

# CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

## MAY 19, 2024

In this, our 100<sup>th</sup> year as a parish, we look to our origins for guidance in moving forward into the next century. This brief history will provide you with insight into who we have looked to for direction, members who are essential to our worship service, and programs that have been instituted to make us an active, vibrant community. We are making investments in our buildings and grounds as well as in our church members. They are the key to our continued success as a parish.

St. Peter's Keys open our hearts to love. The keys to St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Mountain Lakes, NJ, opens its doors with love and worship as the love of God will never fade.

PLEASE...Take this home with you. Read it at your leisure. And enjoy the fact that you are now or have been part of this wonderful faith community.

## RECTORS

Those who have guided, nurtured, encouraged, and blessed this congregation with their presence.

The Vision for the establishment of a new church in Mountain Lakes was initiated by **Reverend Henry Wilson**, Rector, and members of St. John's in Boonton. He saw the burgeoning population of the area and asked that the Diocese consider organizing separate parishes in Mountain Lakes, Denville, Towaco, and Parsippany. While the property on the Boulevard was purchased by the Diocese in 1919, no action was taken until August 1923. At that time Bishop Wilson R. Stearly agreed to the petition from an organizing group of Mountain Lakes residents and Reverend Wilson requesting the establishment of a church to be named St. Peter's. It was the first time a church had been established as a parish rather than a mission in the Newark Diocese.

A Provisional Vestry was established in August 1923, a charter was created and signed by fifty parishioners. It was agreed that the church shall follow and adopt the doctrines of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States of America. A Vestry was to be established consisting of twelve members, with a People's Warden and Priest's Warden as the lay leadership team in partnership with the Rector. In our one hundredth year we still adhere to the same doctrines and Vestry rules. The date for Charter Sunday was to be set as September 16, 1923.

Services started in space donated by Mrs. Henry Wilson (widow of Reverend Henry Wilson), owner of the St. Johns School (currently the

Craig School). Initial services were conducted by a 'supply priest' Reverend H.L. Stoddard of Troy, New York, while the Vestry searched for a permanent Rector. Two services were held on August 5 with a grand attendance of 95 parishioners. A collection of \$77.60 was donated. For the next two years, services were held at the Masonic Temple across the Boulevard from the future Church building site. Sunday School classes were held at the Community Church in Mountain Lakes until the new church building was completed. Mountain Lakes was incorporated as an independent borough on February 26, 1924.

**Canon Guy H. Madara served from 1924 – 1926.** He had recently returned from missionary work in Alaska and was serving as Canon Missioner for the Diocese of Newark. He worked only part time for St. Peter's and the other half for the Diocese. He energized and supported the Vestry in their fundraising for the Church building, while also encouraging the establishment of Men's and Women's groups. In September 1924, a parish dinner was held at the Mountain Lakes Club to review the architectural drawings for the Church, a Parish House, and Rectory. Madara also instituted a newsletter called "Tidings", opening communications to all parishioners. He left in 1926 when called to a fulltime position in North Carolina.

**Reverend Benjamin L. Ramsay served from 1926 – 1935.** Ramsay celebrated the first service in the new church on October 23, 1927, with no pews, only folding chairs. In June 1929, Ramsay, with a clear

understanding of his parish members, introduced the 8:30am Holy Communion service followed by a breakfast, with Morning Prayer and a Sermon at 11:00am. This was done specifically during summers so that golfers would not miss church services. During this time the church grounds were being updated, building a stone wall next to the bridle path. By 1933, the building had received donations of a small organ, pews which were added one at a time, a Baptismal font, choir stalls and two stained glass windows. Ramsay oversaw the building and furnishing of the Church while struggling to maintain a budget that would pay the mortgage as well as normal expenses. He laid out a very clear path for the design of the pews and the focus for the stained-glass windows to be added later.

When the parish could no longer afford the cost of a rented Rectory, Ramsay moved his family to a farm in upstate New York, while he moved into the Sacristy. As funds were further drained, and fuel costs escalated, he moved between parishioner's homes. In 1935 he chose to answer the call to St. Mary Magdalene in Newark, and sadly passed away in December 1936. His schematic for the design of the stained-glass windows was used as they were installed and dedicated years later.

**Reverend Robert Matthew Olton 1935-1940.** As a full-time Rector for St. John's Church in Dover, Olton shuttled between the two parishes to perform the Sacraments as needed. He resigned in 1940 to go on active duty as a Naval Chaplain in the South Pacific during World War II. He safely returned from the war and settled in Virginia.

**Reverend Dr. Theodore Andrews served from 1940 – 1947.** While Andrews completed his doctoral studies, he became the new permanent Rector. He expanded the parish beyond just Mountain Lakes residents to include parishioners from Denville. During his tenure, the Vestry purchased its first Rectory at 10 Condit Road. Andrews opened the church to the community, hosting events such as the Mountain Lakes Choral group and symphony orchestra, as well as a co-operative play school. A supportive guiding light for the parish was Reverend Dr. Lyman P. Powell, former President of Hobart College. He made his home in Mountain Lakes, conducting services and pastoring to the community when needed.

**Reverend Ronald H. Rowland served from 1948 – 1963.** Rowland started his tenure as the parish was beginning its 25<sup>th</sup> year, coming to New Jersey from previous parishes in Switzerland, Virginia and Maryland. Rowland was originally born in England, served in World War I in the English Army Calvary as well as ministering to Prisoners of War. Before coming to the United States, he was an estate engineer, but emigrated and entered the Virginia Theological Seminary in 1932, becoming an ordained priest in 1935. Due to the growth and expanding membership, more help and space was needed. The Parish Hall was built and dedicated in 1956. A second priest was added in 1959 to assist with the growing congregation. Reverend Frank Bancroft served just one year in the Assistant position before leaving in 1960.

Rowland was considered a man of action, combining practicality, heavenliness and earthiness. His parishioners considered him to be a true shepherd of his flock. Many of you are aware that St. Peter's has a Memorial Garden to the side of the church next to the small altar (originally known as the Baptistry). This space was dedicated in 1980 as the Ronald H Rowland Garth and St. Peter's Memorial Garden, a place for reverent internment of ashes.

**Reverend Hayward L. Levy served from 1963 – 1968.** Levy originally came to St. Peter's as a seminarian in 1961. He and his family stayed in the 'Reid House' (the current Rectory) which was used for Sunday School space. He was then called to be the Rector in 1963. Levy considered it his mission to assist the parish in a search for a better way to outwardly express their faith. He also felt that with changes in the parish, reconciliation became his password. He oversaw the burning of the mortgage in 1964. Levy was active in Morris County as a member of various ministerial groups and the Juvenile Conference Committee. He served on the Sex Education Committee in Mountain Lakes, and Co-Chaired fund raising for St. Clare's Hospital building fund. Oscar A Mockridge III became the Curate in 1965 and stayed at St. Peter's until he was called to another parish in 1967. He was succeeded as Curate by William Rawson who continued as the Interim Rector when Levy left in 1968.

**Reverend Samuel Edwin Purdy served from 1969 – 1985.** Purdy came to St. Peter's in January 1969, after serving parishes in Massachusetts, New York City, and Paris, France. He was considered a kind and gentle person. Youth groups appreciated his support, while others in the parish considered him a soulmate. Blessing of the animals was humorously referenced by many. His sense of humor was displayed when he served small fish crackers to emphasize a Biblical lesson that Jesus was a 'fisher of men'. The Golden Jubilee in 1974 absorbed the parish with planning that took over most Vestry meetings.

It was a great joy for him to see the large stained-glass window at the back of the Nave installed and dedicated in 1978. His salute to his parishioners on that day was: "Well done, thou good and faithful servants". Reverend Frederick W. Kates came to St. Peter's as an Assistant to Purdy, retiring in November 1971. When Purdy was called to another parish, Reverend Brewster Beach acted as the Interim Rector while a search was conducted for a new Rector.

**Reverend Daniel J. Riggall served from 1987 – 1990.** Riggall is fondly remembered for his kindness and compassion to all parishioners, especially the elderly. He encouraged participation for all members to become involved in the activities of the parish. When a new person attended a service, within a few days he not only called on them, but encouraged them to become members on various church committees. When a group of women came with the recommendation to upgrade all the cushions and kneelers, he readily agreed. In 1988, the Reverend Sarah Nelson joined St. Peter's as an Assistant. Riggall was called to be a Dean

of the Cathedral Church of St. Paul in Vermont and left in 1990. Interim Reverend Tom Lincoln was appointed as the Search Committee felt that they could choose a new Rector within a short period of time.

**Reverend Dr. Patrick R. Close served from 1991 – 1997.** Close moved the parish into a more networked environment by encouraging the electronic version of Keynotes, the weekly communication for all parishioners. He called these E-Notes. At the direction of the national church, Close and the Vestry created a new Mission Statement for St. Peter's. Close added a Director of Christian Education, Louise Kalmerkerian, who expanded youth activities to include educational trips. He was a prolific photographer of all the youth activities.

While Close completed his doctoral coursework, the Reverend Kathryn King was ordained at St. Peter's and became an Assistant in 1996. The children of the parish were included in her ordination service providing them with a memorable experience. She continued the youth activities when Louise left as well as taking on Outreach support.

Close encouraged the creation of the Deaf Bible School which then evolved into a Deaf Ministry program. Reverend Lois Schembs became the Interim Rector in 1997 when Close was called to another parish.

**Reverend Eric Kimball Hinds served from 1998 – 2007** Hinds joined our parish at a time when there was discord about the future for expansion and evangelism. He became a calming voice of reason. He also set out to rebuild a relationship with St. John's in Boonton, which was originally our 'mother' parish. During the catastrophic terrorist attacks in 2001, his

calm voice held our parish and community together, spearheading the ecumenical services for the whole community held at the larger space in St. Catherine's Roman Catholic Church. He then conducted a service at St. Peter's as we realized that one of our Parishioners had been lost during the collapse of the World Trade Center. He encouraged us all to a greater understanding of the Islamic community with a sharing of meals and ideas.

As he would crossover from the Rectory to the Church, Hinds realized that our Memorial Garden needed major renovation, and asked the Vestry to create a committee to support that effort with a renovation of the space and creation of a 'white' garden. That same committee took on the task of engineering and installing evening lighting for our large window at the back of the sanctuary. He and the Vestry agreed that we would include our parish in the Mountain Lakes House Tour, sharing the beauty of our Sanctuary filled with Christmas decorations with over a hundred visitors. It became apparent to him that a significant number of people in the parish were willing to take on leadership roles enabling him to take on an external challenge as coach of the Mountain Lakes High School Lacrosse team. As he was called to a parish in California, the Reverend Susan Butler became the Interim Rector.

**Reverends Charles and Adele Hatfield served from 2009 – 2018.** Having Co-Rectors was a unique opportunity for St. Peter's to introduce the concept of bringing the skills of two people who came to the priesthood after successful careers in the business community and an academic environment. They both expressed an interest in helping parishioners explore their gifts and talents and how those could best be used in the St.

Peter's community. The Hatfield's guided two members through their discernment process with the successful ordination of George Dredde and Michael Muller as Episcopal priests.

The 'Day of Change' was instituted at the time the nation changed over to daylight savings time. All the change collected that day went towards Outreach programs. Adele took another approach to Outreach with the application of ashes on Ash Wednesday at a local commuter bus stop/parking lot. A parishioner's request encouraged our members to foster the education of three African students through high school and university.

Our youth benefitted from special programs including a new summer Bible Camp, trips for our youth choir to sing and meet with senior citizens and participate in mission trips. Through clever negotiation skills, Chuck was able to arrange for air conditioning to be installed into the Parish Hall for free, Yeah! Reverend Lynn Griffo became the Interim Rector as a search was instituted to replace the Hatfield's.

**Reverend Michael A. Muller started his service in 2019.** The Muller family were parishioners before he felt called to be received into the Episcopal priesthood. Muller previously had been ordained as a Roman Catholic priest in May 1994 at the Sacred Heart Basilica in Newark. His Episcopal reception was in October 2016. Muller served briefly in Essex Fells before we were able to welcome him back to St. Peter's as our Rector in 2019. Muller has created a new digital environment for our

parish because of the Covid pandemic, for those not able to join us in person.

Muller has been instrumental in expanding Outreach programs in support of other struggling parishes, support for recent immigrant families as well as support for the education of five more students in Africa. Muller has actively encouraged the growth of parish by welcoming many young families while maintaining support for all existing members. He was instrumental in creating a new program of faith formation with St. John's in Boonton and Church of the Saviour in Denville.

Reverend Nancy Hansen joined our parish as a Deacon in 2022, taking a dominant role in Parish Life activities with visitations to those who are homebound or in hospital, as well as teaching young parishioners.

## **BUILDINGS AND PROPERTY**

The original architectural design for the new St. Peter's church building included a large field stone church, bell tower, and parish hall. Also shown in the original drawings were lushly landscaped gardens with a circular drive up to the church doors. Unfortunately, the price tag was beyond the reach of this new parish at \$100,000. It was a rude awakening when the parish was only able to initially raise \$20,000 by December 1925 from its members. Plans were toned down and only the main church building would be constructed at the cost of \$40,000 (an equivalent purchasing power of approximately \$710,000 today). The 5-year mortgage was underwritten by several parishioners at an interest rate of 6%, and the construction started. Ground was broken on June 30, 1926, the cornerstone was dedicated and laid on October 10, 1926, with the first service held in the new building on October 23, 1927.

Finding living space for Rectors was taken care of through renting homes in the area. Properties included a home at 86 Lake Drive, one at 112 Laurel Hill Road, and another on Tower Hill Road which rented for \$100 per month. In 1947 the 86 Lake Drive home was purchased. A second home was purchased in 1960, to be used as Sunday School and educational space, but also as living quarters on the second floor. That home known as the Reid House located at 215 Boulevard, became the official Rectory in 1965. In 1963 the Lake Drive home was sold, and another home on Maple Way was purchased for Curate Mockridge and his family. This home was sold in 1970 as it was no longer needed after the Rectory was renovated for the Purdy family in 1969. The 215 Boulevard Rectory continues to be the residence for St. Peter's Rectors

and their families. The Rectory and the church buildings are now considered to be one property for all legal documents.

Furnishings for the Sanctuary were slowly added as they were donated by parishioners. The original glass in the windows was a milky white with drapes (known as dossals) covering the large back window to keep the glare of sun out. These same blue drapes had previously hung behind the altar. By 1933 two stained glass windows were installed, the baptismal font was put into the Baptistry, choir stalls and some pews were added as well as the lectern. Additional windows were donated and installed between 1948 and 1959. The largest window in the back of the Sanctuary was installed and dedicated in March 1978. To show its beauty, the window was backlit from dusk until late evening in the early 1990's. It was renovated in 2023 to protect its beauty and replace the older frame for a longer life. Several bequests from past Parishioners enabled air conditioning to be installed in the Sanctuary in 2009.

A small used Estey organ was purchased for \$5700 in 1924 to be played each week by Miss Emily Wood Bowers. This organ was originally designed for use in a large home. By the mid-1960's the Vestry realized that the organ, now estimated to be over fifty years old, had served its usefulness. Costs to keep it in working order were becoming extensive as 80 notes were not able to be played. The unit was considered obsolete, inefficient and unreliable to play traditional organ music. Once again, a fund drive was established in 1968 to raise the \$30,000 needed for a replacement organ. In 1970 the current Peragallo pipe organ was installed, with a renovation and addition of a new set of pipes in 2007.

As the parish expanded in the post-World War II era, it was agreed that a Parish Hall was needed to support both educational and social activities. The Borough of Mountain Lakes approved the application to build it in 1955. Once the design was agreed upon, the parish came together to collect the estimated \$90,000 for the construction. It was completed and dedicated in 1956.

There was a mortgage burning in 1964, leaving the parish free and clear of external financial obligations for its buildings. A tradition of unknown origin in Episcopal Churches determined that the doors would be painted a bright RED after the last payment of the mortgage, but it was not until May 2016 when two brave souls painted the doors. A side historical note - Since the Middle Ages red doors on an Anglican church or home indicated a place of sanctuary and peace.

Between 1990 and 1994, the parish took on the project of replacing old and worn pew kneelers and worn cushions for altar chairs. While the project was planned to take five years ending in 1995, the speedy diligent work was completed a year early. Both men and women worked on this creative needlepoint effort with the opportunity to choose a design they associated with (such as the deaf community kneeler in the first pew on the left). All the needle pointers were able to sign their work with a personal dedication. So, when sitting in a pew, look down and read these meaningful thoughts from our parishioners.

External changes included replacing the cross on top of the roof in 2002 as the original wooden cross had been struck by lightning in the 1990's. One of the biggest changes was the new slate roof which became essential as it was causing damage due to its age. A grant from Morris

County Historic Preservation Trust in 2015, supplemented by generous donations from parishioners, enabled St. Peter's to install a new slate roof in 2017 that hopefully will last for the next ninety years. Slates that were removed from the old roof were then cleaned and gifted to all families in the parish. A surprise for one and all was the reintroduction of the Verdin Carillon chimes in 2023, which had been struck by lightning some years earlier. The beauty of their sound rings hymns out across Mountain Lakes at noon and 6:00pm each weekday as well as the call to service on Sunday mornings.

With the Centennial celebrations, it was determined that other external changes would be added to enhance our space as well as create an opportunity to welcome the community. Changes include new steps, railing, and lighting from the Boulevard up to the new **Centennial Terrace**. The installation of an ADA compliant ramp from the parking lot provides easier access for those who cannot manage the stairs to the newly designed Terrace. The Terrace creates a space for outdoor activities and services as well as new access to the Undercroft Church entrance. A larger rain garden is being created to contain the water flowing down the hill during rainstorms. Additional space will be added in the Memorial Garden with the removal of overgrown trees and installation of a new privacy fence. Other updates include new front steps, a renovated ADA compliant access ramp and railing to our main entrance, resurfacing of the parking lot, as well as a large well-lit new sign at the corner of Martins Lane, replacing the current church sign which was erected in 1973.

Over the past 100 years the Property Committee has been tireless in the ongoing upkeep of our parish. All those who have served and continue to

volunteer for this important group need to be applauded, as the work is never ending! APPLAUSE!

## **WORSHIP/FELLOWSHIP/OUTREACH/EDUCATION/ COMMUNICATION**

From its inception, our parish has been built around these five concepts. They are evident in our Mission Statement, but most importantly in the demonstration and in the actions of all our Rectors, Vestry persons and parishioners.

The Wardens and Vestry aid and support the Rector, as well as conduct and manage the business operations of the parish. They meet regularly to discuss and decide on budgets, contracts involving renters and vendors, fellowship, stewardship, Outreach programs and staffing of the parish.

In our **WORSHIP** services the Priest(s) are supported by members of the parish volunteering, year in and year out, performing a variety of duties before, during, and after the services. They include:

A **Verger**, one who carries the staff representing the emblem of the church ministry.

**Acolytes**, young people, teens, and some adults who serve as assistants to the Priest in the service. The **Crucifer** heads up the procession with the Cross at the beginning and end of the service as well as bringing the Gospel book forward and holding it during the reading. The **Torch Bearers** light and extinguish the altar candles, carry torches during the processions, assist the congregation to the altar rail during the Eucharist, and assist with other altar duties.

**Ushers** serve as the first face of welcoming for all who attend, handing out bulletins, special reports, and candles during holiday services,

arranging for the collection plates to be presented, creating name tags, guiding us to our seats, or when the sanctuary becomes filled, providing additional seating for everyone attending a service.

**Oblation bearers** bring forward the wine carafe and wafer ciborium to the altar.

**Lay readers** share in the service by reading chosen Liturgical lessons for the week, the assigned Psalm, and the Prayers of the People.

**Chalice bearers (Eucharistic Ministers)** assist the Priest during communion by offering the blessed wine to those participating in the Eucharist.

The **Altar Guild** maintains and dresses the altar for each service, caring for all the frontals that change with each season of the church, for all the linens, the Rectors vestments, the vessels, and candles used during each service, shining brass candle holders and silver cruets. They create the beautiful altar flowers each week that have been dedicated by parishioners for loved ones and arrange the floral decorations for special occasions in the church year. Each Sunday those flowers are given to either a family in the parish or taken to someone who is homebound.

**Music**, for many, is an essential part of their joy in the service. From early days it has been integral to the worship of God. One of our Rectors wrote in a Keynotes, “It imparts a sense of unity and sets an appropriate tone for a particular celebration. It nourishes and strengthens faith, expressing feelings and meanings which cannot be put into words, but what can be in the soul.” St. Peter’s has been blessed with wonderful musicians who play our organ or other musical instruments, direct our choirs and choose

music that will enhance our time in church. Over the years we have had multiple choirs, both youth and senior, participating in our services. Our current music program includes parishioners and professional singers and musicians.

**FELLOWSHIP** has always been an essential component of our parish activities. Initially groups were created to organize events that could be used both for social interactions as well as fundraising for the parish.

The **Women's Guild for Service** was created in 1924. Their early motto was "Do the *kind* thing" and whenever a request came into them, the answer was always, "Yes, thank you for asking". They continued over the years to be the most efficient group at raising large sums to fund the parish each year from events that they held. These varied from harvest festivals, holiday bazaars and creating cookbooks to managing special dinners, silver teas, summer porch picnics (a precursor of Lemonade in the Shade), rummage sales, and commemorative events. In 1936, one of the projects was a yearly collection of books and magazines that were then sold with all the income going to beautify the parish grounds. In the mid-1980's the name changed to eventually become the **Episcopal Church Women**. All women were welcome to participate, but with the changing economic environment as more women chose to work outside of the home, volunteers for these special events became more of a struggle. In 2004, the organization turned over the balance of funds to the Vestry general fund and their duties to various committees of the Vestry. Many of those duties became subcommittees of the Altar Guild.

The **Men's Club** was also started in 1924. They met initially to help determine how best to support activities that would encourage membership participation. Early on the few who had cars would become the means for people to get to church, to meetings, or even to events such as picnics. In the mid-1980's this group assisted in the building of the Church of the Good Shepherd in Ringwood, NJ. Over time they gathered for meals together, but then expanded that to provide meals for others as needed even helping to establish an after-school program for young people in Boonton. Currently they assist the Youth Group in providing the Pre-Lenten Pancake Supper. The Men's group also provides meals at St. John's in Boonton, now alternating weeks with parish women (since 2023).

**Youth groups** have been active since 1924 as well. Planned outings included camping, rafting, Scout troops, attending summer camps and Bible study groups, and projects that were chosen to develop leadership skills while expanding their understanding of a faithful community. Participation in WOODY (World of Our Diocesan Youth) arranged for a group in 1981 to spend the weekend overnite in St. John the Divine in New York City. Mission trips were encouraged to support churches or families in need in both New Jersey as well as states nearby. To pay for these trips, the youth groups baked, worked as waiters and raffle ticket purveyors at Action Auction events, cooked and served at pancake suppers, prepared and sold chili for Super Bowl parties, became the kitchen help for Fish Fry nights, and volunteered. Each Spring our graduates from either high school or college/university are recognized for their achievements at our annual picnic.

**Social Fellowship events** are always welcome at St. Peter's. We are and apparently have been a community that loves a good party. While early events were teas, which perhaps included sips of sherry, over the years we have migrated to events that even had special drinks chosen to match the event. It is always a pleasure to be invited to attend the Vestry sponsored New Member cocktail party, introducing those new members to each other and to the Vestry representatives. Our Easter Egg Hunts and Epiphany Twelfth Night celebrations as well as picnics are always well attended. Dinners for Eight were dinners at various members' homes, with everyone bringing a different delight to share. Apple picking and Christmas tree cutting were scheduled regularly in the early 1980's.

The first picnic was held in 1924 at Idlewild Park near Little Falls, NJ. Transportation was via parish members who had cars making multiple trips back and forth to get everyone to the venue and then home again. Ninety-nine church school students attended with their families. For many years the coffee hour following the last service has been considered an important fellowship of the whole community. It was suggested in the 70's that children should be 'contained' in the Undercroft during this time, but evidently that did not work, and they are now welcomed into the parish hall with special treats designed for them.

Many of the events were planned to raise funds, such as progressive dinners, Holiday Bazaar preview nites, golf outings, Oriental rug sales, Fish Fry's (which started in Fall, but migrated to a Lenten activity), and of course our famous Action Auctions. The Auctions initially started in 1980's as brunches after the later Sunday service in Fall with Chinese food and Bloody Mary's. They evolved into full scale gala events in the totally

transformed decorated Parish Hall with a different theme chosen each year, encouraging all attendees to dress towards that theme. In the 1990's these events were usually held in Spring and the tables were set up to hold approximately 160-180 people, all given a paddle so that the bidding on items could move quickly. Wonderful meals were prepared by volunteers from the parish. Local businesses and parishioners donated all the items, ranging in variety from tickets to plays, Jets or Giants football games, Yankees and Mets tickets, furniture, artwork, baskets of donated goodies, to holiday vacations in the Poconos, the Bahamas or faraway manor homes in Scotland. The best part of each Auction was the coming together as a community with friends and fellow parishioners for a simply fun night. In the past ten years, the event moved to outside venues. The Covid pandemic provided a unique Auction held all online. We were all pleased when we could come back together to celebrate once again in 2022.

Every twenty-five years the parish has held an Anniversary celebration. In 1948, a special service was held in commemoration of the event. In both 1973, the Golden Jubilee, and in 1998, our 75<sup>th</sup> year, a dinner dance was held at the Rockaway River Country Club. Our 100<sup>th</sup> will be celebrated with a Commemorative service that will include previous Rectors as our guests, and a walk across the Boulevard to the Mountain Lakes Club for a late Brunch.

**OUTREACH** programs and activities are in our parish DNA. From our inception, reaching out to others in need has been an important part of planned activities. An early method was the United Thank Offering,

initially managed by the Women's Guild for Service, was a planned giving for mission work within the United States as well as overseas. In the 1940's and 50's it was a small white box that young family members would drop pennies into and then would bring to the front of the church on a specified date. A 1972 report indicated that funds collected went to projects in the United States as well as to parish development in Liberia, building funds in Osaka, Japan, a needed boat for transportation in Papua-New Guinea, an endowment fund for teachers in Polynesia, a primary school in Haiti, and farm equipment in Ceylon.

While St. Peter's no longer participates in this program, we have established an Outreach Committee that each year designates organizations for funding, with final approval from the Vestry. We have reached out with other Protestant communities to arrange for support for immigrants, most recently with the renovation of two Episcopal Rectories in Boonton for families from Afghanistan. Christmas presents are collected for students at the Lake Drive School and clients of Boonton Social Services. Our young people have spent time on mission trips as painters, carpenters, cleaners, and gardeners to help parishes in need.

The Committee has been encouraged to look at the needs of those in northern New Jersey. They have developed a special relationship with North Porch, an organization that supports parents with newly born and small children and collected supplies for food banks including food donations on Family Sunday. Over the past dozen years St. Peter's has worked with the Mental Health Association (previously of Morris and Essex County). We have been active members of the Faith Alliance, having provided funds for their educational assistance program, run

drives for needed clothing and other essentials as well as hosted dinners for their Social Club made up of clients in Morris County. When there is illness or a natural disaster such as earthquakes or flooding, members of our parish reach out to those families to determine what help is needed.

On occasion it can be something as simple as a phone call, dropping off a premade dinner, sending cards to let people know that they are being kept in our prayers, visiting the elderly or those who are alone, arranging for a person with mobility issues to get into church. All of these are an indication that our parish is fulfilling our mission of demonstrating Christian love.

A unique Outreach program began in 1984 with the establishment of a Bible Study program for hearing impaired students attending the Lake Drive School. Students would, with permission from their parents, come to St. Peter's after school classes were completed and be introduced to Biblical concepts. This program was successful and expanded into the Deaf Ministry with some financial support from St. Peter's. We were the only parish in the Newark Diocese that had an experienced sign language interpreter at our services, thus encouraging families of those Bible students to also attend our services and be welcome members of our parish. The program was active for approximately 20 years.

**EDUCATION** for young people as well as adults has been an ongoing effort since St. Peter's became a parish. Sunday School classes started well before there was a church building with students taking the Toonerville trolley up to St. John's in Boonton for classes. Later, classes were closer to

home when space was rented in the Community Church and St. John's School (now Craig School) in Mountain Lakes. There were many students and instructors participating each week, with the first recorded class of ninety-nine participants. After the new Church building was ready, classes continued in the Undercroft, and in later years The Rectory was used for classes. The teachers were usually parents or volunteers who had educational backgrounds. Coursework changed with the introduction of different teaching models. What remained consistent was the commitment to instruct everyone in the tenets of the Christian faith, expand their knowledge of Biblical lessons, and encourage a lifelong process on their faith journey, starting at Baptism, then commitment to Confirmation, and continuing participation in a Christian community. The Godly play program was introduced by Michael and Liz Muller, with the support of parents who instruct the various age groups. During the Covid pandemic, a tri-parish group consisting of St. Peter's, St. John's in Boonton, and the Church of the Savior in Denville was started to consider the concept of 'Faith'. While this started online, a core group of about 20 people continue to study in person with Biblical readings in support of a better understanding of faith.

**COMMUNICATION** became an important tool used throughout our 100-year story. The initial publication was called '*Tidings*'. There was a subscription fee of \$1.00 per year and it was published every Saturday. Local businesses advertised to offset the cost of printing. In 1929, the list of advertisements included Dixon Bros. Oil, Boonton Trust Company, Mountain Lakes Drug Store, Morris County Savings Bank, Corelia Street Pharmacy, and Dr. W.F. Cook (Dentist). The publication included important parish meeting dates, upcoming events using the heading of *Kalendar*,

Sunday School information, and Budget recommendations for a coming year. During the Depression years it was only printed occasionally. In Reverend Purdy's tenure the publication took on the name of *Key Notes* with the Petrus Coat of Arms in the center of the Title. It continued with the same type of information, but apparently no longer required a subscription fee, and there does not appear to be any outside vendors advertising in the monthly edition.

Reverend Close introduced the parish to an electronic version, called *E-Notes*, while still publishing the hard copy *Key Notes* as well. As more parishioners became comfortable in the digital age, the publication became a total online presentation weekly. Reverend Chuck Hatfield introduced St. Peter's to social media by beginning and maintaining an active parish presence on Facebook, which continues to be the platform used for all live streaming today. During this period the newsletter was renamed to *Key News*. It is published weekly in an email to all on the parish list. The Website continues to be changed and updated since it became active under the guidance of Reverend Hinds.

During the Centennial Celebration Ceremony there will be a special dedication for the audio video equipment that has been donated to stream our services online. Online services started during the Covid pandemic in Spring, 2020 and continue today. The current viewership numbers are over one hundred views each week and people from across the globe have clicked in to view our services. We appreciate the interest and feel that this form of Outreach to the world can only be a blessing for all who participate.



### **The Staff at St. Peter's**

The Reverend Michael Muller, Rector  
The Reverend Nancy Hansen, Deacon  
Sal Lagattuta, Music Director      Susan Marshall, Parish Coordinator

### **St. Peter's Vestry**

Deborah Osborne, Senior Warden      Hope White, Junior Warden  
  
Mary Del Ojo   Kevin Edwards   Steve Emr   Jeff Roth   Traci Rutt  
Lisa Sonn   Dan Verrengia   Janet Wilson

### **Centennial Renewal Committee**

Bethany Russo Co-Chair      John Garrison Co-Chair  
  
Brian Marshall   Sue Marshall   Reverend Michael Muller  
Elizabeth Myatt   Bradley White   Janet Wilson

### **Centennial Celebrations Committee**

Deborah Osborne, Chair  
Jeff Roth, Centennial Picnic Chair      Cindy Shaw, Centennial Brunch Chair  
  
Laura Lee Carrico   John Garrison   Tom George   Lois Morlock   Traci Rutt  
Reverend Michael Muller   Lynne Neeley   Stephen Shaw   Jerry  
Watkins   Bradley White   Janet Wilson   Along  
with the many hands that have helped make it all happen

We would like to thank Ray Sikora for lending us his sound equipment for all our remote events.