

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

February 2010

Dear St. Paul's Friends,

Before the most recent snowfall hit, this past month of January from a weather standpoint had made me remember the old catch-phrase, "In like a lion, out like a lamb." The first two weeks of January did not see many high temperatures above the freezing mark, whereas the third and fourth weeks of January have seen some high temperatures in the mid-60's. But then we got slammed in the fifth week of January with nearly a foot of snow! So much for going "out like a lamb!" Given the choice between the two alternatives, I will take the warmer days every time. I don't mind building up fires in the hearth as a necessity, but I am just as happy poking and prodding the not-yet fully seasoned logs to enjoy the visual and physical pleasures of high-leaping, luxurious yellow flames.

"In like a lion, out like a lamb..." is more often than not used to describe the month of March, which in Virginia can be the loveliest of months with soft and gentle winds that presage the coming of summer or it can be the cruelest of months with frigid arctic gusts that force winter's harshness upon us for weeks on end. This past January has been both a lion and a lamb – both freezing cold and warmer than usual.

Several times, Jesus advises his disciples as they go out to preach the Gospel, "Be wise as serpents and gentle as doves." Serpents are certainly not amongst my favorite animals and I can take or leave doves, but the challenging advice remains. We are always to have our wits about us, looking for every opportunity to bring the gentleness of God's good news in Jesus Christ to a world that is very, very weary of bad news:

heart-ache, sorrow, tragedy, and disaster are all too plentiful. Some of us may not think of ourselves as wise in an academic sense. We may not have a theologian's response to the problem of evil ready to pull out from our back pocket. We may not have all the right words to say at the right time, but if we are looking for those situations in which a kind word of encouragement can deflect the pain of a hurtful word, then I believe God will bless us with spiritual wisdom to share that is not our own. Most times, a simple touch, a quiet look in one's eyes, a moment of silence, will be all that is necessary to bring tranquility to a chaotic situation.

When it comes to the weather, we pretty much have to deal with whatever shows up on our doorstep: rain, sleet, ice, snow, or brutal cold. When it comes to being disciples of Christ and messengers of the good news, we can be lions and lambs, wise serpents and gentle doves. We can be as brave as a lion and as loyal as a lamb. We can be as worldly-wise and spiritually-minded as a serpent and as calming as a dove when encountering others in our daily lives. Jesus knows how treacherous the world is and he has given us the Holy Spirit to guide us safely through the turbulence. He has not left us helpless. He wants us to be helpful. With the help of the Holy Spirit, we can be wise as serpents and gentle as doves, both lions and lambs.

May your heart be protected and encouraged by the Holy Spirit this month!

Peace, *Rick*

## *Highlights of February Events*

### **Thursday, Feb. 11<sup>th</sup> – 6:30 p.m.**

Social Club gathering at the Keelers  
All are welcome!

### **Friday through Sunday, Feb. 12<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup>**

Diocesan Annual Council in Williamsburg

### **Sunday, Feb. 14<sup>th</sup> – Last Sunday after the Epiphany**

Holy Eucharist at 8:00 a.m.  
Morning Prayer at 10:30 a.m.

### **Shrove Tuesday, Feb. 16<sup>th</sup>**

Vestry Pancake Supper at 6:00 p.m.  
Mardi Gras Theme

### **Ash Wednesday Services, Feb. 17<sup>th</sup>**

Holy Eucharist – Rite II at Noon and 7:00 p.m.

### **Sunday, Feb. 21<sup>st</sup> – Lent I**

Holy Eucharist Rite I at 8:00 a.m.  
Holy Eucharist Rite II at 10:30 a.m.

## ***Lenten Program Begins February 24<sup>th</sup>***

I like to read. I know that there are others at St. Paul's who also like to read. I like to read all sorts of things: history, mystery, biography, sports, theology, non-fiction, Time magazine, etc. This Lenten season, I would like to invite all those at St. Paul's who like to read to join with me in reading a very thought-provoking book by Rob Bell and Don Golden entitled "*Jesus Wants to Save Christians: A Manifesto for the Church in Exile.*" We will meet every Wednesday night after Compline to discuss the next chapter of this book that addresses the whole of Scripture from a very different perspective than that which we normally use. Rob Bell is the founding pastor of Mars Hill Bible Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan. His first book, *Velvet Elvis, Repainting the Christian Faith* is well worth reading as well. Don Golden is senior vice-president of church engagement at World Relief in Baltimore, Maryland and a former lead pastor at Mars Hill. These two men provide a very broad interpretative overview of a compelling theme in the Bible: the cycle from slavery to redemption to exile to return that is embedded in our Judeo-Christian history. The reading itself is not difficult or cumbersome, but the spiritual response to it is demanding and significant.

The book will take a bit more than the six weeks of Lent to finish, but I think everyone will benefit from the time invested in the undertaking. Participants are encouraged to buy their own copy of the book, but Xeroxed copies will be made available. The outline of the eight-weeks is as follows.

Feb. 24<sup>th</sup> – Introduction: Air Puffers and Rubber Gloves

Mar. 3<sup>rd</sup> – Chapter One: The Cry of the Oppressed

Mar. 10<sup>th</sup> – Chapter Two: Get Down Your Harps

Mar. 17<sup>th</sup> – Chapter Three: David's Other Son

Mar. 24<sup>th</sup> – Chapter Four: Genital-Free Africans

Mar. 31<sup>st</sup> – Chapter Five: Swollen-bellied Black Babies,  
Soccer Moms on Prozac, and the Mark  
of the Beast

Apr. 7<sup>th</sup> – Chapter Six: Blood on the Doorposts of the  
Universe

April 14<sup>th</sup> – Epilogue: Broken and Poured

As you can see from the chapter titles, this should be a very lively discussion. Please come and join us on the Wednesday evenings of Lent (and a bit beyond)!

## ***Vestry Profile***

*(Keep your eye on this space)*

Beginning with the March newsletter, a different member of the Vestry will be profiled each month in this space. The idea behind this new feature is to allow each member of the Vestry to demonstrate the ways that St. Paul's weaves into the whole fabric of his or her life. Some Vestry members may be known to the congregation in only "one dimension:" as an usher, lay reader, junior warden, or member of the Choir. Hopefully, these informative articles will inspire others in the congregation to share their stories and their faith journeys as well. Faces may not always be familiar, so a candid photo will be included – technology permitting. We will begin this series of articles with the members of the class of 2010.

## ***Vestry Retreat Postponed***

The Annual Vestry retreat originally scheduled for the last week-end in January has been re-scheduled for the first week-end in March. Members of the Vestry will gather together at Cheatham Annex just east of Williamsburg to get to know each other better as well as plan for the upcoming year. Five major topics will be discussed: Calendar and Priority Planning, Communications and Growth, Liturgy Planning, Spiritual Formation, and Marketing. Each of these topics will be reviewed from several different perspectives. So that viewpoints of members of the congregation can be considered, please make an effort in the next few weeks to share your thoughts with a Vestry member before the retreat gets underway.

## ***New Acolyte Training Class Forming***

With the recent influx of young families with children, it is time to put some of the young folk to work! The Rector would like to gather with any young people in "the vicinity" of ten to thirteen years old who would like to serve as acolytes (crucifers, flag-bearers, banner-bearers, torch-bearers, or servers) at St. Paul's. The initial goal would be to have three two-person teams who could serve regularly as flag-bearers at the 10:30 a.m. service. Crucifers could be added to these original teams in due time. And then additional teams could be formed to spread out the workload. Please speak the Rector if you or your child would like to become an acolyte at St. Paul's.

### ***Short-term Mission Team to Continue Meeting***

As was previously thought, members of the Diocesan Staff in the Dominican Republic have been quite thoroughly swamped by the demands of the relief efforts going on in their neighboring Diocese of Haiti. We have, however, heard some encouraging news. The Sisters at the Good Shepherd Center have been adding classroom space to their facility and may need some help with that project in the second or third week of June. We will continue to await further word on the various ways that we might be able to assist in this work. We should continue to meet at "the Dominican Republic table" during Wednesday Night dinner in order to hear the latest news and answer any questions. The next gathering will be on Wednesday, February 24<sup>th</sup>. See you there!

### ***Severe Weather Cancellation Policy***

We may yet have more snow and/or icy road conditions that will necessitate changing the Sunday morning schedule or even canceling church all together. Once a decision has been made to change things on a Sunday morning or even a Wednesday evening, the following steps will be taken:

- 1) Notification will be called in to WRIC – Channel 8 (ABC) and to the other two major broadcasting networks when they give us a "closing code."
- 2) The out-going message on the church phone (733-3415), will be changed to reflect the latest decision.
- 3) An e-mail will be sent to everyone letting them know of the current decision regarding the church schedule.

If you think for any reason that the church does not have your e-mail address, please e-mail it to the Rector at the.revrick@verizon.net or call it in to the office at 733-3415. Thank you!

### ***Little Notes from You***

Dear St. Paul's,

Thank you for the wonderful Christmas card. I appreciate, so much, being remembered.

Peace be with you,  
*Dollie Rogers*

### ***Concerts by Candlelight***

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

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 12<sup>TH</sup> ~ 6:30 P.M.**

The Syvati Duo from England Perform  
Julian Collings, *Organ*  
Rebecca Hewes, *Cello*

**Friday, March 12<sup>th</sup> ~ 6:30 p.m.**

Virginia Benefit Chorale  
Steve Davis, Director

**Friday, April 9<sup>th</sup> ~ 6:30 p.m.**

Williamsburg Brass Ensemble

**Friday, May 14<sup>th</sup> ~ 6:30 p.m.**

Mike Goldberg Trio

Donations to the Whittle Music & Arts Fund are gratefully accepted. Please look for the yellow envelopes and place them in the plate at the door. *These contributions fully support St. Paul's Music Ministry in downtown Petersburg.*

### ***Candlelight Concert at Bruton Parish Williamsburg, Virginia***

Tuesday, March 9<sup>th</sup> ~ 8:00 P.M.

Sarah Motley, *Soprano*  
Charles Lindsey, Jr., *Organ & Harpsichord*



### ***February Birthdays***

11<sup>th</sup> Wert Smith  
13<sup>th</sup> Brennan Joiner  
15<sup>th</sup> Andy Cuthbert  
16<sup>th</sup> Mike Lytle  
16<sup>th</sup> Wayne Tuck  
18<sup>th</sup> Mike Smith  
20<sup>th</sup> Kitty Hatcher  
28<sup>th</sup> Ellen Smith

### ***February Anniversaries***

13<sup>th</sup> Mike & Ellen Smith

Mickey & Stephanie Little celebrated their anniversary on January 20<sup>th</sup>. **Happy Belated Anniversary!**

### ***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.