

The Epistle of St. Paul's, Bristol Parish Petersburg, Virginia

August 2010

Dear Friends,

I often struggle to come up with an idea for writing this opening to the monthly newsletter. Having already written in general about summer, I can't really get away with writing about the end of summer. So I am nearly forced to write about something that is at least initially very sad.

My family and I have enjoyed the warm company of our first "ditch kitty" for nearly fifteen years. Kit Kat was deposited in the front yard of the first rectory that we ever lived in beginning in the late summer of 1995 when I was called to serve St. Paul's Church in Millers Tavern, Virginia. Kit Kat wanted nothing to do with us, but her desire to eat outweighed her fear of people. Our elder daughter Christian was able to bring food out to her that she reluctantly accepted and by placing the food a few feet closer to the house each day, Christian was able to lure Kit Kat up on to the side porch in a few weeks' time. Within a month or two, Kit Kat would allow us to pat her between meals. By the time winter began in earnest, Kit Kat was willing to spend the night in the house. As the years went by, Kit Kat shared the bounty of her incredibly stealthy hunting skills. The side porch was the last resting place of a great many of God's small woodland creatures.

When we moved into Richmond, Kit Kat came with and soon rid our new more urban neighborhood of any and all squirrels. When she was introduced to our adopted greyhound, Kit Kat gave Lily a swift right cross across the snout and Lily thereafter always kept a respectful distant from "the little black thing" with the very sharp claws.

Several weeks ago, Kit Kat began to show signs of her advancing age. She started to drag her back right leg and very quickly was walking on the top of her curled under paw. Within a day or two, it became painfully obvious to us that Kit Kat was beginning to fail. We looked in the phone book for a local vet and settled on the Bon Air Animal Hospital about five minutes from the house. We were very fortunate to meet with Dr. Bonnie Cline who had worked with Dr. Debbie Nay in Petersburg for several years. Dr. Cline palpated Kit Kat's abdomen and said that she felt a mass that would need to be x-rayed. The x-rays revealed that the mass was indeed a large tumor. April and I discussed the various options before us with Dr. Cline and we decided that we would put Kit Kat to sleep.

I stayed with Kit Kat while Dr. Cline gave her an injection. Dr. Cline asked very gently if I was really ready for what was about to happen. I told her that I was an Episcopal priest and that I had been with several people at their time of death, but never with an animal. Dr. Cline then asked, "Do you believe animals have souls?" I responded very quickly that I did indeed believe that all living creatures have souls given to them by our creator and that all living things will one day be restored and given eternal life. I said that as Christ was raised from the dead "as the firstborn of all creation," then all living things will be raised up through him because of his resurrection. Christ's victory over death is complete and gives new life to all living things including dogs and cats!

Through a very difficult time, God brought us to Dr. Cline who provided excellent care to Kit Kat and to our family. Dr. Cline's competence and compassion was a gift from God. We know that Kit Kat is chasing squirrels in heaven and letting them go unharmed!

Peace, Rick

Highlights of August Events

Sunday, August 8th ~ Pegram Johnson

8 & 10:30 services
Guest Preacher & Celebrant

Saturday, August 21 – Parish Work Day

9 a.m. to 12 Noon
Outside and inside projects!

Getting To Know Your Vestry

Jason Chandler

My name is Jason Chandler and I have been a member of the St. Paul's Vestry for almost two years. My journey to St. Paul's has been unique. I am the son of a retired Army officer and spent most of my childhood moving from place to place. I was not heavily involved in church as a child but attended the Presbyterian Church for special occasions. I was introduced to St. Paul's by my wife Elizabeth Chandler. She is the former Elizabeth Wynne, daughter of Jim and Linda Wynne who have attended St. Paul's for the past 33 years. Elizabeth and I were married here at St. Paul's in 2001 and I have been a member since. I was also confirmed here at St. Paul's.

There are many aspects of St. Paul's that I enjoy. My favorites, however, revolve around fellowship. I love cooking and eating in the undercroft Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings. Additionally, I enjoy teaching Sunday School to the children of St. Paul's. I know that many of you have very fond memories of St. Paul's that span generations. My memories have been good and bad. Although I am confident that with God's help and the calling of Rick Greenwood, St. Paul's is moving in the right direction.

In regard to my personal life, I am a teacher in Prince George County. I teach 8th grade health and physical education. I am also a Certified Athletic Trainer, currently employed by Southside Regional Medical Center and outreached to Prince George to cover athletic events. In my spare time I attend graduate school and play soccer. I love to spend time with Elizabeth, Riley, and Liam and try to relax whenever possible.

My Vestry duties are focused on fellowship. Please feel free to let me know if you have ideas, concerns, or questions about fellowship or any other aspect of St. Paul's. Who knows, I might surprise you and know the answer!!!

Thanks for reading!!!

Jason

Music Notes from the Choirmaster

There are posts on YouTube of some of the music from the Corpus Christi Evensong of 6 June. Please search under my YouTube channel, charles1000.

Choir rehearsals resume in September. If you'd like to sing in the St. Paul's Choir and/or ring handbells in the Bristol Ringers, both groups are open to teens through adults. We can particularly use more bell ringers! Please feel free to speak with me about these opportunities.

Little Notes from You

Dear Friends at St. Paul's,

Thank you for your prayers and cards. My knee surgery was very successful and I am feeling much better, although I still need to take it easy. Rick's visits, the flowers and your prayers mean so much to me. I am so happy to be a member of such a wonderful and caring church.

God bless you all,
Dollie Rogers

August Birthdays

4th Carla Odom
6th Virginia Maclin
8th Heath Myers, Stephen Tuck
20th Heather Dowling, Anne Finney, Jim Wynne
27th Bryan Sheetz
29th Stephanie Little

August Anniversaries

6th John and Linda Maclin
12th Wert and Pat Smith
17th Ted and Mary Stewart Ruhnke
22nd Sam and Rebecca Bryant

Did we miss your birthday or anniversary?

Please forgive us! If we did, let us know. We may not have had the information. As a parish family, we really do want to remember each person's birthday and anniversary.