

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

July 2010

Dear St. Paul's Friends,

I have always been an avid reader, despite the fact that I can still rather painfully remember being labeled a very slow reader as a child in grade school. Whenever we were asked by a teacher to read a chapter on our own at our desks, I would always be the last one to finish, not by a few moments, but by a very long time. Even though the process remains very slow, I thoroughly enjoy reading all kinds of material. I have just recently resumed my subscription to *Time* magazine and I often read it cover to cover not wanting to skip over those articles that initially seem to be quite uninspiring to me. I read mystery novels, sports biographies, non-fiction, spiritual literature, and the occasional summer "trash" novel.

In addition to anything written by PD James, John Grisham, Marcus Borg, or David Baldacci, I love to read Barbara Brown Taylor's work. The Rev. Taylor is now a professor of religion at Piedmont College and also teaches spirituality at Columbia Theological Seminary. Her books of sermons are deeply moving and very thought-provoking, but I have found myself drawn to her more recent writing on the practice of spiritual disciplines, namely her 2009 book *An Altar in the World: A Geography of Faith*. The table of contents indicates that she has written fifteen chapters on fifteen different ways or practices that allow her to heighten her awareness of God's presence and activity in the world. Each chapter is entitled "The Practice of Paying Attention" or "The Practice of Wearing Skin" or "The Practice of ..." doing something that we do all the time without thinking about it very much. Each practice is not a special or exotic exercise that one does for an extraordinary amount of time, but is usually some very simple thing that we can find ourselves doing all the time in the course of living out our daily lives.

Taylor writes in the Introduction to this compelling book, *"I have no idea what you will see when you look at your life—but if you are tired of arguing about religion, tired of reading about spirituality, tired of talk-talk-talking about things that matter without doing a single thing that matters yourself, then the pages that follow are dedicated to you. My hope is that reading them will help you recognize...some of the altars in this world."* I have found that reading about a chapter a night before going to sleep has helped me to dream of taking the simple moments in my life a great deal more seriously. No, I don't mean that I have given up laughter or being goofy. What I mean is that I now expect to find evidence of God's activity in even the most mundane moments of my life: walking the dog, mowing the grass, brushing my teeth, or even eating dessert. In fact, I find myself chuckling happily, even giddily, over the many ways that God shows up and snaps my wandering mind back into focus. Sometimes God stands right in front of me and shouts, "Look!" and at other times God stands off to the side at the very edge of my peripheral vision and says, "Do you see me? I am here." God is always around, always involved, always present, even or maybe especially when I am not fully paying attention.

In the midst of this summer's sweltering heat, look for God to show up. Expect him to surprise you. And don't be startled to find yourself laughing and his wonderful timing and his exquisite sense of humor. Practice paying attention to your life and enjoy the pleasure that God longs to share with you.

Peace, Rick

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***Highlights of July Events***

**Sunday, July 4<sup>th</sup>**

8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist – Rite I  
10:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist – Rite I  
*Celebrating Independence Day*

**Thursday, July 29<sup>th</sup> – Richmond Squirrels Baseball!!!**

7:05 p.m. vs. Altoona Curve (Pittsburgh Pirates)  
*FIREWORKS* following the game  
\$7 per person – reserved seating

## ***Baseball & Fireworks at the Diamond!***

***Thursday, July 29th***

Richmond Flying Squirrels vs Altoona Curve

***Game time is 7:05 p.m. with fireworks to follow***

Seating: \$7.00 (reserved Silver Seating)

Parking: \$3.00 per car

If you would like to attend, please rsvp as soon as possible by contacting John Maclin, Joe Aldrich or the Parish Office.

## ***Getting To Know Your Vestry***

Deneé Tuck

I am Deneé Tuck. This is my second year of a three year tour of duty on the St. Paul's Vestry. I have been attending St. Paul's for 7 years and 5 years ago I was baptized, confirmed, and married at St. Paul's. I am married to Stephen Tuck and I have a stepdaughter Ashleigh and a son Thomas. I have recently transitioned from a career as a civil engineer at Chesterfield County Utilities Department to that of a domestic engineer at home to raise Thomas.

I enjoy the fellowship at Wednesday Night Dinners, both eating them and preparing them. I am also a member of the Altar Guild.

As a member of the Vestry, I welcome any suggestions that you may have for Rev. Rick and the Vestry that will help St. Paul's grow spiritually and numerically.

## ***Recent ECW Outreach Activities***

All the children's books and the soft teddy bears that were collected by the Episcopal Church Women (ECW) were successfully delivered. Ted Ruhnke took two boxes of books to the Redevelopment and Housing Authority for the two housing projects: Pin Oaks and Pecan Acres. Kitty Hatcher and Peachie Johnson delivered a box of books and some bears to the Police Department (*see the thank you note*). Kitty and Peachie also delivered a box of books to CARES as well as a few more bears, toothpaste, and tooth brushes. This initial ECW outreach project was so well-received that plans for next year's "Books & Bears Drive" are already being made.

In late June, during the hottest days of the summer, Kitty Hatcher delivered cookies to the cooling station opened by the City of Petersburg at the brand new bus station. Kitty said, "We want everyone to think of St. Paul's as the church that cares enough to give!"

## ***Short-term Mission Team returns from the Dominican Republic***

Dr. Ted Ruhnke, Kitty Hatcher, Mike & Ellen Smith, and the Rector returned a day late, but nonetheless thrilled with their experience of working at the Centro Buen Pastor in Barrio Las Flores in San Pedro de Macoris in the Dominican Republic. Arriving on time at the Santo Domingo airport on Saturday afternoon, June 12<sup>th</sup>, the team cleared customs, was met by Sister Jean Gabriel, and was then transported by local taxi for their initial tour of the Center. Over the last twenty-five years, the Center has greatly expanded from its original small one-story building to now include a two-story central office, a medical clinic, a church with its second-story parish hall, three school buildings, and a utility building housing a water purification system. The team was shown latest addition to the Center – a remodeled building for the Kindergarten program. Brooms and plastic bags appeared as if from nowhere, as did the local children, and the team set about cleaning the building for the painting project that would begin on Monday.

On Sunday morning, the team attended the Holy Eucharist at which the Right Rev. Julio Holguin, diocesan bishop of the Dominican Republic, was the preacher and celebrant. After attending a short Vestry meeting, the team road by taxi out to Playa Juan Dolio beach and enjoyed the sun and surf until returning to the Kellogg Center for dinner and a good night's rest.

During the following week, the team was able to paint the entire Kindergarten building, install freshly painted doors in the Kindergarten bathrooms, prep and paint the prescription medicine room and the medical director's office in the clinic, switch out several locksets in the central office, sort through many plastic tubs of donated clothing, and install several electrical appliances. Thursday evening before departing the next afternoon, Sister Jean Gabriel was able to eat dinner with the team at the Kellogg Center. She was able to show us a PowerPoint presentation of her work over the years at the Center. The most important piece of information shared during the question and answer portion of the evening was that the amount of scholarship money to educate one child in the school is only \$250 which covers, clothing, books, and tuition. Everyone on the team believed that it would be a wonderful gift for St. Paul's to send Sister Jean as much scholarship money as possible in that even partial scholarships are extremely helpful.

*(continued on next page)*

## *Vestry Update*

Due to technical difficulties, the team was not able to fly out on time from Santo Domingo and therefore missed the connecting flight from Atlanta to Richmond. After a few hours sleep at the Ramada in Atlanta, the team flew back together on the 7:30 am flight on Saturday June 19<sup>th</sup> into Richmond: happy, exhausted, challenged, and renewed!

### *Thank You from Petersburg Bureau of Police*

Dear Children's Book Drive Committee:

Thank you very much for the donation of five bears and 46 children books to the police department on Friday, June 4, 2010. Several items have already been distributed to children who came with their parents to the station. One child in particular greatly appreciated the Dr. Seuss hard back book she received while her mother took care of police matters at the front desk. Children often come to the police station with their parents and the reasons are sometimes stressful, scary, and confusing. The comforts you have so selflessly provided will certainly brighten their experience.

It is also worth noting that crime in Petersburg is at a ten year low. It is directly attributed to cooperation and collaboration with groups like yours. We will continue to care together.

Regards, *John I. Dixon III*

### *Little Notes from You*

To the very caring people at St. Paul's,

Thank you again and again for your thoughtful attentions. This time you helped make my 94<sup>th</sup> birthday most enjoyable ~ starting on May 13<sup>th</sup> with the Ladies Home celebration events followed right up to the 22<sup>nd</sup>, my own day. It was all quite exciting. Thank you for being an important part.

See you soon at church.

*Nan Jones*

Dear Friends at St. Paul's,

We would like to thank everyone for their very great generosity toward Samuel and Irene at their baby shower in May. Your gifts really help us prepare for the twins arrival and we are overwhelmed by your generosity. Thank you very much.

*Cynthia and Christopher White*

Dear Friends at St. Paul's,

Thank you for all the thoughtful prayers and cards while I was recovering. They have meant a lot to me.

*Martha Lee Romaine*

In its May and June meetings, the Vestry has been addressing the areas of its canonical responsibility: buildings and grounds as well as the operational budget of the parish, but it has also been trying to look beyond these immediate concerns to those issues and opportunities that await us further down the road. A Vestry sub-committee of former Senior Wardens has begun to gather on a regular basis to discuss long-range planning. Even this sub-committee has struggled momentarily to lift its perspective far enough above the near-term circumstances to take a good long look five to ten years into the future. This sub-committee will continue to meet and bring its perspective to the awareness of the Vestry in the fall.

The Vestry would also like to meet with the congregation in a short series of small group meetings similar to those held last summer to help facilitate open communications between the leadership and the membership of the church. These meetings will take place in three different settings, so everyone will have a chance to participate. Dates and times will be forthcoming soon.

In the course of its regular meetings, the Vestry itself is trying to allow for more time to pray and reflect on the several ministries of the church. This dedicated time of "Open Discussion" has been a new and challenging experience for the members of the Vestry. The Holy Spirit will gently guide us through this time and help us to bear good fruit.

### *July Birthdays*

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Susie Parrish, Elizabeth Zehmer
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Sonja Reiss
- 8<sup>th</sup> Adelaide Butler, Brennan McCarney
- 14<sup>th</sup> Mandie Brando
- 16<sup>th</sup> Robert Lytle
- 17<sup>th</sup> John Maclin
- 22<sup>nd</sup> Anya Magazine, Sasha Magazine
- 23<sup>rd</sup> Marti Manson, Bob Odom, Susan Wells
- 28<sup>th</sup> Randy Manson
- 30<sup>th</sup> Craig Parrish
- 31<sup>st</sup> Linda Maclin

### *July Anniversaries*

- 10<sup>th</sup> Charlie & Beth Cuthbert, Bruce & Marti Manson
- 11<sup>th</sup> Chris & Andrea McCarney
- 14<sup>th</sup> Justin & Vanessa Keeler
- 19<sup>th</sup> Martin & Elizabeth Johnson, Heath & Mary Ann Myers
- 21<sup>st</sup> John & Shirley Van Landingham
- 28<sup>th</sup> Jason & Elizabeth Chandler