

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

May 2009

Dear St. Paul's Friends,

When I first began my new ministry as the Rector of St. Paul's, I was thrilled to immerse myself in this wonderful faith community. I have enjoyed getting to know people by name. I have learned how hard people work at their many ministries: all the people who throw themselves into food preparation whether for a Wednesday Night Dinner or a Sunday Morning Breakfast, the many people who care for the worship space of the church every Sunday, the wardens who give so much attention to the hundreds of details of St. Paul's, and even the wonderful folks who come to church every Sunday to pray, sing, and worship. So many people doing so many things for the glory of God! I have been moved by your faithfulness in all of these activities.

I have found that many people do these amazing things, because it's just what they do – “like breathing in and breathing out” – to borrow a line from *My Fair Lady*. As a newcomer to St. Paul's, I have begun to wonder how to explain all of this dedication to other people who might come to St. Paul's. In other words, I wonder how to name the mission of St. Paul's. Some people say, “Oh, well, that's easy! We're a family.” Others say, “We just want to be good Christian folk.” And still others say, “We've just always done it this way.”

I think it is helpful to look at what the Book of Common Prayer has to say about the mission of the Church. The Catechism asks the question very simply, “What is the mission of the Church?” And the Catechism answers the question very simply, “The mission of the Church is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ.” The Catechism goes on to ask, “How does the Church pursue its mission?” The Catechism answers, “The Church pursues its mission as it prays and

worships, proclaims the Gospel, and promotes justice, peace, and love.” Now we're on to something! Everyone who is working so hard at St. Paul's is doing one of these six things: praying, worshipping, proclaiming the Gospel, or promoting justice, peace, or love.

Only two of these mission-oriented activities can be done by oneself. In our quiet moments of solitude and reflection, we can certainly pray and worship by ourselves, even though we more often than not think of common prayer and corporate worship.

The other four mission-oriented activities, however, are always done in and for the community. We proclaim the Gospel Good News of Jesus Christ whenever we offer a discouraged neighbor or friend a word of hope. We can only promote justice, peace, and love in relationship to others. When we offer bread to the hungry, build housing for the poor, or volunteer to mentor a young student, we are promoting justice, creating peace, and sharing love.

When we say that St. Paul's is “offering new life in Old Towne,” we don't just mean doing something new like *Friday for the Arts*. We are offering people a chance to have a new relationship with God through Jesus Christ. As Christians, as members of the Church, we are called to live and work in this world as Jesus Christ does: praying, worshipping, proclaiming, and promoting. It's a lot to do! And thanks be to God that we have the power of his Holy Spirit with which to do it! We have indeed been given a richly challenging ministry by God. Let's get to it!

Peace,  
Rick

## *Summary of the Vestry Meeting held April 5<sup>th</sup>*

All the members of the St. Paul's Vestry gathered in the Guild Room for what they knew to be a very important meeting, particularly the report from the Treasurer. The Vestry had previously been given an overview of the financial condition of the parish.

Chris Johnson, the Senior Warden, addressed several administrative matters including the current status of the purchase of the back parking lot to provide additional parking space and greater flexibility for the future expansion of St. Paul's. The Vestry also reviewed plans for renting the Rectory as office space for a local business.

Mike Smith, the Junior Warden, presented his report on the buildings and grounds. Mike gave the results of his inspection of the alarm systems: all the batteries and several light bulbs will be replaced. The application to Dominion Virginia Power to activate the light at the back of parish house will have to wait until the church completes its purchase of the back lot. The property has been inspected for moisture and water damage by an outside consulting firm. Inspections of the roof and walls still need to be finished. The very heavy bell in the tower will need to be reinforced in the near future.

Steve Tuck then unveiled the Treasurer's Report. Reporting for his brother Mike Tuck, Steve explained the dynamic relationship between the Operating Budget and the Robertson-Bernard Fund. The Operating Budget currently draws 52% of its income from the Robertson-Bernard Fund. At this excessive rate of demand, the Robertson-Bernard Fund will be exhausted in less than two years. There are two steps that need to be taken to ameliorate this situation: decrease spending and grow the number of people contributing to the financial strength of the church. The Vestry has already taken some very prudent steps to reduce the costs of operating St. Paul's. All of us need to do our part by inviting others to church to help St. Paul's grow into a vibrant future.

The Rector discussed the progress toward establishing an organizational structure comprised of five large committees: Growth, Christian Formation, Marketing, Communications, and the Capital Campaign. Further work needs to be done to develop a Time and Talent instrument to identify the many ministries of St. Paul's.

## *Concerts by Candlelight*

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

**FRIDAY, MAY 8<sup>TH</sup> AT 6:30 P.M.**

Lisa Edwards-Burrs, *Soprano*  
Charles K. Lindsey Jr., *Organ & Piano*

**FRIDAY, JUNE 12<sup>TH</sup> AT 6:30 P.M.**

Bryan Sheetz Steel Drum Ensemble

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.*



## *News and Notes*

### *New St. Paul's Bumper Stickers Available*

The beautiful, brand new, red, white, and blue St. Paul's bumper stickers are now available! Featuring both the traditional Episcopal Church seal and the catchy slogan, "Offering new life in Old Towne," these bumper sticks can be acquired for a donation of just \$1. We have produced 500 stickers at a cost of \$355, meaning that we can give away 145 stickers for free once the cost of producing the bumper stickers has been recouped. If folks are willing to donate more towards the purchase of the stickers, then we can give away more of the stickers for free to newcomers and to prospective members. The stickers will be made available at the Wednesday Night Dinners and the Sunday Morning Breakfasts as well as in the Church Office. This is a great way to advertise our church and our new mission "to offer new life in Old Towne!"

### *Invite-a-Friend to Church Sunday, May 31st*

Because Pentecost is one of the four biggest Sundays in the Church Year, St. Paul's is asking everyone to make a really special effort to invite a friend (or two or three!) to join us for this very exciting day in the Church. Come one, come all! Join the fun!

### ***The Parish Picnic will be held Sunday, June 21<sup>st</sup>***

Chris and Peachie Johnson have generously offered to host this year's Parish Picnic at their home on Sunday June 21<sup>st</sup>, right after church, say... about 1:00 p.m. The church will provide hamburgers, hotdogs, buns, and condiments. Parishioners are asked to bring either a side dish or a dessert to share. There will be fun and games for kids and adults of all ages. The Sunday service will be our second "Invite-a-Friend" Sunday, so we will be sure to have a big crowd and lots of fun for everyone!

### ***The Rector's Day Off***

The fourth commandment says, "Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day." As one who works on the Sabbath day, the Rector needs to take a Sabbath rest on a different day of the week than Sunday. When he began working at St. Paul's at the end of January 2009, the Rector was informed that Friday would be his regular day off in that the Church Office is closed on this last day of the week. Recognizing that there is no other clergy on staff, the Rector appreciates the difficulty inherent in saying to the parish, "There is no clergy person to help you in your time of need," if someone were to have a pastoral emergency on a Friday. The Rector has, therefore, asked the Rev. Pegram Johnson to provide emergency pastoral care in case of any crisis that might occur on a Friday. Pegram's phone number is (804) 353-1409, if you need to get in touch with a clergy person on a Friday. Please allow the Rector to have some quality quiet time with God, with his family, and with himself every Friday. Thank you!

### ***The Rector's Vacation***

The Rector will be taking his first week of vacation from Thursday, May 7<sup>th</sup> through Wednesday, May 13<sup>th</sup>. He and his wife will be working very hard on preparing their house in Richmond for sale. Please pray that both of them will be sustained with sufficient energy for the task and that the house will be well-prepared for putting on the market.


### ***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.

### ***Donations to St Joseph's Food Pantry***

We continue to collect food for St. Joseph's Food Pantry on fourth Sundays each month. We give thanks to John Van Landingham for carrying the food over for our neighbors to distribute each month. Many of us are aware of an increased need for the simple things, such as food, by many families who are not normally dependent on others. Please continue to remember the unemployed and those who cannot help themselves.

### ***May Birthdays***



1 <sup>st</sup>	Irving Lunsford
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Louise Fothergill
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Mary Stewart Ruhnke
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Lauren Wynne
4 <sup>th</sup>	Jason Chandler
4 <sup>th</sup>	Susan Smith McKain
4 <sup>th</sup>	Anne Shaffer Randall
5 <sup>th</sup>	Martin Johnson
7 <sup>th</sup>	Matthew Parrish
8 <sup>th</sup>	Skip Parks
8 <sup>th</sup>	Pat Smith
9 <sup>th</sup>	Riley Chandler
17 <sup>th</sup>	Mickey Little
18 <sup>th</sup>	Elisabeth Greenwood
20 <sup>th</sup>	Pat Aldrich
22 <sup>nd</sup>	Nan Jones
30 <sup>th</sup>	Addison Guthrie

### ***May Anniversaries***

14 <sup>th</sup>	Bob and Louise Fothergill
18 <sup>th</sup>	Steve and Deneé Tuck
20 <sup>th</sup>	Gary and Anne Rowlett

### ***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.



### ***St. Paul's Vision***

"To support our mission statement, our vision is to fill St. Paul's with vibrant families who will engage in Christian formation and outreach; expand our music ministry; establish a Christian day school; and maintain an appreciation for our historic, Anglican heritage."