

SPECIAL SERVICES FOR ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS



Sundays, 8:00 am and 10:30 AM
HOLY EUCHARIST, REFLECTIONS ON ADVENT
9:15 AM — Forums on Advent lessons and themes

Wednesdays, 7:00 AM
HOLY EUCHARIST
according to Iona Worship Book — in the Chapel

Saturday, December 18, 6:00 PM — Advent Ember Day
HEALING SERVICE
A service from the Iona Worship Book (Scotland) —
quietness, prayer, chants, anointing with oil
and laying on of hands

Friday, December 24, 4:30 PM
FAMILY CHRISTMAS EVE EUCHARIST
With the participation of "Mission Field," high school
musical ensemble and their special friends.

Friday, December 24, 11:00 PM
FESTIVE SUNG EUCHARIST
Lessons and carols of "Midnight Mass"

Saturday, December 25, 10:00 AM
HOLY EUCHARIST
Simple, quiet and hopeful

Sunday, December 26, 8:00 am and 10:30 AM
FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS
Reflections for the new year



Le Petit Noel Fair December 11th 8:00 to Noon



NEWSLETTER OF ST. PETER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
White Street • P.O. Box 457 • Rockland, Maine 04841

THE ROCK



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THE ROCK

NEWSLETTER OF ST. PETER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

White Street • P.O. Box 457 • Rockland, Maine 04841 • 207-594-8191 • Fax: 207-594-7766

www.stpetersrockland.org



Santa waves from the cart that will be available for rides during the Le Petit Noel Fair. Photography by Amy Wilton

When this issue of *The Rock* arrives, you will have just about one week left to cook, bake, sew, knit or create your contributions to our holiday fair, *Le Petit Noel* Saturday December 11, 8:00 to noon. Please be as generous as you are able because it truly makes our effort to support St. Peter's outreach in the community more bountiful.

We want this to be as total a parish effort as possible so don't miss out on the fun. We will need help with decorating and set up on Friday afternoon December 10th from noon to 6 PM. On the day of the event, help in all areas will be welcome. Isabel Polk is in charge of the breakfast that will be served all morning. Please contact her at home 596-0003 or by e-mail at deacon@stpetersrockland.org or izzyp@aol.com if this is where you want to help.

We will need help selling breakfast

tickets, raffle tickets and all the other items for sale. Some *Le Petit Noel* elves are making phone calls to request help so let them know what you would like to do.

David Grima and Felicity Bowditch are organizing children's activities to entertain the children while their parents are shopping or while they are waiting for a pony cart ride or a photograph. Amy Wilton will be doing the photography with Marty Rogers assisting. Bridget Buck and Linda Peterson will be offering pony cart rides. Both areas will need some additional help.

Joe Patten is standing in for Santa. Remember that you can have a family photo taken without Santa too.

Liz Hunt is in charge of the food table which will sell jams, jellies, baked goods, frozen foods and all things edible. Baked items can be pies, breads, fancy holiday yeast breads, cakes, cookies, bars etc. Frozen items can be

an entrée, soups (dried soup mixes are great too), breakfast meals like a quiche—I'm sure you have plenty of ideas. Just make some extra as you prepare for your own holiday meals.

ECW has been hard at work preparing a beautiful gift basket to be raffled. We have received other items that will be sold in a silent auction. One is a gift from Winnie Easton Jones of a class for an individual or a group in how to write and edit your memoir.

Luckily St. Peter's has quite a few professional and semi-pro crafters who offer quality items not found at most local fairs. In addition to jewelry offerings by Chris McLarty and Debra Thuss, this year will present Linda Peterson's beaded creations and carved wooden pieces by Thom Buescher. Exciting items and a great place to do some of your holiday shopping.

Thanks everyone, in advance, from the *Le Petit Noel* committee.

IMAGES OF THE MADONNA AND CHRIST CHILD

There are several circumstances that deeply affect my response to images of the Madonna and Christ Child, and especially these paintings done by my maternal grandmother.

Firstly, my mother and I were separated before I was four years old.

Consequently, any references to constant and abiding mothers, whether in my Dick and Jane reader, or a Nativity scene at Christmas, evoked confusion, longing, grief and anger in me as a child. I would stare at the Holy Family with their impossible halos, and wonder how they got to be so confident and serene; how they could take for granted the closeness and security that I had never known. These feelings of being on the outside looking in intensified when I was sent to a convent boarding school at fourteen. Here, I was not only a young girl without a clue about mother-child closeness, but

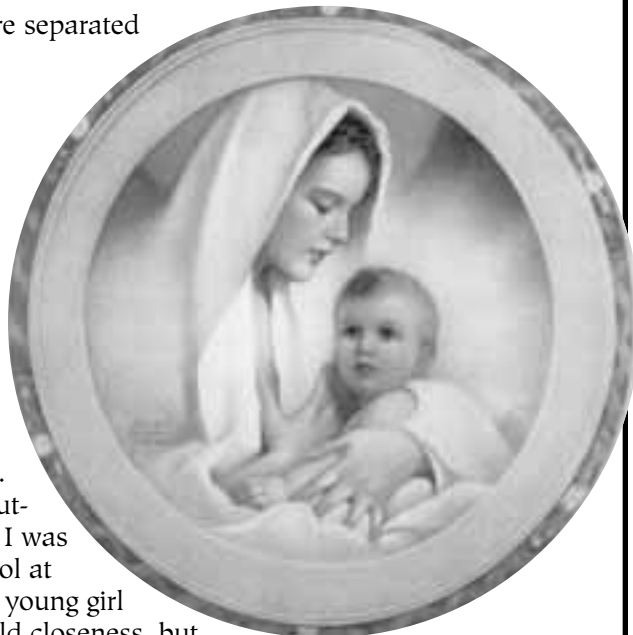
also a solitary Protestant surrounded by nuns and my Roman Catholic peers, for whom the Virgin Mary, or Blessed Mother was a focus of adoration. How I tried, in the unheated chapel with its flickering vigil lights, to be one of them! And although I came to know and admire my mother during my adult life, and believe her love for me never wavered through our lost years, I still look at the Madonna and Christ child with vestiges of childhood yearning.

Secondly, my grandmother posed my mother and me as models for the painting in russet tones, and my mother and brother for the other two. The one that most closely resembles my mother, is the one with the rose-colored robe, while the other two are stylized versions. Gram was a very successful commercial artist who specialized in babies and children and all three paintings were commissioned to be Christmas calendars popular during the 1930's. But the significance of all this is she was the one who raised me from seven to thirteen years. And it was she, more than anyone

before or since, who instilled in me an unshakable belief in a loving God. The foundation of my world-view, sense of self-worth, ethical principles and joy in common things, were her legacy to me.

And so, to look at myself and my mother while we were still together, painted by this grandmother, is indeed a healing experience for me even now. I meditate on both human and Divine Love that are expressed here.

— Dorothy Nyman



THE ROCK

NEWSLETTER OF

ST. PETER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

St. Peter's Parish seeks to serve God's mission of restoring all people to unity with him.

We open wide our door and say, in the name of Jesus Christ, "Welcome."

11 White Street • P.O. Box 457
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Rev. Isabel Polk, Deacon

Home 596-0003

deacon@stpetersrockland.org

Deborah Watson, Administrative Secretary

Robert Earle, Organist

Malcolm Brooks, Choir Director

Garold Demmons, Sexton

ST. PETER'S VESTRY

SENIOR WARDENS:

John Bird 596-6276

Jim Bowditch 236-2272

JUNIOR WARDEN:

Deborah Oliver 236-8503

Mac Deford, Treasurer

MEMBERS:

Katherine Brown, Douglas Curtis, Sr.,

Bruce Davis, George Jones,

Linda Peterson, Joanne Smith,

Harold van Lonkhuyzen,

Christine Wohler

THE ROCK

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is the 20th of each month.

Letter from the Rector



Some folks have been interested to learn that our family observed Ramadan, the Islamic period of daytime fasting that began Friday night, October 15 and ended on Saturday, November 13. Many of you have met Aziz Alkabar, the German-born Moroccan exchange student who is living with us during this school year. He is 17 years old and attends the Watershed Community School. He is also a Muslim. We decided to join him in the observance of Ramadan, as he will join us in our Advent and Christmas observances.

One does not eat or drink during Ramadan except after the sun has set and before the sun rises the next day. Exceptions are granted when there is a necessity. Aziz helped us understand that this season is intended to bring into our experience more profoundly what it is to be hungry—so that we will have more in common with the many hungry and suffering people around us. “The hungrier we are, the closer we are to God; also the farther away we are from the devil.”

I believe that Ramadan came to be a unique and valuable spiritual journey for all of us. For me personally the constant reminder that my body gave me through pangs of hunger and parched thirsty lips was unlike any other religious exercise I have attempted. One doesn’t complain or whine after a while because it keeps dawning on one that this is the plight of over half the world’s people. In this sense one indeed is closer and closer to God, for we have more in common with those whom the prophets and Jesus himself call “the least of these, sisters and brothers.”

This year Ramadan has been, for me, a better precursor to Christmas than the traditional and very quick Advent nod we give to preparing for Christ’s coming. There is very little in the story of Jesus’ birth in poverty, amidst outcast shepherds and on the run from a bloody tyrant, a refugee at an early age—nothing, really—that gets through viscerally to us as we literally bathe ourselves in material consumer goods during this season. What a quiet, real sense of God Ramadan offered as an alternative way to keep a clear head and heart during this onrush.

Islam’s approach to fasting implicates the shallowness of our various “fasts” in Judaism and Christianity. Rather than do too much literal fasting we have become accustomed to giving to chari-

ty as an expression of sacrifice, as some prophets did advocate: that giving to the poor fulfilled the laws of fasting. But even at that we really don’t do such a thorough job of it. In our interfaith Thanksgiving service this year came strong reminders that giving away for the relief of the poor is not optional charity—rather, it is God’s demand for justice. The body still feels plump and satisfied through it all. Ramadan certainly is not a superficial experience. It sometimes hurts and annoys and overwhelms the senses. No comfort zones. And eating, when it happens, is a cause for true and deep rejoicing.

I have no idea whether we can rescue our year-end extravaganza called “Christmas” from its commercial captivity. I do know, however, that to do so will require some intentional action that is as extreme and abrupt as Ramadan is. A moratorium on gift giving? Or decorations? Or big mailings of Christmas cards? Or huge excesses of food and drink? There is a certain denial and even a rebellion in our insistence on making a lavish spectacle, as though it would impress God. “Christmas off to a slow start” reads the business page the Saturday after Thanksgiving. We are forming our children not to be joyful in the love of God but to yearn for and expect material proof of God’s abundance. A recent poll reports that about 50% of the U.S. population believe that the United States is special in God’s eyes and deserves the riches it receives. Our children are taught this by the way we observe Christmas.

So, during the coming days, I will continually search for and welcome many silences and moments of beauty in what I hear or sing. I will lessen my reliance on exterior signs of the season and follow the burrowing animals who, as the days are darker and colder, burrow down into snow and earth where there is much quietness and tranquility. I pray that I will find the Holy Family there, in my warm heart, coursing out into the body of my thoughts and actions. I will try to withdraw from the corpulence of custom. What bliss that pain will bring!

In the love of the One who comes to save,

Ralph

BUDGET & FINANCE COMMISSION

November 2004

READ THIS!

TWO MONTHS AGO, A CHALLENGE PLEDGE OF \$1,000 WAS RECEIVED TO COVER A \$5,000 COST OVER-RUN ON BUDGETED COMPUTER EXPENSES FOR FY 2004. THOSE EXPENSES WERE INCURRED AS A ONE-TIME EVENT. THEY COVERED REVISIONS TO ST. PETER'S SOFTWARE, MAKING IT MUCH MORE USEFUL FOR ALL OF ST. PETER'S NEEDS INSTEAD OF PRIMARILY FOR CHURCH FINANCES.

WE ARE PLEASED TO REPORT THAT

THERE ARE "ANGELS" OUT THERE WHO HAVE MADE GIFTS TOTALLING \$1,500 TO THE ORIGINALLY PLEDGED \$1000. THAT LEAVES \$2,500 AS OPPORTUNITIES FOR OTHER "ANGELS" —AND THIS MUST BE COMPLETED BY YEAR'S END. THINK ABOUT IT— TIME TO DUST OFF YOUR WINGS?

— Tom Putnam, Chairman, Budget & Finance Commission

2005 Stewardship Update

Many thanks to all who have made their stewardship commitment for the new year. As of November 30, 59 pledges totaling \$90,092 have been received for 2005. This is 70% of the 2005 pledge goal of \$127,000. There have been 20 pledge increases and 7 new pledgers. If you have not yet made your pledge for 2005, please prayerfully consider what you can give to do God's work at St. Peter's. We need \$36,008 in additional pledges to reach our goal. Please help us fill the chalice on our 2005 stewardship poster displayed in the parish hall. All things come of thee, O Lord, and of thine own have we given thee. A 2004 Stewardship Reminder \$123,000 has been pledged for 2004, including the 13th Month Appeal. That is 98% of the \$125,500 needed in the current year for pledge income. We hope to meet the 2004 goal and here is how you can help. If you are able to make an additional contribution toward your 2004 pledge and have not yet done so, please consider what you can do for St. Peter's. Also, this is a reminder that St. Peter's fiscal year ends as of December 31. We hope all parishioners will make every effort to fulfill their 2004 pledge commitment. If you have any questions about your 2004 pledge status, please call Deb Watson, Administrative Secretary, at 594-8191.

NEW e-mail addresses!

All the e-mail addresses have changed recently, so be sure to update your e-mail address book. The box at right shows the new addresses.

As part of the change, Chris Stump, one of our outstanding computer experts, has facilitated switching the office from dial-up Internet access to broadband. On dial-up, the church had been subject to monthly overage fees. These fees do not apply to broadband, which will also allow multiple people to access the Internet and not interfere with any of the voice or fax lines.

Thanks to the staff for their patience and help during the transition, and special thanks to Chris Stump for navigating the broadband labyrinth.

Also visit the redesigned church Web site, which incorporates a new Webpage, News and Events.

Ralph Moore	rector@stpetersrockland.org
Isabel Polk	deacon@stpetersrockland.org
Deb Watson	stpeters@stpetersrockland.org

Please also make note of the church's new fax number: 594-7766

Vestry Notes for November

Members Present: Rev. Ralph Moore, Jim Bowditch, Doug Curtis, Sr., Bruce Davis, George Jones, Deborah Oliver, Linda Peterson, Rev. Isabel Polk, Sarah Reynolds, Joanne Smith, Harold Van Lonkhuyzen, Christine Wohler

Members Absent: John Bird, Kay Brown, Mac Deford

Visitors Present: Tom Putnam, Marty Rogers

■ The next Vestry meeting will be December 16, at 7 p.m.

■ The 2005 budget process is continuing, to be finished at our December meeting. We face the risk of serious cuts in programming and staff if we are unable to raise the \$127,000 called for by the TFFOM plan for 2005.

■ We will ask the Rev. Linton Studdiford to lead Vestry retreat sessions on the mutual ministry review process on February 3 and February 26, 2005.

■ The Nominating Committee is still accepting names of those interested in running for parish leadership positions to be elected at the January 2005 Annual Parish Meeting. Please see Deb Oliver, Kay Brown or Thom Buescher if you are interested in serving or would like to nominate someone.

■ Le Petit Noel, our Christmas fundraiser, needs your help. Do you have a Santa suit to lend? (Old news now thanks to Susan Dumican lending us one!) Would you like to lead children's games? Please contact Marty Rogers (236-8922) or Isabel Polk (594-8191) to get involved in these or other ways.

■ The Stewardship Commission reports that pledges are up by \$12,000, or 20 percent, over this time last year, but with fewer pledges turned in so far.

■ The Annual Parish Meeting will take place on Sunday, January 30, 2005 at 10 A.M., following a single service of Eucharist at 9 A.M.

Liturgy and Arts Update

At their recent meeting, among other things, the Liturgy and Arts Commission discussed the following:

- **Expanding Lay Liturgists:** After reviewing the current status of chalice bearers acolytes, lay readers, and Eucharistic lay ministers – the commission decided to plan a “instructional” service and follow-up forum to inform people about these ministries and invite them to participate. The special service will occur January 17. The date of the follow up forum is to be determined.
- **Budget Cuts** The group reviewed the proposed Liturgy and Arts budget for 2005. In keeping with guidelines outlined by the special TFAM planning group and vestry, liturgy and arts — as well a other areas — will experience cutbacks, particularly in the music and altar guild line items. The Rector explained that he and Malcolm Brooks and Bob Earle have worked out a way to reduce their time, but still preserve meaningful music for services. Commission members agreed to help the parish understand these changes and not place unrealistic expectations on our dedicated musicians.
- **Art Exhibit Schedule** In March, the commission will sponsor an exhibit of Anne Wetzel’s Holy Week photographs at the Lincoln Street Center. A special artist’s reception will be organized and advertised to the general public. This should be an wonderful way to share spiritual life with the greater community. Upcoming exhibits in the Gallery of Spirit will include Madonna art works in December by Dorothy Nyman’s grandmother and photographs by Billy Smith in January.
- **Upcoming Services** The group reviewed the schedule of services through December, with particular discussion of the Native American Sunday, November 21; healing services for December; and a “Madonna” Sunday theme the third Sunday in Advent (to be organized by Dorothy Nyman).

Advent Adult Forum off to Inspired Start

Chris McLarty, legendary EFM mentor, kicked off the Adult Forum series on Theological Reflection. Theological reflection is a core concept in the Education for Ministry program that offers methods for connecting the way we live with the ways of religious thought.

TR is a framework for investigating life from a theological perspective, using what you know about culture, tradition, life activity, and intellectual positions. The group discussed these perspectives in preparation for the following sessions in which the group will look at the weekly lessons.

Come join us at 9:15 throughout Advent.

The following poem was requested for the Rock by attendees when it was used to close the session. Enjoy.



O Karma, Dharma, pudding and pie,
gimme a break before I die:
grant me wisdom, will & wit,
purity, probity, pluck & grit.
Trustworthy, loyal helpful, kind,
gimme great abs and a steel-trap mind,
and forgive, Ye Gods, some humble advice-
to beget an earthly paradise:
make the bad people good-
and the good people nice;
and before our world goes over the brink,
teach the believers how to think.

— Phillip Appleman



Books for Sale

COLLECTIONS OF SPECIAL READINGS STILL AVAILABLE.

In the Narthex can be found two beautiful collections of readings. *Watch for the Light* is designed for Advent, Christmas and Ephiphany; *Bread and Wine* is offered for Lent and Easter.

They are available for \$8 each or \$15 for both. You can leave payment in the drawer of the literature table or turn it in at the parish office.

Down East Singers 25th Annual December Feast Music

This year’s concert will feature Vivaldi’s Gloria in addition to seasonal choral offerings. The Odeon Youth String Ensemble with many members from St. Peter’s will also play—so don’t miss one of the performances!

Friday, December 10 at 7:30 PM
at the Rockland Congregational Church.
Sunday, December 12 at 2:30 PM
at the Rockport Opera House