



THE EPISTLE

A PUBLICATION OF ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH | NOVEMBER 2006

From the Rector

Let us Pray?

Let my prayer be set forth in your sight as incense, the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice –Psalm 141:2

What exactly is prayer? Many people think that prayer is something you do only in church or on your knees as you prepare for bed. I remember the prayer my grandmother taught me when I was young, that was said before heading off to bed:

*Matthew, Mark, Luke and John,
Bless the bed that I lay on,
Four corners to my bed
Four Angels round my head,
One to watch and one to pray
And two to bear my soul away.*

That prayer has always stayed with me but I have realized that that is not the only way to pray. The notion that prayer must always take a formal tone and the accompanying posture is not as set in stone as you may think. Prayer can and does take a number of different forms. One of the greatest moments of prayer for me was while living in New York City for seminary I would attend Evensong almost every evening where the community would come together for communal prayer. But after the formality of Evensong I would don my rollerblades and go for a 5 mile blade down the Westside of Manhattan. It was during that time where the world and people whizzed by me as I made my way to Battery Park that I felt closest to God, that I was able to talk to God and at times that I could most clearly hear God.

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Advent by Thom M. Shuman

if you came in the spring,
we could expect newness,
bright yellow flowers
to soften your path,
the songs of birds
to herald your coming.

but you came in
winter's despair;
the chill of complacency
settled upon us...

help us to set down
our parcels of expectations
to reach down and scoop
you up in our arms,
your laughing breath
giving us life. Amen.

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Toys for Mississippi 2006



TWO WOMEN AND THEIR TRUCK will again be making the trip to Camp Coast Care in Long beach, Mississippi over Christmas to bring toys and gift cards to the children. Very little has been accomplished in restoring that area to livable conditions. These children are still the innocents.

The Episcopal Diocese of Michigan Hurricane Relief Task Force along with the Dorothy Chapter of Daughters of the King at St. Paul's is sponsoring this effort.

All checks should be made out to: St. Paul's Episcopal Church. MEMO: Toys to MS. Any member of DOK will be glad to accept any check, cash or toy you want to donate. See Sue Knapp for your tax deduction slip.

Suggestion for toys: basketballs, race cars, any large trucks, Lincoln Logs, scooters, dolls of all sizes (mostly African American); trains, large stuffed animals, electric games, portable CD players, Fisher Price toys. **NO toys of violence, please.** All these toys can be bought for \$20.00 or less. They would like at a least a \$20.00 toy. All donations will be collected around the **11th of December.**

Volunteers are always needed at Camp Coast Care. There could possibly be a van or two of volunteers who would be willing to spend their Christmas holiday in Mississippi this year from December 21st to the 27th. You will find this "a life altering experience". See Sue Knapp is you'd like to participate.

Thank you, Sue Knapp

COZY BOX

Beginning on Sunday, November 12, you may bring new mittens, gloves, hats, scarves and socks to church for the "Cozy Box". This is a Daughters of the King sponsored project that will help provide warm clothing articles to those of our surrounding community. Last year with the generosity of the parish, we were able to take an overflowing carton to the Salvation Army. So bring a cozy item or two to church; we want our box to be overflowing this year, too!

2007 Calendars Wanted

The Seaman's Church Institute of New York and New Jersey is collecting and distributing 2007 calendars to seafarers. Please save 2007 calendars (from pocket to wall size) you receive in the mail or from local businesses. The calendars are give to seafarers who can keep a diary of their travels and also keep track of time while at sea. You may put them in the basket on the information table by the office door. Thank you!

SPIRITUALITY GROUP

The Spirituality Group meets at 7:30 PM at the home of Dorothy Calmes. Upcoming sessions include: **Tuesday, November 14** – Native American Spirituality; **Monday, November 20** – the Venerable Haju Sunim will lead the group in exploring Buddhist Spirituality; **Wednesday, December 13**, Bob Fisher will inform the group about Quaker Spirituality. There will be a session on Hindu Spirituality scheduled for January 2007.

There is a \$35.00 class fee to attend all of the sessions; this will enable us to give the facilitators an honorarium. For additional information, please call Dorothy Calmes at 517-548-6666.

BAH-HUMBUG

Do you need to get a gift for someone during the holidays, and you just aren't sure what to buy them? Does that person on your gift list have everything, and one more tie would cause the tie rack to come falling down? How about purchasing an animal in honor of your mother, aunt, boss or co-worker? At our *Bah-Humbug Heifer Gift Market* you can complete all your holiday shopping and receive a handsome gift card that can be placed under the tree, in a stocking, or mailed anywhere in the world.



Between services and during coffee hour on the 4 weeks of Advent, stop by in the Parish Hall and have Jeanne and Phil Smith explain how a gift of a goat, heifer, or a bee could be the answer to your prayers for that hard to buy for person on your shopping list. There will be an Advent tree available for you to place an ornament representing each animal you purchase. Come fill the tree with animals. When you make your donation, a cow bell will be rung in honor of your generous spirit.

In case you are wondering about the Bah-Humbug name, it isn't because we don't care about the Christmas season. The Bah-Humbug is a special gift of a goat (the Bah) and a hive of bees (the Hum of a bug).

This is one way you can save yourself time at this busy season, when many of us feel overwhelmed by our "to do lists". We don't want this to be something you do in lieu of other financial help you give to organizations around the holidays. Please keep up the good work while helping all those other organizations, but think of this as a way to give someone a gift that will keep on giving, as this gift of an animal is passed on to other people in villages around the world.

SCENES OF ST. PAUL'S



Fall Parish Clean-up



Bishop Gibbs & Members of the Vestry, September 17

Let us Pray...*Continued from Page 1*

Prayer for me has become not only the time of communal prayer, which we share with each other on Sundays and during the week as a community gathered but those quiet times where I can converse with God.

The interesting thing about thinking of prayer as a conversation is that it means that sometimes we have to Shut up and listen. Conversations go two ways and often in my own prayer life I tend to like to dominate the conversation, but every once in a while I force myself to stop and listen in the silence. God will and does talk to us when we allow God to get a word in.

So the next time you think that God only hears formal prayers, try having a conversation with God, try engaging all your senses in worship and in prayer. The sights, sounds, feeling, noises and smells of worship will transcend you, and maybe, just maybe you'll hear God in the midst of the noise of life. Let us pray...



Come & See: Episcopal 101

Perhaps you're a regular churchgoer who is new to the area and seeking a church community. Maybe you're a life-long Episcopalian who wants to know about your faith. Well, *Come & See* is the class for you. Starting Sunday **December 3 through December 17** come and explore what it means to be Episcopalian.

Class sessions meet at **9:15am** in the **Noirot Room**. See you there!

EDUCATION UPDATE

Youth Education

The two oldest youth groups have been combined into one group. The name of the group is GITM/CIA (God in the Minds/Christ in Action). There will be weekly meetings on Sunday mornings starting at 9:15. This will give the students an opportunity to attend the service of their choice.

Note that at this time there will not be any Wednesday evening activity meetings. We have found that our youth are just too busy during the week at this time. Next semester we will revisit this and determine if there is an evening during the week that would work with everyone's schedules.



The youth group went on their first field trip of the new school year on Oct. 29th. Father Deon and Alex agreed to come along to help Phil as chaperones. The group headed out to Pinckney to the Terrified Forest.

It was a perfect night for a walk on the wild side through $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of a converted farmer's field. Many scary creatures blocked our way during our trek, but we made it back to tell our story. Keep watching this space for more news of youth group activities.

Youth Fundraising

We have new Episcopal vehicle window decals. These can be removed easily, so that you can take them off the window when you purchase a new vehicle.

Advent calendars are in. Each family with a child in Sunday school will receive a calendar. For those in the church who would also like one, we have extras available.

Both of these items are available for anyone in the church. Donations will be cheerfully accepted to offset the costs and to help pay for the next youth pilgrimage.

These two items will be available during coffee hour.

Adult Education

We haven't forgotten those of you who completed the survey for adult education. Based on what we received, we would like to start a Kerygma program entitled *Your Bible: The Study Begins* in January. Father Deon will facilitate the meetings. This is a program with 7 sessions, and the meetings will take place in the middle of the week in the evenings. Look for more information in December.

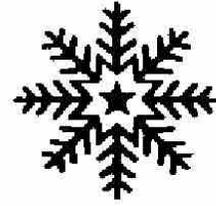
ST. PAUL'S COMMUNITY

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Timothy Bay	11/5
Sean Haaseth	11/6
Susan Uvick	11/7
Fr. Deon Johnson	11/8
Amy Courter	11/11
Bev Field	11/11
Alexis Johnson	11/12
Perry DeBruhl	11/15
Bert Gaetz	11/15
Jay Haaseth	11/15
Matthew Nielsen	11/16
Gwyn Haaseth	11/17
Julia Reichlmayr	11/17
Mike Latham	11/18
Michael Reichlmayr	11/18
Colin MacGregor	11/20
Matt Shields	11/20
Meghan McElroy	11/23
Patti Shields	11/23
Jack McElroy	11/24
David Nagy	11/25
Mary LePiors	11/28
Mary Parker	11/28

NOVEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Andy and Mary Parker	11/4
Ray and Jan Barnes	11/16



CHRISTMAS SERVICES 2006

DECEMBER 24, 2006 4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

9:30am Advent Lessons & Music
with the Celebration of the Holy Eucharist.
(Please note there is only ONE morning service)

CHRISTMAS EVE

5:00pm The Holy Eucharist & Pageant

10:30pm Festive Music for Christmas

11:00pm The Holy Eucharist "Midnight Mass"
(Please note that incense may be used at this service)

DECEMBER 25, 2006 CHRISTMAS DAY

10:00am The Holy Eucharist

By the Grace of God
The Right Reverend Wendell N. Gibbs, Jr.
Tenth Bishop of Michigan

will celebrate with

the Vestry and People of

St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Brighton, MI

The Renewal of Ministry with the Welcoming of
The Reverend Deon K. Johnson
As Fifteenth Rector

Wednesday November 29, 2006
7:00PM

Farewell to the Ways...

Pam and Bill Way will worship with us the last time on Sunday, Nov. 12th. They are moving to Las Vegas, Nevada to make their home near their daughter and her family. The Ways have been part of this community of faith for about seven years. We shall miss them and we wish them Godspeed

Is believing certain creeds really what Christianity is all about?



As I see it, being Christian is not primarily about believing a set of statements to be true. I think that's one of the distortions introduced into the Christian tradition over the last 300 years or so because of the conflict between traditional Christianity and the enlightenment of the 17th Century. [That conflict] called many traditional Christian teachings into question and had an unfortunate transforming effect on the meaning of faith. Faith began to mean believing difficult things to be true, which puts the emphasis in the wrong place.

I don't think God is concerned primarily about the beliefs in our heads, but about something much deeper within us. If one understands the beliefs of the tradition and the scriptures of the tradition not as what is to be believed, but as pointers beyond

themselves that use the language of metaphor and poetry and symbol and so forth, then one can begin to see that the Christian life is about a relationship to the sacred. Christianity, like all the religions of the world, is a human construction. It uses human language, culturally conditioned relative language, and to absolutize that language is a profound mistake.

To be Christian, I would say, is to live within the Christian tradition as a metaphor of the sacred, and also as a sacrament of the sacred. The tradition as a whole has as one of its main purposes mediating the reality of the spirit or the reality of the sacred—that is, entering into a relationship with the sacred. It's about entering into a relationship with suchness, with is-ness. I think of God, to use very abstract language, as is-ness without limits. Our relationship to is-ness matters profoundly. It will shape our whole way of being in the world. If we see is-ness as indifferent, we will be concerned with our own self-protection. If we see is-ness as threatening, we'll be even more paranoid about life. But if we see is-ness as giving us life, it creates the possibility of relating to life in a non-threatened kind of way. That makes possible the lives of the saints.

-Dr. Marcus Borg



Where is God calling us?

As we begin as a parish to plan for the future, we are invited to spend time in discernment and prayer. 2007 is just around the corner. Each member of St. Paul's is invited to pray and reflect on where God is calling us as a parish and as individuals.

A Prayer for the Parish

Almighty and everliving God, ruler of all things in heaven and earth, hear our prayers for this parish family. Strengthen the faithful, arouse the careless, and restore the penitent. Grant us all things necessary for our common life and bring us all to be of one heart and mind within your holy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

God loves us and wants us to have all that we need to live a joyful and productive life.

All that we are and all that we have are gifts from God.

Regularly giving of our time, abilities, energy, and money is a spiritual practice.

Tithing is an important spiritual practice. It helps establish a healthy regard for money.

It helps us to live the life God hopes we will have.



St. Paul's Stewardship Goals for 2007

- ❖ Increased service to the Brighton Community and surrounds.
- ❖ Minimum of 70 pledging
- ❖ \$200,000 pledged towards the mission and ministry of St. Paul's
- ❖ Increased attendance at worship and outreach projects.

a place to belong...

Our primary stewardship goal for St. Paul's, as we begin our journey together, is to become a giving parish. Giving is one of the strongest factors in building a parish's and an individual's spiritual life, for as our Jesus said, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." We tend to become more interested in our parish and spiritual life when we invest time, talent and money.

It is my hope that you feel this is a place to belong, and we want to expand our offerings to you and to our community. The very real truth is this: We cannot meet those responsibilities without your generous support; financially and spiritually. No one really enjoys asking you for your treasure, but it is a reality that we need it as much as we need to see you at church.

As we enter this season of stewardship we are invited to give not out of scarcity but out of abundance. We are all gifted by God with many blessings in life and it is out of our blessings, that we are called to share with our sisters and brothers along our journey of faith. Giving of ourselves, our gifts and our monies truly make St. Paul's a place to belong. May God in Christ continue to richly bless us.

The Choir of
St. Paul's Episcopal Church

Presents

Ⓞ Gracious Light...

an Advent concert of music & anthems

Sunday, December 17, 2006
3:00p.m.

St. Paul's Episcopal Church
200 West St. Paul Street
Brighton, MI 48116
www.saintpaulsbrighton.org

Suzanne Conerway, Choir Director
Shawn Wygant, Organist

St. Paul's Episcopal Church
200 W. St. Paul Street
Brighton, MI 48116

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