

ST. PAUL'S EPISTLE

December 2008

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down... Isaiah 64:1-9

Dear Friends,

Advent is the way of life for us Christians. We live between the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem and the coming of Jesus in glory sometime, sometime. We are a waiting people. We wait for Jesus to come again. We say it every week. I hope we pay attention; I hope we hear and heed the words we say.

“Christ will come again.” It is our conviction. The first century followers expected Jesus to come back any moment, any day. But He didn’t come; He still hasn’t come back in body. But He will! And so, in faith, we wait for Him.

The church gives us this season of waiting so that we can think about what we need for ourselves and for the world. It is a time to anticipate the glorious return of our Savior. I wonder if we think about the Second Coming outside of this season. Do we spend any time wondering about it when we look at the world around us? What is it that we hope for when Jesus returns?

Unlike the first time God entered the world anonymously in a non-descript place, removed from the mainstream of life, Jesus’ return will be noticeable. We will know Him when He comes back. What do we pray that He brings? What do we want Him to see?

In this age of instant gratification, waiting is often a very hard thing to do. Waiting for a day of celebration or anticipating a gift is often very difficult. And yet, that is what we do everyday of our Christian lives as we wait for the glorious return.

I was reminded the other day of Howard Thurman’s words about our life after Bethlehem. The work of Christmas begins after the first coming of Jesus and continues, should continue until He comes again. We don’t wait passively. We don’t wait in fear of judgment or retribution. We wait joyfully doing the work given to us through the life of Jesus.

A watched pot “never” boils. Clock watchers have long and tedious days. Workers, prayers, movers, people like that wait with joy and hopeful anticipation. Being busy doing the work of God is the way to wait. And in doing the work with joy, being faithful as best we can, making the world a better place in our own way are the things that actually do give us instant gratification. It comes from the work and the desire to please God. It doesn’t even come from the success of our efforts. It comes from the effort itself.

This Advent, I hope that we all spend time noticing the wait. I hope we really spend time in the hustle and bustle of Christmas to remember that Christ is coming. Really coming again. Let’s make the world ready. Let’s spend the time of our lives doing the work he has given us to do. Let us also, remember that in our waiting we are called to joy, called to celebrate, called to love one another in happiness of the gift of God in the birth of the Baby Jesus.

Elementary Sunday School

This month, the children discussed saints learning first that according to St. Paul, we are all saints. They discussed stories of Florence Nightingale, C. S. Lewis, St. Francis and Thomas Cranmer. Following the example of these saints, Ben Wicks, came up with an idea to raise money for children in need. This Sunday, he will lead his 4-5th grade class to decorate a lemonade stand for the Advent fair. At the fair, St. Paul's children will offer lemonade and collect donations towards a charity they will choose this weekend.

Our 1-3rd grade class learned about another Episcopal community here in Bedford, the Episcopalian community living at Carlton Willard. They made beautiful boxes decorated with words of faith and inspiration and filled them with chocolates to share with them.

With the approach of Advent, I eagerly await the coming of one of my favorite events - the Christmas pageant. Our children will begin preparing for the pageant on December 7th after the children's sermon.

I wish to thank everyone who has so graciously volunteered their time to our Sunday school program. Thanks to Chris Thompson, Nicky Blackburn, Stacy Schalick, Becky Ricci, Tina Blackburn, Andre Barber, Mary Curlew, Elle Thompson, Jacob Seymourian, Ellen Ryan and John Mitchell.

Cathy Presti

Catechesis Corner



Dear Catechesis families,

The main news to report for December is that there will be NO Catechesis classes this month. This is due to the Pageant and the timing of the Christmas-New Year holiday. We hope that all children will want to participate in the pageant - please see the separate Epistle entry for the schedule. During the rehearsal on December 14, we will keep one Atrium open in case any children are not participating, or need a break.

During the past month both classes have been preparing for the Advent season: learning about the land where the events took place (they may now do better than you at locating Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Nazareth on a map), hearing about the visitation of the angel to Mary, and introducing Advent (yes, waiting for Christmas is hard, but exciting and important!). We were extremely pleased to welcome two new children, Samantha and Taylor, to Catechesis I this month, and hope all will join in welcoming their families to St. Paul's.

May you all enjoy the Christmas season as much as the children.

Sincerely,
Amanda Hubbard and Ellen Ryan

Middle School Youth Group Update

In November, the Middle School Youth Group met in class and discussed bullying behavior and the various anti-bullying efforts at our schools. Thank you all for a spirited and thoughtful discussion.

At the end of November, several of us, including Natalie Schalick, Alex Healey, Clayton Hafer, Ben Johnson, Jacob Seymourian and Tim Ryan, battled each other in two laser tag games at Laser Quest in Danvers. We also participated in the annual cookie baking and care package party with the high school kids.

Activities in December include class on Sunday, December 7, performing in various roles in the Christmas pageant on December 21, and caroling. Look for our table at the Advent Fair on December 6 and have a beautiful holiday icon painted on your face, or tattooed on your arm.

Suzanne Johnson

High School Youth Group Update

Our annual cookie baking extravaganza is Sunday, November 30, at 5:30pm in the parish hall. Please come with clean hands, empty bellies, and a list of people you'd like to receive cookies. Parents and friends, if you have people to add to our recipient list, please let John and Emily know before the 30th.

In December we take a break from scheduled activities so the youth can participate in the Advent Fair, the pageant, and caroling. We are hoping to schedule a visit, along with the middle school youth, to Matt Kruger's parish in Lynn in early January. Please watch your email and Facebook for more information on that event.

We are grateful for your presence and enthusiasm throughout the year. Merry Christmas to all!

John & Emily Mitchell

Notes from the Nursery School



In the next few weeks our bulletin boards and classrooms will take on the look of the holiday season. We are going to base our activities this month on the book "Polar Express." We will have train activities, talk about travel and celebrate the holidays. We will end the month with our holiday show and party for parents and children.

This past month was exceptionally busy with our Open House and the second annual Holiday Gift Boutique. The Open House was well attended; families brought their little ones and stayed for most of the two hours talking to the staff. We have received several applications for next year already. Our Holiday gift boutique fundraiser was a success. Although the weather was not cooperative, many people came out to shop for gifts, to enjoy baked goods, and to visit with friends. I want to thank St Paul's for their support. A number of parishioners came through that night and I appreciate their attendance.

Lee Frank



OUTREACH NEWS

Help us "UNDECORATE" our Giving Tree

Remember to pick up an ornament from our "Giving Tree" in the Narthex. 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 will hang on our "Giving Tree". Please sign up to purchase a gift and take the ornament to attach to your wrapped gift. We also welcome \$5 gift cards to Dunkin Donuts for staff who care for these residents. Gifts are due back at St. Paul's on December 14.



Give a gift of an animal to a needy family

Heifer cards make great gifts for the Holidays – for teachers, work associates, family who are tough to shop for...we have Christmas themed cards and non-denominational cards as well. Cards will be available at the Advent Fair or you can contact Caroline Larson any time to get a card (sailsk8@aol.com 781-275-9338). Heifer International works with communities around the world to end hunger and poverty by providing animals to needy families, giving them economic security and better nutrition.

Heifer Project Living Nativity at Overlook Farm

Saturday December 13 — 1 - 5:30 p.m.

Sunday, December 14 — 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!) Free 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.

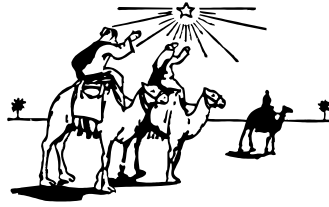
For more information, check overlook.farm@heifer.org or call 508-886-2221.

OUR NEW OUTREACH PROJECT!

Navajo School Library Book Project



The Outreach Committee invites you to participate in a project to provide books for a new school on the Navajo Reservation in Arizona. The new Kindergarten-Grade 8 school is a wonderful, long needed replacement for trailers and century old buildings in a desert community. The school's librarian, Marjorie Yellowhair, explained that they take great pride in their reading program. She was very grateful for our offer and has sent us a list of books they could use. Parishioners will be able to select a book from pictures of the covers and pay the Outreach Committee which will take care of ordering and shipping. The books range from \$8 to \$23 with a few above that. Most are \$11 to \$13. Books will be available for sale at the Outreach table at the fair or after church. Thank you. For more information, contact Barbara Perry (bperry44@verizon.net or 781-275-9094).



Christmas Pageant 2008

Is it that time already? Yes, it is time to give it some thought and get the dates on the calendars!

Sunday, December 21st – 10AM – Christmas Pageant

Saturday, December 20th – 9AM- Lead characters

Saturday, December 20th 10AM – Full cast

Sunday, December 14th – 10AM – rehearsal during Sunday School

Sunday, December 7th – 10AM – rehearsal after Children's Sermon
(Family Sunday)

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.

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

Please see me, call me or email me:

Ellen Ryan 781-275-9795 or ellenaryan@comcast.net

Or

Natalie Wicks 781-275-5244 or NSWicks@aol.com

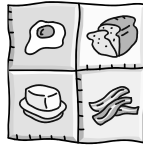
Stewardship Corner

The Stewardship Committee extends its thanks to everyone who has already pledged during our Fall Pledge Drive. Your support keeps St. Paul's working, from our outreach to people near and far, to the nitty-gritty details of keeping the lights on and the parking lot shoveled. Our collective commitment to St. Paul's, especially in such uncertain times, is a testament to our health as a parish and our devotion to Christ and His church.

Ingathering Sunday was November 23. If you have not yet returned your pledge card, we encourage you to do so as soon as possible. If you need a new pledge card, please contact Paul Ciaccia.

Save the Dates

Potluck Breakfast Saturday, January 3rd 8:30 AM at the Church



End the busy holiday season with a New Year's potluck breakfast with your friends from St. Paul's. Join the Women's Group on Saturday, January 3rd for breakfast at 8:30 AM. Each person is asked to contribute a hot dish, fruit, baked item or juice to the breakfast. Watch for a sign-up sheet. This breakfast was well attended and a lot of fun last year.

Women's Retreat Saturday January 24, 2009

We will hold a Women's Retreat at St. Anne's Convent in Arlington on Saturday, January 24th, 2009. The theme of the retreat will be spirituality at different stages of life of women. The convent is beautiful and the Sisters provide warm hospitality and delicious food. It should be a wonderful, spiritual day. Please plan to join us. Watch for more details in the January Epistle.

We are always looking for new ideas. Please contact the steering committee if you have ideas or questions – Roberta Valday, Lynne Wolf, Sima Seymourian (our newest member) and Betsey Anderson.

Advent Fair Boxwood Workshop

**Wednesday, December 3rd and Thursday, December 4th
7:00 PM in the Parish Hall**

The Crafts Committee will be making boxwood trees and kissing balls for the Advent Fair on Wednesday, December 3rd and Thursday, December 4th. These are special workshop and we need lots of hands to get this final project completed for the Fair. Please join us to learn to make these lovely holiday decorations. Contact Caroline Larson or Karen Kruger with questions. Please bring small decorations to use for the trees.





THE READING ALOUD GROUP will meet once a month (next mtg Dec. 7) on Sunday evenings at 7 to share favorite poems, prayers, passages from prose, original writings, etc. Come to help us choose our theme of the month, relax with friends, and enjoy the old-fashioned pleasure of reading to one other. Ask Joan Reddy for more details.



MEMBERS NEEDED IN THE ADULT CHOIR.

We have a great and dedicated choir, but we need new members, especially in the men's sections. Please see Joan Reddy on Sundays, call her at 781-862-5898. or email her (joanreddy@aol.com) ASAP. Come enjoy the music we're preparing for Christmastide. Rehearsals are Thursday nights from 7-8:30 and Sunday at 9-9:30 AM Come one, come all!



Don't forget to 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. Paul's 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.

Keep those tab tops coming!



Tab tops continue to be sent to the Shriner's Burn Hospital, which in turn are combined with other organizations tabs. The tabs contain metal which the Shriner's Hospital extracts and sells. All proceeds are used to help pay bills for the families that incur debts when they stay at various hotels to be near their children, who are in the Shriner's Hospital.

Also, Ed Lawrence is always collecting cans/bottles to retrieve deposits to help support the National Guard Veterans for their every day expenses. Thanks!

Don't forget to click through!



If you are spreading out your Christmas spending and planning to do a little Amazon shopping this month, don't forget to visit the St. Paul's website first! Go to www.stpaulsbedford.org and click the Amazon link on the left sidebar. You'll be directed to Amazon's site, where you can shop as usual -- but every purchase you make will earn a little money for St. Paul's. Thanks for your support!

Parishioners Corner

Welcome to St. Paul's - **Mirabella Ann Mathews** who was born on November 14th, daughter of Carrie and Charles Mathews and sister of Avery Mathews.

**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

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:

Andre Barber

Peter Ricci

Sharon Healey

Sue Runkle

John MacPhee

Heather Marasa

Carrie Mathews

Work of Christmas Begins

"When the song of the angels is stilled,
when the star in the sky is gone,
when the kings and princes are home,
when the shepherds are back with the flocks,
then the work of Christmas begins:
to find the lost,
to heal those broken in spirit,
to feed the hungry,
to release the oppressed,
to rebuild the nations,
to bring peace among all peoples,
to make a little music with the heart...

And to radiate the Light of Christ,
every day, in every way, in all that we do and in all that we say.
Then the work of Christmas begins.

Howard Thurman

December 2008						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

