



The Road to Damascus

December, 2014



Calendar

Dec. 20, 9:00. Altar Guild
Eucharist and meeting.

Dec. 21, 9:00. **One service**
followed by brunch. Church
decorating will follow brunch.

Dec. 24, 5:00 Christmas music.
5:30 Family Eucharist.

Dec. 25, 10:00. Eucharist with
Janet Zimmerman, celebrant,
Libby Wade, homilist, and Tom
Damrosch, organist.

Dec. 28, 10:00. **One service:**
Lessons and Carols with Holy
Communion.

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(pictured below)

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From the Rector

Thank you.

This time in Stockbridge has been the culmination
of my ministry as a priest and pastor.

Eight years ago, you welcomed Marthe and me into
your community of faith. Since then we have been
blessed to be part of a resilient, caring, loving
community of faith. You have supported us and
each other. The gifts raised up and nurtured here
have deepened all of our ministries within our
parish and to those in the world around us.

(More on page 2)



The parish family gathered recently to celebrate the
25th anniversary of Tom's ordination. Carl Casey gets a
hug after he and brother Gilbert delivered Irish
blessings. Also shown are Marthe Damrosch and Tom's
brother, David. Carl Sprague contributed an original
tribute in the style of Gilbert & Sullivan. See the lyrics
on page 3.

From the Rector (continued)

During this time, every member of St. Paul's has made unique contributions to our life together. We have grown in the process. And this has continued even as the parish has also conducted a capital campaign; done a self-study and entered into a search process and found an Interim Priest-in-Charge; and made dramatic progress in Mission and Outreach, Stewardship, Communications and more. And all of this while continuing critical work in areas as diverse as our St. Paul's Children's Center and our Friday morning Intercessory Prayers.

The final events of my ministry here are scheduled from December 21 through 28. After December 31, you will move on into the next chapter of your ministry and Marthe and I will begin a quieter chapter in ours, though that will also be exciting in new ways. I'm looking forward to experiences in new places as a retreat chaplain, a visiting priest, a supply organist and to travelling to and with friends and family. I will also continue to reflect on the life-changing learnings of my sabbatical in 2012.

Marthe and I are moving on with real sadness and awareness of loss. But we also have deep satisfaction and joy in all that we will take away with us.

Faithfully,

Tom and Marthe



A Jack of all trades



At the Sea of Galilee



In the Memorial Garden

Song for Tom

To the tune of Gilbert and Sullivan's
Model Major-General.

December 9, 2014

Written and performed by Carl Sprague



He is the very model of a priest (Episcopalian),
With talents musical, liturgical and even Thalian.
He's scaled our Berkshire summits, and some others quite Himalyan,
And so we're gathered here in celebration Saturnalian.

It's five and twenty years since Tom put on his alb and chasuble
Forsaking banking, mortgage interest and accounts payable
What Marthe said, I do not know, but I am sure it was quite choice...
Today we are assembled congregationally to rejoice.

He's heard our prayers and won our hearts and baptized quite a lot of us.
He's managed Sunday School and Altar Guild without a jot of fuss.
So at the risk of seeming just a bit sesquipedalian
He is the very model of a priest (Episcopalian).

Tom came to us almost ten years ago from Naples Florida.
Since then he's ridden up and down and up the "Berkshire Corridor"
He's shoveled snow...counted our dough...welcomed Gentile and Pharisee,
And done his best to keep the rest of us from sin and heresy.

For his sabbatical he made a trek quite Holy Grail-ian.
He travelled every corner of the globe but the Australian.
And can he preach a sermon? Oh you betcha! On the nail he can.
If we are lady Galatea, Tom is our Pygmalion.

We'll miss him much, his common touch is something we have come to love.
And there are moments when he seems to have descended...from above.
Tom's many things! he laughs! he sings! Angelic, yet mammalian!
We're glad he's been the rector of St. Paul's (Episcopalian).

Greetings from your soon-to-be Interim Priest-in-Charge!

As I will begin serving St. Paul's as Interim Priest-in-Charge on Tuesday, January 6, it seems appropriate to tell you a little about myself and what my duties will be in the transition time between Tom's retirement and the calling of your new "settled" Rector.

My husband Jim and I first visited St. Paul's in September 2012 while I was on sabbatical from Grace Church in Paducah, KY. We appreciated the welcome we received that Sunday. While I knew at the time that we would retire here and we had already bought a house in South Lee, the exact timing was still unclear. I retired from Grace at the end of May this year and we moved here permanently shortly after that and St. Paul's has continued to be a warmly welcoming place for us to worship when I'm not doing Sunday supply work in other churches. Participating in the Community Suppers at the Guthrie Center and joining a Foyer Group have helped us get to know people and develop more familiarity with the area.

People often ask why we chose to move north in retirement. There are numerous reasons, but chief among them was a desire to be closer to our children. Our older son lives in Melrose, MA. He is a professional musician and his wife is a writer and editor. Our younger son, a technology marketing manager, lives in Maplewood, New Jersey along with his wife and our delightful 4-year-old granddaughter. Our first visit to the Berkshires in 2010 was for a cousin's wedding in Great Barrington. We were enchanted by the area and figuring out that it is an easy drive to both Boston and Northern New Jersey made us that much more intent to move to the Berkshires. Both Jim and I grew up in Alabama and have lived all over the south, but we lived in North Dakota as newlyweds, so we're not strangers to snow!

I began ordained ministry in 1998 after graduating from the General Seminary in NYC. Prior to ordination, I worked as a lay staff member in the areas of music and Christian formation. As a lay staff member, I assisted with two periods of transition between rectors. As a priest, I served as part of an interim team in a church in Louisville, KY. Last year I completed the first half of the Interim Ministry Network's training for intentional interims. While I am not certified as an intentional interim, I do have some experience and training to bring to the work of transition ministry.

The work of a congregation during an Interim Period centers around five Focus Points: 1) Heritage (reviewing how the congregation has been shaped and formed), 2) Leadership (reviewing membership needs and the congregation's ways of organizing and developing new and effective leadership), 3) Mission (clarifying the faith community's identity and core values and perhaps working on some short-term goals), 4) Connections (strengthening diocesan and ecumenical relationships, as well as exploring opportunities for shared ministry among the South County Episcopal congregations), and 5) Future (preparing to receive your new rector). Reflecting on these five Focus Points helps a congregation answer the vital questions, "Who are we?", "Who are our neighbors?", and "What is God calling us to do and be in this time and place?"

In addition to the work that is particular to a time of transition, I am also charged to be pastor, priest, and teacher among you. I will preach and celebrate the Eucharist, call and visit newcomers or those with a pastoral need, work with the parish staff and lay leadership to ensure that administrative tasks are completed and assist in developing outreach and Christian formation for all ages.

I am grateful for the solid foundation already laid in this congregation and am excited by future possibilities as we begin to work together in the new year. My agreement with the vestry is for part-time ministry averaging about 20 hours a week. Normally, I will be in the office part of two days during each week and all but one Sunday a month. When not in the office, I may be reached at 270-519-6934 or libby_wade@yahoo.com. Jim and I have already met many of you, but we both look forward to getting to know you in new ways starting in January!



Blessings!
The Rev. Libby Wade

Mission and Outreach Projects

You will notice a small live Christmas tree in the front of the church. This little tree, which was donated by a parishioner, has two big roles to play.

First, it serves as a “giving tree” for families in need. Please take a ribbon off the tree, write your name item on the clipboard, purchase the item, wrap it, and return it with the ribbon. Working with Construct, Inc. we will be sure that the gifts arrive.

You can also take part in our annual program to raise money for the Food Pantry to purchase fresh fruit and vegetables during the winter months. Just drop \$3 or more in the box. Write your name or the name of a friend or loved one on one or more of the ornament tags and hang them on the tree. Your gift makes a big difference!

And last, but not least, the cookie sale raised more than \$400!

Update from the Stewardship Committee

As of December 10, we have already received pledges for 2015 of \$57,556 with a number of pledges still expected. The average pledge is around \$2,600.

A strong level of pledging for 2015 is important for the church to function effectively in a time of transition. A solid base of pledges also sets firm groundwork for the following year, which church financial leadership sees as being particularly challenging and which will likely require a substantial increase in the number or pledges, as well as the level of pledging.

We'll continue to receive pledges and will look forward to providing a final total when this process is completed. If anyone still needs a pledge card, they are available at church or through the office.

Offering envelopes are being prepared for those who have requested them. In addition, you may wish to consider the free bill paying service offered by most banks. Typically, if you make a certain number of electronic transactions a month banks will automatically send payments for you – such as a monthly pledge payment!

Your generosity and faithfulness are deeply moving.

Your Stewardship Team,
Bill Vogt, Tracy Johnson and Tom Damrosch