A New Program Year at St. Peter's by-the-Sea

Each fall we're given a gift: the gift of a fresh start. Have you always wished you were more active at church? Or always wanted you and your kids to attend Sunday School more regularly? The arrival of September each year marks the start of the program year at St. Peter's by-the-Sea and offers us an opportunity to recreate our involvement at church. This year we will launch the program year on Sunday, September 13 with a festive Ministry Fair and Barbeque. All eight of the new ministry councils will have tables set up in the Parish Hall, as will representatives from the numerous other activities, ministries and programs happening here throughout the year.

- Volunteer to help welcome visitors or make new members feel more at home
- Take the plunge and sign-up to sing in the St. Peter's Choir
- Find out about how you can assist in the many community events put on during the year
- Discover how you can reach out to help people in need
- Learn how you can help maintain our beautiful campus and building
- And much more...

On September 13, come at 9 a.m. and peruse the tables, then stick around after the 10:15 service (or come back if you're an 8 o'clocker) for the traditional barbeque out on our beautiful front lawn. It is a day you shouldn't miss.

St. Peter's Nursery
A Safe Haven

When Ruffino Hall was constructed two years ago, special attention was given to our tiniest members: infants and toddlers. The St. Peter's Nursery, dedicated to the memory of the late Janet Morrison, is located in the heart of the new addition, next to the Parish Offices. Brand new walls, floors and toys provide a safe and warm space for these cherished children. This fall we will welcome on staff Heather Wall as our new Nursery Attendant to provide the professional childcare our children deserve. Heather brings considerable experience and skill to the task of corralling our little ones, having operated a childcare center from her own home for the past several years. A team of dedicated parents and volunteers is currently working with Heather to improve our childcare, and ensure that all parents feel confident about leaving their beloved treasures in our care. Beginning September 13, St. Peter's will provide professional childcare every Sunday morning from 9:00-11:30. Stop by and introduce yourself to Heather sometime, and let your friends and neighbors with children know about this wonderful resource.

Sunday School
An Exciting Year Ahead

Are you ready for the new school year? How about the St. Peter's Sunday School year? We're ready! Kickoff of the new year will be at 9 a.m. on Sunday, September 13, when Sunday School classes will be held for all children and youth, ages three and up. If your children were involved last year, we are looking forward to having them back. If they have not participated in the St. Peter's Sunday School before, we hope this is the year! An excellent program is planned to educate, engage and excite children about Christ and participation in St. Peters. ***Note the new time! Christian education classes for all ages, including children's Sunday School, will be at 9 o'clock,*** so families can conveniently attend either the 8 or 10:15 service, and the whole family—parents and children—can attend Sunday School at the same time.

We are currently looking for volunteers to teach and help with the Sunday School program. Please consider how you can support our children's ministry, so we can demonstrate with our actions how important our children are to us and to the future of St. Peter's. Contact Patti Risica with any questions about Sunday School or our ministry to children: 788-9012 or pmrisica@verizon.net.

The Point of Youth Ministry
Leo Carroll, J2A Sponsor

At a recent meeting of the Journey to Adulthood adult sponsors, Casey asked us to reflect on what we think is the "point" of youth ministry. Jill Fallon, the J2A Coordinator, answered, "To keep our children engaged with God," and I agree. But being engaged with God is not easy. I struggled to maintain connected to God when I reached adolescence, and little by little, I pushed God into a small closet; at first opened only on Sundays, but eventually closed completely for years. By being a J2A sponsor, I hope to prevent the loss I experienced from happening to the St. Peter's teens by reminding them of God's presence in all aspects of their lives.

Last week my 18-year old grandson spent a few days with us, and I had a chance to see how the youth group in his church keeps him engaged with God. Ben is not your typical teen. He is afflicted by Asperger's Syndrome, but he is very high functioning. He goes to school, drives and works part-time, but has trouble with social interaction. The Sunday service and weekly youth group meeting are the high point of his week. At their weekly meetings, they eat pizza, play games, discuss current events and personal issues, and plan projects with guidance from their volunteer youth leaders. In recent years, they've participated in mission projects in New Orleans, West Virginia and upstate New York. I know that Ben has benefitted enormously from his participation in the group, just as each of them have benefited from their friendship with him. I also think that their rich involvement at church will keep them more aware of God's presence as they move into adulthood, and they will be less likely to lock God into a Sunday's-only closet.

We can grow our ministry to youth at St. Peter's into a program such as Ben's. To do so, we need your help. If you are a parent of a teen, we need you to help your child keep space in his or her calendar for youth ministry activities, and then encourage them to attend. We also need volunteer leaders. It takes time and energy, but it rewards you by making God more present and keeping you young.

Adult Forum
Deepening Our Faith

The Adult Forum picks back up this fall with opportunities for all adults at St. Peter's to deepen their relationship with God through learning. Expand your experience of church each Sunday by spending the 9 o'clock hour in the Parish Hall, exploring a topic that will help you grow as a disciple. We especially encourage parents to attend, as Adult Forum occurs at the same time as children's Sunday School, allowing the whole family to cultivate their faith.

September 20 & 27—Vocabulary of Faith
(Aka: Church Words You Think You Ought to Know But Don't Remember Learning) We often toss around words in church as though everyone understands what they mean: liturgy, Eucharist, gospel, collect, catholic (to name just a few). We'll unpack many of those words, helping you gain clarity on the complex terminology of our simple faith.

October 4—The Ministry of St. Peter's Pre-School
This year marks the 32nd anniversary of Carol Stuart's leadership of the St. Peter's Pre-School. Come and learn more about the ministry of our school and how she's done it for all those years.

October 11, 18, 25, November 8 &15—
Ecology and Theology
As Christians, we must ask how our faith and belief in a creating, living God inform our behavior and attitudes towards "this fragile earth, our island home." This class will compare contemporary problems in the human use of the earth with theological themes.

November 1—All the Saints of Saint Peter's
On All Saints' Sunday, Cindy Clancy will share stories about some of the men and women in our church's 140-year history who passed on the faith to us today.

November 22—A Conversation Between Faiths
Congregation Beth-David Spiritual Director Ethan Adler and Casey will lead a wider conversation about the interplay between Christianity and Judaism.

December 6, 13 & 20—Preparing for Jesus
The gospels remind us that Jesus didn't drop out of thin air; he was born from humble parents, and traced his lineage back through many generations of ancestors. During Advent, we will explore that heritage by studying those ancestors, and how they prepared the way.