

St. Peter's Episcopal Church

The mission of St. Peter's is to be a supportive congregation for all seeking and wanting to share Christ's love in a welcoming and inclusive community where the Bible, human reason and the historical traditions of the Church are celebrated.

December 2009



Prepare the way of the Lord!

The countdown has begun. The season is upon us: there are cards to send, Christmas letters to write, gifts to buy, presents to wrap, houses to decorate, food to prepare and all those parties to attend.

A radio ad I once heard illustrates well the frenetic pace of the season. A woman is talking to herself. Anxiously she cries, "What do I wear? What do I fix to eat? What's gifts do I buy? . . . There is no time!"

This woman could be sitting in the pew in many of our churches. She could be you. She could certainly be me. Most of my adult life I've been asking God for a 36-hour day or an 8-day week so that I can get everything done that I think is important.

The Rt. Rev. Alan Scarfe
Bishop of Iowa

The Rev. Dr. Lynne
Carver
Rector

James O'Hare
Organist/Choir Director

Carolyn Tapscott
Administrative Assistant

Worship Schedule

Sundays
8 & 10 a.m. Holy
Eucharist
Wednesdays
5:30 p.m. Holy Eucharist

Christian Education

Sundays 9:00 a.m.

Vestry

Nancy Czubara
Jane Hoffman
Mike Johnson
Paul Koch
Joan Marttila
Sonita Oldfield-Carlson
Anne Petrie
Steve Trainor
Marty Yeast

**2400 Middle Road
Bettendorf, Iowa
52722**

563-355-4640

Several years ago while on retreat I was challenged by a new perspective presented in a meditation on time which ended: "I'm not asking you, Lord, for the time to do this and then that. But for your grace to do conscientiously, in the time that you give me, what you want me to do."

During the season of Advent, God calls us to prepare for the coming of Christ – both the coming of Jesus in history to Bethlehem and the second coming of Christ at the end of time when he will "judge the living and the dead." Advent is a time of quiet expectation. It's a time to reflect on the experiences of Zechariah, Elizabeth, Mary, Joseph and John the Baptist. (See Matthew and Luke.) Advent is a time to prayerfully examine how we open or close ourselves to Christ coming in us.

The Collect (the opening prayer) for the Fourth Sunday in Advent begins, "Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself." What does it mean for Christ to be born in you? How do we as a Christian community receive the Lord? And, then, how do we at St. Peter's share the gift of Christ with those around us? Take time this Advent to be quiet, to reflect, to pray and to prepare the way of the Lord!

Lynne+

IN SEARCH OF OUR KNEELING PLACES
Advent Quiet Morning – 12/5



In each heart lies a Bethlehem,
an inn
where we must ultimately answer
whether there is room or not.
When we are Bethlehem-bound,
we experience
our own advent in his.
When we are Bethlehem-bound,
we can no longer look
the other way
conveniently not seeing stars,
not hearing angel voices.

We can no longer
excuse ourselves
by busily tending
our sheep or our kingdoms.

This Advent let's go to Bethlehem
and see this thing
that the Lord
has made known to us.

In the midst of shopping sprees,
let's ponder in our hearts
the Gift of Gifts.

Through the tinsel,
let's look for the gold
of the Christmas Star.

In the excitement and confusion,
in the merry chaos,
let's listen
for the brush of angels' wings.

This Advent, let's go to Bethlehem
and find our kneeling places.

As Ann Weems' poem illustrates, Advent is a time of expectant waiting and watching. Advent is a season of getting ready. Advent is not merely (as distinct from the hustle and bustle of the world around us) the "pre-Christmas" season. Advent is not a time to run about frantically trying to make Christmas happen; rather, it is a season **to get ready for the new life that God brings forth** – simply and mysteriously – among us. There is work to do. Not anxious busy-ness, however, but mindful attentiveness.

As one way of preparing for Advent, you are invited to spend a quiet Saturday morning at St. Peter's.

Quiet Morning Schedule

8:00 – 8:30	Gathering, Coffee & Breakfast
8:30 – 9:00	Meditation & Music
9:00 – 11:45	Quiet Time and/or Engage Advent themes through 1) Scripture 2) Music 3) Art
11:45	Noonday Prayer

Pease register by Friday, December 4 either by calling the church office (355-4640) or by completing a registration form found in the retreat brochure.

Thank you James!

Last week our organist and choir director James O'Hare shared with me his decision to retire at the end of December. Although not a surprise, for we had talked earlier in the year about retirement when I returned home from sabbatical, I am saddened that James is leaving us as music director. I will miss him as a partner in ministry.

James has shared his musical gifts with the people of St. Peter's for 23 years. He has set and worked to maintain a standard of musical excellence. He has carefully selected hymns that provide us additional opportunities to reflect on the morning's lessons from Scripture and deepen our experience of the liturgical season. In response to requests from the congregation, James has broadened the variety of hymns we sing. In addition to leading the choir and caring for its members, he has had a wonderful gift for reaching out to St. Peter's children and youth and encouraging their participation in our music program. I can't imagine anyone at St. Peter's who won't miss his great organ preludes and postludes. Over the years, James has given far more hours of his time and talent than St. Peter's has ever been able to pay for; and, for all this we thank him!

Please join our St. Peter's family for a special coffee hour after the 10:00 service on December 20 at which time we'll celebrate James' ministry of music at St. Peter's.

Lynne+

Advent Midweek Eucharist

Looking for a time during your week to stop for a few minutes, to be quiet, to wait and to watch? Consider participating in the Wednesday 5:30 celebration of Holy Eucharist. This will be a simple meditative service. Candles will light the darkness. We will sing simple chants from the Taize Ecumenical Community in France (An ability to sing or speak French is not required.) You'll be on your way by 6 p.m. at the latest.

Christmas Outreach

This Christmas St. Peter's will once again help a local family. Watch for the gift tree, take an ornament and shop for the family member and gift designated. Return your gift by December 20. This year's outreach is being coordinated by the Rite-13 group (Katelyn O'Hare, Ella McDonald and Emily Tinsman) and their mentor Ghada Hamdan-Allen.

Christmas Wreaths

Can you help us? We're going to have some fun (so said Tom Sawyer) as we make wreaths for the east wall and entrance. Just bring some clippers and garden gloves and join the altar guild on Wednesday, December 16 at 6 p.m. If you have a spare branch or two from your evergreen tree, please bring that on Sunday, December 13 or drop it by the church by the 16th.

Special Music for Christmas Eve

The children and youth of St. Peter's are invited to share their musical talents prior to our Christmas Eve celebration of Holy Eucharist. If you have questions, talk with James O'Hare. There is a sign-up sheet on the table at the back of the church.

Don't miss *The Best Sleepover Ever*

Come worship with us on Christmas Eve at 5:30 p.m. We'll sing carols, hear the Christmas story anew through the pageant written by our Rite-13 group and presented by St. Peter's children and celebrate the first Eucharist of Christmas.

Worship/Christian Education Schedules

(during the Holidays)

On December 27 there will be one service at 10:00 and no church school. On January 3 we will resume our regular schedule with worship at 8 and 10 and Christian education for all ages at 9.

Coming in 2010

Episcopal Diocese of Iowa

Youth Ski Trip



For grades 6th to 12th

St. John's, Dubuque
will graciously host the 6th Annual Ski Trip

January 15-17, 2010

Check out www.iowaepiscopal.org for
registration information and other details

Questions please contact Lydia Kelsey at lkelsey@iowaepiscopal.org
Or 515-277-6165

Registration is due by January 1. If you are interested in participating in the ski trip, talk with Lynne+ **by December 6.**

Continuing Education for Adults during Epiphany

On Sunday mornings at 9 a.m. beginning in January and continuing until Lent, adult education will focus on the heart of Christian faith and life through the lens of progressive Christianity. We will watch and then discuss 20 minute video segments from *Living the Questions 2.0* which "include conversations with leading voices of faith, sermon and lecture clips, digital stories illustrating aspects of an evolving faith and concrete spiritual practices. Each session "stands on its own" so come when you can if a busy schedule makes regular participation difficult.

January 3	A Kingdom without Walls
January 10	Social Justice: Realizing God's Vision
January 17	Incarnation: Divinely Human
January 24	Prayer: Intimacy with God
January 31	Compassion: The Heart of Jesus' Ministry
February 7	Creative Transformation
February 14	Embracing Mystery

?? Change in Sunday Morning Schedule ??

As many of you know we are considering moving to one service at 9 a.m. on Sunday mornings. Since changing the schedule will affect everyone here at St. Peter's, we'd like to include as many people as possible in the decision making and planning. We don't want to rush the process so we will continue with our current schedule through the season of Epiphany.

What's ahead for music at St. Peter's?

The vestry and I will design a process, to be shared with the congregation by our annual meeting in late January, for creating St. Peter's new musical program.

Rather than quickly seeking to hire a new musician, I'd recommend we take several months, explore styles of music and experience them in worship, then work toward consensus. The process would be somewhat like what a parish goes through when preparing to call a new priest.

In the meantime, we're looking for folks interested in helping plan worship including music and folks willing to share their musical talents on Sunday morning. If you have questions, would like to help plan or offer music during worship, please talk with me. *Lynne+*

Mark your calendars:

St. Peter's Annual Lenten Retreat at Mary Monastery will be February 18-20 (Thursday afternoon through Saturday lunch – as in the past, you may come for all or part of the retreat).

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Millicent Hoffman
- 2 Mike Finnegan, Mary Jo Johnson
- 3 Nancy McMullen, Jean O'Hare
- 4 Donna Arp, Jennifer Busch
- 5 Rebecca Dittmer
- 7 Alex Heesch
- 11 Patricia Johnsen
- 12 Michael Cullen
- 13 Michael Heesch
- 20 Ramsey Allen
- 24 Cory Satterfield
- 27 Melinda Kerns
- 29 Lori Shaffnit
- 30 Emily Tinsman

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

- 17 Anne & Bob Petrie



DECEMBER CALENDAR

Saturday, December 5

8:00 a.m. – noon Advent Quiet Morning

Sunday, December 6 – Advent 2

8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist
9:00 a.m. Christian Education
10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist

Wednesday, December 9

5:30 p.m. Holy Eucharist
7:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, December 13 – Advent 3

8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist
9:00 a.m. Christian Education
10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist
6:00 p.m. Vestry Meeting

Wednesday, December 16

5:30 p.m. Holy Eucharist
6:00 p.m. Wreath Making
7:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, December 20 – Advent 4

8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist
9:00 a.m. Pageant Rehearsal
10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist

Thursday, December 24 – Christmas Eve

5:00 p.m. Special Music by Youth & Carol Sing
5:30 p.m. Holy Eucharist

Sunday, December 27 – Christmas 1

10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist

Sunday, January 3 – Christmas 2

8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist
9:00 a.m. Christian Education
10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist

Wednesday, January 6 – Epiphany

5:30 p.m. Holy Eucharist