St. Peter's Net

St. Peter's by-the-Sea Newsletter

Everything in the gospels seems to lead to the cross. The "Passion narratives" take up a fourth or more of each gospel. Think about that. Only two gospels describe Jesus' birth, only one mentions his childhood, none tell anything about his young adulthood or what he was doing before he arrived at the Jordan River. But all four gospels tell fairly detailed stories of the events leading to the cross. What an odd place for faith to begin.

The beauty of gilded or jeweled crosses tempts us to forget that this most basic of Christian symbols was a particularly brutal means of execution. Imagine some new religious cult in the U.S. claiming that its founder was unjustly put to death, and placing a working model of an electric chair at the front of their places of worship.

There are some who would prefer that we not focus on the cross. It is too sad, too gory, and too manipulated by the church into a weapon of guilt. Some question the way the cross seems to portray a vindictive Father God, angry at humanity and only content after an act of cosmic child abuse. Still others fear that the cross encourages oppressed or abused people to simply accept their suffering as a sign of devotion.

So what are we to do? Must we choose between either accepting the importance of the cross, thereby fostering child or spousal abuse, or getting rid of the cross and its power to disrupt our comfortable lives? If it is at the heart of the gospels and of our faith, how are we to make sense of it?

God did not stand by and watch someone else die on the cross. No, in Jesus Christ, God was there, dying. So in the cross of Christ, we see just how much God loves us. What "happens" on the cross that accomplishes our salvation is a mystery that Christians have long debated. But the cross is not a model for passively accepting one's suffering. It is a sign of the type of dramatic and bold action that is necessary to transform the world into the vision that Jesus so often spoke of. Which means it has the ability to sharply challenge those who call themselves followers of Jesus.

Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote from the Birmingham jail, "*There was a time when the church was very powerful. It was during that period when the early Christians rejoiced when they were deemed worthy to suffer for what they believed. In those days the church was not merely a thermometer that recorded the ideas and principles of popular opinion; it was a thermostat that transformed the mores of society … Things are different now … If the church of today does not recapture the sacrificial spirit of the early church, it will lose its authentic ring, forfeit the loyalty of millions, and be dismissed as an irrelevant social club with no meaning for the 20th century*."

During Holy Week, I hope you will come and allow the whole story of the cross to inspire, comfort and challenge you. The cross is God's ultimate sign of his reckless and transcendent love for us. And it is also the truest indication of what it means for all of us to follow Jesus – the call to sacrifice and selflessness that is asked of all those who strive to be disciples.

Casey+
April 2010

Holy Week and Easter at St. Peter's by-the-Sea

March 31 — **Tenebrae** *7:00 p.m.*
Contemplative service of light and shadows with prayers, readings and quiet.

April 1 — **Maundy Thursday** *Noon & 7:00 p.m.*
Footwashing and Eucharist at noon; traditional service including incense and the stripping of the altar at 7 p.m.

April 2 — **Good Friday** *Noon, 5:00 p.m. & 7:00 p.m.*
Three Holy Hours at noon; Way of the Cross for children at 5 p.m; traditional Good Friday service at 7 p.m.

April 3 — **The Great Vigil of Easter** *8:00 p.m.*
Most ancient of all Christian liturgies; includes the lighting of the new fire, Exultet, incense, baptism and first Alleluia of Easter.

April 4 — **Easter Day** *8:00 a.m. & 10:15 a.m.*
Joyful Easter Day celebrations; children are invited to "flower the cross" at 9:30 a.m. and hunt Easter eggs after the 10:15 service.

Our St. Peter's Family

We mourn with

- the family of Kathryn (Kay) Lewis, who died on March 9. Kay attended St. Peter's in the years after the death of her husband, the Rev. John Lewis, former rector of St. John the Divine in Saunderstown.

We celebrate with

- Randy and Andrea Wilson, who renewed their marriage vows in honor of their 25th wedding anniversary on March 20.

Food Pantry
More Than Just Canned Goods

Remodeled Food Pantry with freezer

The newly expanded Food Pantry provides food and "living supplies" (hygiene products and toiletries) to an average of 25 families per month. With the addition of a new energy-efficient freezer, we are also able to provide frozen vegetables, bread and meat. For environmental, economic and health reasons, we want to stock frozen poultry, pork, and beef raised by Rhode Island ranchers and growers. So the next time you're at an area Farmer's Market, Sunset Farm, Casey Farm or any other local meat purveyor, buy something extra for someone in need. The next time you're at the grocery store, grab an extra bag of frozen veggies and a loaf or two of bread. And the next time you're at Walmart or the Dollar Store, pick up an extra hygiene or toiletry item. We can make a difference in the lives of our neighbors.

Mission Trip to Navajoland
How You Can Help

The registration deadline for the July mission trip to the Navajo Reservation has already passed, but that doesn't mean you can't support our work there. Financial contributions to assist with the costs are always welcomed, and so are prayers. This is bold and exciting work we'll be engaged in, and we should all pray to see and serve others as Christ.

Habitat for Humanity
Building Homes, Building Hope

South County Habitat for Humanity operates a resale shop called Re-Store on Thursdays from 1-8 p.m. and Fridays and Saturdays from 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Restore (1555 Shannock Rd., Charlestown, ph. 213-6711) offers everything from furniture to cabinetry to appliances at discounted prices. Restore has been a fantastic revenue source for Habitat in lean times. And keep it in mind when downsizing or remodeling a home, as they welcome donations.

Habitat is currently preparing to begin several builds this summer on properties around South County, and they would gladly receive your support. Visit www.southcountyhabitat.org to learn more.

Episcopal Charities of RI
Amazing Work in our State

On April 18 we will welcome the Honorable Scott Avedisian, Mayor of Warwick, to speak about the important work of Episcopal Charities of Rhode Island. Every year ECRI gives out hundreds of thousands of dollars in grants to change the lives of people who are in crisis and need. In the past, funds from ECRI have helped battered women and abused children find safe havens, provided the elderly and terminally ill with comfort and a sense of dignity through their last days, supported recovery programs for people fighting addiction, and funded literacy programs for immigrants. Visit the table in the Parish Hall after church on April 18 and 25 to learn how even a relatively small contribution can go a long way.

Digging in the Dirt
Cooperative Garden

The book of Genesis reminds us that humanity's first vocation was gardening. At a primal level, we are all doing what we were intended to do when we tend the soil and help things grow. St. Peter's is teaming up with St. Augustine's in Kingston to begin a cooperative garden. Food grown in the garden will support our Food Pantry and the Jonnycake Center of Peace Dale. Contact Sue Raesner to learn how you can get involved with this wonderful ministry: 486-0949.

Credit Questions?
Ask an Expert

Credit is playing an increasingly large role in the lives of many people. From refinancing to job searching to insurance availability, credit, credit reports and credit scores are more prominent in our daily lives than ever before. Steve Bucci, our parish treasurer, is a columnist and author on the topic. Steve will be on hand at the Parish Hall on Wednesday, April 7, at 7:00 p.m, along with fellow parishioner and URI Professor of Finance Joan Anderson, to answer questions on this subject as part of our Adult Education Council programming. So bring a friend, your credit report, and your questions.

Episcopal 101
Back to Basics

If you are a newcomer to St. Peter's, or want a refresher on the life, beliefs and history of the Episcopal Church, you'll want to attend Episcopal 101. This three-part class meets on April 15, 22 and 29 from 6:00 — 8:00 p.m, and is designed to help you connect with other parishioners at St. Peter's and deepen your knowledge and understanding of how Episcopalians attempt to follow Christ. We'll discuss topics such as:

What does the Episcopal Church believe?
How do we read the Bible?
What is a Prayer Book and what's in it?
How are we similar and different from the Roman Catholic Church and other Protestant churches?

RSVP by calling the Church Office at 783-4623.

Community Life Council
Coming Up

The Community Life Council invites you to an evening of Pizza and Pictionary on Saturday, April 24, at 6:30 p.m. You bring your own beverage and a donation for the Food Pantry (canned, frozen or "living supply") and we'll provide the games and fun. Contact BJ Carangia for more information: 315-2416 or bjesposito@hotmail.com. The Council also invites you to consider supporting the Pentecost/Rite-13 Celebration Breakfast on Sunday, May 23. Sign up in the Parish Hall if you can bring something to share.

Congregation Beth David
Sharing Heritage

CBD Religious Leader Ethan Adler with Ark containing Torah

Did you know that Jesus was Jewish, as were his disciples? The meal they ate on the night before he died? The Jewish Passover meal. The Scriptures that he knew by heart and taught from? The Hebrew Bible. So from the beginning, the relationship between followers of Christ and Judaism has been close. On Friday, April 23 at 8:00 p.m. we are invited to share in the worship of our brothers and sisters at Congregation Beth David, our neighboring synagogue on Kingstown Road. This is a marvelous opportunity to worship according to beauty and richness of Jewish custom, and also learn more about our own faith heritage. Back in the fall we welcomed nearly 50 congregants from Beth-David to St. Peter's; let's show that we honor them just as much.

Ministries for Children
VBS and More!

St. Peter's will host a Vacation Bible School this summer on August 16-19 for children ages 3 and up. VBS is an opportunity for kids to learn the stories of the Bible, sing, engage in themed crafts and play together. Youth in grades 6 and above are also invited to participate as "helpers." Please contact Heather Wall at 524-6120 or heatherwall@verizon.net to register your child or to volunteer.

Parents and children are invited to a playgroup and sing-along at St. Peter's on Friday, April 9 at 10:00 a.m. Following a 30-minute musical playtime, everyone will adjourn to the Boon Street playground for snacks and more fun. Again, RSVP to Heather.

With several months to go before summer vacation, education for all ages is still going strong every Sunday morning. If you and your child(ren) haven't been in a while, now is a great time to get back on track: Sundays from 9-10 a.m. (except for April 18). And don't forget that the Nursery is professionally staffed by two trained adults every Sunday from 9:00 - 11:30 a.m. for children up to age five.

Journey to Adulthood

The Journey to Adulthood group (youth in middle and high school) is currently fundraising to support their pilgrimage to South Dakota this summer. Here are some opportunities for you to help them:

Rent-a-Kid *April 10 & May 15*
Need help around the house? Contact the Church Office to "hire" a team of youth for a few hours.

Car Washes *May 1 & June 5*
May 1, noon - 3 p.m. at McDonald's (Wakefield); June 5, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. at Walmart in North Kingstown.

"Flocking" Flamingos
Send a flock of pink flamingos to someone's house for a donation. Call the Chief Birdwatcher at 783-4623 to learn more.

J2A meets every Sunday morning on the second floor of the Boss Pre-School Building, as well as every other Sunday evening in a collaborative youth group with other churches in the area. Learn more at the website.

Noteworthy

❖ The St. Peter's Net goes digital this summer. Notify the Church Office if you need to receive it by mail, otherwise it will be sent by email beginning in July.

❖ The St. Peter's Book Club meets on Monday, April 5, to discuss *A Hole in the Universe* by Mary McGarry Morris. Copies are available at the Peace Dale Library.

❖ All children in Grade 3 or above who would like to become acolytes are invited to attend a training on Sunday, April 11, following the 10:15 service. Please RSVP to the Church Office at 783-4623.

❖ The St. Peter's Knitting Club next meets on Wednesday, April 14, at 7:00 p.m. All knitters, aspiring knitters, or those who just love to gab are invited.

❖ Alcoholics Anonymous meets every morning at 7:00 a.m. and Narcotics Anonymous meets on Monday and Saturday evenings at 7:30 p.m.

Please remember to recycle the St. Peter's Net when you are finished reading it. The Net will go entirely digital this summer, so you must contact the Church Office (783-4623 or stpetersbythesea@verizon.net) by May to let us know if you need to continue receiving a mailed version.

ST. PETER'S *by-the-Sea*
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Narragansett, Rhode Island 02882
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