



# ST. PETER'S CHURCH



2025

# ANNUAL REPORT



## Rector's Message

Dear St. Peters Family,

My first six months as your priest have been a whirlwind.

There has been the true pleasure of getting to know you all individually and as a community, learning the rhythms of the church seasons as St. Peter's celebrates them, diving headfirst into the work of revisioning our campus, starting up a Pastoral Care Committee, making the acquaintance of colleagues engaged in mission and ministry in Philadelphia, leading planning meetings, running adult forums and Bible study. All of this would have been more than enough to keep me occupied, but we begin our ministry together in very unusual times.

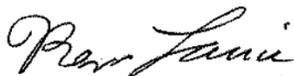
Our neighbors are terrorized and arrested because their skin color makes them suspect, some who rise in protest are hit with tear gas, batons, or shot. Any history that does not present a triumphalist representation of America is removed from our national parks, affirmative action is ended, civil rights protections are rolled back, and government funds are being used and withheld to punish resistance, all at a pace intended to disorient and overwhelm us into numbness and immobility. What felt like common ground to many is crumbling under our feet, so where can we find our footing?

Even though I'm a recent arrival to this community I have complete confidence in this: We can find our footing together at St. Peter's. There are members of St. Peter's who serve at the Food Cupboard every week, others can be found at protests against tyranny and protecting women seeking treatment at reproductive health clinics, still others have made a life's work of teaching and representing our under-resourced neighbors. I could go on.

From their varied and divergent backgrounds, the people of St. Peter's have also committed themselves to sharing a common life based on mercy, hospitality, gratitude, justice seeking and, come what may, joy. Evidence can be found of this every time our members gather to pray for one another, teach our children that God is love at Sunday School, welcome a newcomer seeking community and a closer relationship with Jesus on Sunday morning and take on the mundane, behind-the-scenes labor of making St. Peter's a community where gifts are shared and there is room for all.

In this time when it is hard to find one's footing, I'm honored to have been called to walk with you out onto our shared faith, one step at a time.

Your sister in Christ,



Rev. Laurie  
Rector, St. Peter's Episcopal Church

## Associate Rector's Message

Dear St. Peter's,

As I reflect on this past year, I am overwhelmed with gratitude and excited about the future of St. Peter's.

Over the last year – and throughout the season of transition before Rev. Laurie's arrival – you embodied mutual leadership in ways that continue to humble me. You showed up. You prayed. You served. You asked hard questions and extended deep trust. You allowed me to grow into my role as Associate Rector and more fully into my vocation as a priest, even as you carried responsibilities that were not always visible but were always vital. The health of this parish is not the result of any one person's leadership. It is the fruit of shared ministry.

Now, as we move forward together with new energy and vision, I feel renewed hope that, as an outpost of God's Kingdom, we are not interested in simply maintaining an institution. We are committed to becoming the kind of community that can bear witness to God's love in a fractured world.

I see that most clearly in the ways we are becoming a more fully intergenerational church. Our elders and sages continue to show up and step up. At our Bishop's Visitation last year, 21 people participated in Rites of Christian Initiation, the majority of those in their 20s and 30s. There are an ever-growing number of families with young children finding a home here. St. Peter's has met their presence with real welcome: growing Family Worship, increasing regular combined worship services, reviving Sunday School, and, most recently, mobilizing renewed energy to rebuild our youth group. All of this is so that children of every age know St. Peter's is a place where they can grow in faith as they grow in years. I have deep confidence in the ways our shared questions, energy, and honesty are shaping us into a community of all ages that is so rare in our society today.

I see this becoming at work, too, in the ever-increasing lay leadership within our social justice ministries. Barbara Matteucci's steady leadership of the Social Justice Discernment Group has helped us resist reactivity and instead cultivate a faithful drumbeat of sustained engagement. The leaders of SJDG's four subgroups – Sophia Alexander, Burrell Montz Covey, Ella Peterson, Christy Santos, Kat Voit, and Caroline West – keep us grounded in critical issues and committed to the slow, incremental steps along the arc that bends toward justice. This year also brought the development of St. Peter's Prays with Our Feet, under the leadership of Ella Peterson and Caroline West: an online platform equipping our community to put belief into action through organized, prayerful protest. The discernment, research, organizing, and holy persistence so many of you bring to this work is extraordinary. This is what costly discipleship looks like in real time: refusing to accept injustice as inevitable; learning from those most impacted; grounding advocacy in prayer; and remembering that our call is not to be trendy or reactive, but faithful.

As I prepare for my sabbatical later this year, I am thankful for those who will support Rev. Laurie and continue to shepherd the ministries I oversee. Their strength has never depended on

one person. They are sustained by committed volunteers, thoughtful teachers, wise parents, courageous youth, and leaders who trust that the Holy Spirit is the primary architect of transformation. (And now a shameless plug: We need more of you! If you are open to stepping into a new leadership or other volunteer role, please reach out to me.) I look forward to returning in August eager to see how you have continued to walk in love as Christ loves us.

In all this, I find myself returning to a question that has quietly guided my own prayer: How will we live into God's grace, especially when that grace calls us into a costly discipleship?

Grace is a gift. We do not earn it. We do not manufacture it. We do not perfect ourselves into deserving it. And yet grace does not leave us unchanged. The love of God, poured into our hearts, presses outward. It compels us to forgive when we would rather nurse resentment. It asks us to examine the ways we choose control and certainty over compassion, even with one another. It invites us to welcome the stranger, repair what is broken, and reorder our lives around mercy.

Empire offers us quick and easy solutions to the problems within and around us. The Gospel calls us to something braver: relationships rooted in honesty, humility, repentance, and repair. It asks us to risk vulnerability. It asks us to practice forgiveness. It asks us to hold disagreement and stay at the table. While grace is free, it is definitely not cheap.

I see signs of that grace (and that courage) in you.

The question remains before us: How will we live into this grace? How will we enact Christ's teachings when they cost us something?

Grace is free, but discipleship is not. And yet we trust that the way of Christ leads to our collective freedom and wholeness. Thanks be to God, we get to walk it together.

In Christ's Peace,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Sarah+'. The signature is written in a light, greyish color.

Rev. Sarah+  
Associate Rector, St. Peter's Episcopal Church

## Comings, Goings & Doings in 2025

**Baptisms:** Calum Fournier, Amelia Jones, Sloane O'Connor, Leo Pereyra, Van Pallett, Maya Puri, Nell Stewart, Alice Whelchel, Liamarie Zavala

**Confirmations:** Parker Betten, Tennyson Betten, Paige Carlson-Heim, Eva Cielo, Rachel D'Agostino, Emily Federico, Sophie Hamilton, Jay Hangle, Emmy Jaros, Jack Kwiecinski, Matthew Kwiecinski, Jo Layman-Wilson, Noah Lazzaro, Holly Marvin, Jeff Miles, and Sylvie Wright

**Receptions:** Elijah Burton, Dan Layman-Wilson, Laura Lazzaro, and Peter Marvin

**Marriages:** Danielle Defassio & Mike Samson, Cathryn Sanderson & Damian Gentile, Emmy Jaros & Tyler Fallon, and Rachel D'Agostino & Daniel Boehlert

**Welcome to:** Krystle Baker & Zach Jones with Amelia, Rich & Yari Baker with Chloe, Thomas & Deanna Baldwin, Anna Brown, Deirdre & Solomon Dawson with Hamish, Maggie & Kyle Dunkle, Brian Gallagher, Winnie Host, John Keogh, Chris & Katie Koehler with Callahan, Gwyn Olson & Marc-Andre de Looz, J. D. Porter & Hannah Watson, Jen Russ, Teri Ryan, Cathy Schmidt, Karen Shore, Robin Silverman, Hannah Sugg, Vincent Thompson, Brooke Webb & Jessica Muscella

**Departures:** Dan & Jo Wilson-Layman, Teri Leavens & Michael Sakir with William, & Elizabeth Walker with Churchill & John Lindsay

**Deaths:** John Arneth, Connie Moore, Jo-Anna Moore, Gary Rodriguez, Joan Snowden, Grace Wohlsen

**Vestry:** Nora Adelman, Paige Carlson-Heim, Ann Kell (terms end 2026); Julia Cadwallender, Kat Voit, Ben Willis (terms end 2027); Joe Fanelli, Mildred Robinson, Kathleen Stephenson, Claire Waugh, Caroline West (terms end 2028)

Thank you to Ann Kell and Jonathan Miller for their service on the Vestry.

## Ministry Leaders in 2025

Adult Education.....	Sarah Hedgis-Kligerman
Acolytes & Chalice Bearers.....	Jay Newlin
Altar Guild.....	Kathleen Stephenson
Bell Ringing.....	Ben Cornelius
Book Group.....	Gretchen Cowell
Campus Re-envisioning Committee.....	Kat Voit
Children & Youth Leadership.....	Sarah Hedgis-Kligerman & Danielle Defassio
Churchyard.....	Meredith Piotrowski
Church Tour Guides.....	Carolyn Klepser
Coffee Hour Leaders.....	Emmy Jaros & Maryfrances Parisi
Craft Hangout.....	Laura Lazzaro
Search Committee.....	Nora Adelman, Jared Cram, Tina Hogan, Jonathan Miller & Kat Voit
Finance Committee.....	Paige Carlson-Heim
Food Cupboard.....	Mara Blake-Ward
Gravestone Cleaners.....	Keith Betten
Greeters.....	Cordelia Biddle
History Committee.....	Keith Betten
Human Resources Committee.....	Nora Adelman
Investments.....	Lynn McCormick
Lectors.....	Herb Snyder
LGBTQ+.....	Christy Santos
Livestreaming.....	William Lim & Noah Lazzaro
Music Advisory Committee.....	Nora Adelman
Music Library.....	Hannah Poole
Pastoral Care.....	Laurie Wurm
Prays With Our Feet.....	Ella Peterson & Caroline West
Preserve St. Peter's (HSPCPC).....	Nina Singhapakdi
Property Committee.....	Ben Leaphart
Sages.....	Kate Randall
Social Justice Discernment Group.....	Barbara Mattuecci
Stewardship Committee.....	Lauri Cielo
TNT (20s & 30s).....	Sarah Hedgis-Kligerman
Transition Committee.....	Kathleen Stephenson
Ushers.....	Steve Zettler
Vergers.....	Danny Alvarado
VIA.....	(inactive in 2025)
Whip, Splatter, Stir.....	Claire Shrader
Writers Group.....	Cordelia Biddle
Youth Group.....	Lisa Hardy

Thanks to everyone for all your hard work in 2025!

## Highlights of 2025

### **Thank You Rev. Joe Schaller**

The Rev. Dr. Joseph Schaller transitioned from his role as Assisting Priest at St. Peter's, and we celebrated his formal ministry at our worship service on January 26. Although his formal role here has ended, St. Peter's is blessed to have Joe continue as a parishioner who occasionally leads worship.

### **TNT Activities**

Our 20s & 30s Group gathered multiple times this year for fellowship and spiritual growth. We kicked off the year with an Epiphany Discipleship Group, followed by a Lenten program that focused on the book "God Didn't Make Us to Hate Us." TNT members invited one another to their houses for several dinners and potlucks.

### **Black History Month**

St. Peter's held a number of special events and services in February to observe Black History Month. On February 9, St. Peter's participated in a joint service in celebration of the life and ministry of Absalom Jones, the first black priest ordained in the Episcopal Church, at the Historic African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas. Also in February, our 1761 Society visited Mother Bethel AME Church for a tour of the sanctuary and Richard Allen Museum. St. Peter's Choir & organist Charles Johnson featured music selections by Black composers.

### **Re-envisioning Our Campus**

In 2024, St. Peter's had entertained the idea of partnering with St. Peter's School to build a new building in the parking lot at Third & Lombard streets. In February, St. Peter's Vestry decided not to proceed with the joint building project. The Vestry formed the Campus Re-envisioning Committee, which was tasked with engaging the congregation and guiding our way forward as we explore improvements to current facilities, potential new construction, and re-imagined spaces to better fulfill St. Peter's mission and vision. A group of architects who are members of St. Peter's also convened in November to begin an assessment of St. Peter's current campus, and how it could meet our space needs.

### **Women's History**

Each Sunday in March, there was a woman in the pulpit preaching at St. Peter's Church, as part of our observation of Women's History Month. Organist Charles Johnson participated in "Women Composer Sunday" on March 9, joining with organists around the world to perform works by women composers. In July, Rev. Sarah and parishioner Cordelia Biddle led a powerful women's retreat, guided by Cordelia's newly published book "Listen to Me: The Women of the Bible Speak Out."

### **Spotlight on Food Insecurity**

We spent the Lenten season shining a spotlight on food insecurity and diving deeper into understanding this complex issue that stems from poverty and systemic racism. We collected donations from our congregation and neighbors, collecting more than \$12,000 to support the operations of the St. Peter's Food Cupboard. Also in March, we welcomed three guest speakers

who shared their expertise: Glenn Bergman, former executive director of Philabundance; Ann Rice Burgess and Kyle Evans from Episcopal Community Services; and Valerie Erwin of Farm to Families.

### **Bishop's Visit with Confirmations & Receptions**

On April 6, the Rt. Reverend Daniel G. P. Gutiérrez, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania, worshiped with us at St. Peter's. Together we celebrated as 16 people were confirmed and four people were received into the Episcopal Church.

### **Arrival of New Rector**

In April, St. Peter's announced that the Rev. Laurie Jean Wurm had accepted the call to become the 22nd Rector of St. Peter's Church. Rev. Laurie, formerly the rector of Grace Church Van Vorst in Jersey City, officially began her ministry with us on August 5. In September and October, Rev. Laurie held a series of events and one-on-one meetings to get to know parishioners here at St. Peter's.

### **Choir Mass & Evensongs**

In addition to the beautiful music at Sunday services, the St. Peter's Choir performed Schubert's Mass in G with organ and strings at a special concert on April 27. The St. Peter's Choir also partnered with the choir at the Church of the Holy Trinity Rittenhouse to present two Evensongs: one on February 5 at Church off the Holy Trinity and one on All Souls' Day November 2 at St. Peter's.

### **Social Justice Discernment Group**

Our Social Justice Discernment Group (SJDG) continued to meet monthly, where its members focused on four main justice issues: immigration, LGBTQIA+ rights, healthcare and women's reproductive rights, and food sovereignty. Each meeting provides spiritual engagement in addressing Social Justice as well as action planning. An offshoot of the SJDG called St. Peter's Prays With Our Feet organized this year, providing a way for parishioners to participate in direct actions, protests, and marches including the Hands Off March in April and the No Kings Rally in June. Highlights of the year include participating in the Clare Project, a program that assists those who are unsheltered and facing substance abuse in Kensington, an immigration clinic led by parishioner Kat Voit that assisted immigrant survivors of partner violence stabilize their immigration status, monthly social/supportive gatherings for our LGBTQIA community, and addressing cuts to SNAP funding in association with the Crossroads Womens' Center in Germantown.

### **LGBTQ+ Support**

St. Peter's showed its ongoing support and solidarity with the LGBTQ+ community by once again participating in the Pride Festival in June and OURfest in October, sponsoring a table with other local Episcopal churches. During Pride Month, we welcomed Balena Canto to a worship service for a Drag Queen Story Hour (Balena's 6th annual appearance!). St. Peter's also hosted a three-part series Exploring Queer Theology in May and formed an LGBTQ+ Fellowship Group.

### **Churchyard Gravestone Repairs**

This summer, Building Conservation Associates (BCA), a historic preservation company in Old City, repaired 21 grave markers in St. Peter's Churchyard. BCA offered its services pro-bono, focusing on those grave markers that were severely deteriorated, broken, or pushed over. St. Peter's is grateful for this work, led by BCA director (and our neighbor) Dorothy Krotzer and her team.

### **Facilities Study of St. Peter's Campus**

The Property Committee led the effort to obtain a facilities study of our entire church campus. After soliciting request for proposals, the Vestry selected Voith & Mactavish Architects to do the work. This structural survey will provide St. Peter's with a comprehensive report illustrating the existing conditions of all church facilities, buildings, and building systems, and will itemize those that might require maintenance or capital improvements.

### **Creation Season**

St. Peter's kicked off its annual observation of Creation Season with a Blessing of the Animals on October 5. Rev. Sarah shared stories from the life of St. Francis and explored what they have to say to us today at an Adult Forum in October, while Rev. Laurie led a Wednesday "Creation Morning Prayer" on Zoom, exploring Biblical stories related to our natural world.

### **Commemorating our Nation's 250th**

This fall, Philadelphia celebrated the 250th anniversary of the founding of the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps. As St. Peter's had many ties to the monumental events of those days, the St. Peter's History Committee prepared a special printed guide that identifies the resting places of 14 Revolutionary War soldiers, sailors, and marines. This pamphlet was made available to church visitors, and also part of our annual public event, the Churchyard Challenge.

### **Memorial Garden Renovations**

The work that began in October 2024 to refresh and restore the Memorial Garden (located just north of the church along the Pine Street wall) was completed this year. This spring, a landscape company re-laid stones and pathways in the garden, extended a walking path, and installed iron stanchions and a temporary irrigation system. The garden was weeded, mulched, and new shade-loving plants now fill the space. A granite bench was installed on the northeast side of the obelisk. In November, the parish gathered for a Memorial Garden Blessing to celebrate the work, made possible through generous donations by parishioners, neighbors, and those with loved ones resting in the garden.

### **Food Cupboard**

The St. Peter's Food Cupboard saw an increase in the number of clients this year, especially in the fall during the federal government shutdown and restrictions to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. Parishioners, neighbors, and friends responded with an outpouring of support for the St. Peter's Food Cupboard. In November and December, the Food Cupboard received 66 donations totaling more than \$15,000. We also received additional food deliveries from Philabundance, and hundreds of shelf-stable goods from community food drives, including 1,300 items from a drive at SavATree, organized by parishioner Tyler Willis.

### **Stewardship Campaign**

Our fall Stewardship Campaign was guided by the theme: "Filled with the Spirit!" Rev. Laurie invited parishioners this year to think about stewardship as a spiritual practice, focusing not just on our financial contributions, but our gifts of time and talents. We ended the year with 146 pledges for 2026, totaling \$458,483, including 10 new pledgers.

### **Intergenerational Events**

Our congregation gathered together many times this year for events that spanned generations, bringing congregants of all ages together. It was a full house in the parlor of the Parish House for our Shrove Pancake Breakfast on March 2, where our youth group manned the kitchen and pancake griddles. Our community Easter Egg Hunt and reception had a record number of attendees, and our annual Sundae Sunday event was enjoyed by all. Our summer concerts in June and July drew big crowds of parishioners and neighbors. This Advent, all ages gathered to make Advent wreaths and calendars, and Rev. Laurie hosted a Christmas Party at her house in Collingswood.

### **Children, Youth & Families**

At our Family Worship Service, young children and their families learned about God's love in many different ways: we heard about Martin Luther King Jr. and made a peace tree; we created Valentines for people in our congregation; we learned how Jesus fed people; we acted out creation Bible stories; and we remembered the saints of the church and the special saints in our lives. Our Sunday School, which is held during the 11 AM Worship Service, launched a new curriculum called "Path to Peace with God" that explores how we live in peace with God and welcome all kinds of people and all of creation. Children and youth also participated in our annual Shrove Sunday Pancake Breakfast, Easter Egg Hunt, and our Christmas Children's Pageant.

### **New and Continuing Ministries**

2025 saw the first meeting of our newly formed LGBTQ+ Fellowship Group. Also this year marked the start of a Craft Hangout group and our Transgender, Non-Binary, Gender Expansive Dinners (now known as Unity Dinners). Many other long-running ministries continued their good work, too numerous to list here. More than 30 ministry groups shared information and recruited new members at our annual Ministry Fair in November.

### **Adult Education & Spiritual Growth**

Many parishioners participated in a 10-week course titled "Why Church?" to explore the vital connection between individual discipleship and church belonging. During Lent, St. Peter's partnered with Christ Church to offer a Wednesday evening supper group to discuss the book "Healing Our Broken Humanity." During Advent, St. Peter's offered a Sunday morning series titled "The Will to Dream" that invited us to explore prophetic imagination. Also during Advent, parishioners participated in a Wednesday dinner and forum exploring the idea of God's final judgment.

# 2025 Financial Report

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>2025 Actual*</u>	<u>Balance</u>	
<b>Revenue - General Operating Fund</b>				
Contributions Pledged	\$ 440,000.00	\$ 448,882.00	\$ 8,882.00	
Plate, Easter, etc.	3,500.00	28,033.00	\$ 24,533.00	
<b>Contributions</b>	<b>443,500.00</b>	<b>476,915.00</b>	<b>33,415.00</b>	
Routine Transfers from Endowment Funds	259,620.00	259,620.00	\$ -	
Earned Income**	120,200.00	124,004.00	\$ 3,804.00	
<b>Total Operating Revenue</b>	<b>823,320.00</b>	<b>860,539.00</b>	<b>37,219.00</b>	
<b>Expenses - General Operating Fund</b>				
Clergy***	248,285.00	253,442.00	(5,157.00)	<i>Rectors' Salary &amp; Benefits plus Expense Accounts, Professional Expenses/Continuing Ed, etc.</i>
Music	116,083.00	118,626.00	(2,543.00)	<i>Choirmaster, Organist, Paid Singers, Sub Organists, Supplies, Librarian</i>
Education & Fellowship	15,004.00	14,952.00	52.00	<i>Adult Ed, Children's Ministries, Youth Group, Welcoming Ministry, TNT, Sages, History, Hospitality &amp; Fellowship, Intergenerational Special Events, Pastoral Care</i>
Outreach/Missions	71,200.00	74,310.00	(3,110.00)	<i>Social Justice; Diocesan Sacred Ask</i>
Communications & Development	70,325.00	69,142.00	1,183.00	<i>Communications &amp; Marketing, Vestry Retreat</i>
Administration	222,130.00	224,012.00	(1,882.00)	<i>Admin staff, insurance, office supplies, IT, Audit, Prof Services</i>
Property**	97,654.00	121,502.00	(23,848.00)	<i>Sexton, Utilities, Repairs &amp; Maintenance</i>
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>840,681.00</b>	<b>875,986.00</b>	<b>(35,305.00)</b>	
<b>Net Operating Income (Loss)</b>	<b>(17,361.00)</b>	<b>(15,447.00)</b>		
<b>Other Expenses</b> (non operating--search/profile; capital/property)	-	\$ 2,623.00	\$ -	<i>Includes Search &amp; Profile Committee Expenses</i>
<b>Total Net Income/Loss</b>	<b>(17,361.00)</b>	<b>(18,070.00)</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	
ERTC Funds Received		164,383.00		
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>146,313.00</b>		<i>To be used to offset projected 2026 deficit</i>

\* As of December 31  
 \*\* Unanticipated Property expenses included:  
     *Replacement of hot water heater in church*  
     *Window Cleaning*  
     *Replacement of fire/security alarm system*  
     *Repairs to Organ*  
     *HVAC Repairs*

<b>SPC Special Funds FYE 25*</b>	General Endowment*	Food Cupboard	Buildings & Property	Building Fund (Keys Fund)**	Outreach & Special Initiatives***
<b>Fund Balances 01/01/2025</b>	<b>5,151,042</b>	<b>63,490</b>	<b>80,721</b>	<b>3,004,939</b>	<b>36,949</b>
Revenues 2025	830,941	43,394	26,452	73,587	0
Expenses 2025	259,620	18,642	12,173	200,000	0
<b>Net Total</b>	<b>571,321</b>	<b>24,752</b>	<b>14,279</b>	<b>(126,413)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Ending Balances 12/31/2025</b>	<b>5,722,363</b>	<b>88,242</b>	<b>95,000</b>	<b>2,878,526</b>	<b>36,949</b>

\* As of December 31  
 \*\* Pledges Returned at Request of Donors  
 \*\*\* Includes Anderson Bequest & Refugee Fund