

The background image shows the exterior of St. Peter's Church, a Gothic Revival style building with stone masonry and a large arched entrance. In the foreground, there is a stone wall and a sign for a tribute. The sign features a shield with a cross and the text "St. Peter's Church" and "Henrietta Sparano".

Henrietta Sparano's Farewell Tribute

August 9, 2020

via Zoom

Photos and images from Koshy Mathews
and Judi Hans, compiled by Leo Guen

Retta's family

Father: The Reverend Philip T. Fifer

Mother: Letitia B. Fifer (nee Ashworth)

Siblings: (Retta #4 of 6)

- Helen Margargle*
- Bill & Patricia Fifer
- Christine Ziegler*
- Pete & Liz Fifer
- Kate & Bud Kircher

Children:

- Anthony Sparano
- Amy Sparano
- Paul Sparano

* = deceased



Saint Peter's rectory, now The Clinic.
Retta's childhood home since December 1950.

Family - Father



Father Fifer and Retta's sister Kate in the Rectory library.

Family - Mother



Retta's mother, Letitia Bowen Fifer (nee Ashworth)

Fond memories at the Rectory



Trick or Treating at the rectory --- many good memories for Retta and her siblings. Kate received this kimono outfit from brother Pete when he was stationed in Japan.

Leadership

- Fundraising
- Choir
- Worship
- Vestry senior warden
- Vestry accounting warden
- Historian
- Secretary to Deanery
- Various ministries
- Treasurer for 2019 Capital Campaign
- **Committee Chair/ Coordinator for:**
- Worship committee
- Search Committee for Father Koshy
- Organized Discernment Committee for Father Sam
- Headed 2007 Silent Auction
- Coordinated 2009 Winter Festival

Karen Martz testimonial:

St Peter's has been blessed with the Fifer/Sparano Family for many decades and has been made exponentially better because of it.

Retta has always been a leader in the church whether as a Senior Warden, Accounting Warden, Coffee Hour Leader, Events coordinator.

I really don't think there has been a lay persons' job in the church that Retta hasn't done ten-fold.

Retta has continuously dedicated her time, talents and treasures to St. Peters and all the members of it.

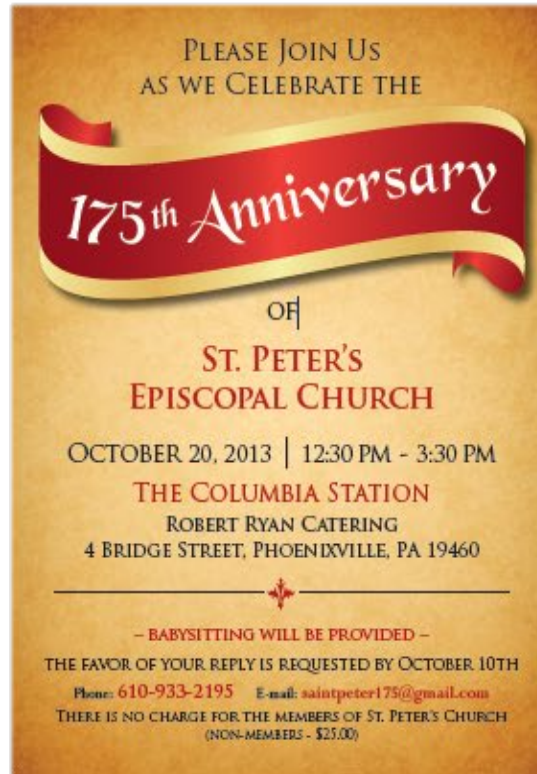
She will be sorely missed and the Martz family wishes her only the best in her new adventures in Ohio.

Social Events

Retta has been our resident “Party Girl”

- Coordinated the 175th Anniversary Party at Columbia Station
- Father Koshy’s 10th anniversary party
- Father Koshy’s Farewell celebration
- Anniversary Celebrations for Father David Hyatt and Deacon Joe Dietz
- Provided food for the Art Auction
- Instrumental in overseeing continuous Coffee Hour on Sunday

... plus many more events not listed



Retta worked really hard on the 175th anniversary luncheon. It was a first class event and a good time was had by everyone.



Please Join
Saint Peters Episcopal Church
At a Luncheon Honoring
Father Koshy & Susan Matthews

Sunday, June 2, 2019

11:30 a.m.

The Columbia Station
4 Bridge Street
Phoenixville, Pennsylvania

The Favor of a reply is requested
by May 12, 2019

610.933.2195 or
stpeter.phoenix@gmail.com

Dedication



How many times have we seen Retta in this pose?
Seamlessly multi-tasking with boundless patience.

Humility



Retta never seeks attention but is always in the middle of the action.

Beauty



A beautiful person, both inside and out.

Warm hands, warm heart



Christmas fun with the Women of Saint Peter's. L to R: Pat Howse, Beverly Burkhardt, Judi Hans, ?, ?, Retta, ?, ?, Lynn Schaeffer

Fundraising

- Jumble sales
- Book Nook
- Silent auction
- Christmas bazaar
- Capital Campaigns

***Retta is really good at asking and getting money
for Saint Peter's!***

St. Peter's Episcopal Church

121 Church Street • Phoenixville, PA 19460

Invites you to join us for an evening of
fellowship, fun and fine hors d'Oeuvres...

Silent Auction

Saturday, October 6, 2007 at 7:00 p.m.

tickets are **\$15⁰⁰** per person

—There will be a Door Prize—

Wine & Hors d'Oeuvres included
with price of admission

(610)933-2195

Contact the church
office for tickets.



Auction proceeds
support the work
and mission
of the church.

Once again, Retta worked for months to get auction items, food, the brochure, and coordinated it all.

Winter Festival



**Saint Peter's Episcopal
Church**
121 Church Street, Phoenixville

Saturday, December 2, 2006
9:00 AM to 3:00 PM

**Quality hand crafted items,
decorations, children's items, raffle,
baked goods and more....**

LUNCHEON IS AVAILABLE

Your sister made and donated most items!!!

ST. PETER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Jumble Sale

*To be held at St. Peter's Church,
121 Church St., Phoenixville*

An illustration of a dark brown elephant figurine standing on a grey rectangular box. The box has the text "STUFF FOR JUMBLE SALE" in black and "FRAGILE!" in red. The entire scene is set against a light blue background within a white-bordered square.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 27TH • 8AM-3PM
-and-
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 28TH • NOON-3PM

Refreshments available for purchase

*Proceeds to benefit the work and mission
of St. Peter's Church*

Retta always worked hard to secure items and food!

St. Peter's Episcopal Church

Books in
the Nook
Sale

**Gently Used Books, CDs,
DVDs & Videos**

Saturday, February 23, 2008
10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Refreshments

*Proceeds to benefit the work of St. Peter's Episcopal Church
121 Church Street, Phoenixville, PA*

Book Sale

Generosity

- Brass pew candles for (evening services).
- Lovely Coffee and Tea service for special events.
- Beautiful Nativity set used at Christmas.
- Faithful contributor to yearly stewardship drive, Capital Campaigns, and so much we don't know about.
- Retta is not boastful about how much she contributes in so many ways.
- She prefers to make donations anonymously. That's one of the many things we love about her.

Retta is not only good at getting money for Saint Peter's, she is also a generous giver!

Choir angelic voice



In the choir, Retta was an alto mainstay – here harmonizing with sopranos Iris Blanche, Georgette Druckenmiller & Karen Martz

Karen & Brian Martz & family stories:

One Christmas Eve we invited Retta to come share our dinner with us in between church services since the choir sang in both and there wasn't much time in between.

When she came she brought with her a box full of ribbon. She taught the girls how to make the stars that are put on the Christmas tree at church every year.

We still have that box up in the attic and enjoy thinking of her every Christmas time.

Retta has been such a wonderful influence on the Martz girls. They look up to her as a strong woman who spends much of her time volunteering for things she strongly believes in.

Emma thoroughly enjoyed sitting next to her in choir when the Brennfleck and Martz kids joined the adults.

Emma always said things like,

“Ms. Retta always seems to know the right notes to sing.”

Wise Counsel



A wise, reliable source of information, perspective and helping hand.
With Father Koshy Mathews, who forgot his selfie stick.

Toastmaster



The right words for the occasion always seem to flow out of Retta. Being surrounded by wonderful clergy and parishioners helps. Here she presents to Father David Hyatt.

Mentor



As Senior Warden, Retta has had many Vestry proteges, including Frank Rothenberger, who ensures her fundraising is precisely accounted for.

Partner in Crime



If enjoying good company, conversation, and fine dining is a crime...
But these smiles look like the grins of mice when the cat is away.

Magnetism



Proof of strong leadership is the strength and devotion of the leadership that follows you. Senior Warden Judi Hans and Accounting Warden Frank Rothenberger learned a few things from Retta at an early morning Wardens' meeting.

Stands out in a crowd



Always ready to lift her voice in song to bring joy to others, even if she's singing harmony, Retta still stands out --- this time, colorfully.

Coffee hour presence



Retta was the unseen organizer behind many a coffee hour, where so many relationships have been nurtured by simple food and drink. Here with Deacon Joe Dietz.

Camaraderie



Just one of the boys.

Foresight



Breaking bread with Gary and Carol Russell. Abundant good works certainly flowed from these planning sessions.

Contagious joyfulness



Merrymaking with Mark & Cindy Hammaker and Pegi Davidson.
What was this gathering about?

The power of women



No quite ladies' night out, but an enjoyable balance of food, wine, friendship, smiles and productivity at a cooking class.

Freeflow of ideas



The kitchen is always the center of the house, and a hub to generate fresh approaches and new ways of doing things.
Variety is the spice of life!

Survival of the fittest



How many times did Retta have to fight off the seductive low-cholesterol duo of Maine lobster in butter?
How hard did Retta resist this temptation offered by Koshy ?

Playful



While usually dignified, Retta could joke with the best. A springy snake is about to fly out of the box, to the surprise of Stewardship chair and Vestry secretary Mona Chylack.

Impersonator (of Santa)



Retta's generosity touched many hearts, with simple acts of kindness. She didn't have to wear a big red suit or white beard, but she did know who was naughty or nice.

Kind, compassionate and inspiring



As Retta moves to Ohio, she takes with her memories of many friendships she made at St Peter's, with people good-hearted people.

L to R: Vernet Spence-Brown, Barbara Rocci, Cindy Hammaker, Anne Andrews.

Comforting



Fifteen years ago, when Susan Mathews became the First Lady of St Peter's, she relied on Retta and others to find her feet.

Advocate for equality and human rights



At the annual Martin Luther King breakfast. Retta supported equality and human rights for all in the Phoenixville community.

Clockwise from left:

John Burkhardt, Vernet Spence-Brown, Rev. Dan, Rev. Asha George-Guiser, Judi Hans, Retta, Susan Mathews. Photo by Koshy.

Adaptable



Indoors or out, formal or informal, rain or shine, Retta always fits in.
At the Druckenmillers'. L to R: Ron Druckenmiller, Retta, Carol Smith,
Deacon Joe Dietz, Joyce Paster.

Innocent



How could Carol Russell not suspect “the other woman” after so many dinners? Even if accompanied by Father Koshy and Susan Mathews? Gary, you’re a lucky guy.

Still innocent



Carol Russell is not buying it.

Environmental Committee gift



The Environmental Committee wants to express its gratitude to Retta with this terrarium to be delivered this afternoon.

Every time you look at this Retta, be reminded how you were a breath of fresh air and grew a sustainable perennial garden filled with devoted, humble servants of God.

Nurturing in every way



Is everybody comfortable?

Love sponge



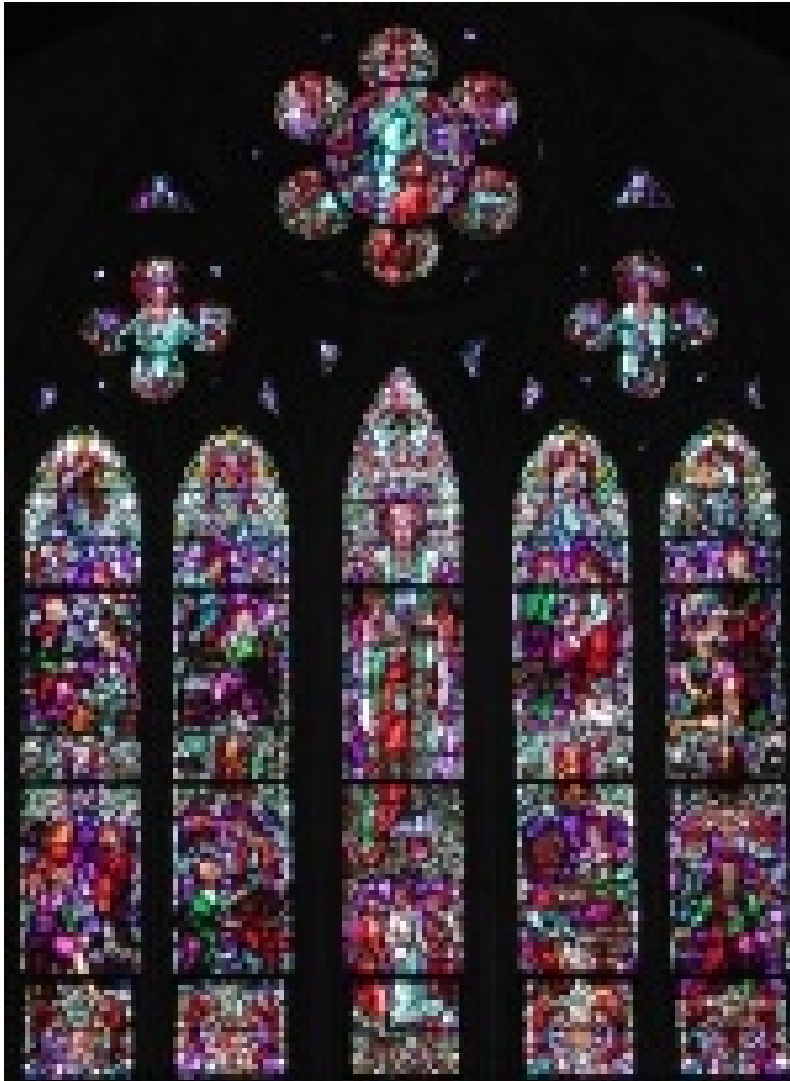
Retta was beloved by Koshy & Susan's entire family, including their son Ranjit and daughter Manju.

Trustworthy



A deep and everlasting bond with Susan Mathews.

Our thanks to Retta and the Fifer family



Whenever we appreciate the beauty and strength of St. Peter's church, let us be reminded of what Retta and the Fifer family have done to build its profound capacity and create space for our spiritual quest and connection.

Presentation of framed print of St Peter's Church door by Jan Wier and Mary Jo Wells.