



St. Paul's Episcopal Church Walnut Creek, CA

The Epistle

SEPTEMBER 2009

A Season of Transition

Again? We're changing something again? When is all this transition ever going to end?!!

With the addition of our newest staff member, Associate for Ministries—Kate Nauer, our open staff positions have been filled—YAY! When I stop to reflect on it, our parish has been in transition since Bob Reynolds retired as rector in 2005. Since that time, we have gone through many transitions among the staff leadership; admittedly, some of the changes happened more smoothly than others. Some might say that is an understatement!

Any change is stressful—even good change (just ask anyone who's planned a wedding!) and perhaps we've experienced more than our share of transitions. Yet, in the midst of all the changes there are significant constants—one clear stabilizing force has been our faith in God's presence with us. I can't emphasize enough how much God wants us to fulfill God's purpose for us. It is God's abiding love and power which has given us the capacity to flourish in the midst of the several issues we have faced over the last four years, and more so in the last 12 months.

God's loving presence is manifested in many ways that are clear. One way I see God's presence is in the leadership of the vestry—our core words for the year are “Positive, Collaborative, and Passionate” and the vestry has exemplified those words through all the situations we've had to navigate. Our Senior Warden Mike Siebert and Junior Warden Tom Tchong have also been magnificent in their council to me and in their interactions with parish members.

The other truly stabilizing force in our parish is our cadre of volunteers—and it is abundantly clear that their love for God is the impetus for the many hours they give in service to our church. We have a LARGE group of people in our church who are very committed to the future of our parish. These folks have seen the parish go through many, many changes (staff and otherwise)



and yet are confident that this is the place where they can accomplish the work that God has given them to do.

We have an amazing sense of community here—a place where faith in God is deep, commitment is deep, relationships are deep and where concern for each other is demonstrated in how we treat one another. I am reminded of a particular situation where one of our single moms was in need of a night off and two folks

came out to watch her children so she could go to the movies. I know of another person who needed some relief from caring for a sick mother and again, generous folks volunteered to sit with her several times until more regular care could be scheduled.

We have a lot of people in our community who care deeply about this manifestation of Christ's Body we call St. Paul's Episcopal Church. Hundreds of caring souls who will not allow this church to be anything less than the loving community it is. Wow—what a gift, what a blessing!

What is ahead for us—where do we go from here? The thing that is difficult for most people to deal with is that the only real constant in the universe is that things change. So as we begin our program year some things will continue (Godly Play, Youth Group, Adult Formation series, Mission trips, clean up days, Outreach, etc.) and other things will be added (Advocacy and Justice, Young Adult participation, Youth-led worship, telling our stories in one on one interviews, long term strategic planning, a new vision statement, etc). Only God know what else the future will bring—that's for sure.

In the midst of whatever happens here—remember the constants in the swirl of change—remember God's love for us and remember our commitment to God, to one another, and to God's St. Paul's Episcopal Church.

Blessings,

Rev. Sylvia

From the Deacon's Bench

— Don Adolphson

This is the most powerful part of a letter written on September 29, 1830 by Richard Oastler, a Methodist layman.

“It is the pride of Britain that a slave cannot exist on her soil. Let truth speak out, appalling as this fact is true: Thousands of our fellow creatures and fellow-subjects, both male and female, are existing in a state of slavery, more horrid than are the victims of that hellish system, ‘colonial’ slavery. Thousands of little children, principally female, from age seven to fourteen years, are daily compelled to labour from six o’clock in the morning to seven in the evening, with only (Britons, blush while you read this) with only thirty minutes allowed for eating and recreation. Vow, one by one, vow together, vow with heart and voice, vow eternal enmity against oppression by your brethren’s hands: Vow till man nor woman, under Britain’s laws, nor son nor daughter, born within her empire, shall buy, or sell, or HIRE, or BE A SLAVE.”

The entire letter was published in the Leeds England Mercury. Upon reading it, John Hobhouse, a member of Parliament, quickly introduced a bill that would: a) forbid the hiring of children under nine b) eliminate night work for children, and c) limit work hours to ten a day. A greatly modified bill, with no teeth, was eventually passed. Dissatisfied, Richard went to work. He organized. He inspired. He learned how Parliament worked. He rallied other Christians, including John Wesley, and he eventually got a stronger bill – one enforced by strong penalties. However, it only covered one industry. Now aroused, more and more Christians joined the battle for broader legislation. In 10 years all child labor was eliminated in British industry. This story makes me proud of those Christians in England who brought life, freedom, improved health and education to hundreds of thousands of children. Interestingly, the factory owners also won. They were forced into making innovations that soon brought them more profits than they had when employing children. Every one won.

But why put this historical event in the Epistle?

I am confident there are people in our congregation who see injustices. Perhaps God is calling them to bring justice to victims of injustice. What holds them back from taking action? I think it is partly a leadership issue. Most of our members are familiar with our Vestry, and the ar-

reas they lead — Outreach, Evangelism, Property, etc. Perhaps there needs to be one labeled “Justice”. “Wait a minute” some might think. “Justice is a political thing, and is best put on the government’s agenda.” These thoughts leads one to ask the challenging question, Was Jesus Political?. Would Jesus vote “yes” for a Vestry “Justice” chair? Could it be that Richard Oastler was successful because an upset compassionate Jesus worked with him to bring justice to 1000’s of British children? Where would Jesus see injustice in our society? .Would Jesus be



anxious at the reductions in the quality of our children’s education because of the huge amount of money California spends to protect us from the largest prison population in the country? Would Jesus be angry at the severe crowded conditions resulting from the huge number of incarcerations? While certainly, Jesus is pleased to see the efforts many at St . Paul’s make to feed the hungry and house the homeless, but would He help us learn what changes could be made in our so-

cial system that would seriously reduce the number of homeless and hungry in Walnut Creek?

When we think about contemporary injustices, it is easy to mentally cringe with the excuse “I am just one person.”. I wonder what enabled Richard Oastler to overcome the judgment that he was powerless. While his passion clearly enabled him to write his letter, there had to be more to obtain his goal of permanently changing child labor’s evil practices. He must have realized that he needed a large enough group with the talents and experience to design a workable plan that that could apply sufficient moral pressure on those in power.

Can you hang in there for a few more words?

So, is anything happening or is it just musing and words? Yes! Baby steps, but more than a crawl. There has been a brief, but quite powerful, contact with members of St. Timothy and St John’s Clayton. Some of these people are off to deeper training in organization and leadership in November in Hawaii. There is still room for others!

What do you think? What do you feel? You will find eager ears when you share your thoughts and feelings with me or Rev. Sylvia.



The First Christmas – Parable or Fact?

There's a traditional nativity story most of us know, and it involves a manger in Bethlehem, a star, and adoring shepherds. But has history has biased our reading of the nativity story?

Come hear Dr. John Dominic Crossan speak about "The First Christmas and What the Gospels Really Teach about Jesus' birth."

Presented by:

St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 1924 Trinity Ave, Walnut Creek, CA 94597

The program schedule is as follows: December 18, 19 & 20

- Lecture 1 Fri 7:30-9:00 pm: The World of the Christmas Stories
6:30-7:30 pm: registration, reception & book signing
- Lecture 2 Sat 9:00-10:30 am: The Christmas Stories as Parabolic Overtures
Registration & Continental Breakfast begins at 8:00 a.m.
- Lecture 3 Sat 11:00-12:30 pm: The Model of Moses in Matthew's Christmas Story
Lunch 12:30-1:30 pm
- Lecture 4 Sat 1:30-3:00 pm: The Light of Peace in Luke's Christmas Story

2 Sermons Sunday 7:30 and 10:00 am, Adult Forum between services at 9:00 am

Student and Young Adult Package: Lecture 4 Sat 1:30-3:30 pm + Discussion forum with Dr. Crossan at 4:00 pm.

Unplug from hectic holiday shopping and come hear about the true meaning of Christmas -- The Christmas story, read in its original context, is far richer and more challenging than people imagine.

Dr. Crossan, professor emeritus of religious studies at DePaul University, has written 20 books on the historical Jesus in the last 30 years. He has been a frequent guest on prime time television including such programs as: PBS' Frontline Series, "From Jesus to Christ;" ABC's "Primetime Special with Diane Sawyer on Mel Gibson's Film, The Passion of the Christ, NBC's Dateline, "The Last Days of Jesus;" and ABC's "Peter Jennings Reporting: The Search for Jesus." He is a former co-chair of the Jesus Seminar and a former chair of the Historical Jesus Section of the Society of Biblical Literature, an international scholarly association for biblical study based in the United States.

Dr. Crossan has become a familiar figure in the public debate over who Jesus was and what he means for us today. His book, *The First Christmas: What the Gospels Really Teach About Jesus' Birth* (written with Marcus Borg) will be available for purchase in the St. Paul's bookstore.

To register, go to St. Paul's Website www.stpaulswc.org.

Sign up now through September 30th and pay only \$50 for the series

Early Registration Extension: I will notify Acceptiva to extend through August.

Nominating Committee Provisions of Bylaws

4.2 Tasks of the Nominating Committee. At the first vestry meeting in November of each year, the Nominating Committee shall present a slate of candidates for election to the vestry and election as delegates/alternates to the Diocesan Convention. The Committee shall submit at least one candidate, and preferably two, per vacancy to be filled on the vestry. Parish members wishing to serve as candidates may submit their names to the Committee before October 15 and if they are eligible under Section 4.3 of these Bylaws, their names will be included on the slate. Members of the congregation may submit names to the committee sixty days before the parish meeting date as well, and with those persons' agreement and eligibility under Section 4.3, their names will also appear on the slate. The slate shall be published to the parish at least forty-five days before the annual parish meeting.

During the month of September this section of the Bylaws, plus Section 4.3, shall be published at least once in the Epistle (monthly Parish newsletter) and in the parish Announcement Sheet (weekly information leaflet).

(Amended by the congregation at the Annual Meeting January 21, 1996)

4.3 Eligibility of Nominees. All nominees for election as vestry members or delegates/alternates to the Diocesan Convention shall be communicants in good standing registered in the parish for at least one year, age eighteen or over, and regular contributors to the support of the parish as confirmed by the pledge treasurer.

A retiring or resigning vestry member may not again serve on the vestry until one year has elapsed, except that a member completing less than two years of service may be elected for a full term. Incumbent delegates/alternates

to Diocesan Convention may again be nominated

and elected as delegates/alternates on expiration of their terms.

(Amended by the congregation at the Annual Meeting January 27, 2008)



My Spanish Village Up And Running

As many of you have observed, My Spanish Village, after months of preparation, began school on Monday, August 10. Thirty students are enrolled and attending regularly in the facilities formerly occupied, until five years ago, by the St. Pauls Pre-School.

My Spanish Village was the dream of Ita Perez, Director. She had been operating a day care center in her home. She heard about our vacant facility from a St. Pauls parishioner who had a child enrolled in the day care center. Negotiations with St. Paul's resulted in a three year rental contract to operate here. Major renovations, repairs and updating were required. Much was done by St. Paul's volunteers (profound thanks to all St. Paul's folks who worked so long and diligently to make our facilities acceptable) And our special thanks to the St. Paul's Member, who wishes to remain anonymous, for the gift of \$2000 to help defray St. Paul's costs in getting the site ready. And much more by Ita, her husband Robert, and their crew. The playground was completely renovated with landscaping, new equipment, and a fresh layer of tanbark. The classrooms were painted and redecorated. Old sheds were torn down and new ones erected. Old furnishing, equipment and materials had to be removed to make room for new. A sports floor was installed in the courtyard. Signs have been placed on the street and at the office. New fire detection and alarm systems have been installed. Electrical and plumbing work was required. Permits and licenses were obtained. Insurance, rental contract and other regulatory matters were dealt with....and so much more.

My Spanish Village is run by Ita Perez, Director, and her husband, Robert Smith, Administrator. Ita and Robert are natives of Peru, Ita was born in the city of Arequipa, in the south, and Robert in Trujillo, in the north. Ita has a bachelors degree of pre-primary education and has earned the professional title of Licentiate in pre-primary education. Both of these degrees were obtained at Antenor Orrego University in Peru. She has also taken many classes in the United States and has achieved the required teaching credentials. Ita and Robert have been

in the United States for five years and have two daughters, Andrea, 13, and Arianna, 5. Ita's interests are gardening (heads up, Fred Bolton!), travel, and making jewelry. Robert likes futbol (we call it soccer) and music.

Ita and Robert are joined by a staff of six teachers: Jessica Duran, Pilar Gorrio, Maria Elena Herrera, Gloria Martinez, Fidela Molina, and Susana Vargas.

The goal of My Spanish Village is to immerse English speaking students in Spanish while they are attending the pre-school. Most of the conversation you will hear from the children is in Spanish. The results have been very good and the references we checked out gave outstanding recommendations.

It is a joy to see our facility renovated and alive with children and teachers again. The rental income St. Paul's receives will help us to meet our budget goals. We hope St. Paul's children will attend the pre-school and that My Spanish Village families will come to St. Paul's.

On Sunday, September 20, following both the 7:30 and 10:00 A. M. services, our coffee hour will be held in the pre-school courtyard. This will be an opportunity for My Spanish Village parents, children and teachers to meet St. Paul's members and visitors. Rev. Sylvia will lead the procession directly from the services to the courtyard, followed by the congregation, and will formally bless the facilities. We hope all of you will join in this celebration.

Because of regulations and laws, we are not allowed to visit the pre-school or playground area during hours of operation (Monday through Friday, 7 A.M. to 6 P. M.) unless we have gone through background checks and finger printing by the police department. This is a law that applies to all pre-schools.

Welcome, My Spanish Village, to St. Paul's community.



Write A Will for \$75

You may fulfill "the duty of every person to have a will" (Book of Common Prayer, p. 445) by making an appointment to meet with an attorney at St. Mark's, Palo Alto on September 19 or St. Mark's, Berkeley on September 26. For an appointment call Shari Gonzales at (415) 869-7813. More information at "Make a Will" www.EpiscopalGift.org.

Here Comes the Fall Rummage Sale

Oct. 17 and 18. Set up Week of Oct. 11-16

Donations accepted SUNDAYS Sept. 5-Oct. 11 before noon outside Rummage Storage

Gently worn clothing, toys, household items, books, linens, jewelry, knick-knacks, small furniture, working appliances

No window blinds, skis, outdated computers

Contact Joan McDavid at jmcdvd5@comcast.net for more information or if you can volunteer to help sort and/or price donations

2009 Garden Tour

— Jim Bell

The 2009 Garden Tour was a wonderful success, raising approximately \$2,300 for the Property Committee. The Property Committee set aside \$300 as seed money (pun intended) for the next Garden Tour, leaving \$2,000 to spend on needs at St. Paul's. As luck would have it, at the end of July, Earle Schremp and several other people prevented a potential lawsuit by repairing the retaining wall and the sidewalk at 1944 Trinity. The cost of this project was \$1,126, all of which came from the Garden Tour.

We were also hoping that the Garden Tour might bring new members into our church, since it starts and finishes at St. Paul's.

I have been talking to Charles and Susan about doing the next Garden Tour; Charles has agreed to chair the Garden Tour for 2010. If you are interested in helping, contact Charles—there's plenty to do.

Interfaith Environmental Stewardship Conference

Toxics and Human Health

Date: 09/19/2009

Time: 9—3:30

This conference is designed to equip our congregational environmental committees with inspiration, knowledge and ideas that will be useful for leading meaningful parish environmental programs.

Trinity Episcopal Parish

330 Ravenswood Avenue

Menlo Park, CA

www.trinitymenlopark.org



**Keynote Speaker:
Jane Houlihan, Ph.D.**

Jane Houlihan is Senior Vice President for Research at Environmental Working Group (EWG), a non-profit health and environmental research and advocacy organization based in Washington, D.C. (www.ewg.org). EWG's innovative research products include:

Skin Deep, (www.cosmeticsdatabase.com), an interactive cosmetics safety guide that garners 2 million page views monthly;

The nation's most comprehensive non-governmental biomonitoring program, with test data on nearly 200 people, documenting the presence of nearly 500 industrial chemicals;

The first-ever national, online tap-water quality atlas for 40,000 U.S. communities.

Houlihan, an environmental engineer, holds Master's and Bachelor's degrees in engineering from Georgia Tech and conducted post-graduate studies at Stanford University. She was granted full engineering research fellowships by Stanford, Georgia Tech and the U.S. Department of Defense. Before joining EWG, she practiced environmental engineering at national research and consulting organizations.

Choice of afternoon breakout sessions: Food ; Water; Waste Management; and Energy

- Robert Davidson, AIA, Emeritus, East Bay Chapter, American Inst. of Architects
- Peggy da Silva, Veritable Vegetable (the nation's oldest distributor of certified organic produce)
- Brad Drda, Environmental Dir., Norcal Waste Management
- Margaret Dyer-Chamberlain, Sr. Research Scholar and Program Director, Stanford Center on Longevity
- Nancy Grove, MD, COE Member and Sustainable Gardening expert
- Debbie Mytels, Acterra Environmental Consultants (www.acterra.org)
- Jacob Voit, Sustainability Manager, Cagwin and Dorward Landscape Contractors (www.cagwin.com)

Admission free—Limited space; Donations for lunch requested

**RSVP to Barbara Bisel
By 09/11/2009
bsmithbisel@cs.com**

**Sponsored by:
Commission for the Environment/
Diocese of CA
(www.diocal.org/environment)
and
California Interfaith Power and Light
(www.interfaithpower.org)**

An Extraordinary Thing Happened On Our Vestry Retreat.....

Last January, at Bishops Ranch, we were discussing how we wanted our church to be. While everyone was aware of our vision statement:

Living Faith, Growing Community, Deep Roots,

And we all feel it is a good motto which will stand the test of time, we have since come to feel we need to have a vision which will serve us in the present and take us into the future, and which reflects what we are facing now, goals we want to accomplish, and which



vividly describes, as Rev. Sylvia put it, what our church would look like when we are done.

We broke into five groups of three each and were sent outside to walk the beautiful grounds. When we gathered back together, amazingly, all five groups had come up with nearly identical views! In discussions at the vestry meetings, we have since arrived at the following culminating statement and five focus areas necessary to realize the vision:

St. Pauls will be a dynamic, multi-generational community in which members, inspired and led by Christ, feel spiritually nourished, connected, uplifted and affirmed,

with special emphasis this year on sustaining and revitalizing our youth ministry.

We went on to identify the three words which we felt would help mold our spirit:

Collaborative, Passionate, Positive.

We then agreed on five focus areas necessary to realize the vision:

1. Define End Result: we discuss this at every vestry meeting and are coming up with concrete, measurable goals that, together, would achieve the result we are looking for.

2. Filling Staffing Needs: primarily, at this point, the music directors, and children and youth ministries. Both positions have now been filled.

3. Healing Hurts and Divisions: mainly addressing the concerns of young families.

4. Honoring Our Roots: the recognition of the Mortons, and their role in making Summer Camp possible, was the first of these events--more to come.

5. Over-communicating: putting structures and connections in place so that information gets to everyone concerned, and that all parishioners are kept informed and in the loop.

During the coming year or two, we will continue to articulate and achieve specific goals (as defined in the

five focus groups), and we strive to help all of us create the community defined in the vision statement the vestry derived on the retreat. This will also sustain our effort to create the long-term vision statement, and breathe new life into it, to help all of us more fully walk the talk.

Our goal is for everyone in the congregation to be involved in this effort, and to share any thoughts/ideas/concerns with us. With this in mind, please call, write, email, talk to any member of the vestry. Our contact information is in every issue of the bulletin and Epistle, and also on-line at www.stpaulswc.org.

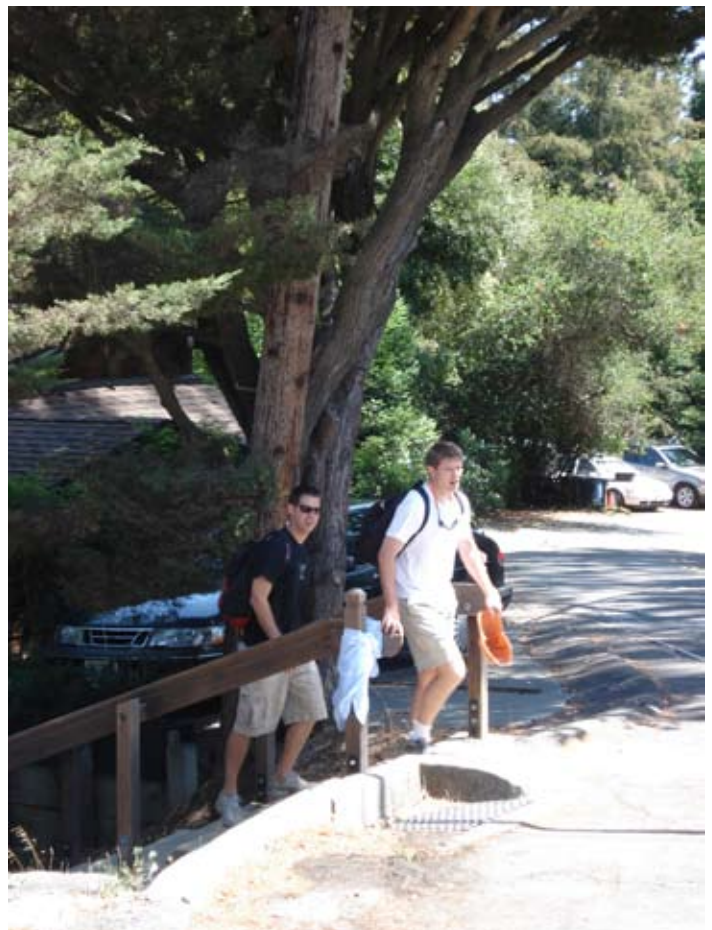
St. Paul's Young Adults Hit the Trails

— Savannah Amerson

What better way can there be to celebrate a late summer day than enjoying a cold beer with friends after hiking a beautiful trail? On August 15th some of the young adult crowd gathered to visit the Tourist Club in Muir Woods. Owned by a naturalist club, Nature Friends International (www.touristclubsf.com), the Tourist Club is tucked into Muir Woods and welcomes guests to their German style beer hall several weekends a month.

Our hike began with the 670 Dipsea Steps in Mill Valley, then wound along a ridge and into Muir Woods, ending with cold draft pilsner and trivia. After we finished the hike, we decided to give the beach at Muir Woods a visit (especially for one of our newer members who hadn't seen the California coast yet!) Finally, we ended the day with another beverage at the Pelican Inn pub. Many thanks to our sober driver!

Summer may be ending, but our outdoor fun will continue. Plans for the Fall include more hikes, wine tasting and possibly sailing. Stay posted and invite your friends; we're going to get out and enjoy God's country!



Kate Nauer Introduction

Dear Parishioners,

Greetings! I am Kate Nauer your new Associate for Ministries here at St. Paul's. I am thrilled to be here and I'm looking forward to meeting each of you and learning more about this vibrant community of faith. Formerly I was a Youth Minister with the Diocese of Oakland for 16 years. I've always enjoyed working with teens and their families and now I will have the added blessing of working with children and young families.

This past Sunday I met with and heard from the Godly Play ministry team. What a talented and dedicated group! They are gearing up for another awesome year of storytelling, wondering and sharing the Good News of Jesus with our youngest members.

Godly Play is a wonderful opportunity for our little ones to begin to explore and understand our language and our way of being Christian Community. They spend about 45 minutes together on Sunday mornings listening to a scripture story very creatively and intentionally told, wondering about that story with in the context of their own lives, doing a little "work" individually to express how the story spoke to them and finally enjoying a "feast" together before they rejoin the larger community at the time of Eucharist. It is an awesome and age appropriate approach to the telling of our story.

We invite all 3-5 year olds, 6-8 year olds and 9-11 year olds to join us for this outstanding opportunity to grow in their faith. We meet in the Godly Play classrooms and everything begins Sunday August 30 at 10:00 am, so please be sure to bring your child(ren) to the classrooms before the 10am service. Right after the Godly Play session on the 30th, we'll celebrate the blessing of the backpacks in the church including a great video for the children. Hope to see you and your little one(s) there!

I also had the opportunity on Sunday to sit down with an outstanding group of parishioners who make up our middle and high school ministry team. In one word? WOW!! We are so blessed to have such a creative, energized and committed group of adults who are stepping up to share their talent, humor and faith with our teens. I heard about some of the activities, discussions, community outreach projects and fun activities that the group has done before—most impressive and so much fun for the teens!

One of my hopes for the high school group and the 8th graders in the middle school ministry program this year is to build a leadership team of teens. My promise to the parish at my introduction was to be a minister who is conversational within the context of a comprehensive

model of ministry.

In English? Our ministries with children, youth and young families will be more actively engaged in the life and worship of the community. We will be introducing a family liturgy once a month in which the young people will play a more active role. You will also see them helping out a bit more with some of the day-to-day responsibilities that have historically fallen upon the adult community. In short, look for our youth and young people to become more present and visible. As we dream about and ponder the church of tomorrow this is elemental and essential to growth. We look forward to learning from and growing in faith with the rest of the St. Paul's Walnut Creek community!

So, in addition to the lock-ins the retreat, the beach-trip, collecting debris along our shores, advocacy and community service projects and the games and discussion at Youth Group, look for us to become more visible and participatory.

And it all begins with a middle and high school opening night party and BBQ on Sunday Sept 13th, 6:30-8:30. Parents of middle and high school teens are asked to please join us for the BBQ portion of the evening 6:30-7:00 and then to return to pick up their child(ren) at 8:15 pm. Calendars with specific dates and topics will follow.

Please RSVP if you will joining us (knauer@stpaulswc.org) and let us know how many to expect.

Please note that beginning this year the high school youth group will continue to meet on Sundays, 6:30-8:30pm and the middle school youth group will now meet on Wednesday, 7:00-8:15pm.

Finally, as our community within a community grows, we will always be on the look-out for more youth oriented adults. If you have a love for children and teens and you would like to discuss the gifts you have to share with this powerfully positive, energizing and promising ministry, drop me an email, text me or call. I would love to sit with you and discover what you have to offer the community of St. Paul's. Or join us for the opening night BBQ on Sept 13 at 6:30pm at the Youth Center!

In Christ-

Kate Nauer

Associate for Ministries

A Season to Celebrate!

— Savannah Amerson

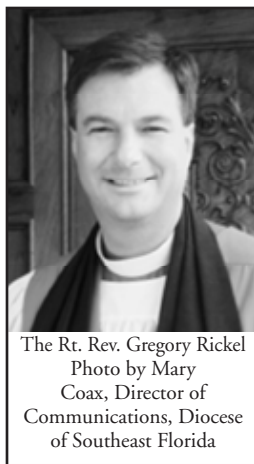
Sometimes I miss the more distinct seasons that I grew up with in the South and on the East coast. The very environment marked the change and made you feel ready for something new. A clean, crispness in the air, leaves changing their colors from green to gold and red...all of this made the season special, marked an ending and a beginning of something new - back to school, back to football, getting ready for Halloween and the holidays that follow closely behind.

But, there is a wonderful blessing that comes with temperate Northern California weather. Outdoor cook-outs and barbeques year round. Hiking and boating and doing other great activities year round. Very few things have to be limited to one season out here! I think this is something special we should celebrate and consider a little more deeply. How do we relate our lives to our environment? We have a unique, temperate environment that is fairly steady year round. What if we transition other parts of our lives that we have segmented into "seasons" and try to celebrate them year round? In our church life, stewardship is one of those things. (I can hear the groans now!) We tend to hear about Stewardship only once a year, and that's during the Fall Pledge Drive. It can feel like a season of relentless, guilt-inducing lectures about money. I can't think of anything that feels less spiritual to me than money. But I think we can change that. I believe that this Fall, we can mark the beginning of an entire new year, a round and even and holistic way to approach stewardship at St. Pauls.

Stewardship is about money, it is about the environment, it is about loving each other, it is about nourishing each other. Stewardship is about taking care of God's creation and honoring God's creation. I can't imagine why we would want to segment that out for only one season. Let's celebrate God's creation and each other year round! We have a lot to celebrate at St. Pauls, too. I hope that you will reconsider what stewardship can mean for us. Let's look at our 2010 Pledge Drive as the start of something new - this is just one more way that we are working together and celebrating life. Our pledge drive is just the kick-off for a year of stewardship celebrations - keep your eyes and ears and hearts open for great things to come, and send us your suggestions. To celebrate life, we first have to care for it. By carefully considering your participation in this pledge drive you will help us determine how we can care for our joint lives and mission.

In Peace,

Savannah Amerson



The Rt. Rev. Gregory Rickel
Photo by Mary
Coax, Director of
Communications, Diocese
of Southeast Florida

The Roller Coaster

— By the Rt. Rev. Gregory
Rickel

Bishop of Olympia and National
Stewardship Consultant

Yesterday I heard a great quote that goes with these financial times. "The only person that gets hurt on a roller coaster is the one who jumps off!" While it makes for a good laugh it also carries some truth. Once on a roller coaster, you don't have many choices, but to stay on and hold on.

The current financial roller coaster surely has many wanting to jump off. Some may even feel as if they are going to be thrown off. This scary ride brings up questions for us. A priest in my diocese recently asked me, "How do we recession proof our parishioners? How do we prepare them for hard times?" While it certainly is a very good question, I had to think that one answer is, "Don't wait to prepare them until the crisis is here, by teaching them Christian stewardship every day, in all seasons, so they are prepared when the harder times arrive." The time to prepare for a hurricane is not when it is coming ashore. We know this intuitively and yet, we continue to do the equivalent of "jumping off" when it comes to our spiritual relationship with money.

Several years ago, two Stanford professors, Jeffrey Pfeffer and Robert Sutton, published a book entitled: "The Knowing-Doing Gap: How smart companies turn knowledge into action." Basically they stated that most people know exactly what they should do, but most don't do it. They don't give any great remedies, but they suggest this, you have to do it. You cannot talk or think your way out of whatever is before you. Even Paul knew this when he wrote in Romans, "For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do — this I keep on doing." He seemed to be having that same dilemma. There is great similarity in this approach and the yearly pledge drive. We tend to take stewardship off the shelf each year about this time; dust it off, plug it in, hope it still works, and then we can't wait to put it back and get on with our "real work." But, if the stewardship walk of our lives is the metaphorical equivalent of the roller coaster ride, most of us have been jumping off instead of riding it out. And we know what that gets us — hurt. I think we know this, and yet by and large, we don't do

it. Then, when we enter times such as we have now, we are suddenly unprepared. Wouldn't it be something if the world would react to the atrocities in Darfur, or the plight of Haiti, as rapidly, decisively, and with as much urgency as we react to a sudden financial crisis? That we do react in this way is proof of the great power money has over our lives and anything with that much power deserves a serious and deep spiritual look on our part. So, on this recent financial roller coaster ride you, in your churches, will be hearing such cries as "we can't do that now" and "stewardship is really going to suffer this year." There will be calls to step back and soft-sell this even more than usual. This would be to jump off the roller coaster. Instead, this time may well be the best time ever to discuss the basic principles of Christian stewardship which include the counter-intuitive notion of living within our means, while being amazingly generous. In fact, a lot of history shows that giving actually goes up during hard times, not the other way around. I am more and more convinced that we will never solve some of the problems, that are very real, and for which we often use in the avoidance of the work of stewardship, unless we first take up the issue of the power money has over our lives. It is still remarkably true that we must decide who we will serve; God or mammon. Now, in this time, where it seems ever more clear that money and possessions will never save us, we are presented with the opportunity to introduce good solid principles of financial management, and discuss even more what is forever true, and most assuredly our salvation, our relationship with Jesus Christ. Money will never save us, but our giving of it is a sure sign of our gratitude, and a reminder to us of how God gives all to us, even our very lives.

Part of our mission is to stay on the roller coaster, and use this time to transform our relationship with money. This is no time for a failure of nerve, for this is our "real work."



Bridge Players Singles Or Couples

If you play bridge, you are invited to join a group from St. Pauls that plays a friendly social game on the 2nd and 4th Fridays at 7:30 p.m. from September until June. There are usually 3-5 tables and members rotate hosting and providing light refreshments in their homes or some other suitable location. For further details, please contact Jan Williams at 943-1184 or jancw@astound.net.



September 17—September 23 is Constitution Week.

Our Constitution is the law of the land. Our president and all members of the uniformed services take an oath to support and defend the Constitution. It should be valued and cherished by all Americans. It guarantees our liberties, one of those being religious freedom. To a large extent, respect for the ideas put forth in it is what makes us Americans. We are different in many ways. We are made up of many groups that include differences in race, gender, religion, and culture. However, our common beliefs in the benefits of our Constitution bring us together as one people. The Episcopal church separated from the Church of England and became its own entity during the American Revolution. Commemoration of the Constitution is basic to the faith tradition of the Episcopal Church.

Constitution Week is the weeklong commemoration of this vital document. Since 1955 when President Eisenhower proclaimed Constitution Week to be September 17th—23rd, Americans have commemorated the Constitution of the United States. Let's do so this year by praying for our nation's leaders and our religious freedom.

Fellowship Groups

Looking for a fun way to enjoy Christian Fellowship in a small group? St. Paul's Fellowship Groups are composed of 6-8 people who take turns getting together at each other's homes to share a meal, socialize and develop deeper relationships with fellow parishioners. Please e-mail parishlife@stpaulswc.org by September 7th to join one of the September-December 2009 groups.

August Clean-Up Days

The following notes were written by Sheafe Ewing and Rev. Sylvia about our two clean-up days. We just wanted the whole parish to know how this all came together.

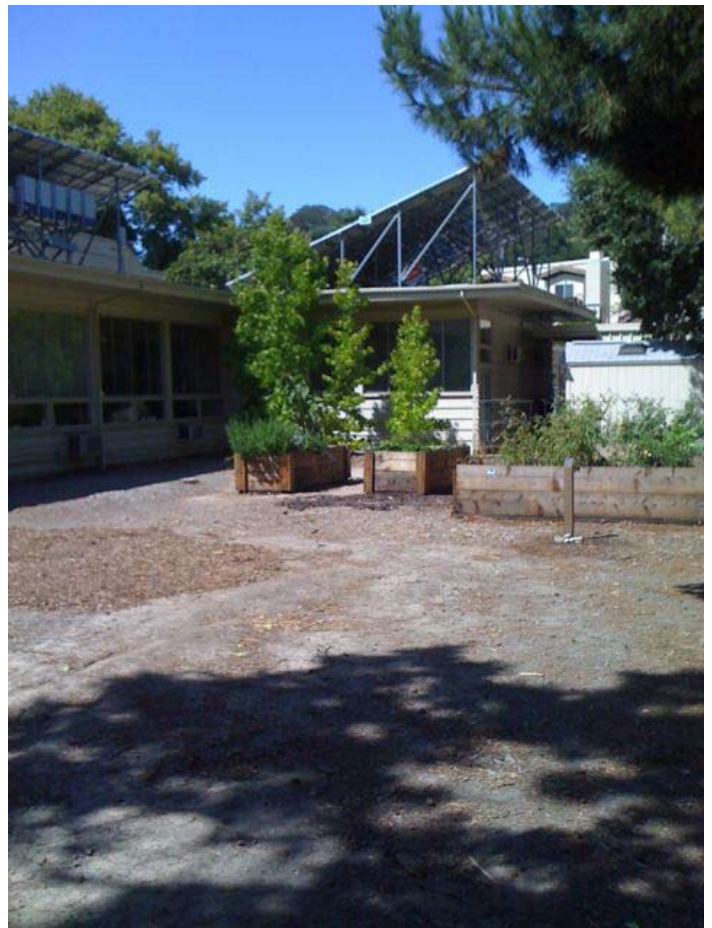
Some people wanted to compliment Sheafe on the good results from the two Saturday Cleanup Days, but he just wants everyone to know that the success of the venture was because of the response of the people who came and lent their hands, NOT with any great lead by Sheafe or Rev. Sylvia, but with their own grasp of what was to be done.

Yes, there were those who facilitated, and contributed in special ways (Mike Siebert, Fred Bolton, Sue Phalen and Whitney Wilson and others who did an enormous amount of work preliminary to the Work Days ; and those preparers of food and beverages, like Julie Layne, Jen Gossett, Maureen Horton, Nancy Robinson and (especially) the providers of the trucks , Josie Nwosu, Mike Yale, Jerry Williams) without which we'd still be wading in trash & debris.

But, when done, it was because of those who came (about 65 or so willing volunteers) prepared and ready to grasp what was needed and how they might contribute and then went forth, pitched-in and DID IT.

More to the point.... and Sheafe and I believe this.... we were blessed in our work.

AMEN!



A meal from the heart

Many of us have had the pleasure of receiving a lovely batch of cookies, a home-cooked stew or a basket of prepared food, given with love by a neighbor, a co-worker or someone from St. Paul's.

The result of such a gift is two-fold; the giver enjoys planning and making the nourishment and the receiver feels the love that was one of the main ingredients of the food as well as enjoys a healthful meal. Wouldn't you like to occasionally supply such a gift to someone in our parish?

GOOD SAMS (Samaritans) has been operating in our church for decades. It's a quiet, behind-the-scenes ministry that dozens have done or are doing today. A GOOD SAM signs up to be available to make and deliver a meal on a certain day of the week, when called upon, to someone in our parish who may be sick or recovering from surgery.

Here's how to enjoy this easy ministry: Join a "team" they are divided by weeks, and each member agrees to be available that one day a month to prepare a meal, if needed. OR, you can request "on-call" status, meaning you'll be called if a meal is requested and other team members are not available for that specific day.

THE BENEFITS: The joy of cooking for a person, or a family, who will be thrilled with a home-cooked meal during a stressful time. You can prepare enough for you and your own family, making the process simple and not much different from your normal schedule. The knowledge that you are living the "do unto others as you would have them do unto you" rule.

As Sue Phalen, a long-time GOOD SAM, said, "Love thy neighbor to me means that we are all family, and I would always want to take care of my St. Paul's family."

Another possibility: Be a caller: When alerted by the church office, call your "team" of cooks and see who might be available. A few minutes on the phone now and then assures that a St. Paul's family member will get the loving meal they need.

PLEASE call Arline Spieler, 935-1897 to volunteer and get more details. Bon appetit!



The Rev. Canon Carl B. Gracely
2225 Pine Knoll Drive #2
Walnut Creek, CA 94595

Celebrating
100 years of life
Saturday, August 29, 2009

Dear Friends,

Please recognize the 100 years of life in God's service of Rev. Carl Gracely, who was 100 years of age on August 29, 2009.

I hope that we can overwhelm this good man with greeting cards mailed to his home address above. Carl still works almost every day in the ministry he established in his retirement: Pastoral Care visitation of patients at John Muir Memorial Hospital, Walnut Creek, California. His life has been a noble gift to those who have received his hospital visits ... and to all who have had the privilege of knowing this good man, as I have, for over 25 years. He is a most remarkable Christian man.

Please send Carl a greeting card right away. This is a most humble man who resists admiration and praise, but thrives on the affection of those who respect his work. I pray that each of us will send a card to show that we truly respect his work! There is no greater appreciation we can offer this extraordinary man for his lifetime of good works.

In His Grip, with love,

Bob Lipscomb . . . <">>>>><

St. Pauls Memorial To Arrive Soon

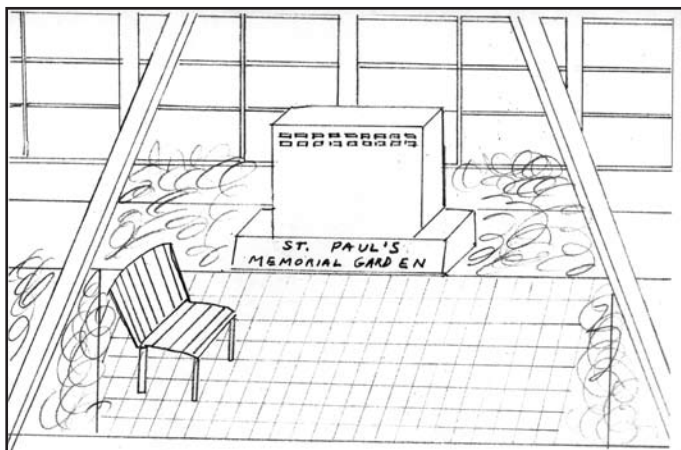
You may have noticed that the foundation has been created for the anticipated arrival of the St. Pauls Memorial stone in September. The Memorial will be located in the area of the Columbarium, in the courtyard on the west side of the church. The Memorial will be for St. Pauls members and their relatives, and will enable them to remember loved ones whose remains are not at St. Pauls. For example, the remains may have been scattered or permanently placed elsewhere.

The Memorial polished granite stone will be six feet wide, five feet high and the same color as the Columbarium. Bronze plaques, four inches wide and two inches in height, will be affixed to the stone with the name and years of birth and death of the loved one remembered. Or, one plaque could remember two people, without dates.

If you would like to reserve, or acquire, a plaque for yourself or a loved one, please get in touch with Fred Bolton, Earle Schremp, Mike Siebert or JoAnne Thomas. Each plaque will be sold for \$175, which will cover the cost of the plaque itself, engraving, and to offset the building cost of the Memorial.

Licenses for niches in St. Paul Columbarium are also available at a cost of \$1200, which includes the urn, engraving of the granite and urn, and perpetual care.

Below is a drawing of the Memorial and adjacent area.



ST PAULS CREWS
NEEDED TO COOK
AND SERVE MEALS
AT THE MOUNTAIN
VIEW SHELTER
FOR HOMELESS
FAMILIES.... Monday
October 5 through
Friday October 9. Plan
an evening when you can
help! We need cooks, servers
and cleaner-up folks! All meals
are planned and ingredients
on site. SIGN UPS IN THE
PARISH HALL Sept 20/27
and Oct. 4.



Mark Your Calendars. Come One,
Come All! Youth and Adults. Choir
Rehearsal begins Thursday Sep 10th.
See you there!



Flu Season

With the flu season upcoming and for those of you who are worried about spreading germs, physical contact during the greeting and partaking of the cup during communion are optional. During communion, if you wish not to receive the cup, just cross your arms over your chest to let the cupbearer know that you will not be receiving the cup. A simple bow or smile, or both, would suffice during the greeting.



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		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

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*

Associate for Ministries

Kate Nauer *knauer@stpaulswc.org*

Parish Administrator

Ti Klingler *tiklingler@stpaulswc.org*

