

ST. PAUL'S EPISTLE

September 2011

Abundant Forgiveness

Peter came and said to Jesus, "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times. (Mt. 18:21-22)

As you come to know me better through my preaching and reflection on Bible passages, you will learn that I have a special place in my heart for Peter. He's so honest, so human, so well-intentioned but prone to error (do you know anyone like this?). Most of all, he's so curious about who Jesus is. Through their adventures together Peter becomes Jesus' best friend. His friendship endures even when Jesus corrects his errors, even through his own shame at betraying Jesus when the cock crowed, even when Jesus seems to question his love.

In this passage above, which appears in this month's lectionary, Peter thinks he is being generous by expressing his willingness to forgive a fellow disciple's mistakes seven times. In Biblical imagery, seven was code for "a lot." But, as usual, Jesus corrects him – arguing that he must forgive not just "a lot," but "a lot, a lot" (seventy-seven times!). Peter takes this good heartedly, though I'm sure he was a bit daunted at Jesus' instruction to be so forgiving. Perhaps we are, too.

Forgiveness is not an easy thing. It's not easy because it is so meaningful, so holy. If you have ever been forgiven by someone else for a personal failing, lapse in judgment, or embarrassing oversight, you will know how much of a blessing true forgiveness is. Forgiveness means that you can openly acknowledge what happened, agree on a shared story about the wrongdoing, and agree that there is no longer any debt – real or emotional – to be repaid. Forgiveness frees a person from having to forget or hide the truth. It allows the truth to be spoken, without acrimony, resentment or bitterness, which enables the relationship between the parties to deepen.

As we begin our ministry together, I know that in the years ahead, there will be many occasions on which I will need to ask forgiveness from one or many of you. Our shared ministry of being church, building up the kingdom of God, and serving God's mission of compassion and reconciliation is not easy. There are many discernments to be made, and while I am confident that the Holy Spirit has wonderful things in store for us, I am also sure we will all make mistakes along the way from time to time. We'll move too quickly, or not quickly enough. We'll become attached to our idea, project, or priority, and lose sight of the bigger picture. We'll fail to honor the roles that we all play in our parish's decision making processes. The everyday hurts and wounds of community life can be challenging, even though they are normal. Keeping in mind Christ's instruction to maintain an attitude of forgiveness will guide us all into the grace and mercy we need to be church together for the sake of the world.

Finally, I want to remind us all that this month marks the 10th Anniversary of the terrorist attacks on September 11th. I wonder how we are doing in our journey towards deeper forgiveness of the people who orchestrated these attacks, as individuals, as a community, and as a nation. How fresh are these wounds? Are we more grieved by the attacks or by how we've responded to them over the past ten years? We'll be finding special ways to mark this anniversary during our service on Sunday 9/11, and I also hope you will join me at a town-wide ecumenical service of remembrance that evening, to be held at 7:30 p.m. at the First Church of Christ (UCC).



Chris +

Announcements from the Rector

Office Volunteers' Needed -- no, not THAT type of office volunteer!

One of the recurring themes during my conversations with the search committee last spring is that many in the parish are looking for more opportunities for spiritual or reflective engagement -- rather than to take on another task, committee, or project. To that end, I am seeking a group of people who would like to gather with me once a day (Monday through Thursday) for about 20 minutes to pray the Daily Office. The Daily Office (a.k.a. Morning Prayer, Noonday Prayer, Evening Prayer) is the most basic form of regular prayer offered by the Episcopal tradition. It can be found in the front of the prayer book and includes Bible readings, intercessions and collects. It also provides an occasion to learn about all the Holy Women and Holy Men appointed for each day in the Episcopal calendar of saints. As the months go by, the regularity of prayer at the same time each day brings with it a new and deeper perspective on faith and spirituality. I highly recommend this spiritual practice! If you are interested, please contact me by September 15. I am open to gathering in the morning or at noontime, as people's schedules allow.

-- Rev. Chris Wendell (chris@stpaulsbedford.org)

Weekly E-Meditation List Available

Looking for a moment of faithful reflection during the work-week, but find yourself always stuck behind a screen? Now you can receive a weekly E-meditation right in your inbox. The meditations are short quotes, prayers, passages and other inspirational material from the Christian tradition (or occasionally from the traditions of other brothers and sisters in faith), meant to invite a moment of spiritual reflection in the midst of our secular week. It's free! To sign up, please send an email to Tracy (info@stpaulsbedford.org) and she will add you to the list. This list is open to anyone who wants to be on it -- members of the parish, relatives, friends, neighbors, etc.

-- Rev. Chris Wendell

Joan Reddy's 10th Anniversary at St. Paul's



This summer marked the 10th anniversary of employment for our Minister of Music, Joan Reddy. Joan's decade of Spirit-filled ministry here at St. Paul's has brought an inspired sense of vitality to our music program and to our parish's worship. Beyond simply her instrumental skill and her dedicated work with soloists and the choir as a whole, she has helped our community's music become a beautiful expression of prayer and praise. St. Augustine once wrote, "He who sings, prays twice!" I think with Joan, it might even be three times! Please plan to attend church on Sunday, September 18 to help us celebrate the first ten years of Joan's ministry among us, and commission our choir for another year of music ministry.

-- Chris +

Save the Dates!

Sunday, October 30th at 4:00 p.m.

St. Paul's Celebration of New Ministry and
Installation of Rev. Christopher Wendell as
St. Paul's 5th Rector.

Sunday, September 25th at 10:00 a.m.

Bishop Shaw's visit to St. Paul's

Bishop Tom Shaw will visit St. Paul's on Sunday, September 25, celebrating the Eucharist with us that morning and visiting with the vestry and parish afterward. Please plan to worship with us that Sunday!

Pastoral Emergencies

In a pastoral emergency (urgent hospitalization, death, or immediate crisis) if there is no answer at the office, please try and reach Chris at his home number.

Vestry Corner

Dear friends,

Welcome back! It seems like summer just began, and already it's almost over. We hope you had wonderful travels, whether close to home or far away, and had a chance to enjoy the plentiful sunshine this summer. (And the heat. We can't forget the heat.)

In the last month, we have said goodbye to Margaret Schwarzer, who concluded her interim time with us on July 31, and hello to Chris Wendell, who began his tenure as our rector on August 2. Thanks to everyone who has helped Chris and his family settle into their new life in Bedford and at St. Paul's. You can find more information about the Wendells elsewhere in this Epistle.

This fall is already packed with activity. Catechesis. Sunday School, and our middle and high school youth groups will kick off the year shortly. Bedford Day is coming up on Saturday, September 17, and plans for our annual Advent Fair, held this year on December 3, are already underway. Bishop Shaw will make his regular visitation to St. Paul's on Sunday, September 25, and Bishop Bud Cederholm will come to St. Paul's Sunday, October 30, at 4:00pm for our parish's Celebration of New Ministry and the installation of our new rector. Please mark your calendars for both of these special days.

As the school year and the church year gear up again, we want to extend a special thanks to everyone who has helped keep St. Paul's running smoothly over the summer: our altar ministers, altar guild, readers, ushers, and greeters (especially those who stepped in as last-minute substitutes); Joan and those who provided special music; our coffee hour hosts; and our vestry members who checked in on the building regularly. We are grateful to have you!

The vestry will meet on Tuesday, September 20, at 7:30pm. All are welcome to attend.

With blessings,
Emily and Paul

WELCOME, WENDELLS!



By now we hope you've had a chance to meet Chris, our new rector, and his family. As you may remember, Chris comes to us from St. Andrew's in Wellesley, where he served as the associate rector for Christian Learning for four years. Kristen Wendell is an assistant professor of science education at UMass Boston, and both Wendells hold undergraduate degrees from Princeton. Their son, Nathan, was born in January. The Wendells previously lived in Watertown, but moved to Bedford this past July. We welcome them to town!

GREEN GRANT = NEW WINDOWS!

We hope you've all had a chance to check out our new, energy-efficient windows in the library and Sunday School classrooms. The windows were purchased through a Green Grant from the Diocese, which our Stewardship Committee applied for and won. The new windows will help us heat and cool the building more efficiently throughout the year, saving both energy and money in the short and long term. Many thanks to Paul Ciaccia, Brad Hafer, Chris LaPorte, Jeff Zwicker, and Alex Brough for putting together the grant application, and to Jack Healey for staining and finishing the trim around the new windows. They look great!



RECYCLING AT ST. PAUL'S

We are delighted to report that the town of Bedford will now pick up recycling at St. Paul's as part of its weekly pickup schedule. (Until now, members of the vestry had been taking the church recycling home to put out with their household collection every other week.) Recycling bins for paper are located in the library and in Tracy's office. Empty glass and plastic containers can be placed in the blue Rubbermaid container in the kitchen. Thank you for helping to keep St. Paul's green!

High School Youth

The high school youth group has a whopping SIXTEEN members this year. Welcome back, everyone—and a special welcome to our incoming freshmen. We will kick off the year with dinner and conversation on Sunday, September 11, at the Mitchells' house at 5:30pm. Please plan to attend, to help us map out the rest of the year and to meet our new rector, Chris.

Also: please note that Confirmation this year will be held on Saturday, April 28, at 10:30am at the Cathedral of St. Paul in Boston. Bishop Shaw will be presiding over the service for our deanery that morning. Confirmation classes will begin in January, with a kickoff meeting for confirmands and parents in the late fall. If you are interested in being confirmed this year, please speak to Chris, Emily, or Arthur.

Hope to see you all on the 11th!

-Emily and Arthur

MIDDLE SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP UPDATE

The Middle School Youth will be having our first meeting on Sunday evening Sept. 18th, at 5:30pm for pizza and planning. We will normally meet the first Sunday of the month during church, but since Bishop Shaw is visiting on Sept. 25th it is important we meet ahead of time to prepare for that. We will also get a chance to meet our new priest, Rev. Chris Wendell, who will be attending the meeting and is looking forward to meeting all the middle school youth. Come have pizza, join the fun, and welcome our incoming 6th graders. I'm looking forward to a great year! (Please bring \$3.00 for pizza, and if you can't eat or don't like pizza, let me know so we can provide other alternatives.) Please RSVP to attend the first meeting to Karin Baker.

First Meeting: 9/18 5:30pm – 6:45pm (at church)

Second meeting 10/2 10am

Karin Baker

Elementary Sunday School

Summer is quickly coming to an end, and with it we begin to prepare for a new Sunday school year. St. Paul's Elementary Sunday school program engages our first to fifth graders in an exploration of the life of Jesus, our liturgy, and community awareness.

A registration table will be set up in the Parish hall during coffee hour on Sunday, Sept. 11th. I'd like to welcome all families to come, meet us, and learn more about our elementary, catechesis and nursery programs.

Sunday school classes will begin on Sunday, September 18th beginning at 9:45 with singing in the parish hall. After singing, we will separate for grade specific lessons then join the service just before the Eucharistic prayer.

Working with our children offers such great joy. Teaching in the classroom offers not only the obvious wonderful rewards of interacting with our children, but also a deepening of our own spirituality as we prepare and learn from the wonderful open minds of children. More adult and youth volunteers (sixth grade and up) are needed. If you are interested in volunteering, or wish to learn more about our programs, please contact me.

Dates to remember:

September 11: Sunday school Registration, during coffee hour

September 18: First day of Sunday school

September 25: Bishop Shaw will visit

October 2: family service, children's sermon

Cathy Presti

Notes from the Nursery School



What a pleasure it is to return to school and find new windows installed in our classrooms. It will now be easier to open the windows in the spring and fall and the classrooms will be less drafty in the cold weather. Thank you to the members of the church for pursuing the grant for these windows.

We are looking forward to the start of school. Teachers will return to their classrooms in early September to set up the rooms, decorate the bulletin boards and plan the activities. Soon after that will be the arrival of the children and the fun will begin! Our first themes will be "All about You" as we learn about each child followed by "Fun in the Fall."

Our enrollment is ongoing. Our five day program is full. Our three day program has a few openings. Our two day program does have openings. If you know of a child age 2.9 or older looking to start at preschool, please send him/her our way.

Once again, thank you for our new windows. I am forever grateful for the support I feel from the parish as we start our 51st year as a preschool.

Lee Frank

CATECHESIS CORNER



It is hard to believe another summer will soon be over. It seems we just said, "Have a great summer!" Another school year begins and, with it, another church school year begins.

We will welcome many familiar faces and many new faces to our wonderful Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program. This program welcomes and nurtures our 3, 4, and 5 year olds as they begin their Christian education. For those not familiar, this program is not at all a 'rote learning' curriculum as the name might suggest, but very individual, with plenty of hands-on activities and time to explore them.

For those families new to our parish and/or new to the Catechesis program, we will provide periodic information through this leaflet and our monthly Epistle. Please do not hesitate to direct any questions to Chris, Amanda or myself or any other Catechists (teachers).

As we think about the program, our main request to families is to let us know which children will be enrolling – anyone who will be three years old (or close) by September is very welcome. Are there families new to St. Paul's with children in this age range? This will help us decide on the number and grouping of classes.

Official **registration will be after church on Sunday, Sept. 11.** But an earlier phone call or email would be helpful. **The first day for the children will be Sunday, Sept. 18.** This will be an 'orientation' day, where we meet in the church hall and they are taken individually to their classroom or "Atrium" as we call it. Parents are welcome to come see them too.

As always, we need plenty of people to keep this active program going through the year. Please let us know if you would be willing to help, even a little! We particularly invite middle and high school youth, including new sixth graders (many of whom are Catechesis graduates!), to consider whether this is a way you would like to serve St. Paul's.

We look forward to seeing children, teachers and families soon – we've missed you!

Ellen Ryan and Amanda Hubbard

DATES TO REMEMBER:

September 11 – Sunday School Registration - after church

September 18 – First Catechesis Day - orientation

September 25 – Bishop Tom Shaw visitation – plan on Catechesis

October 30 – Celebration of New Ministry and Installation of New Rector – 4PM all welcome

Advent Fair Gift Baskets



Hope you all had a great summer. Perhaps you did some shopping for the gift baskets for the Advent Fair. If so, we thank you. This year the gift basket group will be meeting upstairs in the church loft (where Tracy used to sit). Please feel free to bring any goods in to the church that you have purchased and take them to the loft. Many thanks in advance for your contributions. As we progress, we will be asking for donations of time, money and goods. Please consider joining us after church on Sundays as we get started on organizing the loft and assembling baskets. Usually we start these sessions in September shortly after school starts. We do two a week - one after church on Sunday, and one morning during the week, usually Thursdays. Thank you for considering helping out, donating money for supplies, such as packing paper, plastic gift bags, baskets, ribbon, tissue paper. basket fillers, such as seasonal goods (think Christmas), bath/toiletry items, nonperishable food stuffs, kitchen gadgets, candles, etc.

If you have any questions on what we can use, times of meetings, etc., please talk to someone on the committee: Jan Gurley, Carol Hokana, Jan Blake, Jan Gurley, Lisa Hafer, Sharon Healey, Rene Seaton, or Jan Svendsen.

Respectfully submitted,
Jan Svendsen

Usher/Greeter Opportunities

Have you thought about being an Usher or Greeter for St. Paul's? A training class will be scheduled soon for this easy rewarding job. Please see Paul Ciaccia if you are interested in being added to the schedule, or would like to find out more about the training class to come!

St. Paul's Garden



A special thanks to Rene & Jim Seaton, Sue Marasa, Jan Gurley, Jan Svendsen, Karen & Paul Kruger and Paul West for their time in keeping the gardens at St Paul's looking great over the summer.

They could use some more help so if you can spare a little time during the coming months, please let Rene know.

St. Paul's Advent Fair Saturday, December 3, 2011



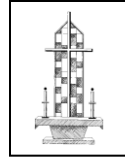
The 2011 Advent Fair will feature St. Paul's famous gift baskets, delicious homemade food including "Soups to Go", fabulous crafts, great gifts for Christmas, a silent auction, fun activities for children, vintage jewelry, good white elephants, books and much more. Please consider helping by doing one of the following:

- * Attend the Craft Workshops or the Gift Basket Workshops this fall - these are fun and all are welcome
- * Donate cash or materials to help purchase supplies
- Sew, knit or create decorative items or jewelry for the fair
- * Volunteer to help on the day of the fair
- * Share any preserves, jams, jellies, pickles, relishes, etc. that you make with the Country Kitchen
- * Donate good used items and books as well as vintage jewelry
- * Make or bake something for the day of the Fair
- * Share any new ideas you may have
- * Save the date and bring your friends

This is an all Parish activity and the major fundraiser of the year. Let's make the 2011 Advent Fair the best one yet.

We could use additional need help in organizing the Fair - a few more volunteers would really help. Contact Betsey Anderson with your ideas or to volunteer to help. Watch for another planning meeting in September!

Craft workshops begin Tuesday September 6th and continue on the Tuesday the 13th, Monday the 19th and Tuesday the 26th at Betsey Anderson's home, 64 Wildwood Drive. Come and lend a hand - you don't need to be an expert and you will have fun!



Reminder

Summer worship schedule (9:00 service) will end on September 4th and our regular Sunday 10:00 a.m. service will resume September 11th.

News from the Bedford Community Table/Pantry, Inc.

The Bedford Community Table/Pantry is currently in need of volunteers to staff the food pantry on Thursday each month. Individuals who would be interested would have to be available from 2-6 on a particular Thursday. As an incentive for volunteers on Thursdays they as well as their family members may partake in the Community Table complimentary dinner which is offered on Thursdays from 5-6 p.m. Volunteers are also needed in other areas, to see a list of volunteer opportunities visit their website at www.bedfordfoodpantry.org. Interested parties may call them at 781-275-7355.

St. Paul's will serving at The Community Table on Thursday, October 13th. Please contact me if you can help out any time that day for food preparation or that evening to serve. More details to follow in the October epistle.

Thank you,
Sharon Healey

Community Table Dates

October 13th

February 9th

April 12th

Save the Date



Women's Group Fall Breakfast

**Saturday, October 1
at 8:30 AM**

**Stelio's Restaurant
in Billerica**

An Update on Rev. Margaret

Beginning this fall, Rev. Margaret Schwarzer, our former interim, will be serving as the interim at Grace Church in Newton, MA. We're so glad she'll still be close by! Please keep her in your prayers as she moves on into this next phase of her ministry.

Calling all Torchbearers, Gospelers and Crucifers!



IMPORTANT ALTAR SERVER TRAINING Sunday October 23. Thanks to all who served faithfully at the altar this summer. We are now gearing up for a fall training with Rev. Chris Wendell. This **IMPORTANT** training will be for **ALL SERVERS** – including new recruits and those who are already trained. We have one or two changes to make in altar roles and responsibilities. And just to mix things up, we will start with pizza and a discussion and then break into groups for training or practice.

Attention New Altar servers!

Two Torchbearers serve at each service. They follow the cross, carrying lighted torches in the procession and they bring the torches to the reading of the Gospel. Children grade 2 and older are eligible to be Torchbearers. Adults are also welcome. There is a Crucifer and Gospeler at each service. The Crucifer carries the cross in the procession and assists at the Altar. The Gospeler lights and extinguishes the candles, carries the Gospel and assists as necessary. Both Acolytes help the younger Torchbearers. Youth may serve as Acolytes beginning in grade 6. Adults always welcome.

Experienced Altar servers

Please join us for the training as there are some changes and we would also like your help in training younger servers.

Please contact Caroline Larson to confirm your attendance.

CALLING ALL SINGERS!



Summer will soon draw to a close, so it is time for the Choirs of St. Paul's to get ready for another year of enriching our worship together.

THE ADULT CHOIR will gather for its first rehearsal on Thursday, Sept. 8 at 7 P.M. in the Library to prepare for singing in the service on Sept. 11, and to begin rehearsals on the music for several exciting events during September and October. Rehearsals on Sunday mornings at 9 A.M. will also resume, on Sept. 11.

THE YOUTH CHOIR will rehearse for the first time directly after the service Sunday, Sept. 11, in the sanctuary. They will sing in the service on October 2.

AUDITIONS are *not* necessary for either choir, just a willingness to participate and learn. *New members are always welcome.* Please tell me if your child cannot yet read, and expect to help with learning words at home, if that is the case.

Joan Reddy, Music Director

Bedford Day

Bedford Day is **September 17th**. Please participate by baking something for us to sell at our booth. Even more appreciated are helping hands to serve at the booth throughout the day. Look for sign up sheets in early September, let us know if you are able to help out, even if it is only for half an hour. Many hands make for light work! We will need youth to help with Spinner Art, and adults to help with everything!...especially set up and break down. Please call if you have any questions.

Sima and Bruce Seymourian



OUTREACH COMMITTEE SEEKS MEMBERS

St. Paul's Outreach committee is planning our calendar for projects for next year, beginning with our traditional Advent Giving Tree. We are looking forward to Chris Wendell's participation at our Fall meeting on Sunday, September 18 after the service. Anyone interested in joining the Outreach committee is welcome to attend. Questions? Contact Caroline Larson.

Thanks to all who continue to participate in the "Tab" program, which supports the Shriner's Burn Hospital.



Keep those tab tops coming!

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

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 Christopher S. Wendell, Rector
Tracy Lane, Parish Administrator
Joan Reddy, Music Director
Bob Godoy, Sexton

Officers:

Emily Mitchell, Co-Warden
Paul Ciaccia, Co-Warden
David Woodward, Treasurer
Katie West, Clerk

Vestry:

Betsey Anderson
Cassie Baker
Arthur Fergusson
Lisa Hafer
Sharon Healey
Carol Hokana
Rene Seaton

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A Blessing for Beginnings

Divine breath:
Each genesis daunts us;
Each sunrise rekindles us.
We cross thresholds into young stories.
One step sings hope, the other shouts doubt.
O God, midwife us into our beginnings.

We long for familiarities;
We recognize possibilities.
Rowing between the tides of transformation and resistance.
O God, midwife us into our beginnings.

Our roots stretch tender into this new soil;
Our fabrics are patterned with new colored strands.
This unknown country will reveal itself one heartbeat at a time.
O God, midwife us into all our beginnings. Amen.

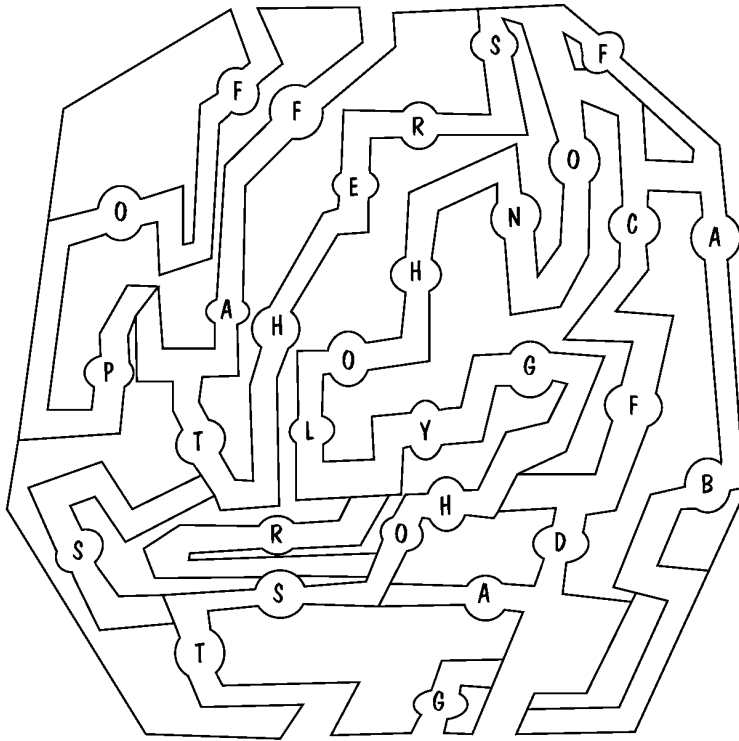
*Keri Wehlander
Canada*

Kids Challenge

All children of the parish are invited to complete these puzzles. If you return them to the church office completed as best you can so we can display them, you may then collect a small prize from Rev. Chris! To collect your prize this month please bring your completed puzzle in on or after Sunday, Sept 11th.

A-maze-ing!

Find a path that takes you from one side of the maze to the other. As you go through the maze, write down the letters in the blanks to the right to discover three names for God.



Names for God

The Bible uses many different words to describe what God is like. To discover some of these, write in the blank the letter that comes *before* this letter in the alphabet. For example, if "B" is below the blank, write an "A" in the blank.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

D S F B U P S

G B U I F S

N P U I F S

G S J F O E

T P O

D P N G P S U F S

T B W J P S

X J T E P N

I P M Z

T Q J S J U