



ST. PETER'S  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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EST. 1868

# ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Almighty and everliving God, ruler of all things in heaven  
and earth, hear our prayers for this parish family. Strengthen the faithful,  
arouse the careless, and restore the penitent. Grant us all things necessary  
for our common life, and bring us all to be of one heart and mind  
within your holy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*Amen.*

*Prayer for the Parish*  
*Book of Common Prayer*

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## Clergy

The Reverend David Hodges, Rector  
The Reverend Nathan Haydon, Assisting Priest  
The Reverend Luke Jernagan, Assisting Priest  
The Reverend Jay Kanzler, Assisting Priest  
The Reverend Susie Skinner, Assisting Priest  
The Reverend Zack Rugenstone, Transitional Deacon  
Valerie Patton, Diocesan Intern & Candidate for Holy Orders

## Parish Staff

Connor Bryant, Communications Manager  
Regina Edwards, Sexton  
Lisa Reynolds, Playgroup Director  
Janet Rouse, Director of Stewardship and Parish Life  
David Sinden, Organist and Director of Music  
Yvonne Twillman, Director of Children and Family Ministries  
Jacquelyn VanWeelden, Parish Coordinator

## Wardens and Vestry

Claire O'Brien, Senior Warden	Allan Ivie, Junior Warden
Peter Boumgarden, Treasurer	Ann Babington, Secretary
Keith Boris	Rich Huck
Margaret Carmichael	Logan O'Connor
Bob Craig	Josh Schafer
Laura Frank	Traci Scudi
Jane Gilbert	Lynn Stockwell
Jimmy Grimmett	

## Diocesan Convention Delegates

Tim Noelker  
Jimmy Grimmett  
Mark Pye  
John Schoenecker

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## Annual Meeting Minutes – Sunday, January 22, 2023

- I. **Call to Order and Opening Prayer:** The meeting was called to order in the Undercroft at 9:04 a.m. David welcomed everyone with an opening prayer and we sang the first two verses of Hymn 518, Christ is the Sure Foundation.
- II. **Introduction of Officers:** David introduced Jane Gilbert, Vestry Member as Secretary for this meeting; and Tim Noelker, St. Peter's Parish Counsel, as Parliamentarian.
- III. **Opening of the Polls:** The polls opened at 9:08 a.m.
- IV. **Approval of the January 24, 2021, Annual Meeting Minutes:** Moved by Kit Baker, seconded by Jim Johnson. Approved.
- V. **Report of the Nominating Committee:** Claire O'Brien, Junior Warden and member of the Nominating Committee, gave the Nominating Committee Report.

Vestry Nominees are Logan O'Connor, Rich Huck, Traci Scudi, Peter Boumgarden and Mokie Carmichael, all with terms that expire in 2026. Nominees for Diocesan Delegates are Jimmy Grimmett, term expires 2024; Mark Pye, term expires 2025, John Schoenecker, term expires 2025, Tim Noelker, term expires 2026. Nominees for Alternate Diocesan Delegates are Katie Claggett, Alternate Delegate, term expires 2026; Charlie Claggett, Alternate Delegate, term expires 2026
- VI. **Report of the Senior Warden:** Junior Warden Claire O'Brien presented the report for Senior Warden Louise Jones who is traveling and referred to the Senior Warden report on page 6 of the Annual Report.
- VII. **Report of the Treasurer:** Peter Boumgarden and Drew Gulick gave the Treasurer's Report, which starts on page 10 of the Annual Report. Drew Gulick will move to an Assistant Treasurer role, having served more than 3 years as Treasurer. Peter Boumgarden will serve as the new Treasurer.

Peter provided a breakdown of our income: 92% from pledge income, 8% from plate offerings and other income. Peter then presented the 2023 budget stating it is a conservative but aspirational budget of \$1,050,000. Peter noted:

  - We will pursue opportunities for fundraising to support special events such as food truck Sunday.
  - The 2023 budget returns to a traditional pull of our endowment of 3% after the more aggressive pull of 5% in 2022.
  - We will see some savings in turnover of staff and combined staff roles.
  - We will see cost savings in the music program with a return to the 2019 budget level.
  - The budget is not balanced, we have a shortfall of \$101,285. We do have money remaining from a generous gift from 2019 that can fund the gap if we do not see an increase in income or decrease in costs.
  - Peter encouraged all to prayerfully consider a pledge to support our operating funds needs and requested a 5% increase in our pledges.
- VIII. **Approval of the 2023 Budget:** moved by Brig Buettner, seconded by Jim Johnson. Approved.
- IX. **Report of the Rector:** David referred everyone to his Rector's Report on page 5 of the Annual Report. David noted that attendance has increased despite the challenge remaining from the pandemic. We are joyfully moving forward.

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David introduced and thanked the remarkable lay staff: David Sinden, Director of Music and Organist; Janet Rouse, Director of Stewardship and Parish Life; Darcy Brainard, Parish Administrator; Jacquelyn VanWeelden, Director of Communications; Zack Rugenstone, Youth Minister; Yvonne Twillman, Director of Children and Family Ministries; Lisa Reynolds, Playgroup Director; and Christine Koch, Administrative Assistant. David then thanked our wonderful clergy Nathan Haydon, Susie Skinner, Luke Jernagan and Jay Kanzler.

David thanked the Vestry for their hard work and led a Litany for the retiring vestry members Julie Peters, Louise Jones, Lisa Acker and Mike Newport.

David said God is calling us to become more than just us. We are a place where we come, connect and realize that we are more. He noted the dramatic decline across all Christian denominations; 6,000 to 10,000 churches in the USA close every year and more than two-thirds of American churches have a worship attendance of less than 100. David noted that St. Peter's has moved forward in a positive and productive way despite the national trend. The call of God always takes us into an uncertain future. God is always ahead of us and always there. Are we ready to meet the spiritually open where they are and as they are? We have work to do to listen to each other.

- X. **Closing of the Polls and Casting of Ballots:** The polls closed at 9:51 am., and the Casting of Ballots for the Vestry Nominees and the Nominees for Diocesan Delegates and alternate was taken, the motion moved and seconded. Approved.
- XI. **New Business:** There was none.
- XII. **Adjournment and Prayer:** Adjournment moved by Mike Newport, seconded by Penny George. Approved. The meeting adjourned at 9:55 a.m.

Jane Gilbert  
Vestry Member

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## Parish Membership in 2023

Increases (all members added by Baptism, Confirmation, reception, or transfer): 42

Decreases (all members lost by death, transferred, or removed): 24

<b>Total Members at end of year</b>	<b>1186</b>
Adults 16 years and older	1048
Children under 16	138
Number of Households	471

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## Sacraments and Services 2023

Average Sunday Attendance: 183

Total Sunday and Saturday Evening Eucharists:	158
Total Weekday Eucharists:	49
Total Private Eucharists:	20
Daily Offices held on Sunday or Saturday Evening:	7
Daily Offices held on Weekdays:	32
Marriages:	5
Burials	21
Baptisms	12    11 were under 16 years of age
Confirmations	14    7 were under 16 years of age

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## The Report of the Rector

*We need a vision that is not based on a fear of a godless future, or a longing for an idealized past, but a rich presence in our own time that inspires the beauty and possibility of Christ's church. --A Creative Minority*

Over the last year, a lot of time and effort has been devoted to the work of formulating a strategic vision for St. Peter's that will help to inspire the *beauty and possibility* of our church for the future. Working with the Center for Healthy Churches, a dedicated group of parishioners organized a process that included putting together three congregational meetings, during which we had conversations about our past, our present, and the future. Each meeting was well attended, with a total of nearly three hundred people sharing insights and providing valuable input. What we learned from those meetings was used to craft three proposals that center on Community, Outreach, and Worship; proposals that are now being implemented.

**COMMUNITY:** *St. Peter's is an unexpected oasis for all. We are a loving, diverse community with a shared calling.*

**OUTREACH:** *St. Peter's is a wellspring of hope. We inspire one another to transform St. Louis and beyond in the name of Christ.*

**WORSHIP:** *St. Peter's offers expansive worship experiences beyond Sunday that are tailored to engage people where they are.*

Seeing people eager to engage in conversation about God's future for St. Peter's, working with members of the Strategic Vision and Planning team and our Vestry -- all of whom have been a vital part of this process -- and having so many members of our church want to help with the implementation of the plan has been inspiring. I am deeply grateful for the work and ministry that we are doing in this holy place, and I am filled with confidence about what lies ahead. In the various ways that we gather -- whether for worship, weddings, funerals, Bible studies, or speaker series -- and through the many ways we provide assistance to those who are hungry, lack shelter, have material needs, or are incarcerated, we *are* making a difference. I read something recently that described the Church as being at its best when it is *pouring itself out in love* for the people within and outside its walls, and as we cast our vision for the future and work to stay attuned to God's call and claim on our life together at St. Peter's, I hope that is the church we will be.

Our gifted lay staff works closely with members of St. Peter's to coordinate many of the activities and ministries that take place in our parish, giving generously of themselves in service to others. They care deeply about the ministries they are responsible for. We are also blessed with a fine group of assisting clergy who work to provide pastoral care and comfort to those who are grieving, and who regularly carry out their priestly ministry as preachers and teachers. In December, Zack Rugenstone, our youth minister, became a member of the clergy when he was ordained a Deacon and, God willing, Zack will be ordained a priest in the summer of 2024. I also want to recognize the members of the Vestry who are completing their three-year term: Ann Babington, Bob Craig, Jimmy Grimmett, Lynn Stockwell, and Claire O'Brien, who served as the Senior Warden this year. It is a privilege and a pleasure to share in ministry with all of these lay and clergy leaders and I am thankful for each of them.

As we move into another year of life together, we have much to be thankful for and much to celebrate. Guided by our shared desire to focus our energy and ministry on community, outreach, and worship, we have the opportunity to build on the solid foundation that has been St. Peter's Episcopal Church for one hundred and fifty-six years and begin to live into a vision that can inspire beauty and possibility for this church, and through which we can *pour ourselves out in love* to share with others in the name of Jesus Christ.

The Rev. David Hodges



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## The Report of the Senior Warden

When I started on the Vestry three years ago, one of our first matters of duty was voting on David's candidacy as rector. As it turned out, it was a pivotal moment in St. Peter's history, and we have been on the move in an exciting direction ever since!

I have been humbled by the opportunity to serve this great Parish, and it has been an honor to follow in the footsteps of many before me who have held this role. A couple of special thank you's are in order: to David, for his support, hard work, and good counsel; to Janet Rouse and our wonderful staff, who have worked tirelessly, often times behind the scenes, in so many ways, to keep St. Peter's moving in the right direction; to Keith Boris, who dedicates an impressive amount of time, energy and resources to the beautiful buildings and grounds of St. Peter's; to Allan Ivie, who has been an amazing partner and has offered sound perspective at every turn; to Peter Boumgarden, who, valiantly stepped in to serve as treasurer in a time of transition; and to Louise Jones – preceding Senior Warden – I thank you all.

On the business and operations side, our Church is on solid footing. In efforts to support our continued growth and commitment to the future of St. Peter's, and in response to the national decline of church membership, we made the important decision to engage Dr. Bill Wilson from the Center of Healthy Churches. As a result of the work of the congregation, Strategic Visioning Team, and resulting Implementation Committee Leaders (thank you all!), St. Peter's is developing long-range plans for three vital buckets: (1) Worship, (2) Community, and (3) Outreach. I encourage everyone to get involved in making our vision statements a reality.

Under the good leadership of Keith Boris and Allan Ivie, St. Peter's implemented several upgrades which will contribute to the overall experience for parishioners and community members. A few (of the many!) projects over the year include: (1) new lighting on the wheelchair ramp on the west side of the church; (2) new first and second floor flooring; (3) upgrades and replacement of the AV in the Undercroft; (4) repair to the fountain outside of the Little Building entrance, which is now operating after many years of being inoperable; and (5) clean-up of the columbarium/courtyard. Finally, St. Peter's consulted with a security company that specializes in churches, and we are making upgrades to security at St. Peter's to support continued safety in our space.

Bringing folks into St. Peter's (and bringing St. Peter's folks together!), as well as maximizing the utilization of our space, has been and will be a continuing priority. Evensong, and the Soulful Spaces speaker series with St. Louis leaders from the Missouri Historical Society, Missouri Botanical Garden, and St. Louis Art Museum, garnered 50-60 people in attendance for each event. Thanks to the initiative and energy of Frances Gay and Dudley Grove, close to 100 parishioners gathered together for the St. Peter's Evening Garden Party hosted by Rick and Lotsie Holton. Our 5 PM Sunday service continues to be another way to engage parishioners exactly where they are, and has continued growing in popularity. I also extend special thank you's to Yvonne Twillman and Zach Rugenstone, who have revitalized youth and family programming and worked hard all year to facilitate great opportunities for this demographic of our church.

Finally, we are on steady financial footing, but like any ambitious nonprofit organization, there is continued work to do. On the positive side, we exceeded our pledge campaign goal by \$112,512, with support from 267 families – 31 of these being new pledges – 91 of these being increased pledges. While we present a balanced budget, there is a continued need to increase household participation and giving levels this year. Every gift is important, and helps us continue our work and the ministry of this church.

In closing, I again extend my gratitude – to each Vestry member I have served with during my tenure, to the staff of St. Peter's, to David, and to this vibrant congregation that my family and I are so thankful to call home.

Claire O'Brien

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## The Report of the Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee is comprised of the current retiring members of the Vestry, Senior Warden and the immediate past Senior Warden of St. Peter's Episcopal Church. The Committee met, publicized the Vestry nomination process, canvassed the parish, and secured the necessary consent to serve, if elected, from six duly-qualified individuals for a term of three years.

The Nominating Committee seeks those they believe will help meet the current needs of the Vestry to efficiently carry out the business of St. Peter's and help the Rector bring to life the vision and mission of the Church. In particular, the committee seeks to identify potential nominees of the congregation that:

- Actively participate in Sunday worship
- Actively participate in parish life and the mission of the Church
- Make an annual pledge commitment to St. Peter's Church

The Nominating Committee has secured the necessary consent to serve a 3-year term on the Vestry, if elected, from:

- **Amy Hilmer** for a term to expire in 2027
- **Tim Noelker** for a term to expire in 2027
- **Michael Orlowski** for a term to expire in 2027
- **William Schoenecker** for a term to expire in 2027
- **Ann Sutter Spann** for a term to expire in 2027

We also present the following nominees to serve as delegates and alternates to the Diocesan Convention, for terms ending as specified below:

- **Jimmy Grimmert**, Delegate for a term to expire in 2024
- **Mark Pye**, Delegate for a term to expire 2025
- **John Schoenecker**, Delegate for a term to expire 2025
- **Tim Noelker**, Delegate for a term to expire 2026
- **Katie Claggett**, Alternate Delegate for a term to expire 2026
- **Charlie Claggett**, Alternate Delegate for a term to expire 2026

Claire O'Brien, Senior Warden  
Louise Jones, Past Senior Warden  
Ann Babington  
Bob Craig  
Jimmy Grimmert  
Lynn Stockwell

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## Our Delegates at Work

The 184<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Missouri was held on November 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Episcopalians from throughout the diocese gathered at the Double Tree Hotel in Chesterfield to enjoy the fellowship and company of one another, as well as engage in the work of the convention, which involved a review of the diocesan budget and elections to diocesan roles. The theme of the convention was entitled “I Love to Tell the Story,” and that theme was the clear focus on all the reports from diocesan ministries and projects that were delivered, including Creation Care, Gun Violence Prevention, and Jubilee Ministry. Moreover, the JustFood truck, a ministry of the Rev. Barbi Click, was blessed at the conclusion of convention.

St Peter’s Episcopal Church was represented by The Rev. David Hodges, The Rev. Dr. Nathan Haydon, The Rev. Zack Rugenstone, and these lay delegates to Diocesan Convention: Jimmy Grimmiett; Tim Noelker; Mark Pye; and John Schoenecker; Charlie and Katie Claggett were the designated alternate delegates for convention. St Peter’s member Hal Burroughs served in his role as Diocesan Chancellor for convention.

The business of Diocesan Convention included:

1. The adoption of four resolutions:

Regular Resolutions

A-184: Clergy Compensation

B-184: Gun Violence Prevention Awareness

Amendments to the Constitution and Canons

E-183: Average Sunday Attendance Calculations (second reading)

D-182B: Restoring Congregational Health (postponed from last year)

All resolutions introduced to convention were approved.

2. The election of those serving in Diocesan roles:

Cathedral Chapter: The Rev. Deacon Paula Hartsfield, Grace Episcopal Church, Jefferson City; Patricia O’Brien, Grace Episcopal Church, Kirkwood

Diocesan Council: Joyce LaFontain, Trinity Episcopal Church, St. Louis; Ezra Smith, The Episcopal Church of St. Michael and St. George

Disciplinary Board: The Very Rev. Shug Goodlow, Christ Episcopal Church, Rolla; Lisa Gould, Christ Church Cathedral, St. Louis; Duncan McArthur, Trinity Episcopal Church, St. Louis

Standing Committee: The Rev. Earl Mahan, Hope Episcopal Church, Town and Country / Episcopal Church of the Holy Communion, University City; The Rev. Ryan Missel, Christ Episcopal Church, Cape Girardeau; Machel West, The Episcopal Church of All Saints and Ascension, Northwoods

3. Adoption of 2024 operating budget

4. Convention address, delivered by The Rt. Rev. Deon Johnson, Bishop of Missouri

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5. Keynote address, delivered by The Rt. Rev. Rafael Morales, The Diocese of Puerto Rico

6. Ministry reports from Diocesan Governance, Diocesan Convocations, Diocesan Ministries, Diocesan Staff, and Diocesan Missioners, which included a report for LGBTQIA+ ministry submitted by DeWayne Trainer

7. The awarding of the Bishop's Medals

The 185<sup>th</sup> Diocesan Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Missouri will be held November 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at the Double Tree Hotel in Chesterfield.

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# The Report of the Treasurer

Fellow Parishioners,

The start of a new year always provides an opportune time to reflect on the financial position of our church. Having started in this role in November of 2022, 2023 presented my first full year acting as Treasurer for the church. Over the last year, I learned a bit more about how St. Peter's works, where we thrive as an institution, and where there are opportunities for continued growth in systems, strategic direction, and financial discipline. In short, I am grateful for the opportunity to steward the finances of the church in this role, working to link strategy, mission, and finance, and I hope that this report gives you a sense of where we stand going into 2024.

## **Summary of Key Points of FY2023**

Coming into the 2023 year, we wanted to be conservative in terms of both expected revenue and the expense side of the ledger. All of this was done with the hopes of mapping the true versus aspirational state of the church finances. At the close of the 2022 budget process, we worked hard to drive some efficiencies into the budget but still projected a gap of just over \$100,000 for the year ahead. In 2023, it was my hope we might close this gap through a mix of increased generosity and rigorous expense management. Ultimately, we ended up relatively close to what we expected, but with both revenue and expenses being higher than anticipated. The cost increases were partly tied to intentional operational choices we made as a group (e.g., hiring a full-time accountant earlier in the year drove up administrative costs) and others linked to unexpected expenses that happen in any given year (e.g., more expensive printer fees due to inflation and unexpected printing expenses). We came into this year knowing that a deficit of this size could be covered thanks to cash reserves made possible by a generous 2019 large gift. That said, knowing we do not want to keep this as an expectation of how we run our budget, we needed this year to find opportunities for greater fiscal discipline. This past year provided us an opportunity to discover further opportunities for cost savings, and the strategic planning process helped us keep an ear to the ground on what you all are most excited about moving forward in the church, and thus, new opportunities for philanthropic support.

## **Key Priorities and Notes for FY2024**

Coming into 2024, we knew it would be important for us to offer a balanced budget. While there still remain cash reserves, we do not want to get into a rhythm of relying on these "rainy days" or "strategic funds" and using them as an excuse not to practice our own fiscal discipline. As a result, despite starting the planning process with a moderate size gap to close, we were able to propose and get approval from Vestry for a balanced 2024 budget which you will find below. In short, reaching this balance was made possible by:

- An ability to find some efficiencies in staffing, including the decision to do a part-time accountant versus a full-time role for the 2024 year.
- A decision to pull from the endowments at a 4% draw versus the 3% draw of the past year. While slightly more aggressive, this is still at the midpoint of our mandated 3-5% range so we believe it was helpful but not lacking prudence.
- A decision to pull back some from our Dioceses support. This reduced support is not done with the intent of this being a forever decision but a reflection of our need to get our own financial house in order first. While the pledged amount is less than the requested amount from the Diocese,

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it is still the second highest gift in our Dioceses and sits at a percentage draw that is still higher than some of our other larger peers who similarly do not meet the 12.5% target.

- Some other small areas for greater attention to budget discipline.

While we know there are times when we have to cut expenses, I hope you read this inspired to build further support (and thus revenue) for the work we want to do as a church. In last year's letter, I offered hope that this year's strategic planning process would spur us on to a vision of what the church can do for our congregants and also the broader St. Louis community. Seeing and feeling the energy at these planning meetings, I start this year with a renewed sense that we are close to that compelling vision, and I look forward to seeing where this vision translates into programmatic opportunities. As this comes together, I hope you are excited about expanding your own financial support for this place to enable this work.

As I said last year, St. Peter's is in a healthy place. We have a stable and talented group of leaders and a generous and engaged congregation, and we are in the midst of a strategic planning process that should enliven the congregants and help them discern what this church can be. To live into this new vision, however, will require resourcing, whether that be in areas where we already support well (e.g., music and the arts) or spaces that are important to us but perhaps not as funded as they could be (e.g., youth programming, outreach, young adult ministry, etc.). As you think about your philanthropic priorities for the year ahead, I would ask you to consider coming alongside this parish with a vision for what your support might mean for people inside these walls, and also those we can impact far beyond a Sunday morning gathering.

Peter Boumgarden  
Treasurer

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# Stewardship Report

## 2023 Annual Giving Campaign

The formal part of the 2023 Annual Giving Campaign kicked off on January 15, 2023, and culminated with Commitment Sunday on February 12, 2023. The theme, *A Community of Belonging*, reflected the belief that being part of St. Peter's and engaging in one or more of our ministries is vitally important to the future of our church. We celebrated the ways in which we belong in our church community: through worship, ministry, formation, Christian education, music, and giving.

### **2023 Annual Giving Campaign:**

Total Number of Pledges	267
Pledge Dollars	\$1,112,512
Pledge Dollars Collected (2023) (add'l \$29,700 collected in 2024)	\$1,083,218
# New Pledges	31
# Pledges Increased	91
Total Parish Households	471
Retention Rate	91%
Households that give, with no pledge	27
Households - no giving	177
Average Pledge	\$4,165
Median Pledge	\$2,400
Pledge Campaign Goal	\$1,000,000

Each member was asked to “step up” for St. Peter's and because of parishioner response to that request, we exceeded our annual giving campaign goal.

**Thank you** to the 2023 Annual Giving Campaign chairs: Laura Frank and Josh Schafer and to the committee members: Kit Baker, Luke Fouke, Dudley Grove, Laurie Haffenreffer, Jim Johnson, Louise Jones, Connie Lohr, and Sandy Peters. Their hard work and efforts are certainly appreciated!

**A GREAT BIG THANK YOU** to all parishioners who supported St. Peter's in 2023! We are able to worship, care for one another, gather together, and help the community because of you!

Janet Rouse  
Director of Stewardship and Parish Life

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# Buildings and Grounds Commission Report

2023 was filled with surprises, challenges, and accomplishments for the Buildings and Grounds of St Peters.

## **Accomplishments & Improvements:**

- Replaced the nine geothermal heat pumps, which heat and cool most of the Church, for \$130,000
- Removed and replaced ~ 12 feet of cracked cast iron waste line in the kitchen ceiling and walls.
- Brought the “NAME” fountain by the little building back into use by repowering it, after being out of service for many years.
- Installed new vinyl flooring in the downstairs classroom hallway and carpet in the offices.
- Utilizing a partial grant from the Diocese, installed landscape lighting around the front handicap ramp and along handicap parking spaces.
- Misc. repairs various to kitchen appliances and kitchen electrical lines.
- Replaced a hot water heater in the little building.
- Ongoing repairs to the masonry of the Columbarium and courtyard.
- Utilizing Ameren incentives, we continued upgrades to LED efficient lighting in the Church offices and Sanctuary.

The LED lighting upgrades done in 2022 and 2023 are now realizing their investment, with our electricity consumption down by (30%) for 2023 vs. 2022.

Necessary repairs to our heating system were noted during routine maintenance in the fall of 2023. Repairs under warranty have been completed with additional repairs (pump replacement) occurring soon.

Improvements to reduce energy consumption, enhance the aesthetics of the Church, increase accessibility, and maintain the buildings will continue in 2024.

Keith Boris  
Vestry Buildings and Grounds



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# The Altar Guild Report

"The LORD is God, and he has made his light shine on us.  
With boughs in hand, join in the festal procession to the altar."  
*Psalm 118:27*

The members of the Altar Guild do sacred work. We provide what the clergy and community need to celebrate the Holy Eucharist. We prepare the church for our regular worship on Sundays, and other services as needed, including funerals and weddings. We also care for many of the items used in our worship. Our members are Kathy Baker, Merrill Buettner, Jan Craig, Frances Gay, Nancy Grimes, Connie Lohr, Claudia McMillin, Didi Noelker, Wendy Olk, Susan Schettler, DeWayne Trainer, and Caren Vredenburg. In January, Susan Schettler resigned as chair, after 13 years of faithful service. We offer her our immense thanks and gratitude. DeWayne Trainer assumed the chair role. The Altar Guild is looking forward to expanding its membership and trying new things to engage more people in our ministry. If you appreciate beautifully polished silver, crisp linens, vestments in good repair or a perfectly set table, we ask you to consider joining us. If you'd like to learn more, speak to a member after a service or contact DeWayne at [dewayne.trainer@gmail.com](mailto:dewayne.trainer@gmail.com) or 314-296-1563.

DeWayne Trainer  
Chair

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## The Report of the Organist and Director of Music

The English minister, composer, and musicologist Erik Routley famously referred to the practice of church music as “our duty and delight.” At St. Peter’s, musicians aspire to a high standard of repertoire and performance, but it is apparent that many of us also take great pleasure in this work.

The music at St. Peter’s is led by the St. Peter’s Choir, the parish choir, and the St. Peter’s Singers, a professional 16-voice ensemble. Our Chorister Training Program for young people is one of the diocese’s only Royal School of Church Music-affiliated programs. We have a small number of Choristers who rehearse weekly.

St. Peter’s remains committed to music in the Anglican tradition in a way few parishes like ours are. At the same time, we are committed to expanding the repertoire we have received by looking back to ancient music of the Church and by intentionally seeking out music by new voices. We also commit to commissioning new music well-suited to our liturgy and tradition.

On the First Sunday after the Epiphany, we welcomed composer Jessica French and Charles Anthony Silvestri, who had collaborated on a new choral commission as composer and poet, respectively. Their carol, *Fix Your Eyes Upon the Star*, was premiered at Epiphany Lessons and Carols, a service that the full St. Peter’s Choir sang. The two artists were also guests at a lively Rector’s Forum. I am happy to report that this new Epiphany carol has garnered significant interest and has already been performed on both coasts of the country since our premiere.

A service of Choral Evensong sung by the parish choirs of St. Peter’s and the Church of St. Michael & St. George, Clayton, was held at St. Peter’s on the Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany. This Evensong was the sixth annual joint service sung by our two choirs.

Choral Evensong (or Lessons and Carols) continues to be sung monthly on the second Sunday of the month, except from May to September. The St. Peter’s Singers led Evensong services on the

- Third Sunday of Lent, in collaboration with musicians from Early Music Missouri
- Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost, and the
- Twenty-Fourth Sunday after Pentecost (a service commemorating the 400th anniversary of the death of English composer Thomas Weelkes with guest choirmaster Dr. Mark Ardrey-Graves.

The Parish Choir sang a Service of Advent Lessons and Carols on the Second Sunday of Advent.

Choral Evensong was sung by a visiting choir, the Choir of Davidson United Methodist Church, Davidson, N.C., on the Fourth Sunday after Pentecost. A service of Choral Evensong scheduled for Easter Day was canceled.

We are proud to continue our partnership with Early Music Missouri (EMMo), an organization that serves as a resource to musicians and Early Music audiences across the central Midwest. In addition to their collaboration with the St. Peter’s Singers at the Lenten Evensong, EMMo presented five concerts at St. Peter’s. St. Peter’s served as a fiscal sponsor for EMMo, and both of our organizations received grant funding from the Regional Arts Commission of St. Louis.

2023 is the first full year for the 5:00 p.m. Eucharist in the undercroft. An outside musician is engaged when the service is held simultaneously with Evensong in the church.

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I am grateful to the Rector and the Vestry for the opportunity to take a sabbatical leave after the Second Sunday of Easter; this was my first sabbatical in 17 years of full-time music ministry, seven of which have been at St. Peter's. I am thankful to the St. Peter's Choir and the many other musicians who continued leading music at St. Peter's in my absence. I returned for services on the Sixth Sunday after Pentecost.

The St. Peter's Choir concluded the choral year on Trinity Sunday. After this, various choir members formed semi-choruses to lead music throughout the summer. The full choir returned to services on the Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

An "Organ Spooktacular" was presented in the church on the Sunday afternoon before Halloween.

On the Twenty-Fifth Sunday after Pentecost, we were pleased to welcome the St. Louis Caledonian Pipe Band for a service of Morning Prayer with Kirkin' of the Tartans.

On the First Sunday after Christmas, the St. Peter's Choir premiered a new carol: "Sing with joy, 'tis Christmas morn" by Robert W. Richter.

As I reported last year, attendance patterns in the St. Peter's Choir remain less consistent than in the past. The number of singers present at rehearsals and services now fluctuates much more than before 2020. The music program also continues to operate without a regular assistant organist. The choirs and I continue to work with these new realities that present a challenge for rehearsing and singing music to a high standard weekly, especially music accompanied by the organ.

Additionally, several significant departures have changed the face of the St. Peter's Choir this year, including the death of Daniel Pickett, a tenor on the Decani side for many years. Dan is someone who not only had a beautiful voice but was a true colleague, mentor, and friend. For Dan, church music was indeed a "duty and delight." Dan exemplifies the kind of strong commitment that has made church music thrive here. Let it be known that I hereby posthumously bestow the Choirmaster's Award on Dan Pickett for his distinguished and exemplary service to the St. Peter's Choir.

David Sinden

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## Parish Life Report

There were many opportunities for fun and fellowship in worship, formation, youth and family gatherings, and parish-wide events this year. The beloved annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper was held in February. A dedicated group of bakers and servers prepared a delicious pancake-inspired dinner for parishioners to enjoy. Our fifth annual blood drive, #givelikecharlie, was held in May. We had 74 donations of blood and 10% were first time donors. Over 222 lives were impacted by these donations! We are thrilled to host this event each year, bringing the St. Peter's and MICDS communities together for a great cause.

The Woman's Guild met weekly and offered many opportunities to gather in-person. They continued their charitable work with projects to support the community and our youth group at church. The Men's Breakfast group, newly renamed to the Tuesday Morning Breakfast Group, met monthly for breakfast and hosted the annual First Responders' Breakfast in September. It was a great way to celebrate our local community fire and police departments.

At the end of May, we held our evening Garden Party, organized by Frances Gay and Dudley Grove, and hosted by Rick and Lotsie Holton. The party was a wonderful opportunity to mingle with fellow parishioners in a beautiful setting. Thank you to the hosts, the chairs, and all the volunteers who worked so hard to make this a special event.

Our parish picnic was held in June, complete with food trucks, music, and fun. St. Peter's Day was celebrated in September with worship and an outdoor picnic celebration, including live music, a balloon artist, and two inflatable games. Thank you to the parishioners that volunteered their time and cooking talents to make this event deliciously fun.

In October, we had a Fall Family Bonfire. Families came out for music, pumpkin painting, hot dogs, and of course, s'mores. A Halloween Organ Spooktacular was held at the end of the month with a merry crowd in attendance. Fun spooky songs were sung, and goody bags were handed out.

Look for more new and exciting ways to participate in the life of St. Peter's in the coming year!

Janet Rouse  
Director of Stewardship and Parish Life

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## Children and Family Ministries Report

The winter spring semester of Sunday School went well, with numbers between 10 and 25. 95% of the volunteer teachers returned to help in Sunday School. We had 2 paid Nursery workers. During the winter semester we introduced several new family events. We continued using Holy Moly as the curriculum during the winter/spring semester.

We continued to have Extended Sunday School once each month and we have celebrations and special activities on these Sundays. We moved the event from the Undercroft to the classrooms in September.

Two new events were introduced during this semester. One of them was Sunday Night Soup Suppers, where the Ladies Guild made soup for a supper for families that attended the 5:00 service. Children were offered Sunday School activities during the service. The event took place three Sundays in March, but was cancelled due to only 1 and 2 families attending, and no in one attendance the last Sunday.

Drop and Go activities were also offered, where the parents could stay and play or drop their children for 90 minutes, while we focused on special activities. Again, this event was not well attended and was not offered after the spring semester. 2 more Parent Nights Out were offered, with one of them being cancelled due to lack of attendance.

The children presented a Mother's Day skit at the end of the church service and did a wonderful job. Many people said they enjoyed the skit and seeing the children.

During the summer, children k-5 joined together to form one class during the summer and met in the Kindergarten classroom, and on Sunday's when there was not a nursery worker, we all went to the playground. Children's Chapel does not meet during the summer due to low attendance.

Vacation Bible School took place from June 5-9. Parents were able to choose between attending from 9:00-11:30, or staying for a full day, from 9:00-3:00. Ten children and 4 youth attended participated in VBS. The camp ended with a hotdog lunch, with parents being invited and a short performance being offered by the children.

Children's Chapel started up again two weeks after the Sunday School Kickoff, which took place on September 10<sup>th</sup>. Our numbers ranged between 5 and 12. We returned to the original format for bulletins and progression of the service was used for the 10 minute service that goes from 10:15 to 10:25 in the chapel each Sunday morning.

Blessing of the Backpacks took place on August 20<sup>th</sup>. Children met in the Undercroft for a school-focused chapel. There were 10 children present for this.

We changed the curriculum from Holy Moly to using Children's Church Bulletins, which is a curriculum that uses the same scriptures used in church. This was meant to encourage a conversation between children and parents about what they had learned that day. K-3<sup>rd</sup> grade was combined into one classroom, due to low attendance, and Sarah Striler continued to teach grades 4 and 5. Numbers for Sunday school were between 8 and 30. Special events, such as service projects, Mother's day performance, St. Nicholas Day, Jesus Birthday Party, etc. tended to be better attended.

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In October we held a Family Bonfire that around 25 people attended. Family's were offered a hot dog supper around a bonfire, and craft activities for the children. Children did crafts, played games and made scarecrows.

Family Advent Wreath Making was offered on the December 3rd, and we had 15 participants.

We held a Parent's Night Out in December with the theme of "Polar Express". Seven children were in attendance and we held it in the confirmation room. We will add this to next years schedule again.

Children were offered several holiday events to participate in, including Cookie Decorating, Jesus' Birthday party and St. Nicholas Day. A new family event offered was Gingerbread House Building, but there was only one family that attended.

The Pageant was the last event of the year. We had 35 children and 5 youth that participated in the play this year.

During 2023, for quarterly service projects, the children packed goody bags for children in detention for the Episcopal City Missions to hand out. Bags were packed for Valentine's Day, Easter, Fourth of July and Thanksgiving. The average number of bags packed per event were 130.

The children also made 60 Christmas cards from St. Peter's Children's Ministry for tenants in Bently Retirement Home in St. Ann.

Yvonne Twillman  
Director of Children and Family Ministries

## **Youth Ministry Report**

The youth group had an incredible year in 2023. This was my first full year of being a youth pastor here at St. Peters and I loved every minute of it. We had dozens of evenings together playing games and learning about what it means to be a person of faith. The Middle School students participated in a mission week around St. Louis while the High School students went to Niagara Falls to serve that community. Our group began partnering with St. Timothy's Episcopal Church which has brought wonderful energy and new friendships to our community. The youth group is going to carry the momentum from 2023 into 2024 with unbelievable Sunday evenings, a Winter Retreat in February, a Middle School Mission week in June, a Mission Trip in July and so much more! Thank you all for the support you've shown me in my first year here at St. Peters and thank you to the youth who join us in our love and service to God.

The Rev. Zack Rugenstone  
Youth Minister

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## St. Peter's Cares Report

"Love Is The Way" according to Bishop Michael Curry's book of 2020. Love is what St. Peter's Cares volunteers have been doing for the past eight years. In 2023 the meal ministry volunteers delivered 74 meals to parishioners during a time of need. As of January 2024, our prayer team of 12 volunteers prayed for 37 parishioners or friends daily. That translates into 444 prayers a day coming from our prayer team. When a parishioner calls, St. Peter's Cares is here to help. Every call is private. St. Peter's Cares will continue to share the love, and we welcome all to join in this ministry. If you are interested in becoming a St. Peter's Cares volunteer please contact Frances Gay or Nancy Grimes, The St. Peter's Cares Shepherds.

If you ever need a meal or a prayer, just leave a message for a Shepherd at 314-993-2306 ext 125 or [shepherd@specstl.org](mailto:shepherd@specstl.org), and Frances or Nancy will contact you within 24 hours. Requests are kept confidential.

And to all who give of their time, talent, and treasure as members of St. Peter's Cares . . . THANK YOU for your loving service!

Frances Gay  
Nancy Grimes  
St. Peter's Cares Shepherds

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# Communications Report

During my first year at St. Peter's, I have been thrilled to work with the vestry, clergy, parishioners, ministry partners, and other staff of the parish to spread the word about everything happening here. We've seen increases in social media engagement, web traffic, and views on our weekly YouTube livestream of the 10:30 a.m. service.

2023 also saw a few upgrades to communications and technology at St. Peter's. We made significant improvement to the undercroft AV system, and I'm grateful to everyone who helped make that possible. We also launched a weekly digital series of Monday Meditations featuring the Rev. David Hodges; catch those on Facebook and Instagram every Monday.

The largest communication headwind this year was an increase in phishing scams targeting our parish. Sadly, these scams (typically involving fraudsters posing as St. Peter's clergy) are nearly impossible to prevent, despite our very active efforts to disrupt them. As we continue to work to guard against scams, it is important to remember to carefully check email addresses/domains and delete suspicious messages. You can always call the office if you have a question about an email.

There are many ways that we like to share news with you:

- *News from the Rock*: is our weekly email newsletter which goes out on Friday mornings. You'll find news about upcoming events, helpful updates and links, and a schedule for the upcoming week. If you're not signed up, please email [office@specstl.org](mailto:office@specstl.org) requesting to get added to the list!
- Bulletin announcements: located at the end of every Sunday bulletin you will find an announcements section! Take a few minutes to look and see what's going on at St. Peter's. For folks who like to keep it low-tech, the bulletins will cover almost everything you need to know!
- Visit our website: [specstl.org](http://specstl.org) is your digital homebase for St. Peter's. You'll find news, information, and other helpful resources.
- Social media: Like us on Facebook ([facebook.com/specstl](https://facebook.com/specstl)) and Instagram ([@specstl](https://instagram.com/specstl)) to see pictures and updates! This is especially helpful for urgent updates like inclement weather cancellations.
- Realm: Realm is a safe and convenient way for parishioners (and ONLY parishioners!) to log in and see their contact information, giving history, church groups, and a parish directory. You can update personal information, add a profile picture (a great way to connect with other church members), change privacy settings, update or edit monetary gifts, and join groups. Haven't signed up yet? Email [office@specstl.org](mailto:office@specstl.org) with your full name, email, and phone number to receive an invitation to create your login.

We always do our best to keep information thorough, accurate, and current across all our communication platforms. I always welcome you to reach out to me with additions, corrections, questions, or comments!

Connor Bryant  
Communications Manager



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## St. Peter's Playgroup Report

### Testimonials:

"St. Peter's Playgroup has been such a blessing to our family. Our two year old son has never been to a daycare or school and this program has been the most nurturing introduction to preschool for him. Our son has been loved and supported by his teachers while being given the patience and freedom to take it all in at his own pace. My husband and I strongly believe that St. Peter's is changing our son's life - he has blossomed in a way we didn't think could happen. We are so grateful for Lisa and her team."

*-Current Playgroup Parent*

"As an early childhood educator, play-based learning is of utmost importance when I seek early learning environments for my children. St. Peter's Playgroup understands how critical it is for his children to explore, grow and learn through play. Children as young as 20 months are introduced to a loosely structured day, with art, snack and circle time activities, but "play" is always at the heart. My son is thrilled to arrive to school each day. He is loved, nurtured and cared for while there. The most important thing? He adores his teachers. (And the playground!) Thank you, SPP, for making our son's first school experience an excellent one!"

*-Current Playgroup Parent*

I am grateful for this positive feedback; it reinforces how meaningful and important it is that we continue with our mission to provide a stimulating, a safe and a nurturing environment where children will have experiences that promote their emotional, social, intellectual and physical development. —Never disregarding our most important goal: PLAY

The 2022-2023 financial year was a healthy one. We offered two classes on Monday/Wednesday/Friday with a two day option. Although the balance sheet does not show a large gain, it was a solid financial year, as we were able to make some building improvements: new rocks on the playground, updating a fire door and the purchase of some new toys.

This year, there is one Monday/Wednesday/Friday class. Each room has two staff members in each classroom. They have background checks performed by the Missouri Safety Care Registry, and the Episcopal Diocese of Missouri. The staff members also participate in a CPR class. The morning begins at 9:10 and ends at 11:45. Each class follows a routine but, of course, is flexible. A typical day includes free play indoors and outdoors, as well as snack, music, art projects, group activities and story time. There are events throughout the year to which parents, grandparents, siblings, and special guests are welcome.

Church members' children have priority in admission followed by current students and then siblings of previous SPP students. Thereafter, applications received with a \$70. non-refundable application fee are processed in the order they are received. If spaces are available, children may enroll at any time throughout the Playgroup year. Children do not have to be potty-trained.

The program is tuition based, but SPP benefits from the following fundraising events:

- Pizza Party, held monthly, a Pizza lunch is served with dismissal at 12:30pm.
- Photographer, Barbi Macon, takes pictures in the spring.
- The Playgroup will offer a summer camp from May 28 through June 7.

Lisa Reynolds  
Director

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## The Woman's Guild Report

The goal of the St. Peter's Woman's Guild is to be an active part of the church, providing fun, fellowship, support, friendship, faith, and spiritual growth while serving the church, its members, and the community. The Woman's Guild meets year-round, making it possible to provide support to St. Peter's programs as well as to each other.

The Woman's Guild is greatly involved in helping those who are less fortunate, while providing for the Greater Good. The Episcopal City Mission, in conjunction with the St. Louis County Detention Center, looks for organizations that will sponsor a Birthday celebration for the Youth. We saw this as a challenge and a very worthwhile project. Seeing the joy in the youths' eyes as we arrive each October bearing gifts lets us know that this is a necessary and worthwhile cause, which we are happy to embrace.

This year in October 2023, the Woman's Guild held their annual Opening Luncheon at the Missouri Athletic Club. Nathan Haydon led us in prayer before we had a tasty lunch with beautifully lit fall centerpieces, colorful candle favors, and a spectacular program about "Foods From Holidays Past," by Magdalene Linck from the St. Louis Missouri Historical Society. Music was provided by Don Franz and his Ragtime Trio. The speaker provided us with recipes and historical facts from earlier days when the Woman's Guild was first formed. A great time was had by all.

Our goal was to raise money for various charities and worthwhile causes to help those who were less fortunate than us. We raised money through selling new items from the Service Bureau and like-new donated items from parishioners at our Fall Boutique. The Guild was also able to donate items to Edgewood for Youth, as well as items to Froebel teachers as Christmas gifts. It was a win-win situation for all. The women of the Guild personally wrapped each gift in bright Christmas paper. We were also able to donate food, party supplies, birthday gifts, and treat bags to the Episcopal City Mission.

The money we raised by selling reindeer-themed items, wreaths, poinsettias, and Christmas items was divided between the Haven of Grace and the Salvation Army. Both charities were ecstatic to receive our donations, which would greatly benefit the babies, children, and adults in dire need of help.

The Woman's Guild finished out the year 2023 by having our annual Christmas party, complete with festive and beautiful Christmas decorations and a delicious salad from the Woman's Exchange, along with a variety of sweets. The Woman's Guild looks forward to resuming their Speaker Series in the next few months and closing out the year with our Annual Plant Sale for Mother's Day!

Cheryl A. Meyer  
St. Peter's Woman's Guild President

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## Outreach Report

Below is a summary of activities and details on the number of people reached through St. Peter's Outreach efforts last year.

Teams of parishioners led by Bill and Jim Gilbert prepared and served 5 meals as part of the Sunday "Hot Lunch" program at Trinity Episcopal Church, Central West End. These hot lunches served around 80 people each time. They also prepared and served 5 meals for the Saturday "Peace Meal" at St. John's Episcopal Church, Tower Grove. Around 60 people were served each time for these Peace Meals.

We also continue to support the Trinity Food Ministry throughout the year with multiple drives. This year, our "First Sunday" food drives collected 940 bags of groceries and personal care items. Over 100 pairs of shoes and other footcare items were collected for Trinity's Maundy Thursday Foot Clinic. Additionally, two winter clothing drives were held in January and November to clothe our neighbors in the colder months.

Since 2019, a Red Cross blood drive has been held at St. Peter's in memory of parishioner Charlie Gillis. This year's event garnered 74 units of blood, impacting up to 222 lives. We look forward to continuing this tradition this May.

In July, we collected backpacks and school supplies for Kid Smart, filling more than four church pews with over 1,000 supplies.

The annual Giving Tree once again showed parishioners' willingness to participate, collecting over 200 gifts that went to The Haven of Grace, Trinity Food Ministry, Episcopal City Mission, and GiFT (Giving is a Family Tradition).

Other efforts include:

- The Woman's Guild assembled 39 giftbags for the teachers of Froebel Literacy Academy Elementary School
- 100 Easter baskets were assembled and given to Gateway 180 Homeless Shelter, Woman's Safehouse, and Pleasant Green Missionary Baptist Church
- St. Peter's Sunday School children assembled 125 gift bags for the children and youth served by Episcopal City Mission

These numbers paint a picture of a loving and generous community focused on caring for the needs of others. We look forward to building on this enthusiasm as we create more opportunities to serve the wider St. Louis community and beyond. Thank you for your continued generosity and time!

Jacquelyn VanWeelden  
Parish Coordinator

Read the latest parish news and updates at [www.specstl.org](http://www.specstl.org).  
Subscribe to the weekly newsletter, *News from the Rock*. From the front page of the parish website, scroll down to “Get Weekly News” to sign-up.



ST. PETER'S  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
EST. 1868

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