

Dear Friends,

There is an ancient chant that is still sung in the Synagogue. The Hebrew words are:

♪ *Oseh shalom bim-ro-mav, hu ya aseh shalomaleynu
v'al kol y'Israel, v'im ru, im ru amen.*
Ya-seh shalom, ya-seh shalom, shalom alenu v'al kol y'israel. ♪
[Bing Videos](#)

The translation in the Synagogue prayer book is:

*“May the one who causes peace to reign in the heavens
make peace descend on us, on all Israel & all the world”*

It can also be translated:

*“The one who makes peace reign in the heavens,
sends peace to us, to all Israel, to the whole world.”*

We used that song on Jan 1st, 2024 as part of the invocation for the swearing in of **Larry Caza** as Schoharie County Clerk. He is not only the outgoing mayor of the Village of Schoharie, he is also part of the network of Bethany Ministries. We believe that this prayer is much needed in our world today in the light of the events of the past year & the current outbreaks of violence in our country & the world. “Shalom” in Hebrew, as well as “Salaam” in Arabic, means much more than the absence of violence. It means wholeness, healing, reconciliation, justice, harmony, recovery, everything that is good, not only for each of us as individuals, but for all of our sisters & brothers. Our experience of 2023 has been one of praying for Shalom/Salaam & giving thanks for the gift as we have received it & seen it given to others.

Ministries of Prayer, Hospitality & Proclamation

As the year has unfolded, we found that our ministries of Prayer, Hospitality & Proclamation have overlapped & merged. We continued to host a weekly contemplative prayer meeting, hosting 7-12 people in person, by zoom on Peter's computer & TV & on speakerphone. By the Fall, **Don Quinn** was in a memory care facility & was only able to engage with us at the beginning of the meeting. Don “graduated”, passing into the next life on Thanksgiving Day, after praying with Peter over the phone two days before. Anna & Peter prayed with the family at the wake on Dec 3 & Peter preached at the funeral Mass the next day while the pastor of Our Lady of the Valley Parish, (OLV) presided.

Our **ministry of presence** has continued with the **NET (Neighbors Eating Together)** dinners 3 times a month, from Sept through May, at the Catholic, Lutheran & Reformed churches in Middleburgh. Our presence spoke of God's care for the whole community & when we could not attend, we were missed. We give thanks for the peace & harmony these dinners revealed & contributed to.

Another expression of this ministry was our participation in the weekly Vigil in Cobleskill of the **Peacemakers of Schoharie County**. We prayed with them from 11-12 each Sat & joined them in person when energy & health permitted. Together with a very diverse group, which includes agnostics, Viet Nam veterans, transgendered persons & those from Jewish, Catholic & Protestant traditions, we witnessed to global & national concerns for peace, justice, an end to torture & care for the earth. Peter always wears his Franciscan habit when he is present in person. Our Franciscan Spirituality group began to meet again, with members other than us taking responsibility for gathering & hosting the group. We met 6 times in 2021, but the house where we had been meeting was sold, so we were unable to meet in 2022. This past year we met in June & Sept at the home of **John Millett & Angela Chirico**. We will meet again in 2024 at the OLV church hall, with **Sena & Frank Monaco** hosting as we provide the reflection.



Preaching & Funerals.

Our ongoing attempt to send shalom from Bethany Ministries is through the weekly reflections on the Sunday Scriptures which Peter emails to over 250 people after Anna listens & makes “suggestions” about how to be clearer for Franciscan Spirituality Group at the home of John & Angela more people. If you want to receive them in the future, or want to be taken off the list, send an email to bethmin@midtel.net.

Although we have not been able to travel to many parishes to preach in person, we have gone to St. Vincent's in Cobleskill several times, [25th Sunday in Ordinary Time, St Vincent's Cobleskill 9/23/23 \(youtube.com\)](#) [Feast of the Transfiguration 2023 \(youtube.com\)](#) to St Thomas the Apostle Church in Cherry Valley in May for the Ascension, [Ascension Eucharist \(youtube.com\)](#) to Holy Cross in Morris, NY [13th Sunday A Cycle, July 2, 2023 \(youtube.com\)](#) & St Mary's in Oneonta in July. Anna preached for the IHM mission in Peru in August at Francis of Assisi Parish in Binghamton, NY & St Joseph's in Port Crane. [Sr Anna speaking for the IHM mission in Peru, 2023 \(youtube.com\)](#) We often collaborate with the pastor at OLV, **Fr Tom Zelker**. Almost every Sunday, Peter plays the violin with the music ministry while Anna helps with the video & is present to the members of the congregation. Peter preached in Jan at **OLV** & for the Feast of St. Francis on Oct 4 at **OLF** [Our Lady of Fatima] while Fr Tom presided. We have been part of 4 communal reconciliation services during Advent & Lent of 2023. Two have been at OLV & two at OLF in Delanson, where Fr. Tom also serves as pastor. Peter presided & preached at one of them & Anna led our ice cube ritual at all of them.



We have had the privilege of participating in 15 funerals in 2023, both sending & receiving shalom to/from the people who have passed & their families & friends. We led the service for **Paul Trendell**, brother of our good friend, **Bill Trendell**, on Jan 21 at the funeral home in Schoharie. We had buried both their parents & several other family members. We attended the funeral of **Virgil Cater**, the husband of our good friend, **Cheryl Cater**, at St Mark's Lutheran Church on Jan 24. In March, Peter presided at the funeral of **Helga de Roziere** while Fr Tom preached. On Sat of that same week, we celebrated Mass in Peter's living room at the same time of the funeral Mass for **Carol Burke**. She & her husband, **George**, had been friends of Peter for many years. Carol had asked for him to celebrate the funeral, but distance & a snowstorm made that impossible. On the 24th we attended the Mass for **Tom Buzon**, the brother of our friend, **Jim Buzon**. Peter played & sang with the music ministry. On the 31st, the Trendell family had a service for Sue, Bill's wife, in Aruba, her favorite place, using a prayer Peter had prepared.

In April we drove to Scranton, PA to visit Anna's very good friend, **Sr Rose Marie Mozzachio**. Anna had been her friend since 1959, both as a Srs of Christian Charity & of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. It would be the last time we would see her alive on earth. She passed from this world to the next on June 4 while Peter was at his Franciscan Chapter meeting. We drove to her funeral on June 12. Anna was able to share some memories of her & Peter played the violin at the Mass. We travelled to Highland, NY twice in June & July for 2 funerals for members of Peter's family, his uncle, **Rudy Campilli** & Rudy's son-in-law, **Mike Galente**. Both funerals were at a Korean Christian church which they had been attending. Mike's was first, on June 17th. The pastor presided & preached while Peter spoke briefly for the family & Anna comforted some of them. Rudy's service was on July 8 & Peter had a larger role, doing part of the homily & co-presiding. We had visited both of them in Nov, 2022 to celebrate the Sacraments of Anointing, Reconciliation & Communion. Rudy's daughter, **Anita Galente** & the pastor of Hosanna Church, **Peter Bae**, ministered to their practical & spiritual needs in a beautiful way during their last days. Our good friend, **Wanda Craner**, died in July. She was buried on the same day as Peter's uncle Rudy, so we were only able to watch it on computer.

We participated in 7 more funerals from Aug through Dec. **George Waldenmaier** on Aug 19, **Bishop Howard Hubbard** on Aug 25 (via livestream), **Dennis Riordan** on Sept 1 (requested by Mike Langan, the Schoharie funeral director), **Joe Bozicevich** on Oct 10, **Cynthia Millett**, on Nov 4, **Don Quinn** on Dec 4 (Peter preached & played violin), & **Roger de Roziere** on Dec 27 (Peter preaching & presiding). We had buried Roger's wife, Helga, 9 months previously.

Spiritual Direction, Ecumenical

Part of our ministry during this past year has been to be spiritual companions to several people; in person, by zoom & through phone, text & email. Peter connects with 2 people by zoom every month. He contacts **Ed August** every week, sending him a letter by US Mail with his weekly Scripture reflection, as well as walking with 7 more as the need has arisen both in person & by zoom. Anna walks with several people in person & by text. We both have been walking with our friend, **Maria Marr** as she undergoes treatment for cancer.

One of our moments of Shalom came on Thanksgiving. We were unable to travel for dinner with Peter's family, hosted by his niece, **Margaret Sprinkle**, because Anna didn't want to share her cold with them. Peter went to her apt upstairs & brought a sandwich from the Carrot Barn. While we were upstairs, the family in the apt next door called & asked to use Anna's oven. She said yes, of course. Later that afternoon we were treated to a complete Thanksgiving dinner by the same family. We both shared and received shalom. We still meet monthly with pastoral leaders from the Lutheran, United Methodist & Reformed churches in Middleburgh. We collaborate with them for an Easter sunrise service, [Exsultet and Easter Alleluia \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Exsultet) the local H.S. Baccalaureate, a Summer Ecumenical Service & a Thanksgiving Service. In Dec there was a special carol service in the Reformed Church where Peter played "O Holy Night" on the violin. There was also a "Blue Christmas" service, focused on anyone who might have a difficult time during Advent.



Anna at sunrise on Easter Sunday

We had several zoom connections with people we would have been with in person in the past. On August 30, we zoomed with the Prayer House Community; on Sept 24, we celebrated the 80th birthday of **George McClain**, along with many members of the PHC & on Nov 4th Peter did a blessing by zoom for the 50th anniversary of the wedding of **Charlie & Denise Kraebel**, a couple he had married while in Buffalo.

Health, Family, OFM, FHM Connections

We have both suffered from colds & other health issues, but not covid. Anna is still waiting for her cataracts to "ripen," Peter finally got a new C-pap machine in late Oct. Our health is still pretty good for people our age. We spent a week at Bolton Landing & enjoyed the Lake George Jazz Festival. We celebrated birthdays at Red's Restaurant in (Sean & Rod's on the same day), Peter's & Marita's at his sister, Barbara's home. We met George & Sharon Esposito for dinner in July as they celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary.

After years of ministry to the women in Passaic, NJ, **Sr Gerardine Tantsits, SCC**, moved to Mendham, NJ this past Fall. Peter attended the last chapter of Holy Name Province at Siena in preparation for the founding of a new province, Our Lady of Guadalupe in Oct, which is a joining of 6 former OFM provinces in the U.S. Peter's Emmaus Fraternity now includes 9 members & meets once a month by zoom on a Friday.

God's Providential Care

We don't know how long we will be able to continue with Bethany Ministries as we get older. We had a scare last year when a large amount was stolen from our online savings account. We had totally let go of that loss. A year later, this past Dec, a check arrived for \$62.12 more than we had lost. God is taking care of us.

However, we still need your donations. They are signs to us that the Lord is taking care of us through you. The gifts you have sent in the past year have made it possible for us to pay our bills even though we are receiving only a few stipends for our ministry. Your continued financial support will enable us to continue our ministry in the coming year. Your support has blessed us in so many ways, especially when we were experiencing medical challenges. We pray for you & your families every day. Mass will be celebrated for your intentions. Please remember us in your prayers.

May the One who makes peace reign in the heavens, the One whose name is Peace, fill your hearts, your lives and our world with the peace that only God can create.



We leave you with a saying on the back of the death card of Sr Anna's friend, Sr Rose Marie:

Namasté

**I honor the place within you in which the entire universe resides;
I honor the place within you of love, of light, of truth, of peace;
I honor the place within you where, when you are in
that place within you & I am in that place within me,
there is only one of us.**

Fr. Peter & Sr. Anna

Sr Rose Marie dancing a few days before she died.

Our **website** has - our [schedule](#) / most newsletters [with pictures], / our homilies & talks [on the 'Resources Page'] / other information.

You can find **all** of our [contact information](#) below.

THE **FRANCISCAN MINISTRY OF THE WORD AT BETHANY MINISTRIES** is
how **Friar Peter Chepaitis, OFM** & **Sister Anna Tantsits, IHM** earn their living

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St Francis in front of the house on Grove St



Former and current Members of our 11th step contemplative prayer group
At a N.E.T. dinner