



John Milliken

**I am excited to announce that St. Peter's will be running the
Alpha Course beginning in January.
"Awesome!" you say; "What on earth is the Alpha Course?"**

The Alpha Course is an eleven-week program designed to introduce people to the basics of the Christian faith in a relaxed environment. In once-a-week meetings we will share a meal together, watch a talk on some aspect of the Christian faith, and have a time for conversation about what we watched. The course originated in an Anglican church in London. It has been so popular that it now runs in 169 countries, with over 27 million people having participated in the course since it began in 1990.

Who is it for? The course is designed for those exploring faith who would not necessarily call themselves Christian. It can also be very helpful for those who are new to the faith or who feel they have never really gotten "the big picture." If you or someone you know (a neighbor, friend, co-worker, etc.) fits into one of these categories, we would love to have you along. When will it begin? The first meeting of Alpha is planned for the evening of Thursday, January 11th.

How can you be involved? As you read this, you may have thought, "I don't think I want to *attend* the Alpha Course, but it sounds like a neat ministry. How can I help?" It will take many hands to run a successful course and there are several ways to get involved. We will need:

-People to help with food: There will be eleven dinners to prepare for those taking the course. You can sign up to coordinate a dinner (or 2, or 3) or to simply help with preparation and service.

-People to pray: We need a team of people who will commit to praying regularly for the program and the guests who participate in it.

-People to provide child care: We want to remove obstacles for those who want to participate. For this reason, we'd like to provide child care if needed. We will need people who are willing to serve for one or more of the weeks of the course.

-Small Group Hosts and Assistants: The discussion time happens in small groups, each one of which needs a facilitator and an assistant. This is a great role for someone who is outgoing, passionate about his or her faith, and a good listener. You will receive training for this role.

You will be hearing more about this in the weeks ahead. Please consider if and how you would like to be involved. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to get in touch with me.

In Christ,

John

Fr. John continued ...

As God reminded me – this is his church and your church – it’s not my church. Every Sunday I get to look out and see a group of incredibly dedicated and gifted people in the congregation that are God’s children. As we enter a season where giving is near the forefront of our minds, think of St. Peter’s as well. This is a season where your church family needs your gifts.



Patrick Henderson-Senior Warden

Peter, like his brother St. Andrew, worked as a fisherman. Andrew introduced Peter to Jesus, and Christ called Peter to become a disciple. In Luke, it is recounted that Peter caught such a large amount of fish that he fell down before the feet of Jesus and was told by the Lord, “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men”.

St. Peter’s church is strong and is filled with remarkable people with faith-filled lives. It is clear that God already knows what our future has in store. It is only we who do not know who the next Rector for our church will be. “Do not be afraid” and be assured that the Vestry is in conversation on our plan and with our Diocese. Meanwhile, we must pray. We must love each other and say our good-bye’s to Father John and his family. It is also the blessed season to prepare our hearts for the birth of our Savior, the Christ child.

As you recall, Jesus also gave Simon a new name: Cephas, or the rock. Becoming a disciple of Jesus, Peter said that Jesus is, “... the Messiah, the son of the living God”. Christ responded by saying, “... you are Peter and upon this rock I will build my church...”. Accordingly, our St. Peter’s church was, is, and will be a steady rock in faith, hope, and love.

Luke: 5:10 - “Do not be afraid; from now on you (we) will be catching men”. Merry Christmas. May the peace and love of our Christ Jesus be with you and yours!

Respectfully,

Patrick Henderson-Senior Warden

Deacon Juanita Smith

Watch for the Light

Though Advent, (literally "arrival"), has been observed for centuries as a time to contemplate Christ's birth, most people today acknowledge it only with a blank look. For the vast majority of us, December flies by in a flurry of activities, and what is called 'the holiday season' turns out to be the most stressful time of the year. It is also a time of contrasting emotions. We are eager, yet frazzled; sentimental, yet indifferent. One minute we glow at the thought of getting together with our family and friends; the next we feel utterly lonely. Our hope is mingled with dread, our anticipation with despair. We sense the deeper meanings of the season but grasp at them in vain; and in the end, all the bustle leaves us frustrated and drained.

Even we who do not experience such tensions -- who genuinely love Christmas -- often miss its point. Content with candles and carols and good food, we bask in the warmth of familiar traditions, in reciprocated acts of kindness, and in feelings of general goodwill. How many of us remember the harsh realities of Christ's first coming; the dank stable, the cold night, the closed door of the inn? How many of us share the longing of the ancient prophets, who awaited the Messiah with such aching intensity that they foresaw his arrival thousands of years before he was born?

Mother Teresa once noted that the first person to welcome Christ was John the Baptist, who leaped for joy on recognizing him, though both of them were still within their mothers' wombs. We, in stark contrast, are often so dulled by superficial distractions that we are incapable of hearing any voice within, let alone listening to it. Consequently, the feeling we know as Christmas cheer lacks any real connection to the vital spirit that radiated from the manger. . . .

We miss the essence of Christmas unless we become, in the words of Eberhard Arnold, "mindful of how Christ's birth took place." Once we do, we will sense immediately that Advent marks something momentous: God's coming into our midst. That coming is not just something that happened in the past. It is a recurring possibility here and now. And thus Advent is not merely a commemorative event or an anniversary, but a yearly opportunity for us to consider the future, second Advent -- the promised coming of God's kingdom on earth.

Such an understanding of Christmas is possible only insofar as we let go of the false props of convention and seek to unlock its central paradox, to paraphrase the modern martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer, is the fact that God's coming is not only a matter of glad tidings but, first of all, "frightening news for everyone who has a conscience."

The love that descended to Bethlehem is not the easy sympathy of an avuncular God, but a burning fire whose light chases away every shadow, floods every corner, and turns midnight into noon. This love reveals sin and overcomes it. It conquers darkness with such forcefulness and intensity that it scatters the proud, humbles the mighty, feeds the hungry, and sends the rich away empty-handed, (Luke 1:51-53).

Because a transformation of this scale can never be achieved by human means, but only by divine intervention, Advent, (to quote Bonhoeffer again), might be compared to a prison cell "in which one waits and hopes and does various unessential things . . . but is completely dependent on the fact that the door of freedom has to be opened from the outside.' It is a fitting metaphor. But dependency does not release us from responsibility. If the essence of Advent is expectancy, it is also readiness for action; watchfulness to risk everything for freedom and a new beginning.

That is why the imagery of nativity scenes is not sufficient to explain the Christmas message. Yes, God came into the feeding trough of an animal. But it was not only as a baby that he lay there. This child was the same man who was crucified on Golgotha, and who rose again. Within the manger lies the cross -- and the hope of redemption and resurrection.

To recognize this requires reverence and humility. It requires faith. We might ask, "What grounds are there for such hope?" Or we might seek to become like children, and believe. Mary did. So did the shepherds and the wise men of the East. . . . So can each of us, wherever we are.



Ministries

Ushers	Altar Guild	Acolytes	Lay Readers
December 3	December 3	December 3	December 3
7:30 Lois Hall 10:00 John Standish Pam Standish Anne Vaughan Sandy Tharaldson	Theo Powers Cara Nicholls Tina Mediate	Kate Alsup Alicia Thoney Maria Black Chayah Milliken	7:30 Forrest Asmus Sandy Asmus 10:00 Mike Evers Mary Beth Evers
December 10	December 10	December 10	December 10
7:30 Roxanne Darnell 10:00 Rick Rossa Liz Rossa Dorothy Goodwin Frank Smedley	Linda St. Clair Sandy Tharaldson Shari Peddicord	Nate Haworth Maya Fritz Isaac Fritz	7:30 Laura Galloway 10:00 Paul Haworth Christina Haworth
December 17	December 17	December 17	December 17
7:30 Peter Clark Carol Clark 10:00 Stan Peddicord Mary Dailey Cara Nicholls Sarah Mentock	Ann Ernst Georgia Boley	Nate Haworth Sydni Bilyeu Ella Bilyeu	7:30 Lois Hall 10:00 Anne Vaughan Isabel Wallop
Christmas Eve /Dec 24	Christmas Eve/Dec 24	Christmas Eve/Dec 24	Christmas Eve/Dec 24
4:00 Gary Outland Lynn Outland Robert Prusak Jodene Prusak 9:00 John Standish Pam Standish Sandy Tharaldson	Karen Nicolarsen ***** Christmas Day-Dec 25 10:00 AM	4:00 Bailee Mentock Corey Hansford 9:00 Calvin Eisenach Joe Eisenach Alicia Thoney	4:00 Sharon Bedard Linen Greenough 10:00 Peter Clark Carol Clark ***** 10:00 December 25 Holland Duell 
December 31	December 31	December 31	December 31
7:30 Bert St. John Ethelyn St. John 10:00 Frank Boley Georgia Boley Karen Ferguson Cara Nicholls	Wendy Gale Maria Black	Sydni Bilyeu Ella Bilyeu Ian Gale	7:30 Laura Galloway 10:00 Lee Helvey Anne Vaughan
<i>For ministry schedule changes, contact Juanita Smith at 673-4928</i>			



Calendar of Events - December 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
HE I-Holy Eucharist I - 7:30 am SS-Sunday School-9:00 am HE II- Holy Eucharist II-10:00 am					1	2
3 1 Advent 7:30 HE I 9:00 Truth & Belief Study 10:00 HE II	4 Handbells 6:30PM	5 Midweek Eucharist 12:05 PM In Chapel	6 Women's Council 9 am	7 Red Door 10-3 pm Vestry 5:15 PM Choir Practice	8	9 Mug & Muffin 10:00-11:30 AM
10 2 Advent 7:30 HE I 9:00 Truth & Behavior 10:00 HE II	11 Handbells 6:30PM	12 Midweek Eucharist 12:05 PM In Chapel	13 St. Nick's Crafters 9 am	14 Red Door 10-3 pm Choir Practice	15	16
17 3 Advent 7:30 HE I 9:00 Authority 10:00 HE II	18 Handbells 6:30PM	19 Midweek Eucharist 12:05 PM In Chapel	20 St. Nick's Crafters 9 am	21 Red Door 10-3 pm Choir Practice	22	23
24 4 Advent No a.m. services Christmas Eve 4:00 PM 9:00 PM	25 Christmas Day 10:00 AM Merry Christmas!	26 No Midweek Eucharist Service	27 St. Nick's Crafters 9 am	28 Red Door Closed... also the first week in January	29	30
31 5 Advent 7:30 HE I 10:00 HE II New Year's Eve!	<p style="font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold;">“Serve the Lord with gladness”</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">— Psalms 100:2</p>					



Prayer Shawls Needed!

The Prayer Shawl Ministry has touched many people over the years who have been ill, hurting or to those who just needs a special hug to warm the heart.

We are calling for those who love to knit or crochet to meet the challenge of rebuilding our supply of shawls.

Yarn/needles or prayer shawl kits are available at St. Peter's. For more information contact....

Roberta Thompson at 674-8578 or

Gail Boyer at 672-9298/674-7655.

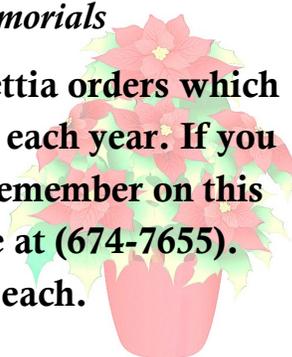
Our goal is to have new prayer shawl's ready to be 'Blessed' before Fr. John leaves on January 21st.

Thank you for your service towards this wonderful ministry!

Christmas Poinsettia's Memorials

We are receiving Christmas Poinsettia orders which are listed in the Christmas bulletin each year. If you have someone you would like to remember on this holiday contact the church office at (674-7655).

Poinsettia's are \$22.50 each.

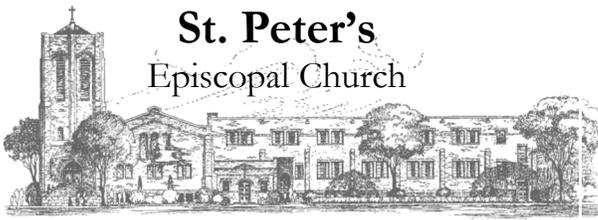


THANK YOU!

Thank you to everyone who has turned in a pledge card for 2018!

If you are planning to pledge, please do so at your earliest convenience as the budget committee will be making plans for the new year.

Your support of St. Peter's is greatly appreciated!



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Church Office Hours

9:00 am to 2:00 pm
(Monday - Friday)