

# ST. PETER'S NET

St. Peter's by-the-Sea Newsletter



**D**uring my last year of seminary, Melody and I traveled to Israel/Palestine for three weeks. It was one of the most important, special times of my life. We visited Bethlehem; we drove to Nazareth and walked the shores of the Sea of Galilee; we prayed beneath 2,000-year-old olive trees in Gethsemane (did they also witness Jesus' desperate prayers?); we walked along the Haram al-Sharif (Temple Mount) and touched the stones of the Western Wall — so many experiences that have shaped my faith and understanding of God and God's Word.

Included in my experiences was walking The Way of the Cross (Via Dolorosa), ending at the 1,700 year-old Church of the Resurrection (or Church of the Holy Sepulcher), which houses the traditional sites of Jesus' crucifixion and tomb. Fourteen small churches are dotted around the streets of the Old City following this route hallowed by pilgrims since the days of Constantine. They are meant to recreate the final walk of Jesus, from his condemnation by Pilate to his death on the cross and interment in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea.

It is an ancient and holy walk. I had to walk it twice.

When we arrived in Jerusalem, I had this urgent desire to walk the Way of the Cross right away. So we found the traditional first station and started a slow walk through the city. But by the third station, I was already distracted and frustrated. The crowds were hard to navigate. I couldn't focus my thoughts, let alone pray. I certainly didn't feel especially pious or reverent. So I hurried to the end.

That night back in our room, Melody and I talked about our experience of the Via Dolorosa, and I admitted my sense of failure. We had come all this way, and my first experience of walking the way of Jesus hadn't been anything close to the holy, transcendent experience I'd anticipated. In her typical way, Melody helped give me some perspective on how unrealistic my expectations had been, but still I battled dejection.

We went on with our itinerary, and it wasn't until the very last day we were in the country that we had nothing scheduled. I suggested that we again try to walk The Way of the Cross, and this time my experience

was totally different. Instead of being frustrated by the noise and bustle, I was able to recognize the way it actually recreated Jesus' own walk. The chaos of the modern Old City was a deeply appropriate and fitting backdrop. The Way of the Cross shouldn't be quiet or peaceful. It should feel crazy, just as Jesus' cross-bearing walk was crazy.

Holy Week is coming, when we will all be invited to walk our own way of the cross, to journey with Jesus through his Passion. You may not walk the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem this year, but you should definitely be ready to experience this story with fresh eyes. Perhaps, like me, you'll enter Holy Week with clear expectations of how it will feel, only to be totally upended. Perhaps surprising aspects of the story will speak to you and give you new insight into the nature of Jesus' sacrifice. Perhaps you'll see yourself or the world with a different perspective. However it happens, I promise that if you walk this way during Holy Week, your heart will be opened in new ways to the one who walked the Way of the Cross ... for you.

Casey+  
Holy Week 2011

## HOLY WEEK AND EASTER AT ST. PETER'S BY-THE-SEA

April 20 **TENEBRAE** 7:00 P.M.

*Contemplative service of light and shadows with prayers, readings and quiet.*

April 21 **MAUNDY THURSDAY** 7:00 P.M.

*Joint service at St. Augustine's Church in Kingston including footwashing and the stripping of the altar.*

April 22 **GOOD FRIDAY** NOON & 7:00 P.M.

*Three Holy Hours at noon; traditional Good Friday service at 7 p.m.*

April 23 **HOLY SATURDAY** NO SERVICES

April 24 **EASTER DAY** 6:00 A.M. & 10:15 A.M. WITH ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN AT 9:15 A.M.

*The Great Vigil of Easter at 6:00 a.m., including the lighting of the new fire, sung Exultet, baptisms and the first Alleluia of Easter.*

*The Flowering of the Cross and Easter Egg Hunt for children at 9:15, followed by family-friendly Eucharist at 10:15.*

## Our St. Peter's Family

### *We mourn with*

✠ the family of Doris Colburn, who died on March 28. Doris was a longtime member of St. Peter's, and is survived by her three daughters (Bev Clark, Priscilla Durant and Joyce Noonan, also parishioners), a son, Roger Colburn, and a host of grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

and especially the Triduum (Maundy Thursday through the Great Vigil of Easter). Each service is steeped in rich and ancient symbolism and is designed to help the believer experience the power of Christ's Passion. For the faithful, worship in Holy Week takes precedence over other obligations: work, school, sports, recreation. There is no better, more appropriate way to prepare for the profound joy of Easter than to travel the way of the cross with the one who gave himself freely so that we would have life.

### **Maundy Thursday** *Worship at St. Augustine's*



*In emulation of Jesus' humble act of service in John 13, footwashing is part of our Maundy Thursday observance*

In John's gospel, Jesus spent much of the Last Supper with his disciples praying for the unity of all who follow him. "Father, protect them in your name," Jesus says, "so that they may be one as

we are one (John 17:11)." So on Maundy Thursday, when we commemorate the Last Supper and Jesus' command ("maundy" comes from the Latin for command) to love one another as he loves us, St. Peter's will embrace this invitation to loving unity and join together with the community of St. Augustine's in Kingston (35 Lower College Road). At 6:00 p.m. there will be a simple meal of soup and bread, then at 7:00 p.m. we will worship together. The service will include footwashing, the traditional stripping of the altar, and an altar of repose for people to keep an hour-long vigil (Matt 26:40-41).

### **Holy Saturday**

No services are scheduled for Holy Saturday, and you are also encouraged to not schedule any activities for that day. Instead, allow plenty of time for prayer and contemplation of Christ's descent among the dead. It is a day of restful waiting, as we prepare to discover yet again the miracle of the empty tomb.

## **Holy Week** **Why All These Services?**

Holy Week is the most sacred time in the Church, when we commemorate the events of Jesus' final week leading to his crucifixion. In fact, almost half of Mark's gospel is taken up with telling the story of this single week, as if to emphasize the monumental importance of those seven days. It begins with his entry into Jerusalem, and includes his final meal with his friends, washing their feet, praying fervently in Gethsemane, betrayal by Judas, the strange trial before Pilate and his execution. Christians believe that every aspect of this week is sacred,

### **Tenebrae** *Light and Shadows*

The service of Tenebrae (Latin for "shadows"), held on Holy Wednesday at 7:00 p.m, begins with light and gradually moves toward darkness by extinguishing a series of candles. This mirrors our experience of Holy Week, as we begin in triumph at the entrance of Palm Sunday and move toward the grim reality of Good Friday. However, the service concludes with a solitary candle, briefly hidden from view as a reminder of Jesus' tomb, but brought back out to symbolize the light of Christ even in that darkest hour. The service combines elements from several ancient monastic traditions, and is quite distinct from our usual Sunday services in its use of psalmody, prayers, and readings.

### **Good Friday** *Were You There?*

At noon we will conduct a service of Three Holy Hours in commemoration of the hours (probably more than three) that our Lord suffered on the cross. The service expands the traditional Good Friday liturgy



*"Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble..."  
(Hymn 172, Afro-American Spiritual)*

with extended periods of silence, two spoken meditations, musical offerings, veneration of the cross, and Stations of the Cross. Then at 7:00 p.m. we will conduct the traditional prayer book liturgy for Good Friday, including reading the Passion and veneration of the cross. Both are meaningful ways to honor the great sacrifice of Christ on the cross, and the journey by God into death itself to demonstrate his amazing love.

## The Bishop is Coming! Sunday, May 1



*Bishop Wolf has served Rhode Island since 1996.*

Did you know that the word “episcopal” is from the Greek word meaning “bishop”? So the Episcopal Church is simply a church governed and organized by bishops. Our own bishop, GERALYN WOLF, will visit St. Peter’s on Sunday, May 1, to preach and preside. May 1 is the first Sunday after Easter, which has the unfortunate nickname of “Low Sunday,” because attendance is traditionally low. But we will extend our best hospitality to the bishop, as it will likely be her final visit to St. Peter’s before her retirement next year. The children will sing a glorious anthem and Alleluia will still ring in the air. You will definitely want to be there!

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## 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 two-part class meets on May 4 and 11 from 6:00 — 8:00 p.m. It 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, and is suggested for all those considering confirmation or reception into the Episcopal Church on May 14. RSVP by calling the Church Office at 783-4623.



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## Digging in the Dirt Cooperative Garden

The book of Genesis reminds us that humanity’s first vocation was gardening (Gen 2:15). 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 will again team up with St. Augustine’s this year to grow a vegetable garden to provide fresh produce for our Food Pantry. Last year we were able to bless our neighbors in need with tomatoes, peppers, squash and corn from July to September, and this year we hope to grow even more. All this gardening requires numerous volunteers — to plant, water, weed and harvest. It is kid-friendly and a fantastic way to embrace Christ’s call to serve. Check out the volunteer sheet in the Parish Hall or contact Sue Raesner to get involved: 486-0949.

## Spring Clean Up Saturday, April 30

Come out on April 30 at 9:00 a.m. to help get our grounds ready for the growing season! Lots of help is needed to prepare the flower beds and lawn for spring and summer and create the beautiful green haven we offer the entire neighborhood. Young backs especially wanted!

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## Congregation Beth David Sharing Heritage



*CBD Spiritual 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, May 27 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 the beauty and richness of Jewish custom, and also to learn more about our own faith heritage. Back in the fall we welcomed dozens of congregants from Beth David to St. Peter’s; let’s show that we honor them just as much.

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## Adult Forum Spring Schedule

Adult Forum continues to meet every Sunday throughout the Spring, offering opportunities to go deeper with Scripture, history, theology, and how faith affects every aspect of our lives.

### May 1 Adult Forum led by Bishop Wolf

### May 8 - 29 Resurrection in the Gospels

*Each gospel presents a slightly different perspective on the resurrected Jesus, and the nature of resurrected life. We’ll dive deeply into these four stories and consider our own hope for liberation beyond the grave.*

### June 5 Q & A with the Rector

*What’s going on at St. Peter’s? What’s happening with the capital needs Casey presented at Annual Meeting? Come with the questions you’ve been wondering about.*

Take advantage of these opportunities to learn more about this amazing, rich, ancient faith we share.

# He Is Risen! He Is Risen!



Easter Day is the pinnacle of the Christian Church, the day when we rejoice at the Lord's victory over death, and the promise to all of us of life with God beyond the grave. Our worship draws on the ancient traditions of Christ's earliest followers and is filled with the symbols, sacraments and songs that have helped Christians celebrate the meaning of Jesus' empty tomb.

## THE GREAT VIGIL OF EASTER 6:00 A.M.

This is the most ancient of all Christian liturgies and is rich with power and beauty. This year we will celebrate the Vigil at dawn, so that the light of the sun will gradually illuminate our worship. The service begins in relative darkness with the lighting of a new fire, symbolizing the Light of Christ kindled in the darkness of the empty tomb. It also includes the singing of the ancient poem *Exultet* (about Christ's victorious rising from death), baptisms, readings tracing our salvation history, the first Alleluias of Easter,

incense, Choir, sung Eucharist and plenty of Easter joy.

## NO 8:00 A.M. SERVICE

Because of the length of the Great Vigil, there will be no 8 o'clock service on Easter Day.

## ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN 9:15 A.M.

Children are invited early to church on Easter Day! Children will help Casey "un-bury" the Alleluia (symbolically buried during Lent). There will be an Easter Egg Hunt on the lawn beginning promptly at 9:30 a.m., and children will also flower two crosses for display in the church.

## FESTIVAL EUCHARIST 10:15 A.M.

A family-friendly Eucharist will conclude our Easter Day celebration. Our joyful Easter singing will be supplemented by a brass quartet, Alleluias will ring, and the sight and smell of a profusion of flowers will enhance our worship.

## Baptism at Easter

In keeping with the early Christian custom of baptizing the new faithful at sunrise on Easter, we will baptize the three Cormier children at the Great Vigil: Victoria (age 3), Emilia (age 7), and Samuel (age 9). Please pray for these kids, who will begin a new relationship with Christ through baptism on Easter Day!