



Key Moments in St. Peter's History

A series of historical highlights from the first 200 years of St. Peter – Libertytown.

St. Peter's Flower Ministry

St. Peter's Church is celebrating its 200th anniversary but the current Flower Ministry of St. Peter's is only 15 years young! As far as can be determined, beautifying the church altar and sanctuary in years past was mainly voluntary and occurred mostly on special holy days, such as Easter and Christmas. Minutes from the Ladies Club dating back to 1977 reflect that various members from the Club would take responsibility for 'beautifying' the altar from time to time.

During Fr. Gene Nichols' pastorate (1984-1992), the late Rita Scaglioni volunteered to make floral arrangements for the altar on a more regular weekly basis. Parishioner Diane Rolfs related a story about Rita approaching Fr. Gene with a request for \$10 a week to help with the cost of the flowers. Not surprisingly, Fr. Gene agreed to a much larger amount!



*Figure 1 Fr. Wible, in front of the creche, playing drum during homily
Christmas Day, 2022*

Before that time, Sebastian Grabenstein who joined the parish in 1948, and who just passed away a month ago at the age of 106, took a great interest in decorating the Church, particularly during the holy seasons of Christmas and Easter. For Christmas, he would donate freshly cut pine trees from his farm to be used in the sanctuary. Sebastian also paid special attention to setting up the creche – the creche we currently use. This creche was designed and built by Sebastian's son, Patrick Grabenstein and the Nativity figures were donated by Sebastian. Rita and Sebastian joined forces to decorate the church for many years on special occasions, including Christmas and Easter.

After the devastating fire of 2004, the parish celebrated Mass in the Parish Center and several people would regularly donate bouquets of flowers for the temporary altar. Lucia (Grabenstein) Kline and former parishioner, Marilyn Potter, using their garden club knowledge, started to make arrangements using flowers

and other plant material from their gardens.

After moving to the new church in late 2008, Lucia, Marilyn and Rose Grimes, who also contributed to the altar flowers, gradually formed a flower committee of interested volunteers. Marilyn, a flower show

instructor, conducted several workshops for new members to provide pointers on floral arranging in the sanctuary.

Shortly after Fr. Jason Worley became pastor of St. Peter's (2009-2018), Lucia was invited to join the Liturgy Committee and to participate on the Art and Environment sub-committee. That marked the birth of what we today call the Flower Ministry. At that same time Marilyn suggested that the Flower Ministry have an annual fundraiser to off-set the costs of flowers and plant material needed for weekly arrangements and the special liturgical celebrations throughout the year. St. Peter's Annual Tea was the result.



Figure 2 "A Colonial Tea" May 7, 2017



St. Peter's Tea, sponsored by the Flower Ministry, was first held in 2011 and has been held annually each Spring (except during Covid). One of the more anticipated events of the year, the Tea has a different theme each year, but the décor is always classic English. Each member of the Flower Ministry is responsible for the décor of their own table and for the preparation of the food served and members of our Knights of Columbus Council assist in the seating and table service. There is usually a silent auction feature in which guests can participate at their option. Once the delicacies have been enjoyed, there is always a well prepared floral program presentation. Tickets are limited and the event always sells out – sometimes before it is even announced in the Bulletin!

The ministry added an additional service in 2009, when they began helping wedding couples with their altar arrangements; this has the added benefit of giving back to the church, financially. The success of the Tea, combined with the Easter and Christmas Flower Memorials from the parishioners each year, have allowed the Flower Ministry to be a self-sustaining ministry of the Parish. In the past few years, the Ministry has even been able to contribute to the cost of hiring professional landscapers to trim the bushes and trees around the campus.

Some of the original volunteers to the flower committee continue to give their time and talent to the Flower Ministry and many new members have joined in their efforts over the last 15 years. Even though this Ministry is a fairly new part of the historical 200th celebration, these members take great pride in helping to add to the liturgical celebrations of this very special Parish.