

# THE Apostle

A NEWSLETTER FOR & ABOUT THE PEOPLE OF

Saint Paul's  
CHURCH

December 2019

Mark your calendars!  
**Thrift Shop Christmas Boutique**  
**SUNDAY**

**December 8**

**Members Shopping, 9AM - 2PM**  
**Community Shopping, 12:30PM - 2PM**

**TUESDAY**

**December 10, 10AM - Noon**

**Great Hall of St. Paul's Church**  
**Holiday Decorations! Gifts! Treasures Galore!**

*Funds raised by the Thrift Shop  
support the outreach philanthropy  
of St. Paul's Church*



## All are invited to Advent Suppers

The Advent silent candlelight suppers this year will be on Wednesdays, December 4, 11 and 18. We will gather at 5:15PM in silence in the Community Room. At 5:30, a simple supper of soup and bread will be served.

There will be some readings, but mostly silence, to pause and reflect on the real meaning of a season that becomes more secular and hectic every year. At 6:15, we will conclude with Compline.

There will be two sign-up sheets, one for attendance, and another for those who wish to bring soup or bread. Please feel free to invite guests.

If you have questions, please contact **Kathy Thome** at 414-313-5808 (cell).

## Greening and Flowering the Church



All members of St. Paul's are invited to Assist with the decorating the Church for Christmas. The event will take place immediately following the 10:15AM Service on December 22. More information will come in the Sunday bulletin.

**Volunteers needed...**

**From Lisa and Melva**

The Gathering's bag lunch date is December 27, at St. Paul's. You can email [lisaandmelva@gmail.com](mailto:lisaandmelva@gmail.com) with any questions; also, The Gathering now has a mail slot in the kitchen. We will be handing out the bagged lunches at Running Rebels, located at 1300 W Fond du Lac Avenue.

Donations of tote bags/back packs that you may have but are not using would be appreciated.

**Choral Evensong  
for the  
First Sunday of Advent  
December 1  
3:30 PM  
Organ Prelude  
Canon Joseph A. Kucharski  
Director of Music and Liturgy  
4PM Choral Evensong  
St. Paul's Choir  
Tedd L. King  
Associate Organist**

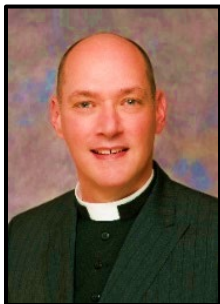
You are invited to contribute to **St. Paul's Christmas flower fund** in thanksgiving for personally significant occasions in your life, to honor a living family member or friend, or to celebrate the life of a deceased family member or other significant person in your life. **Please attach this form, with your donation, and give it to an usher, place it in the collection plate, put it in the Parish Office mailbox in the kitchen or mail it to the church. All donations must be received by TUESDAY, DECEMBER 17.**

**Please print your name and intention as you wish it to appear in the Christmas bulletin!**

Christmas Flower Donor(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Amount attached \$ \_\_\_\_\_

In memory of \_\_\_\_\_

In thanksgiving for \_\_\_\_\_



## From the Rector...

We all experience confusion. It is a very real aspect of our human lives. We attempt to make sense of so many occurrences, and encounters and our rational minds want things to be ordered. We do not like it when things are at odds or in tension. That is what we usually understand as confusion. We do want things con-fused or brought together in unity. This is the way we find and express meaning in our lives and the world in which we are incarnated.

During the past month, confusion has visited me, creating both tension and unity. It is weather related, and whether or not global warming is to blame, it has been arresting. Cold and snow came early, and though I love them both, my sense of seasonal time has been upset. I had to remind myself that it was only the beginning of November. Emotionally and spiritually, it seemed like the week before Christmas or the middle of January. With that came a slight anxiety about being behind and not prepared. It was as if time was running out even though the clock has just been set back an hour. It has been good for me to have my sense of the expected overthrown as I face Advent and the beginning of another year in Christianity. If the belief that God entered into human existence in the person of Jesus, who challenges our experience of the normal, does not confuse us, then the con-fusion of Christmas is not really much to celebrate.

Ten years ago, when I lived in Portland, Oregon the confusion of Advent and Christmas became most real to me. The snow came early. And though I loved it the same as I do now, it was a challenge in a city with extreme hills, unlawful salt nor snowplows. The attempt to drive amid those who can ski down Mt. Hood but not manage even an inch under their tires was futile. From one Sunday to the next, I was forced to stay home from church or face a two-hour commute of only a few miles. On the Saturday before Christmas, the snow started early. I watched from the French doors as the gardens became buried. It snowed ceaselessly all day and all night. As I looked across the lawn at buried bush and fence post, I remember thinking it would never go away. Though I knew it was not permanent, all I could see was the eternity of it being there. Going nowhere and me being there. Going nowhere. Christmas Eve came with more snow. I put the prime rib in the freezer for another feast. I lit the fire and watched midnight mass on television. I went to bed. Christmas Day was spent alone as I steamed the puddings that had lost their place in the queue of preparations for a lovely Christmas. I had simply run out of time.

Now I had all the time in the world. For the next week I stayed in. I breakfasted late and napped in the afternoon always, showering promptly by four and moving into the "drawing room" for drinks by 5:30PM. But, no one ever came. Just me and Sebastian (my Christmas tree) in front of the fire. The conversations were rich, though they took place in the silence. It became a thrill each day to go on a scavenger hunt through the cupboards and create a more exotic concoction of food than I could ever have. It is amazing the bounty that exists around us that it takes a disaster ("against our stars") to reveal. That confused Christmas became the most con-fused of any Christmas I have known. As you plan for Christmas, and little storms destroy you, look into those disasters and find in those stars the Incarnation – the intersection of the timeless with time.

Brad+

*The Rector is at home*

**You are cordially invited to Fr. Brad's home  
for wine and hor' d'oeuvres  
from two to four o'clock in the afternoon  
on Saturday, December 15  
2312 East Linnwood Avenue  
Milwaukee**



## A few giving tips...

*From Gregory Kostka, Chair Planned Giving & Receiving*

The holiday season and year end planning often times involve the act of giving.

Giving takes many forms, such as prayer, volunteering, and of course money. When considering the financial aspect of giving,

remember that there are different ways to do this. The gifting of appreciated securities in lieu of cash may offer better value and tax benefits, depending on your circumstances. Please consult your tax advisor to see if this makes sense for you.

The book club will meet on Tuesday, December 10 at 7PM in the Community Room to discuss Phyliss Tickle's book *Emergence Christianity*. The discussion leader will be Roger Hansen. All are Welcome.



## Christmas Services at St. Paul's

December 24, Christmas Eve...Holy Eucharist  
with Carols, 4PM

December 25, Christmas Day...  
Festive

Choral Eucharist, 10AM



## Mark your calendars for Epiphany Lessons and Carols at St. Paul's Sunday, January 5, 3:30 PM Organ Recital, 4PM Carol Service

On January 6, twelve days after Christmas, the Western church celebrates Epiphany. The word *epiphany* comes from a Greek word that means "to manifest" or "to show," and on this date the church has traditionally commemorated the visit of the magi and the "epiphany." What epiphany, you ask?

God's manifestation to the Gentiles. God showed himself in the person of Christ to the Gentiles. That's what the holiday is all about. So, go ahead and tell your boss that you'll take Epiphany off because it is an important religious holiday for you.

Popular Epiphany customs include Epiphany singing, chalking the door, having one's house blessed, consuming Three Kings Cake, winter swimming, as well as attending church services.

It is customary for Christians in many localities to remove their Christmas decorations on Epiphany Eve (Twelfth Night), although those in other Christian countries historically remove them on Candlemas, the conclusion of Epiphany tide. According to the first tradition, those who fail to remember to remove their Christmas decorations on Epiphany Eve must leave them untouched until Candlemas, that will fall in February, the second opportunity to remove them; failure to observe this custom is considered inauspicious.

Phone 414.276.6277

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**Rector**

Rev. Sheila Scott, **Deacon**

John Bauer, **Sr. Warden**

Thomas Goode, **Jr. Warden**

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**SUNDAYS**

8AM, Holy Eucharist

10:15AM

Holy Eucharist with music

Nursery service available at 10AM

**THURSDAYS**

Evening Prayer, 5PM

**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.*

## Senior Wardens Report from John E. Bauer

I am pleased to be able to share with the St. Paul's membership the substance and outcomes of our most recent Vestry meeting, held Wednesday, November 20.

The recently conducted stewardship workshops generated a good amount of constructive feedback. Using the guide for appreciative interviewing, participants listened to what others said they value about St. Paul's. We were struck by how consistently things like "hospitality," "welcoming," "excellent music," and "outstanding homilies" were mentioned. Of course, when asked to provide three wishes for St. Paul's, the major themes focused on getting more members, raising more money to do more outreach, and attracting more families with children. How we can all work together to actually make these wishes come true will require much more conversation.

Parking in our lot on Sundays by non-attendees is an ongoing problem. Volunteers are sought who can provide about 20 minutes of "hospitality coaching" before the 10:15AM service. Signup sheets will be available for members to indicate a date they can be available to "welcome" our neighbors.

The Vestry accepted a recommended organizational structure which is intended to clearly map out the administrative committees, standing committees, and all the various groups and activities that meet and do good stuff at St. Paul's and to show lines of reporting and accountability. In addition, charters for each committee will be reviewed in December which lay out their purpose, membership, terms of service, responsibilities and activities.

Finally, the Vestry passed a motion to engage Holy Cow Consulting (no kidding!) to conduct an online capacity and effectiveness survey. We believe, after having adopted a strategic plan and having focused on a few major items, it is time for us to do a deep dive into congregational culture and capacity as a way to help direct our strategic thinking and acting in the new year.

Last, I am more than pleased to share our financial standing through October showing that YTD revenues are almost \$24,000 ahead of budget, and expenses are under by about \$1000.