to children and families. For others, it is through a passion for music, the arts and education or stewardship of our beautiful countryside. The summer offers us all a period of renewal and insight into how God is blessing us and how we share it with one another.

Blessings

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Albert', written over a light-colored background.

Albert

**Indaba* is a Swahili word meaning "my well-being is connected to your wellbeing" and has been used in the Diocese to connect different parishes and organizations to understand each other's contexts. We spend three weekends together and St Peter's will be hosting November 7th.



Lillian Corbin

Acolytes Jack Borsch & Augie Larson, April 26, 2015



Barbara Pierce

Lois Mander serves a sumptuous Easter feast. She repeated this feat at the Memorial Day service.

Please Note:

On Saturday, June 6, at 3:00 pm, The Rev. Canon Albert Joy Ogle will be installed as the new Vicar of St. Peter's Church, Lithgow. Bishop Allen Shin will lead the service and Very Rev. Gary Hall will preach; a reception will follow on the church grounds.

All are invited. Please rsvp to stpeterschurch@optonline.net.

St. Peter's Wish List

In an effort to save the church some cash, we thought it would be a good idea to put out a "wish list" of items that are needed at the church.

- Fire-proof filing cabinet
- Apple computer (lap-top preferred, but we'll accept anything Apple)
- Printer (A low-end, inkjet printer would be perfect.)

And, while we're at it, we'd love to find someone who would be willing to take over the administration of our video/streaming system.

This would entail uploading and trimming the videos for the 9:30 Sunday services and special services

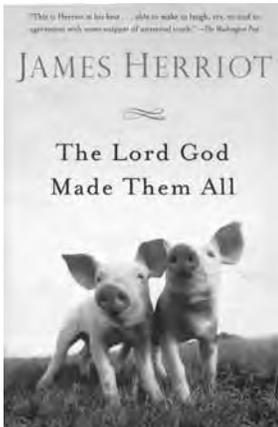
The system will eventually be automated but, until then, the administrator needs to start and stop the recordings. This can be done from anywhere, on any device. (It is presently being controlled on an iPhone.)

If you are able to fulfill any of these wishes, please contact stpeterschurch@optonline.net.

Many thanks.

From the Editors' Desk

Perhaps neither of these books is a perfect fit for the parish library, but in this reader's opinion, each is essential for the celebration of spring and the joy of having something *Really Good To Read*. So, in celebration of the season, here, first, is James Herriot's fourth book in his classic collection of animal stories (with many a nod to their human brethren)—*The Lord God Made Them All* (from St. Martin's Press).



After serving in the RAF in World War II, Herriot happily returned home to Yorkshire, his family, and his multitude of four-legged patients.

You'll smile when you read about the always-tipsy guy who constantly worries about Myrtle, his beagle, creating many false alarms for his loyal veterinarian, always late at night....

Smile again, when reading about the doc's young son, who accompanies him on his rounds, and when operating on a cow, the doc recites poetry to the delight of his assistant. He goes through many a snowstorm to bring medicine to an ailing animal, acts as vet on a storm-tossed trip to Russia with a cargo-load of sheep, and mixes anecdote with philosophy in a book that will charm all readers. Treat yourself!

And here's a big one—a book to keep on your “reading table” and dip into whenever you feel a longing for a good old American novel or poet—a writer who has stood the test of time. Here's Harold Bloom's 500-plus-page forty-somethingth book, *The Daemon Knows—Literary Greatness and the American Sublime* (Random House). Bloom, who's still teaching full-time at Yale after 59 years—knows his literature, and here presents the reader with twelve American writers who have stood the test of time. “Why these twelve?” he asks, and answers, “This book is about the dozen creators of the American Sublime. The essential claim of the sublime is that man can, in feeling and in speech, transcend the human without forsaking humanism.” Think about that for a while, then consider his further words: “My twelve authors center, for me, that proliferation of consciousness by which we go on living and finding our own sense of being.”

They're paired: first, Walt Whitman and Herman Melville. “I think of Whitman and Melville, in

their relation to the contemporary United States, as our resource, akin to Isaiah's prophecy:

“And a man shall be as a hiding place from the winds, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.”

Isaiah 32:2

“There is no critical method except yourself,” Bloom tells us. “As women and men of letters, we ought to share in a vision in which the highest literature becomes our way of life.” Well said? Yes. “Imagine Whitman,” our wise author goes on, “contemplating Mitt Romney's spiritualization of his wealth and you can be thankful that our national poet, who suffered the first Gilded Age, is not here to experience the even more vicious second one!”

Other creators of the American Sublime: Ralph Waldo Emerson and Emily Dickenson; Nathaniel Hawthorne and Henry James; Mark Twain and Robert Frost, Wallace Stevens and T.S. Eliot, William Faulkner and Hart Crane.

That should keep you busy for a while—busy and happy as one can only be when reading a very fine book.

Enjoy!

Ann La Farge

If You Love Me Keep My Commandments

Grief is not the absence of faith, but the price of love. This past year I found myself mourning not only the death of my father, but also my mother. Yes, they had lived long and good lives, but that was specifically why I was mourning them. I had known them so long, and it was unfamiliar for me not to hear their voices and to share visits with them. My father was my compass and mentor in all things spiritual and my mother a guiding force in the world. My grieving went on for some time until I came upon the power of music to transform my soul. Music can move and transport us to new places. I continue to miss my parents, but the power of sadness over my spirit has gradually changed.

I enjoy many different kinds of music, but the music I turned to was very particular. It was the ear-

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ly polyphonic music of Thomas Tallis, William Byrd, and Palestrina. This was the music I had listened to over and over again in the listening library during my freshman year in college. One particular choral piece that I played repetitively was Thomas Tallis's "If You Love Me Keep My Commandments." The music has given me great peace in the midst of my struggle and now as I live into a new joy. I thought



*Angel of Grief
Protestant Cemetery, Rome, Italy*

it was my memory of having heard it before and loving it, but as I listened to both the music and the words I knew it was a special gift of synchronicity. My mourning and inability to move beyond the pain was met by the melody of Tallis's choral work and the words

of John:14.* I could have read these words, but listening to the words sung was exactly what I needed to hear, at just the right moment.

*The text is from *John 14:15-17*:

If ye love me,
keep my commandments,
and I will pray the Father,
and he shall give you another comforter,
that he may bide with you forever,
e'en the spirit of truth.

Here there is the continuity of love through the commandments and the comforter's promise of abiding love forever. I have learned that this music is often sung on the 6th Sunday of Easter. Why is that? Perhaps we are to remember the Easter "Alleluias" even as we celebrate Pentecost and enter into ordinary time. Here, as we bid adieu to Easter for another year, we move into a new time of creation. As we take off the clothes of mourning we are beckoned into this "in between time" in the spirit of truth. My prayer for all of us who find ourselves in this place of mourning is that we may not deny these thoughts and feelings, but rather know that on this journey there is love and comfort and, above all, hope through song.

Linda Stormes

Memorial Day 2015 St. Peter's Cemetery



Photos on left and above by Lillian Corbin. Photo on right (Boy Scouts placing flags on graves of Veterans) by Lois Mander



India—Truly a Land of Contrasts

Last night I slept on a houseboat after spending the day navigating the serene and beautiful inland canals of Kerala, which are flanked by palm trees and rice paddies. The houseboat was a converted rice barge covered with roofing woven from palm fronds and carpeted with rugs made of coir,



the thread that comes from the husks of coconuts. Along the banks women clad in colorful saris did their laundry and washed dishes in the river's waters, while men wearing the traditional *lungyi*, a sarong that converts to shorts, fished for their dinner.

Tonight I sit on the balcony of an 18th-century colonial English plantation house that is our hotel in Cochin, Kerala's largest city, gazing out across



the harbor at a brightly lit container terminal as a destroyer of the Southern Indian Naval Command glides by on its way out into the Arabian Sea.

It was here on the Malabar Coast that St. Thomas, the apostle, established the first Christian church in 52 AD, and today, as you drive down the roads, you see more churches than Buddhist temples. The Arab traders came here in the sixth century in search of spices for which the region is still famous. Then, when the Ottomans cut off trade with Europe, the Jewish merchants of Venice told the Portuguese to follow the Monsoon winds on the far side of the Cape of Good Hope, and they too landed in Kerala in

1498. By cutting out the Arab middlemen, the profit earned from just one shipload of spices was over 1600% by the time it reached Lisbon—the round trip often taking two years. The markets here are still full of stalls selling peppercorn, cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, cardamon, and a variety of curry powders.

Although only two hours by plane, Cochin seems a world away from the cosmopolitan city of Mumbai where we started our trip. Mumbai, whose center is filled with glorious examples of Victorian architecture from the period of the British Raj, has a population of 22 million people, over a third of



whom sleep in wooden shacks in the city's slums or some on the streets. Yet apartments in the most recently built high rises sell for over \$6 million. India's wealthiest person, a resident of Mumbai, lives in a 20-storey "house" that purportedly cost \$1 billion to build and another \$1 billion to furnish. Whether these numbers are accurate or not, one never knows, but what is true is that he lives there with a family of 5 and a staff of 65 servants. Yet curiously enough, no one seems to care.

How does one explain all of this?

Part of the explanation certainly has to do with religion. Hinduism, which is practiced by the vast majority of the population, unlike Christianity or Islam, does not have a founder; nor is there a Bible or Koran or any similar book that sets forth guidelines or rules; nor was there ever a leader like Christ or Mohammed.

Any attempt to explain Hinduism here in a few paragraphs would be futile, but suffice it to say that it is both universal and diverse. There is no one right way to practice Hinduism, and each individual has to find his or her own path. The basis of the Hindu belief rests in recognizing a cosmic power from

which all things emanate and to which all things return. To quote a very informative guide book on India entitled *The Holy Cow*, “Each human being carries within him or her a part of this eternal soul, and the aim of the Hindus is to dissolve the individual self and unite it with the cosmic soul.”

If that seems a bit hard to grasp, then try to figure out the Hindu gods. There are in principle three of them—Brahma, the creator, Vishnu, the preserver, and Shiva, the destroyer. Yet it is not as simple as that. For example, not all three gods are equal—there are almost no temples to Brahma, while there are many to Vishnu and Shiva. And to make it even more confusing, Vishnu is not just one person—he has had nine incarnations (and one more to come), the two most famous being Rama, the warrior, and Krishna, the mischievous boy. And while there is no Hindu bible, the *Ramayana* which is the story of Lord Rama’s exile into the wilderness and fight to save his abducted queen, assisted by an army of flying monkeys, is read by all Hindus, and even turned into a television series that rivaled “Downton Abbey” in popularity.

The one aspect of Hinduism which helps us to understand some of the dynamics of life in India is the belief in reincarnation and the mindset which that brings with it, namely, if you do not have something in this life, you have a chance, or a hope, to get it in the next. But the only way to improve your lot in the next life is to live as pure a life as you can in this one and to do as many good deeds as you can. Forgetting about the reincarnation part, and substituting the Pearly Gates, that does not sound too far off from the Christian belief—at least the one with which I was brought up.

So, part of the Indian attitude can be explained by the Hindu beliefs, but part must be explained by something else.

If you ask an Indian what the two most important things in his or her life are, the response will almost invariably be religion and family. Family in India does not just mean husband and wife and children, but rather the extended family which encompasses parents, grandparents, sisters, brothers and their respective families. It is quite common for one household to include multiple generations. The elders are both venerated for their wisdom and taken care of in their old age.

The other defining factor is the sheer enormity of the population. India’s land mass is one-third the size of the United States, but with 1.3 billion people, there is nowhere to hide. Gated communities do not exist. The millionaire mansions that I mentioned often stand right next to poorer sections of the city and

sometimes even overlook the slums. So Indians cannot deny each other; they must accept and live with each other.

And, in so doing, they accept diversity as a basic fact of life, whether it be economic situation or ethnic or religious background.

The India of today is full of promise for the future, invigorated by a new government and united as never before in the hope for a better life for all. But at the same time it maintains many of the old traditions that make it such a special place. It is truly a land of contrasts and one that is deeply spiritual and of great beauty. But as any traveler will learn after a week or so in India, its beauty is not just in the landscapes or the palaces of the Moghuls and the Maharajas, but also in its people.

As Mahatma Gandhi, whose statue was unveiled this week in front of London’s Houses of Parliament, taught the world in 1947 by leading India to independence clad only in a homespun *dhoti* and without firing a single shot, we might all have something to learn from the people of India.

Woody Keesee

A poem by Richard Wilbur,
reprinted from *The New Yorker*

Ecclesiastes 11:1

We must cast our bread
Upon the waters, as the
Ancient preacher said,

Trusting that it may
Amplify be restored to us
After many a day,

That old metaphor,
Drawn from rice farming on the
River’s flooded shore,

Helps us to believe
That it’s no great sin to give,
Hoping to receive.

Therefore I shall throw
Broken bread, this sullen day,
Out across the snow,

Betting crust and crumb
That birds will gather, and that
One more spring will come.

submitted by Ann LaFarge

THE USHER CORPS THEN AND NOW

In the winter, thirty-plus years ago, when Joann and I first visited St. Peter's, Curt Place was standing on the steps in the snow, welcoming those few souls who braved the cold; he warmly greeted each and every one. Longtime church members Abbott Smith, Roger Young and Curt had been the "Pillars" that held the church together over the preceding years—as lay readers, ushers, welcomers, and, at times, even preaching the sermon.

On a Sunday morning in the Spring of 1995 John Whitworth, Senior Warden, took me aside and asked if I would develop a plan to get members of the congregation to act as greeters and ushers. At that time, a Vestry person would ask for assistance as the parishioners arrived, or have a volunteer assist when Brewster Beach (our Vicar) announced the offertory. Thus, the Usher Corps was formed. It was a small group of men. Peter Elebash, Fred Carter, Tony Gebauer, and "Doc" Goodman were some of those who accepted the challenge. To make us stand out, John arranged for two little fresh white rose boutonnieres to pin on our lapels; they were delivered by the local florist each week in time for the 9:30 service—it was our Badge of Office. Our mission was to hand out the Sunday programs and to take up the collection.

It took a couple of years before we were able to recruit some of the ladies, but Marge Hueglin, Chippy Herman and Susan Heath broke the ice. At first, it was a bit difficult to schedule the Sundays, as

we tried to make sure that no one had to serve two Sundays in a row. However, as we grew in numbers, it became a challenge to give everyone at least one Sunday each month.

In order to assist those with a handicap, we were able to secure portable ramps that are now stored behind the last two pews in the church. In 2006 we arranged to have Liz Baldwin (Eleanore Pitcher's sister-in-law), of the Millbrook Fire & Rescue, give us a training course on CPR and the AED. (Note: the AED (defibrillator) is located in the old rectory office.)

The rules are simple: Report 15 minutes prior to the service to welcome and distribute the programs, summon late comers by tolling the church bells just prior to the processional, take up the collection, assist parishioners to the altar rail when needed, and, following the service, make the final accounting for the day. Then join in coffee hour. On "special" Sundays, the ushers arrange for extra chairs, seat latecomers, and are sometimes called upon to monitor parking.

It has now been 20 years. Our roster presently consists of 17 active members plus 4 subs. We look to the heavens and thank John for the "push." Our Usher Corps has enabled so many of our congregation to assist in service for St. Peters.

Those interested in joining the Corps should contact Head Usher Jim Florack or Anne Gillis.

Dave Schmidt

St. Peter's Pets

*If you have an unusual photo of your pet(s), we'd love to see it.
Please send it to acgillis@optonline.net.*

Catherine Howard's Unusual Cats

Left: Lucky; Right: Purdy, a Maine Coon cat



Ann LaFarge's cat atop a 1930 Ford



Two Parishioners visit Hampton Court

By Stephen Kaye with Bindy's edits

Perhaps it was Hillary Mantel's book about Henry VIII that stimulated our interest in Hampton Court, or maybe it was my interest in Elizabeth I, whose life and fears were shaped by those who figured in the history of that place. On a chilly Sunday in late March we boarded a train at Victoria and 30 minutes later we found ourselves in the small town that grew up on the other side of the Thames from the famed medieval edifice built by Cardinal Wolsey at the beginning of Henry's reign (1514) as his own palace. We crossed the bridge and entered imposing gates fit for a king. Up a small drive to the visitors' guard house where we were interviewed, inspected, and, our papers being in order, approved for paying the price of admission. We then entered, through the imposing outer gates, into the first courtyard. From the battlements all around, ghosts looked us over and pointed towards the inner gates. Men in uncomfortable-looking uniforms holding battle axes and other instruments useful for prodding a truculent servant or two, led us through ancient paneled hallways. We were in time for the 11 o'clock service in the Royal Chapel.

We were greeted by a beaming Englishman in a striped suit (as far as I know, beaming is restricted to Englishmen and clergymen) and led to seats in the choir where others of the congregation were already



seated. A few minutes later the bells rang, we stood, and the procession commenced with clergy, deacons, a boys' choir and then a mixed (men and women)

choir of adults who would follow the familiar liturgy of Morning Prayer.

The Royal Chapel is a richly paneled oldish sort of place where the Tudors reminded themselves that they were chosen by God to rule, subject only to the somewhat hazy business of the Pope having to give his blessing to the arrangement. As Ms. Mantel reminds us, Henry came up with a slightly more pro-

gressive idea of removing the haziness and deciding that he ruled directly under God without any popish involvement at all. It might have been in that very chapel that Henry was enlightened with these notions that founded the English Reformation, where the seeds were planted that grew into the Church of England of which we, here in Lithgow, are still a remote part.

The service was much as we know it—chant-ed Psalms, sung Benedictus, Nunc Dimittis, etc., hymns from the English Hymnal, a somewhat ragged children choir (later we found they were a weekend choir), and several prayers for Her majesty the Queen, who is acknowledged as the Head of the Church. After the recessional there was a social in the hall in the back of the chapel where we met the vicar who announced, in a booming voice, that he was originally from San Diego.

We were later told that the elaborate ceiling of the chapel was installed by Henry VIII, but the oak paneling and decorations were of a later, probably Georgian, period. To the rear of the Tudor structure William and Mary added another courtyard (1689-94). Their architect was Christopher Wren, a favorite of the Stuarts, who employed Grinling Gibbons on the decorative elements. The pair went on to do notable work.

We walked around, taking in the main halls hung with heavy tapestries. It is very much as all those plays and movies show it—dark, candlelit and good for making Shakesperean-sounding speeches and asides. Henry was an avid collector of tapestries. They were a barrier against the cold and the damp of the stone, but did not inspire hilarity. The ones on display—they have a vast collection—were of the story of Abraham, a lot of violence and reminders that life under the Tudors was likely to be short and painful. We climbed narrow circular stairs to small, dark rooms—many of them; the palace is extensive, cold and damp despite a minor effort to pipe heat into at least a few of the rooms. We came upon the royal chambers where a passage leads to a balcony over the chapel where a royal could see and watch and not be seen and where we watched a rather good concert of cello and organ. The palace is well supplied with attractive people disguised as guides. Their job is mainly to prevent visitors from getting lost, a near impossible task.

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The park is extensive, covering hundreds of walled acres. It was, for centuries, where royals hunted. A summertime visit is best because the gardens are dormant in March. The knot garden and the rose garden looked inviting for a stroll, but it was raining an English rain and we wanted lunch.

Parish Survey on Family and Intergenerational Activities at St Peter's

Earlier this year, the Parish held two informal meetings with parents and other parishioners to discuss the future, content, and improvement of Children and Youth Ministries with a focus on Christian Education in the Parish.

As a result of the discussion, we created a survey to address two goals:

- The primary goal was to seek more information from all parents regarding Children and Youth Ministries, focusing on areas of interest and levels of commitment.
- The secondary goal was to connect with the entire parish to find ways to enhance St. Peter's intergenerational community and to allow parishioners to get to know each other.

The on-line survey was circulated from February 19 through March 16, and a survey summary was presented to the Vestry at the April 19th meeting. Here is a brief summary of the survey, along with some interesting discoveries:

- We sent out a total of 186 emails and received 52 responses, via online survey or letters, with an overall 28% response rate; this is in line with previous surveys in the parish.
- We had a very good response from parents of children in the younger age groups (up to 9 years old).
- While tabulating the age groups, we discovered, based on Parish census data, that we have over 100 children up to 18 years of age.
- Spring and fall are the most-attended (event-supported) seasons of the year.
- All of the educational topics were of interest for discussion, with Scripture, *The Book of Common Prayer*, ethical and moral questions, and Judeo-Christian history as leading topics.

- Local outreach (primarily Dover and Amenia foods banks) is one of the main interest areas for both children and adults.
- More than half of the adults would like to have a Distinguished Speakers series.
- 40% of the respondents would like to participate in discussions of their areas of interest/expertise.
- We discovered 10 parents willing to assist Marie in the Church School when needed (parental presence rather than Sunday School teaching).
- 17% of the respondents are willing to assist in organizing occasional events in the city.
- Individual names of those interested in Acolytes, "buddy-system," Vestry/Committee service, and a speakers network have been provided to Parish staff.
- Suggestions were given for enhancing existing events and activities around the parish, especially St. Francis Day (Blessing of the Animals), Hallowe'en and other events.
- Many (especially young families) said that they are currently quite busy with their existing schedules, and any additions need to be carefully evaluated—perhaps existing programs could simply be enhanced.

The parish staff, in cooperation with the Vestry, is taking this feedback very seriously and will provide details, in Keynotes and in subsequent newsletters, of the responses that will be put in place or are already in place as a result of the survey. Stay tuned, and keep an eye on forthcoming newsletters and information on our updated website.

A **Christian Education Committee** has already been formed to monitor progress and to make recommendations to the Vicar and the Vestry. A family newsletter is already helping to improve communication, with future events and themes for the children to follow.

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An **Outreach Committee** is in formation and will build intergenerational events for many programs, i.e., food banks, garden tour coming up in July, Blessing of the Fields and other entertaining activities.

We have improved communication with an expansion of the website, the Family Newsletter and bi-monthly emails from the Vicar on events and spe-

cial programs. We are looking for someone to help with social media and a new St Peter's Facebook page. We hope to have a **Communications Committee** up and running by the summer. Please let staff know if you are interested in discussing these opportunities.

The Distinguished Speakers Series will be continuing, so stay tuned!

Mile Petrov

Confirmation Class 2015-2016

A new format for Confirmation is in place for the coming year, to create a context for a deeper and broader commitment to this important formation experience. Taught primarily by Rev. Cam, classes will be held Sundays two to three times each month, from October 2015 through March 2016, with an expected visitation from the Bishop in April of 2016. Students aged 11 and older are eligible for the upcoming Confirmation Classes. Please email Rev. Cam for more details at chardy@millbrook.org.



Confirmation 2006

Left to right: front—Claire Manny, Grayson Voges, the late Bishop Don Taylor, Rev. Cam; middle—Holden Jaffe, Natalie Barkus; top—Quinn Babcock, Wylie Fresne, Thea Adler, Rev. Ed Johnston, Hugo Reinhardt
Amongst them are an award winning musician, an aspiring designer, a mindfulness practitioner, an actor, and an environmentalist/ranch hand.

Deadlines for Keynotes

August 20

November 20

February 20

May 20

Please send submissions to: alafarge@aol.com & acgillis@optonline.net



St. Peter's Church, Lithgow
PO Box 1502
Millbrook, NY 12545
(845) 677-9286

Congratulations, Graduates!

There is much to celebrate this spring amongst our many students. Below is just a snapshot of graduates from secondary school through Law School. We welcome more good news to publish in the Family Newsletter. Send an email to Rev. Cam (chardy@millbrook.org) with names and any other details, including a picture.

Alistair Hunt: The Brooks School, attending the Syracuse University Falk Sports Management program (as a recruited oarsman)

Cristina Liebolt: The University of California, Berkeley School of Law, where she received the American Jurisprudence Award in Ethics. Cristina will be clerking in the coming year for United States District Judge Lorna G. Schofield in the Southern District of New York. Welcome back, Cristina!

Katherine Mann: Brearley School, attending Harvard College

Nicholas Salnikov Taft School, attending Southern Methodist University

Katie Weaver Phillips Academy, Andover, attending Wake Forest University



Be sure to check the St. Peter's website (stpeterslithgow.org)....new information is added on a regular basis: church calendar, links to the weekly sermons, lists of readers, ushers, acolytes, coffee hour servers, latest issues of *Keynotes*....and much, much more.