

Thanksgiving and Commissioning of our Warden *Emeritus*

Dedicatory: *Webster's Dictionary* defines "warden" as one who watches over, and *emeritus* as an honor given to one who has long served with much merit, so as to retain one's title in retirement.

Thomas Ashford has watched over St. Peter's for more than 60 years as parishioner, vestry member, and warden. His other titles include Lay Eucharistic Minister – at our altar, to our shut-ins, and to the residents of Schoellkopf Health Center, Acolyte Master, Guardian of the Boiler, Purchasing Agent, Wildfire Control Officer, Volunteer Groundskeeper and Flag Raiser, as well as Delegate to Deanery and Diocesan Convention. Recognizing his leadership, he was elected by the people of the Diocese of Western New York to serve on the Standing Committee, the body that governs the diocese between conventions.

Thomas and his beloved, late wife, Margaret, taught their children – and ours – by word and example, the faith that continues to sustain them. His life exemplifies the "good and faithful servant" and his relationship with his Master is one of trusting love. He is a generous and cheerful giver to friends and strangers alike.

We are privileged to have Thomas in our midst as our guardian, Christ's servant, and our beloved companion on The Way.

Antiphon **The Lord gives wisdom.**

Vesicle He is a shield to those who walk with integrity.

Response **The prayer of a righteous man avails much.**

Bishop Almighty God, we thank you for raising up among us Elders in the Faith. Let Thomas' guidance, prayer, and witness among us continue to produce grace upon grace, wisdom from on high, and courage for the days to come, as he continues to serve us as St. Peter's first Warden *Emeritus*.
AMEN.