



Key Moments in St. Peter's History

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

The Ladies Club

In 1937, a group of Catholic women formed the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary at St. Peter's. Every Tuesday, the Sodality met in the Church for Mass and afterwards, would pray the Miraculous Medal Novena. The Sodality was divided into small groups called bands, each having approximately thirteen ladies – and there were enough bands to fill the entire Church! Each lady wore a large Miraculous Medal on a long blue-ribbon necklace during the Mass and Novena. The ladies were active in other ways too; assisting the Sisters of Notre Dame with dinners and the annual two-day fall bazaar (the pre-cursor to our Christmas in the Country annual fundraiser). The Sodality lapsed for a time, but in 1952 was revived by the then “new” pastor, Father John Mountain. The late Anne Morrissey, a long time Sodality member, recalled starting a gift shop of religious articles and crafts and making so many quilts, dish towels and similar items that she wore out 3 sewing machines! Anne was also “in”famous for her tremendous success in selling raffle tickets for the hand sewn quilt at the Fall bazaar (now Christmas in the Country). Very few parishioners were able to ignore her admonition to “Buy a ticket!”



Figure 1 Ladies Club Bake Sale at Christmas in the Country, November 2022

In the late 1970's, the Sodality became known as St. Peter's Ladies Club. About that same time, Gloria Bezold, the first President of the Ladies Club, and her husband Harry, attended a funeral for Gloria's cousin at a church in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. A funeral lunch was provided by the members of that church and Gloria and Harry realized the marvelous benefits of this service for family and friends of the deceased. They were inspired to promote such a service at St. Peter's and in October 1981, the Ladies Club formally voted make this service available to parishioners. Then pastor Fr. Paul Iaia agreed and supported them, later hailing their success. It's no exaggeration that the praises for this service have come far and wide. The late Pearl Gallagher, a long time Ladies Club member, spent the winters in Florida. One day while staying in

in Florida, she stopped to talk with a gentleman who had Maryland car tags. Their discussion led to history of attending a funeral and luncheon in Libertytown, during which he praised the hospitality and lunch provided by the ladies of that parish. Imagine her surprise when she discovered that the parish he was referring to was her own beloved St. Peter's! While Gloria and Harry have passed away, the idea they brought to St. Peter's remains alive 42 years later, with funeral luncheons prepared upon request and at no cost to the family; although families frequently will send a donation to the Ladies Club in appreciation.

Although funeral luncheons remain the primary work of the Ladies Club, over the years fundraising activities have included the annual quilt raffle and bake sale at Christmas in the Country, yard sales, auctions, catered lunches, and dinners for various groups, including school groups with an occasional concession stand of sandwiches, hot dogs, and drinks for private events like estate auctions and once, for a horse show. The Ladies Club has been highly successful at raising money for St. Peter's. They have donated considerable funds to the Parish for the building fund, repairs and renovations, kitchen equipment, altar server robes, re-construction of the Memorial to the Unborn, furniture for Sappington Hall and the church mortgage. Much fruit has been born of their steadfast work and dedication.

Not all of the Ladies Club work is for fundraising, however. The Ladies Club supports many Parish events including Friday Lenten dinners, the Food Bank, receptions for our deacon ordinations, seminarians, and religious order parish members. The Ladies Club has also provided support to confirmation and holy communion classes, the blood mobile workers, Face the Truth Tour, the Annual Children's Coat drive in Frederick County, Frederick Rescue Mission, and they have prepared dinners for area senior citizen groups, complete with door prizes. The Ladies Club also chooses a charity to support every year; in 2021 the Ladies Club supported Sleep in Heavenly Peace, which provides twin beds to needy families at no charge. Until the Flower ministry was established in 2008, the Ladies Club also took responsibility for the majority of the decorating and weekly flowers which adorned the Church.

Monthly meetings are held after Mass on the First Friday of each month. Following those monthly meetings, they frequently have lunch together by providing the meal themselves or visiting favorite area restaurants. Quarterly events like faith building retreats and ice cream socials are held to deepen their faith and enhance the close friendships within the group.

St. Peter Ladies Club members quietly provide invaluable services to the parish and the broader community through their tireless devotion to their mission. There are currently over 35 members, and you will recognize the ladies by their green aprons with "St. Peter's Ladies Club" and their name in gold lettering. Over the years, some husbands of the members have been such a tremendous help that they have been named honorary Ladies Club members! New members (including non-Catholic wives of parishioners) are warmly welcomed into the group. To join, or to obtain more information about the Ladies Club, contact [Robyn Jacobs](#), the current Ladies Club president.