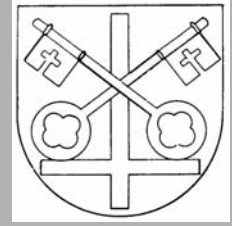


# CROSSED KEYS



NOVEMBER 2008

CHURCH

Dear St. Peter's Church Family,

Sometimes it's good to put everything else aside and just consider all of the things in my life for which I am thankful. King David, the author of numerous psalms, writes:

## Psalm 100 A Psalm for Giving Thanks.

<sup>1</sup>Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. <sup>2</sup>Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. <sup>3</sup>Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. <sup>4</sup>Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. <sup>5</sup>For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations. (NIV)

It sure seems like David had the spirit of thanksgiving that we would all like to emulate during the month of November. In addition to being joy-full, and worshipping with gladness, David's gratitude finds its home in the fact that he knows the Lord is God, and (further) that he belongs to the Lord. Therefore, David issues the command for us to "Enter his gates with thanksgiving..." to "give thanks to him and praise his name."

I'm feeling thankful. I'm thankful that God has placed me here in Sheridan, here at St. Peter's. I'm thankful for the opportunity I have been given to serve you as Rector here. I want to thank all of you who came out on October 8<sup>th</sup> to join in the "Celebration of New Ministry". It was truly a wonderful night with great music, an enlightening and challenging sermon, and the rich fellowship I have come to expect and appreciate whenever we gather as a greater body. My heart was filled with thanks to God for his ongoing faithfulness to St. Peter's, to my family, and to me.

I'm thankful for this particular body of believers; for you. I'm thankful for the support, love and encouragement you have poured out to the Jones

family. From the day Dave announced his resignation, the embrace I have received and the encouragement towards taking the Rector position here has been magnificently overwhelming. I'm thankful for your vestry. The leadership that they have shown throughout this transition has been inspiring for me to observe, and a privilege for me to partner with. I am thankful for your wardens, Tina Mediate and Marcus York. They have done a phenomenal job of keeping the ship moving and maintaining our direction through paying attention to the necessary details.

I am thankful for my staff here. Andy is a treasure to have as a youth director. This comes from one who views him through the differing lenses of overseeing him as well as from having him working with my son in the youth group. Andy is tireless in his efforts to demonstrate the gospel to not only the youth in our church, but to the youth in our community. He has a heart for all people, but his love for kids is beyond comparison. I am so grateful that he has been called to serve here at Saint Peter's while my son is going through the youth program. His creativity, sensibility, and energy are exactly what our EYC needs, and it shows in the health of our Jr. and Sr. high youth groups.

In addition, Gail and Shannon are amazing at what they do. Gail seems to be here round-the-clock to keep the facility in the best shape possible, as well as to care for the financial aspects of the ministry here. Her kind and helpful spirit provide for us all a sense that God is indeed in the nuts and bolts details that that God is indeed in the nuts- and-bolts details that make this place run. Shannon has been a fantastic addition to our staff team. She handles the front office with grace, warmth, and just the right amount of light-heartedness, while maintaining a professionalism and heart for ministry that is required in her position. She is a great blend in terms of her personality to our staff team and adds a brightness to all that she does.

I am thankful for all of the part-time staff as well. From Fritz, Jeannene, and Kelly, to Martina y Eloisa

## Crossed Keys

Speaking of serving, I am thankful for our deacons, Liz Shelton and Mo Campbell. The ordained position of a deacon originated in the early church when the needs of the growing church community became too overwhelming for the Apostles to meet. They appointed seven people to attend to the people and look after those who were not able to care for themselves. (You can read all about this in Acts 6.) True to the origins of the calling, Liz and Mo are phenomenal at caring for the needs of the people in our church community and looking out for new ways in which we can be a service. To be a deacon is to serve, and both Mo and Liz are servants from their hearts on out. I know those who receive care from our deacons are thankful. I, too, am thankful for Liz and for Mo.

Finally, when it comes to personnel, I could not be more honored, nor more privileged, than to work alongside our "retired associate," Fr. John Meyer. He has been such a blessing and an incredible help to me in so many areas of the ministry that it is difficult for me to communicate to you just what an incredible asset he really is. I have learned many things from his wisdom and experience. He is happy, more like joyful, to help and is willing to do whatever he can to help ease any burden. If you run into John on the street, won't you join me in expressing how thankful you are for his presence and ministry here among us?

And that's just the job related stuff . . .

When I consider my family life, my heart overflows with thanksgiving to God for his tender mercy. In the wake of the fire that "redecorated" our house in September, I am constantly in awe of God's faithfulness to me, as evidenced by the events surrounding the fire. I am thankful that the boys were not home that night. I am thankful that the Lord somehow woke Chris up and got out of the house. I am thankful that no neighboring homes were taken along with ours that night. I am thankful that our dog, Hobie, escaped the fire. I am thankful for the personal belongings which we were able to salvage from the house (including, ironically, our smoker/BBQ grill...). I am so thankful that no one was injured and that we did not lose anyone, other than our puppy, Oz.

I am thankful for our firefighters. There were some brave men who put their lives on the line for my sake. What a humbling statement that is to write. I thank God for these individuals who are called to

serve our community in this manner. I am thankful for the numerous family members who have been our constant companions and encouragers throughout these past few weeks. My parents, Chris' parents, my Uncle Bill and Aunt Cyndi, my brothers and sisters-in-law all have been present with us. I am thankful for all of our friends here and outside Sheridan who have blessed us in countless ways. I am thankful for all of the support we have received from all who have prayed for us.

Finally, I am thankful to belong to Jesus. To know that the Lord is God means to be included in God's peace and presence in the midst of life's stressors. This is truly one of the greatest gifts he gives to us. Because we are his, we have the assurance of him being with us, walking through all that comes our way in life, together. I can't imagine going through this without the Lord by our side. This is what I am the most thankful for.

So this November as we approach our national holiday to stop, take consideration, and return thanks to the Lord for all of God's blessings in our lives, won't you join me in heeding Psalm 100? Together let us,

"Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations."

Thankfully, Yours, by Grace,  
Rest eternal, grant to these, O Lord;  
and let light perpetual shine upon them.

We remember Marshall Wayne Cammack,  
Clarence Earl Voogd, and Dennis Duncan.

May their souls,  
and all the souls of all the faithfully departed,  
through the mercy of God, rest in peace.





**VESTRY MEMBERS  
2008**

**Tina Mediate  
Senior Warden**

**Marcus York  
Junior Warden**

**Gary Benson  
Maria Black  
John Chase  
Debbie Ebia  
Mike Evers  
Jack Fritz  
Penny Hoffman  
Theresa Miller  
Cara Nicholls  
Randy Stout**

**Please pray  
daily for our  
Vestry  
members and  
for their  
ministry to St.  
Peter's.**

**THE VESTRY  
MEETS ON THE  
4TH TUESDAY  
OF THE MONTH**



**FROM THE VESTRY . . .**

Yes, I am a “worrier.”

I am a world-class worrier. I was trained by one of the best . . . my mother. She was a wonderful mother and a committed Christian woman. I worry about my family, my friends, our government . . . I even worry about people in other countries who I don't even know! I worry about the environment and about people who don't worry about the environment! Well, you get the point.

In Matthew 6:27, Jesus asks, “Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?” My mother wasn't worried about herself; she was extremely healthy and lived to be 89! But with four children (three of them boys), she apparently felt she had plenty to worry about! She even worried about our friends—I guess just in case their parents weren't worrying enough!

Jesus tells us in verse 26, “Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or stow away in barns, and yet our heavenly Father feeds them, are you not much more valuable than they?” And in verses 28 and 29, “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these.”

I believe that Jesus wanted us to free ourselves of our earthly worries and, instead, concern ourselves with heavenly things. Jesus knows we have earthly concerns and troubles, but we should learn to keep in mind the lessons he gives to us which can free us to spend our time and effort on a goal: to do unto others as we would have them do unto us. In that, we will be freeing ourselves of worry.

Yes, I can write this, but I am still a “work-in-progress.” With God's help, I will keep trying to free myself from worrying. You should too.

God be with you.  
Gary Benson

*Our special thanks to Nan Wertman  
who donated the new pew cushions for the church.  
Thank you, Nan.*

My goal for the next few months is to share with you stories of our EYC students. One of these students is a young man, a senior, named Jake. I have known Jake for five years. He was one of those “skater kids” who seemed to show up on a regular basis.

This year I have seen Jake make some incredible changes in his life. Jake, along with another student who attends EYC, has started a weekly bible study that meets on campus before school starts. This includes getting up early and encouraging other students to do the same while studying the bible together. WOW! For seniors, more and more activities are introduced and even thrown in their laps, but Jake has kept attending church and youth group at the top of his list.

It was just a few weeks ago that we (Jake, a van-load of teens, and me) traveled to the University of Wyoming to check out the campus. On the way back as we are listening to our loud music and eating everything sugar, I looked up in my rearview mirror to see Jake and his friend Johnny reading their bibles and having a discussion on Ephesians. For the next two hours we were able to have great discussion around the fifth chapter.

God bless.

AnDy Menth

**Hello, my name is Jake.** I’m 17 years old and a senior at Sheridan High School. My hobbies include skiing and hunting. I’m an outdoorsman who just loves enjoying God’s creation outside. I spend most of my time in the mountains. I have been attending EYC since 7th grade. However, I have only been a true Christian since 10th grade. You see, in 7th grade, I got into some bad things, and it got to the point where I didn’t know who God was anymore. Then the summer between 9th and 10th grades, my mom, who has always been close to God, invited me to be a counselor at a Christian camp. During that camp my life was changed. I became so close to God. He became what I depended on. Later that summer when the camp got over, I came back to EYC. It has kept me on the narrow path of Christianity. We have a lot of fun at youth group. I have met many Christian friends that I know will last a lifetime. I’ve become very close to God. This year, Johnny and I have started a bible study at our school. Our goal is to make a difference in Sheridan High School. In the future, I plan to

**Jr. EYC** meets at 7 P.M. Wednesdays

&

**Sr. EYC** meets at 7 P.M. Sundays

in the Parish Hall basement.

~

For more information, contact AnDy Menth at 674-

## Crossed Keys



Jake (the student with his hands on his hips) is teaching another teenager how to ride a skateboard on our mission trip to Mexico.

“Through youth group and other events I have noticed that God had been working in Jake’s life very hard. The more I have gotten to know him, the more I have noticed that he gets more and more serious about his relationship with God every day. I have seen the growth in his life that I can only attribute to God. He cares about what matters. And that is a product of the Holy Spirit at work in his life.”

**Branden Biebel**  
Youth Pastor at Cornerstone Church

### UNITED THANK OFFERING

**UTO Sunday is November 16th.** The United Thank Offering is a program of the Episcopal Church for the mission of the whole Church, founded by and administered by women since 1889. The United Thank Offering Committee is entrusted to promote thank offerings, to receive the offering and to distribute the United Thank Offering monies through grants. The Committee awards and administers these grants within the framework of the policies and procedure of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary

Society (DFMS) of the Episcopal Church.

United Thank Offering is a practice in our lives in Christ that begins with daily prayers and gifts of thanksgiving. These gifts of thanksgiving—coins and bills in the UTO box—from each individual are combined with others at the parish and diocesan celebrations and finally within all of the Episcopal Church.

Please take a blue UTO box home with you to put coins in as a sign of thanksgiving and return them to St.

#### United Thank Offering Prayer

Gracious God, source of all creation, all love, all true joy, accept, we pray these outward signs of our profound and continuing thankfulness for all of life. Keep each of us ever thankful for all the blessings of joy and challenge that come our way. Bless those who will benefit from these gifts through the outreach of the United Thank Offering. This we ask through Him who is the greatest gift and blessing of all, Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

**St. Margaret's Guild** will meet Wednesday, November 12th (the second Wednesday, instead of the usual third Wednesday) at 7 P.M. in the Parish Hall. Rather than a program, members will work on crafts for the Bazaar.

### RED DOOR THRIFT STORE

We are happy to announce that we are having a very successful year and doing lots of outreach along the way. Our thanks to all of you who donate and shop with us. Without you and our wonderful volunteers, we could not begin to continue this ministry and outreach. All profits from sales on September 25 and October 2 were given to Rev. Kevin Jones and his family to help with expenses from their tragic fire.

Then on October 9, our proceeds of \$731 were given to the Dog and Cat Shelter. God loves these creatures, too. The shelter was very pleased with our efforts.

In December, we will give all away to various outreach missions and needs within the community, state, nation, and world.

We have a wish list: we can use jewelry; sheets; blankets; good rugs; towels; kitchenware; pots and pans; men's shoes; all winter hats, gloves, and

# Casas por Cristo

At the break of dawn on October 26<sup>th</sup>, eight members of St. Peter's left for Juarez, Mexico, where they built a house for a family in need through the *Casas por Cristo* ministry. In two days they built a house from the ground up for Maria and Rodriguez Ortega and their baby daughter. Mr. Ortega earns \$80 per week as a brick mason.

Juarez is a city of approximately 2.5 million people, the majority of whom live in absolute poverty. The *Casas por Cristo* program has built 3,000 houses in the past 11 years; teams from St. Peter's have built 8 of those houses in the past 6 years.



Mr. and Mrs. Ortega, Baby Carina,  
and Rob Neuman



Bill Doughty



Rich Gilbert



Randy Stout

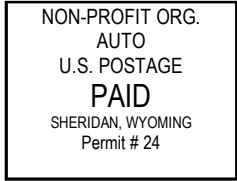


Rich Gilbert, Marcus York, Wendy Condrat,  
Angie Gilbert, Susan Abbott, and Rob Neuman

*Ta-Da!*



ST. PETER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
ONE SOUTH TSCHIRGI STREET  
SHERIDAN, WY 82801



**Return Service Requested**

*Casa por Cristo* — An Open Letter for Compassionate Hearts

As we stood in a circle gathered around the young couple and their eight-month-old daughter in their new “casa,” our eyes moistened and our hearts were moved as we listened to the dedication by their pastor. He began with a reading from Hebrews 3:3-4: “Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself. For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything.”

Upon returning to this wonderful country, America the Beautiful, and crossing the border out of Juarez, I knew I had to write this letter. Building a house in Juarez for *Casas por Cristo* has transformed me. I had been to Mexico countless times as a tourist and teacher of English and Spanish. This was so different than those other times. The entire experience filled me with the power of the Holy Spirit. Our hands did the work of His hands. Leaving the comfort of our lives and confronting the awful realities and abject poverty of the lives of the Ortega family was transforming. All the people we met there were bent but unbroken by their circumstances. They portray a solemn but living faith that is palpable. Looking into their eyes, I saw their trust in us to make their lot a little better—how could our simple gift of a 24-foot by 7-foot home give them so much hope?

I felt humbled in the small part we could do in comparison to their need, yet our small band of eight from St. Peter’s was a mighty force in their lives. They now could raise their beautiful little girl, Carina, in a safe, warm, and dry habitation and where their faith in God would fill Carina’s life as they gave thanks to Him in prayer. When any of us meet each other here again, there will be that special memory that will always connect us. When I said goodbye to Mari, she hoped to send us all a Christmas card and wanted us to stay well.

If you were a casual traveler to Juarez, you would say it looks hopeless, but now there are people like Pete “Doc” Dockery who believe in, and tirelessly work toward, a better future through the work of *Casas por Cristo*. If you have ever looked for a way to make a real difference in only a short span of five days, you need to build a house in Juarez. Ask any of us who go and keep returning again and again.

*En la Paz de Nuestro Señor.*  
Wendy Condrat