



Parish of Saint Paul
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The Epistle

December 2007

Upcoming Events

Monday	Dec 10	4pm	Salvation Army Dinner
Wednesday	Dec 12		Outreach Christmas Lunch at Waltham Community Center
Wednesday	Dec 12	7:15pm	Vestry Meeting - Lee's
Saturday	Dec 15	6pm	Potluck Dinner and Carol Sing
Sunday	Dec 16		Stewardship Pledge In-Gathering (see attached)
Monday	Dec 17	1pm	Christmas Flower Dedication Deadline (see attached)
Sunday	Dec 23	noon	Vestry Coffee Hour with Christmas Tidings
Monday	Dec 24	10am	Pageant Rehearsal
		4:30pm	Christmas Carols
		5pm	Christmas Pageant and Service
		9:30pm	Christmas Carols
		10pm	Christmas Service
Sunday	Dec 30	10:30am	Lessons and Carols
Saturday	Jan 5	5pm	Epiphany Progressive Dinner
Monday	Jan 7	7:30pm	Bridging Committee
Monday	Jan 14	7pm	St. John's Book Group
Sunday	Jan 20	12pm	Annual Meeting
Sunday	Jan 27		Bishop Shaw Visit
Saturday	Feb 2		Jazz and Jambalaya Event

Welcome All!

ST PAUL'S POTLUCK DINNER AND CAROL SING

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2007
6:00 P.M.

Please join us for dinner and song in the Parish Hall. Contact Betty Murray to sign up for a dish.

News and Notes from Church School

Worshipping Together

In late October, John McDargh and I went to a diocesan workshop on "Children at Worship." We learned about children, and a whole lot more! Episcopal churches all around the Northeast are opening up spaces in the Sunday liturgy so that kids, teens, and adults can share more of themselves at church. As the year goes on, the kids and grownups of Church School invite the whole St. Paul's community to keep entering into the liturgy with our whole hearts, minds and souls!

So far, such opportunities have included:

- Children's Liturgy on Oct. 21: look for more young readers, ushers and altar servers

- All Saints Celebration and Altar of Remembrance: Church School students learned to write the names of their beloved “saints” and their own names in the Greek alphabet – the script of our most ancient icons
- Thanksgiving Sunday: Church School students created a Thanksgiving banner and led us in praying our thanksgivings out loud.

Advent Calendar

Join us for any or all of the following activities during Church School, Sundays 9:15-10:15 or as noted:

Dec 2, 1st Sunday of Advent

Making of Advent Wreaths: Bring your fresh cut greens (and your old metal wreath rings if you have them). St. Paul’s will provide binding wire, candles and additional rings for those who need them.

Dec 9, 2nd Sunday of Advent

Come learn about celebrating a “Simpler Christmas.” See below for more details.

Dec 16, 3rd Sunday of Advent

Preparations for our annual Christmas Pageant.

Dec 23, 4th Sunday of Advent

Pageant rehearsal during Church School.

Trimming the Parish Christmas Tree during social hour after 10:30 liturgy.

Special “Ecological Ornament Exchange:” Bring an ornament from home for the Parish

Tree, and receive a nature-friendly ornament in return! Friends of all ages are welcome to pray with us, trim our tree, and take a little piece of St. Paul’s cheer home to theirs!

Dec 24, Monday, Christmas Eve

Carols at 4:30; Christmas Pageant at 5:00pm Family Service

Simpler Christmas

Presents, wrapping paper, office parties, and endless holiday music on the radio – I sometimes find it hard to remember “the Reason for the Season.” But when Maeve Ward and Laura Powers-Patey approached me about incorporating ecological stewardship into the Church School curriculum, it made perfect sense. Caring for nature is not an add-on to the story of Christmas; it’s part of what honoring “Incarnation” is all about.

Our Mennonite brothers and sisters are great leaders in Christian education for personal and social change. The Mennonite sponsored website, www.buynothingchristmas.org, contains practical and spiritual suggestion on how to keep Christmas more simple, less commercial, and more ecologically friendly. The “alternatives” tab lists dozens of alternative gift ideas, everything from homemade calendars and handmade art, to a trip to the resale store.

Come hear Maeve and Laura talk up “Simpler Christmas” at Church School on Sunday Dec 9. And don’t forget to bring an ornament to the Parish Ornament Exchange on Dec 23!

Other Church School News

We’re glad to report that several of our older students are connecting with the Rite 13 early teenage program at St. John’s, Newton. On Sundays when Rite 13 is in session, Eliza Blay has volunteered to pick them up and drive them back to St. Paul’s in time for our 10:30 service. This is a great opportunity for our students to connect with other young Episcopalians, and to grow in their reflection and commitment to a life of faith.

The St. Charles Deanery is coordinating a monthly get-together for middle school aged youngsters – including prayer, conversation, interesting activities, and ... oh, yeah, ... FUN! See John Falcone for details.

We are still looking for one or more volunteers to work with our St. Paul’s teens. Coaching and support will be provided – to the volunteer!! Free pizza and heartfelt conversation with young adults also available. See John Falcone if you are curious.

--John Falcone

Choir Schedule for December

Children's Choir

Thursday, Dec. 6 at 5:30 pm -- rehearsal

Thursday, Dec. 13 at 5:30 pm -- rehearsal

Thursday, Dec. 20 at 5:30 pm -- rehearsal

Monday, Dec. 24 at 4:00 pm -- warm-up for Singing at Christmas Pageant and Service

Monday, Dec. 24 at 4:30 pm -- Carol Sing

Monday, Dec. 24 at 5:00 pm -- Christmas Pageant and Service

Festival Choir for Christmas Eve Services:

Please join the choir to sing joyous Christmas music with the trumpet! Here is the schedule of Festival Choir:

Thursday, Dec. 13 at 7:00 pm -- rehearsal

(NO rehearsal on Thursday, Dec. 20)

Saturday, Dec. 22 at 1:00 pm -- rehearsal

Monday, Dec. 24 at 8:30 pm -- warm-up for Christmas Eve Service

Monday, Dec. 24 at 9:30 pm -- Carol Sing

Monday, Dec. 24 at 10:00 pm -- Christmas Eve Service

Stewardship Committee

On December 2, the Vestry sent out Stewardship Pledge forms for the coming year. The in-gathering date for these forms is December 16. If you have any questions, please speak to any Vestry member. A copy of the form is attached and is also available on the St. Paul's website – www.parishofstpaul.org.

For those of you who have given securities to St. Pauls in the past, please be aware that we are closing the account we have had for years with Bear Stearns into which you transferred these securities. Please contact Chris Meyer for new transfer instructions.

Outreach Committee

Gobble, Gobble!

(That means THANK YOU! In Turkish)

We gave the turkey 56 feathers and donated \$280 to Warwick House to provide nutritious food throughout the holidays.

Over the past five years we have raised:

2002 - \$250

2003 - \$260

2004 - \$220

2005 - \$330

2006 - \$225

Cake bakers needed. Four times a year the Outreach Committee from St. Pauls cooks and serves a dinner at the Salvation Army Headquarters in Framingham. One of the most appreciated parts of the dinner is the homemade chocolate cakes we serve for desert. We need some cake bakers for the December 10 Salvation Army Dinner. Please see or call Ellie Pandorf if you can bake 2 cakes for December 10, or if not then perhaps another time.

Faith and the Environment

Connecting Children and Nature

Maeve Ward and Laura Patey recently had the opportunity to attend a fascinating and inspiring conference sponsored by Mass Audubon at Wheelock College. The title of the conference was Connecting Children and Nature. Though the target audience was educators at all levels, Maeve and Laura found the keynote speakers to be profoundly moving and their message applicable to our community at the Parish of Saint Paul. During the opening of the conference, a slide show presenting images of children and adults interacting with nature and breathtaking scenes of natural beauty filled the large screen.

The speakers included Peter Forbes, the Executive Director of the Center for Whole Communities; Gina McCarthy, the Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection; Priscilla Geigis, the Director of State Parks for the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation; and Richard Louv, the Chairman of the Children & Nature Network and author of, "Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder". Their rich experience and ability to convey hope about our children's future and the importance of connecting everyone, especially our children, with nature proved to be uplifting to the 500+ attendees. They did not focus on the environmental crisis that we know exists today; instead they provided us with inspiration and motivation to share the wonders of nature and to help us all make the "soul/soil connection".

Forbes asked each of us to picture a special place from our childhood. He then asked us to raise our hands if that special place was somewhere inside? Only one or two people raised their hands. For everyone else, that special place was a place in nature. He followed us by asking if we had ever returned to that place. Forbes tried to return to his favorite childhood haunt--a mysterious babbling brook. As he searched for this place he realized that it had been taken over by a development. Through this and other examples he continued to speak to the problem of consumerism, the disconnect between the real and the artificial. "Does the American dream", he asked, "represent progress or extinction?"

Forbes reminded us of the importance of putting the child back into nature. Conservationists, he pointed out, are good at preservation but not relationships. "Look at the signs posted all across the country -"Keep Out," "No trespassing, etc." We can only win through relationships that touch the human heart – not laws or limits. We need to tell stories that inspire such as the story of Classy, who turned a vacant, trash-strewn lot in Harlem into a bountiful small vegetable garden. This garden provides an environment filled with joy and wholesome nourishment for the kids and adults who dwell in a sea of stark, tall buildings. When Forbes visited with Classy in Harlem, the woman introduced him to her Dad. She asked, "Don't you feel that my Dad is your Dad?" We are all connected. Forbes' final question left us with much to consider - "What does the extinction of the condor mean to a child who has never known a wren?"

Gina McCarthy and Priscilla Geigis introduced the "No Child Left Inside" programs offered through the Massachusetts and Connecticut parks systems. They were so clear in their message that we now we have to teach kids about nature, and the earlier, the better. McCarthy told how her mother woke her and her siblings up before 7 am and shooed them out of the house. To punish her kids her mother kept them inside. She followed up by saying that if her mother did that today, she might be arrested. This problem occurs not just in urban and suburban areas, but in and rural areas as well. In fact, with televisions on buses and the prevalence of video games the rural kids may spend even more time inside. So what can we do? In both States these leaders have innovated very successful nature-based programs in the State parks to attract families, all kinds of families. As long as the group includes someone over the age of 18 with someone under the age of 18 – they consider them a family. These nature programs appeal to all types of interests, talents, and abilities. Participants who take part and visit a certain number of parks within a specified time receive awards, such as a year's membership at Mass Audubon. This annual program is one that the Parish of Saint Paul may wish to consider. Wouldn't it be wonderful to have our Parish Family participate in this great adventure?

The keynote speaker, Richard Louv, began by saying, "I'm used to depressing people. And we have a cultural addiction to despair." But then he challenged us to change how we talk about these important issues. He encouraged us to "Tell the good news" as he reiterated Peter's eloquent plea for connections to the human heart as shown through the example of Classy. "How could he top that?" he mused - "and the exciting adventures in the state parks: what more?"

For mental, physical, and spiritual health we need nature; survival, even sustainability aren't enough. We are conditioned to fear for our lives once we go out the front door. Yes, dangers do lurk in the natural world. Remember the adages that we learned as children: "Leaves of three, let them be," or "Stay on trails when nature walking." And the media don't help by

over-the-top reporting about crimes against children that occur outside our homes and the subsequent trials that happen. But locking our kids up inside in order to keep them safe is causing more harm than good. Tell the good news, he expounds. Plopping down with your kid into fresh-fallen snow to create snow angels--helps reduce stress. Nature therapy affects creativity, and for kids, helps cognitive development and perhaps even Attention Deficit Disorder. Talking up new careers that will open up to combat climate change will thwart teenagers' despair about the survival of the Earth. To combat global climate change we'll have to change everything, economically, socially, politically, etc. - and the change has already started. Louv warned in conclusion: what's at stake is nothing less than the survival of our communities, our states, and our nation.

Let's take up this challenge and go for it!

--Maeve Ward and Laura Patey

Diocesan Convention

The Diocesan Convention entitled "Partnerships in Ministry, Holy partners in a heavenly calling" met in Fitchburg, which is in the Diocese of Western Massachusetts, on Friday, Nov. 2 and Saturday, Nov. 3. One of the key pieces of business of the convention was to approve the Diocesan Assessments and Budget for 2007. The total balanced budget of the diocese is \$7,736,500, of which \$5,223,000 comes from assessments on the parishes. St. Paul's share is \$10,862. In turn, the diocese is assessed about \$1,200,000 by the national church. You can find details of the budget in a booklet on the table in the back of the church.

We also approved the report of the Committee on Clergy Compensation and Benefits which sets the formula and numbers for the Total Clergy Compensation (TCC) and other benefits. They presented three ways by which clergy and parishes can meet clergy health insurance needs.

In addition, the convention elected clerical and lay delegates to General Convention. Candidates for other positions, such as members of the Standing Committee, ran unopposed.

Convention approved with no discussion a resolution urging the defeat of any legislation allowing for the expansion of gambling in the Commonwealth; with extended discussion a resolution on a new geographical reference for Bernard Mizeki, Catechist and Martyr (change from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe); and with no discussion a resolution to develop a Spanish language antiracism training program in the diocese.

A resolution on the adoption of a covenant on mutual interdependence in mission, and a resolution on the United States military were returned to committee, the former voluntarily withdrawn and the latter only after much discussion.

An amendment to the Diocesan Constitution allowing all parishes in the diocese to send two representatives to the Diocesan Convention was passed for the second year in a row. It therefore, takes effect for next year's convention. Passed for the first time were amendments to clarify the amendment process and one to allow lay members of Diocesan Council to vote at Diocesan Convention. Both of these must be passed next year to take effect. A new Canon was approved which creates a Diocesan Review Committee which will consider a Charge filed against any Priest or Deacon of the diocese, and which may issue or not a Presentment in the matter.

Reports from various committees and commissions of the diocese were given throughout the Convention. Two lengthier presentations were made on partnerships in ministry. These focused on the overseas partnership with Tanzania and El Salvador; the national partnership with the Gulf Coast; diocesan partnership with Esperanza, a free middle school for 60 Spanish speaking girls which has been established in Lawrence; and locally, the establishment of outreach grants to the deaneries for this coming year.

There were three worship services and three meditations by Bishop Shaw. I found the meditations to be particularly thoughtful and challenging. The bishop began by looking at the Gospel of Mark. What he found there was an expression of questions, doubts, uncertainties, and conflict, not unlike what each of us and the church experiences. "How to deal with all of these?", the Bishop asked. The answer in Jesus' time and in ours is to pray, Tom responded. But also to begin with the concept "that God loves me and is pleased with me before I do anything". This is a wonderful place to begin if we have the courage and the patience to do so.

Tom's second meditation was built around the theme that God trusts each of us and we need to trust God and each other. Tom used the example of a parish in Malden which he visited and which had declined in numbers to about a dozen

parishioners. He spent his time with them exploring their future. As a result of their discussion, they moved down the path toward closing the parish, but they wanted to remain together. So they all got into a van or vans and each Sunday visited as a group nearby parishes. They also had a series of questions they asked the members of each parish they visited. When they asked Tom what would happen to their assets if they closed, he said that they would sit with him and others from the deanery to see what was the best use of them to further the mission of the church - that it was a time to trust in God and God's message to all of those involved.

Tom's final meditation focused on the four Gospels and their treatment of the death and resurrection of Christ. He pointed out that the stories about the suffering and death are approximately the same in all four, but the experiences of and encounters with the risen Christ are quite different in each of the four. Tom said that we all experience suffering and death in similar ways, but each of us experiences the risen Christ in a different way. We should also understand that Christ has been where we are before us and is out ahead of us. We are not alone and Christ's glory can be ours as well. Powerful messages from the Bishop.

I would be happy to discuss or try to clarify any of this with you. Give me a call, email, or see me in church.

Phil Whitbeck,
Delegate to the Diocesan Convention from the Parish of St. Paul, Newton Highlands

News Notes

The 12th Night Party--it's that time again! Save, Saturday, January 5 for a progressive dinner with St. John's and Trinity. We plan to have appetizers at St. John's, dinner at Trinity, and then dessert at St. Paul's, complete with singing and the crowning of the King or Queen of the Weather. Finish up the Christmas season "with a bang"! Please contact Ellie Pandorf to volunteer or for more information.

The next meeting of the Book Group at St. John's will be at 7pm on January 14th. We will discuss Three Bags Full: A Sheep Detective Story by Leonie Swann. This light-hearted book will be a nice holiday read. For more information, speak to Betsy Blagdon.

Celebrations

December Birthdays

2 Jake Edwards
5 Eleanor Evans
7 Derby Swanson
15 Eugene Osborne, Jr.
16 Phyllis Evans
25 Amy Radin, Claudia Deane
26 Nicholas Winset, Elizabeth Pearce
29 Kim Streetman
31 Ginny Fruhan

Articles are due on the 20th for publication on the 1st
Submissions to epistle@parishofstpaul.org