

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

September 2009

Dear St. Paul's Friends,

While driving home from our family vacation in Vermont, we stopped at the last service station in southern New Jersey before going over the Delaware Memorial Bridge. For the last twenty miles or so before stopping, I had been watching the glowering storm clouds gathering in the southwestern sky. I parked the car near the front door of the restaurant and scampered inside between the falling raindrops. The girls ordered a slice of vegetarian pizza to share, April poured out a Coke, and I purchased some M & M's from the candy machine. Then the lobby was instantly lit up by a bright white flash of lightening that was immediately followed by a huge clap of thunder. And then total darkness. And screaming. The power was knocked out and no one could see a thing! Fortunately, we were all close enough to the door to make it outside to the parking lot where we were pelted by the waves of rain.

Whether caught inside a darkened service station, awakened in the middle of the night from a sound sleep, or spelunking in the bottom of a cave, when we find ourselves surrounded by darkness, we all search for light. Once we see even the smallest glimmer, we are drawn towards it - powerfully pulled towards the hope of seeing our way more clearly.

Since I have begun serving as the Rector of St. Paul's, I have been asked frequently, "How are things going?" I have responded to this question in a number of ways, but of late I have been more likely to say something akin to, "We're finding our way." As you read through this month's *Epistle*, you will see articles and announcements about the growing number of things that are taking place at St. Paul's. People are in different places, they have different interests, and they are excited by different things. Some are looking forward to the Choir rehearsing together again on Wednesday evenings. Some are hoping for a good turn-out for the Sunday School. Some are looking for greater involvement in the life of the City of Petersburg. Some are intrigued by the possibility of a short-term mission trip to the barrio in San Pedro de Macorix in the Dominican Republic. Some are happy that the Sunday morning breakfasts will be served again. Though we are in different places, we are all drawn to that one source of light in the darkness, our Lord Jesus Christ. We all feel the attraction to the light that shines forth from Jesus. We may be coming to his light from different directions, but the glorious day when we all arrive in the presence of Jesus is not far off! Thanks be to God!

Peace,
Rick

Highlights of Fall Events

Sunday, September 13th – Kick-Off Sunday

Sunday School Opens
Ministries Fair and Sign-Up Day
Picnic on the Lawn

Sunday, September 20th – Baptisms

Cade and Cole Cannon will be baptized

Sunday, September 27th – Bishop's Visitation

Bishop Hollerith will arrive for breakfast
Meeting with confirmands at 9:30
Celebration of New Ministry & Confirmation at 10:30

Sunday, October 4th – St. Francis Day

Blessing of the Animals at 10:30 a.m.

A NEW WAY OF LOOKING AT STEWARDSHIP

Most Episcopalians can recall with an accompanying sense of dread the approach of the fall season as the time when their parishes begin to focus everyone's attention on Stewardship. Volunteers are drafted to give personal testimonies on the joys of giving money away. Vestry members lurk in the parking lot in the hope of capturing another unsuspecting parishioner to participate on the Every Member Canvas team. A certain Sunday in October is designated as Stewardship Sunday and then for weeks afterwards, there are plaintive cries for more and more pledges. No one on the Vestry wants to create this kind of negative atmosphere around Stewardship. The small group meetings that were held in the early summer were the beginning of a new approach to Stewardship. The Vestry is convinced that if people are informed of what is happening in the life of the church, the congregation will be far more likely to join in what's happening and be supportive.

The Ministries Fair that will be a part of Kick-Off Sunday on September 13th will give everyone the chance to learn even more about what's going on at St. Paul's. **All of the various committees and activities will have a table at the Parish Picnic** at which a representative from a particular ministry will be available to talk about the work that his or her group does. All of the "usual suspects" will be there: the Choir, the Sunday School, the Altar Guild, the Flower Guild, the Library Committee; but there will also be an opportunity to find out more from some of the newer committees as well: the Marketing Committee, both the local and the international Outreach Committees, and the Young Adults Group. We want everyone to have the opportunity to share their time and talents in the way that is most comfortable and enjoyable for them. This is Stewardship at its best!

SUNDAY SCHOOL PROGRAM

The Sunday School Program will begin at 9:30 a.m. on Sunday, September 13th with Elizabeth Chandler and Vanessa Keeler leading the program. A wonderful new feature of this year's classes will be the opportunity for the children to sing together as Elise Steenburgh will be with the students for fifteen minutes every Sunday.

CONFIRMATION CLASSES

In preparation for Bishop Hollerith's visit on Sunday, September 27th, classes for both adults and youth will be offered through out September. Those adults who have not yet been confirmed in the Episcopal Church or those who would like to be received into the Episcopal Church from another denomination or even those who would like to reaffirm their baptismal vows may meet with the Rector on Wednesday evenings from 7:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. September 9th, 16th, and 23rd. These classes will provide an overview of the history of the Episcopal Church, a look at traditional Anglican theology and Scriptural interpretation, and a review of the service of Confirmation itself. Those children who would like to be confirmed in the Episcopal Church are invited to meet with the Rector on Sunday mornings from 9:30 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. September 6th, 13th, and 20th to prepare. *Please contact the Rector if you would like to stand before the Bishop and be confirmed.*



CELEBRATION OF NEW MINISTRY SCHEDULED FOR SEPTEMBER 27TH WITH THE BISHOP'S VISIT

The installation of the new Rector will finally (!!!) take place on Sunday morning, September 27th at the 10:30 a.m. service. This liturgy is the opportunity for St. Paul's to welcome ceremonially the new Rector in our midst. In addition to the Bishop's reading of the Letter of Institution, prayers are offered on behalf of the new Rector and the congregation as they begin their new ministry together. Various organizations within the parish offer up symbols of the work that they share with the Rector. There are many, many opportunities for the members of the congregation to participate in this service. If you would like to contribute your ideas to the development of this special liturgy, please make your interest known to the Rector.

HYMN SING TO RESUME IN SEPTEMBER

The Hymn Sing will resume on Wednesday evening, September 9 at 6:50 p.m. after the choir returns from its Summer Retreat at the beach. Those in attendance at the Compline or Evening Prayer service are offered the chance to pick four favorite hymns that may not always be sung on Sunday morning. Please come join in the songs and the fun!

PEOPLE'S MEMORIAL CEMETERY:

AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE

Did you know Petersburg's cemeteries were once segregated by race and religion? A walking tour entitled "People's Memorial Cemetery: African American Heritage" will be conducted Saturday, September 19, 2009 at 7:00 pm. The tour will begin at the cemetery itself. Please park on Mingea or St. Andrews Streets. The forty-five minute tour will explore the history of the cemetery and will feature interesting stories of some of the burial grounds' permanent residents. Tour participants will be encouraged to share family histories as well. Admission is free. This event is sponsored by the City of Petersburg and the Petersburg Museums. For further information, please call 733-2396.

TIFFANY'S WORLD:

THROUGH MULTI-COLORED GLASS

The City of Petersburg and the Petersburg Museums will present author Donald R. Traser who will speak on "Tiffany's World: Through Multi-Colored Glass" on Sunday, October 4, at Blandford Church. There will be no charge for this 4:00 pm lecture, but donations to benefit the Ladies Memorial Association of Petersburg will gladly be accepted. Mr. Traser is currently writing a monograph on Louis Comfort Tiffany for the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. He began the project of documenting and photographing all Richmond-area stained glass in 2001 and has since visited Tiffany sites throughout the country. Additional information may be obtained from Martha Atkinson, site manager of Blandford Church and Cemetery, at (804) 733-2396 or by emailing her at: blandfordchurch@mindspring.com.

Little Notes from You

Dear Friends,

Thank you so much for the beautiful arrangement of flowers from the altar. I appreciate the kindness of the members of St. Paul's and the sharing of the flowers with me.

Sincerely, *Margaret Whittle*

Dear Friends,

The card depicting our beautiful church arrived on Saturday. Thanks so much for remembering me on my birthday. It really made my day!!

God bless St. Paul's and everyone in our parish.

In Christ, *Stephanie Tucker Little*

Concerts by Candlelight

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

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

Appomattox Chamber Ensemble

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 9TH ~ 6:30 P.M.

Roland Karnatz, *Clarinet*

Charles Lindsey, Jr., *Organ & Piano*

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.



September Birthdays

- 2nd Andrea McCarney
- 5th Drew Nelson
- 7th Christian Greenwood
- 10th Scott Guthrie
- 11th Grace Coover, Frank Myers
- 16th Karen Guthrie
- 17th Allyson Guthrie
- 21st Ginny Long
- 24th John Van Landingham
- 25th Anne Rowlett
- 27th Jamey Sutton
- 28th Jessie Vargo

September Anniversaries

- 6th Jim and Linda Wynne
- 21st Robert and Adelaide Butler
- 25th Skippy and Gracelyn Parks

Happy Belated Birthday to Heather Manson Dowling!
Heather celebrated her birthday on August 20th.

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.