

Dear Friends,

♪ **Gaze upon the Lord, gaze upon his face, Gaze upon the one who holds you in his embrace.  
Gaze upon his life, gaze upon his love, Gaze upon his coming poor from heav'n above.**

Look upon your Lord, look upon his way, Look upon his heart which opens to each day.  
Though he was despised, the lowest of our race, Look upon his sacred cross which brings life & grace.

**If you open to life's pain then with him you shall reign, & allow your heart to weep, then with him you'll rejoice.  
Open to his cross the wounds of each day's love, Then you'll know the splendor of his kingdom above.** ♪

This song is a setting of some of the words of Clare of Assisi. It is sung by Peter & Anna at [\(41\) Gaze Upon the Lord - YouTube](#)

[It's a paraphrase of Clare's 2<sup>nd</sup> Letter to Agnes of Prague, #19-22 set to music by Sr. Briege O'Hare, OSC].

2021 has been a time that has rearranged our lives in profound ways, yet it has re-focused us on our ministries of prayer, proclamation & hospitality & rearranged the time & manner of doing those ministries. The year culminated with events that spilled over into Jan & Feb of 2022, so this newsletter will include those 2 months.

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### *A Healing Process*

We will begin at the end of 2021 before describing what led up to the events from Dec 28 to the end of Feb, 2022. On Dec 28, we went to the regional hospital in Cobleskill [about 20 minutes from Middleburgh] for a routine doctor's appointment for Peter. A bladder ultrasound, revealed he was retaining urine, so he was referred to a urologist at the main hospital in Cooperstown, NY [an hour's drive]. By the grace of God an appointment for the next day was available. One of our Franciscan Spirituality Group offered to drive us there. He had to wait for us for 3 hours & was able to use his computer to work remotely without distraction during that time. Peter was given a Foley catheter to drain his bladder. He ended up having to wear it until Feb 8<sup>th</sup>, after prostate surgery on Feb 4. Because of an ice & snow storm we went to Cooperstown the day before the surgery & stayed overnight in the Hannah-Lee House, a place provided by the hospital for patients & their caregivers. Peter was discharged Feb 5. His college classmate & wife, **Lou & Anna Ferreira**, picked us up & took us home to Middleburgh.

A few days later, under the surgeon's supervision, the catheter was removed at Cobleskill. Though the surgery was successful: no tumors or cancer, it left Peter very weak. Anna, his caregiver through the process, was relieved & also exhausted by the whole experience.

We have been graced during this time by a community of caring & practical people, mostly from our Spirituality Group & the local parish of Our Lady of the Valley in Middleburgh. We are not under the illusion that now we can go back to "normal," in the sense of what used to be our life & ministry, but we are enjoying increased levels of energy & health as we discern the way forward.

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### *Ministry of Prayer*

Bethany Ministries is a threefold activity: **Prayer, Proclamation & Hospitality**. This has been how we have understood ourselves from our beginnings in 1995. In earlier times, especially from 2000 to 2011, Proclamation took up much of our time & energy, as we travelled in the US & Canada giving Parish Missions & Retreats. Since Hurricane Irene in 2011, our Ministry of Hospitality was curtailed because Peter was living in borrowed lodgings until 2014 & the apartment where he has lived since then doesn't have a guest room. Recently we've been able to have visitors stay at Safe Harbor of the Schoharie Valley only a block away. From 2011-2019 we did fewer Parish Missions & retreats, but travelled to cover Masses in the Albany Diocese, especially in parishes whose pastoral leader was not a priest. As Peter recovered from his small stroke Sept, 2019, the pandemic hit & we could no longer travel to do parish missions & retreats in 2020.

In 2021, our **Ministry of Prayer** became more of our primary activity. We resumed our weekly prayer meetings based on the 11<sup>th</sup> Step of AA in hybrid form, with 3-5 people, including the 2 of us, in Peter's living room, 4-5 on computer / TV screen using "Google Meet" & one person on speakerphone, **Don Quinn**, who used to come in person till he moved to an assisted living facility in Schenectady. This has continued weekly with a few interruptions, during the time of Peter's illness from late Dec until early Feb. We resumed our weekly prayer on Feb 17 & plan to continue.

Our personal prayer has grown in quality & duration, especially when we were not able to go out to preach the Gospel. Mornings in particular are dedicated to prayer & we pray for particular individuals & groups. Peter regularly prays with the Schoharie County Peacemakers who stand on a corner in Cobleskill every Saturday. He spends the hour from 11-12, when they are witnessing to peace & justice, & occasionally is able to go in person to stand with them for at least a half hour of that time. He also prays the Office at the same time the Friars at Siena pray it in the morning Mon through Fri. Anna prays for & with her IHM Sisters & connects with them through meetings on the phone, text & email.



Those connecting by Zoom & cell phone & Darlene in-person.

### *Hospitality*

The **Ministry of Hospitality** has been reborn in different forms at this time of emergence from the pandemic & in the circumstances of our living situation. We live in 2 apartments in one building in the Village of Middleburgh but neither of us have a guest room. We can receive individuals or a few people for prayer or spiritual direction, but our hospitality has evolved in new ways. Peter receives several people who seek him out as a spiritual companion using Zoom or Google, even as he is able to see a few in person. This will probably increase in the future. Anna spiritually supports a number of our neighbors in various ways by text & in person. Our Franciscan Spirituality Group is part of both the ministries of Prayer & Hospitality. We have met 6 times in 2021 at a house very close to our apartments called Safe Harbor of the Schoharie Valley. The owners, **Monica & Mike Short**, have a Zoom account, so we can meet both in person & on their large screen TV with people who live at a distance to share faith, life & prayer. We hope to resume our Franciscan Spirituality Gatherings when we have recovered more of our energy. Peter participated in an Opening to Grace retreat to support our friend, **Terrence Reid**. It was an experience of both hospitality & healing prayer & Peter was surprised at how close he felt to Terry & the group.

### *Proclamation*



Sue Trendell with daughters

We visit the sick & shut ins when we are able, bringing the healing Word of Christ through our presence, the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick and Communion. One of the high points of this ministry was when we visited **Sue Trendell** who suffers from ALS. We celebrated Eucharist with her, her husband **Bill** & two of her daughters, **Crystal & Casey**. Another daughter from Texas, **Colleen**, & a sister-in-law from Florida, **Donna**, were present through facetime on a tablet. Sue could not speak or take food by mouth, but she "talked" through a tablet & received Communion in the form of Consecrated Wine through her feeding tube.



Sue & Bill Trendell



Peter celebrating Eucharist at the Trendell Home

We were also able to visit **Ed August, Helen Vedder, Charlotte Marks & Terry Wright**, among others, since the receding of the pandemic.

During Lent of 2021, Peter began to send out email reflections based on the Sunday Scriptures. They were expanded homily reflections which included some public Masses. When we travelled to parishes in Middleburgh, Cherry Valley, Fort Plain, Coxsackie, & Ravena in the Diocese of Albany the reflections included links to videos on Peter's YouTube channel which were recorded by Anna. She has become quite proficient in this ministry. She also directed the production of the video of Gaze Upon the Lord at the beginning of this Newsletter.

One of the high points of the year was celebrating Mass on Oct 4 for the Feast of St. Francis at the request of the new Pastor, Fr. Tom Zelker, who had begun to serve at Our Lady of the Valley in Middleburgh in May. He not only opened the church on a Mon evening, he provided a dinner after the Mass for everyone. Over 40 people came to celebrate, including most of the members of our Franciscan Spirituality Group.

These are the video links to that Mass.

Feast of St Francis part 1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=spnK7eLgb3A>

Feast of St Francis part 2 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uOstdWTi81A>

We were blessed to lead Services at St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Cobleskill for **Holy Thursday**, **Good Friday** & the **Easter Vigil** & to be part of a **Middleburgh Ecumenical Easter Sunrise Service**.

We were delighted to be invited to do a Mass for the Black Catholic Apostolate at St Joan of Arc Church in Menands in Oct.

Part 1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6jzvz0hyOUo>

Part 2 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DOjgpgJxa8I>

Part 3 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zYAc4Hit-uA>



Sunrise on Easter 2021

For two weekends in July we were able to travel to the Oneida area in the Syracuse Diocese so Anna could preach for the IHM Mission in Peru at 6 different parishes. This is a link to Anna's presentation at these parishes. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FTXsbRYeB1o>

We also participated in 8 funerals & burials in churches & funeral homes. Among them were one for **Hank O'Brien** in Delanson in March, when Peter played his violin for the 1st time since his carpal tunnel surgeries, as well as the funeral for Anna's good friend, **Fr. Joe Weber**, at the Cathedral in Scranton, PA. We also led prayers at the burial of **Stasia Hagan**, our very good friend whose funeral was in Jan. & led a funeral in a United Church of Christ for **Maureen Kennedy** who was married to the pastor.

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### *Vaccine, Jazz Festival, Ecumenical, O'M, IHM*

We both have been vaccinated & received our booster shots, even though the beginning of the process in Feb. felt like vaccine roulette. We were able to attend the Lake George Jazz Festival in Sept & relaxed for a week in a cabin in Bolton Landing owned by one of Peter's High School classmates & her husband, **Jean & Bob Brew**. The Prayer House Community met via Zoom on Jan 16, after the legal non-profit had been dissolved. We keep contact with members of this ecumenical community in various ways. We participated in the dedication of a Peace Pole in Cobleskill at an interfaith service honoring **Ron Ruland**, whom we had prepared for death in 2020.

During the pandemic we continued to meet monthly with the Lutheran, Methodist, Reformed & Catholic pastors in Middleburgh outdoors in a park & by conference call. We participated in the Summer Ecumenical Service in Middleburgh that was planned by this group, & which featured music & preaching by **Reggie & Kim Harris**. We were also part of the yearly Baccalaureate service in May & the Ecumenical Thanksgiving service in Nov. Links to ecumenical service; part 1, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WlnwRi7kqGw> part 2, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WBXQ4wEj7jw>

Peter called his Emmaus Fraternity back together & they met by Google Meet in Dec. Anna took part in zoom retreats sponsored by her IHM Sisters & plans to take part of their chapter meetings in 2022.

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### *God's Providential Care*

As we continue to "Gaze upon the Lord" we pray that we will more & more become what we behold. Bethany Ministries is evolving, but it is still anchored in the Love of God, the teaching & example of Christ & the wisdom of the Holy Spirit. The experience of Peter's illness & Anna's support & care has strengthened the community relationships within & beyond our spirituality group & the local Parish of Our Lady of the Valley. Generous donations, both monthly & one time, have continued to enable us to pay our bills & send a monthly stipend to Anna's IHM Congregation. Thank you for your loving generosity. We continue to depend on your support & will pray for each of you. May the Lord bless you & fill your days with peace & joy.

*Fr. Peter & Sr. Anna*

We believe the words of the Prophet Habbakuk [chapter 2, verse3]

The Vision still has its time,  
presses on to fulfillment,  
and will not, **will not** disappoint.  
If it delays, wait for it.  
It will surely come, It will not be late.



Anna Preaching for IHM Peru Mission



Peter - Mine Kill Falls south of Middleburgh



Cathy & Anna at a NET dinner  
Fr. Tom, DLV pastor, blue sweatshirt



Peter at a NET dinner on March 9, 2022



Anna, Peter & David at Prayer Meeting