



St. Paul's Episcopal Church Walnut Creek, CA

The Epistle

MAY 2009

How Much Longer—O Lord?

Today is the hottest day I've experienced this year—my truck thermometer said 102 degrees (but it came down to 94 after a while). Just a few days ago I was complaining about it being cold and how the roses hadn't bloomed yet because they were confused. And today, I walked into the courtyard and the rose arbor over the bench was really starting to pop!

Sometimes it just feels good to be whiney and cranky (you know, like when you pick at a scab?), but sometimes we get so whiney and cranky that we don't know how to get past it. I was in conversation with the Bishop in preparation for his visit with us and we were talking about the mood of the diocese. I'd been to a few meetings and noted that there are people in the diocese who are cranky about a lot of things.

It may be just a symptom of the huge problems that are staring us in the face like 11.1 % unemployment and the high numbers of people losing their homes—the Bishop and I concluded that the state of the nation is directly proportional to the level of crankiness we are seeing.

So, how can we help? How can we as a people of hope be helpful to those in our midst who are experiencing all this anxiety? We can best help by doing things like:

1. Being prayer for specific people we know who are suffering in mind, body or spirit



2. By keeping our own anxieties in check by continually looking to Jesus Christ as a partner

3. Taking time to inventory our activities and cut back on and/or eliminate those actions that are interfering with our sense of peace and joy

4. Look for ways to be hopeful each time you encounter negative news

I heard a great saying the other day: "don't let a good crisis go to waste!" No problem is a waste if we learn from it. The good news is that all the

problems we are facing right now will be gone in a few years and we'll look back and marvel at how resilient we are! If we are wise, the problems will be gone because we are learning a lot from the situation in which we find ourselves.

You see our famous flower growing out of the rock in the picture? It's a small reminder that even the harshest environments can produce wonderful results. God is with us and all will be well, and all will be well and all matter of things will be well. AMEN.

Blessings,

Rev. Sylvia

Deacon's Bench

— Don Adolphson

My parents met and farmed in NW Iowa in the early 1920's. They lived outside of Albert City, a really small town with three Protestant Churches. Unless you were a member in one of them, you could not get credit at any store or have much of a social life. As my father's Swedish heritage was very anti church they soon moved to a city which had less intense views on church membership.

Walnut Creek in 2009 is quite different from Albert City Iowa in the 1920's. We, as members of a church, are a distinct and small minority. Living in a very secular society can create unexpected obstacles to those who want to grow in their spirituality. We live with an over abundance of distractions. Some of them just make our lives more comfortable. Some entertain us. We live with perpetual distractions – sports, sit-coms, talk shows, 24 hr news and weather, etc... Our computers, I-pods and cell phones offer an almost infinite opportunity to pursue knowledge, entertainment, and communication. We can work endless hours a day. All this activity can produce in us a busyness to such an extent that we are often just plain exhausted. The beauty of our connection with God gets blurred.

What do we do, as Henri Nouwen puts it, when “we are too busy to read the Gospels, too restless to have spiritual thoughts, too depressed to find words for God or too exhausted to do anything.?” “To grow in our spirituality” rarely shows up on many “to-do” lists.

I can find only one answer to deal with these obstacles to one's desire for Spiritual depth. Prayer.

But what kind of prayer? Again Henri Nouwen's answer is interesting and reassuring- even surprising. He writes “My time apart is not a time of deep prayer, nor a time in which I experience a special closeness to God; it is not a period of serious attentiveness to the divine mysteries. I wish it were! On the contrary, it is full of distractions, inner restlessness, sleepiness, confusion, and boredom. It seldom, if ever, pleases my senses. But the simple fact of being for one hour in the presence of the Lord and of showing Him all that I feel, think, sense, and experience, without trying to hide anything, must please Him. Somehow, somewhere, I know that He loves me, even though I do not feel that love as I can a human embrace, even though I do not hear a voice as I hear human words of consolation, even though I do not see a smile, as I can see on a human face. Still God speaks to me, looks at me, and embraces me there, where I am still unable to notice it.”

Are there some of you who are interested in how one can grow a deeper Christian spirituality in our secular society? If so, let one of the clergy know. With a positive response, Spiritual Growth programs will be designed, and offered to the members as well to the unchurched who yearn for ways to deepen their relationship with God.

One never knows what may come of this desire for deeper unity with one another and with our Lord.

Thank You Prayer Chain

Rhea, the office volunteer this morning, just received a call from an elated DJ, the daughter of Fred. Fred was in the hospital in what his family thought was his last few days and the St. Paul's Prayer Team visited and prayed over and for him. DJ said the prayers gave her father a great deal of peace and the next day he was much better.

In fact, the doctors found no sign of fibrillation and plan to send him home in a few days!

The family wanted to make sure that the Prayer Team knew of their gratitude for the extra time they have with Fred and the peace and comfort your prayers brought to all of them. They said there was “something special about St. Paul's.”

THANK YOU FOR BRINGING THE POWER OF PRAYER TO PEOPLE IN NEED!

With Gratitude

—Whitney Wilson

On many occasions, I have explained to people that I often “get more” from the kids, than I could possibly be “giving” to them during our Sunday School class time. On Good Friday, it happened again. During the 4pm Good Friday family service, there was a time after the story that I tried to answer some of the kids' questions that they had about Holy Week. Some of these questions, included “How did Jesus die?” “Why did they choose Barabas” and even more interesting was “Why did Jesus die?” These are the questions that we stop asking ourselves as adults. We get lulled into the routine of the Holy Week readings, sermons, prayers, and hymns. But these questions, rather simple but oh so complex, are the ones they we should examine over and over again. And when a child asks you for the answer, it makes you truly examine your assumed answers. Kids have a great way of making us answer those questions that we so long ago have stopped asking. This is how God often gives me the gift of grace. Because in these moments, I find a

voice that I had forgotten about and sometimes, in those really rare moments, I get the amazing privilege of being a voice for the Holy Spirit. I know that the words are not mine but only given to me to teach others that will come after me. It is truly a privilege to be part of that.

Sunday School Program

—Whitney Wilson

As of June 1st, I will be taking a step back from being the active administrator of the Godly Play program and Family Ministries. We are looking to set up a committee to run the Children's programs and need a few more volunteers. Please look over the following list and see if there is a place that you can share your talents with the children of St. Paul's. Feel free to email me (Whitney Wilson) or call me if you have any questions.

1. Teaching Coordinator:

- Plan Quarterly schedule of stories and teachers
- Recruit Teachers
- Schedule Training for new teachers
- Send weekly emails reminding teachers of their assignments

2. Childcare Coordinator:

- Oversight of the nursery – get substitutes when necessary
- Verify pay sheets for nursery helpers (youth group members)
- Schedule childcare for special events

3. Special Services and Events Coordinator:

- Assist with Holy Week Family Service
- Assist with Easter Family service
- Assist with Christmas Eve Family service
- Organize and Plan Advent Festival

4. Children's Ministry Committee Chair:

- Write monthly Epistle articles
- Write monthly Vestry reports
- Write Sunday bulletin notices, as needed
- Coordinate with the Children and Youth Vestry member
- Schedule meetings for the Children's Ministry Committee

5. Family Ministries Coordinator

- Plan three Family Fellowship dinner a year
- Coordinate 2-3 parent Forums a year
- Assist, as needed, MOMS and DADS groups

Thanks...

• To Sharon Schlagel and Susan Mendes for leading our Good Friday Family Service.

• to Tina Whittington, Giles Hinchliff, and Patty West for leading the childrens choirs on Easter Sunday.

MOMS Tea Party

Linda Banwell kindly invited all the Moms (with children at home) to her home for a tea party on Saturday, May 2nd at 2pm. This was a wonderful time to sit and enjoy some adult (Mom) conversation and yummy treats. Many thanks to Linda Banwell and Whitney Wilson.

Pentecost Picnic

The Pentecost Picnic is back! Please join us May 31 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on the lawn near the youth center for food, games and fellowship. Hot dogs, hamburgers and lemonade will be provided. Please bring a side dish or dessert to share. Although there will be several tables and chairs, we recommend bringing lawn chairs and picnic blankets for lawn seating. The youth group will provide games such as potato sack races, giant bubble makers and sidewalk chalk for kids and kids at heart. Look for an upcoming Evite or sign up in the parish hall on May 10, 17 or 24. Questions? Contact Laurie Suda or Marianne Johnson at youthandyoungadult@stpaulswc.org.

Eastertide Checklist

In these turbulent and uncertain times it may be therapeutic to focus on some tasks that are clearly within our personal control.

In the dawning light of Easter we acknowledge that our earthly journeys will one day come to an end. Besides making each passing day more precious, this realization also prompts us to take steps to express our love for those we leave behind. Here is a checklist of six items that we owe it as stewards to Our Risen Lord — as well as to loved ones — to complete:

1. Advanced Healthcare Directive (Power of Attorney for Healthcare and Living Will)— so that when we are incapacitated, it's clear to doctors, family and friends who we wish to make medical decisions for us. Also, so that they may see in writing our clear wishes regarding circumstances in which we do not wish our lives to be artificially prolonged.
2. Power of Attorney for Finances — so that someone can step in and pay our bills and manage our affairs when we cannot.
3. Will or Trust — so that our earthly goods are distributed as we would have them distributed. This also requires being intentional regarding beneficiaries of retirement plans and insurance policies as well as titling of property and accounts. (See the Book of Common Prayer, page 454, regarding bequests.)

4. Funeral or Memorial Arrangements — so that our survivors and priest may know our wishes not only for disposition of our mortal remains but also the content of the worship service celebrating our life.
5. Final Instructions For Family and Friends — so that our immediate survivors can locate our vital papers including deeds, insurance policies, bank, investment and retirement accounts as well as our wishes regarding final arrangements.
6. Ethical Will — so that our closest survivors may hear words from us of what they have meant to us as well as our hopes for them and for our world.

For forms and more information, visit www.Episcopal-Gift.org or call the Gift Planning Officer at 415.869.7812. I will be happy to assist you.

The Rev. Richard L. Schaper, CFP

Gift Planning Officer, Diocese of California



Senior Group Tours Oakland Cathedral, Planning for Next Year

— Betsy Gonzalez

On Wednesday, April 15, nine St. Paul's parishioners and myself traveled to Oakland and toured the newly opened Catholic Cathedral of Christ the Light. Our docent Janet was marvelous as she led us through the modern yet ancient structure, which truly lives up to its name — light everywhere!

Janet also told us about new additions in store during the next year including a new organ which will use wooden pipes and a statue of Mary done by the same artist who created the corpus over the pulpit and the bronze Stations of the Cross which line the sanctuary walls at eye level. As a group, we decided that returning next spring to see the changes is a must.

But this was not the first field trip of the Senior Group at St. Paul's. In the fall we visited The Museum of the San Ramon Valley to see their Christmas Memories exhibit and in March we visited the Bedford Gallery to view the PostSecret exhibit.

Indeed, we have been gathering throughout the year for discussions varying from prayer to Buddhism to the history of our liturgy.

Now, as the program year begins to wind down and as my time at St. Paul's is coming to a close, we are looking to the future and what programming we are interested in carrying into the summer and our next program year.

We are also hoping to answer the question of how this ministry can continue its momentum of the last two years. How can we avoid having to “reboot” this ministry every year, as one parishioner asked.

So, please bring your ideas of topics to explore and local events to attend along with a sandwich to our last First Thursday of the year on May 7. We will gather for Eucharist in the chapel at 12:15 p.m. and then have a working lunch in the conference room until about 1:30 p.m. Drinks and fruit will be provided.

If you have any questions, please email me at bgonzalez@stpaulswc.org or call St. Paul's at 934-2324

Vacation Bible School

Subject: VBS at Church of the Resurrection, August 10-14 - Save the date and register early to save \$20

Vacation Bible School is coming back to the Episcopal Church of the Resurrection from August 10-14. Our theme this year is “Crocodile Dock”. Get ready for the Sing & Play Swamp Stomp, Crawfish Crafts, a wild Snack Shack, crazy Gator Games and a whole lot more. We're going to sing, play and pray our way into Gods' swampy kingdom this summer. To sign-up, just go to www.resurrectionph.org, look for the VBS page, print out the registration form and return it to the church. The cost is \$65 per child if you sign up by June 30 (cheaper than last year!) and \$85 per child if you sign up after June 30. (The price drops by \$10 child for each additional sibling).

If you have any questions call the church at 925-685-2288 or contact Rev. Stephen McHale at mchalesd@gmail.com. We also need plenty of volunteers to help put together this joyful event, so please contact me if you're interested in helping out.

St. Paul's Garden Tour

— Charles Couch

Great weather, beautiful gardens and great people all made the St. Paul's Garden Tour a success. Nearly 100 people bought tickets, and close to 90 toured the gardens on a sunny day. The church gardens as the first feature on the tour was a wonderful opportunity to reach out to the community with a beautiful face and a hospitable

welcome, and it worked. The tour went on to include the four private gardens of the Bolton, Phalen, Ingraham, and Couch families. All the gardens were in their spring prime and reflected the hard work and planning that went into their preparation.

The Tour netted over \$2000 for the support of the parish property. No small part of that was possible because St. Paul's received the donations of outstanding professional design skills of Brian Imhoff and the Smyths' top quality printing work. The brochures, tickets and informational materials were so beautiful they made this tour stand out in a season of garden events.

If It's Heaven, it Must be Family Camp!

— Peter Smyth

Where can you go to be with your most favorite people in the world? And where can you go where there are kids galore for your kids to play with, and parents galore to help supervise? And where can you get relaxing days in the redwoods, your own personal river, not to mention Frog Island?

Of course, the answer is Family Camp.

St. Paul's Family Camp is open to all members of St. Paul's, and we invite you to come, especially if you haven't been here before.

Camp starts on July 19 (Sunday) and ends on August 1 (Saturday); you can attend for one day, a few days, the middle weekend, or the entire two weeks, or something in between. The camp is located on private property provided by the Morton's, in between Garberville and Redway. That's about four hours north on Highway 101, and the camp is situated on the banks of the Eel River.

You don't have to plan the meals. You don't have to buy the food—we have a community kitchen where volunteers do meal preparation and cleanup (yes, you do need to do one chore a day, but then the rest of the time is yours).

The result: time to relax, visit, do field trips, maybe play cards, or sing around the campfire (especially after we sing Good Night Children!).

We invite you to come share a slice of heaven. We are hosting an all parish breakfast on May 24 and everyone is invited. Registration begins that day. Stay tuned for further information!



COOKIES

We need homemade cookies for the Kairos May weekend at the California Medical Facility, Vacaville.

Cookies need to be firm so they do not fall apart or crumble. They are to be 2-4 inches across. Typical recipes include chocolate chip, peanut butter, oatmeal, and chocolate drop. Nuts, raisins, and chocolate chips are okay in the cookie, but NOT ON TOP. Please, NO sugar, sprinkles, or frosting on top. And NO pan type bars such as brownies or lemon squares.

Package the cookies with only a dozen to a quart size plastic, "press" lock bags, not bags with "zippers" on them.

Bring them to church on the Sunday before the May 22-25 weekend. The members of the team from St. Paul's will be going up to Vacaville on Friday morning. They will go by the church on their way to Vacaville and pick up your cookies from the Parish Hall freezer.

Questions? Call Carol Glass @ 939-4521

Celebrating Creation,
the Episcopal Ecological Network in the Diocese of Northern California,
invites you to

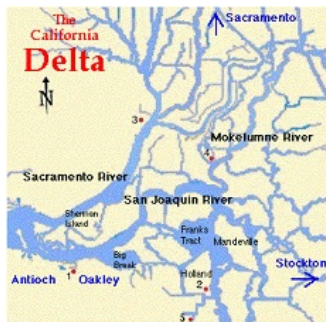
A Day in the Delta

Saturday, May 16, 2009
10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Brannan Island State Park
17645 State Highway 160
Rio Vista, CA



Our day will include

- Welcome and introduction to the Delta from Amy Rhodes of Discover the Delta
- Wisdom on Delta ecology from Dan Odenweller, retired fisheries biologist and member of St. Anne's, Stockton
- Networking with environmentally concerned people from the three dioceses which meet in the Delta: San Joaquin, Northern California, and California
- Local, seasonal treats
- Suggestions for extending your day exploring the environmental, agricultural and cultural riches of the Delta



Please
Carpool. This will save on green house gases as well as money. Per auto day use fee at Brannan Island State Park is \$6.00 per vehicle. Bring sun protection; a sandwich or alternative (we'll have additional eats and drinks); your refillable water bottle. Leave behind dogs and alcoholic beverages. (They aren't allowed in the park.) RSVP to Phina Borgeson if you are coming. <phinaborgeson@sbcglobal.net>

"The greatest threat to the Delta's future is its invisibility."
Jane Wolff in Delta Primer.



Vestry

To join a team, contact the Vestry Liaison listed.

Senior Warden	Mike Siebert (12)	seniorwarden@stpaulswc.org
People's Warden	Tom Tcheng (11)	juniorwarden@stpaulswc.org
CFO	Jerry Williams	cfo@stpaulswc.org
Clerk	Julie Aspden	clerkofthevestry@stpaulswc.org

Ministry Teams

Administration	Mike Siebert (12)	administration@stpaulswc.org
Adult Formation	Sherry Mattern (10)	adulthoodeducation@stpaulswc.org
Children, Youth, Young Families	Laurie Suda (10)	youthandyoungadults@stpaulswc.org
Communication	Marianne Orton (12)	youthandyoungadults@stpaulswc.org
Epistle Editor	Amanda Szakats (11)	communication@stpaulswc.org
Liturgy & Music	Emily Banwell (10)	epistle@stpaulswc.org
Membership	Michael Kus (11)	liturgyandmusic@stpaulswc.org
Outreach	Jim Bell (12)	membership@stpaulswc.org
	Sherry Mattern, assisting	outreach@stpaulswc.org
	Savannah Amerson, assisting	
Parish Life	Julie Layne (12)	parishlife@stpaulswc.org
Pastoral Care	Linnea Jessup (10)	pastoralcare@stpaulswc.org
Property	Jim Bell (12)	property@stpaulswc.org
Stewardship	Savannah Amerson (11)	stewardship@stpaulswc.org

**St. Paul's Episcopal Church
1924 Trinity Avenue
Walnut Creek CA 94596**

TIME DATED MATERIAL
PLEASE DELIVER PROMPTLY
Address Correction Requested

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. Postage PAID
Walnut Creek, CA 94596
Permit No. 123

Rector

The Rev. M. Sylvia O. Vásquez *svasquez@stpaulswc.org*

Assisting Clergy

The Rev. George C. L. Ross *gcross@stpaulswc.org*

Deacon

The Rev. Donald Adolphson *dadolphson@stpaulswc.org*

Deacon

The Rev. Margaretmary Staller *mbstaller@stpaulswc.org*

Facilities Coordinator

Bill Ennis *bennis@stpaulswc.org*

Godly Play Coordinator

Whitney Wilson *GodlyPlay@stpaulswc.org*

Seminarians

Ricardo Avila *ravila@stpaulswc.org*

Betsy Gonzalez *bgonzalez@stpaulswc.org*

Parish Administrator

Ti Klingler *tiklingler@stpaulswc.org*

