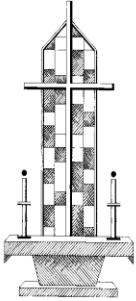


ST. PAUL'S EPISTLE

May 2010



Dear Friends,

Last week I was walking on a trail surrounded by the Balsam Mountains in North Carolina. Every morning while I walked, I thought of all of you walking with me in that beautiful place. Day after day I was confronted with the imagination, creativity, and bounty of God as I looked up at the majesty of God's creation.

I thought a great deal about how we carry each other with us no matter where we go. I realized that whenever I stopped to think, I was thinking of the people at St. Paul's. Wanting to share that beautiful space with you, to remark on the beauty of the world that God has given us was always in my heart and in my prayers.

As Christ abides in God and God abides in Christ, we too have been given the grace to abide in one another. It is in the living in the heart that makes relationships eternal.

The Holy Trinity, God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, represent for us the fertility of the earth. It is in the gracious generosity of God that we experience growth and abundance. Growth and abundance is not just seen in the creation around us. Mountains, gardens, lakes, oceans are all signs of God's bounty given for our pleasure. Growth and abundance are God's desire in our individual and communal life as well.

God's desire for us is to have all that we need to experience God's power of love in our lives. We have family, friends, neighbors and we have this great gift of St. Paul's church. As I walked in the midst of those mountains in North Carolina I thought of them as a symbol of St. Paul's church: majestic, beautiful, powerful. Like those mountains, St. Paul's offers strength, steadfastness, comfort and joy.

How wonderful it is to see our church in light of all the creation! How wonderful it is to have this great and bountiful community in our lives! How great it is to know that the work of our church is to care for one another and for our neighbors in the world! Like the mountains we give glory to God, comfort to those who know us, joy to world in pain and love and care for one another.

We are truly blessed.

CONFIRMATION AND RECEPTION



The rite of confirmation and reception into the Episcopal Church will be held on Saturday, May 22, at 10:00am at Christ Church, Waltham. This year we have a strong contingent of both confirmands and those who will be received—twelve in all!

We encourage any and all of you to come to Christ Church that morning and show your support for our members who are taking a new step in their faith journeys. It promises to be a moving and wonderful morning. There will be a reception afterward in the Christ Church parish hall.

Confirmation classes will be held after church on May 2 and May 16, in preparation for the May 22 service. We will recognize our confirmands during the service and at coffee hour on Sunday, May 30.

HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH UPDATE

Youth Sunday is Mother's Day, May 9. At this special service, the high school and middle school youth take over all aspects of the liturgy—reading, serving on the altar, greeting and ushering, and more. It's a great opportunity for the youth to minister to the congregation in a new way. We hope you can be with us!

The high school youth group will be bringing lunches to the Habitat for Humanity work site at 130 North Road on Saturday, May 15. We'll meet at church at 11:00 to make sandwiches, then take them over to the site and eat lunch with the workers. We should be done by 1:30. Please join us!

Middle School Youth Update

Happy May! A big thank you to everyone who helped make our second annual Easter Egg Hunt such a smashing success! The eggs were stuffed and hidden, the weather cooperated, and the youngest members of our parish had a wonderful time. Special thanks to Paul and Wendy Ciaccia for their contributions.

Here are a few of our upcoming events:

- **May 9th:** We will be teaming up with the High School youth group in the annual Youth Sunday service. Please see Emily Mitchell if you want to know your role in the service, or if you have any questions.
- **June 6th:** Our last in-class discussion - please join us as we congratulate our graduating 8th graders and brainstorm fun plans for next year.
- **End of June:** We are planning an end-of-the-year trip to Water Country. Please watch your emails for a final date and let us know if you plan to attend.

Carrie Mathews & Karin Baker



CATECHESIS CORNER

April is just flying by, especially with no classes due to school vacation. On the 18th the children recreated the Liturgy of the Light in their own special way and I wish you all could have been flies on the wall. They loved hearing that the adults celebrate this in church and that they would do the same on a smaller scale. Two of the children were celebrating birthdays (as I heard over and over ☺) so it was decided that they each would alternate singing and holding the Pascal candle as they processed down the hall and into the darkened library. They were so serious and did a fantastic job. We read some prayers, psalms and sang a song and then each received a candle representing the light of Christ. This has to be one of my favorite Catechesis celebrations. The rest of the month and May will be filled with bitter sweet moments as the children learn about baptism and actually watch one, celebrate the last Family Sunday with Frank, are introduced to the 23rd Psalm, celebrate Pentecost, and join us all as we say farewell to Father Frank on May 23rd.

REMINDERS:

~ A great local opportunity for interested youth or adults to learn more about the Catechesis program. An introduction will be given **May 1st, 9 a.m to noon at Church of our Redeemer, Lexington.**

Please contact either of us for details if you think you might be interested in attending.

~ Please be sure to attend **Family Sunday on May 2** – sadly, the last with Father Frank, so important for the children.

~ Our **last Catechesis class** of the year will be **June 6th** as the children receive their certificates and their folders to take home.

~ **June 13th** will be our **Teacher Appreciation Brunch** after church so please plan on joining us if you helped in any capacity, teaching or assisting, in the Atrium this year.

Happy Spring!

Ellen Ryan and Amanda Hubbard

Elementary Sunday school Update!

On the first Sunday in Lent, the children prepared paper white bulbs to take home and nurture through Lent. They did a wonderful job and brought them back well cared for and in beautiful bloom to share the in the garden of Repose during Holy week. We celebrated Palm Sunday with a puppet reenactment of the Passion presented by the 4-5th graders to the younger elementary and catechesis children. While the older elementary children prepared the puppet skits, the younger children learned how Jesus taught using stories. They heard the parables of the Fig Tree, the Lost Sheep, and the Lost Coin. During a reenactment of the last supper, complete with bread and grape juice, they talked about how we remember Jesus' last supper every Sunday at the altar rail. Great fun was had learning many things about the season playing Lent Bingo.

During our last class, we shared stories about Jesus visiting his friends after his resurrection, and about heaven. With just a few weeks left in our Sunday school year, we plan to talk about Jesus' new commandment to love one another, Jesus' prayer for us, and His promise of the Holy spirit.

We made a few changes to the Sunday school calendar. Here are the remaining dates for Sunday school this year:

May 2	Family Sunday – Frank's last children's sermon
May 9	Youth Sunday –we will have Sunday school, but will bring the children in early so they can enjoy the special service.
May 16	Sunday school
May 23	Pentecost – Frank's last Sunday, no Sunday school
May 30	no Sunday school
Jun 6	last day of Sunday school
Jun 13	teacher's appreciation brunch

Cathy Presti

Notes from the Nursery School



The month of May brings many activities to the nursery school. We will have a fun field trip to the Concord playground. The children are very busy working on their Mother's Day gifts. Teachers are busy conferencing with parents as we prepare to send a group of children off to kindergarten. We will watch caterpillars turn into butterflies and if all goes well, we will set the butterflies free on our last day of school. Our end of year picnic should be great fun with a circus theme.

Enrollment is looking good. Our five day program is full. There are some openings in our three day and two day programs. Hopefully they will be filled during the summer.

I want to thank the members of the church for all the support I have received this year as the director. I especially want to thank everyone who worked so hard in the basement during the flood. I have enjoyed meeting many of you and look forward to working with everyone again next year. Enjoy the summer!

Lee Frank

Basket Committee



As the summer approaches, please keep the Basket Committee in mind when you find yourself bargain shopping. Clearance sections are great, Christmas Tree Shops, perusing outlets, or getting away to interesting places that may be selling unique items at reasonable prices (Stonewall Kitchen, etc.)!! **OUR INVENTORY IS LOW & WE ARE IN NEED OF MANY THINGS!!**

Here's a list of TOP 23 BASKET suggestions, but please feel free to use your imagination :)

- 1) decorative cocktail, luncheon, and dessert napkins
- 2) holiday cocktail, luncheon, and dessert napkins
- 3) tea or coffee mugs (everyday and holiday themed). One mug, pairs, or sets of 4 or 6 are all welcome.
- 4) tea towels for bathroom and/or kitchen (everyday and holiday themed)
- 5) large and extra large baskets with/without handle
- 6) kitchen utensils (spatulas, wooden spoons, whisks)
- 7) spreaders for cheese or jam (everyday and holiday themed)
- 8) wine, or champagne glasses pairs or sets of 4 or 6 are all welcome.
- 9) decorative platters (small - large)
- 10) tea pots
- 11) bowls for soup or oatmeal
- 12) tissue paper for stuffing baskets (mostly solids although stripes, holiday themed, etc. are used as well)
- 13) decorative ribbons for bows and/or curling ribbon (any color and/or holiday themed)
- 14) candles (variety of sizes, themes, etc.)
- 14a) decorative candle holders of all sizes (votive and tea light and larger)
- 15) small jars jams, jellies, syrups, dipping mustards and other non-perishables
- 15a) teas and coffees, candies and cookies in individual or small packages
- 16) holiday ornaments
- 17) gardening gloves and accessories
- 18) holiday plates and cookie platters
- 19) vases (all sizes and varieties)
- 20) small picture frames
- 21) soaps, sachets, bath gel, bath oil, etc.
- 22) cooking and baking items, e.g., soup mixes, dip mixes, muffin mixes, cookie mixes, cooking utensils, implements, etc.
- 23) small decorative notepads for lists etc.

Many thanks, and happy shopping!! The Basket Committee
(co-chaired by Jan Svendsen, Natalie Wicks, and Lisa Hafer)

Women's Group Meeting Wednesday, May 5 Women in the Bible – discussion led by Frank



The Women's Group will hold its final meeting of the year on Wednesday, May 5 in the Library at the church. Frank will lead a discussion on the role of women in the Bible – a follow-up to a lively discussion at last year's retreat. This will be the last Women's Group meeting with Frank as our Rector. We will have special refreshments beginning at 7 PM and the discussion will begin at 7:30.

All women of the parish are welcome! Please join us as we celebrate Frank's ministry with this group for the last 10 years.

Special thanks to Sharon Healey for hosting the Women's Brunch on April 11 and to Judy Wright for leading the family walk on the 18th - despite the gloomy weather.

Stewardship Update

We have surpassed the 2009 pledge amount and the numbers continue to grow. At this point, we have a total of \$ 155,745. That's over \$4500 more than the 2009 total. As of the middle of April \$41,000 has been paid in pledges. Your pledge payments are important so please make every attempt to keep them current, especially as we move into the summer months.

Thank you to everyone who has pledged to support St. Paul's.

Faithfully,

Paul Ciaccia, Stewardship Chairman



Parking Lot!

Please remember that the clergy space in the parking lot is reserved only during the week, not on Sunday mornings. Feel free to park there before the worship service, particularly if you need to be closer to the front door. Overflow parking is also available across the street on Dana Road or along the back



Mark your calendars now: the summer schedule for Sunday services, with one service at 9:00am, will begin **June 27.**

The Thrift Sale is coming! The Thrift Sale is coming!

Date: Saturday, June 19th

Time: 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM

Ever find yourself not wanting to part with nice gently used stuff but no longer have a need for it. Bring it to the Thrift Sale where it can find a happy home. St. Paul's thrift sale is a fun way to perform a vital service to our members, our budget, our community and our environment. Think of the thrift sale while you're doing your spring-cleaning. Look for more details in next month's Epistle. Leaders are still needed in some areas. If you are willing to lead a table/section for the sale, contact Ron Presti.

Faithfully,
Ron Presti

Don't forget to click through!



If you are planning to do any Amazon shopping in the near future, 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



I am participating in Relay for Life, a fundraiser for the American Cancer Society, on May 22. The American Cancer Society is a non-profit organization that supports cancer research and gives financial support to cancer patients and their families. Cancer has touched so many of our lives and every donation can really make a difference. To make a donation to my Relay for Life team please visit <http://main.acsevents.org/goto/Helen.Kissel> or see me after church. Please consider making a small donation to my team as we fight for an end to cancer.

Thank you for your support, Helen Kissel

Happy Birthday to Bampie on May 13th with love from Avery and Bella.



Happy
Mother's
Day!

May 9th

Linus Blankets donated

This year St. Paul's contributed 33 blankets to Project Linus. These small handmade blankets comfort young children in situations such as hospitalization, disasters or family distress. This year 4 of our blankets have already been delivered to an orphanage in Haiti. Thankyou to all our dedicated knitters and sewers as well as those who contributed funds for yarn **and** supplies.



But don't stop knitting! We are already collecting squares for next year. The kids of St. Paul's have pledged to make their own blanket. So far I have one magnificent purple square by Calista Barber. We only need 8 more squares!

For more information, contact Caroline Larson.

Seeds for Haiti

Through a partnership with schools in Vermont, young students in Haiti are learning to grow their own food. With gardens at school and their homes, they are learning about nutrition and sustainable agricultural practices. St. Paul's will be collecting vegetable seed packets during the month of May. Please shop for some seeds and drop them in the basket in the narthex.



Seeds requested:

Eggplant
Lettuce
Cabbage
Bean
Okra
Carrot
Parsley
Tomato (duke and roma)
Onion
Pea
Hot peppers

For more information, contact Paddy Wade.

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!

VESTRY UPDATE

Dear friends,

The executive committee will meet on Tuesday, May 11, at 7:30pm. The vestry will hold its May meeting on Tuesday, May 18, at 7:30pm.

As we move closer to Frank's retirement, the wardens and vestry are in the process of putting together the steps that will be taken after he leaves. The wardens have met with Rev. Cynthia Hubbard, canon for transition ministry, who will worship with us on June 20. We will keep the parish informed as the search committee takes shape and the process unfolds during the summer and beyond.

At our April meeting, the vestry approved our goals for 2010. We built on the goals set for 2009, and added a few more areas of concern and attention for the coming leadership transition. The 2010 goals are reprinted below, and also posted on the vestry bulletin board in the parish hall. If you have any questions about the goals and objectives we've set for the year, please feel free to speak to any vestry member.

Vestry Goals 2010

I. CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

- a. Sustain and support parish growth
 - i. Continue to encourage and support a feeling of family
 - ii. Be mindful of particular parish needs during the transition
 - iii. Consider another Newcomers' Brunch and reinstitution of Newcomers' Table
- b. Support and direct committees of the vestry
 - i. Promote concept of "Sabbath year": a time to enjoy the events and initiatives we currently have in place, but not to institute new ones
 - ii. Encourage new membership and new leadership within committees
 - 1. Develop policy manuals for events and committees, to ease lay leadership transitions
 - iii. Create Lay Pastoral Visiting Committee before Frank retires
- c. Support fellowship and spiritual life
 - i. Celebrate our parish life openly and frequently
 - ii. Sponsor fellowship events with a spiritual component (e.g., Via Media)
 - iii. Encourage parish support of and attendance at parish events

II. FINANCIAL HEALTH AND STABILITY

- a. Promote St. Paul's as a worthwhile mission
 - i. Sustain annual pledging for operating budget
 - ii. Encourage and support fundraising efforts with realistic financial targets, in coordination with Fundraising Committee
 - iii. Target other giving requests to specific items or events
 - iv. Plan for long-range capital projects and other needs, building on the work of the Long-Range Planning Committee

III. COMMUNICATION WITH THE PARISH

- a. Continue to monitor announcements during worship
 - i. Consider a single person, more inserts, possibly different timing
 - ii. Prioritize announcements at/by/for St. Paul's
- b. Explore ways to improve use of the Epistle
- c. Continue to grow our web presence
 - i. Periodic emails from wardens
 - ii. Encourage use of website and Facebook fan page

IV. LEADERSHIP TRANSITION

- a. Support and direct the Search Committee as needed
 - i. Incorporate the work of the Long-Range Planning Committee in the initial phases of the search
- b. Foster a healthy relationship between the interim rector and the parish
- c. Provide appropriately open communication to the parish throughout the interim period and search process

With blessings,
Emily Mitchell and Paul Ciaccia, wardens

ST. PAUL'S CHURCH - FOCUS GROUPS

The Long Range Planning Committee is pleased to share a summary of the results of the discussions of the three focus groups held in February as well as input from middle and high school youth. The results from these meetings help us to understand who we are and who we would like to be going forward. Additional input regarding our hopes for a new rector will be published in a future Epistle and will be used in the search process.

1. What is going well at St. Paul's?

Worship/Services

Worship is joyful, dignified and very welcoming to all with active involvement of laity

- Weekly Eucharist, adhere to BCP; not high church; flexible with variety in summer
- Open altar with inclusion of everyone, baptized or not, including children
- Children recognized and intentionally involved at altar and in junior choir
- Music and choirs appreciated, high quality; growth includes newcomers
- Single Sunday morning service brings parish together
- Children look forward to high fives with Frank during recessional

Church School

Church school with commitment of children, strong volunteers and leadership meets the needs of our expanded number of children of all ages.

- Leadership is excellent and very committed
- Population explosion – growing in size
- Good Sunday School curriculum
- Catechesis (Ages 3-5)
 - Children enjoy going - they enjoy having a choice of activities
 - Children make the connection from classroom to worship in the sanctuary

Youth Groups

Active youth groups in both the Middle School and High School have strong, energetic, committed leadership.

- Youth enjoy the activities, both fun ones and service oriented ones
- Middle school youth group rejuvenated by major increase in number of youth;

Fellowship

Fellowship is an important component of life at St. Paul's with active Men's Group, Women's Group, coffee hour, musical show, Advent Fair, outing and other events.

- These groups are active, fun, led by parishioners
- Provides sense of support and camaraderie; brings members closer together
- Nurtures commitment

Inreach

Parish inreach grows out of a loving, caring community supporting each other in times of need.

- Parishioners friendly, welcoming, supportive of each other
- Response to needs is faithful and seems spontaneous

Outreach

Strong outreach program supports a variety of local, national and international initiatives. Future sustainability of the programs is an important consideration.

- Outreach initiatives have grown: Habitat for Humanity, crop walk, individual initiatives, etc;
- Growth in hands on and financial support

Relationships outside Parish

The parish has a strong relationship with the Diocese and a presence in the community.

Diocese

- Relationship with Diocese starts with the priest but includes lay leaders
- Spiritual and pastoral
-

St. Paul's in the Community

- Our parish is known and respected and leads in interfaith activities
- Frank and parishioners involved in many ways including local government, community service, children's activities in Bedford and other communities

Congregation

St. Paul's is an inclusive, inviting, multi-age parish who welcomes all to share in worship and fellowship.

- Includes members of Carleton Willard Village retirement community
- Growing /inviting to new people of all ages, especially families with young children
- Welcoming, even of those who come infrequently
- Children are accepted during worship, by priest and congregation
- Family Sunday popular
- HS youth feel sense of community;
- Smaller size of church fosters family atmosphere and intimacy
- Laity are active, engaged, caring and supportive of each other
- New members welcomed and involved in church activities
- Parishioners are strong and resilient with the capacity to move forward.
- Cohesive, no divisions, strong lay leadership
- Collegial, open congregation

Communication

Communication is effective with many ways of reaching out to parish including monthly newsletter, weekly bulletin, website, bulletin boards, and e-mail messages to entire parish several times a month.

Stewardship

There is a strong well organized stewardship effort for annual pledging with planning for longer term support of parish through planned giving and support of capital projects.

- Good pledge program and financial giving
- Committed to maintaining /improving building and grounds

Finances

Finances of the parish are well managed with regular reports to Vestry and an annual review or audit.

- Parish is in sound financial position, although there are always things we'd like to do but can't afford
- Weekday Nursery School is doing well, is fully enrolled and always current in obligations to church

Other

- Many of the goals from the earlier LRPC efforts have been accomplished including improved parking, maintenance of property and major renovations and addition of classroom wing.
- The parish celebrated the ordination of Matt Kruger who grew up in our church.

2. What needs improvement?

Worship/Services

- Announcements continue to be an issue as to timing, length and content with the best method not clear.
- More use of alternative music sources was requested and music that has more appeal to children.
- More training for torchbearers was suggested by older youth.
- Altar flow could be improved.

Education

- There is a desire for more adult education.
- Strong Sunday School relies on the outstanding leadership of one person; there is concern that there should be more back up for leadership.
- There is a desire to maintain activities and projects that appeal to all including active boys.
- Provide opportunities for more service projects for children.

Parishioners

- Maintain awareness and sensitivity to those not living in Bedford in planning church activities.
- Improve intentional integration of children and adults.
- Continue to focus on including newcomers during coffee hour and all other activities.
- Provide rides for those unable to drive.

Fundraising

- Frequency of fundraising is a concern.
- There is pressure to meet budgeted goals, especially for the Advent Fair.

Communication

- Provide open and appropriate communication of Vestry actions, financial status, and what is happening during the interim period.
- Identify capital and other needs and communicate them to parish.
- Enhance awareness of St. Paul's in the community.

Interior Facilities

- Old classrooms need to be updated.
- Altar accessibility has not been addressed.
- Crowding in sanctuary on special occasions is a problem.
- Improve traffic flow in narthex including coat rack area.
- Parish hall floor needs repairs.
- Bathrooms need some updates in the older ones. Newer ones difficult for children to use.
- Recent water problems including basement and crawl space flooding as well as exterior ground flooding are a continuing concern.

Exterior Facilities

- Parking is not adequate and paving of the new parking lot needs to be completed.
- Driveway needs to be replaced.
- Exterior lighting at rear and west side of building is inadequate,
- Roof replacements are needed soon.

3. What are our dreams for St. Paul's - if there were no limits?

Services/Worship

- More variety of music, including more contemporary and folk music was requested.
- Purchase the new alternate hymnals.
- Consider two services.

Communication

- Videotape the sermons.
- Put sermons and more information on the website.

Children/Youth

- Provide facilities for active children.
- Consider meeting space for middle and high school youth (possibly in loft above Narthex).

Adult Education

- Provide more and varied formats for adult education.

Staff and Benefits

- Consider a stipend for religious education leader or establish the position of a director of religious education
- Hire an assistant rector or request a vocational deacon as workload increases
- Provide an equity allowance for rector in lieu of rectory

Facilities – Interior

- **Old Classroom wing** – Renovate/redesign the old classroom wing including providing furniture suitable for older children.
- **Bathrooms** - Renovate and update the older bathrooms.
- **Narthex** - Improve the traffic flow in the Narthex and coat rack area.
- **Loft accessibility** - Improve accessibility to the loft area with an elevator.
- **Altar accessibility** - Make the altar accessible by lowering it and removing steps.
- **Sanctuary** - Replace the windows in the Sanctuary and provide additional seating for choir.
- **Sanctuary seating** - Refurbish the kneelers and add additional cushions to pews.
- **Kitchen** – Add a dishwasher, pot sink and exhaust fans
- **Committee Spaces** – Provide more storage, especially for Advent Fair, more meeting and working spaces
- **Parish Hall** - Make parish hall more comfortable especially for coffee hour.

Facilities – Exterior

- **Sacristy** – Build a new Sacristy.
- **Parking** - Expand parking on church site.
- **Driveway** - Replace driveway on west side of church.

Other Major Initiatives

- Purchase next door neighbor's property for parking.
- Consider the purchase of a rectory
- Continue the show.
- Focus on more green ecologically-sound initiatives.
- Hold a mission trip for high school students (possibly with another parish).
- Plan a new significant mission project and/or trip for all parishioners
- Connect with other parishes in the Diocese and community for music, youth and other programs