Supporting Community: Cooking Meals in South Windsor

Article by Lindsey Davidson & photo by Rev. Ann Fraley both from St. Peter’s, S. Windsor

On February second, the kitchen at St. Peter’s in South Windsor was alive with activity. Fifteen parishioners and members of the community had come together to make freezer meals for families impacted by the government shutdown. Space was tight, but spirits were high as elbow to elbow vegetables were being chopped, meats seasoned and every bowl in the kitchen was in use.

Once the stove-top got fired up there were soon batches of vegetables, meat-sauces, taco meat and cooked vegetables ready to be bagged. The clever use of pressure cookers allowed for quick work in baking chicken for salsa chicken entrees, and microwave steamers in cooking up green beans and broccoli. In only three hours the group had prepped approximately 50 meals, each consisting of a pre-cooked meat portion, a pre-cooked vegetable side, and any boxed dried goods needed to create a home-made meal for four people. Meals prepared included tacos, fajitas, spaghetti with meat sauce, Asian chicken, and salsa chicken.

These meals will be distributed to families in the community around St. Peters who were affected by the government shut-down, and any extra meals will be distributed to other members of the community with a need. Many thanks to Susan Blazawski Mazur, a community member who works with Pampered Chef who did all the shopping, brought lots of supplies for prepping and cooking the meals, and who guided us through the recipes we used. And thanks also to St. Peter’s Rev. Ann Fraley who also brought over extra cooking supplies to use.

Keep reading for more exciting news from the Region!
Crafting As Spiritual Practice

The NE Region would like to invite you to a “Crafting As Spiritual Practice” Day on Saturday, March 30th! The event will take place at St. Mary’s, 41 Park Street, Manchester, from 9:30-2:00.

Click here to register

If you are a hand crafter, the Region encourages you to attend! Bring your portable handicrafts that don’t require electricity, and join us! St. Mary’s will provide coffee, tea, water, and sweets—we ask that you bring your own lunch! It could be like a picnic!

All levels of experience welcome. There will be technique stations, if learning something new is your thing. There will also be a swap table (feel free to bring any leftover crafting supplies that need a new home) and a show & tell table so bring your best project to show off! Of course, there will be ample time to craft in silence and bask in the wisdom of God showing up in Community.

Discipleship & Apostleship: Confrimands, Go!

Four parishes in the NE Region have brought their confirmands together to learn to be disciples and practice being apostles. Those parishes are St. Peter’s, Hebron; St. Mary’s, Manchester; St. John’s, Vernon & Trinity, Brooklyn. Below is a story of their adventure in Hartford, participating in Church By The Pond.

This provided an opportunity for the confirmands to see church done a different way, while helping supply much needed hygiene items!—Maggie Breen, NE Region Missionary

The NE Region confirmation class attended a Church By The Pond service at Bushnell Park that is offered to the homeless in Hartford in early February. It was a beautiful, if brisk, day filled with love and prayer as many faithful Episcopalians joined us in Bushnell Park. Our service was led by Father Taylor Albright, and priests and confirmation students from the NE Region assisted. During the service, we gave thanks to God for the people of Trinity, Tariffville, who steadily provide lunches for our guests, as well as the confirmation students who provided the personal care items. Forty-nine people received communion and thirty-one people were given personal care items. The confirmands had a great discussion afterwards, while enjoying pizza at St. Mary’s in Manchester.

Looking For Signs Of Spring

I don’t know about you, but February always feels like the longest month of the year to me even though there are the fewest number of days! And yet, as February gives way to March there is so much hope on the horizon. Already the days are noticeably longer and the sun feels a little bit stronger. And Creation is getting ready for Spring; the cycle of cold to snow to warm days is so typical of our New England weather. The Earth is waking up and getting ready to let new things spring forth—things that never quite look like what we might expect them to. Even Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 15:37-38—“And as for what you sow, you do not sow the body that is to be, but a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.” (NRSV) We, as the church, are being planted and given the opportunity to grow—what we grow into only God can know. We can look forward to being surprised and curious as we watch each new development. I strongly suspect we might not look like what we expect when we emerge as new creations.

Maggie Breen

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Connect with the Region on Facebook

Photo credit: Bishop Laura Ahrens

P.S. my friends: I was featured on the ECCT enews talking about my sheep! Check out the video Here.
St. Peter’s, Hebron, Has Talent: Supporting Community

Article and photo by: Cathie Litwin, St. Peter’s, Hebron

On February 8th, fifteen “silent monks” performed the Hallelujah Chorus at the 6th annual Hebron’s Got Talent Show, before an enthusiastic crowd of over 800 at the RHAM (Regional Hebron, Andover, Marlborough) High School auditorium. Those wailing came from someone who didn’t attend any church on a regular basis. It reads: “Wow, what a great show and fantastic act! You sure have some love going on there at the place you call St Peter’s; and beyond attending church on Sunday, you all walk the talk all week!”

This is how we strive to live out God’s mission. This is how we show good example of our joy in living what Jesus has taught us. This is how we manifest the “E” word!

“monks” are parishioners of St. Peter’s Episcopal Church, Hebron!

The community talent show is a fundraiser from which all proceeds go to children’s scholarship programs of AHM (Andover, Hebron, Marlborough) Youth and Family Services, and Hebron Parks and Recreation. The anonymous scholarships are for those who would not, otherwise, have the opportunity to explore and nurture their talents and passions because of financial considerations. In the first five years, the talent show has raised over $30,000!

So, it was a natural fit for the members of St Peter’s to be community partners and support this effort. Last spring, a parishioner had seen the classic monk act performed elsewhere. When she shared the idea with me that perhaps we could indeed be in the show, we decided to run with it. First step was recruiting 14 already busy people, willing to practice together frequently for 6 months, then stand on stage under bright lights in front of 800 people…and, by the way, do it well. At St. Peter’s…check that box off. Within a week, I had 14 committed souls. Next, a director. Our Priest-In-Charge, Fr. Ron Kolanowski, with a long string of past lives, had once been a music director. I casually passed that role by him without too much detail, and he naively said “sure.” Having a creative tendency and colorful character, he quickly thought of a great by-line for our program ad: GOOD HABITS: prayer, service and fun! The momentum had begun!

Brown hooded robes with crosses and rope belts in various sizes were a cinch, thanks be to God….and Amazon! The signs were a challenge! Forty three foam boards, 5 rolls of duct tape, two pairs of scissors and 5 bottles of Goo Be Gone, to remove “sticky” off the blades of the scissors with every 3-4 cuts into the tape!

We all finally gathered together and with quiet confidence and optimism, Fr. Ron learned that herding monks was only a tad less difficult than herding cats. But he was up for the task and before too long, we were (silently) making a joyful sound unto the Lord!

After 2 months of practicing, we sent in our audition video and held our collective breaths. Three weeks later we were relieved and joyful to learn that 18 acts had auditioned and The St Peter’s Silent Pipers were among the 10 selected to perform in the show. It would seem that now I could say “the rest is history.” But the story has just begun.

What started as fun, fellowship and support for a cause has mushroomed far beyond what we originally imagined. The total proceeds from this years’ show has exceeded $6500. The video of our performance has been shared on facebook pages in multiples of 100; we’ve had thousands of hits with lots of positive comments. We had over 100 people either from or connected to our parish family in attendance at the event. The town is buzzing about the show and about St Peter’s example of community collaboration and outreach.

Of all the many texts and e-mails we all received in the days following the show, the most heart-warming came from someone who doesn’t attend any church on a regular basis. It reads: “Wow, what a great show and fantastic act! You sure have some love going on there at the place you call St Peter’s; and beyond attending church on Sunday, you all walk the talk all week!”

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Needed: Parish Liaisons

By NE Region Leadership Team

The NE Region Leadership Team is seeking liaisons to each of the 18 churches in the NE Region. Would you be interested in making announcements in your parish, printing and posting our newsletter and sharing with Maggie events happening in your parish? Would you be willing to share region events and other ECCT events with your parish?

If you said “YES!” than we have an opening for you!
Please contact Maggie Breen, NE Region Missionary, at 860-214-0085 or email her at mbreen@episcopalct.org and let her know that you want to sign up!

Liaisons are welcome to attend monthly Region Leadership Team meetings but attendance is not required. We hope that you will prayerfully consider being involved in the NE Region in this new and exciting way!
*For more events and event information, click calendar or events for more details or CLICK HERE to add an event yourself to the ECCT calendar.

03/01—Grace, Stafford Springs: Men’s Breakfast—Vernon Diner, 6AM—All are welcome
03/03—6th Annual Interfaith Film Series (also 3/10 and 3/17): Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art—click here for full details
03/03—ECW Chapter Meeting, St. John’s, Vernon, 11:30AM
03/04—Hope After Loss Grief Group, Trinity, Brooklyn, 7PM
03/05—Pancake Breakfast (for dinner), St. George’s, Bolton, 6PM
03/07—NE Region Leadership Team Meeting, St. John’s, Vernon, 6PM
03/09—St. Patrick’s Day Dinner, Grace Church, Stafford Springs, 4:30-6PM, $10/person
03/13—Brotherhood of St. Andrew Chapter Meeting, St. John’s, Vernon, 7PM
03/13—Joining Jesus in the New Missional Age—Come and learn! 6:30PM at The Commons - click here for details and registration
03/17—St. Patrick’s Day Dinner, St. George’s, Bolton, 5PM
03/21—Safe Church Training, St. Paul’s, Windham Center, 6:30-9PM —click here to register
03/23—Christ Church Cathedral: Concert Series—Ameen Mokdad & Cuatro Puntos—click here for details
03/24—Trinity Brooklyn, Healing Service, 2PM
03/30—NE Region Presents: Crafting As Spiritual Practice—St. Mary’s, Manchester, 9:30AM-2PM—click here to register
03/30—Faith Behind Bars & Beyond Forum—”Incarceration Imprisons the Whole Family” - Christ Church Cathedral—click to register
04/05-04/08 —Icon Writing Workshop, Camp Washington—click here for details
04/27—ECCT Spring Training in *Berlin, CT* (new location this year!)—Click here to register

05/04—NE REGION CONVOCATION, ST. PETER’S, SOUTH WINDSOR (THE BEST KIND OF FAMILY REUNION!) - click here for more info
05/11—Workshop on the history of racism, Christ Church Cathedral—click here for details & registration

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