

ST. PAUL'S EPISTLE

December 2007

Dear Friends,

Why do they do it? The people who get up at 3:00 AM to get to the department store by 4:00 AM to buy things on sale. Some people sleep in tents outside stores all night long; some are willing to be trapped in endless traffic in order to get a space in a mall parking lot. I wonder what the conversations are like as they are waiting. Are they enjoying the wait? Are they enjoying being in the company of their companions? What are they doing while they wait? Are they anxious that whatever it is they are seeking won't be there when they finally arrive? Is the long wait for the opportunity to buy something on sale different from waiting in traffic on the way to work, school or an appointment?

I think it is! I hope it is! There must be a difference in how we wait for those things that are a sure promise of satisfaction as opposed to those things that are of duty, responsibility or necessity. In the world we are creating today, waiting doesn't seem to be an attribute that we cultivate very well. We seem to be unable to anticipate good things with deliberate relish and joy. We don't seem to find satisfaction in waiting, in anticipating, in expecting.

In Advent we wait in joyful expectation for the coming of Jesus. It is a waiting filled with the certain understanding that God's promise to reconcile the whole world will be fulfilled. It is a waiting full of awesome anticipation for the realization of God's hope for us. The church sets aside these four weeks to put us in the mind of a people who wait. We wait for the power of our loving God to come into the world and forever change it. It happened at the birth of Jesus. God's promise is being fulfilled and continues to be revealed as we wait again for Jesus to return.

It is in this waiting, waiting for the Second Coming, that we are called to wait in ways that will hasten the kingdom. Some of the same questions apply. How do we enjoy the companions with whom we wait? Are we waiting with great and joyful expectation? What to do as we wait?

Jesus has taught us by his life and teaching how to wait and what to do while we wait for his return. He taught us by his devotion to his conviction for justice and peace. He showed us by his willingness to be in true relationship with the powerful and the poor. He showed us by his willingness to notice those who go unnoticed; to forgive those who seem unforgivable; to socialize with those who are shunned. Jesus reached out to anyone and everyone so that all felt satisfied and fed physically and spiritually.

We Christians are in a constant Advent, constant waiting for Christ to come again. It is in our waiting that we have the opportunity to use the gift of Love and Compassion that has been given to us in the birth of Jesus. What we are called to do in our waiting is what Jesus taught us. Love one another. Bring peace into the world. Have compassion for all. Act so that justice prevails. Leave no one out. And wait with the absolute certainty of the fulfillment of all of God's promises to each of us and to the world.

Elementary Sunday School News

We've been having a great time back in the Sunday school classrooms. We learned about Moses and the 10 commandments using bean-bags, hop-scotch, memory games, and paper mache. Look for the commandment tablets created by the fourth and fifth graders on the wall by their classroom. We listened to the parables while creating flocks of sheep and sweeping the rooms clean in search of lost precious coins. Our 1-3rd grade class learned about another Episcopal community here in Bedford, the Episcopalian community living at Carlton Willard. They made boxes decorated with words of faith and inspiration and filled with chocolates to share with them. The 4-5th grade class wrote thank you notes to veterans residing at our local VA hospital.

Thank you to all the teachers who taught this first session. Thanks to ChrisThompson, Stacy Schalick, Nicky Blackburn, Susan Adamick, Becky Ricci, Liz DeRose, Amanda Hubbard, Ellen Ryan, and Doug Sharpe

Cathy Presti

Catechesis Corner

In the month of November, we wrapped up Session I and began Session II, introducing the geography of the Holy Land, and the early Nativity stories. Many thanks to all who assisted in both classes. Lead teachers in Session I were Carol Hokana and Amanda Hubbard (Catechesis I) and Ellen Ryan, Louisa Saladino-Kuhl and Deborah Regan (Catechesis II). We are fortunate to have Sharon Keane, Ron Presti and Lisa Hafer also leading in Session II - quite a team!

As always, December will bring a change in routine for Catechesis. In the Family Service on December 2, the Catechesis I Atrium will be open as usual following the sermon. While we do not have class for the older group, any children who wish may join us. On December 9th, all children who wish will participate in the pageant rehearsal – Atrium I will again be open. The pageant will be on Dec 16th. The one regular class of the month will be on December 23rd. There will be no class on December 30, during school vacation. However, the pageant itself is a time of learning. We should all be glad that the children of St. Paul's, unlike so many these days, do truly understand the meaning of Christmas.

Sincerely,
Amanda Hubbard and Ellen Ryan

Middle School Youth Group

In November, food was our main focus! We hosted our first coffee hour and it was fun to experience this weekly event from the 'other side' as we poured coffee, sliced cake and watched over the kids' snack table. On November 25th, we recovered from turkey overload by joining with the high school youth for cookie baking fun. We baked gingerbread and chocolate chip cookies, used our creative skills to decorate sugar cookies (mini M&Ms anyone?), and then filled care packages with many goodies to send out to parish friends and family. We also packaged up 15 cookie bundles to hand out during Christmas Caroling on December 16th.

December is shaping up to be one of our busiest months to date! On December 1st, we had our booth at the Advent Fair offering holiday-themed face painting and temporary tattoos. Thank you to all who helped in any way. Later that evening, a group of us made the drive up to Boulder Morty's in Nashua to do some indoor rock climbing. Talk about getting some good exercise! Then, the next morning, we held our monthly in-class discussion during the Children's Service. On December 16th, we will take part in the annual Christmas pageant and then reconvene later that evening to lend our voices to the annual progressive caroling event.

Best wishes for a very merry Christmas and Happy 2008 from all of us!

Carrie Mathews and Suzanne Johnson

High School Youth Update

Huge, overflowing thanks to the high school and middle school youth who helped bake, decorate, and package cookies and other yummy things on Sunday, November 25. We filled 15 boxes for our far-flung friends and 15 plates for the folks we'll visit during the parish caroling party on December 16. In attendance were Heather Marasa, Becky Waghorne, Kaitlyn Crockett, Helen Kissel, Eric Wicks, Jake Seymourian, Shea Kuhl, Emma Healey, Tim Ryan, Miranda Keane, Lauren Johnson, Suzanne Johnson, Carrie Mathews, John C. Mitchell, Emily Mitchell, Ellie Mitchell, and John W. Mitchell (the last of whom was not exactly helpful but kept us entertained). We're taking a break for Christmas, but we hope to see many of you in the pageant, at the caroling party, and at Christmas services.

LIBRARY CORNER



The holidays are just around the corner. If you do a lot of shopping on Amazon.com, please remember to click through the St. Paul's site first. Just visit us -- www.stpaulsbedford.org -- and click on the Amazon link on the left navigation bar. You'll be taken directly to Amazon, and every purchase you make earns money for St. Paul's.

While you're there, check out St. Paul's wish list -- items we'd like to see on the shelves of our parish library. Here are a few examples that might strike your fancy:

AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH by Al Gore (book or DVD). Last spring the Stewardship Committee sponsored a viewing of this Academy Award-winning documentary on climate change.

A WING AND A PRAYER: A MESSAGE OF FAITH AND HOPE by Katharine Jefferts Schori. Collected writings from our Presiding Bishop, offering hope and inspiration from her own experiences as a scientist, pilot, and priest.

HE'S GOT THE WHOLE WORLD IN HIS HANDS by Kadir Nelson. This picture book adaptation of the familiar children's hymn offers luminous illustrations and a message of inclusion.

And don't forget: everything in our library is available for borrowing. Just sign it out on the clipboard and return it whenever you're ready.

Merry reading!



May 17, 2008

at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul

Classes will begin January 6th 2008 after church.

Any young people in grades nine or above, and any baptized adults interested in receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation, please contact Frank.

Save the Date!

December 16th the Christmas Caroling Progressive Dinner will take place. Starting at 4:30 p.m. at the church. It will begin with appetizers at the Hafer's home then move on to the main meal at Frank and Chuck's home. Dessert will be sponsored by the Seymourians and the Runkles and will be held at the Seymourian's home.

Parish Directories



The new directories are here! Each directory is labeled with a family name. Please pick yours up in the narthex today!



How often do you use search engines on the Internet? More than you ever thought? Well, all those searches can help raise money for St. Paul's! How??? You ask???? Well, check out goodsearch.com. Our church is registered with this search engine and every time you search a few pennies will be donated to the church. Just go to goodsearch.com, choose "St. Pauls Episcopal Church (Bedford, MA)" from a scroll down menu and remember to use this search engine when you are looking for a site on the Web. In December, we will receive a check. It is as easy as that!!! Goodsearch is connected to Yahoo, so the searches are reliable.

Thanks!

Stewardship Update:

We continue to receive pledge cards from members of St. Pauls and hope that all cards will be returned by December 9th so the Budget committee will have a solid income number to use as they develop the 2008 budget. AS of November 25th 42% of the pledge cards sent out have been returned with a total pledge of \$91,294. We still have a way to go to hit 100% participation but we are confident that everyone will make a pledge to St. Paul's for 2008.

If you need a pledge card, please see Paul Ciaccia or feel free to go to the St. Paul's website and complete a pledge form on line.

Thank You for your support in this years Pledge Drive.

The Stewardship Committee



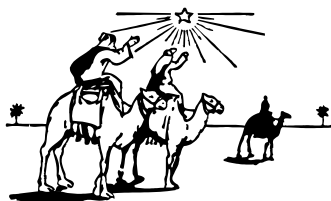
News from St. Paul's Weekday Nursery School



It is time to create our Holiday Bulletin Board in the Big Room. Each year we send home an "idea" to each family and ask for the return of an artistic creation of that idea to place on the board. Some themes from the past have been "Mittens", "Trees", "Peace on Earth", "Visions of sugar plums (Dreams)" and "Homes". So watch what we will be sharing with you over the next 3 weeks.

During Thanksgiving week a table full of non-perishables was brought by the children, to take to our Bedford Community Pantry. Next we hope to decorate an evergreen with many hats and mittens which will benefit the Lowell Central Ministry agency in helping families.

Lastly, a word of gratitude and appreciation to all of you who came and supported our recent Holiday Gift Boutique - Thank You! It was a fun evening and the vendors were pleased too. Their generous raffle prizes and the awesome baked goods sold gave us a nice profit even before the percentage donations have completely arrived from vendors' sales.



Christmas Pageant 2007

Sunday, December 9th – rehearsal for all – during church

Saturday, December 15th – 9AM- Lead characters

Saturday, December 15th 10AM – Full cast rehearsal

**Sunday, December 16th – 10 AM – Christmas Pageant
(9 AM gathering at church)**

If you know now your child/children might have a conflict with the pageant and/or these particular rehearsals, please let me know and I can cast them accordingly.

Every child is welcome to participate and urged to do so!!!

Please see me, call me or email me:

Ellen Ryan

Or

Natalie Wicks

Women's Group

Save the Dates!

Women's Group Epiphany Breakfast

Saturday, January 5 at 8:30 AM – Please join the women of St. Paul's for our post holiday season breakfast. We will hold this breakfast in the Library at the church. Watch for further details.

Book Discussion

We will hold a discussion of *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini, author of *The Kite Runner* on Wednesday, January 30th. Refreshments will be served at 7 PM and the discussion will begin at 7:30. A brief description of the book follows:

"Propelled by the same storytelling instinct that made The Kite Runner a beloved classic, A Thousand Splendid Suns is at once a remarkable chronicle of three decades of Afghan history and a deeply moving account of family and friendship. It is a striking, heart-wrenching novel of an unforgiving time, an unlikely friendship, and an indestructible love—a stunning accomplishment."

Copies of the book will be available to purchase in late December.



COME SING FOR JOY!

All voices are invited to join the Adult Choir to sing during the Advent and Christmas seasons. If you are not able to sing on a regular basis, but would like to get in on the fun now, please speak to Joan Reddy. Rehearsals are from 7-8:30 on Thursday nights, and 9 am on Sundays.

Thanks!

Joan Reddy,
Music Director

OUTREACH NEWS



Help us “UNDECORATE” our Giving Tree

Our Advent Outreach project is to purchase gifts for 60 residents of Fernald State School. These adults are severely multi-handicapped and many have no families. Help make their Christmas brighter with a special gift.

Ornaments with specific requests are hanging on our “Giving Tree”. Please sign up to purchase a gift and take the ornament to attach to your wrapped gift. Gifts are due back at St. Paul's on December 16.

Heifer Christmas Cards still available

Help St. Paul's give a donkey to the Heifer Project this year. Buy a \$10 Heifer Christmas card as a gift for someone you care about and share your caring with a needy family.



Cards available from Caroline Larson

Heifer Project Living Nativity at Overlook Farm

December 8 — 1 - 5:30 p.m.

December 9 — 1 - 5:30 p.m.



Come see the barn St. Paul's helped build! The Living Nativity is an annual event at the Heifer Project demonstration farm in Rutland, Massachusetts. About an hour away, this live nativity complete with animals is presented every hour on the hour for a 20-minute period in the barn. (Dress warmly!) Sleigh or hay rides. Caroling around a campfire. Purchase alternative gifts from Heifer International and crafts from around the world. There is no charge for this event, but everyone is asked to bring a plate of cookies to share.

For more information, check overlook.farm@heifer.org or call 508-886-2221.



Habitat for Humanity in Bedford

Planning and fundraising continue in earnest for the Habitat project at 130 North Road. Habitat for Humanity of Greater Lowell (HFHGL) is finalizing its agreement with the Bedford Zoning Board of Appeals and hopes to have approval by the end of the year on the comprehensive permit needed for construction. HFHGL is also moving forward with demolition of the existing barn and selection of a contractor to prepare the site—infrastructure, roads, and foundations. Meanwhile, the group has formed the Bedford Partnership, which will work with local churches and civic organizations to raise funds and identify volunteers. St. Paul's is a member of this Partnership. Our goal is to begin construction at the site once the weather warms early next year.

As you might imagine, providing affordable housing for 8 families is an expensive undertaking, and financial donations are highly valued. To ensure that your donation reaches the project at 130 North Road, please donate *directly* to HFHGL, not Habitat for Humanity International. Please visit www.lowellhabitat.org for more information, or send your tax-deductible donation to:

Habitat for Humanity of Greater Lowell
P.O. Box 1783
Lowell, MA 01853-1783
Please see John Mitchell with any questions.

Tab Top Reminder!



Keep those tab tops coming! All proceeds from the sale of the aluminum from your tab tops benefits the Shriner's Burn Institute for Children in Boston.. Thanks!

**St. Paul's Episcopal Church
100 Pine Hill Road
Bedford, MA 01730**

**Non-profit
Organization
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Bedford MA 01730
Permit No. 11**

Sunday Service of Holy Eucharist: 10:00 a.m.

Office hours: Tuesday-Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Telephone: 781 275-8262

Fax: 781 687-9070

E-mail: info@stpaulsbedford.org

Staff:

The Reverend Francis Fornaro, Rector

The Reverend Michael Hamilton, Deacon

Tracy Lane, Parish Administrator

Joan Reddy, Music Director

Bob Godoy, Sexton

Officers:

Ron Presti, Senior Warden

Emily Mitchell, Junior Warden

Betsey Anderson, Treasurer

Carol Hokana, Clerk

Vestry:

Sharon Keane

Peter Ricci

Paul Kruger

Sue Runkle

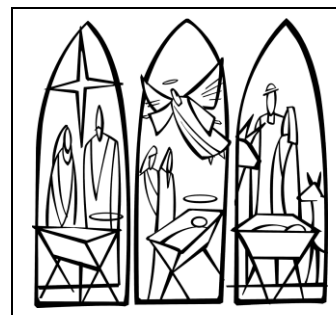
John MacPhee

Carrie Mathews

In December Darkness

The whole world waits in December darkness
for a glimpse of the Light of God.
Even those who snarl "Humbug!"
and chase away the carolers
have been seen looking toward the skies.
The one who declared he never would forgive
has forgiven,
and those who left home
have returned,
and even wars are halted,
if briefly,
as the whole world looks starward.
In the December darkness
we peer from our windows
watching for an angel with rainbow wings
to announce the Hope of the World.

from *Kneeling in Bethlehem*
by Ann Weems



December 2007						
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30	31					



Join us for Christmas Services

St. Paul's Church
100 Pine Hill Road, Bedford, MA

December 24th 3:00 PM Children's Service

December 24th 9:30 PM Christmas Carol Sing

December 24th 10:00 PM Festal Christmas Eve Service

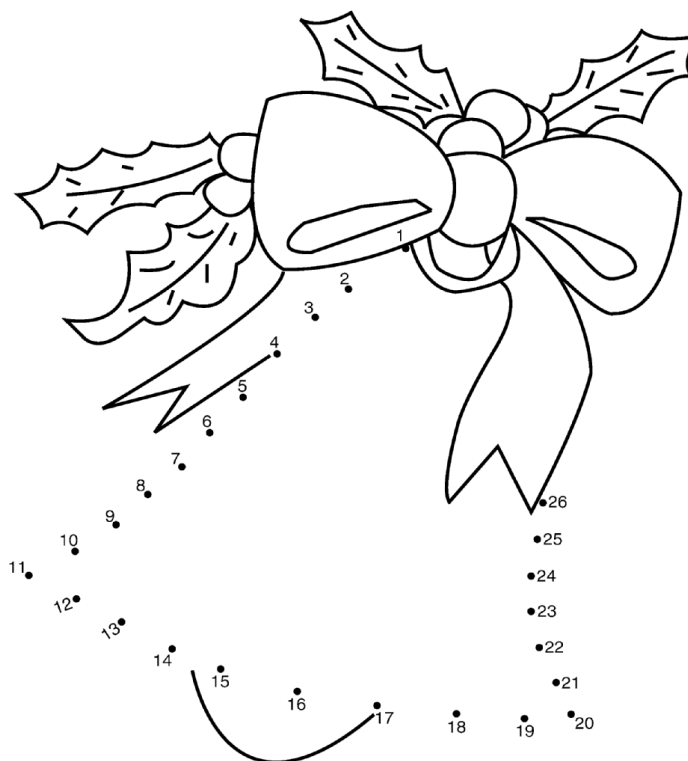
December 25th 10:00 AM Christmas Day Service

Bring a friend



Christmas Dot to Dot

Connect the dots and color the picture.



Finding Bethlehem

Can you help Joseph and Mary find the way to Bethlehem?

