

SAINT PETER'S NET

JESUS SAID TO PETER, "FOLLOW ME, AND I WILL MAKE YOU FISH FOR PEOPLE."
MATTHEW 4:19

A Confession of Faith in a Time of Crisis

We are living through perilous and polarizing times as a nation, with a dangerous crisis of moral and political leadership at the highest levels of our government and in our churches. **We believe the soul of the nation and the integrity of faith are now at stake.**

It is time to be followers of Jesus before anything else—nationality, political party, race, ethnicity, gender, geography—our identity in Christ precedes every other identity. We pray that our nation will see Jesus' words in us. "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35).

When politics undermines our theology, we must examine that politics. The church's role is to change the world through the life and love of Jesus Christ. The government's role is to serve the common good by protecting justice and peace, rewarding good behavior while restraining bad behavior (Romans 13). When that role is undermined by political leadership, faith leaders must stand up and speak out. Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "The church must be reminded that it is not the master or the servant of the state, but rather the conscience of the state."

It is often the duty of Christian leaders, especially elders, to speak the truth in love to our churches and to name and warn against temptations, racial and cultural captivities, false doctrines, and political idolatries—and even our complicity in them. We do so here with humility, prayer, and a deep dependency on the grace and Holy Spirit of God.

This letter comes from a retreat on Ash Wednesday, 2018. In this season of Lent, we feel deep lamentations for the state of our nation, and our own hearts are filled with confession for the sins we feel called to address. The true meaning of the word repentance is to turn around. It is time to lament, confess, repent, and turn. In times of crisis, the church has historically learned to return to Jesus Christ.

Jesus is Lord. That is our foundational confession. It was central for the early church and needs to again become central to us. If Jesus is Lord, then Caesar was not—nor any other political ruler since. If Jesus is Lord, no other authority is absolute. Jesus Christ, and the kingdom of God he announced, is the Christian's first loyalty, above all others. We pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10). Our faith is personal but never private, meant not only for heaven but for this earth.

The question we face is this: Who is Jesus Christ for us today? What does our loyalty to Christ, as disciples, require at this moment in our history? We believe it is time to renew our theology of public discipleship and witness. Applying what "Jesus is Lord" means today is the message we commend as elders to our churches.

What we believe leads us to what we must reject. Our "Yes" is the foundation

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Mission Statement: *We are an inclusive, forward-looking Episcopal parish that seeks to grow in Christ through worship, education and fellowship, serves Christ by ministering to local and global communities and shares Christ in following His command to "Love one another as I have loved you."*

Vision Statement: *Our vision at St. Peter's is to be an inclusive, vibrant Christian community honoring our Episcopal heritage by achieving excellence in worship, mission, education and fellowship.*

Staff

Very Rev. Dr. Koshy Mathews, *Rector*
Rev. Joseph Dietz, *Deacon*
Retta Sparano, *Liturgical Coordinator*
Michele Engle, *Director of Youth and Family Ministries*
Karen Greene, *Music Director*
Judith M. Dougherty, *Parish Secretary*

Vestry

2019 Raymond Foerster
Karen Martz
Henry Young
2020 Judi Hans
Vincent Giancaterino
Julia Sharpe
2021 Shelly Brennfleck
Frank Rothenberger
Jan Wier

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What's Happening At St. Peter's May 2018

p. 1-4 A Confession of Faith
p. 5 Deacon's Roundtable
Day By Day; New Members
p. 6 Trevor Gordon Hall Concert
Ascension Day Service
Mission News
p. 7 May Celebrations
Service Participants
p. 8 Financial Update

for our “No.” What we confess as our faith leads to what we confront. Therefore, we offer the following six affirmations of what we believe, and the resulting rejections of practices and policies by political leaders which dangerously corrode the soul of the nation and deeply threaten the public integrity of our faith. We pray that we, as followers of Jesus, will find the depth of faith to match the danger of our political crisis.

I. WE BELIEVE each human being is made in God’s image and likeness (Genesis 1:26). That image and likeness confers a divinely decreed dignity, worth, and God-given equality to all of us as children of the one God who is the Creator of all things. Racial bigotry is a brutal denial of the image of God (the imago dei) in some of the children of God. Our participation in the global community of Christ absolutely prevents any toleration of racial bigotry. Racial justice and healing are biblical and theological issues for us, and are central to the mission of the body of Christ in the world. We give thanks for the prophetic role of the historic black churches in America when they have called for a more faithful gospel.

THEREFORE, WE REJECT the resurgence of white nationalism and racism in our nation on many fronts, including the highest levels of political leadership. We, as followers of Jesus, must clearly reject the use of racial bigotry for political gain that we have seen. In the face of such bigotry, silence is complicity. In particular, we reject white supremacy and commit ourselves to help dismantle the systems and structures that perpetuate white preference and advantage. Further, any doctrines or political strategies that use racist resentments, fears, or language must be named as public sin—one that goes back to the foundation of our nation and lingers on. Racial bigotry must be antithetical for those belonging to the body of Christ, because it denies the truth of the gospel we profess.

II. WE BELIEVE we are one body. In Christ, there is to be no oppression based on race, gender, identity, or class (Galatians 3:28). The body of Christ, where those great human divisions are to be overcome, is meant to be an example for the rest of society. When we fail to overcome these oppressive obstacles, and even perpetuate them, we have failed in our vocation to the world—to proclaim and live the reconciling gospel of Christ.

THEREFORE, WE REJECT misogyny, the mistreatment, violent abuse, sexual harassment, and assault of women that has been further revealed in our culture and politics, including our churches, and the oppression of any other child of God. We lament when such practices seem publicly ignored, and thus privately condoned, by those in high positions of leadership. We stand for the respect, protection, and affirmation of women in our families, communities, workplaces, politics, and churches. We support the courageous truth-telling voices of women, who have helped the nation recognize these abuses. We confess sexism as a sin, requiring our repentance and resistance.

III. WE BELIEVE how we treat the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the stranger, the sick, and the prisoner is how we treat Christ himself. (Matthew 25: 31-46) “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.” God calls us to protect and seek justice for those who are poor and vulnerable, and our treatment of people who are “oppressed,” “strangers,” “outsiders,” or otherwise considered “marginal” is a test of our relationship to God, who made us all equal in divine dignity and love. Our proclamation of the lordship of Jesus Christ is at stake in our solidarity with the most vulnerable. If our gospel is not “good news to the poor,” it is not the gospel of Jesus Christ (Luke 4:18).

THEREFORE, WE REJECT the language and policies of political leaders who would debase and abandon the most vulnerable children of God. We strongly deplore the growing attacks on immigrants and refugees, who are being made into cultural and political targets, and we need to remind our churches that God makes the treatment of the “strangers” among us a test of faith (Leviticus 19:33-34). We won’t accept the neglect of the well-being of low-income families and children, and we will resist repeated attempts to deny health care to those who most need it. We confess our growing national sin of putting the rich over the poor. We reject the immoral logic of cutting services and programs for the poor while cutting taxes for the rich. Budgets are moral documents. We commit ourselves to opposing and reversing those policies and finding solutions that reflect

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the wisdom of people from different political parties and philosophies to seek the common good. Protecting the poor is a central commitment of Christian discipleship, to which 2,000 verses in the Bible attest.

IV. WE BELIEVE that truth is morally central to our personal and public lives. Truth-telling is central to the prophetic biblical tradition, whose vocation includes speaking the Word of God into their societies and speaking the truth to power. A commitment to speaking truth, the ninth commandment of the Decalogue, “You shall not bear false witness” (Exodus 20:16), is foundational to shared trust in society. Falsehood can enslave us, but Jesus promises, “You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” (John 8:32). The search and respect for truth is crucial to anyone who follows Christ.

THEREFORE, WE REJECT the practice and pattern of lying that is invading our political and civil life. Politicians, like the rest of us, are human, fallible, sinful, and mortal. But when public lying becomes so persistent that it deliberately tries to change facts for ideological, political, or personal gain, the public accountability to truth is undermined. The regular purveying of falsehoods and consistent lying by the nation’s highest leaders can change the moral expectations within a culture, the accountability for a civil society, and even the behavior of families and children. The normalization of lying presents a profound moral danger to the fabric of society. In the face of lies that bring darkness, Jesus is our truth and our light.

V. WE BELIEVE that Christ’s way of leadership is servanthood, not domination. Jesus said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles (the world) lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant” (Matthew 20:25-26). We believe our elected officials are called to public service, not public tyranny, so we must protect the limits, checks, and balances of democracy and encourage humility and civility on the part of elected officials. We support democracy, not because we believe in human perfection, but because we do not. The authority of government is instituted by God to order an unredeemed society for the sake of justice and peace, but ultimate authority belongs only to God.

THEREFORE, WE REJECT any moves toward autocratic political leadership and authoritarian rule. We believe authoritarian political leadership is a theological danger that threatens democracy and the common good—and we will resist it. Disrespect for the rule of law, not recognizing the equal importance of our three branches of government, and replacing civility with dehumanizing hostility toward opponents are of great concern to us. Neglecting the ethic of public service and accountability, in favor of personal recognition and gain often characterized by offensive arrogance, are not just political issues for us. They raise deeper concerns about political idolatry, accompanied by false and unconstitutional notions of authority.

VI. WE BELIEVE Jesus when he tells us to go into all nations making disciples (Matthew 28:18). Our churches and our nations are part of an international community whose interests always surpass national boundaries. The most well-known verse in the New Testament starts with “For God so loved the world” (John 3:16). We, in turn, should love and serve the world and all its inhabitants, rather than seek first narrow, nationalistic prerogatives.

THEREFORE, WE REJECT “America first” as a theological heresy for followers of Christ. While we share a patriotic love for our country, we reject xenophobic or ethnic nationalism that places one nation over others as a political goal. We reject domination rather than stewardship of the earth’s resources, toward genuine global development that brings human flourishing for all of God’s children. Serving our own communities is essential, but the global connections between us are undeniable. Global poverty, environmental damage, violent conflict, weapons of mass destruction, and deadly diseases in some places ultimately affect all places, and we need wise political leadership to deal with each of these.

WE ARE DEEPLY CONCERNED for the soul of our nation, but also for our churches and the integrity of our faith. The present crisis calls us to go deeper—deeper into our relationship to God; deeper into our

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relationships with each other, especially across racial, ethnic, and national lines; deeper into our relationships with the most vulnerable, who are at greatest risk.

The church is always subject to temptations to power, to cultural conformity, and to racial, class, and gender divides, as Galatians 3:28 teaches us. But our answer is to be “in Christ,” and to “not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable, and perfect.” (Romans 12:1-2)

The best response to our political, material, cultural, racial, or national idolatries is the First Commandment: “You shall have no other gods before me” (Exodus 20:3). Jesus summarizes the Greatest Commandment: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, your soul, and your mind. This is the first commandment. And the second is like unto it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these commandments hang all the law and the prophets” (Matthew 22:38). As to loving our neighbors, we would add “no exceptions.”

We commend this letter to pastors, local churches, and young people who are watching and waiting to see what the churches will say and do at such a time as this.

Our urgent need, in a time of moral and political crisis, is to recover the power of confessing our faith. Lament, repent, and then repair. If Jesus is Lord, there is always space for grace. We believe it is time to speak and to act in faith and conscience, not because of politics, but because we are disciples of Jesus Christ—to whom be all authority, honor, and glory. It is time for a fresh confession of faith. Jesus is Lord. He is the light in our darkness. “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (John 8:12).

The Most Rev. Michael B. Curry, Presiding Bishop and Primate, The Episcopal Church; and others.

Deacon's Roundtable

The Great Fifty Days of Easter will come to a close with the celebration of Pentecost. Pentecost was originally a Jewish religious observance which took place fifty days after Passover. We Christians remember it as the day on which God chose to reveal the third person of the Trinity—the Holy Spirit (Ghost). St. Luke—in the second chapter of the Book of Acts—recounts the episode for us. “And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they (the Jerusalem Christians) were sitting. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.” It was essentially the gift of languages that evangelized the world and helped give birth to the Church.

The whole of the New Testament tells how the Holy Ghost (Spirit) is given by Christ to his Church for carrying on his ministry of restoring broken lives and making them ultimately fit for heaven—despite everything.

Our word “ghost” comes from the Anglo-Saxon word *gast*, from which we get our word gust. It means a sudden gust of wind. As the Rev. C. Frederick Barbee puts it, “‘Ghost’ is the sudden gust of wind that whirls us around to look on the face of God.” “Spirit” is derived from the Latin word *spiritus* which means normal breathing. Not every Christian soul experiences a sudden conversion, thus “Spirit” represents the gradual growth most of us experience, as implied in the Confirmation prayer, “Strengthen, O Lord, your servant ... with your Holy Spirit; empower her/him for your service; and sustain her/him all the days of her/his life.”

If we are to see the Church continue, we must speak in languages our children, peers and fellow workers will understand. God has called each of us to his service by filling us with his Holy Spirit. Continue to pray that his Spirit will be manifested in each of us.

For the past 35 years it has been my special privilege to nurture my spirituality by attending

a religious retreat on the beautiful grounds at St. Joseph's-in-the-Hills, Malvern. This is the largest, privately, lay owned retreat house in the country.

Each year Our Lady Queen of Peace Group meets to strengthen their spiritual lives. This group consists of about 150 men and young men—common work-a-day folks like you and me—who are looking for a deeper relationship with their God.

Our weekend this year is Friday through Sunday, July 20, 21, and 22. Please pray about your calling to this time away from the cares and worries of the world. See me after services on Sunday or give me a call at home if you are interested. This may be the chance of a lifetime for the men of St. Peter's—don't turn it down.

Deacon Joe

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DAY by DAY



The May/June/July issue of *DAY by DAY* [Forward] is now available in the Narthex Tract Rack.

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Celebrate our New Members



On Sunday, May 6 at the 10:00 service, the New Member /Growth Ministry Committee will be hosting a celebration to recognize our newest members. We will have a special coffee hour and our newcomers will receive a blessing. If

you have joined Saint Peter's within the past year and would like to be recognized, please contact Judi Hans at 610-327-4653 or **JudithHans@comcast.net**. We hope that we can include all people who consider themselves to be new members of Saint Peter's.

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Music at St. Peter's Presents

Trevor Gordon Hall - May 6, 2018 4:00 pm



Rated one of the top 30 guitarists in the world under 30 years of age by Acoustic Guitar magazine, Trevor Gordon Hall is an instrumentalist from Philadelphia whose compositions range in style from edgy, driving rhythms to soft melodic phrases. Trevor sets himself apart by leaving no physical aspect of the guitar untouched and weaving together different textures into grand yet intimate and lyrical compositions. Trevor continues to tour playing his custom designed "Kalimbatar" for audiences all over North America, UK, Europe, Asia and South America, including a recent debut at the iconic Carnegie Hall in NYC. With high praise from industry greats including Steve Hackett, Graham Nash, Pat Martino, Tommy Emmanuel and more, Trevor continues to develop his blend of sounds that focus on utilizing the instrument's fullest creative and compositional potential, guiding listeners through an igniting experience of music that isn't just heard but felt."

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Ascension Day ~ Thursday, May 10th



40 days after the Festival of Easter the Church celebrates Ascension Day. As Christ ascended into heaven, we are left with the promised gift

of the Holy Spirit. 10 days following Ascension Day we celebrate Pentecost, the day the Church received the gift of the Holy Spirit. Ascension Day, much like Ash Wednesday is a feast that falls on a weekday and has lost the importance that it deserves.

The Ascension is an important part in the life and ministry of Jesus, a day that we should celebrate and remember with great joy. On Thursday, May 10th, at 7:30 p.m. we will celebrate the Feast of the Ascension here at **St. Peter's**. We hope you will join us for this festive occasion, and to celebrate our great commission.

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El Salvador Mission News

Cindy Hammaker 610-933-3806; chammaker@verizon.net



Thank you to all who gave their daily devotions to Cristosal during Lent season by donating a Dollar-a-day! The full amount of funds received will go directly to Cristosal's great work of giving support and hope to those struggling with adversity and injustice in El Salvador and Central America.

It will be a great honor to host Noah Bullock, director of Cristosal, on April 28th and 29th and to have him in our close midst to educate us on the situations and dire issues in El Salvador. A great thanks to all who will be attending the social gathering at the Logar's house on the 28th, and thank you again for any further donation you would like to make which will go directly to Cristosal and especially their efforts in mitigating the issues of forced migration. The mission committee is also facilitating some speaking opportunities for Noah to connect with other churches, clergy and interested parishioners in our diocese. So, this is a wonderful way that St. Peter's can help to spread the interest and support of Cristosal's invaluable work.

Also, there is a date to mark on your calendars for a country dinner with dancing event on Saturday, June 2nd! Funds received will go towards supporting missionary expenses for a Cristosal Global School seminar in Fall, 2018. If you are interested in participating in Cristosal's Global school or learning more about this opportunity, please contact Cindy Hammaker or Gary Russell. So, as you can see, great things are happening with St. Peter's mission work and thank you again for your support in making it all happen!

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May Birthdays

- [1] Lenora Thornton, Sean Magee, Clara Boone
- [7] Jared Adams
- [9] Emily Bindschusz
- [10] Pat Howse, Carol Russell
- [13] Grace Druckenmiller, Annette Kiernan
- [16] Amy Brodar
- [19] Clem Young, Eric Phillips
- [23] Tara Young
- [24] Jacob Schaefer
- [28] Susan Mathews
- [29] Vernet Spence-Brown
- [30] Thomas Hammaker, Matthew Hope,
Trevor Gordon Hall, Lily Rothenberger

May Anniversaries

- [5] Kim Guiser and Asha George-Guiser
- [7] Henry Young and Andrea Archer
- [11] Michael and Rosemarie O'Rourke
- [13] Michael and Erica Logar
- [22] Bill and Cathy Sullens
- [28] Christopher and Diane Hope
Koshy and Susan Mathews
- [29] Vivek and Minita Hivale

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May Worship Service Participants

Greeters - 8:00 am

- 6 Joan Grunwell
- 13 Lisa Scott
- 20 Glenn Murray
- 27 James Dallas

Lectors - 8:00 am

- 6 Anne Holbrook
Lisa Scott *chalicist*
- 13 Alexis Wilson
- 20 Ron Gaugler
- 27 Lisa Scott

Acolytes

- 6 Ryan Sutter
Sydney Alling, Emma Martz
- 13 James Hammaker
Trey Foerster, Phoebe Foerster
- 20 Vernet Spence-Brown
Isaac Nagy, MJ Kiernan, George Barker
- 27 Greg Perles
Mali Warren, Sean Magee

Greeters - 10:00 am

- 6 Kim Thornton, Mike Logar
- 13 Anne Andrews, Pat Howse
- 20 Vernet Spence Brown, Cindy Giancaterino
- 27 Michael and Rosemarie O'Rourke

Lectors - 10:00 am

- 6 Lynn Boukalik, Curt Quaintance
Susan Mathews *intercessor*
Vernet Spence Brown *chalicist*
Richard Greene *chalicist*
- 13 Carol Russell, Vernet Spence Brown
Retta Sparano *intercessor*
Ron Druckenmiller *chalicist*
Peter Druckenmiller *chalicist*
- 20 Phoebe Foerster, Marty Bloem
Beverly Burkhardt *intercessor*
Richard Greene *chalicist*
Carol Russell *chalicist*
- 27 Asha George-Guiser, Jolie Chylack
Mona Chylack *intercessor*
Ron Druckenmiller *chalicist*
Vernet Spence-Brown *chalicist*

Ushers

- 6 Clem Young, Sam Smith
- 13 Vincent Giancaterino, Robert Parker
- 20 Curt Quaintance, Carl Rennie
- 27 Bruce Alling, Jim Tackett

Financial Update – March 2018

from Frank Rothenberger, Accounting Warden

The financial position of St. Peter's through March, 2018 is outlined below.

- **Income**
 - Total open plate donations through March were \$3,554 which were below budget of \$6,000; however, this was offset by \$71,839 in pledges for 2018 that are outpacing budget of \$68,244.
 - Overall, operating income was \$85,483 which is more than the expected income of \$80,106. This includes \$4,774 in Clinic rent that is deposited directly into the maintenance savings account and \$1,477 in 2017 pledges recognized in 2018 (not included in the pledge amount above).
 - Total income, including pass through income of \$13,967, was \$99,451.

- **Expense**
 - Total operating expenses were \$86,974 which were above expected budget of \$77,470.
 - Operating expenses continue to be impacted by higher than expected winter utility bills and repair/maintenance costs expensed in the first quarter of 2018.
 - Total expenses, including pass-through expenses of \$11,841, were \$98,815.
 - The operating shortfall improved from \$9,655 through February, 2018 to an operating shortfall of \$1,490 through March, 2018 and this shortfall was sufficiently covered by cash on hand.
 - St. Peter's reported a total surplus of \$665 through March, 2018. This is essentially operating on a breakeven basis.

Additional detail on income and expense is available upon request.

Account Balances (as of 3/31/18):

- Checking: \$10,805
- Savings: \$9,067
- Certificates of Deposit: \$42,490
- Youth Group: \$2,037
- Pantry/Outreach: \$31,144
- Mission: \$1,640
- Building Maintenance: \$10,063
- Concert Series: \$5,296
- Capital Campaign: \$34,110
- Ecumenical Meal Program: \$6,639
- Petty Cash: \$200
 - **Total Cash: \$153,491**

Thank you all for your continued and generous support of St. Peter's.