



November 3, 2014

Dear Friends,

What an exciting time at St. Paul's Church! Let me mention some highlights. Yesterday morning in our combined service at 9am, we commissioned the members of our Profile, Search and Transition committees (total membership: twenty three people) during our joyous All Saints Day celebration. Afterwards we came together in the Parish House to enjoy warmth and conversation over a delicious brunch.

The hardworking Profile Committee is completing its work. They have received important feedback from the self-study and produced a beautifully written document with a wonderful mix of the elements that give our church its distinction. It is now available on our website. Please have a look at the profile and explore the entire website: <http://www.stpaulsstockbridge.org>.

We are also looking forward to a festive celebration of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Tom's ordination on Tuesday, December 9 and to a goodbye brunch after the Sunday service on December 21. The December 28 service of Lessons and Carols, a favorite of mine, will be Tom's last service before he retires.

The self-study and our period of discernment have revealed many important themes. Loud and clear is the message that parishioners want to hire a full time priest. This expectation will require our being able to afford an appropriate compensation. There will be additional pressure on our budget as we move through the transition process in 2015-16. Although one option for meeting a projected shortfall between income and expenses is to dip into the principal of our endowment, this is not ideal. Of course, income can increase with successful fundraising, more membership and higher pledges. New folks are beginning to come to church and we have planned a new fundraising event.

So, I am hoping you will make as generous a pledge as you can. This is a special year. Please join with friends at church to do a little extra – baking cookies, helping with our Christmas projects, offering some volunteer time and, to the extent you are able, making a higher pledge.

Bill and I are increasing our giving this year. We look back at our forty years as members of St. Paul's Church and are grateful for so much. As they grew up, our children benefitted from the affectionate informality of St. Paul's and the attention of so many caring adults, including those at the Children's Center. I feel blessed to have connected with new friends at church and have loved knowing we watch out for one another. Sitting in church I have learned to listen, to be open to the word of God and to try and carry God with me throughout the week. St. Paul's has helped to guide me and keep me on course as a wife, as a mother, as a professional, and as a person.

To use a sailing analogy, I see St. Paul's Church as the rudder with God as the skipper of my boat. I have faith that I am not sailing alone and that if I watch the weather, trim the sails, and listen, I can handle any challenge, right my course and find a way to smooth sailing. Knowing my little boat has a reliable rudder has made all the difference to me and to our family. Please think about what St. Paul's means to you now, as well as your hopes for the future, and be as generous as possible. Many thanks.

Peace and love to you,

Vaunie Gaulty  
Senior Warden