



† ST. FRANCIS' EPISCOPAL CHURCH COMMUNIQUE

APRIL 2024

The Newsletter for St. Francis Dunellen



Grace and Peace!

I must say, it has been such a joy to be with the parish of St. Francis Dunellen this past month. The love and support that is shown to one another, the community, and to the broader church itself is remarkable. What a privilege it is to serve this parish! As it has only been one month since my start, I am still getting my proverbial feet wet. I am learning who all of you are and learning names. If you have not noticed, names are **very** important to me, especially at the communion rail. Thus, if I ask your name at communion, it is because I believe that receiving the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ is very personal on many levels. Due to this, it has become my practice to address those receiving the precious gift of the Eucharist by name to create and foster an even more spiritual and personal space.

Additionally, I am also continuing to learn about the traditions and workings of the parish- learning where things are in the church, how we operate as parish and a community member, and all the inner-workings that fall in between. Moreover, I am still learning, and taking in, how to best be your Priest-in-Charge, leading you spiritually and communally. I humbly ask for your grace as I stumble and fumble in these first couple months.

As I learn about each of you and the amazingness that is St. Francis, I feel it important to share with you tidbits about me and who I am spiritually and how I experience God. Perhaps you have figured this out already, or maybe you've perceived such, but I am one who often finds God outside of church walls - in the forgotten park areas, upon mountain tops, in the hole-in-the-wall lunch spots and coffee shops, while sitting in undesirable train stations and walking through areas that don't always carry the best reputations. These are the spaces, the areas, that God also finds me and calls me to listen deeply and intently to what I need to hear; where God guides me along the path which I am to follow. These are also the spaces

where I meet people that haven't been given a space or allowed a voice, whose name isn't known, and who very much desires community and relationship. These spaces, my friends, are sacred; they are holy ground.

I invite you to join me in finding God outside the church walls. I invite you to meet me at DaLuca's Coffee Shop (350 North Ave. in Dunellen) on Friday mornings starting at 8:30 am. I invite you to lead us, as St. Francis, to places where you might feel called. I invite **YOU** to explore the places in and around our area where you feel God calling you, where you might find God in another. This, beloved, is the work of Christ; something we can all do in a way that feels authentic to ourselves. This is the work of the church. Let us do this work together.

God's Peace,
Ayden+



AFFILIATION UPDATE

At the direction of Bishop French, the St Francis Vestry approved a resolution to officially dissolve our affiliation with St. Barnabas, Monmouth Junction. St Barnabas is in the process of signing a Letter of Agreement with a Priest-in-Charge.

FINAL DEACON'S CORNER

By now, most of you know I will be leaving St. Francis Church effective April 7, 2024.

I am so happy to have had this time with you. What a blessing it has been to start my diaconal ministry here.

I came to you a freshly minted deacon in September 2021. I have had the opportunity to grow and learn from so many fine people including Father Jack and Father Frank and all the wonderful supply priests. Pam and Barbara taught me a little bit about Altar Guild. Tiffany introduced me to incense.

I am thankful for this opportunity to served Jesus in worship and the care of His people. I am grateful to have walked beside you in happy and sad times. St. Francis is a generous community that shows Christ's love in word and action. I will miss you.

I leave you in good hands with Reverend Ayden. St. Francis and you all are ever in my prayers.

Blessings,
Deacon Gerry



FAREWELL DEACON GERRY

On September 12, 2021, Deacon Gerry Welch signed a letter of agreement to be our deacon. Deacon Gerry was ordained as a Vocational Deacon in August of 2021 in the midst of the pandemic. When she arrived at St. Francis, she had no knowledge that Fr. Jack would be retiring in January of 2023. So, when he retired, Deacon Gerry became our main spiritual provider. With a regular priest no longer onsite, we were able to supply almost every week throughout 2023 and during the first two months of 2024.

For Deacon Gerry, that meant being flexible and willing to roll with the direction of the "Sunday priest" while at the same time giving guidance and direction regarding our traditions. She rose to the occasion. She also assumed all the visits to our homebound & ill & participated in funerals and burials in our Memorial Garden. Holy week celebrations, Advent preparations and everyday church needs also became part of the job for Deacon Gerry. Distributing ashes at the Dunellen train station in 2023 and 2024 and then going to the Greenbrook Regional Center for distribution to their residents was a true sharing of love and community. Some of the other community events that the deacon embraced were Street Fairs and animal blessings. Always willing to give her time and talent.

Most recently, she began leading Morning prayer in Spanish. Zoom and Facebook were available for participants. Even though only a few attended each Wednesday, Deacon Gerry did not miss getting out the word of God. She also conducted a Wednesday noon-day service.

In short, Deacon Gerry Welch has kept us afloat for 14 months. We give thanks to God for bestowing upon us the blessings of her ministry. We wish her well as she discerns the direction she will take to continue to serve the Lord with all her heart and with all her soul.

Join us on April 7 as Deacon Gerry celebrates her last Sunday with us.



OUTREACH

Outreach Coordinator: Pam Maiolo

Our Special Lenten donation has come to a close. Donations this Lent will be forwarded to this year's recipient, **Women Aware, New Brunswick**. This organization's mission is to promote the safety and self-sufficiency of individuals and families affected by domestic violence in Middlesex County. Thank you to all who gave to this important community group. Our collective donation is \$1200.

Saint Paul's Food Pantry will continue to accept donations of non-perishable food items to assist helping the food insecure in our neighboring town. For the month of April, donations of peanut butter & jelly are being suggested.

Fresh Start Program continues to collect Women's sanitary items in addition to adult, baby, and toddler diapers. Imagine if you or someone you know could not afford these basic needs.

Plainfield Area Humane Society is the recipient of our pet food collection. Dry or wet, dog and cat foods are needed. Small blankets and towels are also requested.

*It has hands to help others.
It has feet to hasten to the poor and needy.
It has eyes to see misery and want.
It has ears to hear the sighs and sorrows of people.
That is what love looks like.*

-Saint Augustine

PALM SUNDAY AND EASTER WORSHIP





APRIL HEALTHY BITS

Chris Colwell

I have to laugh...you may have heard me say that from time to time. Turns out, laughter is GOOD for you! One of my FAVORITE sitcoms is 'I Love Lucy'. Almost anything Lucy Ricardo says makes me laugh, especially ***"Hello friends, I'm your Vitameatavegamin girl!"*** Did you know April is National Humor Month? Seriously!! Take a look at what I found at www.nationaltoday.com/national-humor-month:

Did you know that laughter is the best medicine? Just goes to show that you can't go wrong with celebrating – humor is one of the most essential qualities to human life.

Larry Wilde, an author and humorist, created National Humor Month in 1976 to show people how humor is a useful tool to improve our way of life. He stated, "The idea of laughing and the use of humor as a tool to lift ailing spirits is growing. Scientific research now indicates that the curative power of laughter and its ability to relieve debilitating stress and burnout may indeed be one of the great medical discoveries of our times." Through laughing, we're reducing our stress and pain levels, strengthening our immune systems, and recharging our bodies.

Humor plays an important role in our overall health. Scientific research has proven that humor is a useful tool that heals us emotionally and physically. Laughter is part of human behavior regulated by the brain. It is an expression of happiness and inner joy. In social interactions, it's a sign of acceptance and positive interactions with others. It is contagious and oftentimes the laughter of one person provokes the laughter of another. Humor is a useful way to relieve stress.

As human beings, we love to laugh because it brings happiness and joy into our lives (the average adult laughs 17 times a day). The more we're able to laugh at ourselves, the more we're able to share those moments with our friends and family. The industries built around laughter such as jokes, sitcoms, and comedians are all designed to make us laugh because it makes us feel good. It has a positive effect on our bodies; it relaxes our muscles as well as increases our blood flow and boosts our heart rate.

Let's celebrate National Humor Month with a laugh – it's contagious!! Here's a poem by Ogden Nash to help you start smiling...

The Termite

Some primal termite knocked on wood
And tasted it, and found it good!
And that is why your Cousin May
Fell through the parlor floor today.

Cheers to you and your families.

-Chris

POEMS TO PONDER

Michelle Klastava

On March 23rd, my children and I had the privilege of attending the Iftar dinner hosted by the Muslim Center of Middlesex County. As the sun set, marking the end of the day's fast during Ramadan, we immersed ourselves in an afternoon of learning about the profound spiritual beliefs and practices of our Muslim brothers and sisters. The experience was truly enlightening.

Throughout the gathering, we found common ground with our fellow attendees in matters of faith, hospitality, community service, and our shared devotion to God. The ambiance was one of unity and understanding, bridging the gaps between our diverse beliefs.

The prayer leader eloquently elucidated on the significance of fasting during Ramadan as a means of spiritual rejuvenation—a time to reset and reaffirm one's connection with the divine. His words resonated deeply, reminding us of the universal pursuit of spiritual growth and enlightenment.

In his poem "These Spiritual Window Shoppers", the 13th-century Islamic scholar and poet Rumi urges us to wholeheartedly commit to our faith, even when the immediate rewards seem uncertain. Much like Holy Week for Christians, Ramadan serves as a poignant reminder to introspect and nurture our relationship with our faith.

Rumi's analogy of "shadows with no capital" poignantly underscores the spiritual void that comes with half-hearted commitments. Conversely, he extols the virtues of unwavering dedication, drawing parallels to the perseverance of figures like Noah.

In essence, our experience at the Iftar dinner served as a profound reminder of the transformative power of faith, unity, and wholehearted devotion. It reinforced the notion that regardless of our religious affiliations, we are all bound by the common threads of humanity and the shared quest for spiritual fulfillment.

"These spiritual window-shoppers"

-Rumi

These spiritual window-shoppers,
who idly ask, 'How much is that?' Oh, I'm just looking.
They handle a hundred items and put them down,
shadows with no capital.

What is spent is love and two eyes wet with weeping.
But these walk into a shop,
and their whole lives pass suddenly in that moment,
in that shop.

Where did you go? "Nowhere."
What did you have to eat? "Nothing much."

Even if you don't know what you want,
buy *something*, to be part of the exchanging flow.

Start a huge, foolish project,
like Noah.

It makes absolutely no difference
what people think of you.

CELEBRATIONS

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

Cheryl Scriven	04/02
Taryn O'Sullivan	04/04
Lydia DiAgostino	04/06
Jonathan Myzie	04/09
Vincent Maiolo	04/12
Princess Thomas	04/14
Vito Pelliccia, Jr.	04/14
Gary Burns	04/16
Maruquel Donaire	04/18
Norma O'Sullivan	04/22

APRIL BAPTISMS

Adam Scolnick	04/01
Timothy Tereman	04/07
Daryl DeRogatis	04/12
Daren Mayer	04/14
David Doll	04/15
Ashley Thomas	04/18
Princess Thomas	04/24
Chris Colwell	04/28
Wesley Tirado	04/30

APRIL CONFIRMATIONS

Cordell Trotman	04/09
Elda Hubbard	04/23
Sarah Crowther	04/29

APRIL ANNIVERSARIES

Chris & Robert Colwell	04/27
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“The deeds you do may be the only sermon some persons will hear today.”

St. Francis of Assisi

APRIL MONTHLY CALENDAR

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4 6:15PM Intercessory Prayer Group	5	6
7 SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER 8AM Holy Eucharist (On-Site ONLY) 10AM Holy Eucharist (On-Site & On-Line) <i>Deacon Gerry's Farewell</i>	8	9 3PM Contemplative Prayer Group	10	11	12	13
14 THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER 10AM Holy Eucharist (On-Site & On-Line) <i>Coffee & Craft</i> <i>Amy - Leather Bracelets</i>	15	16 3PM Contemplative Prayer Group	17	18 6:15PM Intercessory Prayer Group 7:30PM Vestry Meeting	19	20
21 FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER 10AM Holy Eucharist (On-Site & On-Line) 2PM Jazz Concert	22	23 3PM Contemplative Prayer Group	24	25	26	27 2PM-5PM Making Peace Retreat (Kate Mason)
28 FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER 10AM Holy Eucharist (On-Site & On-Line)	29	30 3PM Contemplative Prayer Group				

APRIL LITURGICAL SCHEDULE

ROLE	USHER <u>On-Site</u>	Camera <u>On-Site</u>	Acolyte Chalicer	CELEBRANT	FIRST LESSON <u>On-Site</u> Reader	PSALM <u>On-Site</u> Reader	HOST USHER (Zoom & Facebook)	SECOND LESSON <u>On-Site</u> Reader	PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE (-)	COUNTER (-)
APRIL 7	Pam	Amy	-	Rev. Ayden Petrone	Olivia	Grace	Emma	Kate	Larry	Grace Olivia
APRIL 14	Chris	Christy (Kathy – Training)	AJ	Rev. Ayden Petrone	Rillette	Tyler	Emma	Gerianne	Chris	Michelle Gerianne
APRIL 21	Laura	Gerianne	Jaeden	Rev. Ayden Petrone	Larry	Laura	Emma	Olivia	Christy	Marie Cynthia
APRIL 28	Ilia	Vin	-	Rev. Ayden Petrone	Cynthia	Pam	Emma	Laura	Grace	Kathy Paul

Coffee & Crafts with Grace McDougall Card Making



SAVE THE DATES!

COFFEE & CRAFTS SUNDAYS HOW TO MAKE LEATHER BRACELETS



Have a special talent or skill that you would like to share with us or learn? Join us for Crafting Sundays during Coffee Hour! Just 15 mins of your time.

Let me know if you're interested - Signup sheet is in the narthex. Contact Heather with questions at hnunes505@gmail.com

Final Session

Sign-up Now!!

April 14- Amy Myzie-Presenter

Free bracelets

JOIN US FOR AN AFTERNOON OF LIVE JAZZ

ST. FRANCIS CHURCH PRESENTS

THE STEVE MINZER QUARTET

SUNDAY APRIL 21, 2024

2:00PM

WWW.STFRANCISDUNELLEN.ORG



Light refreshments will be served.

In lieu of ticket sales, we ask you to consider a donation to support our Community Programs.

ON-LINE RETREAT - Making Peace with What We Cannot Change **April 27, 2024 2PM-5PM**

You are warmly invited to an online retreat on Saturday, April 27 from 2PM to 5PM. We will explore how we can gradually make peace with all the things in our lives we cannot change.

There is so much that falls into this category – our fractious political landscape, the intractable presence of all the “isms” in our society, and the ongoing heart-stopping environmental catastrophe unfolding around us.

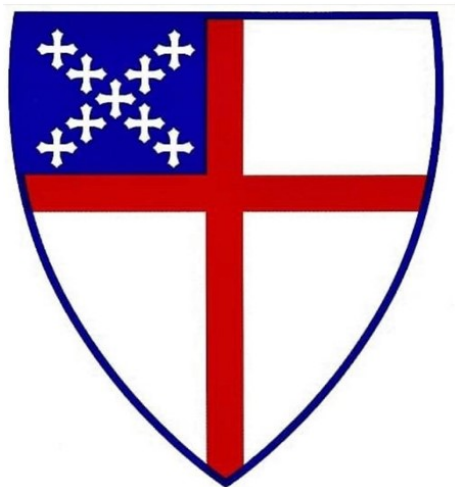
But beyond these overwhelming obstacles, there are the challenges we each face in our lives. Illness. Losses. Broken relationships. The things that keep us up at night. The things we cannot fix.

Finding a way to continue on despite (or because of?) these challenges is no easy task. Join us to see how The Divine may nurture you in the midst of the difficulties. Contact katemason@duck.com with questions or to sign up. The retreat is free, but you do need to sign up for the Zoom link.

Kate Mason



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ST. FRANCIS EPISCOPAL CHURCH

www.stfrancisdunellen.org (732) 968-6781

APRIL 2024

Clergy

The Rev. Ayden Petrone, *Priest in Charge*

Vestry

Pam Maiolo—Sr. Warden, Finance, Buildings and Grounds, Rectory Liaison, Outreach

Amy Myzie—Jr. Warden, Finance, Financial Secretary

Christy McGuire—Stewardship, Communications (Media Releases), Website

Marie Petit-Holmes—Youth

Elaine Patania—Stewardship, Finance, “Office Overseer”

Cynthia Pelliccia—Fellowship, Finance

Olivia DiAgostino—Communication (FB+)

Vestry (continued)

Gerrienne Breck—Vestry Clerk, MailChimp, Sign
Grace McDougall—COME, Fellowship, Finance

Michelle Klastava—Youth, COME

Paul Sinckler—Finance, Buildings and Grounds

Non-Vestry

Ilia Scriven—Treasurer, Finance

Tom Patania, Yuennadi Moya—Buildings and
Grounds

Laura Breck—Communique, Liturgical Scheduling
Administrative Assistant—Trina Rios

Office Hours—Monday & Thursday 10AM-2PM
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