



St. Peter's Press

January 2023

St. Peter's Presbyterian Church - Spencertown, NY

PO Box 14 | 5219 County Route 7 | Spencertown, NY 12165

Telephone: 518.392.3386 | Email: saintpeters.spencertown@gmail.com

Website: <http://saintpeterspc.org> | Facebook: www.facebook.com/saintpeterspc

What the Church Means to Me

Messages on *What the Church Means to Me* continued after the Stewardship Campaign, with Jennifer Thompson and Sandy Fischer sharing their thoughts on 11/20 and 12/4, respectively. If anyone would like to share their feelings about the church, please let Rev. Elia or Kathy Geddie know. All of the messages we have received have been moving and inspiring, so we hope others will come forward.



From Jennifer Thompson:

My father was a collector of old things — old skis, knives, coins, eyeglasses, stamps. Not in any monetary way. But he loved history and old buildings because of the untold stories they kept.

When I graduated from college with my history degree, I didn't know what to do. I started an MA in education, but I realized I didn't have the passion for it that would sustain me. Then I turned to Urban Planning (as I was interested in historic preservation), and took a class on architectural history with a wonderful professor (that is still a good friend today), and my path was decided. Professor Morgan was connected to the Art History department so I transferred over, and eventually got my MA in Art History, but my real love was architecture. So I continued on to study architectural history. This is all to say that place and

structure and the stories to be found there are very important to me.

When I go up into the attic of our house, I see tree trunks and ax marks; the trees that were felled mere steps probably from where the house stands. In the basement I see stones collected from the earth below and from the Punsit creek bed. The connection to place is strong. So when I come into the sanctuary, I feel the lineage of the people before me, the Mohican people who were here first, the European settlers that followed, and a long line of ancestry that brings us here today and is evidenced by the cemetery that surrounds this sacred place.

The church building has given me, from the



very beginning, a sense of belonging. I feel the connection of a lineage that I have no real part of, coming from KY as I do, but one that feels like home. And it's beautifully crafted, and stands proud overlooking the village green in perfect balance with the Academy and Town Hall.

But in the end, it's the people who matter most. And finding community with all of you within these walls is what keeps me here. While the church is an historic symbol and an important reminder of our past — and knowing and owning that past is key — it's the steadfastness of our congregation, of each and everyone of you, that makes my world so much brighter.

(What the Church Means to Me is continued on the next page.)

***(What the Church Means to Me,
Continued)***

From Sandy Fischer: My parents moved here shortly before I was born and were warmly welcomed into this church community. I was baptized here and grew up in the Sunday school program. Favorite memories include watching the eggs



being hidden on Easter Sunday for the egg hunt; seeing everyone dressed in their finest on Easter morning — getting a fancy new dress was always so special — the Christmas Eve services; and watching the older Sunday school classes, knowing someday I would be like the big kids. Vacation Bible School was the most fun thing to do in the summer, and I still have some of the crafts I made then....now vintage!

The Christmas pageant was always special — the costumes, the props, who would get to be who? I was always an angel....lol....questionable sometimes!

When I was in high school, I went through the confirmation class with Tim and Tom Newton under Rev. Ames and remember how grown up and special that part of the church service was when we vowed ourselves to God and this church. I taught Sunday school for a while, learning Bible stories and telling them with felt cutouts. I helped with Vacation Bible School, and eventually took over the music program for a few years. The church was always my place of solace. I came here to practice piano when we didn't have one at home. I came here when I was sad or upset or needed a quiet space to be.

When I moved away in 1989, Spencertown and St. Peter's still remained my home. I never found a church that gave me the same feelings, and somewhere along the way I lost touch with my faith. When I moved back in 1997, I didn't immediately return to the church. I dabbled in other faiths searching for something that spoke to my soul. Around 2012, I decided that for Lent I wasn't going to give anything up; I was going to let something in. And I went to

church. Drew was the pastor, and his words spoke to me. I talked to Luke Olivieri and auditioned for the choir. And then I talked to Phillip Patterson. I had known Phillip a little from before I moved away, but now as an adult, it was different. He immediately roped me into the Deacons. And I've been a fixture ever since. My relatives on both my parents' sides all live in the Midwest and beyond. We would see them once or twice a year, and I have fond memories of summers at the lake house but no real connection to a place there. My husband's family has been here for over 250 years, so much of the fabric of this town and this church resonate with their history. And now, having two children of my own, place and history are important.

Jeff Kiplinger spoke of the resonance of wood and how it gets better with age. Pondering the fabric of this church with over 250 years of singing and faith services, I know that I am a part of that. I've got 40 years or more of singing, praying, and crying in this place. Pieces of my heart and soul are in those rafters.

My family has struggled financially for all these many years, and I often feel bad about not pledging more money to the church when we desperately need it. I pledge my time, sometimes more than I spend with my own family, and my talents as best I have. And when I'm able, I support it with monetary contributions. I find comfort in the song lyrics:

*What can I give Him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man, I would do my part;
Yet what can I give Him?
Give Him my heart.*

David Pearce has on a couple of occasions likened the song *Balm in Gilead* to St. Peter's.

*There is a balm in St. Peter's
to make the wounded whole,
there is a balm in St. Peter's
to heal the sin-sick soul.*

It is my hope that through my commitment and love to this church that I will leave a legacy of place and service and community for my children. So that wherever they go they will always know and feel that this is their home, too. That their history was born and raised here as well as so many before them, and that they

(What the Church Means to Me, Sandy Fischer, Continued)

will always be welcomed and feel the same sense of peace and comfort as I have always felt.

Every morning I look up the street at the steeple of the church, catching the sun as it hits the weathervane. It has weathered much in the last 250 years. It is much more than a building. It is a beacon for this town, this faith community, and for my heart.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Price Chopper Gift Cards



The deacons, with some support from the Clara Gott fund, purchased Price Chopper gift cards for those who might need a little extra help

this season. Ten \$50 gift cards are available. This is a tradition started several years ago by our beloved Phillip Patterson. If you know of someone who could use some extra help over the holidays, tell them about the gift cards. The cards, as long as they last, are in the narthex on top of the mail slots.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Because of Friends Like You

*Anonymous,
Submitted by Mary Wambach*

It's good to open up the door and find you standing there.
For just to hear you say, "hello" can banish every care.
And when you come inside the house, you bring so much along:
Companionship, a rousing smile that turns the hours to a song.
The conversation never lags, and time just slides away
Because there's much for you to tell and a lot for me to say.
These visits give the heart a lift one can't afford to miss,
And life is richer through the years because of hours like this. So come as often as you can,
There are dreams for us to share. It's good
To open the door and find you standing there.

Mary Wambach



With great sadness, we report that Mary Wambach, a very active member and supporter of St. Peter's for many years, passed away on December 31 due to complications from pneumonia. She was 88 years old. She had been taken to St. Peter's Hospital the week before, on Christmas Eve. She died just short of the 1-year anniversary of her husband Lou's death on January 18, 2022.

Though Mary had not been able to come to church services for quite a while due to health issues, she remained very interested in St. Peter's, always keeping up with what was going on. She never stopped tithing. She bought dinners from fundraisers, and even purchased meals for others who could not make it to the church. She loved taking Communion at home. Mary was active in the Women's Guild for many years, contributing her considerable sewing and crafting skills to making wonderful things. She is best known for her fabulous teddy bears, which she loved to make and to teach others how to make them.

Over the years, Mary sent contributions for the newsletter. One envelope of these jewels was sent very recently. One of the items sent is in the column on the left. It reflects how much company meant to her and reminds us how important it is to spend time with others.

She requested that in lieu of flowers, contributions be sent to St. Peter's. RIP Mary; we love you, and we will miss you so much.

The Beautiful Christmas Bazaar



From left: Pat Meess, Jennifer Thompson, Barbara Smith, and Lynn O'Connell at the crafts area.

St. Peter's held its annual Christmas Bazaar on December 3 from 10 AM to 2:30 PM-ish (selling continued after the official closing time). Thanks to the considerable efforts of organizer Jennifer Thompson and many helpers, everything looked beautiful. The event was a great success!

We had decorated wreaths, the cookie walk, jewelry, hand-crafted items, and the silent auction. The quilt raffle drawing was at 2 PM; Sharon Wing won!

A delicious lunch of chili (vegetarian and meat options), cornbread, and cake was prepared and served by Mary Anne Davis and Nancy Ordman. All the chili was gobbled up!

Barbara Smith started a crafts group in October, which met weekly and created many wonderful things. This year, the plan is to start the group early this year. Everyone is welcome!

The event raised \$4,811 for St. Peter's. A breakdown of amounts by category is (thanks to Larry Massimo for his meticulous tabulations):

- Wreaths \$ 680.00
- Silent Auction 855.00
- Lunch 586.00
- Crafts 1094.00
- Jewelry 651.00
- Cookies 294.00
- Quilt Raffle 576.00
- Grandma's Attic 45.00

January Worship Sundays at 10 AM

(In-person and via Zoom)

- 1st:** Rev. Donna Elia
Communion, Epiphany
- 8th:** Rev. Donna Elia
- 15th:** Lay Leader Jere Wrightsman
- 22nd:** Kathi Jones
- 29th:** Rev. Elia
Annual Meeting, Potluck

~~~~~

## January Lectionary Readings



**1st** (Celebrating Epiphany): Isaiah 60:1-6, Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14, Matthew 2:1-12

**8th** (Baptism of the Lord): Isaiah 42:1-9, Psalm 29, Matthew 11:2-11

**15th:** Isaiah 49:1-7, Psalm 40:1-11, John 1:29-42

**22nd:** Isaiah 9:1-4, Psalm 27:1, 4-9, Matthew 4:12-23

**29th:** Micah 6:1-8, Psalm 15, Matthew 5:1-12

~~~~~

A New Year's Resolution!?

Consider joining the St. Peter's Choir; no experience necessary; no audition. If you've ever wanted to sing with others, and perhaps



learn more about music and become a better singer, consider our choir! There are few open choirs left in the world, and this form of community is sorely needed today. Come join us!

Clara Gott Fund

The Clara Gott Fund Committee met after church on January 1 to decide upon applications received by the 12/15 deadline.

Applications approved include: (1) Contribution to deacons' purchase of Price Chopper gift cards; (2) Columbia County Pathways to Recovery, a grassroots group responding to the needs for education, awareness, advocacy, and change in regard to addiction in Columbia County; and (3) seed money for the St. Peter's "Soul Café," a community-wide project in the planning stages (more information to come).

The next deadline for submitting applications to the Clara Gott fund is 3/15.

~~~~~

## Considering Becoming a Member of St. Peters?

Rev. Donna Elia will have an informal conversation with those considering becoming members of St. Peter's on Sunday, February 5 at 9 AM in the Fellowship Hall. She said, "We'll chat about the Presbyterian Church, St. Peter's in particular, and expectations and opportunities of membership."

You don't have to decide at this point. It's a conversation about possibility. We'll select another date, and possibly a third, depending upon the conversation and schedules of participants. A member of council will be present to share his or her experience of membership at St. Peter's!

~~~~~



Come to the potluck after church on January 29. We'll have some yummy food

brought by you to feast on during our Annual Meeting! Isn't it amazing how we always have dishes brought that satisfy every food group?!



~~~~~

## A Gift, a Miracle, or Maybe Both by Marion Ulmer



The Christmas Eve Service at St. Peter's was lovely. The church was full, and it filled our hearts to see so many people after 3 long years of Covid and its variants. But when we got home, I discovered I was missing one of my hearing aids. I double checked my purse and pockets. With a flashlight, I checked the car floor, between the car seats, and even the garage floor. Nothing!

After a Christmas Day brunch at our granddaughter's on Angel Hill Road, Bill and I went back to the church to look for my hearing aid. We had no expectation of finding it. He looked outside where he had parked the car, and I went inside. I opened the door to the sanctuary and there on the rug, just feet from me, lay the hearing aid! It was untrampled despite the many feet that must have walked over it. I put it in, and it worked! That was nothing short of a miracle! But that we found it at all was truly a gift. God does move in mysterious ways!

## **Announcement from Council Regarding the Manse**

We know it is important to maintain property; therefore, the church's manse should be occupied. Council has spent months researching ways to solve the water problem and has decided, after extensive consultation with professionals, that the best solution is to drill a separate well for the manse. We are contracting with Goold Wells & Pumps, Gordon Goold, who not only gave a competitive price but will also extend a 10% discount. He is able to start the work within a few weeks. He requires a few thousand dollars down payment and will let us pay as the work is done.

The estimate for drilling the well is just over \$21,000 plus the cost of a backhoe. The 10% discount will be applied when the final cost is tallied.

We just had a successful Stewardship Campaign and made pledges for the operating budget. Thank you for that wonderful effort. We received new pledges, and thus far, the total pledged amount is up 20% over last year. That is phenomenal! If you are able to give additional support, we invite you to consider donating to this specific project. We will also apply to the Trustees of Albany Presbytery through the grants and loans program. We welcome your input on additional funding ideas.

This money will be recouped over time by our ability to rent the manse. If ever the church chooses to sell the manse, it will be essential to have a separate well. Occupying the manse is

good for the building and a responsible use of our resources.

With God's help and all of us working together, we will continue to build up St. Peter's.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## **Women Unabridged Book Group**



In January, rather than meeting about a book, Women Unabridged is having its annual day out on Saturday, January 21st. They will go to

The Clark Museum (it's free in January and February) and then go out to lunch.

The February book is *The Underground Railroad* by Colson Whitehead for Black History month.

The book club welcomes any woman in the church and friends. We usually meet the third Monday of the month.

For questions or to join the group, please contact Denise Davis, 518-392-9690, or Teresa Barenfeld, 518-755-3273.

**Rev. Donna Elia** will be at St. Peter's January 11th, and 25th from 10 AM to 2 PM. Feel free to come chat with her in person while she is here. You can also call her on her cell phone (518-495-6795) or on the church phone (518-392-3386).



**With winter upon us, covid, the flu, and RSV are on the rise. Please stay home if you do not feel well and join us on Zoom. Council is monitoring the situation and might change worship protocols depending on conditions.**

♪ **Happy Birthday to:** ♪



|                   |      |
|-------------------|------|
| Marta Barenfeld   | 1/1  |
| Bonnie Mesick     | 1/5  |
| Charlotte Coalter | 1/8  |
| Arlene Newton     | 1/15 |
| Cheryl Roberts    | 1/15 |
| AnneMae Cashen    | 1/16 |
| William Culley    | 1/16 |
| Patricia Meess    | 1/18 |
| Frances Culley    | 1/23 |
| Ian Wing          | 1/26 |
| Terry Buck        | 1/28 |
| Isabella Waldorf  | 1/28 |

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



*Dick Light celebrated his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday on December 10. His daughter Lisa made it extra special by hiring a bagpipe player to serenade Dick. He went out with friends, many of whom are part of St. Peter's. They have a great group, calling themselves the ROMEOs (Retired Old Men Eating Out). Dick said, "being 90 is fun!" And he meant it!*

*Also full of vitality are Emma Jensen (left) who turned 91 on December 10 and Shirley Newsome (right) who turned 89 on December 12.*



# Photo Album

## *From the Church Bazaar*



*Left: David Pearce, John Lange, and Dan Franck enjoying delicious hot chili and cornbread for lunch. Right: Barbara Conkling's beautiful display of jewelry was a big hit.*



*Left: Donna Staron (sitting) and Judy Hoag getting ready for cookie walk customers.*

*Below: Pat Meess (front) and Lynn O'Connell setting up the craft tables.*





# Photo Album (Continued)



*Left: Marcy Coalter with the festive cookie containers*



*Right: Jean Brower selling raffle tickets for the beautiful quilt made and donated by Margy Quinn. Besides the quilt on the far left, the table to the right shows some of the silent auction goods and experiences, including the amazing amaryllis bulb arrangement made by Jean.*



**Coffee Hour** is a cherished time for fellowship after worship at St. Peter's.

*Left: Pat Meese, Shirley Newsome, and Emma Jensen catch up with each other on December 18. In the background, the Council Members are having a special meeting.*



*From left going around table: Nona Lange, husband John, Randy Ezinga, and Dan Franck enjoy coffee, tea, and conversation together.*

## ***Caroling on the Green***

*On a cold winter's eve, we gathered to joyfully sing Christmas Carols on the Spencertown Green.*



*From left are crooners Larry Massimo, John Lange, Nona Lange, Jere Wrightsman, Mary Anne Davis holding Zebby Geddie, Luke Olivieri, Jeff Kiplinger, Valerie Toenes (hidden), and Brin Quell. Not shown, Kathy Geddie. It was nice to meet Valerie and Brin, who had such beautiful voices; we might be able to recruit them for the choir. Jeff, who organized the event, printed beautiful songbooks for everyone. There are plenty of them, which we are saving for next year when we'll have even more carolers. Everyone warmed up with delicious hot chocolate (homemade by Mary Anne), hot cider, and cider donuts in the Fellowship Hall afterward.*



*From left, Luke Olivieri, Jeff Kiplinger, Valerie Toenes, and Brin Quell*

# JANUARY

| Sunday<br>(Service at<br>10 AM)                                       | Monday                                                                     | Tuesday                                        | Wednes<br>day                                                                                                                                                      | Thursday  | Friday                                                                                                            | Saturday                                                              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1</b><br>Rev. Donna Elia<br>Communion                              | <b>2</b>                                                                   | <b>3</b>                                       | <b>4</b><br>Council<br>Meeting 7 PM<br>via Zoom<br>Choir Practice<br>7 PM                                                                                          | <b>5</b>  | <b>6</b><br>Full Wolf Moon<br> | <b>7</b>                                                              |
| <b>8</b><br>Rev. Donna Elia<br>Baptism of the<br>Lord Sunday          | <b>9</b>                                                                   | <b>10</b><br>Deacons' Meeting 7<br>PM via Zoom | <b>11</b><br>Choir Practice<br>7 PM<br>Rev. Elia office<br>hours 10 AM-<br>2PM                                                                                     | <b>12</b> | <b>13</b>                                                                                                         | <b>14</b>                                                             |
| <b>15</b><br>Lay Leader Jere<br>Wrightsman                            | <b>16</b><br>Martin Luther King<br>Day<br>Annual Report<br>submissions due | <b>17</b>                                      | <b>18</b><br>Choir Practice<br>7 PM                                                                                                                                | <b>19</b> | <b>20</b>                                                                                                         | <b>21</b><br>Women<br>Unabridged trip to<br>Clark Museum and<br>lunch |
| <b>22</b><br>Rev. Kathi Jones                                         | <b>23</b>                                                                  | <b>24</b>                                      | <b>25</b><br>Choir Practice<br>7 PM<br>Rev. Elia office<br>hours 10 AM-<br>2PM                                                                                     | <b>26</b> | <b>27</b>                                                                                                         | <b>28</b>                                                             |
| <b>29</b><br>Rev. Donna Elia<br><b>Annual<br/>Meeting<br/>Potluck</b> | <b>30</b>                                                                  | <b>31</b>                                      | <b><i>"Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only<br/>light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate;<br/>only love can do that."<br/>Martin Luther King, Jr.</i></b> |           |                                                                                                                   |                                                                       |