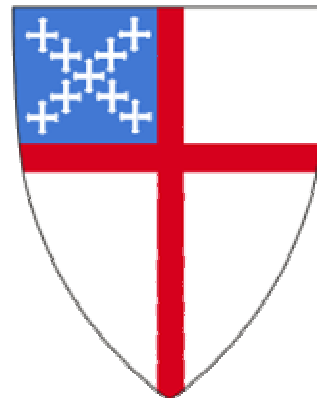


The *Epistle*

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



Volume 7, Number 4

A Message from our Fr. Mike

***St. Paul's
Episcopal Church***

61 Wood Street
P.O. Box 165
Hopkinton, MA 01748

Tel: 508-435-4536
Fax: 508-544-8205

Office E-mail:
office@stpaulhopkinton.org

On the web:
www.stpaulhopkinton.org

Worship

Holy Eucharist – Rite II
Sunday, 10:30 AM

*coffee and hospitality
afterward*

*Published:
December 18th, 2007*

Good News at Saint Paul's!

As 2007 moves to its end we have entered the Liturgical Season of Advent—a time of anticipation. Soon we will be "greening the church" as we anticipate the parish's Christmas services. We are already deep into the annual stewardship campaign as we anticipate the life and ministry of Saint Paul's in 2008. As we anticipate the good news of the Gospel (O tidings of comfort and joy!), we already are receiving good news in the form of new pledges, increased pledges, gifts to the parish and new commitments of time and talent to sustain Saint Paul's for the year to come.

I think that by now everyone knows that 2008 will usher in a new age of "Collaborative Ministry" at Saint Paul's. A task force of faithful members of Saint Paul's and Christ Church in Medway have been working for most of 2007 on forming a Collaborative Covenant that will offer both parishes the opportunity for stability in clerical support, a consistent liturgical leadership at Sunday worship, and help with administration and pastoral care. 2008 marks the beginning of the Hopkinton-Medway Collaborative Ministry. As things stand today, The Rev. David Johnston and I will be the Shepherd team for the collaborative for the year to come—Fr. David will be preaching and celebrating the Holy Eucharist on most Sundays at Christ Church in Medway and I will be doing likewise at Saint Paul's. We plan to do a pulpit exchange on a regular basis to be sure that we can both respond to pastoral care needs appropriately. I expect that fairly early in the year the collaborative [\(cont. on page 4\)](#)

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.*

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.*

In this Issue

Worship	2
Sunday Worship	2
Collaborative Ministry	2
Prayer Group	2
Flowers on the Altar.....	3
Electronic Devotionals.....	3
Adult Bible Study	3
Upcoming Events	3
Annual Meeting – January 27 th	3
Members needed for Collaborative Council.....	3
Wise Words	4
Message from Fr. Mike (cont.).....	4
Serving on Vestry.....	4
Clues to aging well	5
Altar Guild	5
Choir	5
Hospitality	5
Outreach	6
Project Just Because.....	6
Helping St. Paul’s Church	6
Your Vestry	6
Epistle/Communications	6
Just for kids.....	7

May the true joy of Christmas Day
resonate within each of us as we
welcome Christ and
welcome each other.
May abundant
blessings be yours.

This is Christmas: not
the tinsel, not the
giving and receiving,
not even the carols,
but the humble heart
that receives anew
the wondrous gift, the Christ.

—Frank McKibben



Worship

*Lord of all, enable us to always be
ready for the fulfillment of history
when "the coming of the Lord is near"*

Make us holy, as you are holy. Amen..

Christmas Worship at Saint Paul’s

- Dec. 20th 7:30PM - A Blue Christmas
- Dec. 23rd 10:30AM - Advent Four and Holy
Baptism
- Dec. 24th 4:00PM - Christmas Eve Family
Service
- Dec. 24th 7:00PM - Christmas Eve Lessons
and Carols (Grace UMC)
- Dec. 24th 10:00PM - Christmas Eve Holy
Eucharist (Grace UMC)
- Dec. 25th 9:30AM - Christmas Day Blessing
of the Toys

Sunday Worship

The Sunday worship schedule is centered on the Holy Eucharist, Rite II at 10:30AM. This service is celebrated for the first three Sundays of the month. 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.

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

Collaborative Ministry

The Hopkinton-Medway Collaborative Ministry (HMCM) continues to define itself and how it will operate to most effectively support the ministries of both St. Paul’s and Christ Church’s parishes. To read more of the HMCM, please browse to it’s website at:

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

Prayer Group

The Prayer group, led by Lori Robak and Sue Ramsley, meets regularly on Tuesdays at 9:45AM in Fr. Mike’s office. Please join them any Tuesday for the entire hour, or just to stop in to request prayer together for a

specific concern. All are welcome to join this informal prayer time, praying silently or aloud.

If you have a prayer request, please call Sue at 508-881-5361 or Lori at 508-435-3353 or visit the prayer website at:

<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.

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 Dianne Belamarich at (508)397-9487 or the church office (508)435-4536.

Electronic Devotionals

There are many good devotional websites available these days. For instance, a number of devotional sites can be found at:

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

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.

Adult Bible Study

Held on Sunday evenings at 5:00pm, the group will be using a 12 week study guide entitled "David – Developing a Heart for God". If interested, please call or email Amy Kent at (508)435-0221 or aandjkentfamily@comcast.net

All are welcome!

Upcoming Events

JANUARY

Annual Meeting – January 27th

The St. Paul's annual meeting will be held on Sunday, January 27th directly after the 10:30AM 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

Members needed for Collaborative Council

At the 2008 Annual Parish Meeting the membership of Saint Paul's will be asked to approve the Collaborative Covenant for the Hopkinton-Medway Collaborative Ministry. This action will launch Saint Paul's and Christ Church in Medway into a new life of linking up with each other to empower ministries that are beyond the current capabilities of either parish by itself. Saint Paul's needs three members and one alternate to serve on the HMCM Collaborative Council. The council is planned to meet at least three times a year, to craft an annual program, to budget for that program, and to evaluate the effectiveness of the collaborative ministry in carrying out that program. The Collaborative Council also needs a treasurer. Is one of these a ministry for you? Talk to Fr. Mike about it!

Wise Words

Want to provoke a warm response from others? Look in people's eyes and smile sincerely.

Faith isn't meant to be kept to oneself. It simply has to be shared in non-threatening ways and shown in loving actions.

Peace must begin within ourselves. Anger only provokes anger in others.

We cannot make enough of the virtue of trust. If we cannot be trusted, of what value are we?

Message from Fr. Mike (cont.)

ministry will be hiring an administrator, and the administrator and I will begin holding office hours in both parishes two days a week. By linking arms with Christ Church in this way, Saint Paul's should immediately begin to see the ability to reprioritize its financial resources and invest itself in ministry. This is good news too!

An essential component of a successful collaborative ministry is enthusiastic and effective lay ministry. As the clergy (Fr. David and I) move more firmly into "support" roles, it is "the priesthood of every believer" that will be moving to the center and taking its proper place. Now is the time for every member to step forward and claim the ministry for which they have been gifted and to which they have been called. In 2008 Saint Paul's vestry will continue to make decisions that will shape the life and ministry of the parish for years to come. Do you love the Lord and Saint Paul's and have a good business sense? Saint Paul's needs a new treasurer. Are there priorities that you would like to see the parish embrace? Saint Paul's needs three new vestry members. There are more "hands on" opportunities too. Do you love children and watching them grow in faith? Saint Paul's needs more adult Sunday School teachers. Do you love to sing

in the shower? Saint Paul's needs new voices in the choir. Do you feel called to administer and chalice or read lessons? Saint Paul's needs you to help lead services. Can you set a dinner table? Saint Paul's needs you on the Altar Guild.

In one of the great prayers of the church we give thanks that "everything old is being made new." It's happening right here at Saint Paul's—and that's good news!

Mike+

Serving on Vestry

When I first came to St. Paul's, I wasn't really sure what Vestry was. I knew it was "there" just not sure what "they" did, a sentiment that more than a few folks have confessed to sharing...

The Vestry meets to make management decisions on behalf of our church and parish. To help you understand, let me share a story with you as a means of comparison.

Think of the very first time you went to dinner at your husband's/wife's/significant other's family. You were probably using your best manners, and on good behavior, had a polite conversation, then went to sit down after dinner.

As you started to become a member of that family, your participation most probably changed - perhaps you started to bring a little something to the gathering (maybe a salad or dessert), or brought chairs in from the other room. As familiarity grew, that role changed to doing whatever was needed to help make the meal ready - from making a dish, to cleaning up; any and all in between. In fact, if you were to attend one of these dinners now, you would feel awkward if you did NOT help out in some capacity.

St. Paul's is your Church Family. It is important for everyone to participate in some

capacity in this family also - by giving us the gift and wisdom of various perspectives on issues that affect our church community. It is also healthy to have a continual renewal of thoughts/ideas added to the mix (you wouldn't want every family dinner to be Uncle Bob's green bean casserole, would you?)

For those of you that think you "don't have the time", consider this: Vestry meets once per month for 2 (two) hours - some of you will watch way more than 2 hour of football on TV today alone! If you have a favorite TV show that you watch once per week - that's 4 hours a month!

Vestry is a rewarding experience, I was surprised at how much more I got out of it than I originally expected.

Please reflect on your role here at St. Paul's - there are many who can benefit from your participation.

Oh and, we'll look forward to seeing you at the next dinner!

Clues to aging well

Whether or not we like it, "the days dwindle down to a precious few," as an old song puts it. We're aging daily and hourly. "The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ, moves on"

The question, sooner or later, is: How do we best handle the aging process?

It begins with keeping a healthy spirit. The body ages, but our spirits can remain vibrantly alive. We can keep spiritually alert by carrying on a conversation with God, truly listening more than talking. We can strengthen our spiritual life by attending worship services and reading the works of people who lived close to God, such as Mother Teresa, E. Stanley Jones, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and others.

Keeping one's body in tune through exercise and diet are also keys to aging well. But just as important are fellowship with others, working on interesting projects, engaging in family activities, learning something new and traveling.

Most importantly, remember that you're never too old to grow in love for others. After all, St. Paul tells us that love "bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends"

Altar Guild

The Altar Guild is a Parish ministry that is responsible for keeping the Church ready for its Sunday worship. The guild needs 6 to 8 people to give one hour per month, at their convenience, to set up the altar for Sunday worship, clean up afterward, and arrange the flowers for the Altar (no experience needed!!!). Please consider giving this simple gift of time and contact Ruth Warner at whitehaller2@comcast.net.

Choir

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

Hospitality

In typical Episcopalian style, we celebrate and enjoy fellowship at Coffee hour following our Sunday worship.

Grace Church begins coffee for their hospitality hour following their service and we clean up the coffee after our hospitality hour. The two coffee 'hours' are separate, which means we are always in need of volunteers as hosts. Hosting a coffee hour means bringing and setting up the goodies before the 10:30 service, keeping the coffee pots filled as needed, and cleanup afterward.

A sign up sheet is available outside the Kitchen in the parish hall.

On the second Sunday of each month, we hold a **Pot Luck Lunch** after the service. Check the website calendar for details.

Outreach

Project Just Because...

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

You can browse to their website for their needs and for information on how you might help those in need in our community:

www.projectjustbecause.org

Helping St. Paul's Church

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

Jay Jacobson	Senior Warden
Sue Ramsley	Junior Warden
Phil Robidoux	Treasurer
Mary Arnaut	Asst Treasurer
Dianne Belamarich	Clerk
Ruth Warner	Property
John Diercks	Stewardship
Peter Dittman	Epistle/Website
Steve Pelletier	Stewardship
Gretchen Carr	Hospitality

The vestry meets monthly, at 7PM on the 1st Wednesday of the month, in the Parish

Hall, with the next meetings scheduled for Wednesday, December 5th.

Copies of prior vestry meeting minutes may be found on the website. Browse to the link below for details on how to access the minutes:

<http://stpaulhopkinton.org/vestry.html>

As other minutes are posted, they will be announced via email.

Epistle/Communications

Once a month, typically mid-month, the Epistle is distributed electronically (as a .pdf file) and is also available on the St. Paul's Website (www.stpaulhopkinton.org). If you would like to receive the Epistle electronically, please send email to Peter Dittman at epistle@stpaulhopkinton.org.

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

[Editor's Note]

It is with sadness that I tell you of my resignation as Epistle editor and member of the Vestry. I would like you to know that I have found this ministry and my tenure on the vestry to be a deeply rewarding experience; far, far exceeding my expectations and helping me to explore my relationship with God in ways I would not have dreamed.

We are looking for someone to take over this ministry. This is a wonderful opportunity for someone who would like to get more involved in the Church and Parish activities. Please consider contributing your talent (and a few hours per month) to writing the Epistle.

In His Love,
-Peter Dittman



Just for kids

COUNTDOWN TO THE
New Year

Celebrate the blessings of the previous year and the hope of the New Year with this fun party idea and craft.

What you need:

- Brown paper lunch bags or colorful bags
- Construction paper
- Markers
- Glue
- Scissors
- Stickers (optional)
- Inexpensive prizes or treats (see ideas below)

What you do:

1. Before New Year's Eve, assemble a bag for every hour before midnight that you plan to celebrate.
2. Use construction paper and markers to make a clock with a different time for each bag.
3. Glue a clock onto each bag.
4. Decorate the bags with stickers or other designs.
5. Fill the bags with inexpensive prizes or treats, each accompanied by a Bible verse. Here are a few suggestions:
 - Plastic party-favor watches ("The LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore" Psalm 121:8, NIV.)
 - Bookmarks ("Devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture" 1 Timothy 4:13, NIV.)
 - Small notepads and pencils ("Let love and faithfulness never leave you ... write them on the tablet of your heart" Proverbs 3:3, NIV.)
 - Sweet treats ("Taste and see that the LORD is good" Psalm 34:8, NIV.)
 - Party noisemaker, in a bag to be opened at midnight ("Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth" Psalm 98:4, NRSV.)
6. Open each bag at the time shown on its clock.

Just for KIDS

IN WITH THE NEW

It's "time" for New Year's resolutions! We should always want to improve ourselves for God, looking to Jesus as our example. God will work with us and through us when we come to him in prayer.

Using the clock's hour hand, copy each word to help you complete 2 Corinthians 5:17, NIV.

" _____ , _____ is _____ , _____ is a _____
 _____ ; the _____ has _____ , the _____ has _____ !"

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17, NIV

Answer: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"