

Fernando Gellago, Epiphany, 1440-1507

THE EPISTLE

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BEING A CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

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Dear Friends:

I write to you in the midst of new diets, exercise regimes, and various torturous self-improvement strategies. For we, of course, currently endure New Year's Resolution Season.

With each year that passes I grow a little more cynical about the value of short term struggles with ourselves. Long ago I learned that gym pros know to avoid the exercise rooms and training halls until the first week of January has ended — packed with newbies clad in the latest Lululemon, dropping small fortunes on memberships that will soon be left alone to fester. For we begin by knowing that we will undoubtedly fail, and fail quickly, and our resolutions seem only code for our insecurities: a half hearted attempt to become the person we are not.

Yet every January I have spent in parish ministry has seen faces reappear that have not been seen in church for sometime: some form, I imagine, of spiritual resolution. And, indeed, there is no better way to begin 2017 than with a renewed commitment to Jesus Christ and His Church.

Which leads me to wonder: what might our New Year's Resolutions be for St Paul's? I invite you to look around and ponder. This is a busy place: our worship and musical schedules; our parish missions; our formation ministries. Something I love



THE REV'D RICHARD WALL

about St Paul's is not only the excellence and attention that is poured into each aspect of our life, but also the love and the commitment.

And yet we also face challenges — significant challenges. Along with previous clergy, I have written before about issues of sustainability: whether those ministries we name as best beloved continue to make sense, or, even if they still attract a core following. Although signs and life and vibrancy surround us, statistics reveal decline in attendance and income beginning around 2010-2011. We continue to try to offer the same programs and ministries with few resources (human and financial) which leads to staff and volunteer burnout, and perpetual budgetary anxiety. Bishop Budde recently reminded the vestry how reliant the

ST. PAUL'S PARISH SEEKS TO RESTORE ALL PEOPLE TO GOD AND TO EACH OTHER, THROUGH SACRAMENTAL WORSHIP AND CHRIST-LIKE LIVING.

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parish is on a very small number of pledges funding a very large chunk of the budget. When a large pledge comes to an end visible changes are inevitable, and I wonder if this accounts for at least some of the changes and financial decline the parish has experienced over the last few years — and the ensuing accompanying general sense of uncertainty as to why cutbacks are occurring.

Given this crucial truth of our funding structure, I wonder if our greatest challenge is a culture of expectation: an expectation that various high caliber ministries will, can and should simply happen without the deep commitment of our own time, talent, and treasure. Or expectations about attendance and the importance of a full church. Or expectations that magnetic new vision and direction for our church might fall from the sky, without realizing the collective sacrifice, self reflection, discernment, and commitment that authentic vision demands.

Of course, this is no different to any other parish church I know and love. Too easily we become consumed by the tyranny of nostalgia and our edited memories of golden days. Too easily we look to our church and clergy for chaplains to an idea or ideal that no longer exists — and perhaps never did. Too easily we can slip into "consumer" mode and cast aside the value of stability and the demands of community in one more search for a place that offers something new, or different, or better.

How do we step out of ourselves and look beyond ourselves? A church that exists only for the stated needs of its members is not doing the work of God. If our sole focus is numbers; attendance; income; some obsessive quest to recapture what once was — we are not doing the work of God. I do not want our church to become a January gym: full of those searching for a fleeting curio, here today and gone

Church has never been about ourselves per se...but about following Jesus in a place and in company that somehow blesses us beyond all imagining and yet also stretches us to our very limits.

tomorrow; or avoided by others for all the noise, bustle, and confusion.

Three hundred years ago the French Jesuit Jean-Pierre de Caussade wrote of the “*sacrament of the present moment*” that each moment of each hour is infused with God’s presence and grace. If we believe this, he taught, then we are free to accept obstacles with humility and love, as part of our surrender to and happiness in God’s will. It is an invitation to faithfulness in the present moment — and this, I believe, is our business as we consider the future of our church. It is the guiding principle in our process of strategic planning, now one third complete.

In a sense, the work and witness of any Anglo-Catholic parish is a “given.” Our life begins and ends at the Altar of God: a living encounter with Jesus Christ, that propels us into the world to love and serve our Lord, especially in the hungry and poor. Church has never been about ourselves per se — not some mechanism of self satisfaction — but about following Jesus in a place and in company that somehow blesses us beyond all imagining and yet also stretches us to our very limits. This is a place where we find both stability and challenge.

In that spirit, let me suggest three resolutions for us to consider:

First, I ask for your support for this community and institution — not only in terms of your financial giving, but also through your presence and ministry. In my last parish I would sometimes preach about my own stewardship practice and my “no strings” approach to my own pledge. This means that my own pledge to St Paul’s comes without condition — and if the vestry or diocese or national

church makes a decision with which I struggle, then I will not use my pledge as a way of working this through. I invite you all to take a no strings approach to your own discipleship. When our ministry aligns with the sacrament of the present moment, when we enter a spirit of surrender, we find the gift of perfect freedom which Jesus offers. When we attach a set of stipulations or conditions to our ministry and discipleship, then we simply bind our souls to our egos. I often remind myself that another translation of the “blessedness” of which Jesus speaks in the Beatitudes is “happy.” When we set ourselves free to follow Jesus we are finally happy.

The second two resolutions veer from the standard script, and spring from some recent conversations with Fr. Shawn — that, in turn, spring from issue fatigue. Such as: the huge amounts of time we spend at staff meeting on minutiae — or planning, logistics, recruiting volunteers for events that then receive little support.

Fr. Shawn shared with me writing by a Jesuit scholar, Juan Luis Segundo, who in his book *The Sacraments Today* addresses what he names “the sacramental crisis.” He writes:

“The Christian community is characterized by two things. Firstly, it must be a community of mutual aid in which people practise the dimensions of real encounter and fraternal love, not simply by reading or reflecting, but by proffering real, concrete help.

Secondly, such a community cannot exist for its own self-satisfaction. It must carry out a mission. The mutual aid of the community is not its own intrinsic justification; it is not confined to the ambit of the faith community. Thanks to it, the community ought to be able to free itself on every level (material, moral, etc.) so that it can

exercise service to the rest of mankind.

Now it is our belief that such a Christian community will not suffer any sacramental crisis or have any major difficulties about the meaning of the sacraments. It will see the meaning quite clearly. Our present-day problem will have evaporated into thin air.

It will undoubtedly be such communities that will know how to find the best and most significant forms of sacramental expression. But in all probability they will not be overly concerned about external transformation. They will not feel the desperate urge to renovate and purify the liturgy that drives many Christians today.”

Any church — and we are no exception — can trap itself in circular conversations. Fr. Segundo reminds me Christ calls churches — and so calls us — to be communities of mutual aid and communities of mission.

How are we ministering to each other in our community? How are we ministering to those beyond our walls? And are both imperatives at the core of our heart and soul — are they parish passions — or simply two more ministries on a long list? And so somewhere here are our second two resolutions. As we move into the next phases of our strategic planning process, I hope we keep these two foundational motifs before our eyes.

Perhaps I am a little too hard on New Year’s Resolutions. After all, it was no less than St Benedict who reminded us — urged us — *always we begin again*. Please enjoy this short burst of aerobics, sugar free diets, and saving more money. But in the midst of self improvement please also spare a moment to reflect on Christ’s call, the still small voice speaking to us from the beauty of our altars, and search to serve our Eucharistic King, wherever we may find Him.

This comes, as always, with my love and prayers

Fr Richard



St. Paul's Strategic Plan Interim Report

Roy Byrd, Gwyneth Zakaib

During September the Vestry announced the formation of a Strategy Working Group (SWG) to begin formulating the St Paul's Strategic Plan 2017—2020.

The Strategic Plan will guide the life of our parish over the next five years and will move us from a maintenance status—internal focus on preserving what we have—to a mission focus. The outcome of the process will be a set of realistic documented strategic initiatives or focus areas.

The process is organized into three stages. Each stage is led by a Vestry Co-Chair to address one of the three central questions: *Where We Are as a Parish?* *Where do We Want to Go?* *How do We Get There?*

The purpose of this report is to present the findings from Stage-I, “*Where We Are as a Parish?*” In October Vestry Co-Chair Gwyneth Zakaib convened a working group consisting of parishioners Richard Morrisson, Charlene Mui, Jack Raffetto, and Edie Davis. The group met weekly for five weeks through video conferencing and file sharing using Google documents. Building upon a foundation of completed work including the *2015 Vestry Report on Administration and Operations*, *2014 Bishop's Report on St. Paul's*, and the *2014 Parish Profile* they reached out to leaders within St. Paul's ministries to establish particular strengths, weaknesses, threats/concerns, and opportunities within the respective ministry. To the right is a sampling of key findings in each category.

These findings are not all inclusive. We will schedule a presentation during January for those interested in learning more or who might be interested in participating in the next stage

St. Paul's is welcoming parish with a rich tradition of Anglo-Catholic worship, resilient preaching, and beautiful liturgy. Parishioners have a strong theological understanding, take their own spiritual development seriously, and are solidly committed to mission and outreach. Our music program, with its parish choir and choir of Girls and Boys, choral and organ musicianship is nationally known.

The Episcopal Diocese of Washington lists opportunities and resources on their website that we can explore and utilization. We can also investigate what is working for other parishes. There are several key demographics already at St. Paul's we can engage better—younger parishioners and newcomers in their 20s and 30s, those at or near retirement age, and visitors who come through our doors. We have a depth of talent already in the parish—we simply need to identify and leverage talent better. Similarly we should continue embracing technology, as an exemplifying, pushing Wifi throughout building, establishing cloud-based networking, improving communications, training more people on technology and communications—these require a relatively small investments of time and money with the potential for large returns.

Membership, pledges, and general giving are in decline, where the majority of annual income is increasingly dependent upon a few large pledges—an unsustainable operating model. There is an overwhelming consensus that there is a critical shortage of volunteers and difficulty in attracting new help—this is true for nursery coordination, CGS, Altar Guild, Grate Patrol, hospitality/event

coordination, pastoral care, evangelization, technology, and newcomer support. The Washington D.C. metropolitan area and the parish neighborhood is a transient community and in some respects St. Paul's is a transient parish. The resulting turnover requires constant welcoming of new members and recruitment of volunteers. A large percentage of parishioners live beyond the immediate neighborhood of the church, lengthy commutes and limited transportation alternatives is a challenge for developing robust fellowship opportunities at St. Paul's outside of Sunday.

Like every other parish in the Diocese and the Nation we are grappling with a decline in religious belief, church affiliation and worship. We are also not immune from theological disagreements within the Episcopal Church. There is a generational shift within the parish, a marked decline in parishioners in their forties and fifties and fewer young families. Declining income is contributing to volunteer and clergy burnout, and deferred maintenance on aging portions of the physical plant. Limited parking while not a direct threat is a significant challenge.

Internal origin
(attributes of the organization)

Helpful
to achieving the objective

Harmful
to achieving the objective

S
Strengths

W
Weaknesses

External origin
(attributes of the environment)

O
Opportunities

T
Threats

Diagram Source: By Xhienne - SWOT pt.svg, CC BY-SA 2.5, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=2838770>

of the planning process, "Where do We Want to Go?" John Orens will lead the effort.

The St. Paul's Strategic Plan will guide the life of our parish over the next five years and will move us from a maintenance status—internal focus on preserving what we have—to a mission focus. In other words it will enable us to seek new ways to engage the parish, to build relationships in the wider community; and work toward the fulfillment of Christ's message of love in the world. The outcome of the process will be a set of realistic documented strategic initiatives or focus areas. Underpinning each initiative, resourced and measurable tasks. The plan is intended to be a living iterative document; an executable roadmap, rather than a mere list of lofty goals.

The goal is to rollout the St. Paul's Strategic Plan 2017—2020 at the June 2017 Annual Meeting. If you are interested in learning more about the strategic planning process or think you might like to participate in one or more of the remaining planning stages contact Roy Byrd by email at rrbyrd@comcast.net.



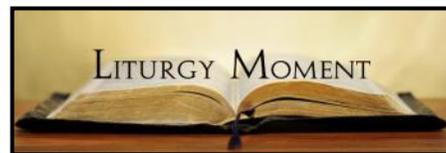
When Does the Liturgy Begin?

Fr. Shawn Strout

As the new year begins, I thought I would begin at the beginning. This year we will step through the liturgy, reflecting on each piece of it as we go along. We will begin with the Eucharist, not because it is the beginning as in the case of baptism, but because it is most familiar to us since we celebrate it every day here at St. Paul's. Please let me reiterate that I warmly welcome your questions along the way. Please do not hesitate to email me with them (stout@stpauls-kst.com).

Let's begin with a fundamental question, "When does the liturgy begin?" A knee jerk reaction might be to say, "Well, Father, surely you know the scheduled time of Masses at St. Paul's, don't you?" Indeed, I do. However, I would suggest to you that the liturgy does not begin at 7:45, 9:00 or 11:15 am on a Sunday morning (or our weekday times either). Those are our posted service times, and are indeed when our services begin. However, the liturgy begins much earlier than those times.

Another response might be that the liturgy begins the evening before, Saturday evening in the case of Sunday. That response shows a good grasp of how liturgical time works. Because we have inherited our liturgy from the Jewish faith, we measure time in the way that the ancient Jews did (and contemporary Jews still today do) from sunset to sunset. Thus, for Jews, Shabbat begins at sunset on Friday and ends at sunset on Saturday. Similarly, we Christians also measure our liturgical time in that way. The two best examples are Christmas and Easter. Our mass on December 24th is The First Mass of Christmas. Similarly, the Easter Vigil is The First Mass of Easter even though they begin the night before. So, we could argue that the



liturgy begins the night before the actual service. Yes, that is true to an extent, but I will argue that it begins much earlier than that as well.

"Okay, Fr. Shawn," some of you might respond. "How about the liturgy begins on Easter? After all, Easter is the central feast of the Church." Again, that is a great response. And indeed, Easter was the first feast to be celebrated by the Church and is indeed the focal point of our liturgical calendar. In many ways, we celebrate Easter throughout the year, each Sunday, as we commemorate the Paschal Mystery of Christ (i.e. his birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension). Or others might say, "Fr. Shawn the liturgy must begin in Advent because Advent is the beginning of the liturgical year." That is also very true. Advent marks the beginning of the church year even though our civil year, here in the United States and much of the west, begins on January 1. But, again, I will argue that the liturgy begins much earlier than that as well.

So, when does the liturgy begin? It liturgy begins in the very heart of God. As Christians, we believe that God is Three Persons in One Unity. God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Classical Trinitarian theology suggests to us that the Father is worshipped by the Son and the Holy Spirit for all eternity. Thus, the very heart of God involves worship. The liturgy begins in the heart of God.

Why is that important other than perhaps to impress a friend with our theological sophistication? It is important because we must always remember that worship begins with God. We join with God in worship.

We also join with the angels and archangels in their worship of God as well, as we say in the *Sanctus* in every Mass. Worship is not something that we initiate. Rather, it is our response to the worship that occurs in the very heart of God and throughout creation. As Christ says in the Gospel according to Luke, if we did not worship God, the very stones would cry out. Worship is happening all around us, every day, every hour of the day.

So then, does that mean we could just stay in bed on Sunday morning and worship God? Sure, it does. Does that mean we could worship God at our local Starbucks? Absolutely. How about taking a walk in the park or a hike in the woods? Definitely. But do we? Periodically, I'm sure we stop and worship God at the beauty of a sunset or the flash of color in the autumn leaves. Occasionally, we might worship God as we reminisce with a good friend over a hot cup of joe. But, if we are honest with ourselves, those moments are rare and fleeting.

Gathering together corporately on a Sunday morning is a discipline that builds up our awareness of God's presence in our lives throughout the week. It is a dedicated time that we make to focus on God and truly worship *as a gathered community*. Daily worship, either through attending Mass here at St. Paul's or through praying the Daily Office or some other devotional material, is another way in which we set aside time to conscientiously worship God. When we do that, we become more aware of the majesty and grace of God all around us, everywhere and always. The liturgy begins in the very heart of God. We respond to that liturgy when we gather together to worship God. Care to join us?



A Historian, a Parishioner,

Patrick White, Robin Meigel, John Bohl, and Janet Wamsley

A historian, a parishioner, a composer and a photographer...sounds a bit like the joke about folks riding on a train or lost on a desert island! But no, just a wonderful coming together of different perspectives on St. Paul K Street's annual Advent Lessons and Carols Service. These perspectives ground us in the traditions of worship, from how the service itself has evolved, in the spiritual connection of listening and sharing, in the creative expression of music, and in the keen eye of the visual experience.

The Historian

Advent (the word means "coming" or "arrival") is a season which has two meanings for Christians. It is a time to prepare for the anniversary of the Lord Jesus' first coming—his birth to the Blessed Virgin Mary at Bethlehem two thousand years ago—and culminates in our celebration of Christmas, the twelve day feast that lasts from December 25 to January 6.

The other theme of Advent is the Second Coming of Our Lord at the end of time, when he will come in great power and glory to judge both the living and the dead. The double emphasis on both the first and the second advents of Christ gives to the season its unique mixture of devotional joy—joy in the redemption that has come to us in the Incarnation, and awe before the Judgment that yet awaits us.

To the spiritually discerning believer, both of these tremendous and signal events of past and future are experienced as eternally present realities. The Procession with Carols on Advent Sunday originated at King's

College, Cambridge, England in 1934, composed by Dean Eric Milner-White (who had also been responsible nine years earlier for the more widely known Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols for Christmas Eve). In his Preface to the Advent Sunday service, Dean Milner-White wrote: "In the old English liturgies, the Advent Offices made a preparation for the coming of our Lord to this earth far more vivid and eager than those of our present Prayer Book. So an Advent Carol Service, if without precedent, is not without suitability, if it helps to express 'the desire of all nations and ages.'" The purpose of the service is "not to celebrate Christmas, but to expect it."

The progression of the choir, starting in darkness at the back of the church and ending in brilliant light at the High Altar, symbolizes the movement from the prophetic expectation of Messiah to the very brink of messianic fulfillment, both in the birth of the Son of God and his final coming in judgment and glory. We are bidden to awake and watch, prepare and expect, for our God will come and save us, and deliver us from the bondage of sin and death, and bring us into the radiance of his kingdom of glory.

The Parishioner

"Oh My, That sounds like John Tavener" I thought, as I listened with an ear to the ethereal music outside the entrance to the narthex. But it was only after the lights went up that I could check the attribution in the bulletin for this year's Advent Procession with Lessons and Carols. John Tavener is one of my favorite composers but *this* moving piece, oh so appropriate for the occasion, was composed by none other than our John Bohl, especially for this service in honor of

a Composer and a Photographer

the 150th Anniversary of the founding of St. Paul's Parish.

I have not missed this annual event since attending my first time. It is fair to say that I now look forward to and anticipate this service which itself is an anticipatory celebration of the expectation of Christmas!

It is sometimes said that émigré populations are more zealous in their observation of traditions from the mother country than contemporary citizenry who live there today. I have not attended this same service at King's College, Cambridge, England to know how closely we adhere to this celebratory service which originated there in 1934. But I can say that I shared our website link for the video of the 2015 service with an older, housebound, friend living in Vancouver, British Columbia who himself was a chorister at St. Paul's in London in his youth. He was moved and full of praise for the musicianship of the young and older choristers alike.

The carols and hymns are emotionally moving and complimentary frames for each of seven lessons. Some are more familiar than others and it is a different musical experience each year. Dear readership – if you are one of those that hasn't actually attended this annual celebration – you are missing out on one of the great musical traditions at St. Paul's.

The Composer

Last August, while I was planning the repertoire for the year, I was debating between several settings of the text of the Advent Matin Responsory (the text the choir sings from the Atrium at Advent Lessons and Carols). Our Honorary Assistant Organist Bob Motes was the one who suggested I compose my own, which,

after thinking about it, I reluctantly decided to do. While I love to play the organ, hymns, accompany the choirs, conduct, and improvise, composing is at the bottom of my list! The choirs waited and waited, until the week before Lessons and Carols for it to be completed.

While many writers and composers have what they might call “a process” — setting aside a certain time each day, in a specific place, etc., my process was quite the opposite. Ideas and melodies would come to me in my sleep. Sometimes I would use my phone to record myself humming a melody (usually at 3:15 in the morning), or get up and write something down. Much of the completed piece

took shape early one morning while I sat on the floor at the coffee table, just in time for that afternoon's chorister rehearsal. In the end, the process was not only enjoyable but humbling, as I knew this would be performed by singers that I respect and admire so much — those of our own spectacular choirs!

The Responsory was written for the 150th Anniversary Celebration, and is dedicated to the boy and girl choristers.



SERMON SERIES

THIRD SUNDAY OF
ADVENT
DECEMBER 11, 2016

The Rev'd Richard Wall



Meryl Streep is marvelous! Many of you saw her, I'm sure, as Mrs. Thatcher in *The Iron Lady*, or the boss from hell in *The Devil Wears Prada*. Think a little harder and recall the movie *Doubt*. Meryl Streep is Sister Aloysius, a nun running a parochial school in the Bronx on the eve of Vatican II. This nun is a tight ship — terribly traditional; despising of reform or innovation; and very, very certain about everything she says and does. She's respected by the other nuns, and feared by the priests who run the church next door.

And then, one day, a new priest arrives. Father Flynn was younger, excited about the changes revolutionizing the church. He grew his hair, his fingernails a little too long for a man of God. He showed scant deference to our Sister Aloysius; more thinly veiled contempt. And the feeling was very mutual.

Sister looked for ways to discredit Father; maybe she could push him to another parish faraway. She had no doubt that something about him wasn't right — his flippancy towards tradition; his refusal to play by her rules; his unwillingness to see things as she did: this was a highly suspect priest. Of what, she couldn't say. But Sister was watching.

Finally, she had her chance. She saw something that could be construed as unseemly, untoward. She challenged him: she bluffed; he blinked. He was gone within hours and a new priest materialized. But then the final scene of the movie: she sits in the parish garden, weeping with doubt over what she had done. For all her propriety; for all her pious talk of tradition; for all her devotion to students, she doubted her insinuations, doubted her accusations were anything more than misunderstanding or snap judgment or even plain parish gossip. Sister Aloysius had doubts.

Today, we jump back two thousand years and find John the Baptist, languishing in his prison cell, contemplating his last days, and also crippled with doubt. "Did I do the right thing?" "Was it worth it?" he asked himself over and over again. Lord knows a dreary cell, water dripping, rats scuttling, the best of us would be second guessing. Peeking through the bars, nobody outside seemed to care he was in prison. Where were the crowds of his disciples? Why hadn't the prison been mobbed, the keys grabbed, his cell unlocked? And where's the Messiah — where's the axe, the fire, the winnowing fork? Was all this for nothing? Where is God, he agonized, sitting in his prison cell just next to the Sea of Galilee, watching the sun rise and set over the water, wondering when the end of his life would come.

We wouldn't peg John as a doubter. A voice from heaven told him his purpose, his mission, the point to his life — preparing the way of the Lord — baptizing — making his paths straight. Whatever it took to make that happen, John did it.

Yet...yet. Prison can do things to a person. And yes, Herod may have thrown him into jail, but John is imprisoned by his own expectations: locked in an interior cell of disappointment and disillusion. And his locked door and dreary cage look so familiar. We cling so tight to our own expectations, our own standards, our own perspectives, that we find ourselves imprisoned: locked into a view of God, the world around us, other people, our own lives — a view that is always so small and so narrow. And we think God should make our lives easy, cozy, successful. Yet what do we find? We meet a God who calls us to live lives with meaning, who stays by our side through pain and suffering, who calls us not to win but to stand

God does not test us – and God does not abandon us; we are never left alone; faith is no solitary struggle. But He does give us grace – grace pulling us back from the brink; grace to step away from the edge; grace to help us help our brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus. We can be enriched and changed by the power of God’s love, and we can reflect this love back to the world.

with the last and the least, finding strength in weakness. We find a God who never allows us to stay home in our cells, nursing our pain and bitterness, but calls us to stand up and break out into unexpected joy and fulfillment. And as our expectations are dashed by our God of surprises do we rejoice? Or do we doubt?

Take comfort in today’s passage. This morning we are in good company. Faith is not made of egg shells — faith is the strongest kind of rope: it can be pushed, pulled, tied up and let out, yanked over, grabbed under without ever having to break. This kind of faith can weather a lifetime of doubt — although it will never be an anesthetic, never shield us from the pain of being human. God does not test us — and God does not abandon us; we are never left alone; faith is no solitary struggle. But He does give us grace — grace pulling us back from the brink; grace to step away from the edge; grace to help us help our brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus. We can be enriched and changed by the power of God’s love, and we can reflect this love back to the world. With the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, working in our lives and within this church, we can find our way back to a better place whenever we are beset with doubt. Advent is the time to escape our expectations, escape our doubt — and be reminded that our cell doors are only ever locked from the inside.

When I watch Doubt my heart breaks for Sister Aloysius. As she cries

at the end of the movie it seems she has no understanding, no insight into her distress. Is there any hope for her? Any hope for new life, joy, resurrection? Or does she live and work and minister in a vacuum, in a bleak, impersonal world, her faith story one more resume, stripped bare of saving grace. This Advent — learn from her. For we have a promise, a gift — a blessed assurance: that the blind receive their sight; the lame walk; the dead are raised up; and good news is preached to the poor. And blessed are we who take no offense at this holy baby.

We all, at points in our life, doubt: we all face the collapse of meaning and direction — through illness, anxiety, unemployment, broken relationships — and, at the last, in our own deaths. I have no easy answers to the dilemmas of existence, but only this witness to what I know. That, through the love and mercy of God, our failures, our burdens, our betrayals, our limitations, our doubts, can open into new freedoms when we follow the way of Jesus. We, like millions of others, can find life in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ. A century and a half ago, Coleridge put it like this, and I can say no better: *Christianity is not a theory, or a speculation, but a Life; not a philosophy of life, but a Life, and a living process... Try it.*



Scarf Auction Benefits St. Saviour’s School

Anne Windle

On St. Paul’s recent pilgrimage to the Holy Land, we visited St. Saviour’s School, Amman, Jordan which St. Paul’s has been supporting for several years through need-based scholarships given to 25 percent of the students as well as classroom renovation and equipment. St. Saviour’s offers a K-12 education to about 350 boys and girls, Muslims and Christians, sighted and blind. We were all very impressed with what the director of the school has accomplished with limited resources over the last sixteen years and were motivated to provide even more assistance.

I made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land about eight years ago and while in Bethlehem, purchased several scarves from a street vendor, who wept when I and a few others made our purchases. Bethlehem has been very economically depressed by the wall constructed by Israel. I subsequently ordered more scarves through our tour guide, and sold them at St. Paul’s to benefit the Commission on Mission.

So when we visited Bethlehem on this pilgrimage, I purchased about a dozen scarves, which were sold at silent auction the last few weeks to benefit St. Saviour’s. I am very happy to report that all the scarves and one of the bags were sold, and the Commission on Mission will be sending over \$500 to St. Saviour’s. Many thanks to those of you who participated; generous parishioners bid as much as \$75 for a scarf. Every cent is appreciated and will be well-used.



November Vestry Report



Preston Winter

The Vestry held its regular monthly meeting on November 29th, 2016. Fr. Richard provided a brief report on a very meaningful pilgrimage to the Holy Land, highlighting the Epistle article (see the December issue). He also provided an update on the Music Director search, noting that a number of strong candidates had applied prior to the November 30 deadline.

Katherine Britton presented (in writing) the Treasurer's Report, reporting lower than normal plate income and a possible small overall deficit by the year end. A brief update was provided on the repairs to the ceiling tiles and carpet near the nursery that were damaged by a recent leak, which will be repaired once the final selection of a service provider is complete.

With regards to Stewardship, the 2016 campaign has been slower than in recent years. As of the date

of the meeting, we had received 112 pledges, for a total of \$453,000, as compared with 143 pledges for a total of \$516,000 at the time in 2015. Our goal is still to reach \$750,000 for 2017, but we have a significant way to go. Vestry members will seek to follow-up with parishioners who may still be willing to pledge for 2017.

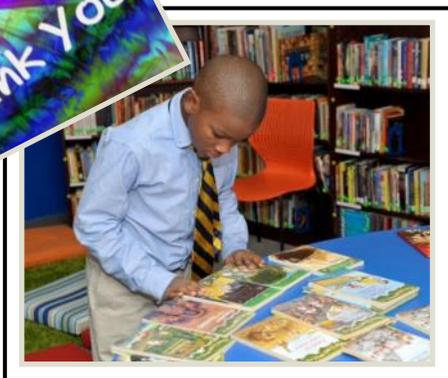
Gwyneth Zakaib then presented the strategic planning phase I summary, which included an overview of major strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges that St. Paul's encounters as we begin 2017. [For more on this phase, see report on Page 4-5] The next phase of strategic planning process will continue with a deeper dive into "Where do We Want to Go?", which will be led by John Orens, and we will encourage and engage parish participation.



Bishop Walker School Donation

Sylvia Rortvedt

Thanks to the members and friends of St. Paul's who participated in the fall back-to-school campaign for Bishop Walker School. Donations included 5 boxes of school supplies and financial support for the school library. Contributions of nearly \$500 were matched by the Commission on Mission, allowing the library to acquire \$1,000 worth of library books, including titles in science, health, biography and fiction to support the curriculum and promote reading. As one of the volunteers



who sees the impact of the library at BWS on a regular basis, a heartfelt thank you!



150 SAINT PAUL'S PARISH

This Month in St. Paul's History

January 1, 1945
Last services held in "Old" St. Paul's.



January 19, 1911
First organ recital series with choir.

January 25, 1947
Groundbreaking ceremony for "New" St. Paul's.



JANUARY ON K STREET

UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS AT ST. PAUL'S

1	Linda DeBerry	14	Grace Buzby Edward Loucks
6	Douglas Freeman Liz Ryon	17	Richard Best
8	William Buzby Frank Parlier Eric Petersen Emerson Sieverts	20	Samantha Glosh William Heron
9	Penelope Wilhelm	21	John Crane Mark Freeland
10	Clarissa Dean Hannah Proctor Jeanne Smith	24	James Kennedy Ann Martin William O'Brien
11	Peter Agnew Catherine Ballinger Linna Barnes	27	Andrew Darmstadter
12	Sarah Evans Brown	28	David Parker
		31	Mildreth Thorberg



SPECIAL SERVICES/ MAJOR FEAST DAYS

The Circumcision of Christ Sunday, January 1, 2017

9:45 a.m.: Morning Prayer
10:30 a.m.: Sung Mass

The Epiphany

Friday, January 6, 2017

6:45 a.m.: Morning Prayer
7:00 a.m.: Low Mass
5:45 p.m.: Evening Prayer
6:45 p.m.: Solemn Mass

The Baptism of Our Lord Sunday, January 8, 2017

7:30 a.m.: Morning Prayer
7:45 a.m.: Low Mass
9:00 a.m.: Sung Mass
11:15 a.m.: Solemn Mass
6:00 p.m.: Epiphany Lessons & Carols, followed by Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament

Patronal Feast: Conversion of St. Paul Sunday, January 22, 2017

7:30 a.m.: Morning Prayer
7:45 a.m.: Low Mass
10:30 a.m.: Solemn Pontifical Mass
with The Right Reverend Mariann Edgar Budde, Bishop of Washington, preacher and celebrant
6:00 p.m.: Solemn Evensong & Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament



**KEEP CALM
and
BECOME A
GRATE PATROL
DRIVER**

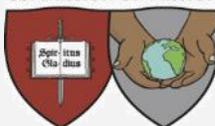
We are short on drivers for weekend breakfast delivery runs!!!!!!

If you can help, please contact Glenn Marsh (gmarsh338@outlook.com).

Delivery teams meet in the parish parking lot at 5:45 am on Saturday and Sunday mornings and deliver along pre-set routes. Newcomers will be teamed with old hands. You can volunteer for a regular time or as your schedule allows.

Your help will make all the difference to those in need.

SAINT PAUL'S PARISH
COMMISSION ON MISSION





SAINT PAUL'S PARISH

K STREET — WASHINGTON

2430 K Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20037

202.337.2020
<http://www.stpauls-kst.com>

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Remember to mark your Calendar:

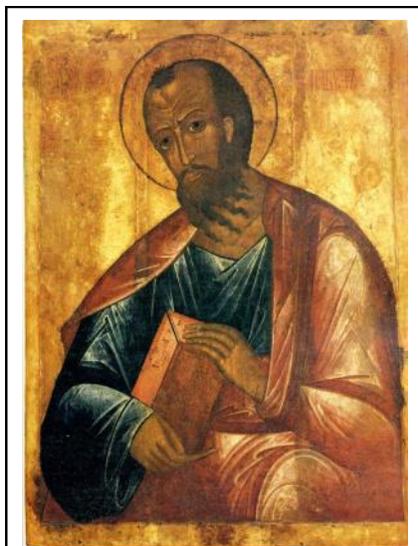
Patronal Feast, Conversion of St. Paul: Sunday, January 22,

Combined service at 10:30 a.m.:

Solemn Pontifical Mass,

The Right Rev'd Mariann Edgar Budde, Bishop of Washington,

Preacher and Celebrant



St. Paul, the Apostle, Unknown Artist, 1550