

St. Paul's Angel Chapel Window, Janet Wamsley photographer

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THE EPISTLE

OF SAINT PAUL'S PARISH—K STREET

AN EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE DIOCESE OF WASHINGTON

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2020 XXXIV NUMBER 4

"Ever Faithful; Ever Sure"

Dear Friends:

Our overlords all agree: all clergy and parishes need to be planners; strategic thinkers; quick to map the future into sequences of arcs, with a sense of how God calls and how we reach that destination.

And, of course, the last few months show that God laughs at our plans. Over and over I thought I had a sense of the way forward, of exactly what we must do, that some promising shape to our common life was slowly merging – but then another pile of paper into recycling, as the world unexpectedly shifts once again. There were moments earlier on when life seemed to change several times each day. This is an era when we are recalled to the best qualities of discipleship: attentiveness and faithfulness to the present moment, a moment always infused with God's presence and blessing; to seek and serve Christ in all persons not at some point in the distant faraway but in the immediacy of the here-and-now and the all-around.

August in churches is generally busier than anyone might guess: preparing for what a former colleague described as the "return of the Episcopalians" in September. Liturgies, programs, formation, mission, stewardship, fellowship all ready to be, of course, bigger and better than ever before.

This year is completely different. None of us know what even the rest of 2020 will bring, but we do know that this Fall shall be as none other. My



THE REV'D RICHARD WALL

best guess is that the pace and shape we have found in August, with reopening to in-person worship, will continue. But many of our best loved traditions and rhythms will be cast anew in light of this emerging new normal.

And yet I do not despair, for we all know by now that the Gospel really does hinge around one tiny three-letter word: but. Yes, common sense, safety, civic ordinance, ecclesiastical directive mean an entire litany of change and absence - BUT in spite of all this the work and mission of our church will continue, just as it has all along. Worship, fellowship, formation, mission, discipleship will all continue, but in ways creative and nimble and new. If we need to suddenly shift gear again, then we are ready to do exactly that – and then continue. And deep within all this God redirects our gaze from all that seems so important – from our emotional attachments and lines in the sand, our programs and preferences and priorities, to what is

ST. PAUL'S PARISH SEEKS TO RESTORE ALL PEOPLE TO GOD AND TO EACH OTHER, THROUGH SACRAMENTAL WORSHIP AND CHRIST-LIKE LIVING.

THE EPISTLE

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Editor Katherine Britton

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Ministry is now where it should be: in that liminal space between church and world; in a place that unsettles and deeply challenges. This is an opportunity for us to grow individually and collectively; to reconsider and reevaluate all that we are in light of where we now see and find Jesus.

of first order importance: a man hanging on a cross; an empty tomb; bread; wine; common prayer; the presence of Jesus in each other and especially the poor.

Ministry is now where it should be: in that liminal space between church and world; in a place that unsettles and deeply challenges. This is an opportunity for us to grow individually and collectively; to reconsider and reevaluate all that we are in light of where we now see and find Jesus. We think of Jesus as a source of comfort, hope, and consolation; but He comes too as a thief in the night; He comes to disturb and unsettle. The dynamic of Christian life follows the path he first trod: we suffer – we die – we find new life. Too often we are very good at suffering and very bad at dying – and resurrection stays perpetually in sight but beyond our reach.

Of this I am convinced: this is a time when we must each stand up and be counted, in a myriad of different ways. We know that this season will not last forever. But in this time our church and parish family must rely on each one of us – and not only for our faithful stewardship and financial support, as important as that is. But also for our participation, our presence, our good will and good humour. This means stepping up, reaching beyond ourselves, stretching and expanding

our personal vision and experience – and owning our personal responsibility for the vitality and mission of St Paul's in our own day and time. The world needs the church more now than perhaps ever before in our lifetimes.

In decades and centuries to come, long after we are just names in parish records, those studying the history of our parish will, I believe, turn straight to this year – to our present moment – and how we navigated this crisis of pandemic. What will they find? A community, I pray, who rallied around, who grew stronger, who learned something new about themselves and the God they serve – and who remained always faithful.

Please do not hesitate to contact me to arrange (virtual) meetings and conversations.

This comes, as always, with my love & prayers
- Fr Richard

Meet our New Seminarian: Omar Cisneros



Omar Cisneros Seminarian

Greetings, St. Paul's K-Street, I am excited to meet you all and get to know you in person or via Zoom during my internship. My sending diocese is the Diocese of Oklahoma, and I am a Middler at Virginia Theological Seminary and expected to graduate in the spring of 2022. My wife is a registered nurse, and we have two dogs, a Boxer and a Chi-Winny.

My call to the ordained ministry started because I saw a need for a fresh voice in the Episcopal Church. However, since entering seminary, I have fallen in love with various different types of theology, and especially with the pastoral dimension of ministry.



Meet Our New Parish Coordinator: Dylan Thayer



Dylan Thayer, Parish Coordinator

If you're observant as St. Paul's begins to reopen for worship, you may see a new face: mine! My name is Dylan Thayer, and I am delighted to announce that I am St. Paul's new Parish Coordinator. Working together with Father Richard and our core team of dedicated volunteers, it's my

responsibility to oversee all aspects of program management, parish communications, general administrative functions, and property management at St. Paul's.

And if you're really observant, you may notice that you've seen my face before. I first got to know St. Paul's in 2011, when I served the parish as a visiting summer fellow. During that time, I learned the ins and outs of the Grate Patrol ministry, and I have been proudly volunteering in the kitchen and on the streets alongside Tina Mallett and so many other wonderful volunteers both inside and outside the St. Paul's community ever since.

After graduating from Hamilton College in 2013, I worked as a youth minister for three years, including at Christ Church just up the street in Kensington. I'm excited to bring the skills and perspective I gained as a youth minister to my new role as par-

ish coordinator. After leaving Christ Church, I attended Vanderbilt Law School, graduating with my J.D. in 2019. When I'm not at work I enjoy running competitively, reading and writing non-fiction, spending time outside, and relaxing with friends and family.

I love working in the Church because when I was young my home parish (St. Francis Potomac) provided direction and vision for my spiritual life and my relationship with God. I believe that effective parish coordination enables people to grow into Christ's perfected vision for their lives. I know that every single person in this parish has an essential role to play in building God's Church, and I look forward to meeting and working with every single one of you!

Blessings,
Dylan



Grate Patrol Pandemic Blessings

Tina Mallett, Grate Patrol Coordinator

Although in March Covid-19 threatened to shut down diocesan missions as well as parishes, St. Paul's met the virus head-on and continued operations on both fronts with innovative solutions. For the Grate Patrol several fortunate gifts emerged.

Bishop Mariann had expressed the desire that parish outreach ministries continue in spite of closed church buildings. She cautioned, however, that the at-risk population of persons aged 65 and older should not participate in these ministries. For us, that meant almost all of our volunteer force. This is where our first wonderful gift - new helping hands - appeared.

The rector and wardens agreed that we could carry on the Grate Patrol with reduced risk of infection and with fewer volunteers by delivering meals on Sat only and by reducing slightly the number of meals prepared. Thus we delivered two days' worth of breakfast with hot coffee on one day each week to everyone on our usual routes.

Several indomitable young-at-heart parishioners volunteered right away to perform the weekly tasks of procuring supplies, boiling eggs, preparing sandwich fillings, setting up and loading bags and making coffee. These hearty souls worked in the din-

ing hall or kitchen alone to maintain the ultimate in social distancing.

Glenn Marsh switched from scheduling Saturday/Sunday drivers to Friday sandwich makers and Saturday drivers. He recruited new helpers from St. Stephen Martyr who lived in the neighborhood and several young members of our own congregation, whose upended work schedules now afforded time to help, volunteered. The vacant dining hall provided plenty of space to work at more than safe distances. Two wonderful families from Christ Church, Vienna, whose children had participated in the Grate Patrol years ago with the Falls Church, called to help and have been on duty now for months. Social distancing is not a concern when one of these families is scheduled because they are already living in one household.

With respect to drivers, some of our regular deliverers were able to go on the routes with family members, which solved the problem of maintaining distance in a car. Other drivers were able to go alone. New drivers have stepped up to learn the routes. With the passing of months and the increasing knowledge of how the coronavirus is spread, our supply of delivery teams is growing.

We are grateful for the magnificent work of all Grate Patrol volunteers, past and present, intermediate

and ongoing. A thundering shout-out to you all!

Naturally, since early March, we have been observing CDC guidelines for mask and glove wearing, hand washing and surface cleaning. Thanks to the income from the Scaffold Resource benefit Golf Tournament, Charlie Weiss was able to procure for our homeless friends oodles of face masks, hand sanitizer, socks and tarps. We have been distributing these along with breakfast on Saturday mornings. This has been a second gracious blessing during the pandemic.

A third blessing made possible in part by copious stay at home time during the coronavirus is the creation of a new Grate Patrol website. Savva Brown who has been a regular deliverer with his dad, Frank, for years, has developed a very handsome, informative webpage that will be linked to the St. Paul's site. More info on this to come.

Lastly, though of most significance, is a word about the homeless friends whom we serve. The closing of restaurants, libraries, museums, day centers and churches, where indigent people used to be able to hang out (and to take advantage of restrooms), is a terrific loss. So are the shut off public water fountains. However, most of the people we question say that they are ok. In spite of the fact that there are no indoor gathering spots, we observe camaraderie and helpfulness among folks whose tents or sleeping bags are near each other and I am ever amazed at the gracious and thankful attitude of the people whom we are privileged to encounter. May we keep them ever in mind and share our blessings with them.



“Corona-tide” Children’s Formation

Art and Religion

Katherine Britton

During a virtual coffee hour in the early days of the pandemic lockdown, Hannah Proctor asked the “room” whether they could think of ways to reach out to the children of the parish. Michael Robinson took up the challenge.

Using his experience as a school docent at the National Gallery of Art, Michael started putting together power point art and religion presentations for the children of St. Paul’s. And he has kept on doing them. He hopes “that, in doing so, the children of St. Paul’s and their families feel that they are valued, especially during this time of COVID. They are, after all, the future of the parish!”

To date, Michael has done the following presentations:
Stories from the Bible told through Art:

Adoration of the Magi

Adoration of the Shepherds

The Annunciation

Daniel in the Lions’ Den

David and Goliath

Return of the Prodigal Son

American Art – An Introduction to American Portraits

American Art – Every Picture Tells a Story

An Introduction to Modern Art:

Fauvism

Piet Mondrian

Wassily Kandinsky

An Introduction to Mythology

Saint George and the Dragon

An Introduction to Mannerism

The Art of El Greco

These wonderful presentations are full of beautiful images, fascinating insights, sources of inspiration, and fun activities for children to enjoy. If you have missed them or just want to see them again, please contact our new Parish Coordinator, Dylan Thayer, at parishcoordinator@stpaulskst.com for the link.

A Virtual Atrium with Davette Hines

Janet Wamsley, Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Coordinator

Over the summer, I've participated in Zoom calls with Catechesis of the Good Shepherd catechists and trainers, and observed the Zoom CGS sessions Davette Himes has been running at All Saints Sharon Chapel in Alexandria. Davette was my trainer for CGS for 3 to 6 year olds. Her passion, energy and enthusiasm blessed me during training, and inspired me in the two summers I worked with her at Shrinemont Family Camp.

She will begin an atrium year virtually in September, and I look forward to supporting her work and being involved as she offers children's formation to children and families via Zoom.

Obviously, "corona-tide" has interrupted many routines and forced us to be ready to change directions on a moment's notice. But it is encouraging to me to see children deepen their relationships with God through means I wouldn't have imagined six months ago.



Hannah Proctor comments, “My children have participated in Michael’s weekly art presentations, and especially enjoy the ones where their whole bodies are engaged. One week they were encouraged to pose like David in triumph over Goliath. We learn something new in every presentation!”

Imperfectly Tense

Jonathan Scolare



“The imperfect tense is used for continuous actions started and ongoing prior to the utterance, as well as for habitual actions,” instructed the website we were using to learn Old Church Slavonic (OCS). It was early June and Christopher White and I were sitting down to start what has since become an ongoing process to teach ourselves this ancestral language. Nearly every Friday night since then, we have sat with a Gospel passage written in OCS, trying – imperfectly – to read through each verse, word, and syllable. It has become a weekly puzzle of dropping this ending, omitting that vowel, adding the appropriate suffix, asking why that verb is active and not an aorist, carrying the one, hey Macarena.

It’s one thing to learn a new language. It’s a different undertaking altogether to learn a dead language. Indeed, sourdough starter is more alive than OCS. Yet I firmly believe in an omnipresent God who speaks in every tongue, at every moment, in all the tabernacles of the world, even to the end of time. You need not pray in the language of your church, your country, or, even in words. You can say your prayers with perfect grammar or as imperfectly as you would like.

Our Lord hears them all.

But I was not dwelling on God’s omnipresence or omniscience when I was reading that introductory OCS lesson. The term “Imperfect Tense” struck me. It came at a time when much of the news was written in the imperfect: he was kneeling on a man’s throat; the man was not breathing; the EMT was sleeping in her home; the 25-year-old was jogging. This verb form as defined above portrays the state of these ugly truths we must now confront. Racism is built upon, and sustained by, continuous actions that have been ongoing far longer than any of us have been on this earth. We can see the reports and hear the stories of powerful groups and individuals habitually choosing to exclude and disenfranchise people – even to the point of violence – based on the color of their skin. If we take the words separately – “imperfect” and “tense” – we have two far too fitting descriptors of our world today. We are being called to sit with our imperfections and examine them in their rawest, ugliest forms. We are facing a global health crisis because of failures to communicate threats and comply with safety measures. “Tense” is almost a mockingly oversimplified adjective for the plethora of communities grappling with social unrest, economic uncertainty, and existential danger to their health.

Times like these make the ideas of grace and forgiveness appear to be nothing more than pictures we would see in a child’s coloring book. Under the best of circumstances, the peace of our Lord that passes all understanding overwhelms us in its unfathomable, indescribable depths. Now it seems all but unobtainable. Our words, our language, can no longer do justice to the anger, the fear, the hurt, the imperfect tensions that we are seeing and experiencing. Yet even when words fail us,

our Lord still hears us. Indeed, our Lord spoke of – and in – the imperfect. In the parable of the sower we heard earlier this summer, Jesus says the seed that fell on the good soil “was producing” (εδιδου) fruit. Practically speaking, this makes sense. Fruit does not simply pop out of the ground. It takes time, patience, and often a great deal of labor. On the cross, that symbol of our salvation upon which all our sins were nailed, we read how Christ said, “Father forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34, ESV). This translation, however, implies Jesus said it once and no more when in fact the Greek verb used is ελεγεν, an imperfect form. It was a repeated action. He was repeatedly saying, “Father forgive them.” On that cross, Christ spoke of – and in – the imperfect.

Our actions today are planting seeds, some of which will fall by the wayside and some may never take root. However, some will fall into good soil. Nourishing these seeds through listening, reading, and examining of one’s own imperfections, and these actions will continuously produce fruit. It will not be easy. For some, it will feel like learning a new language, one that is very much alive and filled with unfamiliar vocabulary. Throughout the nation in different departments and levels of government, it will mean examining the authors’ intent behind laws and policies. And, yes, we will all make mistakes along the way. When we do make mistakes, we only need to look to the cross to see all our imperfections nailed into the One continuously saying, “Forgive them.” If we truly open ourselves up to these experiences, if we commit to ongoing improvements in our communities, we can come to see the peace of our Lord in all its unfathomable, indescribable depths.

Virtually Choir-less

Carolyn Hoff, Graduating Chorister



In March, several graduating choristers, myself included, sang their last Evensong—without knowing it. It's no secret that social distancing has forced most groups to switch to virtual options, including choir. Since March, we've created a few virtual videos to share with the congregation: some a cappella, some with accompaniment, others with only the Parish Choir or the choristers, and some with everyone together.

Well, "together" is perhaps too strong a word. The way we record is actually quite different than singing live. First, the director makes a track for everyone to sing along to; this could be the accompaniment, or if the piece is a cappella it could be a computer-generated version of the voices. Then, that track is sent out to all of the singers, and they each individually record their part; they listen to the track (with headphones so their own microphone doesn't pick it up) and sing along to it. Then everyone sends their recordings to the editor using a cloud-based Dropbox account. The

editing is the most challenging part of the whole process, because the individual recordings need to be aligned and the voices blended. Thanks to our producer, Alistair Coleman, ours turn out realistic, almost as if we were singing in the nave.

This elaborate process pays off, because you can listen to the piece whenever and wherever you want. But of course, singing to a phone camera in a quiet room is much different than hearing your voice swirling around the nave, bouncing off the ceiling and walls, then fading away. Telling your family, "Stay out; I'm recording," is much different than being surrounded by some of your favorite people, listening to them sing, and shooting them smiles after an amazing moment. And listening to a computer-generated click track is in no way the same as blending with your fellow singers, or feeling the organ's 32-foot stops rumble your chest.

This fall, I will become a junior at Interlochen Arts Academy, a boarding school in Michigan. I will major in

organ and hope to continue with organ after graduating so that my life can be full of moments like those I've had at St. Paul's. St. Paul's has a unique choir; besides the high-level music we sing weekly, singing here has taught me many lessons that I'll be able to apply to everything I do. Among other things, I've learned that small mistakes are nothing to stress over; that community and trust are just as, if not more, important than skill; and most importantly, a solo "has never killed anyone ... yet." I've watched myself and every other chorister grow more confident with each solo they sing, and more comfortable with themselves as they meet more and more people with similar interests.

In a way, I'm glad I didn't have the typical "Last Evensong" with buckets of tears both during and after the service, because that's not what I'll remember most. Instead, I'll remember improvisations with hidden tunes, watching incense float upwards, singing Lessons and Carols by candlelight, getting home late after Easter Vigil only to wake up early for Easter morning, and ending Evensongs with the descant to Psalm 117. I am forever grateful for my years as a chorister, and I know that this is not a farewell, but rather a "See you later." I hope that choir resumes soon, and that the nave once again rings with the chorus of gorgeous voices that make up our choir and congregation. Until then, virtual choir will have to do.



Editor's Note: If you missed the virtual performances of the St. Paul's choirs, or if you just want to enjoy them again, please go to the Facebook page of St. Paul's choirs: <https://www.facebook.com/spkschoirs>. You can hear the St. Paul's choirs sing "The Road Home" in April, "God is Gone Up" by Gerald Finzi for Ascension, and two anthems composed for St. Paul's during the Pandemic by Jeffrey Smith, Director of Music — "Ubi Caritas" in June and "How Can I Keep From Singing" in July.

Wardens' Report, March-August 2020



It's probably safe to say that way back in March most of the Executive Committee and Vestry did not know what Zoom was. But here we are in August, with several months of virtual Executive Committee and Vestry meetings under our belts. This is a brief update of what St. Paul's leadership has been up to, virtually, during the total and now partial shutdown.

Acton Academy

From mid-March through the end of the school year, Acton Academy faced the challenge of operating both their Montessori pre-school and their elementary classes virtually. Acton lost three students whose parents were negatively affected by the Coronavirus shutdown and also had to reduce tuition because of the decreased services they were able to provide students and their families. At the March meeting, the Vestry granted the Executive Committee authority to defer Acton lease payments to other dates within the calendar year. At the May meeting, on the recommendation of Borger, St. Paul's property management company, and in light of the ongoing pandemic and resulting economic crisis, the Vestry voted to abate Acton's rent by half for a period of six months, from April through September, 2020, for a net loss to St. Paul's of \$45,774.11. This action was taken in recognition of the fact that if the abatement was denied, Acton would likely have to close, and St. Paul's would probably be without a tenant for some time to come. At the July meeting it was reported that Acton does plan to open for the 2020-21 school year with on-site classes five days a week, from 8 am to 3 pm, in compliance with CDC guidelines. As of the August Vestry meeting, Acton has lost five of the 25 students it had registered for the new school year, and expects to lose at least two more. Acton has now presented to St. Paul's three options to

further reduce its rent: further rent abatement, a renegotiation of the lease, or some combination of the two. The Executive Committee will study these options, consider what other courses of action are available, confer with Borger Management and present a recommendation to the Vestry for full discussion and a vote at the September meeting.

Parish Coordinator

On Friday, July 10, 2020 the Vestry approved the employment contract for Dylan Thayer, who started July 15 as the Parish Coordinator, formerly Parish Administrator. The title was changed to reflect the addition of program management to the position's previous responsibilities of facility management, parish communications and general administrative functions. For instance, as we reopen, Dylan will manage the registration and checking in of parishioners who chose to attend Mass in person on Sundays. This change in both title and responsibilities is consistent with what other churches in the Diocese are currently doing.

HVAC

The HVAC system has been an ongoing drain on both the energy and finances of the parish. Most recently, Air Handler 1 began leaking, which led to ceiling panels in the hallway between the men's and women's restrooms falling. Borger recommended engaging an engineering firm to review the entire HVAC system and assist us with developing a comprehensive plan for repair or replacement of components of the HVAC system. The Vestry was informed at the July meeting of the formation of a work group consisting of the Executive Committee, Vestry members Jon Doster and Kris Brown Coleman, and the parish Coordinator to determine next steps for dealing with the HVAC system. On July 6 and 7 the work group

interviewed two engineering firms that submitted proposals to provide an assessment of St. Paul's HVAC system. At the August Vestry meeting, on the recommendation of the work group, the Vestry approved hiring GHT Chartered to perform the assessment, which will cost not more than \$10,000.

Atrium Roof

Leaks in the atrium roof have been an ongoing problem, with frequent expenditure of funds for repairs that have not held up over time. Roof Consulting Services (RCS) was hired to assess the atrium roof and provide a written report. As a result of that report, RCS was hired as a consultant to oversee the hiring and work of a company to repair the atrium roof and Glass Contractors of Hyattsville was hired to re-caulk the glass pyramid over the atrium. The total cost of work to the atrium roof is expected to be around \$30,000.

Annual Meeting/Vestry Elections

At the April meeting, the Senior Warden recommended that, given the current pandemic, the Annual Meeting and election of new Vestry members be delayed from June until later in the year, when the duration of the Coronavirus shutdown will hopefully be clearer. He noted that the Parish Bylaws permit the Vestry to schedule the annual meeting at any time during the calendar year. The upshot of this is that Vestry members who would normally be rotating off the Vestry in June will remain in place for now, providing continuity and institutional knowledge during this uncertain time.

And So We Carry On

We hope this report finds you well and partaking of some of the many virtual spiritual enrichment and social opportunities St. Paul's has offered during this very trying time, including morning and evening prayer, daily Mass, Wednesday evening

forum, Sunday solemn Mass, Sunday forum and coffee hour. See the current Eblast for a schedule of current offerings. Feel free to reach out to either one of us if you have questions about this report or anything else having to do with the Executive Committee and Vestry.

Faithfully submitted,
David Schnorrenberg, Senior Warden
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Anne T. Windle, Junior Warden
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Financial Update

Katherine Britton, Treasurer

St. Paul's current financial position remains solid despite a significant drop in income, the largest component of which is a reduction of over \$45K in rent from Acton through September. See Wardens' Report above.

We have been blessed with ongoing generous support from parishioners and friends of St. Paul's. Nonetheless, we are now starting to see some decline in giving. We hope that the loss of projected pledge and plate income will be under \$40K.

Despite income loss, our net income has remained positive because we have also experienced reduced expenditures: lower payroll expenses because of three and a half months without a parish administrator; lower music expenses because of the pandemic limitations on singing; no strategic planning expenses because initiatives have had to be on hold; a reduced Diocesan pledge (accepted by the Diocese for all parishes as one way to respond to loss of income during the pandemic); and a small reduction in operational expenses.

New expenses coupled with the potential loss of further Acton income noted in the Wardens' report will be a challenge. However, we do not expect to run a deficit in 2020.

Life in the Coronavirus Pandemic

Jennifer Johnston



No One Is Exempt!

No church – by order of the Bishop! No one allowed in the church offices, no egg boiling or flower arranging. No weekly trips to Annie's, no yoga or yoga in the water, all exercise rooms and pools closed.

So I dug out the sewing machine, which should have been thrown away years ago, but jerry rigged I was able to sew quite a few masks from old shirts or that fabric I had been keeping for years, and gave them to friends.

Then a fruitless safari to Harris Teeter for toilet paper and flour. I did not make any sour dough bread, but I did make whole wheat bread, and scones, and gingerbread – all so good that I ate them. Now I am on a diet.

So how else will I occupy my time. No work for me at the Kennedy Center – so I will finish painting my living room, file my taxes, go through all my boxes of papers, throw out all the clothes I can't fit into anymore, and all those shoes – who needs shoes?

Thank goodness for Fr. Wall and Elijah Mills and other acolytes – Morn-

ing and Evening Prayer every day via Zoom, and Mass at noon viewable on Facebook. So my day was organized around the services. Very Benedictine!

And then there are all those recommended books to read – *Simpler Living*, *Compassionate Life*, *True Prayer* by Kenneth Leech, *Temple Theology* by Margaret Barker, *The Rule of St. Benedict* by Joan Chichester, *The Way of St. Benedict* by Rowan Williams, and, inspired by the many quoted poets, *The Poetic Imagination* by William Countryman.

One of the best things was the Zoom coffee hour on Sundays after the Mass when Fr. Wall divided us into small chat groups and we met those parishioners that used to attend the other service. And we all learned our way around the Lectionary, and how fascinating to hear the different versions. Of course I would read from the King James Version, after all it is the language of Shakespeare, but **whosoever so readeth needeth to find ones way around diverse 17th century language.**

I never painted my living room; I did file my taxes. I never sorted through my papers, or clothes, or shoes; but I did plant tomato plants on my balcony that produced quite a few tomatoes.

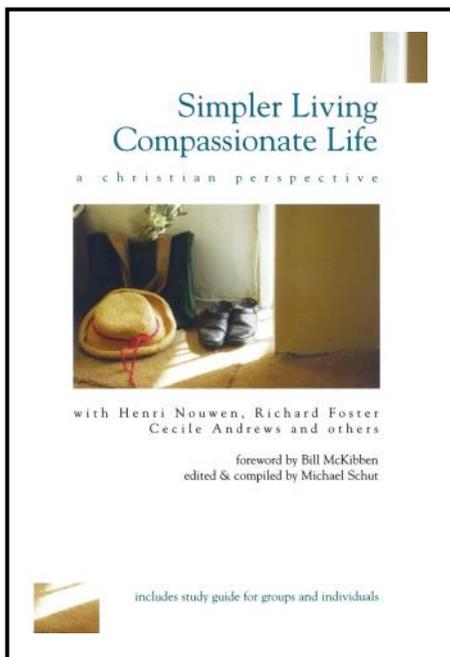
The new normal means I still wear gloves and a mask whenever I leave my apartment – even to put out the trash, I have returned to egg boiling, and arranging flowers, on my own, and wearing a mask. I did get to know many parishioners I did not know pre-virus, and look forward to the time when we can get together without fear.



On Matters of the Soul

Ed Loucks, Convener

Our Monday night group was considering options for our next book last March when along came COVID-19 (AKA “crummy various”) to change our lives. The church was closed, so we could no longer meet in our usual place. Fr. Richard suggested we try using his Zoom account, so we did, and it has worked rather well. We miss the hugs, but the discussion is just as lively. We’ve learned to like the convenience of not having to mess with evening rush hour traffic, so as long as Fr. Richard allows us, we will continue to meet on Zoom, following evening prayer on Monday nights—about 6:30 PM. You are welcome to give us a try.



Our group did manage to finish our last book – *Simpler Living, Compassionate Life*, edited by Michael Schut, a collection of articles on the topic of managing our lifestyle, rather than letting it manage us. One article by Richard Foster neatly summarizes

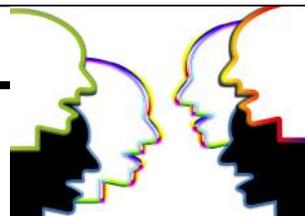
much of what the book talks about. Foster writes about “the outward expression of simplicity:”

- Buy things for their usefulness rather than their status
- Reject anything that is producing an addiction in you
- Make a habit of giving things away
- Refuse to be propagandized by the custodians of modern gadgetry
- Learn to enjoy things without owning them
- Develop a deep appreciation for the creation
- Look with a healthy skepticism at all “buy now, pay later” schemes
- Obey Jesus’ instructions about plain, honest speech
- Reject anything that breeds the oppression of others

Shun anything that distracts you from seeking first the kingdom of God

Foster discusses these suggestions on pages 187-89 of the book. You can imagine the vigor and passion of the exchange among our participants. I must confess that I am the chief of sinners when it comes to things like books. The rich man, whom Jesus described, had run out of storage space for his wealth, and was planning to tear down his barns and build bigger ones so he could sit back, eat, drink and be merry while Lazarus lay suffering at his door step. Like that rich man, I have a problem finding storage space for all my books. Like Oscar Wilde, I can resist anything except temptation.

Our group will begin a new book when we convene again in the fall. Between now and then, we will get together for fellowship – on Zoom, we



hope. One of our members wants to share with us some podcasts on spiritual topics he has been enjoying. We have agreed to meet the Monday evening after the Labor Day holiday—September 14th. As is our tradition, our first meeting of the new season will include our annual ice cream social, only this year it will be “virtual.” Each person will bring his or her dish of ice cream or whatever they feel like eating and we will watch each other munch away.

Our next book—*Mere Christianity* by C. S. Lewis—is a modern classic we’ve all heard about but probably have not read. Shortly after World War II, Lewis was invited to give a series of radio talks on BBC on the basic beliefs of the Christian faith. The talks were well received, and were later compiled in the form of this book. Our Presiding Bishop, Michael Curry, tells in his installation homily as 27th PB, that his mother became an Episcopalian after reading this book.

We have come to realize and appreciate how valuable, how important community and fellowship is to spiritual growth and formation. You may want to consider starting your own small group. It’s easy, fun, and reasonable—costs no more than the price of a book. To be a convener of a small group, you do not need any special qualification, other than the ability to listen with love. The book is the teacher.

Come join us! For more information, contact me at ed-loucks@comcast.net or 301/633-5937. Or contact any member of the group whom you may know.



UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS AT ST. PAUL'S PARISH

SEPTEMBER

- 2 | John Presley
Ann Schnorrenberg
Susanna Beiser
- 3 | Susan Granum
Dennis Tosh
- 5 | Jonathan Coleman
- 6 | Katherine Dirks
- 7 | Virgil Benn
- 9 | James Barrientos
Michael Freeland
- 16 | John Wires
- 18 | Sidney Bakke
- 21 | Austin Bakke
- 22 | Jonathan Doster
Bryan Marcus
- 23 | Simon Winter
David Vance
- 24 | Eno Ajueyitsi
Benjamin Coleman
- 28 | Monique Grant

BIRTHDAY
Happy

OCTOBER

- 2 | Joan Miller
Sylvia Rortvedt
- 4 | Megan Murton
- 6 | Aidan Crane
Ashley Proctor
- 7 | Sarah Schnorrenberg
- 9 | Benjamin Best
- 10 | Alistair Coleman
- 12 | Sarah Barrientos
William Begley
- 13 | Peter Britton
- 15 | Kris Brown Coleman
Skip Keats
- 17 | Elliot Chiu
Stephen Goodman
Sally O'Brien
- 23 | Elizabeth Schnorrenberg
- 24 | Patricia Byrd
- 26 | Betty Ajueyitsi
- 29 | Benton Crane
- 30 | Lydia Taylor

Upcoming Feast Days



**Feast of the Holy Cross,
Monday, September 14**

**Feast of St. Matthew,
Monday, September 21**

**Feast of St. Michael and All Angels,
Tuesday, September 29**

**Feast of St. Luke (transferred),
Monday, October 19**

**Feast of St. James of Jerusalem,
Friday, October 23**

**Feast of St. Simon & St. Jude,
Wednesday, October 28**

Please check the website as these feasts approach to learn what services may be offered.

Looking Ahead:

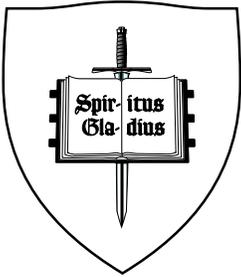
November 1st is All Saints' Day, and Bishop Mariann Budde plans on making her Visitation — either virtually or in person, depending on how things are at that point in time.

November 2nd is All Souls' Day and we are planning a Requiem. Details to follow.

2020 Gifts In Memoriam

St. Paul's is very grateful for the gifts received in memory of the Rev. Robert Gillespie (who died April 6, 2020) and Mrs. Charlotte Gillespie (who died July 9, 2020) from: Judith Cherrington, Joanne Dalton, Laura Gillespie, Debora Rudy, and Mohsen & Carol Younes.

St. Paul's is also very grateful for the generous gift to the Grate Patrol by Jane Holloway in memory of her mother Dabney Holloway (who died April 7, 2020).



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