

Good morning, my name is George Beall. Today I would like to share with you my St Peter's experience.

In 2009, my family and I were looking for a new church. We had always gone to First Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia. One year, Advent 4 fell on Sunday which was also Christmas Eve. That year, First Church didn't have a family service until 11pm. My brother Charlie and I were so young that our family didn't want to be out past midnight on Christmas Eve. So it was time for us to find a new church for Christmas Eve, and we found St Peter's.

When we came on our first Christmas Eve we saw the world's best pageant. The pageant was so great, we decided to keep coming back.

Summer was our most flexible time, so we came a lot during the summer of 2013. Emily was on medical leave and Frank Toia led worship. We liked Frank, he gave great sermons. That summer the sanctuary was rearranged to have the service in the center with the people facing each other. We also met Polly, who lived in our neighborhood and she always made us feel welcome.

We kept coming and over time we met some great people. Deacon Pat became a favorite of ours and even blessed my Eagles Jersey every Christmas Eve. The first blessing she did, we won the Super Bowl six weeks later. We also met Larry and Lois who had been friends with my Grandfather from years ago.

By the time my brother Charlie and I were in high school, life was pretty busy. We weren't able to come as often as we wanted. But when we did, we were always happy to see our welcoming community. Alex and I were classmates and teammates and Donna was our neighbor up the street.

When Charlie went away to college two years ago, my mom and I were able to start coming on a regular basis. We became members of St Peter's in January of 2020, pre-covid. When Covid hit we all had to stop coming. What I appreciated most, was the option of being able to participate on the livestream. For Easter of 2020, we woke up and sat in the living room in our jammies and ate Easter cookies during church. On Ash Wednesday of 2021, we dusted each other in our kitchen with ashes. We even participated from home this past Christmas Eve and all our family loved the pageant just as much as we did that first Christmas Eve.

Because I work most weekends at the Morris Arboretum, I really appreciate having the option to worship from home. On the weekends that we are able to come to church, it's great to be able to see so many friends.

What makes St Peter's special is the wonderful people who worship here. I can tell people like each other because the passing of the peace is always so long. All kidding aside, every time I come I meet someone new and interesting. St Peter's feels like home to me.

Thank you,  
George Beall