

St. Peter's Press

September 2022

St. Peter's Presbyterian Church - Spencertown, NY

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Onward with Joy By Reverend Donna Elia



Dear members and friends of St. Peter's,

You may have heard the news that the Council and I have enthusiastically agreed to extend our contract, beginning September 1 through the end of May. Beyond that, we are keeping an open mind to see what might yet unfold. Our main focus will be the revitalizing work at St. Peter's: worship, pastoral care, mission and outreach, justice work, collaboration with other congregations, and stewardship. We are energized about all of it, including stewardship! Starting in September, lay people will engage the theme, *What the church means to me*. They will share in worship and invite others to reflect upon this sacred, beloved community. Are you willing to share your story? Please let me know.

As the Fall schedule unfolds, we hope you will join in celebrating new life at St. Peter's. Upcoming events include: the Homecoming Sunday Potluck on September 11 and the Celebration of Baptism for Teagan Reese O'Rourke, daughter of Brianna and Kevin O'Rourke, granddaughter of Wendy Diskin, in worship on September 25.

St. Peter's is in dynamic mode: our Council and deacons are thoughtfully, lovingly building community. The Spirit is present in our midst! An open-hearted and inclusive congregation like St. Peter's is greatly needed, and you are a vital part of the work! For your prayers, talents, and presence in the many and varied ways you offer them, we are grateful. As the late Frederick Buechner* said, "The grace of God means something like: *Here is your life. You might never have been, but you are, because the party wouldn't have been complete without you. Here is the world. Beautiful and terrible things will happen. Don't be afraid. I am with you. Nothing can ever separate us. It's for you I created the universe. I love you.*"

Our journey of accompaniment continues.
Grace and peace, Donna

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*Columnist Michael Gerson wrote a tribute to theologian, author, and Pastor Frederick Buechner in *The Washington Post*, saying "Buechner was a writer tuned into the frequency of grace. [Buechner said] *'Pay attention to moments when unexpected tears come to your eyes and what may trigger them.'* He was talking about those sudden upwellings of emotion we get from the sublimity of nature or art, when we see a whale breaching, or are emotionally ambushed by a line in a film or poem. We are led toward truth and beauty by a lump in the throat."



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Rev. Donna Elia will be at St. Peter's September 14 and 21. See the calendar at the end of this newsletter for the schedule. Feel free to come chat with her in person while she is here. You can also call her on the church phone (518-392-3386) or her cell phone (518-495-6795).

Report from Council

By Mary Anne Davis

The Council held a joint meeting and potluck cookout with the deacons on August 3. The Council's decisions made at the meeting are listed below.

- Reverend Elia's Pastor's Report included a summary of pastoral visits, including to Cynthia Olds in Philadelphia and the graveside service for Harold Silvernale on August 1.
- Jere Wrightsman agreed to coordinate the Peace and Global Witness Offering.
- Mary Anne Davis agreed to be Clerk Pro Tem until another person steps up. After discussion about pro tem being *for the moment*, Council and Mary Anne agreed that she will serve as Clerk from now until December 31.
- Jere and committee that initially seated Donna as Pastor at St. Peter's for the summer recommended that Council extend her contract until May 31, 2023. Council approved.
- Donna said that items sometimes occur, or people come to her with issues or requests. She recommended referring such occurrences to committees, where possible, rather than to the full Council, saving Council from time-consuming votes and processes. Committees will then report as necessary. The Council approved proceeding this way.
- Co-treasurers Wendy Diskin and Jeff Kiplinger have researched and discussed the most economical way to purchase fuel oil based on options offered by Valley Oil. They recommended and Council approved that St. Peter's prepay for 1600 gallons of fuel oil at the quoted price of \$4.29/gal, totaling \$6000.
- Donna led a discussion about stewardship, coming from a theological point of view vs budget driven. "Time, talent, and treasure make stewardship a thing of celebration," she said. People might consider, *How/why does the church matter to me. If I want my money to reflect where my values are, where do I give?* Donna said, "Pledging,

attending, and supporting are acts of worship." Council agreed it would be a good idea to have people reflect upon "Why the church matters to me" in the context of worship.

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### Potluck After Church on September 11

Bring a dish to share for our Homecoming Potluck after church on Sunday, September 11. We will celebrate the end of summer, the beginning of a new school year, and all the changes that come with a new season and the bountiful harvest this time of year. We will also celebrate Reverend Donna Elia's ordination on September 10, 1989.

This will be our first potluck since before the pandemic in 2020. Weather permitting, we will have it outdoors on the Spencertown Green. Come and enjoy good food and delightful fellowship!

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Election Day Dinner, November 8

The deacons are planning an election day dinner, so go vote on November 8 and then don't go home and cook; come pick up a delicious dinner featuring savory roast beef, tenderly cooked veggies, and dessert. The proceeds will go to the general church fund.

There will also be a vegetarian option.

Report from Mission & Social Justice Ministry

By Teresa Barenfeld

St. Peter's has been hosting many outreach activities that have been organized by the deacons and others (many thanks!). To revive outreach, congregational vitality, and commitment to social justice, Council became a Matthew 25 church in 2021. However, events slowed plans to develop our own Matthew 25 themes and goals. Hopefully, we can revive our involvement in Matthew 25 by developing some actions and goals, tailored to St. Peter's.

As a representative of St. Peter's, I continue to be engaged with two groups: the Albany Presbytery Anti-Racism Task Force (along with Mary Anne Davis) and the Chatham Area Interfaith Council (CAIC) Anti-Racism Forum.

CAIC is a way for local religious leaders* to connect, and it organizes the area's interfaith services and events, such as the annual interfaith Thanksgiving Service. (*Leaders is loosely applied: anyone who is active in their faith.) The CAIC Anti-Racism Forum is a subgroup of CAIC that focuses on racial issues. Right now, we are working with the Columbia County Sheriff's Office on both racial issues and the need for chaplaincy (they have a chaplain at the jail, but there is always a need for volunteers both at the jail and for other things such as emergencies and natural disasters). We are also looking ahead to plan community events.

St. Peter's continues to be engaged in mission work or collections of money for mission, but not at a level as in the past. Part of that is due to the small size of the congregation and thus the number of people available to take on organizing projects, who are usually already doing quite a bit of volunteer work, both within and outside the church. I would propose to reinvigorate mission at St. Peter's by starting small and perhaps partnering with one or two of our sister Presbyterian churches, Valatie and Hudson, who do have ongoing mission projects.

September Worship Sundays at 10 AM

(In-person and via Zoom))

4th: Rev. Donna Elia and the congregation
Communion

11th: Rev. Donna Elia,
Homecoming Sunday Potluck

18th: Elder Nina Nichols, MDiv.

25th: Reverend Donna Elia,
Baptism of Teagan Reese O'Rourke

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## September Lectionary Readings

**4th:** Jeremiah 18:1-11, Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18,  
Luke 14:25-33



**11th:** Jeremiah 4:11-12, 22-28, Psalm 14,  
Luke 15:1-10

**18th:** Jeremiah 8:18-9:1, Psalm 79:1-9,  
Luke 16:1-13

**25th:** Jeremiah 32:1-3a, 6-15, Psalm 91:1-6, 14-16, Luke 16:19-31

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Get Your Quilt Raffle Tickets!



Get your raffle tickets for a beautiful handmade quilt created by Margy Quinn.

Tickets are on sale now until the drawing of the winner at the end of the annual Christmas Bazaar, on December 3. If you would like to sell tickets to your friends and family, we have some available at the church.

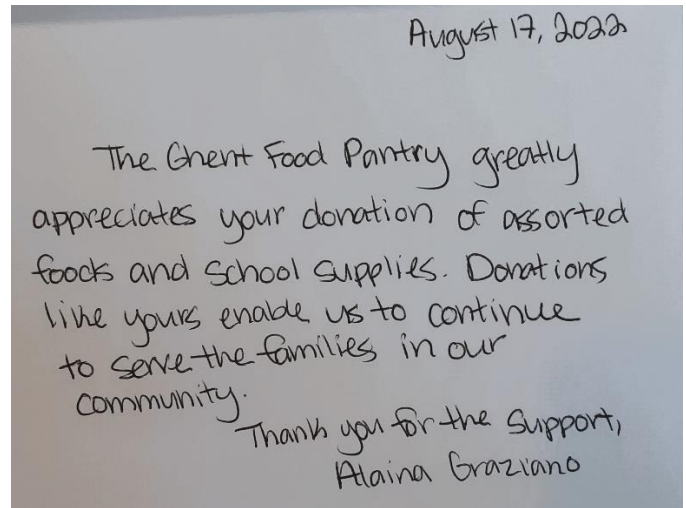
For questions, contact Wendy Diskin at 518-392-6395. Tickets are \$2 each, \$5 for 3, and \$10 for 7.

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### ***Bring Your Food Pantry Donations to Church***

The food pantry donations we have been collecting during the church service are much appreciated by both the Ghent and Chatham Food Pantries, as illustrated by the thank-you note we recently received from the Ghent Food Pantry:



So, keep those donations coming! Much thanks to Larry Massimo for taking our donations to the pantries.

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August 20 Takeout Dinner

Our **Summer Takeout**

Dinner on August 20 was a great success, collecting more than \$1300 for the church's general fund account. (The actual amount is TBD, after all expenses are paid and payments are received.) This was a church-wide effort. Thanks to the following volunteers: Barbara Conkling, Mary Anne Davis, Joel Dyslin, Wendy Diskin, Donna Elia, Sandy Fischer, Kathy Geddie, Larry Massimo, Pat Meess, Barbara Smith, Sharon Wing, and the *many* St. Peter's bakers who made their famously deeeelicious desserts.



We also thank **Donna Staron**, who donated all the corn and potatoes, and **Price Chopper**, which donated all the buns,

baked right in the store.

Look and See

By Mary Oliver



amused. The duck, too, was not provoked, but, you might say, was laughing.

This morning, at waterside, a sparrow flew to a water rock and landed, by error, on the back of an eider duck; lightly it fluttered off,

This afternoon a gull sailing over our house was casually scratching its stomach of white feathers with one pink foot as it flew.



Oh Lord, how shining and festive is your gift to us, if we only look and see.

REFLECT

RECHARGE

REFRESH

At the

WOMEN'S RETREAT

Centered around

Hildegard of Bingen

1098 - 1179

Composer, Writer, Visionary

Saturday, 8 October 2022

10 AM – 3 PM

Old Chatham, NY

Presentations, Small groups, Lunch, Reflective Exercises

You, Friends, and Hildegard

Call for information and tickets (518) 794-0237

Spaces are limited.

Scholarships available

Swim Wing Productions

♪ **Happy Birthday to You:** ♪



Leslie Newton	9/2
Sandy Fox	9/3
Timothy Davis	9/4
Jeff Braley	9/6
Willard (Bill) Ulmer	9/10
Mitzi Lobdell	9/22
Larry Massimo	9/22
Nancy Ordman	9/28

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



Happy **63rd Anniversary** to Marion and Willard (aka Bill) Ulmer. They had a wonderful wedding on August 29, 1959 (left), and today live happily and actively with their dog Queenie (right). The adventuresome pair honeymooned in Maine, camping out until rain came and they decided to go to a motel. They celebrated their retirement in 1990 by getting a camper and driving to many places across the country.



Big Move for Marcy and Lee Coalter and family! After spending a year of service at Plowshare Farm in NH, the Coalters have returned to NY. While it was not an expected return, they are grateful and overjoyed to have been welcomed back home to the place of dear family and community, and putting homesteading roots down once again.

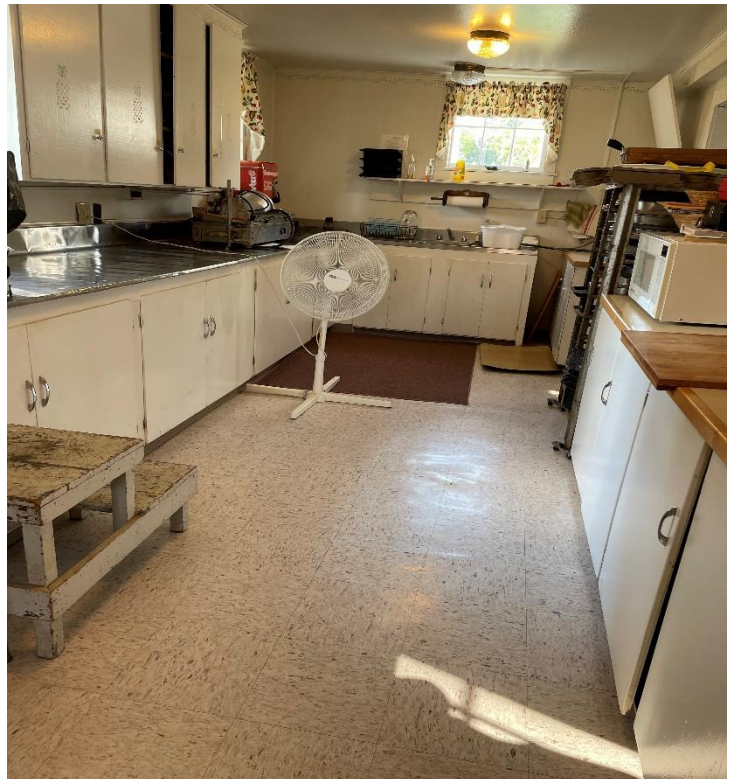
Note: If you have milestones in your family (marriages, anniversaries, births, milestone birthdays, graduations, etc.), please contact Kathy Geddie in the Church Office at 518-392-3389 or email saintpeters.spencertown@gmail.com.

Photo Album



Wendy Diskin and Mary Anne Davis with pans of pulled pork for the Summer Takeout Dinner held August 20. The menu had pulled pork or pulled chicken sandwich, coleslaw, potato salad, fresh corn on the cob, and dessert. Yum! We are sorry we did not get photos of the many people who worked on the dinner.

Look and marvel at our clean kitchen! Thanks to Mary Anne Davis and Larry Massimo who rolled up their sleeves to accomplish this feat on August 19, motivated by the takeout dinner the following day. It would have been difficult to work on the dinner with the kitchen in the messy state it was in before they cleaned it. Most of the countertops and the floor were covered with all sorts of things, including empty boxes, containers, Christmas tins, and much more. Unfortunately, we did not get a before picture.





Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
All Sunday Services below begin at 10 AM				1	2	3
4 Rev. Elia Communion "Everybody Preaches" Deuteronomy 30:15-20 and Romans 12:9-21	5 Labor Day	6	7 Council meeting, 7:00 PM on Zoom	8	9	10 Full Moon 5:20 AM <i>The Harvest Moon</i> 
11 Rev. Elia Homecoming Potluck!	12	13	14 Rev. Elia in office, 10 AM to 2 PM	15 Deadline for submitting Clara Gott application	16	17
18 Elder Nina Nichols, MDiv.	19 Women Unabridged Meeting, 5:30 PM outdoors at Lee Armstrong's home; book is <i>Bittersweet</i> by Susan Cain	20	21 Rev. Elia in office, 10 AM to 2 PM	22 Deacon's Meeting 7 PM on Zoom Autumnal Equinox 9:04 PM Welcome Fall	23	24 Deadline for submitting articles to the newsletter
25 Rev. Elia Teagan Reese O'Rourke Baptism	26	27	28	29	30	