



St. Peter's Press

June 2023

St. Peter's Presbyterian Church - Spencertown, NY
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Civil Rights Pilgrimage

By Rev Elia

Dear Ones at St. Peter's,

At a recent St. Peter's Council meeting, our intrepid clerk, Mary Anne Davis asked, "How many



sabbaticals have you taken in 33 years of ministry?" I replied, "This is my first one." This plan was in place before I began serving as pastor of St. Peter's, which continues to be a joy for me!

Beginning June 1 and extending through August 31, I will be

studying, blogging, and traveling – sometimes nearby, like the site of two lynchings in New York State, which is a Juneteenth event co-sponsored by the Albany Presbytery Anti-Racist Task Force (ARTF). In July, I'll go to the Deep South: Montgomery and Selma, Alabama, and Jackson and Money, Mississippi. August will include a trip to DC. The travel will include both visits to sacred sites and conversations with people doing the work of racial justice.

I will be available to St. Peter's during some of this time, preaching twice in June and at least once in July and again in August. This will be a mutually beneficial opportunity to reflect theologically on racial justice and the work of anti-racism. I so appreciate the Council's willingness to recognize the importance of this transformational time.

I will continue to moderate Council, as I can do that from anywhere. I certainly want to know about pastoral concerns. Please feel free to reach out to me. Quite honestly, I don't need a sabbatical from St. Peter's, but I am glad for this opportunity, especially for such a meaningful time to study, reflect, and with God's help, to lean more deeply in the direction of justice. It's a journey at the heart of our faith. How wonderful to get to share it with you!

With all my best and with deep gratitude,
Donna

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## Rev. Donna's Contract Is Renewed for Another Year!

By Mary Anne Davis

The St. Peter's Council voted unanimously and enthusiastically to renew Rev. Donna Elia's contract through next May. It was suggested that we keep her through all of 2024, but Presbytery and the Committee on Ministers and Congregations (COMAC) require us to renew a pastor's contract on a yearly basis. Oh well. We are grateful for Donna and look forward to another year with her inspiring and thoughtful sermons and excellent guidance and leadership for at least 12 more months!

Since Donna has been at the helm, we have had a Soul Café to help feed the community, collaborated robustly with both the Valatie and Hudson Presbyterian churches, welcomed some new members, and experienced energized worship. The Board of Deacons increased to 7 members, due in large part to Donna's support and encouragement of the deacons. I know I speak for all of us when I say, thank you Donna!! YIPPEE!!

**Rev. Donna Elia** will not have office hours this month due to her sabbatical. However, you can call her for pastoral care at any time on her cell phone (518-495-6795) or email her at [delia001@nycap.rr.com](mailto:delia001@nycap.rr.com)

## *My Story at St. Peter's*

By Grace Ann Silvernale



*Harold ("Took") and Grace Ann Silvernale in the Red Lion Inn Sleigh, December 2018*

Since my lifetime at St. Peter's has been many years, I will start back at my childhood growing up next door to the Church.

Activities and playtime consisted of simple, ordinary pleasures. Roller skating on the cement sidewalk in front of the Church was my only chance of being able to use my roller skates. Sidewalks, and we did have them, were of gravel except for a small portion in front of St. Peter's that was made of cement.

Sunday School happened each and every Sunday. On cold winter days an older man, Fred Bartlett, provided a warm area for us. A fire in the pot-bellied stove upstairs was there to greet us, as were teachers such as Florence MacNish and Catherine Seipel.

Blueberrying in Austerlitz was a fun time as well as providing berries for pies at a Church dinner. We had picnics at Prospect Lake in South Egremont, MA. Pete Steuerwald would back his truck to a cement platform at the side of the Spencertown Store. We children would then get in the back of the truck and were taken to the lake for swimming, boat riding, pony riding, and trying to dance to a jukebox. Our parents then came with picnic provisions, and we all sat at a very long table to enjoy what they brought.

The Tower Club booth at the Chatham Fair will never be forgotten. Hard work, yes, but the whole town seemed to look forward to it from year to year. The Braley family provided transportation of the food and necessities from St. Peter's to the Fair. Going down to the basement of the Church during Labor Day weekend, many people appeared. Dough Murdock — Mr. Murdock to me as he was Branch Manager of the bank where I was then employed in Chatham — and Hiney Barden sat there peeling

potatoes and everything else that needed peeling. The assembly line never faltered. The Steam Table and sandwich and hamburger section provided many wholesome meals.

The Tent (where the Tower Club was then set up) had a good-sized sink to handle everything that had to be washed and dried. I can still remember Catherine Crellin, wife of Jack Crellin from the Board of Trustees at St. Peter's, saying "I could just jump in this sink!" Days were hot; thunder and lightning with rain pouring down made rivers for us to stand in. The next year, we were located in a building. My sister, Bea Demnler, Mike (Myrtle) Braley, and Edythe Barden spent so much time at the Booth, one of the *carnies* asked them where their next stop at a Fair would be.

Christmas Bazaar time brings back memories of a long table filled with handmade stuffed animals and dolls, children's pajamas, quilted baby blankets and knitted items. There were felted birds, hand-painted wooden houses, chances on a handmade afghan, "Grandma's Attic," a bake table, and lunch. A sight to behold — all of it!

Time marches on — Harold and I were married on Pearl Harbor Day in 1957 at St. Peter's by the Minister at the time who was blind. There was hesitation in marrying us due to the short length of time we had known each other.

It is my hope, and the hope of many, that St. Peter's will flourish for years to come.



*Grace Ann and Harold's magnificent rose bush is one of many features that make her back deck so inviting and peaceful.*

# Rhubarb Is the Harbinger of Spring

By Jean Brower



Several years ago when Grace Ann Silvernale organized the St. Peter's Bake Table for the Summer in Spencertown event, she requested *all*

*things rhubarb*. The following was my contribution:

## Rhubarb Nut Bread

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour two 8 x 4 x 3 loaf pans.

**Ingredients:** • 3/4 c each brown sugar & white sugar • 2/3 c vegetable oil • 1 egg, beaten • 1 c sour cream or buttermilk • 1 tsp baking soda • 1 tsp salt • 1 tsp vanilla • 2 1/2 c flour • 1 1/2 c, 1/2 -inch pieces of rhubarb • 1/2 c pecans, toasted then chopped when cool • 1 T butter, softened • 1/3 c granulated sugar

**Directions:** • Combine the sugars, oil, and beaten egg. • In another bowl, mix buttermilk or sour cream, baking soda, salt, and vanilla. • Add the milk mixture to the sugar mixture alternately with the flour, beating well after each addition. • Fold in rhubarb and toasted nuts. • Pour into prepared pans. • Combine softened butter and sugar and sprinkle the mixture on top of the dough. • Bake for about 1 hour.

The recipe does make two loaves, but, sadly, I only gave Grace Ann one loaf as my dog Raffles ate one!! I gave Grace Ann the price of the other. I now call it *Raffles Bread*.

*Bon Appetite and a Joyous Spring,  
Jean*

# Clara Gott Fund

The next **deadline for submitting applications** to the Clara Gott Fund is **June 15**.

Applications are available at all times on the church bulletin board in the narthex and via a link on the St. Peter's website at <https://saintpeterspc.org/clara-gott-fund/>. If anyone knows of a worthy organization or an individual in need who could use support from the fund, please inform them about Clara Gott.

A congregational meeting was held after the church service on June 4, 2023, to revise the Clara Gott bylaws. Some of the changes lessened the number of people required to serve on the committee from the various boards and from the congregation at large. This is due to fewer active members of the church. Also, the pastor was given the right to be a voting member of the committee. You can find the bylaws on the church website.

Clara Gott Committee Members for 2023 are Jere Wrightsman (Chairperson), Rev. Donna Elia, Kathy Geddie, Shirley Newsome, David Pearce, Ellen Schoonover, Jennifer Thompson, and Marion Ulmer.

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### SUPPORT FOR MIGRANTS BUSED FROM NEW YORK CITY

From Sunday to Monday, May 28-29, over 100 migrants arrived in the Capital Region on buses from New York City, which no longer has capacity to house them, according to the mayor. While they are staying in hotels in and near Albany, a coalition of community organizations is seeking to provide support and welcome. The most immediate need is for funding, which is being coordinated by the Columbia County Sanctuary Movement (CCSM). We encourage personal and congregational donations through their website, which can be accessed by the QR below. Information about additional means of support, including donations-in-kind and volunteering, is available at

<https://www.sanctuarycolumbiacounty.org/asylum>

From:

- Mary Anne Davis and Rev. Donna Elia, co-chairs, Albany Presbytery Anti-Racism Task Force
- Terry Diggory and Rebecca Rector, co-chairs, Albany Presbytery Immigration Network

Columbia County Sanctuary Movement: donate NOW!



### Collection of Toiletries for Immigrants—Give a Helping Hand



St. Peter’s is also participating in the Columbia County Sanctuary Movement by collecting toiletries to provide to the immigrants now in our area, who need a helping hand.

Please bring your contributions to the box in the narthex on the table near the right sanctuary door.

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### Underground Railroad Education Center Founders to Speak at St. Peter’s

On Sunday, June 25, we will have a special

presentation by Paul and Mary Liz Stewart, founders of the Underground Railroad Education Center (UREC). UREC “researches and preserves the local and national history of the



Underground Railroad movement, its international connections, and its legacy to today’s social justice issues, thereby empowering people of all ages to be agents of change toward an equitable and just society.”

We will have a light lunch of sandwiches, etc., after the service, after which the Stewarts will share their story. Please pass the word to others you know who would be interested in attending.

To learn more about UREC, see a YouTube video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q7NcVBWyPys>; plus there are many more sites on the work of the UREC.

## St. Peter's Bake Sale June 24

St. Peter's will have a bake sale table at the Spencertown Academy's *Market on the Green* on June 24 from 9 AM to 3 PM. This is part of the Academy's Hidden Gardens event.



Being part of this event will be fun, will support our community, and might raise a little money for St. Peter's. Our own Mary Ann Davis and Randy Ezinga will also have tables on the Green as well to sell their pottery and woodworking works of art, respectively, as well. Be sure and check out their displays as well.

We need contributions of goodies to sell at the bake sale and people to staff the table, which can be done in shifts. There will be a signup sheet at church.

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## Women Unabridged Book Club

The book selected for June is *The Girls of Atomic City, the Untold Story of the Women Who Helped Win WW II* by Denise Kiernan. This book tells the story of thousands of civilians, many of them young women from small



towns in the South, who were recruited to come to Oak Ridge, Tennessee, during the war. They were kept in the dark about the tasks they performed in the factories there until the end of the war, when Oak Ridge's secret was revealed.

For June, we've decided to restart in-person meetings and will share a potluck meal at Kathy Geddie's home on Thursday, June 15, at 6 PM. (Note the change in day of the week.) If the weather is good, we'll meet outside.

The book for July is *Lessons in Chemistry* by Bonnie Garmus, recommended by three book club members. This is a newer book, so we recommend putting in a request for the book to the library system now. Teresa Barenfeld is hosting that meeting on July 17; bring your swimsuit and enjoy a pool party!

The book club always welcomes new participants. For questions, contact Denise Davis, 518-392-9690, or Teres Barenfeld, 518-755-3273.

## Farewell to Our Dear Marian Kern



Marian B. Kern peacefully passed away the morning of May 6, at her home of 75 years, in the town of Austerlitz NY.

She was born April 14, 1929, and lived most of her childhood in Breakabeen, NY (in Schoharie County). After living a short time in Schenectady, she married her sweetheart Willard

Kern and moved to Austerlitz, Columbia County, NY. They built a house on Punsit Road, where Marian lived the rest of her life.

Marian worked various jobs throughout her life, and raised three daughters, Violet Robbin, Nancy Hallenbeck, Ann Ordway, and one son Willard (Woody) Kern.

Marian was very active in and loved St. Peter's. Among her many activities with the church, she taught Sunday School and participated in many activities with the Women's Guild. In the Guild, she sewed many Church Bazaar items to sell and helped make the church banners. She was always willing to help whoever needed an extra hand and developed many friendships through the years.

In recent years Marian enjoyed sitting on her porch watching the birds and squirrels at her feeders, while listening to and singing along with music, and visiting with family and friends.

Memorial donations can be sent to the Community Hospice of Columbia Greene, 47 Liberty St., Catskill, NY 12414; the Chatham Rescue Squad, PO Box 352, Chatham, NY 12037; or your favorite charity.

*Sharon Wing wrote a wonderful article on Marian that so well captures her beautiful essence, which appeared in the March 2023 Newsletter. You can access Sharon's article on the St. Peter's website at <https://saintpeterspc.org/newsletters/>.*

**June Lectionary Readings**

**4th:** Genesis 1:1-2:4a; Psalm 8;  
Matthew 28:16-20

**11th:** Genesis 12:1-9,  
18-26; Psalm  
33:1-12;  
Matthew 9:9-13,  
18-26

**18th:** Genesis 18:1-15;  
Psalm 100;  
Matthew 9:35-10:8

**25th:** Genesis 21:18-21; Psalm 86:1-10,  
16-17; Matthew 10:24-39

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The Men's Group will meet at 12 noon, after church, on June 25 at the Chatham Grill. After this meeting, the group will be on hiatus for the summer, with the next meeting being after church on September 24th.

**June Worship  
Sundays at 10 AM**  
*(In-person and via Zoom)*

**4th:** Rev. Donna Elia  
Communion

**11th:** Lay Leader Marion Ulmer

**18th:** Lay Leader Jere Wrightsman  
Father's Day

**25th: Rev. Donna Elia**  
Light lunch followed by presentation by the founders of the Underground Railroad Education Center (UREC)

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***I Wake Close to Morning***  
By Mary Oliver

*Why do people keep asking to see  
God's identity papers  
when the darkness opening into morning  
is more than enough?  
Certainly any god might turn away in  
disgust.  
Think of Sheba approaching  
the kingdom of Solomon.  
Do you think she had to ask,  
"Is this the place?"*

**Deacons Bring Back Caring List**

At their May 5, 2023, meeting, the deacons voted to reinstate the Caring List, which assigns persons in the church to a particular deacon. Of course, any and all deacons are available to any and all people all the time. However, it is felt that it might be easier to have one person as a primary contact. The method of assigning the deacons is by splitting up the congregants alphabetically as listed in the Church Directory. The list is below; feel free to contact a deacon at any time.

- Marcy Coalter: Arms-Cash
- Mary Anne Davis: Coat-Dave, Wing
- Joel Dyslin: Davi-Gall
- Randy Ezinga: Gard-Jens
- Kathy Geddie: Keef-Mora
- Jennifer Thompson: Myer-Scho
- Sharon Wing: Silv-Youn

♪ **Happy Birthday to:** ♪



|                    |      |
|--------------------|------|
| Kurt Barenfeld     | 6/3  |
| Seraphina Coalter  | 6/3  |
| Evelyn Keefner     | 6/5  |
| George French      | 6/6  |
| Marjorie Hansen    | 6/8  |
| Katie Smith Cashen | 6/9  |
| David Pearce       | 6/10 |
| Hannah Braley      | 6/11 |
| Ellen Schoonover   | 6/15 |
| Karin Silvernale   | 6/29 |

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



*Happy **1st Birthday** (born on May 10) to **Teagan O'Rourke**, daughter of Kevin and Brianna, little sister of Collins O'Rourke, granddaughter of Wendy and Greg Diskin, and great granddaughter of Emma Jensen.*



*On May 6, 1978, **Wendy Jensen and Greg Diskin** joyfully got married at St. Peter's! She became a wonderful teacher; he became an amazing chef. They raised two beautiful children, Sean and Brianna. And they combined their **45th anniversary** celebration with their granddaughter Teagan's 1st*

*birthday celebration (so all the photos from that event were, you guessed it, of the baby).*

## ***Milestones, Continued***



***Welcome to the world Baby Nika Ray***, born May 21 to parents Dorna Lange and Sanja Boekle in Berlin, Germany. The parents and grandparents, John and Nona Lange, are above-the-moon thrilled! John and Nona plan to visit sometime this summer.



You can see how thrilled Sanja (arrow on left) and Dorna (arrow on right) are; they can't stop laughing as they are greeted by very nice and helpful neighbors at their Berlin abode when they brought Nika (middle arrow, duh) home from the hospital.



***Happy Birthday to Sandy Fischer*** who turned 55 on May 8. On her birthday she worked (being the above-and-beyond teacher she is). She then took her robot students and the robot they built to the Elks Lodge for a demonstration, for which they received a donation to the robot program. She did get to celebrate with the family and an ice cream cake on Mother's Day.

***Note:*** If you have milestones in your family (births, weddings, milestone birthdays and anniversaries, etc.), please send an email to [saintpeters.spencertown@gmail.com](mailto:saintpeters.spencertown@gmail.com) so we can share the good news with others in our community.

**PLEASE SUBMIT ARTICLES, MILESTONES, BIRTHDAYS, AND PHOTOS FOR THE JULY NEWSLETTER NO LATER THAN JUNE 25.**

**LOOK FOR GRADUATES IN THE JULY NEWSLETTER.**



# Photo Album

## *From the May 20 Kimchi Class*



*From left: Katy Flammia (teacher's assistant and wife), Mary Anne Davis, teacher Jeff Kiplinger, Mitzi Lobdell, Kathy Geddie, Joel Dyslin, and Shirley Newsome, with the goodies they got to take home.*

## *This was a hands-on participation class:*



*Left: Mitzi supervising Mary Anne who is putting the kimchi cucumbers in jars; Right: Mitzi and Joel chopping, chopping, chopping. Shirley is cheering everyone on.*



*That's chef Jeff's hands mixing those fresh, delicious, and healthy ingredients*

## Photo Album (*Continued*)

### *People are the heart of St. Peter's*



*Jean Brower has returned from her winter sojourn in warm, sunny Florida, yippee! Here she's enjoying a coffee hour visit with friends, from left, Shirley Newsome, Marion Ulmer, Emma Jensen, and Jean. In the background is Collins O'Rourke who came to church full of sparkle with grandmother Wendy Diskin.*



*On most Sundays, Kaarin Lemstrom-Sheedy (aka "Pook"), walks from her home on Elm Street to worship at St. Peter's. If you wonder why you don't see her at the end of the service or at Coffee Hour, it is because she has to leave early to open up her store, pookstyle, in Chatham, which she runs with her jovial husband Bob.*



| Sunday<br>(Service at<br>10 AM)                                                                                                                                       | Monday                                                                                                  | Tuesday                                                                             | Wednesday                                                                                                           | Thursday                                                                     | Friday | Saturday                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                         |                                                                                     |                                                                                                                     | 1                                                                            | 2      | 3<br>Full Strawberry<br>Super Moon<br>                                                                                               |
| 4<br>Rev. Donna Elia<br>Communion<br>Congregation Meeting<br>on CG bylaw revision                                                                                     | 5                                                                                                       | 6<br>Choir Practice 7<br>PM                                                         | 7<br>Council Meeting 7<br>PM via Zoom                                                                               | 8                                                                            | 9      | 10<br>Montell Phish<br>Gospel Group<br>renting church for<br>private recording<br>session                                                                                                                               |
| 11<br>Lay Leader Marion<br>Ulmer                                                                                                                                      | 12                                                                                                      | 13<br>Deacons'<br>Meeting 5:30 PM<br>at Mary Anne<br>Davis's home<br>Potluck dinner | 14<br>Choir Practice 7<br>PM<br> | 15<br>Women Unabridged<br>Meeting/Potluck at<br>Kathy Geddie's<br>home, 6 PM | 16     | 17                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 18<br>Lay Leader Jere<br>Wrightsmen<br><b>Father's Day</b>                                                                                                            | 19<br>Juneteenth<br> | 20                                                                                  | 21<br>Choir Practice 7<br>PM<br> | 22                                                                           | 23     | 24<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>St. Peter's<br/>bake sale table<br/>at Market on the<br/>Green, 9 AM-3<br/>PM</li> <li>Free Repair<br/>Café from 10 AM<br/>to 2 PM at<br/>Chatham<br/>Firehouse</li> </ul> |
| 25<br>Rev. Donna Elia<br>Light lunch after the<br>service followed by<br>presentation by the<br>founders of the<br>Underground Railroad<br>Education Center<br>(UREC) | 26                                                                                                      | 27                                                                                  | 28<br>Choir Practice 7<br>PM                                                                                        | 29                                                                           | 30     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |