
ST. PAUL'S EPISTLE

December 2006

Dear Friends,

I'm still learning how to wait with some sort of composure. I'm better at it at this age of my life than I was at any other time. My first response to being in a waiting situation is exasperation, but I am able to move myself to a better place—usually one of acceptance, resignation, and then even to a place of opportunity. Eventually, in waiting, I end up taking time to think about my family and friends, my ministry at St. Paul's. I pray; often I pray that the waiting be over. I continue to learn that in waiting there is tremendous opportunity for grace.

There has been a period of preparation and waiting for the Feast of the Nativity in the Christian church since 380 A.D. The period of waiting has changed throughout time in length and in rituals. Historically the period focused on sin and penance. There are still signs of that in the purple colors of the church during this period. Churches were not and are not decorated until the last moment possible before the Christmas celebration to indicate penitence and somber self-reflection.

However, the focus of this time in the church has moved from contemplation of sin and penance to a much more hopeful and expectant mood. When we read the history of our ancestors in the Hebrew Scriptures, we come to understand that the expectation of the promised Messiah was not about sin at all. It was about injustice and oppression. The idea of the Messiah's coming was one of joy and hopefulness. When contemplating the entrance of God into the world, our ancestors became confident, they became active, they were emboldened to right the wrongs they could in the moment of their lives.

This is the spirit of Advent that is unfolding in many Christian churches today. It is filled with the spirit of hopeful anticipation, a spirit of confident expectation that the evils of the world will be destroyed. War, poverty, oppression, and all the things that divide and destroy God's people will be wiped out, and the "peace of God which passes all human understanding" will prevail not only in our hearts and minds, but in all places and for all people in the world.

The season of Advent is a time of waiting, a waiting that is full of promise and certain joy. As Christians, we are always waiting for Jesus to return. As we move through Advent every year we are called upon to remember God's saving act of sending Jesus into the world. In that greatest of gifts God affirms the Divine Love for all humanity that is offered to us. It is a time of wonder and hope, as well as a time to contemplate God's hope for all people. The season is quiet and moves slowly (in the church, that is). The season gives us an opportunity for grace in waiting. It is a time to think of the good things in our lives and to become even more mindful of the needs of others. By waiting, by keeping the exuberance of the gift of Christmas on hold for a while, by reigning in our need to "get there," we allow Christmas to suddenly appear in the liturgical feasts and celebrations. It bursts upon us with all the joy and wonder that God's love promises. Listen to the longing we hear in the readings this season, listen to the plaintive psalms, listen to the hymns and the words of hopeful joy in them. And then on Christmas, let the magnificence of God's love shine all around you as it did for the shepherds. Prepare for joy, my friends.

Frank +

Meet the Vestry: Carrie Mathews

Carrie Mathews is a new vestry member, but she is certainly not new to St. Paul's. Carrie's family has been with St. Paul's since the "beginning," with her grandfather being a building founder and her mother attending the church as a young girl. Carrie's parents, Paul and Wendy Ciaccia, lived in Hudson when first married, and Carrie was baptized at St. Luke's Episcopal Church. In 1977 they returned to Bedford, settled on MacIntosh Road, and started to attend St Paul's again. Carrie has many wonderful memories as a child here. She participated in many Christmas Pageants and was a Virgin Mary "wannabe." However, there were so many girls in her age group, her highest billing was as a tall Angel Gabriel.



Carrie went to school at Colgate, where she met her future husband Charles. They next spent four years in Washington, D.C., and attended St. Margaret's Episcopal Church while living there. Following this, they spent two years in Durham, NC, where Carrie became active with a handbell choir at a nearby Methodist church. When Charles finished his studies, he honored Carrie's deal to "move back to Boston, since [she] had moved to Durham." Charles probably knew better than to challenge her, since Carrie had earned a purple belt in taekwondo many years earlier.

Carrie and Charles were married at St. Paul's in May 2003 in a ceremony officiated by our rector Frank. After a honeymoon in the Greek Isles, Carrie had to go back to Durham to finish work commitments. Charles had to stay in the Boston area, so he lived with his new in-laws—probably the first time a groom went back to a mother-in-law. After returning from Durham, Carrie began working for a media company, providing research for senior IT executives and writing for *CIO* magazine.

Carrie and Charles settled for a year in Brighton, and started attending Carrie's home church of St. Paul's once again. During this time Carrie became a member of the 50th Anniversary Committee, and when that role was completed, she went on to become a vestry member and to co-chair the middle school youth group with Suzanne Johnson. With all this on her plate she still finds time to go to the Ciaccia "Maine estate" (her parents' lakefront cottage) and enjoy a baseball game or two. Carrie's and Charles's love of baseball is so complete that an imprinted baseball was given out as a wedding favor.

In 2005 Carrie and Charles bought a home in Acton, where Carrie is a member of the Acton Family Network. Their daughter Avery was born in August 2005 and baptized at St. Paul's, making her the 4th generation of the family to attend our church. Who knows . . . maybe Avery will fill the role of the Virgin Mary in a future Christmas Pageant and fulfill Carrie's wish vicariously.

Meet the Vestry: Peter Ricci

Peter Ricci was born in Cambridge and lived in Somerville before his family moved to Lexington when he was young. He was raised Roman Catholic. “My family was and still is a melting pot of religions. My mom was raised German Protestant and converted to Judaism in her adult life. My dad was raised Roman Catholic and my grandmother was Methodist,” says Peter. He attended Catholic school for a short time and was active in his home parish through high school.



Peter met his future wife, Becky Wolf, in the mid-1990s. He came to St. Paul's on and off while they were dating, attending events like Christmas caroling. By 1996 he considered himself a full-time member. “We lived in Somerville and started to attend church on a more regular basis. We got married at St. Paul's in May 1998 by Ann Broomell—“her first marriage at St. Paul's,” recalls Peter. “I still remember Ann coming to check on me before the ceremony started—in the old kitchen! That's where the groom entered the church back then.”

Peter and Becky continued living in Somerville after getting married, but Becky was an environmental educator and wanted trees in her yard—a fact Peter reminds her of every time they rake leaves in the fall. They looked briefly in Lexington, but were drawn to Bedford given Becky's connection. And then, as Peter puts it “we found the proverbial fixer-upper.” In fact, they moved into just one room of their house in January 2000 on the coldest day of the year. His daughter Joleen was born in January 2002, and Quinn followed two years later. Both were baptized at St. Paul's. “And we also have a cat named Scout who came before both of them!” says Peter.

Peter has been in the EMS field for over 20 years and became a Lexington firefighter in 1997. “It's interesting working for the town where I grew up. I know everyone, which is a great part of the job; but on the flip side I'm more likely to run into people I know who are in an emergency situation.”

When asked what he does in his spare time, Peter responded, “What spare time?” However, he eventually revealed that he'd like to do more woodworking. One thing that you probably didn't know about Peter is that he does editorial cartoons for the *Lexington Minuteman* newspaper.

Peter Ricci came to St. Paul's by way of his wife Becky, but has clearly made his own mark through his involvement in many of the church's activities like the 50th Anniversary Committee, men's group, vestry, and his role as chairman of the Property Committee. Peter is the first to acknowledge the importance of St. Paul's in his life. “I married into a St. Paul's legacy family. Until just recently, four generations of the Rose/Wolf/Ricci family were attending church on a regular basis—how amazing is that!”

Catechesis Corner

Session II of Catechesis is going well. We have been teaching some parables and a little geography of the holy land, leading into the early Nativity stories—the visitations of the angel to Mary, and Mary to Elizabeth. These set the stage for Advent. Lead teachers this session have been Lisa Hafer, Sharon Keane, Amanda Hubbard, Louisa Saladino-Kuhl, and Ellen Ryan, assisted by many others. Thanks to all!



December will be an unusual month for Catechesis. Because of the pageant and the timing of holidays and Family Services, there will not be any full classes. On December 3rd, we will have Catechesis I as usual in the atrium following the children's sermon, and will introduce the Nativity story. We hope all children will participate in the Pageant (December 17th) this year. However, for any who do not want to, or who are finding the rehearsal a bit much, the Catechesis I atrium will be open on Dec. 10th. Children will remain with their families in church on Dec. 24th and 31st. Please explain to your children what is happening, and that we will be back in our routine in the new year.

We wish all children, teachers, and their families a very happy Christmas and holidays!

Looking ahead to January: teachers, please save the date of Wednesday, Jan. 10th for a long-overdue meeting.

Amanda Hubbard & Ellen Ryan

St. Paul's Elementary Sunday School Program

Our Elementary Sunday school program is in full swing, having just completed the first session. Each year our beginning session covers living in community and the Episcopal Church. This year we had a great time exploring different communities we belong to, our families, our schools, St. Paul's Church, our neighborhoods, and our classes. We learned about the Ten Commandments and how following these rules help us live peacefully in God's community. What better way to learn about living in God's community than looking at our saints? The children learned about St. Paul, St. Francis, St. David Pendleton Oakerhater (a Cheyenne Leader who became a missionary to his own people), and St. Florence Li Tim-Oi (the first woman priest in the Anglican Church). Looking at our own Episcopal community, we learned about the Bible, our prayer book, and some of the gestures used during the Eucharistic prayers.

Advent is just around the corner, and we will begin waiting for Jesus' birth. The children are looking forward to sharing the nativity story with the St. Paul's congregation on Sunday, December 17.

Thank you to all of our Sunday school teachers: Stacy Schalick, Chris Thompson, Janice Young, Susan Adamik, Andrea Hayes, Ariana Seymourian, Becky Ricci, Sima Seymourian, and Ailin Thomas.

Dates to remember

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| Sunday, Dec. 10 | Christmas Pageant rehearsal during Sunday school |
| Saturday, Dec. 16 | Christmas Pageant Dress-Rehearsal |
| Sunday, Dec. 17 | Christmas Pageant |
| Thursday, Jan. 4 | Session 3 Sunday school planning meeting, 7:30 P.M. |

Cathy Presti

Christmas Pageant 2006

Help celebrate the birth of Jesus in a special way. All children of St. Paul's are invited to participate in the annual Christmas Pageant.

Rehearsal Schedule

Sunday, December 10th

Rehearsal during the church service for everyone

Costume fitting after rehearsal and church

(parent volunteers needed)

Saturday, December 16th

9:00 A.M. Narrators and Readers

9:45 A.M. All Children

Sunday, December 17th: Pageant Day!

9:00 A.M. ALL PARTICIPANTS arrive to prepare.

Parents, please help dress your children; then you may be seated in church.



If you have questions, please call or write me at 781-275-9795 or Ellenarian@comcast.net.

Ellen Ryan

Middle School Youth

Ever wonder what it's like to climb straight up a wall? Ask members of the middle school youth group who traveled to Boulder Morty's indoor rock wall climbing gym in Nashua, NH on November 11th and they'll tell you it's lots of fun! Miranda Keane, Shea Kuhl and her friend Charlotte, Eric Wicks and his friend Craig, Ariana Seymourian, Jake Seymourian, and Emma Healey, along with Suzanne Johnson and Carrie & Charles Mathews, made the trip. Trained belayers helped us out as we climbed walls of varying difficulty, and halfway through we enjoyed a pizza dinner to re-energize.

After Thanksgiving, we combined forces with the high school youth group to bake cookies to give out during Christmas caroling and prepare care packages for St. Paul's youth away from home.

This month, December 17th is a busy day for us—we will participate in the pageant during the day and then sing a few fa-la-la's to members of the parish as we go Christmas caroling in the evening.

Carrie Mathews & Suzanne Johnson

Christmas Caroling and Progressive Dinner

What better way to enjoy the Christmas season than to sing Christmas carols and enjoy a progressive dinner with friends from St. Paul's. We will meet at St. Paul's at 5:00 P.M. on Saturday, Dec. 17th.

If you and your family are interested in joining, please sign the sign-up sheet in the hallway or see Frank or Ron with any questions.

Ron Presti

Buy a Brick, Build a Barn!

Last March a massive fire destroyed the Overlook Farm barn in Rutland, Massachusetts. Overlook Farm is a 270-acre working farm located in Rutland, Massachusetts. As a demonstration site for the Heifer Project, the farm helps visitors gain a new understanding of the causes of hunger and poverty and a renewed appreciation for the solutions Heifer provides.

Over 5,000 visitors from all over the USA come to Overlook Farm each year to view exhibits, visit animal displays, and tour the Global Village, which provides working examples of the type of sustainable agriculture Heifer supports around the world.

St. Paul's is raising funds by "selling" bricks to help rebuild the barn. Come visit the Heifer table at Coffee Hour and at the Advent Fair.



The Heifer Project works with communities around the world to end hunger and poverty by providing animals to needy families—giving them economic security and better nutrition. Since 1944, Heifer International has helped more than four million families in need, providing 29 types of animals and intensive training in animal management, environmentally-sound farming and community development in more than 125 countries.

Caroline Larson

Do Your Christmas Shopping at Amazon.com!

Are you an online Christmas shopper? Amazon.com has almost everything you need for everyone on your list. And if you click through the St. Paul's website first, every purchase you make on Amazon will earn money for St. Paul's. Just go to www.stpaulsbedford.org and click on the Amazon link on the left-hand side of the homepage. You'll be directed to Amazon, where you can shop to your heart's content.

A few recommendations for your holiday reading pleasure (all on our Wish List)

The Memory Keeper's Daughter by Kim Edwards
This word-of-mouth phenomenon focuses on the consequences of a father's decision to institutionalize his brain-damaged daughter—and the delivery nurse's decision to defy that order. A powerful and heart-wrenching novel.

Leaving Church: A Memoir of Faith
by Barbara Brown Taylor
Taylor expounds on her personal journey of faith, which led her to resign from active pastoral ministry after 20 years in urban and rural Episcopal parishes—an act that surprised and

scared her, and left her questioning her vocation. Taylor's writing is witty, moving, and compelling: *Booklist* called this "a luminous portrait of faith not lost but questioned, refound, and regained."

Tuck Everlasting by Natalie Babbitt
The Giver by Lois Lowry
These two picks for younger readers are classics, and for good reason: both explore the meanings of life and community, creating alternative societies to illuminate the choices we all make in our daily lives. No child (or adult, for that matter) should leave these unread.

Advent Adult Forums

Dreams and Waiting for the Christ Child: Sunday, December 10th after church

Our seminarian, Sue Crommelin, offers this fascinating look at dreams and faith. Dreams are important throughout the Bible: just look at all the dreams and visions surrounding the coming of the Christ Child. Let us begin to prepare our hearts for this joyful and mysterious event by looking at our own dreams. Start recording your dreams now! Then on December 10th at the Adult Forum, come, sit down and rest for a little while, and share and listen to the dreams of your faith community. There we can listen together to see what the Spirit is saying to God's people as we await the coming of God's beloved child into the world.

Foundations of Religion: Frank will host an adult forum series based on Karen Armstrong's book *The Great Transformation: The Beginning of Our Religious Traditions*. Starting Tuesday, December 5th, at 7:00 P.M. and continuing each Tuesday until the 19th. Soup and bread will be served.

Reading Group: Humor for the Holidays

Our new read-aloud group reconvenes on Sunday, December 10th, at 7:00 P.M. in the library. Bring one of your favorite selections of humor and share it with the group.

Joan Reddy

SAVE THE DATE!

Women's Group Epiphany Breakfast

Saturday, January 6th, 8:30 A.M.

Please join the women of the parish for a winter breakfast at St. Paul's in the library. We are planning to have this event at the church to allow more people to attend and to make it easier and less crowded for conversation. This will be an opportunity to relax together after the busy holiday season. If you are new to St. Paul's, this is an informal and easy way to meet other members of the Parish. Watch for final details in the January Epistle—and plan to join us!

Betsy Anderson

Epistle Submissions

While we are in the process of finding a new parish administrator, please continue to send all St. Paul's administrative emails to info@stpaulsbedford.org, including Epistle entries. For those sending service schedules, please send your information as soon as it is ready. Ideally these should be received by the 15th of each month, unless the schedule for the upcoming two months has already been sent earlier. All other entries, including calendar events, should be received by the 20th of each month. Thanks for all your support and effort in creating an enjoyable Epistle, full of information for all parishioners to read.

Ron Presti

St. Paul's Episcopal Church
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Sunday Service of Holy Eucharist: 10:00 A.M.

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The Reverend Francis Fornaro, Rector

The Reverend Daniel Collier

Joan Reddy, Music Director

Bob Godoy, Sexton

Officers:

Ron Presti, Senior Warden

Emily Mitchell, Junior Warden

Betsy Anderson, Treasurer

Michael Ryan, Assistant Treasurer

Dori Sutton, Clerk

Vestry:

Sharon Keane

Peter Ricci

Paul Kruger

Andy Saladino

Carol Hokana

Robert Thomas

Carrie Mathews

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Advent Hymn

Hymnal 71



Hark! The glad sound! The Savior comes,
the Savior promised long:
let every heart prepare a throne,
and every voice a song.

He comes, the prisoners to release
in Satan's bondage held;
the gates of brass before him burst,
the iron fetters yield.

He comes, the broken heart to bind,
the bleeding soul to cure;
and with the treasures of his grace
to enrich the humble poor.

Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace,
thy welcome shall proclaim;
and heaven's eternal arches ring
with thy beloved Name.