

November 2015

The Power of Gratitude....a Stewardship message

from Jennifer and André Williams, Stewardship Chairs

What is an Attitude of Gratitude? It is taking time each and every day to give thanks to God for the good things that blessed our lives in the last 24 hours. Simple, yes, but do not underestimate the power of this daily practice.

Do you know that 99.9% of creation is nothing more than vibration? In other words, things are not what they seem to the five senses. Vibration is energy in motion. When people send out a vibration of any kind, they are profoundly influencing their world in a positive or negative way. Look at this in another way. Feelings are vibrations. A good feeling resonates with positive (good) vibrations. A bad feeling resonates with negative (bad) vibrations that brings negative results.

Here is a question. What do you want in your life...good or bad vibrations? The answer, I assume, is "good" vibrations. So, if that is what you desire, practicing gratitude really brings good, powerful vibrations.

Consider this. When giving thanks, aren't you thinking about the good things that have come your way?

Most people experience many good things:

- ❖ Were you able to get out of bed this morning? Good!
- ❖ Did you cross a busy street safely? Good!

- ❖ Did you reach into your pocket and find a few forgotten coins or bills? Good!

You get the idea. There are hundreds, if not thousands, of events and resources daily that bless us. We all have many, many reasons for expressing gratitude.

Now, here is the payoff for gratitude. What you are grateful for increases. The better you feel about something, the more good vibrations you create.

Why do some people only concentrate on what they do not want, and then are surprised when what they do not want continues to show up? Now you know why. "Like attracts like." That's God's cosmic law. It's always working, and you can't change it.

So, taking time each day to be thankful is a powerful, spiritual practice that produces much fruit. Not only does it make you feel good inside, but it works wonders in attracting more of the things that you really want and like.

In the days leading up to Thanksgiving, promise yourself that now is the time to bring more blessings into your life. Take a few minutes every

day to practice gratitude for your many blessings. Appreciate them! Give thanks to God.

And now, by using the right too – gratitude – just imagine the life you can create and enjoy.

**Gratitude
and
Attitude
are not
challenges;
they are choices.**

-Robert Braathe

A Year of Gratitude

Commitment Sunday November 25, 2015

By now you have received your Stewardship letter and 2016 pledge card. Please return your card to St. Paul's in the supplied envelope, and either mail it to the church or place it in the collection plate on or before

Commitment Sunday, November 25, 2015.

We are grateful for your participation.

From the Rector...



We are well into our Stewardship Emphasis as we look ahead to 2016.

Jennifer and André Williams are leading and challenging us to consider Stewardship as a year-round practice and discipline of being a follower of

Jesus. Our theme is “A Year of Gratitude.”

From gratitude to God for our blessings flows generosity. Often we act out of self-protection, holding and grasping. These acts are self-defeating. A mindset of Gratitude and Generosity has surprising personal benefits, not that we give to gain. Those benefits are by-products, not the reason for being grateful and generous. That may surprise you.

Christian Smith and Hilary Davidson wrote a book, *The Paradox of Generosity: Giving We Receive, Grasping We Lose*. They identify five practices of people who are generous because they live from gratitude. These practices are: Voluntary financial giving; Volunteering time; Relational generosity (of one’s attention and emotions); Neighborly generosity (acts of kindness toward those around you); and Personal importance of generosity. From the attitude of gratitude and acts of generosity, the authors of the study document benefits that impact personal happiness, bodily health, purpose, decreased depression and increased personal growth. The goal is to develop lives of gratitude and generosity, to not reap benefits.

Not long ago I read of a youth director in a large, exclusive congregation. Because giving had fallen off, the head pastor hosted a meal for the top contributing families. The youth director was stunned that he was part of that group. What was going on in the lives of his teens and their parents? He began to have conversations about purpose and priorities with his youth and families about focusing on our life purposes and defining priorities. They went on to reflect on what they do beyond themselves that impacts others, including how service impacts and changes them.

People who feel valued and useful, who participate, contribute and are appreciated, feel gratitude. When we look people in the face, listen carefully to their words and what lies beneath the

surface, honor their feelings and thoughts, engage them in meaningful and authentic conversations, they feel valued, connected, and grateful. That is how God sees and loves us, and how God made us and this world.

Giving to the church in all the ways that you do is a gift we treasure. We are all in this together, building not a budget, but a kingdom; raising followers of Jesus, not merely pledges. Our varied gifts being used for God through this church are crucial. Money is part of the equation. Daily, as I said in a recent sermon, take a few moments to notice where God has been with and for you. Take a moment to say a simple prayer: “Thank you, Lord.”

If you can begin doing that, noticing what you may have been missing, you will cultivate a spirit of gratitude. From gratitude flows the spirit of generosity. That’s how we follow Jesus and inherit God’s kingdom and values.

Blessings in this season of reflection and recalibration of our lives and focus, Fr. Steve+



Evensong for the Feast of All Saints

- ❖ *Sunday, November 1, 4PM*
- ❖ *Forest Home Cemetery Chapel*
- ❖ *Rev. Dr. C. Steven Teague, Presiding*
- ❖ *The Choir of St. Paul’s Church*
- ❖ *Reception follows*



Advent 2015 begins on November 29...

In preparation of the birth of Jesus on Christmas Eve various events have been planned:

- ❖ The annual Advent Devotion Booklet, written by parishioners, will be available. **Mary Eagan** will be coordinating the project, with **Lee Matz** contributing photos.
- ❖ The Advent Wreath will be lit at each Sunday Service.
- ❖ The Thrift Shop's Boutique will be held on Sunday, December 6.
- ❖ There will be an intergenerational making of decorations and then decorating the Great Hall Christmas Tree on Sunday, December 13. Lunch will be served.
- ❖ The Festival of Lessons and Carols will be on Saturday, December 12. **Carol Deptolla** will coordinate.
- ❖ On Christmas Eve the children's pageant will be held at the 4PM Family Service. Major parts will be available for high school, middle school and older elementary children. Non-speaking "gift bringer" parts will be available for early elementary and younger children. Please contact **Jen Pennington**, at ejpaddington@yahoo.com, if you would like your child (children) to participate. Practices will be the four Sundays preceding Christmas Eve: November 29, December 6, 13 and 20. All will be held immediately after the 10:15AM service. Children who have "giftbringer" parts would only have to attend the December 20 practice.

WAIT: An Advent Reflective Retreat

Waiting is the thematic heart of Advent and of a retreat at the DeKoven Center, Racine. In a series of meditations punctuated by worship and ample time for reflection, this retreat is an invitation to enter the annual preparation for Jesus' Nativity with a renewed sense of the importance of waiting. The retreat begins with a gathering reception on Wednesday, December 2 at 5 PM and closes after breakfast on Friday morning. The hours follow the monastic pattern of prayer, Eucharist, meditation and silence. The conductor is Episcopal priest Rev. **Dr. Sam Portaro**, author of seven books, retired chaplain of the University of Chicago and a blogger. Price: \$200 includes all meals, 2 overnights and programs.

Adult Education Forums for November from Terry Zimmer

ALL SESSION BEGIN SUNDAY AT 9AM IN THE COMMUNITY ROOM



❖ On All Saints Day, **November 1**, **Jan Van Rensselaer**, Executive Director of *Forest Home Cemetery*, and **Lecia Johnson**, Chairman of the Board of Directors, will be with us to talk about changes that have taken place at the cemetery over the last three years, including new planning options such as green burial. Come hear more about what local historian **John Gurda** describes as not only a place to bury the dead, "but also as arboretum, sculpture garden, nature preserve and museum of local history."

❖ On **November 8** there will be a "surprise" speaker discussing *Gratitude*, the theme of this year's Stewardship Appeal.

❖ Join us on **November 15** and **29** when **David Zersen** presents *The Truth in the Creeds We Confess*. An October 2015 trip to Istanbul/Constantinople made Zersen think about the Church's Nicene Creed that was fashioned in four Ecumenical Councils and that we confess each Sunday. What were the challenges, battles, conclusions and continuing impact of these ancient debates? Fully illustrated with pictures from the settings where the Councils took place in 325, 381, 431 and 451.



DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME ENDS ON NOVEMBER 1!

New Endowment fund Announced...*from Jon Barsanti*

In September the Rector, Wardens and Vestry created a new fund to focus on St. Paul's current and future mission to benefit children and youth, either locally or wherever. Known as the St. Paul's Children and Youth Ministries Fund, it was created by consolidating three existing sources: **Julia Frances Camp Fund**, **Stark Sunday School Fund**, and a bequest from the Estate of **Alice Riley** to serve the purposes specified in the **Alice Riley** bequest of several years ago. All three of these gifts expressed a wish on behalf of the donors that children, the Sunday School and/or related ministries were to benefit. In the bequest governed by Ms. Riley's Last Will and Testament, a clause stated: "...it is my wish that these monies be used for the benefit of children either locally or wherever..." Distributions from the fund made will be used in fulfilling St. Paul's Church's mission to benefit children and youth. It is the hope that some meaningful portion of this fund will always be maintained as a permanent endowment fund for the stated purposes.

The creation of this fund serves as a reminder that, over the years, St. Paul's has been blessed with several funds serving a variety of purposes, all of which accept contributions of any amount at any time. As you begin to review your year-end tax planning you may like to consider a contribution to one or more of the following funds:

- ❖ **Altar:** St. Paul's Altar Guild Endowment Fund established for purposes designated by the Altar Guild that go beyond normal operating expenses associated with sacramental worship.
- ❖ **Building and Related:** St. Paul's Building Maintenance and Restoration Fund established to endow the future financial requirements of maintaining, restoring, and preserving our historic structure. St. Paul's Stained Glass Window Fund established for the purpose of supporting the stained glass window needs at St. Paul's.
- ❖ **General:** the Unrestricted Undesignated Endowment Fund sustains St. Paul's through periods of cash needs beyond its pledge receipts and open offerings. All bequests and memorial funds, unless otherwise specified by the donors, automatically become a part of this fund. Annual withdrawals are limited, by Vestry mandate, to no more than 5% of the average of the last twenty calendar quarters' fair market values.

- ❖ **Music:** St. Paul's Music Ministry Endowment Fund established to endow the major music programs at St. Paul's.
- ❖ **Organ:** St. Paul's Organ Endowment Fund established to endow future maintenance requirements of our new organ.
- ❖ **Outreach:** St. Paul's Outreach Endowment Fund established with a preference that distributions be used to support parish involvements in feeding the hungry, serving the homeless and other organizations serving the needy. This fund is regularly supported by contributions from the Thrift Shop, Lenten Discipline efforts, and gifts to the Birthday Club and from other interested members of the parish.
- ❖ **Special Needs:** St. Paul's Rector's Special Needs Endowment established to provide funds, at the discretion of the Rector and with the advice and consent of the Vestry, believed necessary to address special missions, evangelism needs and outreach efforts of St. Paul's.
- ❖ **Youth:** St. Paul's Children and Youth Ministries Fund – NEW (see above). St. Paul's Youth Music Endowment Fund (formerly Choristers of St. Cecilia Endowment Fund) supports the youth music program at St. Paul's.

Attitudes of gratitude lead to the creation of these funds.

Under consideration: the creation of St. Paul's Technology Fund, a fund that would provide the monies needed from time to time to update various technological innovations vital to the mission of St. Paul's in the future. Please let us know if you might be interested in providing seed money for such a fund.

Also under consideration: The creation of a giving category known as Endowment Builders, a giving group similar to The Heritage Guild of St. Paul. Members would be those persons who make contributions, of \$50 or more, to any of the Funds listed above. This would be an annual listing and would appear in the Annual Report to the Parish.

Comments are welcomed: telephone or E-mail **Jon Barsanti**, 414-224-0339 or jbarsanti@wi.rr.com.

"The greatest thing this generation can do is lay a few stepping stones for the next generation."
-Charles F. Kettering

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SUNDAYS

8AM, Holy Eucharist

10:15AM,

Holy Eucharist with music

Nursery service available at

10AM

WEDNESDAYS

7:30AM, Eucharist

12 Noon, Eucharist & Lectionary

Study

MISSION STATEMENT

We are a community of faith being transformed through Christ to embody the

healing presence of God's love to one another, our city and the world.

Outreach Update...



Master shopper **Charles Camilli**, on behalf of the Outreach Committee, recently spent \$500 on a collection of personal needs for The Gathering that included 8 sleeping bags, 8 pairs of flannel lined pants and 12 cans of beef stew. These he delivered along with items donated by parishioners that included 29 pairs of socks, a grocery bag of toiletries, 3 lightweight jackets and 29 cans of beef stew.

All of this is a result of a decision made by the Outreach Committee in June 2014 that approved an expenditure of \$500, four times a year, to purchase personal supplies for guests of The Gathering and to request parishioners to also donate supplies.

Saturday, November 7, is the last opportunity for members of St. Paul's to volunteer this year. A sign-up sheet can be found in the Information Center.

The **Book Club** will meet at 7PM on Tuesday, November 10, in the St. Paul's Library Room to discuss chapters 9 through 14 of *Strange Glory* by **Charles Marsh**.



Techie news for St. Paul's Facebook fans...

There has been lots of confusion among Facebook fans as to where to find St. Paul's page. It seems three pages have been created. The official page can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/stpaulschurch>. The other two pages will be consolidated into the official page.

Thank you...

Greg Kostka and all of the volunteers who welcomed 846 guests at the Doors Open event in September. Gregg coordinated the church's participation. This is a record for St. Paul's.