

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

November 2009

Dear St. Paul's Friends,

While contemplating the possible topics for this month's letter, I considered something to do with All Saints' Day, some thoughts on the Annual Meeting, and a word or two about Thanksgiving. Each of these ideas seemed adequate, but not terribly inspiring or challenging. Then I went up to Shrine Mont to attend the Fall Clergy Conference for the Diocese of Virginia. It was there in the beautiful and peaceful Shenandoah Mountains that I listened to two Episcopal monks from the Order of Saint John the Evangelist in Cambridge, Massachusetts present their offerings on the care and feeding of one's spiritual life. "Ah, now we are on to something both challenging and inspiring," I thought to myself.

Brother Terry, whom my wife April had met some two years ago while attending her CREDO weekend in Connecticut, mentioned in the midst of his humorous and insightful talk an admonition that caught me off guard. He said, "You know that our culture so greatly admires those who are successful multi-taskers? The executive who can be dictating a letter, video-conferencing with other partners, sending an e-mail, texting a child, and paying off an electric bill all while thinking about his plans for dinner that evening. Or the soccer Mom who can pick up one child from school, drop off another at the doctor's, meet a friend for coffee at Starbucks, finish up a load of laundry, and bake an exquisite birthday cake for her 75 year-old mother-in-law all at the same time. Even you clergy-folk pride yourselves on writing articles for the monthly newsletter, while answering the phone, while responding to e-mail, while counseling a bereaved parishioner, and still manage to think about an outline for Sunday's sermon! Well, my advice to you is this: don't. Don't multi-task

anymore! If you happen to be staring out the window, then stare out the window with all of your attention devoted to that staring. If you are walking upstairs, then walk upstairs with all your attention focused on that walking. And, if you are petting the dog, then give all of your attention to petting that dog." I have to admit it was that last sentence that really made me hear what Brother Terry was saying.

I can only imagine how different my life would really be if I actually paid closer attention to "the still small voice" of the Holy Spirit as it directed me from one single task to another. I can't imagine that God would tell me to do the ten or twelve things that I constantly tell myself that I have to do in a given moment. Oh, how much more pleasant life would be if I could just move gently and deliberately from one completed task to another and at the end of the day simply say to myself, "It's been a good day."

I mentioned Brother Terry's advice to my eye doctor just this morning, because she said quite proudly, "I'm a good multi-tasker!" I said I was thinking about telling the members of my congregation to stop multi-tasking and start doing one thing at a time. My doctor said, "Ouch, I can feel my paradigm shifting out from under me!" I recognized with her that changing old habits, particularly habits highly-valued by our amped-up culture, can be a very painful and disorienting process. But the momentary discomfort may very well be worth the far greater reward of living a more peaceful, focused, and, ultimately, more productive life. Perhaps it would be particularly beneficial for all of us to begin leading more intentional lives before we get caught up in the hectic busy-ness of the upcoming holiday celebrations. Hmmm...

Peace, Rick

Highlights of November Events

Sunday, November 1st

All Saints' Sunday

Holy Eucharist at 8 & 10:30 a.m.

Choral Evensong at 4 p.m.

Sunday, November 8th

Morning Prayer at 10:30 a.m.

Veterans Day Prayers and Patriotic Music

Sunday, November 15th

Annual Meeting

2010 Budget Presentation and Vestry Elections

Sunday, November 22nd

Thanksgiving Service

Thanksgiving Liturgy celebrated

Sunday, November 29th

Advent 1



All Saints Evensong

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1ST AT 4:00 P.M.

Join us for our festive celebration of All Saints' Day at St. Paul's as we offer a Service of Evensong featuring the music of Herbert Sumsion, Heinrich Schutz, and Ernest Bullock.



Concerts by Candlelight

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

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 13TH ~ 6:30 P.M.

Cheryl Van Ornam, *Organ*

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11TH ~ 6:30 P.M.

Annual Christmas Gala and Sing-A-Long
This Year Featuring Charles Lindsey, Jr., *Organ*

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.

Young Adults Group Changes its Name

The parish ministry formerly known as the Young Adults Group has changed its name to the Social Club in order to allow as many members of the parish to feel welcome to join in the festivities and functions as possible. The new Social Club will be meeting together on the first Thursday of every month for dinner, conversation, fellowship and fun. November's gathering will be at the home of Steve and Deneé Tuck, December's will be at the Johnsons and January's will be held at the Keelers. Everyone is welcome!

Morning Prayer Service

Sunday, October 11th marked the return of Morning Prayer to the second Sunday of the month at the 10:30 a.m. service. The Rector and Organist/Choir Director have been collaborating on this particular liturgy to make this worship experience uplifting and enjoyable for as many as possible. Morning Prayer offers the opportunity for greater use of Anglican Chant and some of the most beautiful prayers in the *Book of Common Prayer*. Please mark your calendar for the second Sunday in November (the 8th) when we will engage in our second service of Morning Prayer.

Initial Meeting of Short-term Mission Team

Plans are being put together for a short-term mission trip to Centro Buen Pastor (the Good Shepherd Center) in the Las Flores barrio in the southeastern city of San Pedro de Macorix in the Dominican Republic. We could provide a team of simple laborers: painters, carpenters, electricians, plumbers, repair-persons, childcare providers, Vacation Bible School leaders, and folks who want to be of some help to the many families who come to the center for food, education, medical help and worship. We would probably stay for a week with a day for travel on either side of that working week. We are currently looking at the second or third week in June 2010. If you think you would like to join in this very exciting ministry or would just like to learn more about the possibilities, please come join us for an exploratory meeting in Bristol Hall following Compline on Wednesday, November 11th at 7:15 p.m. Coming to the meeting does not mean you have to go with the team. Listen to "the still small voice" of the Holy Spirit and learn more.

St. Paul's Annual Meeting

The regular Annual Meeting which is usually held in January will be moved up to Sunday, November 15th for several reasons. One, the Vestry wants to encourage a closer connection between the Annual Meeting and the in-gathering of pledge cards for the Stewardship Campaign. Two, the Vestry wants to incorporate its new members and elect next year's officers before the new year begins. In years past, new members and officers have not been oriented to their responsibilities until as late as March! Three, the earlier date allows the congregation to have some input on the agenda for the Vestry Retreat that can now take place in January and set up the Vestry's goals for the coming year. The Annual Meeting will take place in the church immediately following the 10:30 a.m. service. Please see the enclosed flyer on the Vestry Election Process.

Thanksgiving Sunday, November 22nd

Recognizing that many members of the parish will be traveling away from home over the Thanksgiving holiday, it seems wise to celebrate Thanksgiving at St. Paul's on the Sunday morning before Thanksgiving Day. Known as "Christ the King" Sunday in the Liturgical Calendar, this last Sunday in Pentecost, is particularly adaptable to a Thanksgiving theme, e.g. we are all grateful to be servants of our most high King Jesus Christ. Music and hymns especially appropriate for Thanksgiving will be played and sung. So, before heading on down the road, please come and worship with us on Thanksgiving Sunday. And, even better, if you are having family and friends in for the holidays, bring them to church with you!

Adopting a Family (or two) for Christmas

Efforts are being made to learn from the folks at Petersburg Social Services the names of two or three deserving families for the people of St. Paul's to "adopt" at Christmas time. Last year's family was so appreciative of their Christmas gifts and the invitation to join us for the Christmas Dinner that we hope to repeat that experience again in an even greater way this year. By the time we publish the December newsletter we should have the necessary specifics from Social Services to share with those members of the parish who would like to buy a gift or two for a needy family.

St. Paul's Library Now Has Internet Access

Due to the relentless efforts of our very diligent Junior Warden, Mike Smith, the St. Paul's Library now has a computer with Internet Access available for those who need to Google a forgotten fact or follow-up with an interesting idea come upon while reading in the Library. The Chandlers, the Keelers and Ernest Miles have donated the computer equipment to make this wonderful addition to the Library's services possible. Frances Johnson and the rest of her Library Committee are very grateful for the generous efforts of these fine folks. Thank you!

Arts and Crafts in Old Towne Petersburg

The Petersburg Area Art League invites you to join in their first Arts & Crafts Show to be held in beautiful Old Towne Petersburg November 13th to 15th at the Union Train Station, 103 River St. This event will feature 25-35 juried painters, printmakers, sculptors, jewelers, photographers, and artisans of fine crafts. The weekend will provide a great time for shoppers to purchase one-of-a-kind holiday gifts for family and friends. The show will be open to the public free from 6pm-9pm on Friday. Saturday, November 14th hours are 10am-6pm and Sunday, November 15th hours are 11am-5:00 pm. There will be a \$3.00 charge at the door on Saturday & Sunday. This event is sponsored by the PAAL and the City of Petersburg. For information contact PAAL at (804)861-4611 or www.paalart.org.

November Birthdays

- 7th Sacadi Powell
- 10th Mary Ann Myers
- 12th Meg Bryant
- 13th Maggie Cuthbert
- 16th Jacque Hatcher
- 19th Charles Cuthbert Jr., Chris Johnson
- 20th Tracy Brinkley, Evelyn Johnson
- 21st Laura Brooke McCarney
- 23rd Alex Maclin
- 29th Gerald Brinkley Jr.

(No anniversaries this month)

Happy Belated Birthday to Wesley Brando! Wesley celebrated his third birthday on October 25th.

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.