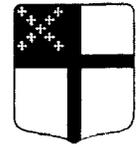


# KEYNOTES

September 2015



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

Two very special birthdays were celebrated this summer.



*Faith Tompkins at 99*



*Jan Rankin and Albert Ogle at Jan's 95th birthday party*



*Albert Ogle created the River Jordan for a Baptism on August 9. Here he sits on the banks of the river with Lavelly and Campbell Corbin (granddaughters of Lillian & Peter).*



*Jan Rankin, former Broadway performer, in a publicity photo taken in the 1940s.*

### The Sky Is Low, the Clouds Are Mean

The sky is low, the clouds are mean,  
A traveling flake of snow  
Across a barn or through a rut  
Debates if it will go.

A narrow wind complains all day  
How some one treated him;  
Nature, like us, is sometimes caught  
Without her diadem.

*Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)*

## From the Vicar's Desk



Dear Friends of God:

When does *your* internal year begin?

For some of us, our birthdays mark the beginning of a new spiral or cycle of life. For others, it can begin on January 1<sup>st</sup>, with a new calendar year and an

opportunity to release the old and embrace the new. For me, September marks the beginning of a new cycle, and I am not entirely sure why. Perhaps the recreation of summer gives one more energy and new insights to enter into a new work-cycle. Perhaps it is years of returning to school or university to begin a new *academic* year, or perhaps it is sensing the delicate changes of light and leaf color that charm us into yet another winter of survival and simply getting through it all. Some churches mark the return to a more regular pattern of worship and programs with a Homecoming Sunday celebration in September, where everyone is welcomed back after the busy summer, when we all have a lot of summer tales to tell. In just a few weeks, we will be celebrating our first year together when a dramatic move from the West to East shook us all out of complacency into new life! A *plunge* is always good for the soul, reminding us of the deep mystery of God from whence we come and to whom we return, year after year.

### Taking care of each other

This fall, St Peter's will be focusing on what it means to take care of ourselves, our immediate church family, our own families and communities, and even our place on this planet. Like a stone plunging into the waters of eternal consciousness (baptism?) the Christian pilgrim is invited to reflect upon our own liquid heart-print upon the world. Will this water-covered earth be a better place because we simply *plopped* in one day and our ripples touch and shape many surprising things? Or was there simply no effect...simply nothing? We were so careful not to cause waves and remained so self-contained that our lives had no impact on the face of a watery abyss. Some lives can be lived in ways that cause our own personal tsunami and I have seen this play out in congregations and families long after the in-

stigator is gone. Our imprint on the world can leave waves of negativity and even destruction that still slosh and crash about long after we are gone. Even more peaceful ripples of influence can be reshaped and distorted by the negative impact of shock waves. How we maintain a sense of movement outward when these destructive wakes can also shape ours requires deep interior stability and focus. Yet the sages remind us that water is more powerful than stone and we can even crack it open by being persistent and focused.

### Returning to our own baptismal covenant

The biblical commandment to love self, God and neighbor ripples through our liturgies, into our being and into our homes and workplaces. Our baptismal covenant soaks us with the eternal love of God as well as our shared responsibility to bring justice, respect and peace into the watery abyss of modern day existence, where nothing seems stable or permanent. How do we live out our biblical and baptismal values with integrity and faithfulness? We offer some shared insights and experience from fellow pilgrims this fall and I hope you will mark your calendars to make these *red letter days* to be with us.

**In-reach.** The Outreach Committee is inviting you to complete a pew card about how we take care of our own, and offers some suggestions for members willing to offer services as well as requesting services—everything from help with rides to hospital appointments to receiving Holy Communion at home. This is a very important circle to embrace our church family. We would like to hear from you by September 13<sup>th</sup>.

**September 10-13<sup>th</sup>.** Susan and Max Guinn are founders of KidsEcoClub and will be coming out from California to talk about how we care for the environment and the planet and how to share this with young people. Max is 14 and recently shared the platform with the Dalai Lama in Los Angeles and he and his friends at Country Day School in San Diego led the public awareness campaign to ban indiscriminate use of plastic bags in California. This young man has already caused quite a ripple effect! What are his values and some of his abiding principles that might inspire our own families and youth? They will be speaking at local schools on September 11<sup>th</sup> and we will have a community meeting for them in the parish hall on Saturday evening 7 p.m., and they will speak at church on Sunday.

**September 20<sup>th</sup>** will be the Sunday we learn about our long-term support of the mission to seamen, led by Barbara Lindsley, and there will be an opportunity to provide support and knitted goods for sailors around the world.

**October 4<sup>th</sup>** will be our annual celebration of “all creatures great and small” with the St Francis Day blessing of the animals. Our community has a deep reverence for the earth and a love of the creatures who share it with us. We hope to have some representatives of Dutchess County animal shelters and rescue.

During **the last weekend of October**, we are hoping to have a brief visit from the Episcopal Bishop of Cuba, Right Rev. Griselda Delgado del Carpio, who is on her way to Washington for the installation of our new Presiding Bishop, Michael Curry. Details to follow.

**November 1<sup>st</sup>** is All Saints Day, when we remember our departed loved ones at both Sunday services.

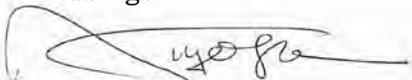
The Outreach Committee will be introducing us to the Dover Plains Food Bank which is already supported by the parish through a \$1,000 donation every month.

**Sunday 8<sup>th</sup>**. St Peters will host the third and final weekend conversation with Trinity Wall Street and Rural and Migrant Ministries through the IND-ABA process (a Swahili word meaning “my well-being is connected to your well-being”). We are learning more and more about the different ministries in our Diocese, where we respond differently in different contexts but are invited to discover Episcopalian characteristics!

**Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> November** is St Cecilia’s Day and we are delighted to celebrate a mass from the 16<sup>th</sup> century written by William Byrd for the language we use in St Peter’s every Sunday. We are celebrating this day in thanksgiving for the inspiration of our music program and will have singers from Bard College. A feast for the soul as we prepare for Thanksgiving and Advent the following weeks.

I hope you will make use of these opportunities to refresh body, mind and spirit and to think about your own impact and connection to God’s marvelous creation.

Blessings



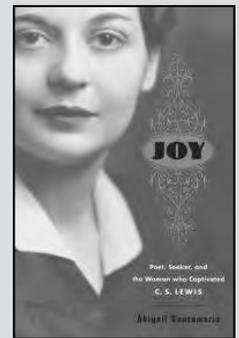
Albert Joy Ogle  
Vicar of Lithgow

*Joy: Poet, Seeker, and the  
Woman Who Captivated C.S. Lewis*

By Abigail Santamaria

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, August, 2015

Spiritual inquiry, by nature, tends to be a complex enterprise, but that of Joy Davidman was especially fraught. The daughter of Jewish immigrants, she was a gifted poet and writer, the recipient of the prestigious Yale Younger Poets Award in 1938. She became an agnostic, a communist, an advocate of Dianetics, only



becoming a committed Christian later in her life. All of this, along with her experience of conversion and her subsequent relationship and marriage to C. S. Lewis, one of the twentieth century’s most profound Christian thinkers, is explored in the newly published biography, *Joy: Poet, Seeker, and the Woman Who Captivated C.S. Lewis* by Abigail Santamaria.

Davidman was a spirited and often difficult woman. Perhaps because Santamaria writes with such clarity and grace, one nonetheless empathizes deeply with Davidman’s struggles—her troubled first marriage, her years as a young mother in the Hudson Valley, her move to England with two young sons, and finally, the short years she shared with Lewis before her untimely death from bone cancer at 45. While Davidman may be best known as the woman who seduced C.S. Lewis, it is her turmoil in going from being a secular Jew and Stalinist to a committed Christian that gives the book its greatest substance and draws us into her very being. Her story, touching on some of the most challenging intellectual, political, and spiritual questions of the twentieth century, engages the reader exactly because these questions have such universality.

As Santamaria writes, “If reading and writing biography are attempts to map and study the steps of people who lived meaningful lives in order to better guide our own, then Joy’s story teaches us much about love, faith, and embracing ideals that transcend our temporal lives.” Most of all, perhaps, that story tracks those ways in which it is possible for a full spiritual life to emerge from a combination of courage, a ferocious intellect, and a capacity for love.

*Akiko Busch*

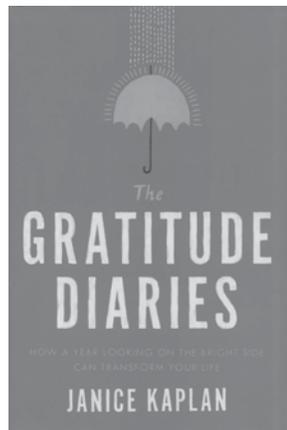
## From the Editors' Desk

David Gregory, longtime moderator of NBC's *Meet the Press*, was also NBC's chief White House correspondent during the presidency of George W. Bush. Gregory had always been fascinated by the spiritual journeys people take, but had not yet taken his own. The time came when President Bush asked him—not once, but often—"How's your faith?" Gregory, facing a crisis of his own (having to leave NBC) and facing the question of how he and his wife—he Jewish, she Christian—would raise their kids—began writing a book, and here is *How's Your Faith? An Unlikely Spiritual Journey*. (Simon & Schuster, \$26.00) "In writing this book," Gregory states, "I've realized how many of us are searching for meaning and purpose in life. We're all asking ourselves the same questions: Who do I want to be? What do I believe? This is my answer, and the story of how I got there."

He interviewed his parents (a Catholic mother and a Jewish dad) and an array of spiritual leaders of all faiths, but it is his own story that illuminates this book. I'll not soon forget what he said about forgiveness: "Forgiveness is like dropping the rocks—letting go of the things that might weigh you down."

At once accessible and profound, this is a story that will resonate with anyone who ponders the question of faith—as who doesn't? This fine book is in the parish library.

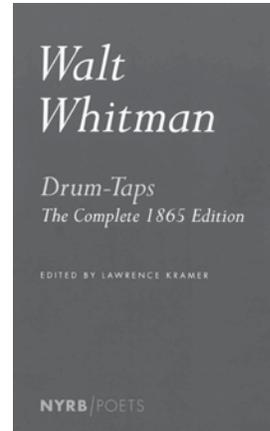
And here's another thought-provoker with an upbeat slant: Janice Kaplan's *The Gratitude Diaries—How a Year Looking on the Bright Side Can Transform Your Life*. (Dutton, \$26.95) This memoir is the story of how the author spent a year living gratefully, gaining a fresh outlook that would transform her marriage, family life, work,



health, and everyday experiences. But...how did she actually go about it? Well, she asked advice—from psychologists, professors, doctors, and philosophers. Combining research with anecdotes, she shows us how gratitude can transform every part of our lives. This inspiring and very reader-friendly book is sure to whip you out of a slump and help us all to begin living—our best year ever.

A publicist in the Dutton office commented, "After reading Janice's book, nearly everyone in our office has experienced a gratitude epiphany."

And just a mention of a truly delightful new book with a Hudson Valley connection: *Walt Whitman—Drum-Taps, The Complete 1865 Edition*, edited, annotated, and with an introduction by Lawrence Kramer (Nancy Leonard's husband). (New York Review Books, \$14.00) This edition is the first to present the book in its original form since its initial publication 150 years ago.



Pick up a copy; get comfortable, and read these poems aloud.

Ann La Farge

St. Peter's choir  
will be singing for All  
Saints Day on November 1, at  
the 9:30 service. Rehearsals take  
place on Sunday mornings at 11:00.  
All are welcome, regardless of experi-  
ence or musical ability. Please  
contact Nancy Vanderlee at  
navanderlee@gmail.com  
or (914) 204-6472.

### Deadlines for Keynotes

November 20

February 20

May 20

August 20

Please send submissions to: [alafarge@aol.com](mailto:alafarge@aol.com) & [acgillis@optonline.net](mailto:acgillis@optonline.net)

# Alice at 150

By Stephen Kaye  
reprinted from  
*TheMillbrookIndependent.com*

July 24, 2015 - A gathering of local celebrities, leading thespians, and literary giants was on hand to attend the March Hare's tea party to which Alice had not been invited, although she showed up as confused as the rest of us. It was said to have happened on July 24 at 10:30 a.m. precisely.

It was in part a celebration of Scott Meyer and the tradition of book-related events that he initiated and for many years hosted in the upper room of the Merritt Bookstore. The host today was Moby Mudge, author of a book on the sculptures of Central Park of which Alice figures as a main subject (the Delacorte Memorial and a fountain honoring Sophie Irene Loeb, a noted civil leader of the 1930s).

The March Hare was played by David Greenwood, the dormouse by Fred Whitridge, and the Mad Hatter by John Reid. Alice was played by Barbara Rankin and the narrator was Anne Gillis.

In truth, the meaning of mad was not determined, but they all had a mad time, as did the gathered celebrities, including those 7 and under.

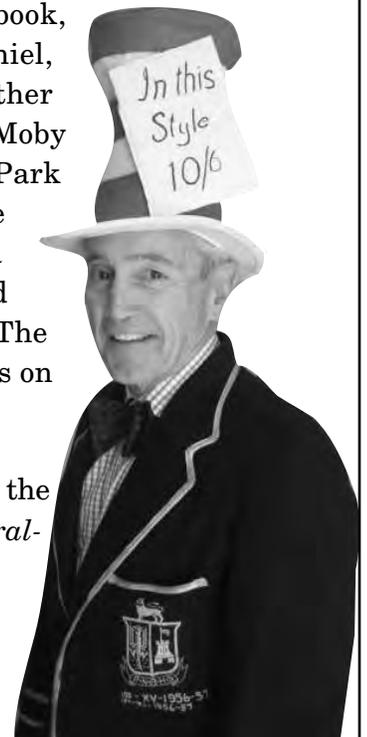


Mr. Mudge did not say there was a run on Alice in Wonderland and books about Charles Dodgson, the math professor who took the pen name of Lewis Carroll, the author of the two Alice books, although the subjects are the subject of much conjecture. Wonderful

pictures from the book, done by Sir John Tenniel, hang on the walls together with photographs by Moby Mudge of the Central Park figures. They can be seen even though the tea and cookies and the mad guests are all gone. The book created by Mudge is on sale in the bookstore.

The website for the book is: [www.aliceincentral-park.com](http://www.aliceincentral-park.com).

photos by  
Susan Fargione  
& Claire Reid



Alice  
(Barbara Rankin)

March Hare  
(David Greenwood)

Dormouse  
(Fred Whitridge)

Mad Hatter  
(John Reid)



## ***Outreach in Action*** **Ministry and Outreach Focus**

### **May: Episcopal Charities**

Sunday, May 10 was Mother's Day everywhere in this country. But in St. Peter's Church and other Episcopal churches throughout our Diocese, May 10 was also Episcopal Charities Sunday. Thanks to our Vicar and the chair of the Vestry's Outreach Committee (Catherine Howard), St. Peter's has gone a step further, making Episcopal Charities the special ministry focus for the month of May.

Episcopal Charities is the charitable outreach arm of the Episcopal Diocese of New York,<sup>1</sup> providing funding and critical support to approximately 100 parish-based programs throughout the region, touching the lives of some 850,000 people annually. On Episcopal Charities Sunday, EC especially celebrates its 50 food programs, which served 2.6 million meals last year and will exceed that total in 2015. While all the programs it helps are organized at the parish level, the outreach is community based. The price of admission is need, not shared belief or affiliation.

St. Peter's Church has been a pillar of support for Episcopal Charities since EC's founding in 1996. Jim Tozer and June Felix were members of its board of directors for many years and helped encourage an outsized contribution from our parish. I joined the board at their invitation a few years ago and have seen first-hand the excellent work that this group does. We see its work in our own neighborhoods: in Manhattan or the Bronx (a jobs training course on the Upper West Side, a soup kitchen at St. Bart's), in Millbrook and its surrounding communities.

We raised over \$3,000 at St. Peter's on May 10 and the days that followed. On behalf of Episcopal Charities, I'd like to thank all those who contributed and the entire congregation for its continued support of this vital organization. I'd also encourage anyone who would like to know more about Episcopal Charities to ask me.

*Jim Florack*

### **June: Rural & Migrant Ministries**

St. Peter's has had a relationship with the Rural and Migrant Ministries as long as I have been a member, and probably much longer!

Father Richard Witt, Executive Director of RMM since 1991, is well-known to St. Peter's. He has come to us each year, to report on RMM and hope for help! Succeeding members of St. Peter's parish have come to know and love him over the years for his hard work and self-effacing success with the rural and migrant population of New York state.

RMM is a coalition of several denominations, is non-sectarian, and non-profit, working alongside hundreds of disenfranchised rural residents and agricultural workers through programs of advocacy, empowerment and leadership development. They nurture leadership and education, especially among youth. The Youth Empowerment programs are particularly successful in my estimation. I remember when Richard brought a group of 5 young people to St. Peter's, each of whom spoke about the Youth Employment Group training that they had taken over the past year. They learned how to work a cash register, they learned public speaking, they learned how to prepare for and handle a job interview, even for the most entry-level jobs. These simple skills made a huge difference in their confidence. It was apparent.

Our Outreach emphasis this past June was on Rural and Migrant Ministries. Partly as a result of this, our contributions to RMM this year were \$28,000. Some parishioners were so impressed with the success of this program that they made significant contribution to its work. Great thanks are due these donors, and it is a tribute to the nature of RMM's work, and to its success in the face of much need among the mostly Latino populations they serve.

An added note is that RMM is our Indaba Partner, so we will be hosting RMM and Trinity Wall Street here in Lithgow on November 8. Mark your calendars!

*Betsy Shequine*

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<sup>1</sup> Includes Manhattan, The Bronx and Staten Island; and Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster and Westchester Counties.

## July: Food of Life Food Pantry

Down a long rural road in Amenia stands a pretty little church with a big heart. Every Friday from 3 to 5 pm, neighbors from our surrounding communities come to the St. Thomas Parish Hall to stock up on nourishing food staples. They come with big empty bags and leave with a bounty of food to see them through the week. In season, canned and dried foods are supplemented by fresh vegetables and fruits provided by the gardens of St. Thomas and the Sharon House Garden Project in Cornwall, CT.

It all started back in 2009, just after the recession began. Reverend Betsy Fisher and her congregation recognized a strong need for a food pantry to service their area. With few resources and even less space, St. Thomas opened their Food of Life/Comida de Vida Pantry right in the church sanctuary. Later, with the help of a grant from Episcopal Charities, the St. Thomas food pantry was able to relocate into a small addition to the existing parish hall.

After reading the book *Toxic Charity* as a parish, St. Thomas decided to refer to their patrons as “neighbors,” respecting their dignity and self-determination, rather than stereotyping them as needy. Their neighbors are young and old, families and single people, all of whom just need a little extra help when it comes to putting food on the table—many while in the midst of working multiple jobs.

This project is run almost exclusively by volunteers. They plant, tend, and harvest the gardens and help to distribute the food on Fridays. Private gardeners often share their excess vegetables with those who need it the most. This is truly a community endeavor.

For those of you who have already given, we thank you for your kind generosity to this very special group. If you are interested in volunteering your time or contributing food, please contact me at 845-677-0680. Financial contributions can be made on their website [www.foodoflifepantry.org](http://www.foodoflifepantry.org) or by check made out to Food of Life Pantry, sent to:

St. Thomas Episcopal Church  
40 Leedsville Road  
Amenia, New York 12501

*Claire Reid*

The following note was recently received from Rev. Richard Witt of Rural & Migrant Ministries in thanks for our June efforts.

*Dear Friends,*

*I cannot begin to find the words to express my gratitude for the astonishing support from St. Peter's.*

*It is a tremendous affirmation for us.*

*We are grateful for this remarkable partnership.*

*In Peace,*

*RW*

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## St. Cecilia Day Musical Observance at St. Peter's

On Sunday, November 22, our congregation will have the privilege of hosting a vocal ensemble from the Bard College Conservatory Vocal Arts Program in a Mass setting by William Byrd. This musical performance will be presented within the context of the service at 9:30 a.m.



Lucy Fitz Gibbon, acclaimed soprano and early music specialist, will conduct the singers. This will be a unique opportunity to observe the Feast Day of St. Cecilia, patron saint of Musicians. Special thanks should be given to Stephen and Bindy Kaye for helping to make this special program possible.

Following is a brief biography of the conductor:

A graduate of Yale College, Lucy is the recipient of numerous awards for her musical and academic achievements. Lucy also holds an artist diploma at The Glenn Gould School of the Royal Conservatory, where she was one of a select number of students chosen to attend on a full scholarship, and a master's degree from Bard College Conservatory's Vocal Arts Program. For more information, see [www.lucyfitzgibbon.com](http://www.lucyfitzgibbon.com).

*Nancy Vanderlee*



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

## ***Our Bridge to the Diocese of New York***

The Episcopal Church is a democratic organization. Many early Episcopalians joined in creating the present political and constitutional system of this country. We rely on grass roots participation and informed policy decisions that shape our Vestries, Diocesan Conventions and National Conventions. Each year, the great Diocese of New York meets to decide on budget priorities and issues affecting our church and larger community. It is a very important all-day gathering (Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> November) and we need two representatives from St Peter's to join our clergy and represent our interests and concerns. We would also like to hear from you afterwards so that the congregation can have an opportunity to learn what happened at the Convention and where the Diocese intends to focus resources.

If you would like to participate, please forward your name and a brief paragraph outlining why you feel called to this important ministry, to one of the clergy or wardens in the coming month.

*Albert Ogle*

### **To a Post-Office Inkwell**

How many humble hearts have dipped  
In you, and scrawled their manuscript!  
How shared their secrets, told their cares,  
Their curious and quaint affairs!  
Your pool of ink, your scratchy pen  
Have moved the lives of unborn men,  
And watched young people, breathing hard,  
Put Heaven on a postal card.

Christopher Morley