

The Mars Hill Proclaimer

Published by the People of St. Paul's Episcopal Church
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In the bleak midwinter . . . The Season of the Epiphany

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From Mthr. Wright

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ -

This season of Epiphany always seems to me to come upon us so quickly. It feels like an in-between time. We are just finished with Christmas -- some decorations may be lingering. Already we seem to be thinking ahead to Lent and hoping for spring. So Epiphany time is sometimes a bit overlooked. It seems especially important this year to live into the meaning of Epiphany right at this time. This has been a difficult year and now we are challenged with the economic gloom and discouragement of this bitterly cold and snowy weather. In the midst of that, Jesus is and always will be the light of the world. We have celebrated the birth of the Christ Child, we commemorate the visit of the Magi who followed the star. We celebrate Jesus' own Baptism and renew our Baptismal Promises.

In that Light, Jesus shows himself to us. We needn't look far for signs of the manifestation of Emmanuel -- God with us. We only need to stop and look over our shoulder and know that he is already right there with us.

We move into a time of uncertainty in our world and in our community. There is anxiety, but there is also hope. Hope in the future. Hope in our parish. Hope in our world. And we can rejoice as we live in the present moment.

We can rejoice and give thanks for the generous hearts and loving hands of so many people who work and pray so hard here at St. Paul's. Those generous hearts were manifest at Christmas in the gifts to Safe Passages, Nets for Life and the generous gift you gave me. Thank you!

It was manifest in all those who worked so hard to decorated the church so beautifully and sing so wonderfully. The music of the choir, the children and the musicians lifted not only our voices but our hearts. We can celebrate the many gifts here at St. Paul's.

Thank you for all you do. Thank you for allowing me to minister with you.

Let the Light of Christ shine in your lives.

Peace and blessings
Gwynne +

A Letter from Norma Fitzgerald

To My Dear Church Family/Friends:

Your kindness, prayers, and good wishes have meant so much to me. Thanks for your cards, calls, visits, flowers, and goodies – the many ways you have supported me and brought cheer to my days. Special thanks to those who helped me when I fell and stayed with me until I was settled.

I miss being at church but appreciate priests and parishioners who have brought Holy Communion to me.

*With thanks and love, **Norma***

Transitions

Birthdays for January and February

January		February	
6	Lukas Stubblefield	3	Maureen Gerrity
10	Lynn Marie Roberts	6	Sharon Downen
15	Janice Larson	6	Roy Mason
15	Joseph Newport	12	Bobby Russell
27	Michael Duffy	17	Kurt McMahon
		17	Blythe Stason
		19	Tyson Fogel
		25	Gretchen Schlabach
		26	Freyja Johns

Marriage Anniversaries for January and February

January 21, 1967	George & Jane Nenonen
January 28, 1978	Al and Peggy Newby
February 10, 1946	Bob & Audrey Brown
February 15, 1958	John & Carol Krusbe

In Memoriam

Alfred Schilt
January 9, 2009

Our New Lay Officers

Convention Delegates:	Ellen Anderson & Vince McMahon
Convention Alternates:	Henry & Eva Leonard
Counters (Sunday collection:	Betsy Pool & Anna Dee Lastick
Junior Warden:	Vince McMahon
Treasurer:	Dick Downen
Vestry:	
Beverly Smith	3 year term
Brad Cripe	3 year term
Roy Mason	1 year term
Endowment Committee:	George Nenonen

Announcements

MIDWEEK SERVICE

The Holy Eucharist is celebrated on Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. and features a Liturgy of Healing.

ANGLICAN ADVANCE is the newspaper of the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago. If you would like to receive it at home, please contact the parish office, and I will submit your name and address.

+Ash Wednesday - February 25+

There will be two services on this day, both celebrations of the Holy Eucharist with imposition of ashes. The first will be at noon. The second, at 6 p.m., will feature the St. Paul's Adult/Youth Choir. A soup supper will follow in the parish hall.

Bowl for Kids' Sake

This annual fundraiser for the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program will be held the weekend of March 6 - 8. Team St. Paul will bowl Sunday, March 8th, at Four Seasons Sports in Sycamore. We always have fun at this event, and EVERYONE is welcome to join the team! If you would like to bowl, please add your name to the sign-up sheet on the table in the parish hall and take a pledge envelope. If you aren't up to bowling, please consider sponsoring a bowler for this worthy cause. For more information contact Maureen Gerrity at 815-748-1718. Thank you!

Remembering... On Sunday, February 15 there will be a memorial service for the victims of the NIU shootings last year. The service will be at 3 p.m. at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 830 N. Annie Glidden Road in DeKalb. All are welcome.

Calling All Hotheads!

***It has been the custom to have a chili cook-off party on a Sunday in Lent after the 10:30 service. Usually we are all getting pretty tired of winter and need some fun to raise our spirits. Since we have begun having a combined service once a month, how about having our chili cook-off on the combined service Sunday in March!
Is anyone willing to be the coordinator?***

Our Epiphany Journey

In the Advent issue of the Proclaimer, we were urged to use the time before Christmas to engage in quiet reflection as preparation – preparation for the birth of our Lord and preparation for the tasks ahead. During Advent, we were urged to ask questions of ourselves as a parish; these are the questions *the Search Committee* wants us to think about: *Who are we? Who do we hope to be? What is important to us as a parish? What do we want in a priest? What will a priest see in us?*

We are now in the season and spirit of Epiphany, when the Wise Men journeyed – where they did not know – but when they followed their guiding light to see where it would take them. Perhaps we may see the Annual Meeting as the start of our own journey, a time during which we may and we can start to respond to those questions, guided by the light of prayer and work. During the Annual Meeting, we heard reports from committees, but it was my hope that we will also get started on the process of addressing the questions, the process of learning who we are and what we can be – essential questions as necessary preparation for choosing a priest. David Anderson told us that we should begin responding to those questions in the small group sessions that will be held in the next two weeks.

Perhaps one way to go about the business of learning who we are is to examine some of our routines, ones which can be changed without damage to our faith and theology. Sometimes we can see ourselves only when we try something new. When Mthr. Wright sang from the pulpit, she showed us that change can be refreshing and enervating. At the 10:30 January 9th service, as we renewed our baptismal vows as required by the church calendar, Mthr. Wright added an innovation by providing us the chrism oil that accompanies baptism, blessed by Bishop Lee, and each of us dipped our finger in the oil and crossed our foreheads with it. It was fragrant and powerful, a combination one might say of baptism itself.

Using Mthr. as a model of experimentation, innovation, and, well, a willingness to take a risk, I thought we might consider the search period itself as a time for experiment. As I challenged myself to think of some experiments, I came up with the following alternate routines and practices:

Sitting close to each other during worship, this closeness made possible by roping off seating. What advantage is there in this? I think it would give us a more intimate setting, since we are now a small parish (with hopes of growing, of course). We will be warmer(!). And, it has been my experience as a teacher, that sitting together rather than dispersed throughout a large setting serves to create a stronger sense of community. I have noticed that in other churches the only time people are spread out is when they are engaged in individual prayer, but when they are engaged in worship, they sit together.

As we are a small congregation, we have even more need to be together (as I see it). Frankly, sometimes our dispersed body feels lonely to me. And I bet it looks lonely, also, to visitors. By the way, we welcome children among us. If they begin to fuss or to cry and thereby make their parents uncomfortable, then the parents can move with the babies if they choose, but parents should know that their children and babies are welcome in this more family seating.

Having ushers – well – usher us to our seats. This is a courtesy both to regular members and to newcomers and also a pragmatic way to bring all of us forward and seated close to each other.

At least a once-per-month single service/mass. Why do we have to wait for the occasional fifth Sunday to do this? We can alternate between the early and later services. How about the first Sunday of every month? -- For me, the single service has the advantage, as above, of reminding us of the whole family of St. Paul's, of renewing our sense of who we are.

An additional communion practice of offering each other communion. This is not a new practice in the history of the church. Other churches do this routinely, and we do this during Lent. In this alternate practice, the priest continues to say the mass and bless the elements. She and the sub-deacon then begin offering the bread and wine; we then continue to serve each other. – What is the advantage of this? I think it connects to the suggestions above: this practice offers the possibility that we will experience a greater sense of connection to each other as members of the body of Christ and of the family of St. Paul's. Communion is a special and sacred family meal, and like many good family meals, it can overcome separateness and sustain love. I am not suggesting this as a substitute for our current practice but as an addition to it. The schedule can vary. For instance, perhaps the single-service time could also be the time we offer each other the elements. I don't know about the specific time of the month, but I do think the time (in the life of St. Paul's) is right – the time when we are small and searching is perhaps the most compelling time to initiate this additional practice.

Which way to Canterbury? One of our gifts to the university community is the little path at the edge of our lawn, the path a shortcut for many students (and some others) to the university. I thought it might be useful for us to have a welcome sign with church hours announced it and a short prayer for students. You know, sort of a medieval *this way to Canterbury* kind of sign. Perhaps even a small bench.

And, while we're at it, how about chapel hours? I thought it might be an interesting experiment to have a few hours when the church is opened for prayer and quiet reflection, with a pot of coffee and perhaps a small refreshment available during those hours. Individual parishioners could volunteer to be there during these hours, both to protect the church and also to be available to chat with visitors, if they wish for conversation. This might be one way to increase our service to students and, possibly, to gain some new members. I don't think it would cost very much to do this.

An additional Annual Meeting to talk about concerns in addition to finances. A church should not have to wait until it searches for a priest to talk about its programs, purpose, and hopes.

So, what do you think? These are suggestions. Can we think about them and talk about them? And are there others you'd like to suggest? Please think about them and jot them down on the comments and suggestion board in the church hall. Please also think about our assets – broadly defined – and jot them down there, too.

Ora et labora (prayer and work).

In addition to the prayer, reflection, and discussion we will engage in as we search for a priest, we will also need to do other preparatory work: painting the house! That is to say, the rectory and parish hall, so we'll be at our shiniest best when invited priests join us. Here is the information from Jennie Marshall Cummings:

Hello. Here are some updates on painting for the ones who have volunteered, so far.

Looking for Painting Volunteers

Supplies provided but extras encouraged.

The plan is to paint one day per month to finish the Rectory and then do the Parish Hall.

Starting: Rectory, February 7, Saturday 9-12:00.

Volunteers:

Blue taping and woodwork cleaning the Friday and week, beforehand: Jennie and Rick Johns.

The walls are in good shape with minor spackling needed.

Rhys is making extra keys tomorrow. Anna Dee will have a key copy in the office.

Possible Painters:

Vince/Pat McMahan; Larry Retherford, Jennie/Bill Cummings; Ellie Klenke/Dick Zen Zen.

Lunch at 11:30:

Marilyn Sjöholm providing casserole. See Jennie Cummings or Rhys Prall to sign-up to volunteer time or supplies. 815.758.6873 marshalljennieL@aol.com

Getting to Know You

Speaking of college students, I thought it would be timely to remind ourselves that we do have one college student with us routinely at St. Paul's: **Colin Prall**. Many of us have known Colin and watched him grow up at St. Paul's. A student at Columbia College in Chicago, Colin is nonetheless with us often during the academic year. He is a film major. (I have said to him on more than one occasion that we would be willing subjects for a film project about St. Paul's [perhaps I shouldn't say *we*]; perhaps one of these days he can film us in worship or in a small group meeting during the search process.)

I don't mean to pressure Colin. Just having him with us is good enough. And we should take note that he continues to serve St. Paul's. During Advent and Christmas, he served as acolyte and was seen helping his mother, Jocelyn Prall, prepare the altar. He seems to me to perform his service with reverence and grace. He is a gift to our church.

Thank you, Colin.

A Touch of History Once Again: A Report by Rosemarie Ostberg.

Ten years ago, someone suggested that we have a series from the official document below in our *Proclaimer* and I was asked to edit the series. So I started at the end of 1998 and am going to print these again because we have many new people, and it is good every now and then to review history. Also, someone might be interested in working on our history from 1977 to the present; if so, please call Rosemarie at 815-758-5216. I am even going to print my 1977 introduction, as it almost fits our present circumstances. The document is entitled

**November 6, 1977 Edition of the History of the Church of St. Paul
on the Occasion of the Dedication and Consecration
of the Third Edifice of The Church of St. Paul
by the Right Reverend Quentin E. Primo, Jr., Suffragan Bishop, Diocese of Chicago**

Here is the introduction, followed by the short history through 1867:

As we look to the Vestry for guidance in the affairs of St. Paul's Church and to the Search Committee to somehow find just the right priest for our parish, it might give us some perspective to look at our early and very uncertain beginnings.

The late 1850's in DeKalb County were most difficult economically. The nationwide Panic of 1857 saw nearly every merchant in the county forced to suspend payment. The next year was another in the regular course of those wet seasons where were noted as coming every seventh year. Farmers harvested less than half the usual crop.

In the midst of this troubled period, the first known historical reference to an Episcopal congregation in DeKalb, Illinois, was written by the Rev. Mr. Warren H. Roberts, in 1858. (It was customary to refer to the priest as "mister" at this time.) As he wrote in the Journal of the Convention of the Diocese of Illinois:

I have omitted the weekly evening service, and availing myself of the Season for good traveling, have officiated at different points in the country around, especially at DeKalb and Cortland, two points on the Galena and Chicago Union Railroad. In each of these places I hold a service alternate Sundays. I have had much to cheer me in my present field of labor.

Mr. Roberts was at this time rector of St. Peter's Church, Sycamore. He also held occasional services in the villages of Genoa and South Grove, the latter no longer in existence. This ministry constituted an area of approximately 100 square miles. From a 1917 article in the DeKalb Chronicle, we further learn that these occasional services were held in the town of DeKalb in 1858 and as fruit of his untiring efforts, the parish at Alban was organized in this community. The date of this organization is not known, but it is of interest that in the first parish register of St. Paul's, this heading is written: *Book of Minutes of the Parish of St. Alban*. But little is known of the life of this early congregation.

Unfortunately, little is likely to be learned, for even the first parish register of the present Mission of St. Paul's is lost. Apparently, however, services were held in DeKalb as long as Mr. Roberts was Rector of St. Peter's, his post until 1863. A Diocesan roster of 1858 suggests that this DeKalb congregation was recognized, though its status as parish or mission cannot be established.

For the next two years, there appears to be a decline in the activity of St. Alban's, perhaps as a result of the increased preoccupation with the Civil War and the succession of rectors at St. Peter's. The

diocesan journals, however, do suggest a renewal after the end of the Civil War. From the 1865 volume, we have this entry by the Rev. Charles J. Hendly:

“I am making an effort to have services at DeKalb, a town six miles distant from here, as there are some church families there. I hope to introduce the church and feel somewhat hopeful of success.”

And from an 1867 diocesan journal, a statement by the Rev. George F. Cushman, D.D.

“In connection with St. Peter’s, service is held every Sunday afternoon in DeKalb, and if they can be continued, there is good prospect of establishing a Parish in the growing town. The Rev. Cushman reported ministering to twelve communicants.”

This story of our history will continue. Rosemarie has written it through 1977 and suggests that someone else “might be interested” in working on the history from 1977 to the present. If so, please contact Rosemarie Ostberg at 815-758-5216.

Organizations and Activities

How lovely, how witty, how sisterly. This is my way of saying how much I enjoyed the December E.C.W. (Episcopal Church Women) meeting at the home of Marilyn Sjolholm. Marilyn’s talent as a decorator engaged our eyes, and her gifts as a hostess made us feel cozy and comfortable as we enjoyed her table. There were about 25 of us, a strong number. The camaraderie among the women was strong, and the repartee between Marilyn and Rosemarie Ostberg fun to see and hear. ***It is not unimportant*** that we women, coming from different backgrounds and generations, have found a sense of family with each other. I know that for me, whose siblings are now gone (*may light perpetual shine upon them*), the friendship offered by my comrades at St. Paul’s fills an important hole in my life. I am grateful to the women of St. Paul’s (and to the men), and I am sure others feel the same. A welcome is extended to all the women of St. Paul’s to participate in ECW. There is no joining; simply come. Look for the schedule on the tables in the church hall.

For now, thanks to all who helped make our December meeting special, and, for the warmth of her hearth and heart, an especial thanks to Marilyn Sjolholm.

The next luncheon date will be February 21. You may sign up in the parish hall.

So, what goes on at the meetings of the ECM, *Episcopal Church Men*? (I just made up that acronym; there is no official *ECM*, but there is a St. Paul’s men’s group that meets once a month for breakfast at the Lincoln Inn.) ***I do not mean to take lightly*** the importance of men meeting together, sharing meals and conversation. The Proclaimer looks forward to reports on their activities and conversations. No sign up is necessary; all men of the parish are welcome. The group meets at Lincoln Inn on the third Saturday of the month at 8 a.m. The next breakfast is on February 21.

As the numbers of all – women, men, college students, children, babies -- are small, and as we begin to define ourselves in preparation for our search, ***the value of our being together*** becomes large. Formally or informally, our being together suggests these questions: *What do we find that we have in common? What do we gain from each other that makes our life at St. Paul’s important to us? What do we have that we want to share with visitors and newcomers?*

Our being with each other and our effort to respond to these questions may have implications for our search for a priest and our invitation to others to join us in worship and community.

Book Notes

A Review of Speaking of Faith, by Krista Tippitt (Viking 2007)

Marilyn Cleland

I don’t know about you, but as for myself, I would say that I am one whose Christian identity, since I was 17 years old, has been a challenge to myself. If we have to live within a system of belief/non-belief (as much of the world seems wont), then, at 17, I was ready to cast myself with the non-believers. As such, I announced to my mother one Sunday morning that I was not going to church anymore. But later, after many years of missing worship and even longing to return, I happened upon St. Paul’s Episcopal Church. And I kept coming back. I didn’t know or care on which side of the binary line I stood, but I was homesick for the church and so I returned to it.

Recently, I read a book by a woman who has taken somewhat the same journey. Krista Tippett, whose NPR program, *Speaking of Faith*, has written a book of the same title, a journey that she calls “a chronicle of a change of mind” (Viking, 2007). In it, she does not so much argue against the old binary model of faith as, instead, offer an alternate way of experiencing faith, what I might call a *living in the multitudinous*, the maelstrom, of quantum *uncertainty*. (Sorry about that.) An important 20th century physicist, Heisenberg discovered that looking at the smallest particles caused those particles to change. (I know I simplify.) Another notion of uncertainty in physics comes from Einstein. In his physics, time is fluid, as Tippett reminds us, with past, present, and future circling onto each other. By metaphorical extension, one might say (and many have!) that anything examined closely will be changed by the examination, or observing, process. The knower changes the known. The listener changes what is heard. The faithful change the faith. It is in this sense that I mean uncertainty.

Tippett’s book narrates her journey through uncertainty, the process by which her beliefs and her understanding of faith have changed as she explored and observed many traditions, both secular and religious. Her journey, as I see it, narrates her willingness and even her pleasures in moving through the manifold and extraordinarily rich implications of uncertainty. Curiously, her willingness to live with uncertainty gave her the freedom to take her religious journey, not sure where it would lead her. She wondered if she could reconcile religion with her intelligence. She has “found that [she] can.”

Uncertainty sounds negative, doesn’t it. But it does not have to be. Tippett’s walk through uncertainty begins with her feet solidly grounded in traditional Christianity, and she uses the language of Christianity (as she says, it is “her mother tongue”) to explore other faith traditions. She is interested in all faith traditions, not just intellectually, but also aesthetically, emotionally, and theologically. Her personal thesis is that exploring other faith traditions is necessary for her own lived faith and, she believes, for contemporary religious experience. She proposes that “we may need the rich and complicating details of all our traditions to get anywhere near the fullness of the underlying truths and the power they have to edify and illuminate our world of change.”

She begins with a chapter entitled “Genesis: How We Got Here” and ends with a chapter, “Confessing Mystery.” Her journey intertwines and connects many religious traditions, great and small, from around the world. She makes connections between religion and contemporary physics and biology (including a conversation with an important contemporary English physicist and Anglican priest, John Polkinghorn), between the secular and the religious, between beauty and spirituality. She makes these connections through what she calls “conversations” with people of different faiths or with their great sources. (Reading is a conversation with a book.) She makes connections, but she offers no synthesis. She admits that, while she had “longed for solutions and systems,” for universal truths that would apply to all peoples everywhere, she found none.

In the end, she says that all we have are questions. But these questions “cleanse our answers and enliven our world.” The questions we ask of ourselves and of God – and does God ask questions of us, too? -- are just as important as the answers were to previous generations. By implication, when we look at our faith and when we ask questions of it, we are changing it and, in the mysterious way of uncertainty, we are creating it. One might call this a *theology of uncertainty*. For many, part of the beauty of the Episcopal Church is its ability to ask questions of the faith and of the faithful, to examine the church and, in the ways of the uncertainty principle, to change the church. This openness as well as the beauty of our liturgy and the eucharist -- the Holy Communion (*the holy conversation* ?) – through this beauty and this communion we are thus enabled, sometimes, to experience the mystery of faith and to create it anew.

Our Next Issue: Lent and Easter

We will publish again in March, during Lent, which begins February 25th. **The date for material for this issue will be March 1st.** Lent is a solemn, contemplative time as our church year slouches its way to Jerusalem (*pace*, Yeats) and to the cross. Some of us engage in some Lenten discipline, as Jesus practiced his own discipline in the desert or in a night of prayer in Gethsemane. Perhaps Lent calls us to contemplate Jesus’ anxiety and fear of death in Gethsemane (*let this cup pass from me*) or His existential loneliness as he experienced dying on the cross (*my God, why has thou forsaken me*). Our contemplation of Jesus’ experiences may enable us to face our own Lenten experiences. Then, as we approach Easter’s joy and renewal (*Haleleujah! Christ is Risen; He is Risen Indeed!*), we may recall our own past experience of renewal, or we may seek out and pray for our own future renewal.

One might say that our parish has experienced, in its own way, a Lenten experience of sorts and looks now to a potential for real Easter renewal. We have experienced loss and mourning following Fr. Geisler's departure, as well as some anxiety in response to life without our priest. Now, as we engage in our search, we look forward, with Mthr. Wright's help, to renewal as a parish.

A Call for Your Help

Keeping Lent and Easter in mind, I am calling for people to write of their own Lenten and Easter experiences, or to write in response to something they have read or watched that speaks to these experiences. Please think about sharing your experiences or responses in the *Proclaimer*. I will be glad, as a (volunteer) writer and editor, to work with any other volunteer writers, if you'd like, although it is not necessary. Your stories (and the way you respond to what you read or see is a story, also), would be gifts to the people of St. Paul's. Won't you please consider giving at this time?

Of course, I continue to seek any writing relevant to the faith, to religious experience. Writers don't have to read nominally "religious" material. I have read John Updike's novels following one of his major characters, Rabbit Angstrom, who has encounters with grace. They are very religious works. So, please do not think you have to look for religious experiences only in materials directly dealing with religion. God whispers (and sometimes shouts) from many places.

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