

RECTOR'S LETTER

Dear Friends,



Many of you are beginning to coordinate travel plans, start overdue home projects, and, finally, return to some level of normalcy. As we enter this time of transition, with half of the U.S. population vaccinated and a major decline in new COVID cases, I hope that you will embark on activities and tasks that fill you with joy.

As the parish enters this time of transition, I want to share with you updated worship guidelines that have been approved by the vestry:

- Those who have been vaccinated do not need to wear a mask. You may choose to continue to wear a mask for personal comfort. Masks will continue to be made available at the church entrance.
- Indoor social distancing practices will continue during mass:
 - o seating will be available at every other pew;
 - o the peace will not be physically exchanged;
 - o the offering plate will not be passed around, but it will be brought up during the offertory by a designated person;
 - o ushers will guide people to receive communion;
 - o communion in one kind (bread alone) will be distributed.

- Since proper indoor social distancing cannot be observed during the distribution of communion, the officiant (priest or deacon) will continue to wear a mask during the administration of communion.
- Musical offerings will continue to be offered solely by our parish choir.
- The choir will continue to wear masks when singing, with the option to remove their masks between musical offerings.
- Books and other printed materials will be restored to the pews.
- Pews will be sprayed with self-drying disinfecting spray between masses.
- Coffee hour will take place outdoors.
- Sunday school and other indoor programs (in-person study groups, parish dinners, and other social events) will not resume until at least late summer/early fall.

Guidelines and best practices, both from public health and ecclesiastical offices, are constantly updated. Please know that this is probably one of many more updated guidelines that I will share with you.





While we approach more hopeful days, we will continue with our current worship schedule. All services are now open to the public, including our Wednesday 9:30 a.m. mass, and they will also

continue to be livestreamed. A few people have asked if we will return to the old summer schedule of one mass on Sundays—a practice that was put in place prior to my arrival. Rather than once again altering our worship times, I'm more inclined to plan events that will bring us together as an entire parish. This, of course, requires a good amount of planning, but it's worth it. Our Pentecost parish cookout was an attempt at gathering the whole parish for a time of fellowship, and I think that it was a great success.



As we continue to see further progress on the

public health front, I hope that we will find new and familiar ways to come together.

Finally, now that we are leaving behind some of the more difficult days of this pandemic, I invite you to think of those great blessings that were bestowed upon you during the last 15 months. I know that this might be a hard thing to do, given the pandemic's ongoing impact and death toll. At the same time, many of us have experienced things that we are grateful for: answered prayers, healing and recovery, small miracles, and experiencing God's presence in ways we never imagined. To help mark these moments of gratitude, we will be ordering and adorning the Lady Altar with ex-votos: emblems of thanksgiving placed in a church. There's a piece later in this issue of *The Herald* explaining what an ex-voto is and how you can donate one to remember and mark God's blessings during the pandemic.

Yours in Christ,
Fr. Carlos †

FROM THE DEACON'S PERCH

"Without Pentecost the Christ-event—the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus—remains imprisoned in history as something to remember, think about, and reflect on. The Spirit of Jesus comes to dwell within us, so that we can become living Christs here and now." —Henri Nouwen

The Acts of the Apostles, often referred to simply as Acts, is the fifth book of the New Testament. It tells of the founding of the Christian



church and the spread of its message to the Roman Empire. Acts begins, namely, with Christ's Ascension into heaven. Acts was apparently written in Rome, perhaps between 70 and 90 CE. There are five key ideas in Acts: witnessing, worship, Holy Spirit, prayer, and church growth. I point this out because we will be using many of the readings from Acts during this season of Pentecost, and we will learn that the message of Christ comes to dwell in us—as Henri Nouwen states, “to become active living members of Christ in the here and now.” As John Stott points out, when we read Acts, we can see what a normal Christian conversation looks like and can be like.

The men's spiritual group, which resumes Monday evenings at my home (7-8 p.m.) will explore these ideas further. Please know that there no need to be a Bible scholar; we are all on this journey to understand what the Holy Spirit is trying to say to us in life. We will be using the John Stott's book on Acts for our Bible study, and all men are encouraged to join us. If in the future there are women who want to meet as a group, I would be happy to help facilitate in organizing it; feel free to talk to me about this. In the area of ministry, the good news is we are really appreciated at the food bank for all our donations. The director asked that we continue with the condiment donations, because they cannot keep up with the demand. We collected

many boxes of food for them; let us continue to give to those who have less.

With the Centre Gives Program on May 12, thanks to your generosity, we gave to the Centre County Library, Bellefonte Food Bank, Farm Preservation, Volunteers in Medicine, Faith Centre, PAWS, and Out in the Cold.

I have been participating in online workshops for my continuing education. One them, *The 5 Love Languages* (www.5lovelanguages.com), is great for marrieds or for couples in general. There is a quiz at the end to see what language of love you speak. I am also taking some preaching courses online and will be doing the festival of homiletics.

Fr. Carlos and I serve on the Commission for Ministry for our diocese. We are putting together a program for lay people who are licensed for various roles in church as lay preachers, eucharistic ministers, and lay leaders. More info will follow.

On **Saturday, June 19**, The Bellefonte Cruise will return to town. I am organizing a fund-raiser and will set up in front of our church. The plan is to cook and serve burgers, hot dogs, and sausages, as well as cold drinks. I can use help with cooking, serving, and clean-up. We will start at 8 a.m. and end at 5 p.m. If you can spare some hours while enjoying the day, your help would be appreciated.

~Deacon Alex†

SUMMER COFFEE HOUR SIGN UP

Throughout the summer, we hope to gather for coffee hour outside the rectory after the 10:30



a.m. mass. We are looking for volunteers to help set up, serve beverages, and clean up afterwards. All beverages (and occasional food items) will be provided by the church. If you want to bring any specialty drinks or food items, you are welcome to do so, but it is not required.

We still need volunteers in July and August. To sign up for coffee hour, please visit: <https://bit.ly/3u6ZoLP>.

If more than one person is signed up on a Sunday, you may be paired together. If you prefer to set up on your own, please mention it in the comment box at the end of the form. Father Carlos will email you to confirm your volunteer date and to go over the coffee hour setup.

EX-VOTO: A SIGN OF THANKSGIVING DURING COVID-19



An ex-voto is an emblem of thanksgiving, a small medal or religious item, placed in a church or chapel in gratitude for answered prayers, healing and recovery, personal miracles, or simply as a “thank you” to God for his love and faithfulness during a difficult time. Cathedrals, churches, and shrines across Europe are adorned with ex-votos placed there by parishioners and pilgrims. Many of these ex-votos date back decades, even centuries. Many more will be placed in the months ahead as we enter this time of transition.



At Saint John’s, we will join Christians all over the world and adorn our church with our own ex-votos. These heart shaped medals will be placed at the back of the church, around the Lady Altar, as a sign of gratitude for our own answered prayers, personal miracles, and thanksgivings and blessings.

If you are interested in having an ex-voto placed in the church, please fill out this form: <https://stjohnsepiscopalbellefonte.breezechms.com/form/0efdd6>; or you can contact Fr. Carlos.

The cost for an ex-voto is \$25 (this covers the cost of one ex-voto, plus shipping and handling from an Italian liturgical house). We will write your name and thanksgiving on the back of the ex-voto before it's placed at the Lady Altar. If you have any questions, please contact Fr Carlos.

Two peculiar-shaped ex-votos have already been purchased: one in the shape of lungs and the other in the shape of a person's back. These ex-votos depict two of the most impacted body parts by COVID-19.



We're grateful that only two parishioners were diagnosed with COVID-19, and both were able to recover. These ex-votos are given in thanksgiving for their recovery and for the recovery of our loved ones from COVID-19, and in thanksgiving for doctors, nurses, and all other medical staff in Centre County.

AROUND THE PARISH FAMILY TABLE



Scott Mauger is celebrating 45 years of employment at Supelco, a part of MilliporeSigma, in Pleasant Gap. Onward to retirement!

Erik Clayton's Master Singers choral group from State College Area High School recently performed the Brahms *German Requiem*.

Rebecca Clayton accompanied on the piano. The *Requiem* is a beautiful major musical work that is beyond the capability of most high school choirs. Watch it on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R2SfuJ7g7ME&t=946s>. Kudos, Erik and Rebecca!

Wesley Mauger, son of Scott Mauger, was awarded the 2020 Security Forces Flight Level



Noncommissioned Officer of the Year Award. To earn the award, he demonstrated and exhibited the Air Force Core Values – Integrity First, Service Before Self, and Excellence in All We Do – to the utmost degree. Wes was also recently promoted from Tech Sargent to Master Sargent. Wes is stationed at Andrews Force Base in Maryland. He lives in Mechanicsville, Maryland, with his wife Christina and son Robert.

VESTRY NEWS

The vestry met via Zoom on May 19.

Rector's Report:

- Church reopening has been going well. We are continuing to follow all necessary safety protocols.

- Parish garden has been a huge success with our parish youth and youth from the Bellefonte Youth Centre.
- First in-person parish fellowship event will take place with a cookout on Pentecost (May 23).
- In response to last week's CDC guidelines, new diocesan worship guidelines will be coming out soon.
- Fr. Carlos will collect vestry members' input to help update parish worship guidelines.

Treasurer's Report:

- April report – everything on track.
- Father Carlos thanked the vestry for their support that helps the parish remain fiscally sound.

Sr. Warden's Report:

- Senior Warden has been assisting on a project in the rectory.

Jr. Warden's Report:

- A leak in an old cast iron pipe in the rectory has been detected.
- The Wardens have been working with Jeff Wilson to address the problem; laundry room floor was ripped out to access water pipes.
- Jeff has installed new PVC pipes to bypass the old cast iron system and ensure the leak stops.
- A temporary floor will be put in place in the laundry room; further renovations will follow in the rectory bathroom and laundry room.

New Business:

1. Money Counters in June and Onward
 - a. Counters will return to counting on Sunday on the second and fourth Sunday of the month.
 - b. L. Roberson asked vestry members to send him their availability to set up a counters schedule.
2. New Worship Guidelines
 - a. We are currently waiting for new worship guidelines from the Diocese.
3. Summer Coffee Hour
 - a. During the summer we hope to gather for coffee hour after the 10:30 a.m. mass.
 - b. Volunteers are needed for July and August.

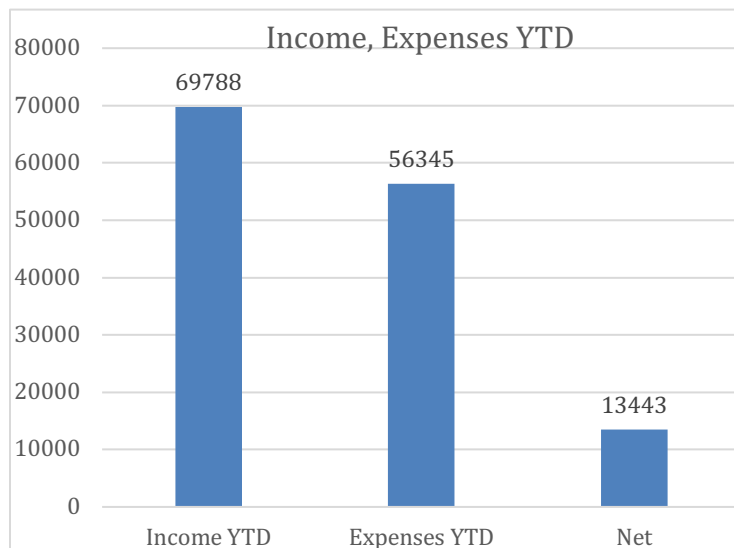
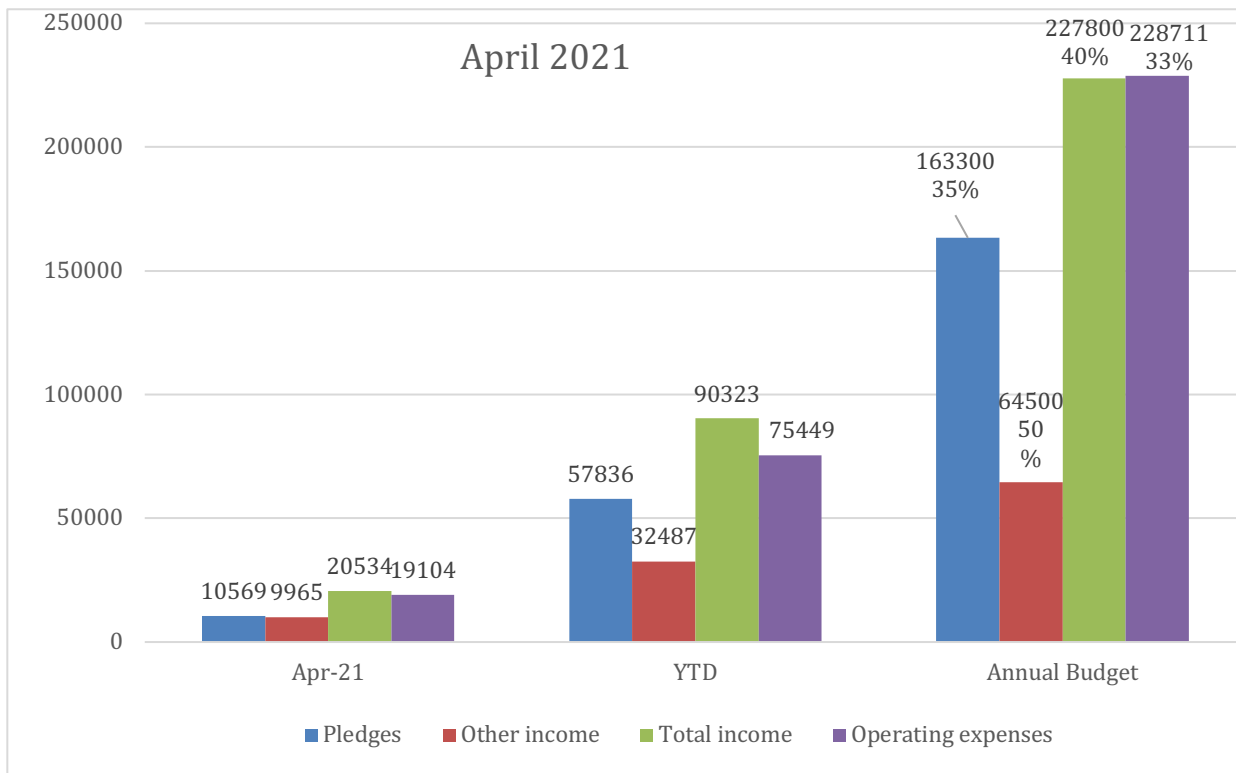
Vestry Members: Larry Roberson (Sr. Warden), Matt Perkins (Jr. Warden), John Fusco, Carol Fyfe, Debra Cree, Susan Christy, Peggy Jackson, Thomas Quigley, David King, Charlotte Zmyslo

JUNE BIRTHDAYS

Heidi	Eminhizer	June 12
Blanche	Raymond	June 13
James	Green	June 17
Adela	Germano	June 21

Financial:

	Apr-21	YTD	Annual Budget	YTD % of Budget
Pledges	10569	57836	163300	35%
Other income	9965	32487	64500	50%
Total income	20534	90323	227800	40%
Operating expenses	19104	75449	228711	33%
Net	1430	14874		



Expenses		
Income YTD	YTD	Net
90323	75449	14874

Numbers do not include investments, savings, or checking acct balance.

June 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 7:00pm AA	2 9:30am Monthly Parish Requiem 12:00pm AA	3	4	5
6 Solemnity of Corpus Christi 9:00am Low Mass 10:30am Sung Mass Facebook Live & YouTube	7	8 <i>Father Carlos Away</i> 7:00pm AA	9 <i>Father Carlos Away</i> NO WEDNESDAY MASS 12:00pm AA	10 <i>Father Carlos Away</i>	11 <i>Father Carlos Away</i>	12 <i>Father Carlos Away</i>
13 The Third Sunday after Pentecost 9:00am Low Mass 10:30am Sung Mass Facebook Live & YouTube	14	15 7:00pm AA	16 9:30am Low Mass 12:00pm AA 7:00pm Vestry	17	18	19
20 The Fourth Sunday after Pentecost 9:00am Low Mass 10:30am Sung Mass Facebook Live & YouTube	21	22 7:00pm AA	23 9:30am Low Mass 12:00pm AA	24	25	26
27 The Fifth Sunday after Pentecost 9:00am Low Mass 10:30am Sung Mass Facebook Live & YouTube	28	29 7:00pm AA	30 9:30am Low Mass 12:00pm AA			