

The Road to Damascus

December, 2015



Calendar

Dec. 5 and 6: Cookie Sale

Dec. 6: Food Pantry Sunday

Dec. 10: Blue Advent (First
Congregational Church)

Dec. 13: Consecration Sunday.
9:00 service followed by brunch.

Dec. 17: Blue Advent (at St. Paul's)

Dec. 24: 5:30 p.m. Family
Christmas Eve service.

Dec. 24: 10:30 p.m. Sung
Christmas Eve Eucharist.

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a budget update**

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back!**

The Church That ...

What is the mission of St. Paul's? How do we reach out to our community? What is the best way to help? Those are questions that the Mission and Outreach Committee is asking. Bishop Fisher has challenged parishes to identify themselves as the "Church that does...." The idea is to identify and act on issues of community concern. To that end, the committee has been examining community needs and exploring how St. Paul's can respond.



Committee Chair Kendra MacLeod and Natalie Boyce review some of many ideas raised at a recent meeting.

Two meetings to date have narrowed a list of challenges brainstormed by 14 parishioners. The group will continue to seek parish input as it refines its goals and objectives. Current outreach opportunities include our annual Giving Tree to provide Christmas "wishes" to needy local families and a new Food Tree to support the Lee Food Pantry. Please see your weekly bulletin for more details. New participants are most welcome.

From Father Sam

Advent calls us to preparation for something good about to come—for the coming of the glory of God into our midst, as one of us. And I feel like we are also in a season of preparation for good things coming in the life of St. Paul's Church. All the signs point to a joyful new chapter of our life together:



- Many visitors and new members
- An emerging group of engaged teenagers
- A renewed interest in mission and outreach
- Plans to revitalize our interaction with children
- New collaborations with other faith communities in the Southern Berkshires
- Close and loving attention to our beautiful/historic building

There is a palpable feeling that **God wants to do new things here**. More than one of us has remarked about the sense of the Holy Spirit moving in our community. That is invigorating, but it can also be scary. With the call come several challenges: How we equip ourselves to be God's instruments; How we quiet the voices inside ourselves that don't believe we are up to the task; how we learn to respond to God with an enthusiastic, "Here we are, God; send us!"

Our Stewardship campaign this year comes later than we might have liked, due to other events on our communal calendar. But that complication brings with it the serendipity that we are thinking about our individual need to give back a portion of what God has so generously given us at the same time that we are preparing for the coming of Christ. (Please see the update below.)

Together, we can prepare for the coming of the Kingdom of God—and can be God's agents right here in Stockbridge and beyond. Praise to God for the opportunity to be reflections of God's glory!

- *Sam*

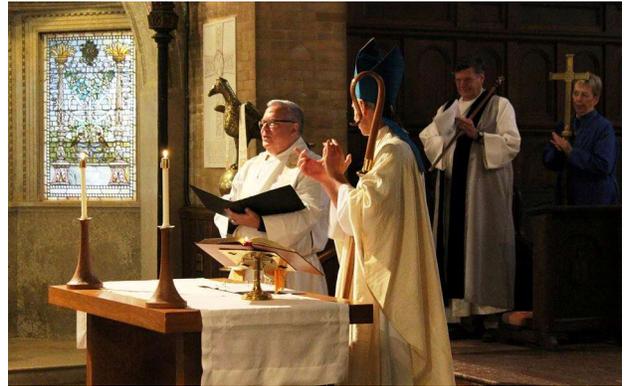
Finance Update

St. Paul's Finance Committee (Kendra MacLeod, Chair; John Davies, Linda Day, Father Sam, members) are pleased to report that our income and expenses for 2015 are mostly in line, with only a small deficit of \$8,000 anticipated at this point, due mostly to the one-time expenses of welcoming a new priest including unbudgeted \$10,000 in improvements to the rectory. Anticipating robust Christmas and end-of-year giving, we hope to come very close to closing that gap. The Committee is readying the 2016 budget, anticipating new programs and new opportunities for us to share the light of Christ in the new year. The budget suggests a \$20,000 gap between income and expenses. It is hoped that a successful stewardship campaign with many members "growing a step or two" in their estimates giving to St. Paul's will erase that difference and allow us to invest both in our church and broader community for the glory of God.

Celebration of a New Ministry at St. Paul's

October 24, 2015

With great joy the St. Paul's community plus family and friends of Sam Smith gathered on October 24 for the formal celebration of Sam's new ministry.



Above, the choir and Sam and Bishop Fisher during the service. Below, our "family portrait."



Our New Presiding Bishop

Michael Curry became the first person of color elected to that position on June 27 during the Church's General Convention in Salt Lake City. He was installed on Sunday, All Saints Day, in Washington National Cathedral. He was welcomed at the door of the cathedral, which is the seat of the presiding bishop, by Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori, who was the first woman elected to the position in 2006.

Among those at the service was Bishop Doug Fisher. "As I prayed in the magnificent National Cathedral during a three-hour service which featured incredible music from many traditions and rituals old and new, I realized why Michael Curry is a great gift to our church and to the world. He has the ability to bring together the immense diversity of cultures in common worship and in common mission," said Fisher.

"Michael's election is one more step in the on-going journey of racial justice and reconciliation," Fisher said.



Reaching Out to the Community

By Scott Camirand, Co-Chair of the Events and Community Awareness Committee

The newly formed St. Paul's Events and Community Awareness Committee is charged with overseeing the development and implementation of a plan to enhance visibility of our parish in the community.

Our team coordinated two very successful rummage sales during August and October that took advantage of increased foot traffic tied to local events. Beyond a strong profit realized, we were able to showcase the church to a host of visitors and local patrons.

We also coordinated a musical presentation by the NoMa NYC Ensemble in September (below) and plan to build on this experience for future similar events and lectures.



2015 will conclude with our annual cookie sale that coincides with the Stockbridge Main Street at Christmas celebration in December. Once again, we anticipate this will combine the potential for a profitable venture for St. Paul's with the opportunity to enhance our visibility in the community.

There are several exciting events being considered for the upcoming year and we will certainly afford ample notice to all as to assure maximum participation.

Consecration Sunday is Coming!

By Vaunie Graulty, Senior Warden

Congregations that approach financial stewardship from a biblical perspective do not view the money Christians give to their church merely as a way to pay its bills. Rather, such congregations see financial contributions as a way to help people grow spiritually in their relationship with God by supporting their church's mission and ministry with a percentage of their incomes.

St. Paul's Vestry has selected the *Consecration Sunday Stewardship Program* as a way to teach us biblical and spiritual principles of generous giving in our stewardship education emphasis this year.

Consecration Sunday encourages people toward proportionate and systematic giving in response to the question, "What percentage of my income is God calling me to give?"

***Consecration Sunday* will be December 13, and there will be one service only at 9:00 a.m. followed by a brunch in the Parish House. We are asking attendees and church members to make their financial commitments to our church's missionary, benevolent, and educational ministries in this community and around the world.**

During our Ingathering of Estimates of Giving for 2016, The Rev. Jim Burns, our guest preacher, will conduct a brief period of instruction and inspiration, climaxed by members making their commitments as a confidential act of worship.

Every member who completes an Estimate of Giving card does so voluntarily. This process is done in a way that no one feels embarrassment if he or she does not fill out a card. There will be no home solicitation to ask people to fill out cards, and there will be no follow-up visits. We want *Consecration Sunday* to inform and inspire our community.



The “Side Windows” are Back

By Carl Sprague

I'm sure we're all glad to see the return of the side windows in the apse, which flank our Lafarge window of St. Paul. These windows were commissioned in 1959 as memorials to the Cary and Musgrave family. They depict four scenes in the life of St. Paul - who is readily recognizable by the red cloak he wears - matching the central Lafarge image.



Back in 2014 John Misci of Misci Art Glass in Revere, MA recommended that they should be removed and rebuilt with new lead. The Vestry agreed to undertake this project as part of our Capital Campaign.

The windows were removed and transported to Misci's studio where he documented and traced the windows and soaked them in a mild soap solution to loosen old paint, dirt and putty. John rebuilt the windows with all new high alloy

lead (below right). The windows were re-grouted and new supports were added.

This project began in January 2015 and took until October - about the same time it took us to search for and find our new priest! John returned the windows to the church and set them back in place (below) just in time for the Bishop's visit to install Sam as our new Priest-in-Charge.



John had several observations to make about the initial

construction of the windows, which he considered to be poor - and about a certain lack of coordination in terms of their original design and execution. He said that the original builders had resorted to using unusually tiny fragments of glass in their effort to follow the artist's layout. Some of these pieces ended up being buried

invisibly in the leading. This may explain why these two windows, which are actually some of the most recent in our collection, came to be in such sad shape, while our older Tiffany and LaFarge windows are apparently quite solid.

