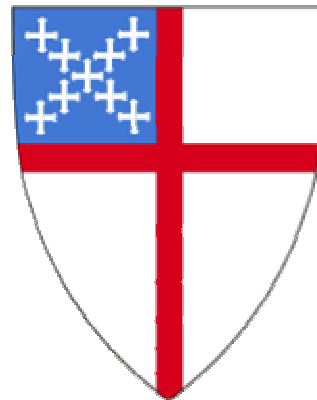


The *Epistle*

*St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Hopkinton, MA*



Volume 5, Number 5

A Message from Fr. Mike

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Worship

Holy Eucharist – Rite II
Sunday, 10:00 am

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Happy New Year at Saint Paul's!

In Roman mythology there was a god named Janus, from which we have the month January. Janus had two faces, and figures of Janus adorned many Roman gateways and doorways—one face looking in the other looking out. In the ancient Roman calendar the new year began with the winter solstice, and January was a time for looking back at the year past and looking forward at the year that was to come. I can't personally look too far back into 2005 at Saint Paul's, but with your help I think I can summarize some of what the year has meant in the 250+ year history of the parish. I can look ahead with you into the year 2006 at Saint Paul's, and dream with you about what it might mean to the extended future of the parish.

Looking back over the year past, the parish's first full time rector in recent years left, ending a long-term storm of controversy. Sunday attendance had declined. Some of those who had made pledges at the end of 2004 moved on to other parishes within the Episcopal Church or to other denominations. As the parish's revenue declined and its financial reserves were depleted, Saint Paul's fell behind on payments for its Diocesan Assessment, and for a Stokes Foundation loan that had provided funds for some
(continued on page 4)

Mission Statement.

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

Happy New Year ♪ *Happy New Year* ♪ *Happy New Year*

In this Issue

Three Kings Day	2
Worship	2
Sunday Worship.....	2
Prayer Website	2
Prayer Update	3
Prayer Group	3
Flowers on the Altar	3
Upcoming Events	3
Epiphany Pageant – January 8 th	3
Annual Meeting– January 22 nd	3
Stewardship Update	3
Sunday School News	3
Alone?	4
Note from Fr. Mike (<i>cont. from pg. 1</i>)	4
Happy Birthday!.....	6
Altar Guild.....	6
Choir	6
Hospitality.....	6
Outreach.....	6
Project Just Because... ..	6
.... Needs... ..	6
Helping St. Paul’s Church	6
Use St. Paul’s web site to buy from Amazon.com	6
Your Vestry	6
Epistle/Communications.....	7
eDevotional.....	7
Epistle	7
Next Deadline for submission	7
Just for kids	8

Three Kings Day

January 6 marks the day of Epiphany, the arrival of the three kings or wise men. The three kings were the Gentiles who “came from afar” to offer gifts to the Christ child. The meaning of the event is that Jesus came as Lord not only for Jews, but for Gentiles as well. Christ is the Savior of the world — the whole world.

Three Kings Day — or Dia de los Reyes in Spanish — is celebrated in many places around the world on January 6. Last year in Phoenix alone, more than 25,000 Latinos and others celebrated Three Kings Day. During the festivities, there are parades with camels bearing the “kings,” toys are given to children,

food is shared and folk dancers perform. Many women bake bread with a miniature plastic Jesus inside each loaf. The person who ends up with the figurine is obliged to host a party for others on February 2, Candlemas Day.



Worship

Sunday Worship

For the fall of 2005 the Sunday worship schedule has been changed. There will be one service at 10AM. For the first three Sundays of the month, this service will be Holy Eucharist Rite II.

On the fourth Sunday of each month, we nod to our more traditional members, and celebrate the Elizabethan language of the Holy Eucharist Rite I service.

Once a quarter, there is a month with a fifth Sunday. On those Sundays, we'll have a service of Morning Prayer with Sermon. For those unfamiliar with Morning Prayer, it harkens back to the prayer tradition of the monasteries in the Middle Ages, and reflects the normal Sunday service of the Episcopal Church during the 19th and early 20th century.

All of our services will feature traditional and contemporary music and enjoy the support of our organist and choir.

The 8AM service will be “on vacation” until the 10AM service starts to “fill up.”

Prayer Website

Please remember to visit the prayer website:

<http://stpaulhopkinton.org/prayer/>

In addition to prayer requests, the website features special prayers, book summaries and recommendations, and links to other

websites of interest. There is a special prayer request form on the website for people wishing to add their prayer requests to the site.

Prayer Update

We continue to pray each week during the Sunday service for both residents of specific streets in Hopkinton, and residents of neighboring towns. We'd also like to add different professions to this list (firefighters, teachers, store employees, accountants, nurses) so if you'd like to add your profession or that of a loved one, please leave a message with the church office.

Prayer Group

Beginning January 5th, Lori Robak and Sue Ramsley will be leading prayer group on Thursdays at 11AM. Please join them any Thursday for the entire hour, or just to stop in to request prayer together for a specific concern. The group will meet in a room off of the parish hall or Fr. Mike's office. All are welcome to join this informal prayer time and are welcome to pray silently or aloud.

Flowers on the Altar

Flower offerings may be made at any time of the year to the Glory of God, in thanksgiving for a specific blessing or in memory of a loved one. The flowers or plants enhance the chancel and remind our parishioners of a specific blessing or memorial. After the services the flowers/plants can be taken home by the donor or can be delivered to sick/shut-in parishioners.

If you'd like to dedicate flowers on the altar, please contact [Ruth Warner](#) at 508-435-6349 or the church office at 508-435-4536.

Upcoming Events

JANUARY

Epiphany Pageant – January 8th

The Sunday School classes will be putting on an Epiphany Pageant – If your child(ren)

would like to take part, please let your Sunday School teacher know, or contact Linda Lee (hopklee@netscape.com) or Vicki Jacobson (Vicki.Jacobson@comcast.net).

Annual Meeting– January 22nd

The St. Paul's annual meeting will be held on Sunday, January 22nd directly after the 10:00AM service. A light brunch will be offered and there will be an activity for the children. Your comments, feedback and opinions are important, especially as we embark on our new calendar year – please plan to attend.



Bring a Friend This Sunday

Stewardship Update

We are pleased to inform you that this year's stewardship drive is continuing to be very successful. As of this writing, we have over 30 families pledging and hope to reach and exceed our goal of 35 families in early January.

If you haven't had a chance to make your 2006 pledge yet, please contact Chris Estey at 529-4733 or John Diercks, 435-5015.

Thank you!

Sunday School News

We will be having the Epiphany Pageant on Sunday, January 8th. There are both

speaking and non-speaking roles. If your child(ren) would like to take part, please let your Sunday School teacher know, or contact Linda Lee (hoplee@netscape.com) or Vicki Jacobson (Vicki.Jacobson@comcast.net).

The schedule for January is:

January 1st - No Sunday School
January 8th - All Ages Worship - Epiphany Pageant
January 15th - Sunday School
January 22nd - Sunday School
January 29th - Sunday School

The Epiphany Pageant will be held on January 8th, any children wishing to participate should plan to attend the rehearsals on Saturday Dec. 31st and Saturday January 7th at 10am at the church.

Please note that we still do have need for Sunday School Teachers – please consider dedicating some of your time, even if it's only on a part-time basis, to helping teach our children.

Vicki Jacobson

Alone?

A minister arrived early at the church where he was to be the guest preacher. He opened the door and walked down a long hall with his robe draped over one arm and his sermon notes in hand. He looked into one of the rooms and saw a four- or five-year-old boy sitting all alone. So he stopped.

"Hi," said the child. "My name is Tommy and I'm all alone in this big room."

"You feel all alone in that room?" asked the preacher.

"I don't just feel it. I know I'm all alone!" answered the child.

"Don't worry. I'm sure that somebody will come along soon to be with you," replied the pastor.

With wistful eyes, little Tommy searched the preacher's face, then said, "How about you?"

Good question. And isn't that the question God asks each of us regarding God's work on Earth? "I need faithful friends to do my work," God says. "How about you?"

-Story told by Dr. Jim Moore

Note from Fr. Mike *(cont. from pg. 1)*

much needed improvements to the parish's physical plant years ago. Financially strapped, the vestry, under the leadership of the wardens of the church, Janet Moorman and Ruth Warner, and supported by the parish Treasurer, Phil Robidoux and the Clerk to the vestry, Jay Jacobson, created a plan to survive. Basically, they looked to the lay leaders of the parish for Sunday Worship as much as possible, and provided the sacraments using a supply priest.

In August the wardens, the treasurer and some members of the vestry met with Bishop Cederholm, and formed a plan for rebuilding Saint Paul's. The plan included entering into a five year payment plan for the parish's 2005 assessment, liquidating, if necessary, some long held stock assets, and a grant from the diocese to underwrite a salary package for a priest in residence. The priest in residence was to work with the wardens and vestry to find out the truth about "what went wrong" with its previous pastoral relationship, and use that truth to set the parish free to embrace its future. I am honored to be part of that plan.

In October we began life together at the Feast of Saint Francis and the Blessing of the Animals. Since then, 21 faithful members of the parish have come forward to tell the story as they know it. Each person has seen the events of the past few years from a different perspective. Putting all the interviews together, I think it is possible to at least outline the story of what has happened. One thing is very clear to me. All of the people

who have talked with me love the Lord and care very deeply about this parish.

At year's end there are some encouraging signs. St. Paul's celebrated the Nativity of Our Lord with its largest worship service since 2004. Our stewardship team, John Diercks and Chris Estey, have done yeoman work, and you, the faithful, have come forward to increase the parish's pledge base, topping 2004 by substantial numbers both in dollars pledged and numbers of pledging families. I think the corner has been turned. 2005 was traumatic, but St. Paul's has survived, and the blows that she has suffered will make her stronger.

2006.

Things that had become old are being made new. There is much to do at Saint Paul's to restore it to good health, but all of the steps are ones that can be accomplished if we keep at it. With the help of the Diocese we can begin to rebuild a broader leadership base within the congregation, and ease the load on the members of the vestry who have worked so long and hard under difficult and trying circumstances. With the vestry's help, we can once again offer adults the opportunity to deepen their walks with the Lord through Christian Education and Formation classes and groups. With everyone's help, we can make it possible for our adults to be present at worship without having to give up the joy of teaching or attending Sunday School. We can also have the adult volunteers we need to support our programs for children and youth. None of this is new to Saint Paul's—every part of what needs to be done has been done here with great success at some time within the memories of our oldest members.

I have some specific things that I need to address as your priest in residence this year:

- At the annual parish meeting on January 22, I will try to tell the story of what has happened here in the past several years—to*

speak the truth with love, and to claim our freedom to move on.

- 2006 must see a major effort toward rebuilding the parish's membership base. In preparing the (very much overdue) 2004 Parochial Report, the vestry and I discovered that a very small portion of the people who have made St. Paul's their spiritual home are actually members of the parish. With your help, I hope to have that situation substantially improved by the end of 2006, both by inviting new members into our fellowship and by doing the administrative work to make members of the folks who already attend St. Paul's on a regular basis.*
- To begin restoration of the Adult Christian Education and Formation traditions of the parish, I want to offer at least two classes for adults on weekday evenings before the summer is upon us. The first, which I hope to complete before Lent, will be focused on the way the Episcopal Church understands the Sacraments of the Church—and coincidentally offer folks who have come from other denominations an insight into the theology of the Anglican/Episcopal tradition. The second, which I hope will be a Lenten offering, will be on the importance and power of prayer, and the forms and disciplines of a healthy prayer life.*
- To assess the pastoral and spiritual needs of the parish, I want to visit every family that finds its church home at St. Paul's. I know that this visitation will take months to accomplish, but I believe it still represents the best way to reach and embrace every member of the parish family.*

I invite everyone to attend the parish's annual meeting, where we will elect new members to the vestry, a new Senior Warden, and new delegates to the Annual Convention of the Dioceses of Massachusetts, and work together on our plan for the new year the Lord had given us.

Mike+

Happy Birthday!

January Birthdays include:

Peter Cholakis January 6
Kate Correia January 8
Barbara Robidoux January 11
Caroline Correia January 12
Beth Holohan January 14
David Willett January 15
Luke MacDonald January 16

Altar Guild

The Altar Guild is a Parish ministry that is responsible for keeping the Church ready for its Sunday worship. They arrange for the flowers (memorials and/or thanksgivings) on Sunday mornings, and perform many other behind-the-scenes tasks to ensure the celebration of the Sunday Eucharist.

Altar Guild is looking for new members for the fall. Training can begin anytime. For more details, talk with Ruth Warner.

Choir

The choir is also looking for people who enjoy singing or play an instrument. If you have an interest, you can contact Janet Moorman, Gretchen Carr or Carol Spengler for more information.

Hospitality

Coffee hour after Sunday's worship are hosted by the hospitality crew. There's a signup sheet in the Parish hall.

Outreach

Project Just Because...

Please continue to remember St. Paul's community outreach program with **Project Just Because**.

.... Needs...

- Household items
- toiletries
- Clothes (adult and children) in good condition.
- Blankets
- New underwear and socks
- Kitchen accessories
- Towels and sheets
- Children's toys, games, and books.

You can also browse their website for additional needs:

www.projectjustbecause.org

Helping St. Paul's Church

Use St. Paul's web site to buy from Amazon.com

We constantly strive to maximize our financial resources in order to accomplish our goal of doing God's work here on earth. One of the ways we do this is in affiliation with Amazon.com.

A link to the Amazon associates page is available at www.stpaulhopkinton.org. St. Paul's receives a percentage of the sale on all purchases on Amazon from this link.

Your Vestry

<vacant>	Senior Warden
Ruth Warner	Junior Warden
Phil Robidoux	Treasurer
Jay Jacobson	Clerk
Susan Cholakis	Assistant Treasurer
John Diercks	Stewardship
Chris Estey	Stewardship
Peter Dittman	Epistle
Sue Ramsley	Spirituality
Ralph Edwards	Outreach

Next Vestry meetings: Jan. 3rd, Feb. 7th



Epistle/Communications

eDevotional

By now you've heard that we suspended the daily eDevotional mailings. There was a nominal cost to the service and we weren't too satisfied with using it as a way to communicate to you, the parish.

There are many good devotional websites available these days. For instance, browse to:

<http://www.crosswalk.com/faith/devotionals/>

It contains a number of links to other devotional sites. These include devotionals for women, couples and people who want an easy way to read through the Bible in a year.

If you are interested in receiving a particular devotional, just go to the website and click on a choice for the day. You can also sign up for weekly newsletters, etc.

Thanks to Sue Ramsley for researching this for us!

Epistle

The Epistle is being distributed electronically (as a .pdf file) and is also available on the St. Paul's Website (www.stpaulhopkinton.org). Hard copy is also available in the parish hall. If you would like to receive the Epistle electronically, please send email to Peter Dittman at pdittman@comcast.net.

Of course, we also welcome your opinion on any communications from the vestry/church.

Next Deadline for submission

If you have articles, suggestions and/or announcements for the next Epistle, it should be submitted by January 27th, for publication February 1st.



