

# THE EPISTLE



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from Davison Welch

## St. Paul's Episcopal Church

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**Worship**  
**Holy Eucharist**  
**Sunday, 10:30 AM**

*Coffee and Hospitality*  
*After Service*



## A Message from the Priest in Charge

My Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In the hymnal version of Beethoven's Ode to Joy, hymn 376, there is a wonderful closing sentence, "Thou our Father, Christ our Brother: All who live in love are thine; teach us how to love each other, lift us to the joy divine." Beethoven is not the author of the idea that we have a familial relationship with our creator. In Genesis we see that God used his own breath to give life to the first human being. In the Epistles we find Paul talking about how we all become heirs of the kingdom through adoption. In our Baptismal service we pray for those who receive the sacrament of new birth—birth into the larger family that is the church. All of these thoughts and traditions were there long before Beethoven put them so beautifully into song. The idea is pretty simple, but quite profound. All who have been baptized are a family of brother's and sisters in Christ.

This is quite different than the family in which I grew up. As a child my family was my parents and two sisters. We lived on a farm some 500 miles away from any relatives. There were occasional visits from grandparents and such, but mostly they were "them" and we were "us." It was quite a shock to attend a Thanksgiving Day celebration with Judy's family in 1966 and meet over 40 relatives at one time. It was amazing to see how they not only knew each other's names, but seemed to care for and actually like each other. I was a little overwhelmed, to say the least. Of course, after we married, her relatives became my relatives. I'm happy to say that in the nearly 40 years since then they have truly become my family also.

The Rev. Arlyn Raathage wrote a significant little book about church dynamics several years ago. In it he described how parishes of various sizes "work." The smallest and most intimate parishes he named "Family Sized." A family sized church, he wrote, had about 50 or fewer folks who attended worship on a Sunday morning. Saint Paul's and Christ Church have been family sized churches for many years (with excursions into how a family sized church works. Past 50 it becomes hard for everyone to know everyone. Past 50 it becomes difficult for everyone to have a handle on

*Our Mission*     *The mission of St. Paul's is to minister unconditionally to all in the name of Christ through shared worship, teaching, healing and service.*

*Our Vision*     *St. Paul's is called to be an embracing, nourishing and life-giving family in Christ. We are called to care for each other, for our community and for the world.*

everything that is going on. Past 50, decision making becomes distributed. As the Rev. Alice Mann suggests in her writing, when Sunday attendance gets much past 50 expectations began to grow about replacing "OK" or "pretty good" with "excellent" when it comes to church's programs.

Christ Church and Saint Paul's have entered into a time of discernment. The presenting issue is that of discerning whether the current priest in charge of the two parishes should be called as rector. This, all by itself, is a major decision, and one that should be made prayerfully and carefully. We have assembled a wonderful team, with members from both parishes, to take on this important task. The Diocese of Massachusetts has provided us a coach for the process, so we are not going this alone. I'm pretty hopeful about the outcome.

A second issue that our discernment team will address has been colorfully described as "stake planting." The question to be addressed looks something like this. "What should Saint Paul's and Christ Church look like ten years from now?" This is actually the larger question, because it addresses what kind of churches we wish to become. Do our parishes wish to remain intimate families? Is "OK" or "pretty good" good enough if we can preserve the depth of relationships we know now? Do we want our parishes to grow? Do we have a passion for excellence that empowers us to take on new paradigms for relationships, communication and decision making? Both paths allow us to be faithful to the Gospel and to our Lord, and both paths will require that we continue to adjust to new circumstances. Are we willing to make the changes required to reach either goal as vital and viable churches in the early 21st century?

I grew up in a small family where I was loved and nurtured and prepared for life. It was good! As an adult I now am loved and nurtured by an extend family with branches in California, Georgia, Washington DC, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine and Vermont. It is good!

As Christians we are brothers and sisters to all those who have been baptized into the death and resurrection of Christ. Do we wish to celebrate our Christian family by remaining family sized churches? Or do we wish to grow become churches that are more like extended families. Which way do you see us being lifted into that "joy divine" of our wonderful hymn?

Please pray for our discernment team, and share with them your thoughts.

Faithfully,  
Mike+

## Vestry Members Answer the Question...

### "Why are you an Episcopalian?"

As the Assistant Treasurer for St. Paul's, I see how St. Paul's is changing positively. We are blessed with people who are getting involved spiritually and faithfully by contributing, not just their money, but also their time, ideas, and caring for others.

No doubt, our church needs people who reach deep into their pockets; our operational expenses are daunting at times. However, if our parishioners just donated money, St. Paul's would not flourish and would not meet its true purpose.



#### Members of the Discernment Team:

##### At Saint Paul's:

Steve Pellitier  
Sue Ramsley  
Jay Jacobson

##### At Christ Church:

Helen Durkin  
Denise Wahl  
TK



I believe God wants us to connect as a family by helping each other, reaching out to others, and living a meaningful Christian life. I believe we can build a strong, faith-filled foundation for ourselves, our loved ones, and people in need; by learning from the weekly Sunday services; by getting involved with our outreach programs and mission; and by participating in our church events.

I became an Episcopalian because of my faith in our Lord and my connection with the fundamental ideas of the church. As Episcopalians, I believe that we are encouraged to care; to question; and, above all, to embrace God's love and redemption. To me, it's just this simple - God is always there for you, so praise God by supporting your church, each other, and your community - both close to home and around the world.

With love, Mary Arnaut

From Sue Ramsley... I grew up in several different protestant churches. My Dad's father was a Methodist minister, so we went to Methodist churches, and a huge Presbyterian church while living in Pennsylvania. When I was 12, we moved to MA and our family attended the First Baptist Church in Holliston for many years. Ken and I met, married, and attended another church for a while; some hurtful things began to happen there, and we made the decision to leave that church. At the time, my brother Dave (a professor at the Univ. of Illinois) was attending an Episcopal church, and recommended it, so Ken and I decided to check out St. Paul's. This was more than 22 years ago. The Episcopal tradition was quite different than other churches I'd been to, and it has taken many years for me to feel comfortable here. I have prayed consistently about whether or not to stay at St. Paul's, and the answer continues to be, "Yes, stay." I am excited about what God is doing at St. Paul's, and very privileged to participate.

***Why are you an Episcopalian or Why are you at St. Paul's?***

*Contact the Editor, Sally Snyder, to have your reason published.*

## A Call to Action

President Obama's speech has really inspired me! I'm so incredibly excited to have him in the office and his call to action speaks to my heart. Below are a couple of things, I've thought of, that our church can do to be a part of his call to action.

Fr. Mike mentioned a couple of weeks ago about starting a fund to help people in our parish who may at some point, given the economy, need help paying their mortgage. Maybe we could call this fund The Help Your Neighbor Fund. Speak with Fr. Mike if you'd like to donate.

A church in Milford is holding an Auction in Feb. I have no idea what type of items are being auctioned but thought the idea was interesting.

The Unitarian Universalist Church in Milford has done a spaghetti supper on Sunday evenings for years. It's for people who need a free meal. It's totally staffed by volunteers. I'm not sure how big this need is in Hopkinton...but maybe we could find out.

How about adopting a soldier? I will attend an information meeting at Milford High School to get details about this. You can visit this link to the class description and feel free to join me:

[http://www.milford.ma.us/mcs/program\\_details.html?program\\_number=49](http://www.milford.ma.us/mcs/program_details.html?program_number=49)

O&program\_type=AW&multipleWeeks=&weekCount=2&referer=/mcs/program\_database.html

Were you inspired too? Do you have ideas that our parish can do for Outreach? We, as Christians, know that this is not just our Presidents call to action, but it is what our Lord has always called us to do.

I honestly don't know how much time and energy I personally have to devote to these ideas, but I believe many hands make light work. Please contact me if you are interested in spearheading our Outreach efforts or just want to be a part of the call.

Peace,  
Dianne Belamarich

## Thank You to Those Who Serve

At both parishes of the Hopkinton-Medway Collaborative Ministry there are small groups of dedicated people who have taken on the task of working in and leading parish programs in this past year that deserve our thanks. Many of them are continuing on in these capacities into 2009, but some are stepping down and allowing others to have a turn at service.

At Christ Church, Helen Durkin, who has served as Senior Warden for the last three years is stepping aside and Pace Willisson will be assuming that demanding position as an officer of the parish. Helen will continue to serve on the vestry. At Saint Paul's, Gretchen Carr is stepping off the vestry. She has served for the past three as our Hospitality Chairperson, coordinating Coffee Hour, Potlucks and other fellowship parish events. Mitch Palmer is coming onto the vestry, and will take on a ministry responsibility as vestry assignments are made at the February vestry meeting.

Thank you, Helen and Gretchen for your faithfulness, your energy and your devotion to the Lord and to our parishes.

Thank you also to those members of our vestries who continue in service during what promises to be a challenging and interesting year.

Mike

## Choir Report – Feb 2009

*By Carol Spengler*

Our thanks to all the wonderful people who make up St. Paul's adult choir! We gather at 9:30 AM before church to rehearse – new members are welcome!

Christmas eve we were blessed by the instruments of accompaniment provided by our newly formed "St. Paul's Youth Chamber Players"! They practiced after church and for 5 Tuesdays after school at my home to prepare carols and accompaniments for the service music. Kudos and a big thank you go to the children of the Bloomer, Jacobson, Rector and Slater families! They worked very hard and their performance was wonderful. We hope to reunite for the Easter season. Other young people who play instruments or would like to sing are welcome to join our music program. Please speak to Carol Spengler – Organist and Choir Director if you wish to join us!



2009

| FEBRUARY |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| S        | M  | T  | W  | T  | F  | S  |
| FP       | 2  | 3  | V  | 5  | 6  | 7  |
| PL       | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| 15       | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 22       | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
|          |    |    |    |    |    |    |

| MARCH |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|-------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| S     | M  | T  | W  | T  | F  | S  |
| FP    | 2  | 3  | V  | 5  | 6  | 7  |
| PL    | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| 15    | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 22    | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 29    | 30 | 31 |    |    |    |    |

| APRIL |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|-------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| S     | M  | T  | W  | T  | F  | S  |
|       |    |    | V  | 2  | 3  | 4  |
| FP    | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 |
| PL    | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| 19    | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| 26    | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |    |    |

| MARCH |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|-------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| S     | M  | T  | W  | T  | F  | S  |
| FP    | 2  | 3  | V  | 5  | 6  | 7  |
| PL    | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| 15    | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 22    | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 29    | 30 | 31 |    |    |    |    |

## Antique Appraisal Event

Skinner of Boston will be at St. Paul's for our 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Antique Appraisal Event. There's a limit of 40 items at \$10/item. Make your reservation soon as last year sold out. Call 508-397-9487 for a reservation. Donations for observation accepted at the door. Light Refreshments will be served

## Women's Retreat – March 6–8

Women of St. Paul's and Christ Church are invited to the **25<sup>th</sup> Annual Women's Retreat**. Join us for a weekend full of Spirit, Prayer, Fellowship, Fun, and Food.

When: March 6-8, 2009

Place: Barbara C. Harris Conference Center  
Greenfield NH

Cost: \$180.00 includes Jan White's Leader fee,  
2 overnights and 6 meals.

The center needs to know how many will be going so contact Jane Desilets if interested. She can be reached evenings at 508-435-6477 or email at [auntjane60@verizon.net](mailto:auntjane60@verizon.net)

## Life at St. Paul's . . .

### KEY DATES

- February 14 – Valentine's Dance Fundraiser
- February 25 – Ash Wednesday
- February 27 – 2nd Annual Appraisal Event
- March 6, 7 & 8 – Women's Retreat
- March 8 – Nick Cholakis Eagle Scout Court of Honor  
(Rain date 3/15)
- March 22 – Grace Methodist Church Concert  
(Rain date 2/15)
- March 25 – Joint Vestry Meeting  
(Christ Church and St. Paul's)

### REGULAR MONTHLY EVENTS

- First Sunday of the month: Food Pantry Collection **FP**
- First Wednesday of the month: Vestry Meeting **V**
- Second Sunday of the month: Potluck after Service **PL**