

SAINT PETER'S  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
SCRIPTURE + TRADITION + REASON



# NEWSLETTER

Worship | Discipleship | Fellowship

## Homecoming Sunday, September 15th

Join us as we kick off our **Discipleship Year** on September 15th. Eucharist will be at 10:30 a.m., with a Potluck Lunch to follow. Tell a buddy, bring a friend, ask a neighbor, and don't forget your favorite covered dish!

## Sunday Morning Prayer begins September 8th

Do you need a different kind of worship on Sundays? Do you feel called to pray more? Join us for Sunday Morning Prayer, beginning Sept. 8 at 9 a.m. The service takes a half hour, and will be followed by coffee and discussion of the day's readings in the Parish Hall.

## "First Saturday" service to bring Evening Worship to St. Peter's

Beginning September 7th at 7 p.m., join us for a service of compline. Each month will feature a different theme, with September focusing on Discipleship.

## Pastor's Pen

As I begin my fourth program year at St. Peter's, I find myself giving thought to the very concept of a "program year." The idea is that - much like schools - the church has a set period of time when it engages in Christian Education and special events and activities, and implies the church also takes "time off." For over half a century, this was the *modus operandi* of the parish church: occupy parishioners of all ages with age appropriate activities for the purposes of education, outreach, and - yes - propagation of the congregation. Also, for about half a century this worked rather well in the United States. After the Second World War, churches were packed, and a twenty year period of massive expansion set in. Churches rushed to build education and activity space in nearly every location that could afford it. The motto from the film, Field of Dreams, "If you build it, they will come," was lived out in communities across the nation: if a church was built, people came.

Then, starting in the 1960s, a gradual decline began to take place in the mainline denominations. Half a century into that decline, and we see many denominations - including ours - at half their postwar strength. This has, in many places, made the "traditional," parish model of building, worship, and programming harder to sustain. Many churches have closed, and many others have had to pare back staffing, programming, and worship. Others have combined with one another. For the last decade, the trend can be summed up as, "Bigger churches are getting bigger; and smaller churches are getting smaller."

Lest one think this message is going to be bleak, allow me to reassure you, that I believe there is vital ministry going on in Dansville in general and St. Peter's in particular. Our average Sunday attendance has crept up over the last few years, and we have added to our membership roles, even if members interact differently with the church than they did in years past.



## **Bishop's Visitation October 13th**

The Rt. Rev. Prince G. Singh, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Rochester, will be visiting St. Peter's on October 13th. He will celebrate the 10:30 a.m. Eucharist, and bless the facilities at Parkside Spiritual Development Center. A potluck lunch will follow.



## **Parkside Grand Opening Celebration October 12-20**

Parkside Spiritual Development Center will officially launch this October with the hosting of the Genesee Valley Presbytery on October 12, the Bishop's Visitation on October 13th, a community dedication on October 16th, and the hosting of the Genesee Valley Association of the United Church of Christ on October 20th. Additional details - including a schedule of events for the coming months - will be forthcoming in a special newsletter.

Though we are far from being self sustaining in terms of annual stewardship, we are in a position to continue to invest in mission and ministry as parishioners and staff discover together where the Holy Spirit is calling us. Our partnerships - notably with Dansville Presbyterian Church - demonstrate that collaboration while respecting distinct denominational traditions is life giving and life affirming.

Despite all these encouraging signs, I still have something to break to you: the program church is dying, if not already dead. We cannot expect to surge in membership just because we have programming in place. Indeed, in a time when people work 6 or 7 days a week, and children have school activities nearly every weekend, more "programming" as we have known it is not what they need: they are over-programmed as it is.

What is the alternative to the program church? There are many takes on this, but my take is that we are to be a discipleship church. Instead of classes and activities designed to mirror the programming found in schools and self-help classes, we can focus on spiritual formation designed to empower each and every one of us to go into the world as representatives of Jesus Christ, and connect with our friends, neighbors, and - yes - strangers with genuine affection and an invitation to join us on our journey with God. Discipleship is different from mere programming because the direction is different: instead of hoping (often in vain) that people will come to us, a discipleship approach equips us to go to them. Instead of our buildings being destinations, they become launchpads for mission and ministry. Instead of our worship services being exercises in "what can I get out of it?" they become venues where—yes—we are recharged, but also encouraged to ask "what can I offer?" In short, the discipleship church is the program church turned inside out.

This distinction is important as we prepare with our Presbyterian and Congregationalist partners to launch the *Parkside Spiritual Development Center*. Parkside is not just a federated version of an overgrown Sunday School. Instead, it is an ecumenical launchpad for our mission and ministry in the community. Under its auspices, we hope to create a community of disciples who—whether they identify with traditional Christianity or not—nevertheless have—as our baptismal prayers put it—inquiring and discerning hearts. We want to *facilitate spiritual growth in the community* as in our churches, in hopes that God will transform them and us as part of a new creation in Dansville and surrounding areas. Yes, we will have a clearing house of Christian Education resources, some of which will find their way into activities at St. Peter's and its neighbors.

Yes, we will have workshops and lectures designed to meet needs in the community. Yes, we will have opportunities for learning. Yet always, we do so with the hope that those who participate will go forth as disciples and lead in transforming their communities, religious and otherwise. Parkside will fit the discipleship model by serving the community, not just itself. When you see its upcoming programming in a special mailing in mid-September, I hope you'll be excited, but also notice the difference in focus.

So it is that I guess we are not starting our program year after all. We are beginning a **discipleship year**. If you have doubts about this change in emphasis, (1) they're totally understandable, and (2) just remember what Jesus did with only 12 disciples (one of whom didn't exactly work out)! If you have any questions, or find the Spirit is moving you to offer something not mentioned here, don't hesitate to contact me. Until then, I am

Faithfully yours in Christ,

- Fr. Eric +



## Pipe Organ to be Overhauled, Expanded

This fall, the pipe organ will be renovated by Smith & Gilbert of Portageville, NY. The original "shed," left over from the previous Saint Peter's building, will be demolished, and a new housing for the organ will be built in its place. The organ itself will have repaired, re-voiced, and updated pipes, as well as a significant expansion, doubling the number of pipes. Working facade pipes will be added to the openings in the chancel area, improving both appearance and sound. Additionally, the air reservoir and motor will be replaced, the latter being relocated into the organ loft instead of under the building. The result of the project will be an organ that is both traditional in sound for our architecture, historic in that its tracker play and some original ranks will be preserved, and honored in that it will be an instrument of dignity, worthy of both the worship space and the organists who play it.



This project follows a smaller one last year in which the mechanicals of the organ were repaired to preserve its tracker functionality. The parish organist, W. Stephen Rose, likens last year's repairs to osteopathic surgery, whereas this year's work is an overhaul of the organ's heart and lungs, with voice lessons.

Work is anticipated to cost over \$40,000. To contribute to the Organ Fund, visit [stpetesdansville.org](http://stpetesdansville.org) and click the donation button at the bottom of the page, or contact the parish office directly.



# Calendar

## Standing Schedule beginning September

Sunday: 9 AM - Morning Prayer (Sanctuary)  
10:30 AM - Holy Eucharist (Sanctuary)

Monday – Thursday: 9 AM - 2 PM Office Hours  
*Additional hours by appointment.*

Friday: *Rector's Sabbath*

## SEPTEMBER

Saturday, September 7	7:00 PM	First Saturday Worship (Sanctuary); Discipleship Theme
<b>Sunday, September 15</b>	<b>11:45 AM</b>	<b>Homecoming Sunday Potluck (Parish Hall)</b>
Tuesday, September 17	9:30 AM	Men's Fellowship Breakfast (Sunrise Diner)
Saturday, September 28	11:30 AM – 1:00 PM	HOPE Luncheon (Parish Hall)
Monday, September 30	6:00 PM	Diocesan Pre-Convention Meeting (St. Peter's, Henrietta)

## OCTOBER

Tuesday, October 1	6:00 PM	Diocesan Pre-Convention Meeting (St. Thomas, Bath)
Saturday, October 5	7:00 PM	First Saturday Worship (Sanctuary) w/ Blessing of Animals
Saturday, October 12	9:00 AM	Presbytery Meeting (DPC; Lunch in Parish Hall)
<b>Sunday, October 13,</b>	<b>10:30 AM</b>	<b>Bishop's Visitation, Parkside Blessing, &amp; Potluck</b>
Tuesday, October 15	9:30 AM	Men's Fellowship Breakfast (Sunrise Diner)
Wednesday, October 16	5:00 PM	Parkside Ribbon Cutting
Sunday, October 20	1:00 PM	UCC Association Meeting (Parkside; Sanctuary; Parish Hall)
Saturday, October 26	All Day	Diocesan Convention
	11:30 AM – 1:00 PM	HOPE Luncheon (Parish Hall)
Thursday, October 31	4:30 PM	All Hallows' Eve Service (Sanctuary; Parish Hall)
	6:00 PM	Dansville Halloween Parade (Village Hall; Downtown)

## NOVEMBER

Saturday, November 2	5:00 PM	First Saturday Worship (Sanctuary); Gratitude Theme
<b>Sunday, November 3</b>	<b>All Day</b>	<b>All Saints' Sunday</b>