



ST. PETER'S
EPISCOPAL
CHURCH

302 MERCHANTS AVE.
FORT ATKINSON, WI 920-563-3889



FROM THE DESK OF MOTHER MINDY

Dear St. Peter's Community,

It has been a whirlwind couple of months. We have had so many exiting things happen! One of the top things on the list for me is the success of the Cookie Cupboard. The end total for what we earned was a smidge over \$3,000! That is amazing considering all the advertising that we did was free—we created an event on Facebook, advertised on the Chamber website, and had many “regulars” who are used to looking for us the same day as the Winter Market. The participation of the St. Peter's community made this happen. Thank you again to Jolene, Ellen, and Barb for coordinating. Thank you to Georgia and her “helper elves” that assisted her in making jellies and pickles in spite of a bum leg! Thank you to Breck, Laurie, Bob, and Bill for helping set up, and to Laurie for providing the “seed money” for change. A huge thank you to those who packaged cookies and to those who baked. This is really a major undertaking and it happened because our church worked together to make it happen.



Another activity that happened was the children of the parish got together and made their treasure boxes. There are activities in their boxes, writing and coloring utensils, and the children's bulletins. When children show up to church, they can grab their box and their bulletin for worship. Their coloring and crafting is a form of worship and you would be surprised how much of the Mass those little ears hear.

Continued on page 2



The packaging of the dozens of cookies in the undercroft. From L to R: Terrie, Nancy, Angie, Jane, Eda, and Joleen

celebrate!

On Sunday, February 6, 2022
Bishop Jeff Lee will
receive John Michael Donohue
as an official member of the
Episcopal Church during
the 8:00 AM Mass at
Zion Episcopal Church in Oconomowoc.

Please pray for John as he makes this
commitment and celebrate
John becoming an Episcopalian!

We also had a wonderful work day after service the last Sunday of Advent. We had some diligent volunteers changing the altar linens, cleaning pews, polishing brass, vacuuming, and other assorted tasks. Thank you again to all who stayed to help! A huge thank you to Judy and Scott Fernhaber for greening the church beautifully as well. It looked gorgeous at Christmas!

During Advent, we had an ecumenical study and had four churches represented! Pastor Sarah Rabe from First Congregational and I led the morning sessions and I took the evening sessions via Zoom.

It was wonderful to be able to meet together and get perspectives of our other Christian brothers and sisters. I'm hoping we can do a Lenten study together using the same format.



Volunteers polish the altar brass. From L to R: Jess, Izzie, Brigid, Ginny, Eda, and Sue

December saw St. Peter's work the Fort Atkinson Food Pantry once again. We had new participation from members and also welcomed back part of our Food Pantry "Dream Team," Amy and Karen. Although Amy and Karen are not members of St. Peter's, they have been working with us as long as I've been a part of St. Peter's and I am grateful for their service. Please join me in offering a huge thank you to Laurie McHenry for coordinating our service. A huge thank you and shout out to the McHenry kids for helping right after Christmas as well! Please keep open Monday and Thursday afternoons in June, as that is our next month to serve at the Food Pantry.



During my installation in November, we recognized the service of Barb Werner as our Parish Administrator. Barb is an amazing admin. She is dedicated to her role and does so much more than what is expected. She truly is an amazing asset to our church. If you have any stories of how Barb has touched you in her job and ministry at St. Peter's, I would encourage you to share those stories with her.



I continue my work with the Homeless Coalition as Co-President of the Board of Directors. That has kept me very busy. I have informed the board that I am stepping down as Co-President in order to focus more on projects here at church, namely the Agape Self-Care Ministry. As you will see in the Vestry Minutes, the Homeless Coalition is embarking on a Capital Campaign to raise \$200,000. If the coalition raises \$50,000, the Fort Community Foundation will match that with \$100,000. That means we have a 2:1 match! I would love to send a generous check from St. Peter's. If you have the means to give to the Homeless Coalition, I would encourage you to write a check to St. Peter's with Homeless Coalition on the memo line. We will send one check to the coalition mid February. As a reminder, I know I've been busy, but I am never too busy for you. You all mean the world to me.

Blessings, Mother Mindy

LAY EUCHARISTIC LEADERS SCHEDULE

JANUARY 16

10:00 AM IN-PERSON & LIVESTREAM

Lector: Terrie Knox

AV Technician: Breck

Acolyte: Bill Cannon

Usher: Scott Fernhaber

JANUARY 23

10:00 AM IN-PERSON & LIVESTREAM

Lector: Randy Ridout

AV Technician: Bob Krumm

Acolyte: Bill Cannon

Usher: Scott Fernhaber

JANUARY 30

10:00 AM IN-PERSON & LIVESTREAM

Lector: John Donohue

AV Technician: Michael Bills

Acolyte: Bill Cannon

Usher: Scott Fernhaber

FEBRUARY 6

10:00 AM IN-PERSON & LIVESTREAM

Lector: Terrie Knox

AV Technician: Breck

Acolyte: Bill Cannon

Usher: Scott Fernhaber

FEBRUARY 13

10:00 AM IN-PERSON & LIVESTREAM

Lector: Bev Wille

AV Technician: Bob

Acolyte: Bill Cannon

Usher: Scott Fernhaber

FEBRUARY 20

10:00 AM IN-PERSON & LIVESTREAM

Lector: Eda Wilson

AV Technician: Michael

Acolyte: Bill Cannon

Usher: Scott Fernhaber

ACTIVITIES AT ST. PETER'S

Monday–Friday 8:00 AM

Morning Prayer in the Gathering Room

Sunday, January 16

10:00 AM Sunday Worship

In-Person and Live Streamed on YouTube

(Masks Required inside the church)

5:00 PM Evening Prayer

Premieres on YouTube

Vestry Meeting

Tuesday, January 18, 2022

6:00 PM on ZOOM

Sunday, January 23

10:00 AM Sunday Worship

In-Person and Live Streamed on YouTube

(Masks Required inside the church)

Sunday, January 30

10:00 AM Sunday Worship

In-Person and Live Streamed on YouTube

(Masks Required inside the church)

Sunday, February 6

10:00 AM Sunday Worship

In-Person and Live Streamed on YouTube

(Masks Required inside the church)

5:00 PM Evening Prayer

Premieres on YouTube

Sunday, February 13

10:00 AM Sunday Worship

In-Person and Live Streamed on YouTube

(Masks Required inside the church)

5:00 PM Evening Prayer

Premieres on YouTube



Consider Putting the Way of Jesus First as We Race Into 2022 by Dr. Tom Sine

In 2020s Foresight: Three Vital Practices for Thriving in a Decade of Accelerating Change, Dwight Friesen and I document that we are likely to see a concerning decline in levels of church participation in attendance, giving and caring for our neighbors during this destructive pandemic. As you know this concerning trend is already happening in many of our congregations, neighborhoods and our lives.

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry offers a prescription that addresses this very concerning decline participation in many of our churches and our lives.

Why don't you consider forming a small group in your congregation to explore how to change our lives to "Live and Act More Like Jesus" in 2022?

"By God's grace ...

... WE ARE BECOMING A CHURCH THAT LOOKS AND ACTS LIKE JESUS.

What does this re-formation look like in practice?

We'll know we're moving forward when we...

Center on Jesus Christ. His teachings, his example, his Spirit, his way of love and his way of life are the key to having loving, liberating and life-giving relationships with God, our neighbors, all of creation, and ourselves.

Practice the selfless, self-giving way of the cross. The way of "cruciform love"—Jesus' act of unselfish, sacrificial, self-offering love, or losing one's life in order to gain it— is our way to authentic life.

Unite around the practice of a rule of life in small gathered communities. These kinds of groups—small circles of people who support each other in following Jesus with intention and accountability— are necessary for cultivating Christ-centered life.

Reclaim our Christian identity as a Spirit-driven, countercultural, underground movement. We must break free of the church's identification with domination systems, empire, establishment, privilege, and social and cultural traditions that have held us captive— and get back in touch with the risk-taking, liberating ways of Jesus.

Live and bear bold witness to the vision and values of Jesus. We point to the reality of the kingdom (the peaceable reign) of God, and we seek to embody the beloved community, where each person strives for and celebrates the dignity and flourishing of every beloved child of God as much as we do for ourselves."

Christine and I are headed out to our retreat site January 2022, like we do every January, to discern God's rule for our life for this challenging new year. Why don't you embrace Bishop Michael Curry's invitation to create a small group in your Episcopal church to create a new way of living in 2022 "That Looks and Acts Like Jesus"?

Source: <https://www.episcopalcafe.com/the-way-of-jesus-2022/>

I found the following poem in my spiritual folder while I was looking for resources for sermon preparation last week. The poem is from God's perspective and speaks of the waters of baptism. As the First Sunday after the Epiphany is the Baptism of Our Lord, I thought it was most appropriate, so I tracked down the Rev. Rachel Wildman and requested permission to share it with you. I pray that it touches your heart the way it touches mine.—Mother Mindy

This Water, My Spirit



- ◇ This water is not meant to change you into a different person; for the person of you is *exactly* who I need.
- ◇ This water is not meant to mark you as “in” and , therefore, others as “out”, for everyone is “in” to me.
- ◇ This water is not meant to shame you and exorcise a part of you that some may have told you is unacceptable to me; for shame is not of me, and inhibits you from accepting my deep, abiding love for you, a love that I have had for you from all time; No.
- ◇ This water, through my spirit, is meant to embolden you; to set you afire; to inspire you.
- ◇ This water, through my spirit, is meant to invite you to remember who you already are *and* who you are becoming;
- ◇ This water, through my spirit, is meant to join you to my people, my mission, my love.
- ◇ This water, through my spirit, is meant to make you insatiably curious about me and, therefore, about yourself.
- ◇ This water, though my spirit, is meant to make you known—to yourself and to my people—as my creation.
- ◇ This water, through my spirit, is meant to free you to explore the unique constellation of gifts I have given you and the passions that result from those gifts.
- ◇ This water, through my spirit, is meant to transform; so that you may see me, hear me, feel me, speak me, and follow me.
- ◇ This water, through my spirit, is meant to bathe you in hope.
- ◇ This water, through my spirit, is meant to help you accept that I AM, and that I AM DOING, that YOU CAN DO with me, and that I CALL YOU to do with me.
- ◇ This water, through my spirit, is meant to reveal the truth—My Kingdom is at hand; you are already a member; you need just discover it, uncover it, make your home here.

THE LITTLE LIGHT WE CARRY

- By: Emily Meeks

I am not prepared for the darkness.

Our group gathers at base camp for an oxygen check and snacks before our final ascent to Uhuru Peak, Kilimanjaro's summit. My stomach is knotted and roiling. I have no interest in energy cookies.

There is not just one single path to summit Kilimanjaro, and most, including our route, Rongai, require a middle of the night final push. You attempt to fall asleep before the sun sets so you can rise in darkness. I trained for the mileage, weight and altitude, but I have not yet climbed in darkness. "*Pole, Pole,*" go slowly in Swahili, the guides say but it is not a pace I know.

It grows colder as we climb. I see people with the glossy look of altitude sickness. I wonder whether I will join them and not make it. My water, sunscreen and emergency chocolate are starting to freeze. I love hiking because it expands my view but this feels like I am in a tunnel of darkness. I don't know how to escape.

I slow my breath. I start praying – for the women in my bible study, for my marriage, for my stomach, for unanswered questions about work, for my next step – for anything that comes to mind. *God, will you come close?* Ahead, head lamps dot switchbacks that seem to connect to the sky, forming a constellation of climbers ascending into midnight. "*O come.... all ye faithful....joyful and triumphant.*"

It's October, I am in Tanzania on a mountain with every part of my body wrapped in puffy layers – what am I hearing? "*O come, let us adore Him. O come , let us adore Him.*"

I look up and around – it's coming from a switchback above – the Christmas hymn I have loved since I was a child. I listen and let the words encircle me.

Our skyscape expands and reveals two celestial gems – a shooting star and a sliver of orange moon. My steps are the same measure, but I feel a change begin inside – *I may be able to do this.*

My husband moves up beside me, from his assigned place at the back of our trekking line. He puts his gloved hand on my shoulder. We climb higher, together, and I can feel more of the heaviness subside and my stomach settling as we navigate the silhouettes of people, snow and rock. I talk more and feel new energy to encourage others in our group.

At Gilman's Point, shadows fold into soft hues of purple and gray, light begins breaking forth and I *know* – I, we, are going to make it as we warm ourselves with sips of hot tea. The crater rim takes us inward to Stella's Point with pinks, oranges, reds and blues emerging over Tanzania and Kenya. The wind picks up and pellets of ice ping skin not covered by a buff. Snow changes out the colorful sky, and we walk through blowing flakes and flurries. We stand at 19,341 feet on Africa's highest free-standing peak. We exchange mitten high-fives and start our return – the conditions are changing.

Now it is Christmas Eve and we show our vaccination cards to check in for a pew at Saint Mark's. We pick up bulletins and little candles that will light our way through Silent Night.

The processional music starts, and I look up and around at the lights and the greenery. Last year, there were no pews, just an empty nave livestreamed as we navigated our first Christmas in a pandemic. We are more informed but still in the throes of the uncertainty of a variant's unpredictable ways. We have faithfully wandered here together on this night to experience the promise of Christmas, of God dwelling with us. "*O come.... all ye faithful....joyful and triumphant.*"

The opening hymn starts. I am reminded of a glacier, a shooting star, a sliver of orange moon and a loving gesture. Standing here in pews with my faith community feels like light in the darkness.

At our wedding, one of the readings was from Henri Nouwen: "Often we want to be able to see into the future. We say, "How will next year be for me? Where will I be five or ten years from now?" There are no clear answers to these questions. *Mostly we have just enough light to see the next step: what we have to do in the coming hour or the following day.*

Continued on page 7

Continued from page 6

The art of living is to enjoy what we can see and not complain about what remains in the dark. When we are able to take the next step with trust that we will have enough light for the step that follows, we can walk through life with joy and be surprised at how far we go. Let's rejoice in the little light we carry and not ask for the great beam that would take all shadows away."

It reads quite nicely in a wedding ceremony but practicing it under the layers and the weight of life can feel harder, especially to someone like me who prefers being in control of each step. It requires dependence to hold and rejoice in the little light we already carry within us.

I long to look for and recognize God's light in others, in creation and in myself to help stand in places I never thought possible.

Emily Meeks loves finding adventure and connection outside, especially while running, biking, hiking and kayaking. She attends and serves at Saint Mark's Cathedral in Seattle.

Source: <https://www.episcopalcafe.com/the-little-light-we-carry/>

PRAYERS

- **Parishioner Cycle of Prayer** - Pat Dillon
- **Ministry Rotation Prayer** - The Evangelism Committee
- **For those who are sick:** Bob & Kitty Martin, Jerry Swanson, Jack Schark, Gary, Vickie, Charlie, Kristin, Steve, Steven
- **Happy Birthday:** Spencer Davis, Tim Marks, Jim Mode, Duncan Osgood
- **Prayer for difficult times (coronavirus)**



SENIOR SPOTLIGHT

Our Chorister, Molly Wanless, is a Senior at UW-Whitewater. This year she is completing her B.M. in Vocal Performance with a Spanish minor. Molly has performed in many UWW theater productions, including The Addams

Family (Wednesday) and Triumph of Love (Leonide). Molly has been singing with St. Peter's Episcopal church since the fall of 2019 and she is so grateful for the St. Peter's community for their kindness and support throughout these years! Next year Molly will be attending an out-of-state graduate school program to further her educational/performance experience.

Please join me in thanking Molly for her service and vocal talents!
-Mother Mindy

HAPPY NEW YEAR! (anonymous)

Good morning, and welcome to Flight 2022. We are prepared to take off into the New Year. Please make sure your Positive Attitude and Gratitude are secured and locked in the upright position.

All self-destruct devices: pity, anger, selfishness and resentment, should be turned off at this time.

All negativity, hurt and discouragement should be put away.

Should you lose your Positive Attitude under pressure during this flight, reach up and pull down a prayer. Prayers will automatically be activated by Faith. Once your Faith is activated, you can assist other passengers who are of little faith.

There will BE NO BAGGAGE allowed on this flight. God, our Captain has cleared us for take-off. Destination – GREATNESS!

Wishing you a New Year filled with new
HOPE, new JOY and new
BEGINNINGS! ❤️ □ ❤️ □ Stay Blessed! And
welcome to 2022!!! ✈️ □

St. Peter's Vestry Meeting (On Zoom)

November 17, 2021



Present: Scott Fernhaber, Bill Cannon, Breck McHenry, Bev Wille, Ginny Laurent, Bob Krumm, Matt Bills

1. **Check-ins** – Mother Mindy asked people to use 3 descriptive words, and to state what they are looking forward to in the life of the church.

2. **Business**

a. Budget – the 2022 proposed budget was presented. Discussion followed. Mother Mindy showed a screen with Current Assets, compared to a year ago. She explained what the Auxiliary Fund is and how it came to be. Restricted Endowment is now at 1.3 million. Current Assets are 1.8 million. Bill pointed out that gains in the market are only on paper, unless we cash them out. Also, we were reminded that “What goes up must come down”. Matt asked about who manages the investments in the Premier Bank Endowment. Laurie was asked to explain the budget. We have an \$80,000. Deficit. Finance committee recommended drawing money out of the Auxiliary Fund. There are some major expenses, \$23,000. Budgeted for the rectory. \$10,000. For the Undercroft along with the \$8,000. that came from insurance for repairs on the basement, Furnaces are on the Budget as well, but may be able to wait until they break down. Matt said that energy efficiency issues may be a motivation to get them done sooner than later...especially with energy prices rising. Scott says the payoff of a more efficient furnace takes a long time to realize...years. Scott – if we wait until they go bad, we could pay as much as twice to three times as it would cost to do it proactively. The proposal is to get 1 to replace 2, and get AC for the undercroft. Brian’s perspective was to wait until we actually need it replaced. It was suggested that we should get the furnaces assessed. At the time Badger Basement did the work on the Undercroft it was found that 2 out of three AC Units. Bill said we should replace them, and Bev reminded us that it would be wise to do the things we need to do to take care of our building. Supply chain issues are another factor...could have to upgrade and pay more. Ginny also believes in being proactive. The Finance Committee deferred to the Vestry to make that decision. Laurie agreed. Choir is budgeted at \$10,000. But there is no fundraiser to add to that. So, it is coming out the operating expenses. Other changes in budget: Barb’s wages would increase slightly, and includes a week of vacation and holiday pay. Shawn’s salary increases slightly as well. The budget will be voted on in December. The finance Committee thinks that we won’t have that full \$80,000. Deficit. Probably more like 60,000. And they recommended it come from the Auxiliary fund. Matt suggested that we make a motion to not exceed 60,000. He also has some ideas about possible revenue streams. Scott believes there is a good chance that we will reach our anticipated contributions that we budgeted for 2021. However, we all need to prayerfully consider how we can increase our financial giving from the congregation.

b. Undercroft – JM carpet came in and looked at the space. Because we are on a slab we need something *breathable*. His recommendation is the type of linoleum tile that is down there, but updated with color and patterns. He also recommends a) removing the asbestos tile, or b) encapsulate it. We did get a remediation quote of \$4,000. From one company. There is a discrepancy in the message from J&M Carpet about whether or not carpeting is an option. Breck said that in a recent conversation he was told that the carpet squares would be ok. Other options for opinions on that were discussed. Scott said, first deal with the asbestos. Then decide what type of flooring. Where is the Asbestos? In the closets in the Undercroft, it is also under

the carpet, Tile in the kitchen is asbestos free. MM asked about how to proceed. Matt pointed out that the company that gave us the quote is a Serve-Pro company, and he is not comfortable with their expertise. He thinks they may have low-balled us. May need to get a few more quotes from both a remediation company and a flooring company. Breck will put in some more requests for having companies come in to give a quote. It may take them a while, but we don't have a deadline. Bob said he would like to have a company whose specialty is to do the remediation.

c. Any more Questions? Bob needs to be gone this Sunday and is on the usher. Matt will usher this Sunday. Mother Mindy Thanked everyone for the Service they offer by being on the Vestry. Mother Mindy closed in prayer.

Bill motioned to adjourn, Ginny Seconded. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted, Barbara Werner

St. Peter's Vestry Meeting Minutes
December 15, 2021 (On Zoom)

Present: Mother Mindy Valentine Davis, Scott Fernhaber, Breck McHenry, Laurie McHenry, Bob Krumm, Bill Cannon, Ginny Laurent, Bev Wille

Absent: Matt Bills

Prayer: Mother Mindy opened with prayer.

Check-ins:

Minutes: a few typos to be fixed but content accurate. Bill moved to approve and was seconded by Ginny. No discussion, all in favor.

Financial Report: In the last few weeks, a lot of the pledged money for 2021 came in as often happens at the end of the year.

We also received a very generous \$30,000 memorial check.

Agreed to increase the budget to \$170,000 for 2022. As was agreed to last meeting, if we have a shortfall, we will get it from the Auxiliary Fund, not to exceed \$60,000. Bill moved to approve the budget as currently amended, Scott seconded. Discussion followed. Vote was taken, all were in favor.

Bishop's Visit – The original date given us was in January, but Mother Mindy will be on her trip. Two new dates were offered, July 24 or 31st. Ginny asked if at that time will there be two services. It is an unknown, but a possibility.

Outreach Funds – Mother Mindy asked if anyone knows of needs that the Outreach funds should go to. She asked if the church could send a contribution to the Homeless Coalition which is raising money to purchase transitional housing. IF they raise \$50,000, the Fort Atkinson Foundation will match it by \$100,000. Breck suggested we give \$1,000. Discussion followed. We can be pretty sure there won't a pancake supper. Outreach funds are at \$9,188. We can ask church member ship to match funds sent by the church. Breck made motion that St. Peters donates \$1000 from Outreach to the Homeless Coalition and also to encourage congregation members to provide donations to increase that number. Ginny seconded the motion. NO discussion. All were in favor.

(Continued on page 10)

Docile Curtain – It should be taken down and cleaned and restored. It needs to be given a rest...which means that hanging can be stressful for it. It has stretched by its own weight. It was agreed to do this after Christmas since it is so beautiful with our Christmas colors. Bill suggested the Chicago Institute of arts. Milo and Cole should be consulted. Bev looked up another company, the Chicago conservation center. Scott offered to talk to Cole or Milo about it.

PTZ camera – still in China, backordered.

Buildings and Grounds – Breck has received 3 figures for asbestos abatement. The range from \$2,400 – \$8,800. This is from RG Environmental. Discussion followed. It was also proposed to reconsider Serve Pro that originally tested and gave a quote a month or so back. Mother Mindy asked Breck who he feels most comfortable with doing the job. He said RG Environmental. No one is opposed, and agrees that Breck should go ahead and hire them. Most likely this would take place in January or February.

Rector's Report – Mother Mindy is so proud of St. Peter's and so appreciative of everyone. The Cookie Cupboard was just amazing.

Any questions, reports, suggestions: Ginny asked if any of the asbestos will get into any part of the church. Breck assured that they have a very rigorous process to make sure it doesn't get into ductwork or through any other means.

Housing Allowance: \$1,000. Bill moved and Bob seconded. No discussion, all in favor.

Bev moved to adjourned and Bob seconded. All in favor. Meeting ended at 7:07

Respectfully submitted, Barbara Werner

SARAH, THEODORA, AND SYNCLETICA OF EGYPT—"DESERT MOTHERS", 4th - 5th c.

The **Desert Mothers** were female Christian ascetics living in the desert of Egypt, Palestine, and Syria in the 4th and 5th centuries AD. They typically lived in the monastic communities that began forming during that time, though sometimes they lived as hermits. Other women from that era who influenced the early ascetic or monastic tradition while living outside the desert are also described as Desert Mothers.

The Desert Fathers are much more well known because most of the early lives of the saints "were written by men for a male monastic audience" – the occasional stories about the Desert Mothers come from the early Desert Fathers and their biographers. Many desert women had leadership roles within the Christian community. There are several chapters dedicated to the Desert Mothers in the *Lausiac History* by Palladius, who mentions 2,975 women living in the desert. Other sources include the various stories told over the years about the lives of saints of that era,



traditionally called *vitae* ("life"). The lives of twelve female desert saints are described in Book I of *Vitae Patrum* (*Lives of the Fathers*).

The Desert Mothers were known as *ammās* ("spiritual mothers"), comparable to the Desert Fathers (*abbas*), due to the respect they earned as spiritual teachers and directors. One of the most well known Desert Mothers was Amma Syncletica of Alexandria, who had twenty-seven sayings attributed to her in the *Apophthegmata Patrum*, or *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*. Two other *ammās*, Theodora of Alexandria and Amma Sarah of the Desert, also had sayings in that book.

According to written accounts, Amma Syncletica might have been born around AD 270 (since she died about AD 350 and is said to have lived to her eighties), to wealthy parents in Alexandria and was well educated, including an early study of the writings of Desert Father Evagrius Ponticus. After the death of her parents, she sold everything she had and gave the money to the poor. Moving outside the city with her blind sister, she lived as a hermit among the tombs outside of Alexandria. Gradually a community of women ascetics grew up around her, who she served as their spiritual mother. Even though she was an ascetic and hermit, Syncletica taught moderation, and that asceticism was not an end in itself.

Theodora of Alexandria was the *amma* of a monastic community of women near Alexandria. Prior to that, she had fled to the desert disguised as a man and joined a community of monks. She was sought out by many of the Desert Fathers for advice—reportedly Bishop Theophilus of Alexandria came to her for counsel.

Sarah of the Desert's sayings indicate that she was a hermit living by a river for sixty years. Her sharp replies to some of the old men who challenged her show a distinctly strong personality. According to one story, two male anchorites visited her in the desert and decided, "Let's humiliate this old woman." They said to her, "Be careful not to become conceited thinking to yourself: "Look how anchorites are coming to see me, a mere woman." She replied, "According to nature I am a woman, but not according to my thoughts."

Sayings:

- Amma Sarah said, "If I prayed God that all people should approve of my conduct, I should find myself a penitent at the door of each one, but I shall rather pray that my heart may be pure toward all."
- Amma Syncletica said, "In the beginning there are a great many battles and a good deal of suffering for those who are advancing towards God and afterwards, ineffable joy. It is like those who wish to light a fire; at first they are choked by the smoke and cry, and by this means obtain what they seek ... so we must also kindle the divine fire in ourselves through tears and hard work."
- Amma Syncletica said, "There are many who live in the mountains and behave as if they were in the town; they are wasting their time. It is possible to be a solitary in one's mind while living in a crowd; and it is possible for those who are solitaries to live in the crowd of their own thoughts."
- Amma Theodora said that neither asceticism, nor vigils, nor any kind of suffering are able to save. Only true humility can do that. There was a hermit who was able to banish the demons. And he asked them: "What makes you go away? Is it fasting?" They replied: "We do not eat or drink." "Is it vigils?" They said: "We do not sleep." "Then what power sends you away?" They replied: "Nothing can overcome us except humility alone." Amma Theodora said: "Do you see how humility is victorious over the demons?"

Source: http://www.satucket.com/lectionary/desert_mothers.html


January 2022 Newsletter

ST. PETER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

302 Merchants Avenue

Fort Atkinson, WI 53538

Return Service Requested

	ST. PETER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH	302 MERCHANTS AVE. FORT ATKINSON, WI 920-563-3889	office@stpetersfort.org www.stpetersfort.org Rector: Mother Mindy Valentine Davis
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

ST. PETER'S MISSION STATEMENT

To Lead Each Person into a Living Relationship with Jesus Christ,
Train Them as Disciples, and Make Jesus Known to Others.