



ST. PETER'S NET

ST. PETER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH → 654 N. EASTON ROAD → GLENSIDE, PA 19038 → (215) 887-1765

Fourteenth to the Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 2009

Retelling Our Sacred Story

"Our stories are only maps," writes sociologist Sarah Lawrence-Lightfoot. Our stories of faith, both personal and collective, are the sacred texts of our lives. Just as God speaks to us through the words of Holy Scripture and through our common prayer, so too does God continue to speak to us through our own experiences. In remembering our stories and in retelling them we are able to discern the direction in which God is leading us. As a parish community we are beginning a new chapter of our story. In order to know how that chapter needs to be written, I believe we need to engage in some story-telling.

Now some of you may argue that you recently undertook such work when you were searching for me, your new rector. You may be wondering why we need to do this again. First, we are at a different place as a community than where we were two years ago. Secondly, I believe we need an intentional opportunity to get to know one another as priest and people. And finally, in my own experience healthy congregations which continue to look to the future with promise and possibility engage on a regular basis in a discernment process.

So, I invite you to participate with me and the vestry in an experience which I hope will deepen our relationships and our commitment to our parish community as well as give us insight into our future ministry and mission together. On Sunday evenings in the fall and winter the vestry and I will offer Cottage Communion for groups of 10-15 parishioners. You will be invited to attend one of these in a parishioner's home. We will gather and in the midst of sharing the Eucharist do some story-telling.

I have chosen to offer these gatherings in the context of the Eucharist because I believe there is no better way to share the sacred texts of our lives and our parish community. Our worship is at its essence a retelling of God's story and our shared story as God's people. In the Eucharist we hear the saving acts of God through the accounts of the Hebrew people and through the life and teaching of Jesus. Then, in a very personal way we encounter that saving grace as we gather around the table together and partake of the bread and cup. In both word and sacrament we are reminded of our identity as God's beloved and are renewed for our mission as Christ's Body in the world.

The dates of the Cottage Communion are: October 25, Nov. 1, 8, 15, Dec. 6 and 13, January 10, 17, 24, 31, and February 7. We will end this series of evenings with an Everyone Education in the spring in which all members (children, youth and adults) will be encouraged to participate. At the end of this month there will be sign-up sheets for each Cottage Communion located in the Parish Auditorium. Please choose one for you to attend.

I do encourage you to be a part of this experience. Your story is important and needs to be shared among your parish family! With God's help we can begin to write the new and exciting chapter of St. Peter's sacred story.

Faithfully Yours,
Emily+

Highlighting Education at St. Peter's

St. Peter's Episcopal Church

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Frank Walter;
Matthew O'Keefe, Youth
Representative

NET Editors

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Carol Boyle
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Please send articles, photos,
suggestions by the 15th of
each month for the
following month's NET

Question: Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?

Response: I will with God's help.

— From *The Baptismal Covenant, Book of Common Prayer, page 304*

No matter how old or young we are, Christian education or spiritual formation is an important part of our being a follower of Christ. The people closest to Jesus in the Gospels were called "disciples." The word "disciple" comes from the Latin *discere* which means "to learn."

Here at St. Peter's Church there are many opportunities to grow in faith, to become more mature as Christians, and to explore how this beautiful way of life taught by Jesus Christ fits into our lives today. Whether you are a three-year-old experiencing a Bible story for the first time; an elementary school aged child discovering that the things Christ taught have meaning in your day-to-day living; a teen grappling with the tumultuous ups and downs of adolescence; a young adult working out your own philosophy of life separate from your parents; an adult dealing with family, workplace, and the responsibilities of citizenship; or an elder discovering how to be creative and vital in the face of physical decline; there is something for you at St. Peter's Church to help you on the journey.

God is speaking to us in this place and time, in the midst of today's joys and sorrows. We must learn to listen, to keep our faith alive and active, nimble and growing. Jesus was always challenging his disciples.

"You give them something to eat." (*Mark 6:37*)

"Who do you say I am?" (*Matt. 16:15*)

"Stand up. Do not be afraid." (*Matt. 17:7*)

"What will a man gain by winning the whole world, at the cost of his true self?" (*Matt. 16:26*)

"Follow me; and Levi rose and followed him." (*Mark 2:14*)

We must allow ourselves to be challenged and never become complacent. We must always ask ourselves, "How is Jesus challenging me today? How can I be a better disciple?"

You will find in this issue of the NET many opportunities for people of every age to explore more deeply how the faith relates to our lives and world today. Come let yourself be challenged!

— Carol Boyle

