



Bethany Ministries

January 2019 – The Story of 2018

Prayer ~ Proclamation ~ Hospitality

Dear Friends,

Recently we heard Carole King on TV & were immediately moved by a song she wrote in 1977 & revised in late 2018. We heard echoes of the past year of our lives in its lyrics.

♪ *Poetic phrases come to mind Whenever I find injustice being done
 And I wonder,what am I gonna do,what am I gonna do?
 What can one do except be one Talking to two, touching three
 Growing to four million.....Each of us is one—all of us are one.
 Open your heart & let the love come shinin' throughAnd you will do what you need to do—
 To know just where the other you is comin' from.
 We are one. It just amazes me that I can be part of the energy it takes to serve each other & I wonder
 What am I gonna do, What am I gonna do?
 What will we do—we're gonna run, reach for the sun, come together as one
 show them how it's done. At the end of the day we'll be able to say:— Love won. ♪*

[Listen to it on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gc93thQVIV8>]

Prayer & Spirituality

"Talking to two, touching three"

Our **Ministry of Prayer** includes a weekly contemplative prayer gathering with includes 8-10 participants in a meeting based on the 11th Step of AA, "Sought through prayer & meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood God; praying only for knowledge of God's will for us & the power to carry that out." The core of the meeting includes spending 20 minutes in silence. Once a month we also meet for 2 hours with our Franciscan Spirituality Group, [14-20]. These groups have become our "local" community.



Ecumenical & Interfaith Ministry

"Open your heart...to know just where the other you is comin' from"

Our friends **Mike & Sherry Meyer-Veen** invited us to celebrate Epiphany with them at a gathering at their home in Jan '18. On Good Friday we joined them at the Schoharie Reformed Church which they co-pastor for a beautiful service beginning at noon. It was deeply contemplative & renewing. On Easter Sunday we participated in a Sunrise Service which began in the Coltrain Funeral Home, run by **Matthew**, the son of Rev. Carol Coltrain who died earlier that year. He prepared an empty coffin in the gathering space, symbolizing the empty tomb. We prayed there, read the Resurrection Gospel & sang, before proceeding to the parking lot to wait for the sun to rise over the ridge. It was a uniquely moving experience to see Carol's dream realized like this.



In June we were part of the Middleburgh HS Baccalaureate Service at St. Mark's Lutheran Church. It was so packed that a beam supporting the balcony cracked with a loud noise. No one was injured but the building needed subsequent repair. During July, we collaborated with the other area clergy for the yearly summer Ecumenical Service on the Middleburgh HS lawn & were blessed to have **Kim & Reggie Harris** lead the singing. In Oct, we were asked to be part of an Interfaith Memorial Service in the Schoharie HS gym to support the 1st responders & help families of the 20 who died in the tragic Schoharie limousine accident. At our monthly meetings with the Middleburgh Clergy, we plan events & support each other with deep faith sharing.

We attended most of this year's bi-monthly **NET**(Neighbors Eating Together) dinners, held either in the Lutheran Fellowship Hall or the Catholic Church Hall since after the flood in 2011. Our Prayer House Community in Dingmans Ferry, PA met 3 times over the year to share faith & prayer & to care for the hermitage which we founded in 1991. Peter often stands with the Peacemakers of Schoharie County, a diverse group of dedicated persons from different or no faith traditions at their weekly Vigil in Cobleskill, NY.



Finally, in Dec, we were again invited to tell stories, lead carols & use our collection of puppets in the Village Library for the 20th "Miracle on Main St,"-the yearly Middleburgh celebration of Christmas. This year we told the story of the "Christmas Truce" of 1914, since 2018 marks the 100th anniversary of the end of WW I & the 200th of the carol, "Silent Night," which British & German soldiers sang in English & German on that Christmas Eve.

Preaching Ministry at Home & on the Road

"It just amazes me that I can be part of the energy it takes to serve each other"

Our **Ministry of Proclamation** has evolved from doing Parish Missions & week long retreats to serving parishes on weekends & doing shorter retreats. Anna listens to Peter prepare his homilies & makes "suggestions" that help them connect better with people. At each parish, she is present to the parishioners & interacts with them. Peter often plays his violin at Masses, while inviting the congregation to "Name-That-Hymn." We helped out at **Our Lady of the Valley** in Middleburgh & **Our Lady of Fatima** in Delanson, NY when asked by **Fr Matt Wetsel**, the pastor of **OLV** & Administrator of **OLF**. We helped during Holy Week & covered his vacation time.

On July 1, Fr Matt was transferred & made pastor of both Holy Trinity in Johnstown, NY & of Holy Spirit Parish in Gloversville, NY. **Fr James Davis**, who was pastor at **Our Lady of Hope** in Fort Plain, NY was named as the pastor of **OLF** & Administrator at Delanson at the same time. On Aug 26, while covering the Mass at **OLF** we celebrated the 50th Wedding Anniversary of **Barb & Tom Valosin**, friends & supporters of Bethany Ministries. It was celebrated in the United Methodist Church across the street because **OLF** Church & Hall were being renovated. Late in Dec **OLF** returned to their church building & we celebrated with them the 4PM Christmas Eve Mass that featured special roles focused around the children.

During their 2nd semester we traveled to the campus ministry at SUNY Oneonta for 3 Sun evening Masses, including Palm Sun. We also went to SUNY Albany to celebrate 4 Masses for their campus ministry. Other parishes we served included St. Joseph's in Worcester, NY & St. Paul the Apostle, Schenectady, NY. Peter also did a Charismatic Mass in Nov at St. Paul's.

Since the Bishop had appointed **Deacon Joe Cechnicki** as Parish Life Director of **Our Lady of Hope**, Fort Plain, NY [where we had done several parish missions] **OLF** was in need of a priest for Masses & Reconciliation. Peter was able to cover most of the Sat & Sun Masses. When he couldn't **Fr Tim Lyons, OFM Conv**, who heads the St. Kateri Shrine in Fonda, NY, was able to cover. We call it "*Franciscan Bi-Location*". Our Ministry of Proclamation in Apr, May, & June included sessions of Ecclesiology I & II courses for the Albany Diocesan Kateri Institute for Lay Ministry as well as the closing retreat for those who had completed the 3rd year of the program.



Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals etc

"Each of us is one, all of us are one"

Our outreach to families & individuals who are in need of spiritual direction, support in grieving, celebration of new life & creative solutions around wedding issues we see as part of our **Ministry of Hospitality**. Anna reaches out to support many individuals through text, phone calls & personal contact. Peter walks with 5-7 people in spiritual direction in person, by phone or by the internet.

Our ministry was often to individuals or families, especially those who were sick & dying. We visit them to bring Communion & to celebrate both the Sacraments of Reconciliation & Anointing of the Sick. One of the people we visited was **Lynn O'Rourke**, recently retired Parish Life Director of **OLF** Parish. She suffers from pancreatic cancer & with her husband, **Bob**, is part of our Franciscan Spirituality Group.

Death was no stranger to us this past year. One of the people we anointed died only 2 days later. We were touched by the lives & families of the 13 people whose deaths we ministered to over this year. Some of them were referred by local funeral directors, but **Rev Carol Coltrain & Barbara Lopez** were personal friends; **Chrissy Barkley**, Scotia, NY was the daughter of Diane Becker, a member of our Mon Prayer group; **Marilyn Donahue**, Hudson, NY was Peter's cousin, the daughter-in-law of his godmother Isabelle; **Annie Gaffney**, Secaucus, NJ, whose death came rather quickly was Anna's cousin; & **Kathy Maus**, from Buffalo, NY, who had moved to Middleburgh to be part of the beginning of Bethany Ministries in the mid 90's.



In 2018, we celebrated life's beginnings no less than its endings by baptizing 2 granddaughters of **John & Janet Wierzchowski** [pronounced "which house key"] at **OLF** in Delanson, NY. At the 2nd Mass we discovered the godparents who had travelled from Japan for the Baptism of their niece were parishioners of Peter's Friar classmate there, **Russell Becker**.

We were delighted to celebrate 2 weddings in June & Sept. The first, between **Derek Frome & Molly Andruszkiewicz**, was a two stage celebration, like one we did in 2017 [Molly took Derek's last name-surprized?]. The legal & canonical wedding was on June 1st in San Francisco with only immediate family in attendance, but the public celebration & confirmation of vows was in Sullivan County, NY on June 30 on Molly's Grandmother's great lawn with over 250 guests. The family even built a pavilion just in time for it.

The Sept 29th wedding was for **Angela Chirico**, part of our Mon prayer group, & **John Millett**, her NJ high school friend. Both had been married before, but had secured annulments. Peter concelebrated the wedding with a priest who was John's close friend, **Fr Bob Kaeding**, at the parish he pastors in Monmouth Beach, NJ. Anna & Peter, long time friends of Angela, shared the Gospel reflection at the ceremony.



IHM & OIM Connections

Anna travelled to Scranton several times for her IHM Chapter. For Peter's 50th Jubilee of Profession as a Friar we travelled to St. Francis, NYC for Mass & a party with his classmates. Terry Reid, his fiancée, Adrienne, Kevin Kemper [one of Peter's former students], & Kim Baldwin from the Prayer House joined us at the Mass. Two friars from the Emmaus Fraternity, **Chris Keenan** & **Ben Taylor**, sat with us at the reception. We celebrated with our Middleburgh community on July 20 with a Mass at St. Mark's Lutheran Church, since OLV was closed then & a dinner catered by OLV Café. It was a marvelous event, with people from many parts of Peter's life – his 3 sisters & 1 brother-in-law, 3 classmates & their wives from his days at Siena, **George McClain**, **Tilda Norberg** & Sophie, their dog, from the Prayer House Community, along with many more.

Peter continues to meet with the **Emmaus Fraternity**, at Mt. St. Vincent's in the Bronx, since 3 of them live there. Peter attended a special chapter in June, which voted to go forward with the merger of US Franciscan provinces. He also visits his brother Friars at Siena when he is able & celebrated his jubilee with them in Sept. Anna continues to meet regularly with her "**Mission Group**," her basic connection to the IHM Congregation. One of the IHMs, **Sr Angela Miller**, along with her sister **Rose**, who worked at the IHM Center, suffered a tragic death in April. Both were murdered by Rose's son. Despite every effort, Angela's body has still not been found.

Health & Recreation

Peter fell through a step to the cellar & had to be rescued by local EMT's. There were sirens & a trip to the ER, but no serious injury. Anna had minor surgery on her drooping eyelids. It was quite successful. She also did a recommended sleep study & found she did not have sleep apnea. Otherwise, we have been well.

While vacationing once more with **Al & Bonnie Haberle** in Westport, NY, we were able to spend some time with our friends **Lyn Barrett** & **Ron Bussian** [Peter & Ron did some birding], we attend the Jazz Festival in Lake George; & meet with **Ted Cornell** at **Crooked Brook Studios**. Peter went fishing in local streams & Anna took scenic pictures. The 2 weddings we did blessed us with some recreation. At the site of the Frome wedding Peter caught a 16^{1/2}" brown trout in the Neversink River when we went for the planning at the end of May.

The Prize Catch



Lavellette, NJ Tee Shirts

After the NJ wedding we spent a few days at the Shore in Lavellette, at a cabin the groom's family owns.

God's Providential Care

"At the end of the day, we'll be able to say - LOVE WON!"

You have been unbelievably generous in 2018, & we have been able to pass your gifts on to others by our ministry of presence & by sometimes serving without expecting recompense. You enabled us to be supportive to those suffering from injustice & to take a day to drive **Brenda Evans** [who doesn't have a car] to NH to visit her son.

When **Terry Wright's** husband became too sick to drive she gifted us with a second car. We drove it to the cemetery in the funeral procession when **Charles** died in Oct. Though both cars are 14 yrs old & one is approaching 170,000 miles both are serviceable now.

We are deeply grateful for your participation in our ministry in various ways - through your prayers; your commitment to peace & caring; & your financial support. We thank you in advance for your support in the coming year. May you always be able to say at the end of each day till the end of your life, "**LOVE WON**".

Fr. Peter & Sr. Anna



11th Step Prayer Group at a N.E.T dinner



Our Lady of Hope, Fort Plain, NY
