

The Road to Damascus

April, 2012



St. Paul's Episcopal Church

Final Service at Good Shepherd

Built in 1902 as a “mission church” of St. Paul’s, the Church of the Good Shepherd, South Lee, held its final Sunday worship service on April 15. More than 100 people, including a strong contingent from St. Paul’s, packed the little church.

Though it was a sad occasion for the Good Shepherd community, the service brimmed with the hope of a new future. The final verse of the final hymn sung in the 110-year old church captured the moment:

*Together met, together bound,
we'll go our different ways,
and as his people in the world,
we'll live and speak his praise.*



Left: Celebrants were the Rev. Mark Hatch, the Rev. Tom Damrosch and the Venerable Bill Coyne. *Right:* Fr. Tom with Good Shepherd’s Donna Touponce, Alice Collins and Peter Putnam.

Welcome, Noreen. Welcome back, Mark.

The Rev. Noreen Suriner and the Rev. Mark Hatch



will lead our worship while Fr. Tom is on sabbatical. (See page 2.)

The first woman ordained in our

Diocese, Noreen has served churches in Washington, Baltimore and New York state. (See page 6 for a full bio.)

Mark is familiar with St. Paul’s having served as interim prior to our calling Fr. Tom.



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It's Time for the Rector's Sabbatical

Tom spoke with *The Road to Damascus* about what this means for him and for us.

Are you getting excited?

Indeed I am. And I'm deeply grateful to the parish and to the Eli Lily Foundation for making this time for study and reflection possible.

What will happen here in the parish?

We are blessed to have very fine lay and clergy leadership available during this upcoming time.

We have a great Vestry, led by Wardens Carl Sprague and Vaunie Grauly, and an expanded Pastoral Care Team. We're also training Lay Eucharistic Visitors to bring Communion to parishioners who are unable to attend church. And all our committees are preparing for their various responsibilities.

For Sunday worship and when a priest is needed during the week, the Rev. Noreen Suriner and the Rev. Mark Hatch will be our primary clergy. We'll also have the Rev. Tad Evans back for the Day of Pentecost, Sunday May 27, and additional clergy are available if needed.

What will you be doing?

I'll be traveling with one carry-on bag and a tablet computer to key places in my family history and to places which are significant for toleration among faiths. In the Philippines, I'll visit St. Andrew's Seminary of the Episcopal and Philippine Independent (Catholic) Church, St. Luke's Hospital where I was born, and travel with my brother David to the mountain towns of Baguio, Bontoc, Sagada, Banaue and



Besao (my father's church in Besao is shown here). Other major destinations are St. George's College in Jerusalem where I'll take a course, "Following in the Footsteps of Jesus"; southern Spain where tolerance among all faiths flourished until the late 15th century; and Liverpool Cathedral and St. Deiniol's Library in Britain. And there will be time in this country for processing and reflecting on my learnings and experiences of this sabbatical time and how that relates to my ministry as a whole.



How is your planning going?

Very well. There have been a few adjustments. I've been making exciting contacts in the northern Philippine island of Luzon, where I'm finding people wonderfully welcoming. At the same time, there has been increased unrest in southern island of Mindanao. So instead of going there, I'm adding to the time set aside for looking at the links between East and West, stopping

both in Istanbul and Venice. And my hosts in Britain have put me onto a course on three women mystics in Wales at St. Deiniol's Library (above).

What will happen here during the sabbatical time?

On Sunday, April 29th, we'll have a Reception after the 10:00 a.m. service to mark the transition to the sabbatical period for all of us.

Then parish life will continue without me from May 1 through September 6. Sunday services will remain at our "new" times of 8:00 and 10:00 a.m. every week. Godly Play will wrap up on Pentecost, May 27.

Summer will have its usual round of activities with some additions. The Vestry is planning a "Night to Remember" in June. This will give the parish an opportunity to reflect on its own roots, its history, its stories, in parallel to that part of my own endeavor.

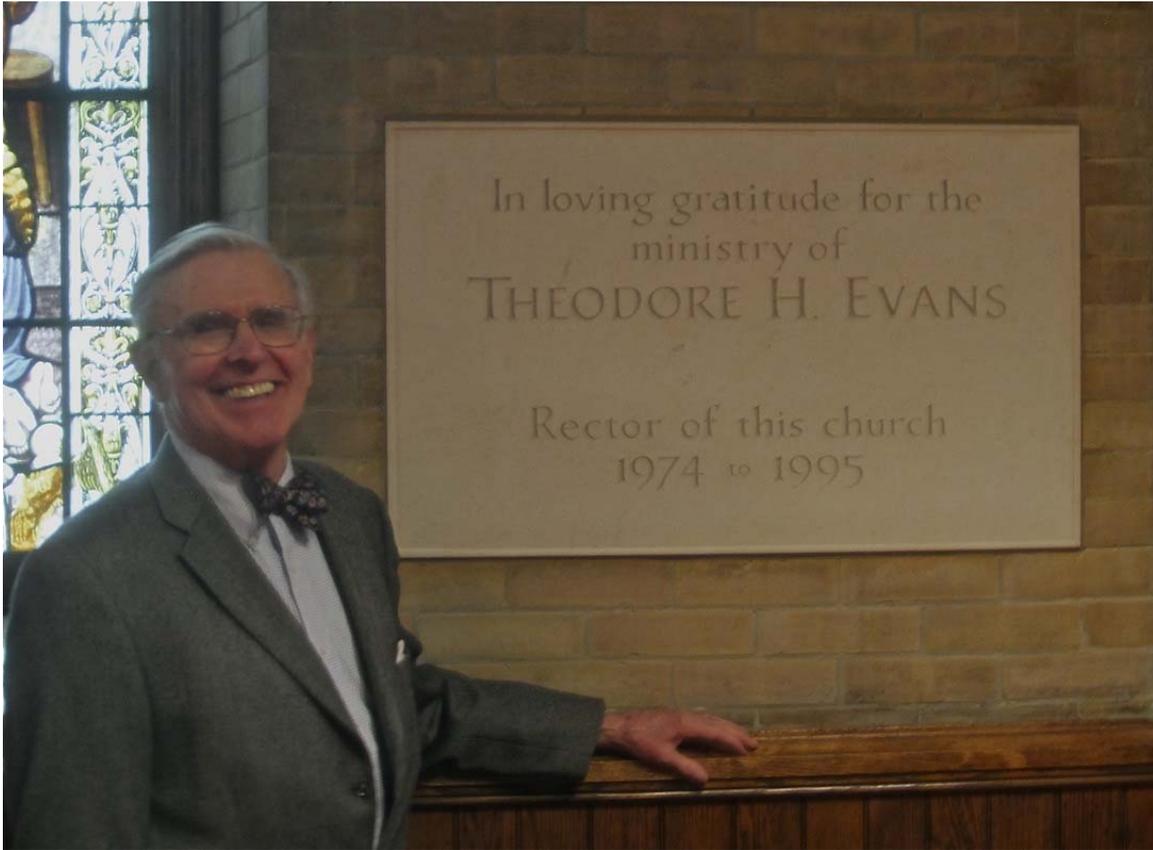
July and August will see special events including a Sale. Vacation Bible School will be held here at St. Paul's in the Children's Center on the mornings of August 6-10. And the Robbins-Zust family Marionettes will return to us for a third season.

Will we be keeping in touch with each other while you're on sabbatical?

No. Life in the parish will go on under the leadership of Carl, Vaunie and the Vestry and the sacramental ministrations of Noreen and Mark. Meanwhile I will be focused on the process of learning and growth which is what a sabbatical is all about. What we can do during this time is pray for each other!

How will we reconnect?

First, I'll sit down with the Churchwardens and others to bring me "up to speed." Then on September 9th we'll have Fall Start Up Sunday together. Finally, Vaunie Grauly and Natalie Boyce are working with the Very Rev. Hannah Anderson as consultant to design a process through which we can all share what we've learned in this time apart.



A Very Special Day

March 25th was a special day in the life of St. Paul's. We not only welcomed Bishop Gordon Scruton for his final official visitation before his retirement. We also welcomed newly Confirmed members, and a plaque honoring longtime Rector Tad Evans was unveiled. The service was a moving reminder of the enduring nature of our worship and church community.



John Carmichael receives Confirmation from Bishop Gordon Scruton. Ben Herrick (left) and Bill Maynard (right) were also confirmed. Dolores O'Neil, to the right of the Bishop, was received for Communion.

Update on the Bishop Search

Candidates to be the next Bishop will be announced this week. The candidates will be presented to the Diocese at a series of events that have come to be known in The Episcopal Church as "WalkABOUTs." These are an opportunity for both the delegates to the electing convention and other interested members of the Diocese to meet and hear from the candidates in a series of events around Western Massachusetts. The closest WalkABOUT to St. Paul's will be at St. Stephen's Church, Pittsfield, on Monday, May 21, at 7 p.m.

The convention will be June 2. Bill Vogt and Linda Day will be delegates.

The Most Amazing After-Church Refreshments – Ever!

The St. Paul's Tower Room has never witnessed anything quite like the "coffee hour" put on by young parishioners Carl and Gilbert Casey. Carl and Gilbert, along with their grandma, Carla McCormick, have been mainstays of the acolyte program. As if that were not enough to keep them busy, the pair volunteered to provide refreshments one Sunday. We were treated to candy-topped cupcakes, Gummy Bears, Twizzlers, and more! It was truly a memorable event!



Meet Noreen Suriner

The Rev Noreen P. Suriner retired after serving the church for 31 years and returned to the home town of Middlefield. She was the first woman to be ordained from the Diocese of Western Massachusetts although she never worked as a priest here until she did two Interim ministries: one year at St. John's Northampton, from 2007 to 2008 and one year at All Saints in South Hadley, 2008-2009. Her early formative experiences were at St. James, Great Barrington. There Pierce Middleton invited her and her Bible Club of 34 children into the Parish Hall. For two summers she worked for the diocese coordinating 8 Vacation Bible Schools. It was a wonderful opportunity to see a variety of Episcopal churches. She then settled at St. Stephen's, Pittsfield, the parish that sponsored her for Seminary.

Noreen was originally a third grade teacher in both Great Barrington and Housatonic from 1969-1973. She completed her Master's in Education at American International College, and went off to Virginia Theological Seminary in 1973. There she completed her Master's in Divinity.

After Seminary she worked at her field work parish, St. Columba's, Washington, D.C. one of the fastest growing Episcopal Churches in the North East. Later she was an Assistant at the Church of the Redeemer in Baltimore for two years and served as rector for 13 years at Christ the King Church, also in Baltimore. In 1995 she moved to Trinity Memorial Church in Binghamton, NY where she served for 12 years as rector. In addition to serving in many roles in each of the diocese, such as Standing Committee, Diocesan Council, and many other boards and organizations she was also the first woman to be called as rector in the Mid Atlantic area. She served as the first woman president of the National Network of Episcopal Clergy Associations and was the first woman priest to be elected to the Church Pension Fund Board of Trustees. She served for 12 years culminating as Vice Chair for three.

Currently she is serving as supply at St. Luke's Lanesboro and has begun a political career. She ran unsuccessfully for State Representative, however, for a newcomer she did very well, receiving 20% of the vote. She continues serving as Select Board Chair, Board of Health Chair, Wired West Representative and Emergency Management Director for her town. For a while she worked at the Big Y as cashier, but discovered that the hours interfered with her other commitments, thus she has resigned – although she loved her fellow employees, supervisors, and shoppers.

Noreen has built her own home in Middlefield, enjoys gardening, raising her six championship Scottish Terriers and new flock of chickens, two ducks, and two guinea fowl.

Her life is full and she is excited to be with the people of St. Paul's as Fr. Tom goes on sabbatical. She hopes to learn everyone's name and graciously requests that people do wear their name tags so she may name each of you at the altar when distributing communion. Should you need anything, please call at her home, 413-623-8788 or less predictable is her cell: 413-441-6989. In Middlefield there is mixed cell coverage and sometimes a message is not gotten until a few days later.

From the Director of the St. Paul's Children's Center

I am pleased to bring you up to date on recent updates to the Parish Hall.

In December, when the Early Education and Care Division of the Department of Education came to renew the Children's Center License to operate, it was mandated that the building be equipped with electrical CO2 detectors. I immediately contacted the Town Of Stockbridge Building Inspector and the Stockbridge Fire Chief to assist me in the right direction. From there I called Lee Audio and Security. We already have an alarm system that is maintained by this company. They immediately responded by sending someone out to explain what was needed.

So as of January 15, the work began to upgrade the fire alarm system as well as a CO2 detection system. These are both on a monitoring system that checks the working condition of the alarms through the phone lines. We are very proud and honored to say we have state of the art systems in place all due to the funds that were received by memorial donations to the Children's Center when Martha Muir unexpectedly passed away.

We are confident that Martha and her family would be very pleased that the funds were used in this manner. Martha was an avid "fan" of the Children's Center as well as the building that houses it.

Lisa Kane, Director

Pastoral Care

Pastoral care needs are coordinated through our Pastoral Care Team. You can call any of these people and get an attentive ear, arrange for a Home Communion or a hospital visit, discuss a variety of pastoral needs or reach one of the clergy.

The members of our Pastoral Care Team are

Donna Besaw	298.5213
Natalie Boyce	298.3443
Janet Jongste	637.1405
Mary Taylor	637.4169
Donna Touponce	413.717.5431

For urgent needs, please call the clergy directly

Tom Damrosch	298.4913	through April 29
Noreen Suriner	413.623.8788	home
	413.441.6989	cell (less predictable)
Mark Hatch	413-931-5298	work
	857-753-1127	mobile/voicemail
	413-591-8015	Skype