



# The Keystone

## Saint Peter's Episcopal Church

200 Pleasant Street, Bennington, Vermont 05201

Phone 802-442-2911

Website: [www.stpetersvt.org](http://www.stpetersvt.org)

Interim Rector: Reverend E. Angela Emerson

Fall 2020

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**“God is calling the community of Saint Peter’s Parish to live, worship  
and serve according to Christ’s word and example.”**

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### **The Changing Face and Dynamics of Leadership and Communications**

Things are a bit different now at St. Peter’s Church. We have a new Interim Rector, The Rev. E. Angela Emerson (or Angie or Ange or Priest Angela), a new office manager, Marica Levin, a Community Missioner, John Terauds, and a new Sexton, Dennis Rose. With all of these new additions, the time has come for our Sr. Warden, Collins Sennett to have a little break from fielding all calls, all inquiries, all requests, all complaints, and initiating all communication. Thank you Collins for your leadership during this unsettling period!

So, let’s all do our part and make the church office the *central communications hub*. Email the office at [office@stpetersvt.org](mailto:office@stpetersvt.org) or call the office @ **802-442-2911** with information, announcements, requests, and Marcia or Angela will respond. This is especially important for requests for pastoral care. If you are ill or hospitalized or have an emergency, please email or call!

As the congregation transitions to part-time clergy, energy will be devoted to developing new lines of communication and new roles for leadership. This is an ongoing and evolving task.

Here is what is happening at the moment:

In general terms, the Vestry and Interim Rector share leadership of the congregation. The Interim Rector provides day-to-day direction to the staff (Marcia Levin, Office Manager, John Terauds, Community Missioner, and Dennis Rose, Sexton). Every Monday, Marcia, John, and Angela meet with the Sr. Warden, Collins Sennett, and Jr. Warden, Bill Harrington, to assess how things are going, set priorities for the week, and exchange information. We address any emergencies or pressing matters that require a decision. Thankfully, there have not been any other than our plans to do outdoor worship services in August. Each of us submits a written report to the Vestry before each Vestry meeting. If you would like a copy of any of the reports, please email [office@stpetersvt.org](mailto:office@stpetersvt.org).

The Vestry and Interim Rector will appoint teams to carry out both long-range and short-range tasks. Right now there are ‘networks’ of people doing pastoral care, cultivating new efforts in community ministry both in the Pleasant Street neighborhood and in the greater community, under John

Terauds' leadership, and a burgeoning Liturgy and Worship Team. And of course, there is a team of COVID BUSTERS, also known as Health Officers who are deeply involved in planning for outdoor worship. For now, any questions about any of this work, and suggestions or ideas for other areas of work, should be directed through the office for dissemination to the Vestry.

**Please read your weekly e-news carefully.** The weekly email will provide the dates and times of events, as well as information about the Sunday Service. If you have an announcement for the e-news, please send it to [office@stpetersvt.org](mailto:office@stpetersvt.org) by noon on Wednesday. If you do not receive the weekly email, please let Marcia know and she will add you to the list. If you don't have email, please call the church office @ **802-442-2911** and we will get a printed copy of the weekly email to you.

**The *Keystone* will no longer be monthly.** We are moving to a quarterly publication with more 'meat' for you to digest so that everyone can be better informed about the many and varied ministry efforts underway. If you have articles to submit, please submit them to Kay Trafton, Editor of the *Keystone* – [kayteach33@gmail.com](mailto:kayteach33@gmail.com). The next deadline will be at the end of November. Please send any questions and comments to the Interim Rector at [aemerson@stpetersvt.org](mailto:aemerson@stpetersvt.org) or to [office@stpetersvt.org](mailto:office@stpetersvt.org).

In August, we hope to have a joint meeting of the Vestry and the Ministry Discernment Team to discuss a timeline and plan for calling a new rector. This process will be quite different from previous ones. Why? Because COVID-19 is turning our world upside down and the new initiatives and adaptations required by COVID-19 and our sense of mission and service in light of changing conditions in the world, will be the story that is captured in the profile.

The coming year will be a thrilling ride of ups and downs and twists and turns that will be unsettling to some and stimulating to others. Remember, we are all in this together, so please let everyone in leadership know what you're thinking and how you are doing.

### **Love Your Neighbor ~ A Mantra for COVID-TIDE**

“The times they are a changin’.” Bob Dylan wrote those words in the sixties but the phrase speaks to the changes we are now experiencing. If there is one change that is causing us all acute distress, it is physical distancing. We are separated from mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, nieces and nephews, children and grandchildren, next-door neighbors, dear friends, and from our community of faith. The uncertainty of when this health crisis will end—if it will ever end—only exacerbates our fears, our anxiety, our yearning for what we have lost.

In our vulnerability, we can hold on to these words from Holy Eucharist Rite I: “It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto thee, O Lord, holy Father, Almighty, everlasting God.” For what shall we give thanks during this time? Landlines, cell phones, smartphones, tablets, computers, and yes, ZOOM! Today, give thanks for all these technological wonders that make our isolation and vulnerability bearable, and allow us to gather and pray and praise together, to check in with each other, to touch base and express our concern. It is one

way to show our love for one another—to actually love our neighbor—so reach out and touch someone today!

Perhaps now, more than ever, it is important for us to strengthen our ties to one another using whatever technology is available to us. In other parts of the *Keystone* you will read about ideas and efforts to strengthen our communication so that everyone is connected to someone in the community. Everyone has a ‘buddy’ to call on for help and a “buddy” with whom you can check in and exchange “The Peace.” The peace as we know it is both a prayer and blessing we offer to each other. And we all need that prayer and blessing—now more than ever.

~ *The Rev. E. Angela Emerson, Interim Rector*

### **Loving Your Neighbor Is Pastoral Care**

Our closest Episcopal Church neighbors are St. James’ in Arlington and Zion Episcopal Church in Manchester. We have been informally dubbed “The Southwest Constellation” and the Sr. Wardens and Clergy are meeting with the Canon to the Ordinary, Lynn Bates, to talk about how we can help and support each other. At the present time, both Arlington and Bennington have part-time clergy. The Rev. John Mitchell, Zion Manchester has just retired, and that congregation is under the leadership of the Vestry and Sr. Warden. At our first meeting, we identified Pastoral Care as the top priority in how we might help and support each other.

In this time of COVID-19 isolation, each congregation is struggling with how best to stay in touch. Everyone is trying ZOOM, but that is reaching a limited number of people. Our directories are not as current as we need them to be and there is no formal network using telephones, driveway ‘drop-ins,’ small group gatherings by neighborhood, or even systematic or regular check-ins. We have relied so heavily on our Sunday morning gatherings—especially coffee hour—that are not prepared or organized to support each other.

What might it look like for us to establish and grow our ‘connectedness’ to each other through person-to-person contact outside of Church? We can do this, but it will take a commitment on the part of all of us to give a little bit of time to each other on a regular basis.

This is very much a part of pastoral care under our present conditions. Historically, pastoral care has been one of the primary tasks of clergy, and with full-time clergy that made perfect sense. But with the transition to part-time clergy, there is a greater need for the lay members of the congregation to take a more active role in visiting, calling, and supporting one another. Zion Manchester has a number of people who are trained Stephens’ Ministers. This is a program that gives in-depth training to lay persons to provide pastoral care in a wide variety of circumstances. Perhaps we might consider having some ‘training’ time with Zion’s team of lay ministers.

The part-time clergy will be called on to help other congregations in cases of hospitalizations, emergencies, and death. We may need to develop a network of retired clergy to assist. We may need to look at what other resources we might develop to meet the needs of our communities.

Pastoral care is taking on a new and expanded meaning for us in this period of transition—not only the transition to part-time clergy, but transition away from Sunday morning gatherings at the Church to new, undeveloped, but necessary means of loving our neighbor.

~ Collins Sennett & The Rev. E. Angela Emerson, Interim Rector

### **Love Your Neighbor & Black Lives Matter**

by *The Roving Reporter*

They stood in a circle with their signs facing the street. They were small in number but the message was clear, powerful, and well received: Black Lives Matter. Enough is Enough. Love.

Cars passed by, the driver honked the horn and passengers gave a thumbs up. A family-filled car stopped for a moment to listen to the prayer. A man walking along the street yelled “Thank you, thank you.” Another car passed, and the look of surprise on the face of the passenger was worth a thousand words.

There was conversation about the plan to paint a Black Lives Matter mural on the street in downtown Bennington. “How can we support this movement?” “What can we do?” “How can we get others to join us?” “How can we create conversation about race, about why we need to say Black Lives Matter?” Two women from the greater community joined the folks from St. Peters... Until the rain started in... and everyone scattered!

It was a good day! The message was sent: We love our neighbors. The message was received—and gratitude filled the air. It was a good day!

### **Welcome Marcia!!!**

Marcia Levin has joined the staff at St Peter’s as Office Manager to assist and support communications, office systems, and the community in general. You may contact Marcia on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday by emailing the church @ [office@stpetersvt.org](mailto:office@stpetersvt.org) or calling **802-442-2911**. Marcia and her husband Spencer just moved to Bennington from Seattle, Washington to be near family here in Southern Vermont.



## Community Mission: Living in Christ Is to be Christ in the World



Artwork: *The Road to Emmaus* by Michael Torevell

“Storms make the oak grow deeper roots.” This simple observation by the early 17<sup>th</sup>-century Welsh-English poet and parish priest George Herbert has a message for us: As we get walloped by political, economic, social, health, and environmental challenges—some days all at once—we need to tend to the roots that give us strength and resilience.

For anyone following Christ, our roots are bound in the continuing call of the Resurrected Christ to show the world what God’s abundant, boundless, and merciful love looks like on the street, in the classroom, at the hospital, and in my favorite comfy armchair at home.

For some people, recognizing that Christ has been dwelling in our hearts all along is the beginning of a marvelous journey that helps us see Christ in the eyes and hearts of the folks around us. For other people, working hard for social justice, better health care, and for childhoods with brighter futures brings a sudden awareness that Christ is walking alongside all of this work, often unrecognized.

In short, our individual faith journeys are as unique as our God-given fingerprints. But the destination is the same: to be joined in the body of the Resurrected Christ, living and working and loving in the world. Our roots are nourished and strengthened by God’s Word, the example of Jesus Christ, and in the restoring breath of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Trinity calls us to be part of this creative activity in the world. We are to follow the example of the apostles, who were called by Jesus to be living, breathing vessels of the Good News. As we read in the fifth chapter of the Book of Acts (12-16):

*Now many signs and wonders were done among the people through the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon’s Portico. None of the rest dared to join them, but the people held them in high esteem. Yet more than ever believers were added to the Lord, great numbers of both men and women, so that they even carried out the sick into the streets, and laid them on cots and mats, in order that Peter’s shadow might fall on some of them as he came by. A great number of people would also gather from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all cured.*

I see my time as St Peter’s Community Missioner as an opportunity to help all of us strengthen our roots in Christ. As we hear God’s Word and celebrate God’s creativity in worship, as we gather for

Bible Study, as we get together to discuss the significant challenges facing us in these tumultuous and scary times, our roots in faith and Christ's call will grow deeper and stronger.

This is our response to Christ's first and greatest commandment, to love the Lord our God with all our heart and with all our soul and with all our mind. As we feel our roots grow stronger and deeper, we will look around at the needs around us to see how we can match up our unique talents and gifts with the work Christ is calling us to do. This is so we can love our neighbors as ourselves.

Our journey as members of the body of Christ is also our communal journey as family, friends and neighbors. It is a journey of listening to and responding in the love of Christ. In a world too often buffeted by the storms of darkness, hate, and fear, we are called to be the roots of light, love, and hope of God's unfolding kingdom.

*~ John Terauds*

### **Practical Ways of Growing Our roots in Christ**

- To offer ourselves, our loved ones, and our neighbors up to God in prayer every day.
- To study God's Word to help us understand our vital role in God's ongoing mission. We have begun this in our Thursday evening Word and Prayer group, where we look at the message and meaning of each coming Sunday's Gospel reading. This will lead to even broader Bible Study opportunities this fall.
- To worship, give thanks, and pray as a community, strengthening each other as members of the Body of Christ.
- To exercise the spiritual discipline of giving and practicing the spiritual gift of generosity.
- To engage with the community around us to see how God is already at work outside traditional 'church.' To this end, with the invaluable help and initiative of Nancy Sanford and Mary Gerisch, we are:
  1. Collecting the prayers of individual people from the neighborhood around the church, so that we can join them in our common worship during the Intercessions;
  2. Creating a Bennington Cycle of Prayer, where we can pray for and celebrate the great work already taking place in the community around us through its organizations and those of us who support them with our time, talents, and financial support;
  3. Having conversations with community organizations to discover their current needs and to learn how the people of St Peter's can join in their ongoing missions;
  4. Looking at ways to turn our church grounds into a place of welcome and gathering for anyone and everyone who passes by on Pleasant St; and
  5. Exploring ways in which we can contribute prayerfully and meaningfully to conversations about racial equality and reconciliation in Bennington—building on the vigils we have held on the front lawn of the church on the first Sunday of the month since June.

If you want to know more, if you have questions, if you have doubts, or if you have an idea or insight, please share them with Angie, John, or our soon-to-be formed Community Mission team.

Let's go into the world in peace to love and serve the Lord, fully embodying the great joy and trust expressed in the Letter to the Ephesians:

*Glory to God, whose power working in us can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine. Glory to God from generation to generation, in the Church and in Christ Jesus, for ever and ever. Amen—and Alleluia!*

~ John Terauds

### **Expanding Christian Community (ECC)**

Many of you may remember getting a call this past spring to update the directory and gather emails for our weekly newsletter. That information did not go in a deep, black hole as you may have thought. It was recently transformed by Cathy and Emily Perkins into an electronic, geographical map of our parish! Now you may be thinking, that's all very nice but what's an electronic, geographical map and why should that matter to me?

The beauty of this electronic, geographical map is that it is really a key. It is a key to seeing how close you may live to another church member without ever realizing it. A key to knowing who you might connect with and help in some way. A key to understanding you have the ability, even in the most simple of ways, to reach out to someone, and this is the key to how Christ meant for all of us to serve.

In the next few weeks, we'll be creating 'parish pockets.' Expect to hear much more, expect to hear from someone you may know or that you don't know, expect to hear from someone living close to you, and expect this will be someone you can count on—and in return, they can count on you. Remember, it takes only a ripple to become the wave, and we're going to use connection to push out and expand the hope and love of Christ!

~ Collins Sennett

### **St. Peter's Golf Scramble**

Our 7th Annual Golf Scramble will be held this year on September 26th at the Mount Anthony Country Club. This is a popular nine-hole event and a major fundraiser for St. Peter's.

Most monies are raised through parishioners sponsoring a hole. Normally we would be soliciting funds with inserts in the service leaflets. Since we will not be in church, please look at the sponsor format below and send your generous contribution to the church office:

**St. Peter's Golf Scramble**  
**St. Peter's Church**  
**200 Pleasant Street**  
**Bennington, VT 05201**

**BRONZE LEVEL: \$100.00**

**SILVER LEVEL: \$250.00**

**GOLD LEVEL: \$500.00**

**DIAMOND LEVEL: \$1000.00**

**PLATINUM LEVEL: \$2000.00**

Thank you,

**Golf Scramble Committee:** Holly Schmitz, Dick Bower, and Doug Bradshaw

**Outdoor Services**

St Peters is moving towards holding outdoor services in late August. The services will be Morning Prayer with no music. Most likely there will be three scheduled services: Saturday at 5 p.m., and Sunday at 8 and 10 a.m. As we're allowed to have only 25 people in attendance at each service, parishioners will need to make a reservation to attend.

In order to help us plan ahead for this, please call Cathy Perkins at **442 9660** or email the church office at [office@stpetersvt.org](mailto:office@stpetersvt.org) in the next week and let us know which service you wish to attend.

**Outreach Committee Update**

Our Outreach Committee met in April and had about \$2000.00 to disperse. These funds represent 20% of any fundraising activities garnered from the previous year: the Christmas Tea, the Golf Scramble, and the Bowling Tournament.

The committee allocated \$1000.00 to Greater Bennington Interfaith Services (GBICS), and \$500.00 to the Kurn Hattin Home. We kept reserve monies for camperships requested this summer and also a reserve fund for emergency monies that may be needed during the year. In letters of thanks, each organization mentioned the negative effects of COVID-19 on their budgets, and expressed how thankful they were for our caring.

Any parishioner can be a member of this committee. Let Mary Gerish or Dick Bower know if you're interested.