



THE MESSENGER

JANUARY, 2021

The Interim Rector's Corner

The Feast of the Baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ, commonly called "The Epiphany," follows the seasons of Advent and Christmas. The lessons for the Season after the Epiphany *shine light* on the various events in Christ's life which clearly reveal that he is God incarnate, and that in seeing him and how he acts, we are seeing God.

It is my responsibility to shine and share, with a mixture of sadness and joy, that The Rev. Barbara Elliott+ has decided to, as she says, "really retire" from St. Paul's as Assisting Priest on January 15, 2021.

Barbara+ has served faithfully, given freely, and cares deeply about each of you and St. Paul's. Her leave-taking is yet another loss in a string of losses for St. Paul's and we will need time to grieve, really grieve, these many losses before we are able to move forward in healthy ways to envision a future.

Barbara's deep care and generosity was evident to me as soon as I met her. She has "shown me the ropes" around St. Paul's and been supportive of me throughout my breast cancer journey. I will miss her. At the same time, I feel a sense of delight for Barbara+, wondering what well-deserved joys retirement might bring for her and Tom. It is my hope that you too will join in the following ways to celebrate her ministry and thank her for all the ways she touched you in your lives.

We invite you to show your gratitude for Barbara and her ministry. If you are wanting to contribute monetarily, **please consider giving a "Gratitude Gift" to the bell tower renovation** in her name.

We will be having a **special Zoom coffee hour on January 10th** after Barbara's last service at St. Paul's to say, "Well done, good and faithful servant of the Lord." **You can help make it a special day by writing**

your notes of thanks, special memories, times that made you laugh, best wishes, or whatever seems to make sense to you. Send it to Rita at the church office. Terry Roberts will create a special memory book of them, so please do not delay. They may be sent to the church by snail mail or email them to

office@stpaulsduluth.org. The **deadline is January 4.**

I have one other "shift" in our leadership to share. The Rev. Margaret Thomas+ will be stepping aside from the pastoral care she has been providing. Mother Margaret+ is well known for her warm pastoral phone calls and handwritten letters. Due to health reasons, Margaret+ and Nelson need some time to rest and heal. Once things settle down, I have encouraged them to discern how God might be calling them to service in Christ's name once again. For now, I encourage you to surround them with your love and prayers.

During the Season after the Epiphany, we are going to begin *Shining a Light* on the work of transition. Please see this month's Transition article: *Change & Transition... what's the difference?* on page 11. We are also starting Adult Transition Formation Offerings beginning on Wednesday night Zooms from January 13 to February 10.

Go *Shine your Light* in Christ's Love rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit!



Mother Debra+

The Reverend Dr. Barbara Elliott's Retirement



We are fortunate that Mother Debra is healing and now says she is strong enough to carry on with all that comes with being the Interim Rector we called her to be! Given this good news, I am planning to retire January 15.

Thank you for your trust and confidence in my leadership. Last July, we were all surprised to learn of Bill's and Sue's plans to leave St. Paul's.

The Vestry then invited me to help sustain our community until our Interim arrived, assuring it would be only a month or so. Now we are more than four months since then—and the good news is that Mother Debra is both here and ready to do the job.

I am so fortunate to be part of St. Paul's with you. I became part of the congregation in 1978 when our family moved to Duluth, and since then, I have done everything that captured my passion along the way: Sunday School teacher, Christian clowning, Confirmation teacher...and on and on...I also recall all those Shrove Tuesday dinners and talent shows!

None of which we can do just now, of course, but which we are looking forward to doing again together in our future! All of these activities happened before I trained and worked as a hospital Chaplain, chose to go to Seminary, and was then ordained to the priesthood as part of St. Paul's Epiphany services in January 2013. In 2012, Bill invited me to serve as the Assisting Priest here as well. It has been a growing journey.

And now it is time to retire. At age 72, Episcopal priests are obliged to retire—and I celebrated that birthday last summer. Fortunately I have had permission from our Bishop to work in supply at St. Paul's through the Fall since then.

I am profoundly honored and privileged to have been your priest through these times. Please accept these deeply felt words of thanks with the blessing that we have shared so often: "May a slow wind work these words of love around you, an invisible cloak to mind your life...May the blessing of God Almighty be among you and remain with you always. Amen."

Reverend Barb

Zoom Coffee Hour to Celebrate Rev. Barb's Retirement

We Wish a Happy Retirement to Rev. Barb!

Barb Elliott is retiring. We will honor her with a special Zoom coffee hour on Sunday, January 10, at 11:00 am. You can help make it a special day by sending your notes of thanks, special memories, times that made you laugh, best wishes, or whatever. Please send it to the Parish Office by email to office@stpaulsduluth.org, or by postal mail to 1710 E. Superior St., Duluth MN 55812. Terry Roberts will compile your greetings into a special memory book. The deadline is January 4, so please do not delay. And be sure to join at our Zoom Coffee Hour on January 10 to say, "Well done, good and faithful servant of the Lord."

If you wish to honor Barb's service with a monetary gift, she has requested that your gifts benefit the renovation of St. Paul's bell tower. Please feel free to donate in the usual ways, online or by check, and note in the memo that the gift is in honor of Rev. Barb's retirement. Thank you for your generosity.



From Your Organist

Greetings St. Paul's!

At the beginning of the month my friend Father Ricci called out, "Happy Advent!" Without thinking I said, "We made it!" The words hung in the air and our bodies sunk down a little into the floor as the weight of the words pressed on our shoulders. Even though we made it through Christmas, we still keenly feel how much we miss you, and miss being together.

The practice of looking and waiting for hope and light during this past Advent was a bit more challenging in 2020. My husband and I listened to a "It's Been a Minute" podcast from MPR of an interview of a holocaust survivor who was almost one hundred years old. When asked what has given her hope during this pandemic after all that she has lived through, we were both struck by her words, "There are already seeds planted in the ground." As I reflect upon what it means to work for a church that is "closed" but open, it is my humble hope that I am helping prepare the soil for new seeds to be planted. However, I have already seen so many

seeds that have been planted. In Heidi, who generously and faithfully volunteers her beautiful singing voice, in Tim who grew up in the church and now is using his talents and gifts to create incredible virtual services, and in Rita who has adapted to an ever-changing landscape and kept things running. Just watching and working with three people at St. Paul's practicing and living out their faith has given me such hope and admiration for this wonderful community. It is my hope that not only will I find you more seeds already in the ground at St. Paul's, but you will find each other.



*Respectfully submitted,
Rachael Kresha, Interim Organist*

Clergy Transitions and Leave-taking

Good, healthy pastoral relationships can often result in a natural response to seek the presence of the pastor that is known to us, even when that relationship has ended. Weddings, baptisms and funerals are the most common points in any person's life where we might instinctively reach out to a former spiritual leader.

Bishops throughout The Episcopal Church set a variety of appropriate boundaries and best practices to foster a healthy transition between clergy and the churches they serve. Some of these best practices include: bringing pastoral relationships to a close, and not leading worship or serving in any leadership or clergy roles at the church where they once served.

When an exiting or departed clergy person points you to the new spiritual leader, they do so out of love and respect for the congregation and themselves. For us clergy it is important for us to let go and move on with our lives, whether it be to a new position or the joys of retirement. It is also important for the membership of a congregation to let

go of the former pastor. Why? Quite simply because letting go paves the way to be open and receive the spiritual leadership and pastoring from the new clergy person. When we let go, we gain room for someone else.

Bishops discern a variety of leave-taking practices that are appropriate, taking into consideration what is best for all involved. The Episcopal Church does require clergy to retire when they reach the age of seventy-two. +The Rt. Rev. Craig Loya, Bishop of ECMN, granted Barbara+ an extension of ministry to serve at St. Paul's for a time, being aware of Bill's leave-taking. Like other transitions before Barbara's and St. Paul's, let us each help each other in the process of letting go. When it comes to transition it's true that "a good beginning stands on the top of a good ending."

Mother Debra+

From Your Treasurer

Dear Parishioners,

October financials were presented at the December 15, 2020 Vestry meeting. Here is a summary of the October **General Fund** Statement of Activities.

November update of 2020 pledges:

Pledge income received in November 2020	<u>\$ 36,876</u>
YTD 2020 pledge income as of November 30, 2020	\$288,978
YTD budgeted pledge income as of November 30, 2020	\$350,221
Variance of actual to budget pledge income as of November 30, 2020.	<u>\$ -61,244</u>
YTD 2019 pledges as of November 30, 2019	\$273,317
YTD income as of November 30, 2020	\$443,836
YTD expense as of November 30, 2020	<u>\$407,569</u>
YTD income over expense November 30, 2020	<u>\$ 36,267</u>



Please note that our 2020 pledge receipts are \$ 61,244 under budget and we are nearing the end of the year. Make sure we have your pledge contributions before the end of December to have them included in your 2020 charitable giving.

The amounts above from the **General Fund** YTD expense do not include \$84,900 of payroll expenses that have been paid from the Payroll Protection Program loan and are recorded in a separate **PPP Fund**. We expect the entire \$84,900 to be forgiven.

If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, please call the office or email me at natalie@stpaulsduluth.org.

Respectfully submitted by Natalie Smith, Treasurer

A Message of Thanks from Mother Debra

Dear members of St. Paul's,

Thank you so much for the beautiful flowers that were waiting for me when I got home from the hospital after my breast cancer surgery. They were such a surprise and cheered me up when I wasn't feeling my best.

I am so thankful and blessed to be at St. Paul's. You truly are a faithful community that lives out the Way of Love in so many ways! Each day I feel Christ's healing presence in the many ways you have embraced me from well wishes, cards and emails, to fruits, preserves, even meals, and cookies... oh, those cookies!

I have wonderful news to share. I will not be needing chemotherapy or radiation! Sometime after the New Year I will

most likely begin a long-term course of Tamoxifen pending review of my current medications. Tamoxifen is used to reduce the risk of the cancer recurring.

Breast cancer is a scary thing. Having learned of my diagnosis shortly before our travel west to join you, I have found Christ's healing presence in each person who has reached out to me, who has shared their own cancer journey with me, and has been praying for me. Please know that I am praying for you too.

In Christ's love,
Mother Debra+

From Your Priest Emerita



My dad was not much of a church goer, leaving that mostly to my mother, but he always had great Christmas cheer. He had barely survived the 1918 Spanish flu. He had dropped out of engineering school to enroll in the Navy. Then he got sick.

As I knew him he seemed determined to live positively. He held our family together through The Great Depression, WWII and my mother's mental illness, including suicide attempts.

When I was about nine I asked if we could have a Nativity set like other neighbor families did. Daddy built a small wooden barn. Then he took me to the Kresge dime store

to pick out the basic figures. We got Mary, Joseph, Baby Jesus and a donkey. Then he splurged on two sheep. He said that the next year we could purchase more and we did.

Myself, I have initiated or reactivated live Christmas Eve Nativities in all the churches I have been a part of. The combination of meaning, memories and mystery of depicting Luke's gospel is the most important. Adding Matthew's version is exactly what my dad did, too. It is so good that folks here at St. Paul's are planning to continue in this year of loss and fear and uncertainty.

*The Rev. Margaret W. Thomas,
Priest Emerita*

January Wednesday Nights Adult Formation

Casting a Light on Faith, Science, & Transition

Throughout the Season of Epiphany, we will be *Casting some Light* on a number of things that are important to St. Paul's. Adult Formation Sessions will be offered each Wednesday night at 6:30 pm using the Zoom link available on the website. If you aren't able to join in any of the sessions, each session will be recorded and can be viewed later on the website.

January 13, 20, 27; February 3, 10, 6:30 pm: *Getting to Know Mother Debra+ & Transition*

Our Transition Companions will join in casting a light on our inhouse "Transition Specialist," Mother Debra+. Come meet her in a smaller group setting and introduce yourself. Learn something about the transition process and be ready to share what you most want her to know and love about St. Paul's.

Space is limited to 15 people per session. Please contact Rita in the Parish Office (call 218-724-3535, or email office@stpaulsduluth.org) with your first and second choice dates to attend. If more people want to attend than we have space, we will start a waiting list and/or possibly add sessions.

January 6, 6:30 pm: *How to Talk to Kids About Climate Change: Informed by Faith and Science*

We all love our children and want what is best for their future. Come hear Charlie Orsak, a local parent, member of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, and a volunteer with the Citizens' Climate Lobby present: ***How to Talk to Kids About Climate Change: Informed by Faith and Science***. He will address faith and science perspectives on caring for creation, how to best talk to kids about the urgent problem of climate change, and actions families and individuals can take to make a meaningful difference. There will also be time for questions and discussion. He hopes to see you there.



The Sheltering Arms Foundation

I have recently been named to the Sheltering Arms Foundation's Board of Trustees. It is a great honor to follow in the footsteps of other St. Paul's parishioners such as Christabel Grant and Leslie Brunfelt. In a few short months, I have already learned so much about Sheltering Arms, its fascinating historical legacy, and its affiliation with the Episcopal Church in Minnesota.

Sheltering Arms began in 1883 as an orphanage established by the first Episcopal Deaconess in Minnesota, Sister Annette Relf. It later became an after-care hospital for polio victims until the polio vaccine came along. After WWII, Sheltering Arms became a school for children with developmental disabilities.

Part of the incredible story of Sheltering Arms is how well the organization adjusted to societal change, always focusing on the critical needs of children and families in Minnesota. In its fourth transformation in 1983, Sheltering Arms re-incorporated as a foundation, focusing on partnering with agencies and organizations which provide direct services to Minnesota children and families. Since 1983, the Foundation has awarded over 1,200 grants, totaling over 16 million dollars.

More recently, the Foundation has embraced advocacy for children's issues as part of its modern mission. Because Minnesota has a significant opportunity gap for children and families of color, the Foundation strives to partner with advocacy agencies to impact public policy and create opportunities for Minnesota's most vulnerable children and families. In order to address this growing



The
Sheltering Arms
Foundation

opportunity gap, The Sheltering Arms Foundation is committed to increasing its cultural competency and commitment to equity.

The Sheltering Arms Foundation is governed by an active, committed, volunteer Board of Trustees comprised of female members of the Episcopal Church in Minnesota. The Foundation awards grants in the following areas: Early Childhood, Youth Development, Advocacy and Episcopal Community Grants.

I am thrilled to represent St. Paul's as a Trustee of the Sheltering Arms Foundation and look forward to serving and helping the Foundation continue its good work.

You can learn more about The Sheltering Arms Foundation at their website: <https://sheltering-arms.org/>

The Sheltering Arms Foundation relies on donations to be able to provide grants to community organizations to improve the lives of children and families in Minnesota. Gifts of any size are welcomed and greatly appreciated. If you would like to donate to The Sheltering Arms Foundation, please use this link: <https://sheltering-arms.org/donate/>

If you have any questions or suggestions for me to take to the Board, feel free to contact me at nancymcdiener@gmail.com

*Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Diener, Trustee*

Evening Bible Study

Since Memorial Day when George Floyd was killed, our group has chosen to read items that can expand our understanding of racism, and thus we set the Bible aside for a few months. Now we are focusing on our relationships with our Native American brothers and sisters, and this month's reading is "The Gospel Comes to North America" which was written by Archbishop Mark MacDonald. It continues our learning about racism and American Indians. We have been having lots of good discussions.

This month we will meet Tuesday, January 12, via Zoom again, 6:30-8:30 pm. We will discuss our reading and spend the extra half hour planning the group's next steps. Bring your calendar and reading ideas.

You are welcome to join us. Let me know if you would like a copy of the article and the Zoom invitation for the January session.

God's blessings... --Reverend Barb E.

belliottd@d.umn.edu

Prayer Shawl Ministry

Do you have time for a winter project? If so, you are welcome to join the prayer shawl ministry in making warm fleece prayer shawls for our homeless neighbors. Fleece prayer shawls are ideal for our homeless neighbors because they are soft, lightweight, durable, and warm. Think of them as giving a socially-distant warm hug.

They are also easy to make since no knitting, crocheting, or sewing is involved. All that you need is some ultra soft fleece material, sharp fabric scissors, and a measuring device. With supervision using scissors, this project could be fun for families with children of all ages.

Completed prayer shawls can be dropped off at St Paul's and will be distributed for homeless individuals through CHUM, Steve O'Neil Apartments, and Life House. The first of these four fleece prayer shawls is pictured below. They are bright red to represent St Paul's front door. They were blessed by The Rev. Dr. Barbara Elliott, and distributed by Amber Sadowski at Life House in December.



Each shawl has a tag which reads *"May this shawl be a sign of God's loving healing presence. May it warm you when you are weary. May it encourage you when you are discouraged. May it assure you of God's care and comfort. May it remind you that you are surrounded by the prayers of others."* from St. Paul's Episcopal Church

The directions for making fleece shawls are printed here for your convenience. For more information or details regarding fabric, patterns, or methods, please contact Marian Flammang at marianflammang@iCloud.com

Instructions for Fleece Prayer Shawls

Makes two adult sized shawls – Start with a prayer or thought of intention; such as sending loving-kindness to those who are homeless this winter.

Step 1 – Buy material. Buy two yards (72 inches) of soft draping fleece at a fabric store. It usually comes 58-60 inches wide. This type of fleece is more expensive than other fleece at \$12-\$17 per yard and is often labeled "Soft, Minky, or Velvet" fleece.

Step 2 – Cut material. Fold the material in half lengthwise. With sharp fabric scissors, cut two pieces along the fold which are then 29-30 inches wide by 72 inches long. (Tip - Since this material produces a lot of lint as you are cutting, you may want to lay it out on a sheet or plastic table cloth before cutting to ease clean up.)

Step 3 – Cut fringe. To cut fringe on the two ends which are 29-30 inches wide; draw a chalk line or measure eight inches from edge. Cut about 30 fringe strips which are one inch wide by eight inches deep on each end.

Step 4 – Make fringe. Tie a knot at the top of each fringe by looping it over onto itself and tucking it in at the top snugly. Finish both ends this way.

Step 5 – Clean up. Take the finished shawls outside, along with the sheet or table cloth in order to shake vigorously and remove lint.

Step 6 – Deliver. Please take finished shawls to the McGiffert entrance of St. Paul's Episcopal Church where there will be a bin labeled Fleece Prayer Shawls for the Homeless Project. The shawls will then be blessed, and a Shawl Blessing Card will be attached. Designated individuals who serve homeless individuals will distribute shawls to those in need.

Thank you and bless you for your participation in this valuable project.

*Respectfully submitted,
Marian Flammang*

From Your Vestry



Greetings from your wardens and vestry! The vestry met in December to begin our deliberations over the 2021 budget. As you might imagine, this has been a decidedly different exercise than in years past, with significant deviations from the approved budget having occurred over this past year in both the income and expense sides. It has definitely required our serious

evaluation and imagination in equal measures to be able to predict our personnel and facilities costs, after the nearly complete staff turnover we have experienced and the shutdown of our church gatherings due to the pandemic. And against this backdrop, we look to our Interim Rector, Mother Debra, to advise us on how we can best maintain our parish vigor while preparing to call a new rector.

Our pledged income took a big upturn in November, and we thank all of you who have been diligent in keeping your pledged commitments up to date. This helps immensely as we still have the constant expenses associated with keeping the lights and heat on and meeting our payroll now that our COVID relief grant has been spent down. Our Stewardship Committee continues to track and encourage incoming pledges for the new year, as we look with anticipation towards eventual reopening and congregating. Together, the vestry and Stewardship Committee expressed our gratitude for you and your 2021 pledges with handmade candles from Life House; we hope you enjoyed the warm light it cast in your household this holiday season!

The bell tower tuckpointing project is nearly complete as I write this, and we are deeply grateful for Craig Fellman's oversight and the skilled laborers who have rebuilt the stone tower. It has become apparent that now was indeed the right time to tackle this project. The degraded mortar and fractured stones in critical places that allowed storms and driving rains to compromise the tower's integrity and seep into the sanctuary have all been thoroughly inspected and repaired or replaced.

We also spent time discussing how we will plan and conduct the annual meeting. Since we cannot hold this in person, we are exploring ideas on how we can be most inclusive in presenting information, seeking your input, and facilitating important discussions about our church business. We are considering the possibility of dividing up the key elements of the annual meeting – presenting the budget, voting on new vestry representatives, considering Convention delegates, recaps and highlights of the past year – into multiple forums rather than a single event. While we hope you all understand that we will need to conduct this “virtually” through some online platform, we commit to providing information to all of you early and in ways that you can receive and process it. We will need your ideas and voices to help us make good decisions for the future of St. Paul's!

Finally, I offer my sincere and profound thanks to The Rev. Dr. Barbara Elliott as she retires from her many years of service to the church and our parish. I know that our challenges and difficulties during this tumultuous year would have been so very much harder had she not agreed to take on the responsibilities of priest in charge, and kept our daily and weekly service programming on track without missing a beat. And I know all of you who have experienced her pastoral care and commitment over these many years join me in wishing her a blessed and fulfilling next chapter.

Questions, concerns, or ideas for St. Paul's? You can reach me via email at: ncosta2799@charter.net

Peace,
Nancy Schuldt,
Senior Warden

Deadline for submissions to the February issue of *The Messenger* is
8:00 am, Thursday, January 21, 2021.

Please email items to: office@stpaulsduluth.org

From Your Nominating Committee

The following three people are nominated to serve on Vestry:

Carol Andrews

I grew up at St. Christopher's Episcopal church in Roseville, MN where my parents were both very active members. My father was often on the vestry, so this opportunity for me to serve St. Paul's is also an opportunity to follow in his footsteps. In 1999 I began attending St. Paul's mainly for its proximity to our house and beautiful architecture but stayed for the friendly people, great music and open attitude. My main contribution to St. Paul's has been with the Landscaping Committee. My kind, loving husband Tom grew up Catholic and does not normally attend church, though you may see him occasionally when I play with bell choir or for bake sales. Our children William and Geneva are high school seniors (already!). I also have a step-daughter and grandkids in Grand Forks. My college degree is in civil engineering. I currently do environmental work for St. Louis County Public Works Department.

Judy Harvey

I am a cradle Episcopalian growing up in St. Paul, MN. It is almost 50 years since I moved to Duluth and became a member of St. Paul's. I raised 3 children, Glen, Craig and Ann Fellman, at St. Paul's. Craig is my only child in Duluth at this time. I was employed at St. Luke's first as an Alzheimer's Respite Care Coordinator and then as the Director of Volunteer Services. Until recently, I volunteered in Hospice and the Surgical Center. I was also on the Volunteer Board of Directors. St. Paul's activities and committees I have participated in are: Sunday School Teacher, ECW, 40+ years on the Altar Guild, three Discernment Committees, three Search Committees and Co-Chair of one, previous

Bishop's Search Committee, Co-Chair Christmas Bazaar, Clerk of the Vestry, Usher, Nominating Committee, and one term on the Vestry. St. Paul's has been my support throughout my life and I am pleased to be a candidate for the Vestry.

Rick Lyle

My name is Rick Lyle and I have been a member of St. Paul's church for most of my life. I am a second generation member. I, along with my wife Heidi, have raised three children through our Sunday school program, confirmation, acolytes, flag wavers, and being nursery attendants. Heidi and I assisted as youth directors for two years in the mid 1990's. I have also been a Sunday school teacher and was an usher for a few years. And for fun, Heidi and I played on the inaugural Heavenly Hitters softball team.

NOTE: The Nominating Committee is still working on identifying a fourth candidate to fill the pending vestry vacancies. We will share that information as soon as it is available. We also seek to identify candidates for delegates to Convention. Please let us know if this service opportunity is something you would be interested in doing on behalf of St. Paul's.

Respectfully submitted by the Nominating Committee:

*Eirik Rennan, Amber Sadowski, Nancy Schuldt
and Sue Stromquist*

Wednesday Evening Faith Formation

Hello Friends,

I have been missing our Faith Formation on Wednesdays and thought it would be fun to try a virtual offering beginning after Christmas. Please join in on Wednesdays for some Faith Formation and Fun for children (and adults). Using some existing curriculum and creativity, we will provide a variety of offerings from messages to read and engage in, virtual recorded messages with ideas for activities, or a combination of these. If anyone is interested in participating in generating ideas and creating activities, please let Joanne Erspamer know: joanneerspamer@gmail.com Please stay tuned and keep an eye out for details in January.

Respectfully submitted by Joanne Erspamer

January Weekly Worship & Formation Schedule

Sundays

10:00 a.m. Sunday Worship via St. Paul's website, YouTube or Facebook

10:45 a.m. Zoom Coffee Hour via Zoom

Mondays

9:00 a.m. - Reflection & Announcements via Facebook. This content is also added to St. Paul's website and emailed to all parishioners on Mondays.

Tuesdays

9:00 a.m. - Bible Study via Zoom

6:30 p.m. - Book Study (2nd Tuesdays only) via Zoom

Wednesdays

6:00 p.m. - Faith Formation via Facebook/website

6:30 p.m. - Adult Formation via Zoom

Thursdays

9:00 p.m. - Compline via Facebook

9:15 p.m. - Post-Compline Chat via Zoom

Fridays

9:00 a.m. - Morning Prayer via Facebook

Saturdays

9:00 a.m. - Community Connections (2nd Saturdays) via Facebook/website

All Zoom links, Meeting ID, and Passwords may be found online at www.StPaulsDuluth.org

Please like us on Facebook.

Change and Transition... *what's the difference?*

If you take a quick look at the *Illustrated Oxford Dictionary* you will find two very different definitions of the words “**Change**” and “**Transition.**”

Change is “*the act or instance of making or becoming different.*” **Transition** is “*a passing...from one place, position, situation to another.*”

Change itself is limited in time: a certain event at a certain point in time, such as when a staff member leaves. By the end of the month, St. Paul's will have experienced five staff changes in a span of less than a year! While change is understood as a normal and ongoing reality of life, it still evokes anxiety, fear, grief, confusion, and more. It is a time of great uncertainty.

Transition is the response to change. Transition is an ongoing, psychological process without a definite timeframe. The process of growing deeper in your faith with God is a journey, a transition!

Change is the “outward and visible” event that happens. There is a moment in time that we receive the bread and wine at the Holy Eucharist; there is a “change” of hands from the priest to ours. There are many changes that occur in the calling of a new clergy person. The clergy leaves a prior ministry and says “good-bye.” He or she arrives at a new church and says “hello.” Congregations end a relationship with a former priest, greet a Transition/Interim Rector, then once again wave “good-bye.” Then they welcome their newly called priest. Each of these are changes that take place on a certain date.

Transition is one's emotional, psychological, mental and spiritual responses to change. Transition is an ongoing process. The space/time between any two changes is where we will find transition. Our internal responses are invisible. They are “**inward and spiritual**” responses even though they may have outward manifestations. In the Holy Eucharist we receive the “outward and visible sign” (change) of bread that leads to an “inward and spiritual grace” (transition) that sustains us as seek to be Christ's hands and feet in the world. Churches that live into “transition” whole-heartedly become free to explore new things and reinterpret their deep abiding values for a transformed future (transition).

The Alban Institute has pioneered new ways of enabling congregations and clergy to be agents of grace and transformation that shape and heal the world. Alban found in their research that congregational transitions actually start from the time the clergy person announces that he/she is leaving and continues until at least one year after the new clergy person has begun his/her ministry with that congregation. But

for the clergy person, the transition lasts possibly as long as 18 months into the new call, the length of time that allows the spiritual leader to do some things “the second time around.” Thus, the transition is complete for the clergy person when things start to settle into a “normal” familiar pattern even though the congregation may feel that they have already completed their transition!

So, to put it simply, Change is an event while Transition is a process. Think of change like a move to a new home. You pack up one house, make the drive, and unpack in your new house. There may be some intermediate steps, but one day you are in your old house and on another day, you are living somewhere else.

Transition, on the other hand, is like a long journey that leaves you feeling that you have arrived home! It is a process that starts simple, but it does take some time. You hang up the pictures; you know where everything is in the kitchen. You get to know your neighbors and you make some new friends. You can get to work without your GPS and in most cases feel like you can even turn it off or put it away. During transition time, you come to like and trust your colleagues and know that you can count on them too. You find that the kids are happy at school and they want to invite their new friends over for “play dates.” You find the church that's right for you, and you are even ready to start getting involved. Then one day, as you've been doing for months on end, you gaze at Lake Superior while eating your lunch, and out of nowhere a smile creeps across your face, and you say to yourself “I'm home!” With that realization you know your transition is complete. So, transition is not the moment your new priest moves to Duluth or the Israelites stepped across the line into the Promised Land, that's change. Rather transition is sometime after your new priest has arrived; when things feel really settled and both your and his/her heart breaks loose in love - that's when your transition is complete!

As St. Paul's moves through the “transition process,” it is important to realize that the impact is not the same for all parties. Each of you will be in a different space in your transition. Traveling the transition path is worth it. It takes time, but it is worth it. Read the Exodus story sometime and see how the Israelites negotiated their transition. They let go of something/one along the way, so that there was room for something/one new in the Promised Land. And in the process, they were transformed!

Article continues with a prayer for transitions on back cover:

St. Paul's Episcopal Church
1710 E. Superior St.
Duluth, MN 55812



Email for the church:
office@stpaulsduluth.org

Visit our website:
www.stpaulsduluth.org

A Prayer for Transitions

by Sandra C. Kolb

*Ever-present God
May we remember that
In the no-where
You fed us with the bread of angels;
From the no-thing
You created a new covenant with your people
By crossing the no-place
We entered a land flowing with milk and honey.
Be with us now, instilling us with courage and faith
That we may choose life;
That we may learn to fly.
Amen.*

