



THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF ST. PETER'S IN ESSEX FELLS

# The Messenger

271 Roseland Avenue, Essex Fells, NJ 07021 • 973.226.6500 • [stpetersef.org](http://stpetersef.org)

M A Y 2 0 2 5

## Alleluia!

I SPENT THE FIRST 18 YEARS OF MY LIFE as a member of a small Assembly God Church in Upstate New York. The parish building was on the top of a hill, flanked by acres of undeveloped land, filled with trees, plants, and grass. In my early teens, the area right behind the back door was my favorite spot to explore. At first, all you could see was layers upon layers of forest. But after a few yards of tall weeds, the landscape opened up to another world. The green abruptly faded away to brown and gray and black. The grass disappeared into the dirt. Trees were toppled over and splintered. I would later learn that the previous owner of the property sold it after his house burned down. All that remained from the structure and its surroundings was wood, ash, and death. Or so it seemed.



We are now well into the second week of Eastertide. One of the most important times of the Church Year; it's the fifty-day period when we reflect on the great mystery of our faith - Jesus Christ died only to be resurrected three days later. When we say "mystery," we are making a deep theological claim. The truth that our Lord is risen is a paradox. And by "paradox," we don't mean that it's a puzzle that we will eventually solve. A mystery of our faith has no less than two distinct qualities. The first is that we will never completely understand it. All we can do is revel in its beauty and accept it as a leap of faith. The second quality of a mystery like the resurrection is that it will never be understood on the world's terms. The resurrection can't be tested with the scientific method. It will never be proven by some archaeological study. And according to the world's standards, like greatness lies in wealth and power, mysteries of our faith such as the raising of Jesus appear utterly foolish.

It's true that the realities of Easter are ultimately mysterious, which we will never fully grasp. All that said, here's what we do know. Jesus Christ is risen and because of that even though all that we see will eventually pass away, death isn't the end of life. It's only the beginning. For you. For me. For every person and all of creation.

But there's an important aspect of this season that we often overlook, and we would do well to consider. One of my favorite icons in the Orthodox tradition is one called "Anastasis," the ancient Greek word for "resurrection." But this icon isn't a depiction of an empty tomb or Christ appearing before his followers. It shows him down in the dark depths of hell. Its gates are trampled beneath Jesus' feet as he pulls Adam out of his tomb on his right and Eve out of her tomb on his left, joining the estranged couple's hands together. The message is clear. Jesus' death resurrects us into new life as individuals, but also into a new, shared one as a species. And this new way of being began the moment Jesus died. We cannot truly appreciate the dimensions of Easter if we don't appreciate that Christ's death, on its own, started the whole process. Because of this new reality, all death has a bit of Christ's death within it and has the potential to bring new life. To this wonderful, holy and undeserved gift, all we can say is "alleluia!"

Over the course of my teenage years, I began to see bits of life in that burnt-over section of the woods behind my church. Some bugs here. Some mushrooms there. But I stopped going out there after I moved away to college. About fifteen years later, as I was visiting my parents, I was feeling especially nostalgic, so I decided to go out and see what it looked like. It had completely transformed. As I made my way back, the borderline was still apparent, only because the area that was once nothing but sticks and soil was covered with all sorts of plants and animals. A place once emptied by death was full of life. So, there it was—a little bit of resurrection in rural New York State. And all I could think was, “alleluia!”

*Yours in Christ,*

*Nate*



## CHRISTIAN FORMATION

Sunday School classes will resume on May 4. We will begin a series of classes on Communion for children. Communion Recognition provides age-appropriate instruction of the meaning and purpose of Holy Eucharist. Communion Recognition is for 7-8 year olds (2-3 grade) but it's open to others who may be a bit older.

### *The dates are:*

Sunday, May 4 after the 10 am mass

Saturday, May 17 at 10 am (to make the communion bread)

Sunday, May 18 Communion Recognition at the Announcements at the 10 am mass

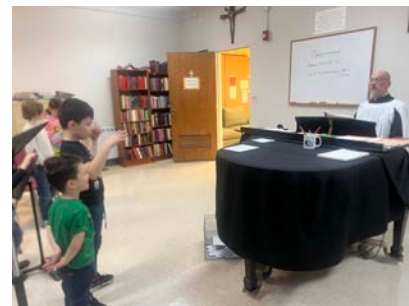
The group will meet in the Nave on Sunday and the Undercroft on the Saturday (where we will make bread for the Holy Communion on May 18. The next Family Eucharist will be Sunday, May 11.

## Music and the Great Fifty Days

It is hard to believe that *The Hymnal 1982* first entered the pews of Episcopal churches almost forty years ago this spring. That may seem a short time for those of us who grew up with its predecessor, *The Hymnal 1940*; however, the average lifespan of a hymnal is twenty years. The contents of a good hymnal always combine old and new texts and tunes—sometimes an old text has something remarkably new to say, and sometimes a new text causes “a light surprises the Christian while he sings” (Hymn 667). It’s hard to imagine a time when Episcopal churches did not sing “Amazing grace! how sweet the sound,” yet its first appearance in an American Episcopal hymnal was in our current book.

The Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music has produced a number of hymn supplements in the last few decades, including *LEVAS II*, *Wonder Love and Praise*, *Voices Found*, and more. Over the past few months, we have often sung hymns reprinted from these books or other sources current with them. On Mother’s Day, we will sing these words by New Zealand hymn writer Shirley Erena Murray:

Like a mother you enfold me,  
hold my life within your own.  
Feed me with your very body,  
form me of your flesh and bone.



Like a father you protect me,  
teach me the discerning eye.  
Hoist me up upon your shoulder,  
let me see the world from high.

These newer texts add to the richness of our traditional texts and help us to explore the vast body of hymnody from other countries and cultures. For this reason, St. Peter's has owned a copyright license since last fall so that we can print these texts with permission and use them in our online broadcasts.

During the Great Fifty Days of Easter, we are singing the canticle *Pascha Nostrum* (BCP page 83) at the beginning of mass. In the first Prayer Book of 1549, these "Easter anthems" were used at the opening of Morning Prayer for the octave of Easter Day (Sunday and the seven days that followed). In the current Prayer Book, its use is suggested during the Easter season. The first anthem portrays the death and resurrection of Jesus as the Christian Passover (1 Corinthians 5:7-8). Unleavened bread is a sign of a new start and a reminder of the deliverance of the Jewish people from Egypt. The old leaven is sign of defilement and sin. The second anthem reminds us that in baptism we have died to sin and are raised into new life by Jesus (Romans 6:9-11; this is also the Epistle at the Great Vigil). The third anthem states that what was lost to humanity through Adam's sin has been restored in triumph by Christ, the "second Adam" (1 Corinthians 15:20-22).

Sometimes it takes time and patience to "sing a new song to the Lord." The late hymnologist Erik Routley liked to say that "hymns are poetry for people who aren't poets and music for people who aren't musicians...hymns should give the people an opportunity to sing about what the Lord has done for them." *The Hymnal 1982*, and its various supplements, and the Book of Common Prayer contain a vast wealth of stories about what God has done for his people for all time. Newer texts and tunes remind us that God is still "working his purpose out as year succeeds to year" till the time "when the earth shall be filled with the glory of God as the waters cover the sea" (Hymn 534).  
—Mark Trautman

## COMING UP IN THE GREAT FIFTY DAYS

### *Fourth Sunday of Easter, Good Shepherd Sunday, May 11*

The Fourth Sunday of Easter is commonly known as "Good Shepherd Sunday" because of the Epistle and Gospel associated with this day for centuries. In the first years of persecution in the church, the most common representation of our Lord in Christian art was the Good Shepherd. The scriptures, prayers, and hymns that day will remind us that Jesus is the "Good Shepherd of his people" who "lays down His life for the sheep."

### *Sixth Sunday of Easter, Rogationtide, May 25*

For centuries the church has set aside the three days before Ascension Thursday as "Rogation Days," from the Latin *rogare*, which means "to ask." These days were set aside to ask God's blessings on crops and harvests and to grant us temperate weather. This was also the Sunday set aside as a time to "beat the bounds," or trace the geographical boundaries of the parish.

In the collect for the Sixth Sunday of Easter (BCP page 225), we ask God to pour into our hearts such love, that "we, loving you in all things and above all things, may obtain [your] promises." The inspiration for the prayer is 1 Corinthians 2:9: "As it is written, 'What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him'—these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit."

## Ascension, May 28

Throughout the scriptures, the number forty designates a period of testing and trial. In the Old Testament, examples include the children of Israel being tested in the wilderness for forty years, and Noah's faith put to the test of forty days and nights of rain. In the New Testament, Jesus' fasting of forty days before he began his public ministry is the basis for our observance of Lent each year. *(The picture is the Ascension window in All Saints' Chapel, dedicated to the Rev. Harold and Sophia Onderdonk, Ascension, 1968).*



In Acts 1:3, we are told of another time of testing, that Jesus “presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during the forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God” before miraculously ascending into the heavens in the sight of the apostles. As Jesus withdrew his visible presence from that particular place and time so that he could be invisibly present with his followers everywhere and all times, the apostles began the business of forming the church. After the Ascension the eleven chose Matthias as the twelfth apostle and prepared for the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost.

## Pentecost and Holy Baptism, June 8

Pentecost is celebrated on the fiftieth day after Easter. It commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles in “tongues of fire” and marks the foundation of the Christian Church. It celebrates God's love that binds us together in Christian fellowship and reminds us of the power of the Holy Spirit working in us to continue Christ's redemption through us. These reasons make Pentecost one of the great Baptismal feasts of the Church Year. If you know someone who desires the Sacrament of Baptism, please reach out to the Parish Office ([info@stpeters.org](mailto:info@stpeters.org)).

—Mark Trautman

## THE WORK OF MINISTRY

### Care & Connect

Hello, my wonderful parish family! I want to talk a bit about Care & Connect. The mission is twofold: “To care for the members of our St. Peter's family—*and* to connect St. Peter's family members, new and old, to one another.” this means we are *all* members of Care & Connect. If you see someone new to St. Peter's or whom you haven't seen before, say hello and introduce yourself. It isn't as hard as you might think. If you know of someone who is ill or struggling, reach out to them and/or let me or Angel Ministries know so we can tune in with them also. As part of a caring community, it is the responsibility of each of us to look out for one another and show God's love.

### PRAYER CIRCLE FOR HEALING AND THANKSGIVING: MAY 11 AND 25

Care & Connect continues to sponsor a twice monthly prayer circle on the second and fourth Sundays of each month immediately following the 10 am service in the All Saints' Chapel. This is a brief focused prayer group where we offer our concerns and thanksgivings to God, both aloud and quietly in our hearts.



## CROSS ROADS RETREATS, MAY 7 AND JUNE 4

Join me next Wednesday for *Wednesdays Away*. I have already registered for both May and June retreats and would be happy to carpool! *Wednesdays Away* is 9 am-3 pm, cost is \$50, and it is open to all, and a lovely lunch is served. Find out more at

[www.crossroadsretreat.com/wednesdays-away](http://www.crossroadsretreat.com/wednesdays-away) or reach out to me. **May 7** is *Music and Meditation*: “Music can provide a way to communicate our feelings, especially when we have no words for them. Since ancient times music has provided an international language to communicate joy, sorrow, praise, and community. We will explore and listen to a variety of music that can be paired with scripture, psalms, and the Christian community.” **June 4** is *Move Like the Wind*: “At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit is said to have come as a great wind, reminiscent of Jesus’ description of the Spirit in us (John 3:8). Wind carries things away. Wind fans flames, fills sails, brings rain, makes waves, and carries seeds and pollen through the air to germinate new life. How is the Holy Spirit moving like a wind in you?” This session will be led by Laurie Matarazzo who grew up at St. Peter’s and whose father was the Reverend Norman Rice, associate rector under the Reverend Harold Onderdonk in the 1960s.

—Dana Leach, [leach@stpetersef.org](mailto:leach@stpetersef.org), 201-694-6543

## ANGEL MINISTRIES

Angel Food Delivers frozen meals to parish family and friends dealing with times of sickness, death, or other challenges. Meets periodically to prepare meals. Contact Maggie Wohltmann ([MargaretWohltmann@hotmail.com](mailto:MargaretWohltmann@hotmail.com)).

## IN THE WIDER COMMUNITY

### St. Peter's OpShop

Let the savings begin! It's pick-your-coupon week at OpShop! When you come to the cash register...draw a coupon and save 20%...maybe 30% or 40% and even up to 50% off your purchase price. We have lots of lovely new with tags items...perfect as gifts for Mom! Plus tons of new inventory every week. Shop with us! We are open seasonally from mid-September until the end of May each year. <https://www.facebook.com/TheOpShop>

### Street Fair

FRIDAY, JUNE 6

Our beloved Street Fair is back this year, Friday June 6 from 4-10 pm. Please join us in welcoming our community for this fun-filled event. There's plenty of opportunities for everyone to help with this exciting ministry, first held at St. Peter's in the early 1930s. Contact Mary Shearin ([shearchaos38@gmail.com](mailto:shearchaos38@gmail.com), 973-590-1678).

### Vacation Bible School

AUGUST 4-8

Registration is now open for VBS! Our 2025 theme is *Road Trip: On The Go With God*. Our fun-filled camp will be held August 4-8 from 9 am to 12 pm. It is designed for children in Pre-K (at least age 3 and fully potty-trained) through 5th grade. Anyone entering 6th grade or older can serve as a volunteer. The cost is \$75 per camper until June 30 (\$15 late fee after that); there is no fee for volunteers. Need-based scholarships are available upon request. Registrations are already coming in, so please register at <https://stpetersessefells.mycokesburyvbs.com>.

—Sarah, Jack, and Luke Latson ([spfvbs@gmail.com](mailto:spfvbs@gmail.com))



## Easter Thanks

- Thanks to the *Altar Guild* for their hard work throughout the season, and the beautiful decorations in the church and the chapel.
- Thanks to our *Parish Choir* and *Handbell Choir* for their beautiful music throughout Holy Week and Easter—and special thanks to our section leaders Meghan Tannella, Giulia Utz, Michael Barretti and Kevin Johnson for their leadership. The Parish Choir sang for 8 services from Palm Sunday to Easter Day.
- Thanks to *Sunday School children* for singing so beautifully at the 9 am mass on Easter, and to their parents for all their support.
- Thanks to all *Acolytes, Lectors, and Ushers* for their leadership in all of our Holy Week and Easter liturgies.
- Thanks to all who gave generously to *Easter lilies* and *Easter music* this season.



## MAY 2025

| Sunday   | Monday   | Tuesday                   | Wednesday   | Thursday   | Friday  | Saturday   |
|--|--|---------------------------|---|--|---|--|
|  |  |                           |   | 1<br><b>Sts. Philip &amp; James, Apostles</b><br>OpShop, 11 am-2 pm<br>Parish Choir, 7:30 pm | 2   | 3<br>Altar Guild, 10 am<br>OpShop, 10 am-2 pm  |
| 4<br><b>Easter 3</b><br>HE, 8 am, 4pm, Chapel<br>10 am, Church Communion<br>Rec. after church          | 5<br>AA, 7 pm  | 6                         | 7<br>Handbell Choir, 7 pm                         | 8<br>OpShop, 11 am-2 pm<br>Parish Choir, 7:30 pm   | 9   | 10<br>Altar Guild, 10 am<br>OpShop, 10 am-2 pm<br>Caldwell Woman's Club, 2 pm                            |
| 11<br><b>Easter 4: Good Shepherd Mother's Day</b><br>HE, 8 am, 4pm, Chapel<br>10 am, Church C&C        | 12<br>AA, 7 pm   | 13                        | 14<br>Handbell Choir, 7 pm                        | 15<br>OpShop, 11 am-2 pm<br>Parish Choir, 7:30 pm  | 16<br>Diocese of Newark 150th Anniversary Concert, 7 pm<br>(Christ Church in Short Hills) | 17<br>Altar Guild; OpShop; Anniversary Eucharist, 10:30 (St. Peter's in Morristown)<br>Comm. Bread 10 am |
| 18<br><b>Easter 5</b><br>HE, 8 am, 4pm, Chapel<br>10 am, Church Comm.<br>Recognition; SPY meeting 6 pm | 19<br>AA, 7 pm   | 20                        | 21<br>Handbell Choir, 7 pm                        | 22<br>OpShop, 11 am-2 pm<br>Parish Choir, 7:30 pm  | 23<br><b>June Messenger Deadline</b>  | 24<br>Altar Guild, 10 am<br>OpShop, 10 am-2 pm   |
| 25<br><b>Easter 6</b><br>HE, 8 am, 4pm, Chapel<br>10 am, Church C&C                                    | 26<br><b>Rogation Day</b><br>AA, 7 pm<br><b>Memorial Day</b> | 27<br><b>Rogation Day</b> | 28<br><b>Rogation Day</b><br>Handbell Choir, 7 pm | 29<br><b>Ascension Day</b><br>OpShop, 11 am-2 pm<br>Parish Choir, 7:30 pm                    | 20  | 31<br><b>Visitation of the BVM</b><br>Altar Guild, OpShop, <b>Confirmation</b> at Our Saviour, Denville  |



## How to Make Your Pledge Commitment Online for 2025

- Go to the <https://stpetersef.org/donate/pledge-form/>
- Donate > Pledge Form
- Complete the form
- Click 'Pledge' button



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### STAY CONNECTED!

Webpage: [www.stpetersef.org](http://www.stpetersef.org)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/St.PetersEssexFells>

OpShop Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/TheOpShop>

OpShop Instagram: [@opshopstpeters](https://www.instagram.com/opshopstpeters)

**The next deadline for the monthly *Messenger* will be May 23. Please feel free to email news and events to [info@stpetersef.org](mailto:info@stpetersef.org)**

### ST. PETER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH STAFF

The Rev. Nathaniel Darville, *Rector*, [darville@stpetersef.org](mailto:darville@stpetersef.org)

Mark A. Trautman, *Director of Music and Administrator*, [trautman@stpetersef.org](mailto:trautman@stpetersef.org)

Dana Leach, *Care and Connect*, [leach@stpetersef.org](mailto:leach@stpetersef.org)

DJ Elmore, *Bookkeeper*, [bookkeeper.stpeters@gmail.com](mailto:bookkeeper.stpeters@gmail.com)

### THE VESTRY OF ST. PETER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Jim Irwin and Mary Shearin, *Wardens*

Christine Albano, David Cowell, Barbara Gargiulo, Erika Grothues, Sarah Latson, Kurt

Vonderahe, *Vestry Members*

### LITURGY & FORMATION LEADERS

**Altar Guild:** Alice Samuels, [inkyretired@aol.com](mailto:inkyretired@aol.com), Karen Mosher, [looker-mosher@msn.com](mailto:looker-mosher@msn.com)

**Acolytes:** Christine DiGiovanni, [adigio1552@aol.com](mailto:adigio1552@aol.com)

**Eucharistic Ministers/Chalicians:** Father Nate Darville, [darville@stpetersef.org](mailto:darville@stpetersef.org)

**Lectors:** Kathleen McLaughlin, [kathleenmcl27@gmail.com](mailto:kathleenmcl27@gmail.com)

**Music Program:** Mark A. Trautman, [trautman@stpetersef.org](mailto:trautman@stpetersef.org)

**Ushers:** Wayne Copeland, [waynecopeland@keyconsult.com](mailto:waynecopeland@keyconsult.com)

**St. Peter's Youth (SPY):** Father Nate Darville, [darville@stpetersef.org](mailto:darville@stpetersef.org)

**Christian Youth Formation:** Father Nate Darville, [darville@stpetersef.org](mailto:darville@stpetersef.org)

### OUTREACH MINISTRIES

**St. Peter's Opportunity Shop:** Stephanie Kent and Dawn Ruggiero, 973-226-0337

**David St. George Outreach Fund:** Erika Grothues, [davidstgeorge.committee@gmail.com](mailto:davidstgeorge.committee@gmail.com)

**St. Paul's Shelter:** Liz Irwin, [lizcirwin@verizon.net](mailto:lizcirwin@verizon.net)

**Christine's Kitchen:** Jennifer and Kurt Vonderahe, [jcvonderahe@gmail.com](mailto:jcvonderahe@gmail.com)

**Vacation Bible School:** Jack and Sarah Latson, [spcfvbs@gmail.com](mailto:spcfvbs@gmail.com)

**St. Peter's Nursery School:** Jacqueline Albietz, [stpetersessexfellsns@gmail.com](mailto:stpetersessexfellsns@gmail.com).

### EPISCOPAL LEADERSHIP

The Most Reverend Sean Rowe, *XXVIII Presiding Bishop and Primate of The Episcopal Church*

The Right Reverend Carlye J. Hughes, *XI Bishop of Newark*

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