

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

March 2009

Dear St. Paul's Friends,

After about a month into this ministry, I have learned a few things about the wonderful community of faith here at St. Paul's.

Folks here sure do like to eat! The breakfasts on Sunday mornings have been fabulous and the dinners on Wednesday nights have been outstanding! But more than eating, the people of St. Paul's just love being together. The early church Christians referred to this fellowship activity as *koinonia* and the word is used twenty times in the Bible to describe the occasions when the believers would gather for worship, for prayer, for study, and for mutual support. Our celebration of the Eucharist on Sunday morning is an example of *koinonia* as are our Wednesday Night Dinners. We are very good at enjoying one another's company!

Folks here sure do like to sing! It has been said that "he who sings prays twice." I can't tell you how many times already that I have been standing in my office on a Sunday morning and heard someone humming or singing out loud as they go down the Parish Hallway. Charles Lindsey does a fantastic job of creating

beautiful praises that emanate from the hearts of both the choir and the congregation. We are truly blessed by his expert leadership!

Folks here sure do like to welcome a newcomer! I and my entire family have been made to feel very welcome in your midst and I believe that this open embrace comes as a direct result of a loving relationship with God. The Most Reverend Bruce Cameron, Bishop of Aberdeen and Orkney, Primus of the Episcopal Church of Scotland, who preached the sermon at the consecration of Bishop Hollerith, spoke of our belief in a "running God" based on the image of the father who ran down the driveway to meet his prodigal son as he returned from Egypt. The people of St. Paul's make a sincere effort to embrace strangers and help them to feel welcome. I am personally grateful for this vital Christian hospitality.

So, it's been a good month! I have experienced *koinonia*, been blessed by good music, and been embraced by warm Christian good-will. As we endeavor to engage in the spiritual discipline of keeping a holy Lent, may we continue to practice these Christians virtues and strive to share them with others.

Peace,  
Rick

## *Summary of the February 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> Vestry Retreat*

The members of the new 2009 Vestry gathered "down by the river" at Cheatham Annex just east of Williamsburg, VA for an overnight retreat to discuss a broad range of topics. During the first of five sessions, the Vestry conducted the business portion of its work together before reviewing its overall canonical responsibilities. Particular attention was given to the three newest members of the Vestry: Jason Chandler, Justin Keeler, and Deneé Tuck who were attending their very first Vestry function.

After a great evening meal prepared by Chef Jason and a comfortable night's sleep, the Vestry gathered on Saturday morning for its second session which established a prioritized list of maintenance tasks and major or minor capital improvement projects. The purchase of the back lot from Mr. Larry Tucker was named the number one major capital improvement project. Clearly designating the Market Street entrance to the back of the church was determined to be the number one minor capital improvement. The painting of the Parish Hallway was chosen to be the number one maintenance task. As the remaining ideas filled up the sheets of newsprint taped to the walls, the need for a Capital Campaign became obvious to everyone present. It was also realized that all of these wonderful ideas could be most effectively included in a Capital Campaign to support the building of St. Paul's Episcopal School on the campus of St. Paul's Episcopal Church.

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The third session conducted just before lunch focused the Vestry's attention on the topic of stewardship. After looking very carefully at what had worked well and what had not worked so well in the past, the Vestry began to brainstorm about both different stewardship campaign ideas as well as different fund-raising ideas. The consensus of this session was that no one member of the Vestry should bear the entire responsibility for stewardship, rather the entire Vestry should work together on teaching about the many aspects of stewardship year round.

Having enjoyed yet another delicious meal together, the Vestry engaged one another in a lively discussion of marketing ideas: methods, styles, and messages were all examined with great enthusiasm. Two areas seemed to attract the greatest interest: 1) resuming a weekly newsletter that could be sent by both e-mail and regular mail and 2) starting up a program for the young adults in the parish.

The fifth and last session was devoted to a review of the several Committees of the church and the assignment of Vestry liaisons. The established or prevailing committees were listed on one sheet of newsprint and the committees that the Vestry believed to be most useful to the work of the church over the next year were listed on another sheet of newsprint. Several of the "old" committees were identified with their "new" counterparts, but some committees were entirely new. Only a few liaisons were chosen as the greater part of the discussion centered on the development of a workable committee structure. The remaining liaisons will be appointed in the upcoming Vestry meetings.

The work of the Vestry begun on this retreat is certainly not finished. We still have much work to do together, but everyone felt that great things are in store for St. Paul's and that we are headed in the right direction!

### **2009 Lenten Series begins March 4<sup>th</sup>**

#### ***"The Bible Basics for Lent"***

- March 4: The Great Flood: "And it rained for forty days and forty nights..."
- March 11: The Desert Wanderings: Forty years in the Sinai
- March 18: The Babylonian Exile: More than forty years away from Jerusalem
- March 25: From Easter to Ascension Day: Jesus' last forty days on earth
- April 1: The Season of Lent: Jesus' forty days in the wilderness – No foolin'!

The roots of our traditional "observance of a holy Lent by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word" are deep and vital. The purpose of this year's Lenten Program is to enrich everyone's awareness and understanding of the currents that run throughout the entire Bible which can nourish our thirsty spiritual souls. Come join the Rector and Steve Tuck as they lead this enlightening endeavor to appreciate "The Bible Basics for Lent" on the five Wednesday evenings after Ash Wednesday: Dinner at 6:00 p.m.; Compline at 7:00 p.m.; and Lenten Program at 7:15 p.m.

### **Young Adult Fellowship Group to Begin**

On its recent retreat, the Vestry identified revitalized ministry to our young adults as an essential aspect of our overall growth strategy. We would like to gather as many of our young adults together in one place as possible for a very short meeting to decide upon some initial steps that we might take together: plan for an initial start-up meeting either at the church or in someone's home or even at a restaurant downtown; determine the interest for undertaking a Young Adult Retreat together, and thinking about some "Taste & See Events" to attract other young adults to St. Paul's. This initial brief meeting will take place immediately after the 10:30 a.m. service on Sunday, March 8<sup>th</sup> in the sanctuary. Please come if you are interested in helping to get this vital ministry to our young adults off to a good start. All are welcome!

Who should be considered a "young adult?" Without drawing hard and fast lines, it might be reasonable to assume that young adults with similar interests are between the ages of 18 and 40, they could be married, divorced, re-married, or single, and with or without children. In addition to possibly going on a retreat together, the young adults could meet regularly for a monthly pot-luck supper at church or in someone's home. Each of these monthly meetings could also serve as a small fund-raiser for a local outreach effort as well as be an opportunity for Christian fellowship. The sky's the limit!

## Concerts by Candlelight

Every second Friday of the month  
as part of Petersburg's *Friday for the Arts*.

**FRIDAY, MARCH 13<sup>TH</sup> AT 6:30 P.M.**

**Virginia Benefit Chorale  
Steven Davis, Artistic Director**

Donations to the Whittle Music & Arts Fund are gratefully accepted. Please look for the yellow envelopes and place them in the plate near the door.

*These contributions fully support St. Paul's Music Ministry in downtown Petersburg.*

### Calling all young people to begin Acolyte training

Though St. Paul's may not have enough young people within a single age group to form a cohesive Youth Group just yet, we do have several young people who might like to participate in the worship services as Acolytes. The Rector would like to invite all those children between the ages of 8 and 18 who would like to carry a flag, bear a torch, lift the banner, or serve at the altar on Sunday morning to a series of training sessions in Lent. The same training will be offered at two different times during the week, so that everyone might have a chance to learn a few simple rules. If you are interested in serving as an Acolyte please come to either training session: 5:30 pm on Wednesday night, March 4 or 9:45 am on Sunday morning, March 8. These trainings will be repeated on an as-needed basis. The hope is that we will be able to have a fully trained complement of acolytes ready to serve on Easter.

### Pet-Food Donations

Peachie Johnson has offered to deliver pet-food to area animal shelters to ensure that every pet does not go hungry during this current economic crisis. Please bring dry or canned dog or cat food to church with you on the second Sunday of each month and Peachie will make sure that it all gets delivered to the right place.

### A Note from the Choirmaster

I would like to thank Ted Ruhnke for spending many hours, recently, in the Choir Room organizing and filing music. He undertook this stupendous initiative voluntarily, and I cannot thank him enough.

~Charles

### Little Notes from You

Dear Friends at St. Paul's,

Your prayers and cards during my health issues are appreciated so much. Even though my fall put me back, I feel that I am now making great progress. I do feel much better and hope to see everyone in the near future.

Thank you,  
Pam Sheetz

### A ride to St. Paul's Richmond's Lenten Speaker Series & Lunch is being offered

Through out Lent, Jackie Blake will be driving up to Richmond to enjoy the Lenten Speaker Series & Lunch at St. Paul's Episcopal Church on Grace Street in downtown Richmond. For over 100 years, St. Paul's has sponsored the Community Lenten Series. Each 30-minute service begins at 12:30 pm and lunch is served in the Parish Hall in two sittings (11:45 am – 12:30 pm & 1:00 – 1:30 pm). Takeout entrees are also available from 11:45 am – 1:30 pm. Lunch is \$7, including drink and tax. Desserts are available for \$2. There is no cost to attend the service. If you would like to ride with Jackie, please call her on the Monday of each week.

### March Birthdays

1 <sup>st</sup>	Gwen Owen
4 <sup>th</sup>	Paden Vargo
5 <sup>th</sup>	West Cuthbert
8 <sup>th</sup>	Rick Greenwood
13 <sup>th</sup>	Heath Thompson
14 <sup>th</sup>	Maria Booth
16 <sup>th</sup>	Max Haynie
17 <sup>th</sup>	Elizabeth Chandler
18 <sup>th</sup>	Dollie Rogers
19 <sup>th</sup>	Marion Owens
22 <sup>nd</sup>	Richmond Zehmer
29 <sup>th</sup>	Ashleigh Tuck

### March Anniversaries

1 <sup>st</sup>	Joe & Nancy Kail
28 <sup>th</sup>	David & Susan Wells

### 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.