

## **St. Peter's, Eggertsville**

### **What are some significant moments in the history of your church that have shaped its identity today?**

We began as a small mission church in 1953 in the Post-WWII expansion period of our WNY Diocese, with Deacon Richard Duncan as its spiritual leader. The "church" started in the small house in the northeast portion of our property, which is currently the home to our Threads of Hope Linen Pantry.

Our Golden Anniversary was celebrated in 2003 with Bishop Michael Garrison in attendance. Rev. Jerre Feagin and Rev. Barbara Price led us into the a new millennium, with an inspired Spirit of outreach that defined us. Our first Deacon, Rev. Thomas Tripp, was ordained in 2007, and was later followed by Deacons Joanne Coury Frake and Diana Leiker.

We are currently conducting our first Capital Campaign in order to repair an aging roof and boiler, restore our organ, and install an LED outside sign to better communicate our virtues and activities to the surrounding community.

### **What makes your church unique in the region and the diocese?**

A wooden sign that adorns the space above the Nave entrance to greet people, sums up much of the character of St. Peter's throughout the years. It reads: "Hospitality-Generosity-Simplicity."

To the best of our knowledge, our Threads of Hope Linen Pantry is the only one of its kind in WNY. It has served over 60 agencies in our area of service.

For the size and attendance of St. Peter's, we feel we we have a sizeable and impactful outreach identity, which we will outline later.

### **What are the most vibrant ministries or strengths of your parish today?**

In the past, St. Peter's has hosted an after-school program for the Eggertsville Community, supported schools in back-pack drives, and hosted community events such as movie nights, peach festivals, and summer lawn sales, complete with hot dogs and book sales. Currently we host outside groups to include a Sewing Club, Bottle Club and offices of Parish Nurse Ministries of New York, Inc.

Our Health Committee sponsors Flu Shot Clinics, Narcan training, and AED training with CPR re-certification.

Our deacon-led ministries include Refugee Ministries partnering with Vive La Casa (now Jericho Road), Journey's End, and Jewish Family Services. The church has supported Prison Ministry with Collins Christian Ministries. Most recently we are supporting Buffalo homeless peoples with St. Paul's Cathedral, and supporting Harvest House by collecting personal care baby items.

As a result of Covid, we started a "Blessing Box" ministry, supported by parishioners, in order to help feed those who struggle with going hungry.

**Describe a moment in your community's life when you felt the presence of the Holy Spirit moving among you. What made that moment possible?**

Our often-mentioned Linen Pantry was begun over 20 years ago by a parishioner who was inspired by a dream. The rest of the church responded in kind to make it come true. We have twice run a Gift Discernments exercise in the parish in which the Spirit led personnel to being "called" to serve in both clergy and laity capacities.

Many of those in attendance felt the presence of the Spirit while enrolled in programs such as Sacred Ground or Racial Healing Circles.

We all may have encountered the Spirit during and after the Covid Pandemic, in order to foster hope, and maintain faith in a trying time. The idea for our Blessing Box came out of that encounter.

**How does your church engage with the local neighborhood, the civic life of your community, or diocesan and/or Episcopal Church-wide initiatives?**

St. Peter's has always been keenly aware of our surrounding community-its makeup and its needs. We try to invite the community into our parish events, and hope that our future LED sign will increase and its knowledge of what we do, and what a good neighbor we can be for them.

Besides occasional events, we have been maintaining a "Blessing Box" on our property to provide food to those that may need it.

**What are the hopes and dreams of your congregation for its next chapter?**

Our fervent hope is that the Holy Spirit never leaves us as we continue to live our lives through the Gospel teachings, even in more trying times as these. We plan to continue the "trinity" of that wooden plaque:

Hospitality- welcome the strangers

Generosity- of time, skills, funds

Simplicity- love God, love our neighbors; God loves you-no exceptions