



THE Epistle

Excel in this Grace of Giving

FALL 2023



▶ The Joy and Freedom of Generosity

by Kristine Blaess, *Rector*

“The Kingdom of Heaven is like this . . .” In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus tells his followers a parable, inviting them to consider that the Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field that a person finds and covers up. In his joy at discovering this treasure, he goes and sells all that he has and buys the field.

Often, we’re encouraged to put ourselves in the place of the one who found the treasure in the field. What kind of treasure would so valuable that we would sell *everything* we have to go buy the field? Is God’s reign the treasure we would rush joyfully to sell out for?

I invite you today, however, to consider that in God’s reign, *you* are the treasure buried in the field. Jesus, in his joy, has discovered you up to your neck in the cares of the world, and has given everything he has—even his own life—so that, rejoicing, he can set you free into a new life lived with him.

Franklin Fry reminds us that God our Father loves us so ardently that he gave his Son. The Son loved so lavishly that he gave strength, health, and liberty, and eventually even his own life blood. The Father and the Son love so

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▶ In Our House . . .

by Michael Whitnah, *Associate Rector*



We have the best neighbors. On our cul-de-sac, there are three houses (including ours) in a row that have children all about the same age. The whole pack of kids have spent the summer going back and forth, from yard to yard, house to house, engaged in all manner of shenanigans. For the most part, we’ve encouraged them to

stay outside on their bikes, up in tree houses, on the play set, etc., but in the heat of the day, they do go inside.

This has led to interesting conversations within the Whitnah family, usually concerning the use of technology, and almost always including the phrase, “Well, in this house, we . . .”

Our own kids are learning more about what it means to belong to our household. It may not be the same in your friends’ house! But in this house, we are committed to living a certain way. Belonging and commitment go hand in hand; it’s how we share life together, in a household.

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persistently that together they pour their Spirit without ceasing into our hearts.

What we as followers of Christ are called upon to do, then, is to be an open watercourse for God's divine love. We are invited to reflect God's love back to him and out to his world. We are called to give it free flow.

And so our generosity—with our time, our talents, and our treasures—is really just about letting the abundant good gifts that come in a steady stream from God flow into us and through us. As we let God's gifts pass through us to others, we make room in ourselves for more of God's good gifts to flow in. Our stewardship of these abundant gifts is about taking the vitality which God pours into our veins and the money which God has given to us in trust, and seeing to it that they are spent for the things that are closest to God's heart.



This is the joy and freedom of generosity—it allows us to live in the free flow of God's love and to be part of God's joyful work of rescuing this world he loves. ■

Kristine + The Rev. Dr. Kristine Blaess
Rector

Generosity and Evangelism

By Don Clayton, Stewardship Chair

St. Paul's has a long history of generosity. There are many visible reminders of this around our campus: the beautiful sanctuary with our organ, the parish hall, the new outdoor columbarium, and the grocery store that continues to operate next door. But that spirit of generosity shows up even more fully in the lives of those around us: in the people who are assisted through our CONNECT ministry, in the homeless women who are given a warm place to sleep on cold nights, and of course, in the lives of all of us who make St. Paul's our church home, as you can read about in this issue of the Epistle.

Our **2024 Estimate of Giving Cards** will be mailed out soon, and are due back by October 22. Please prayerfully consider all that God is doing in your

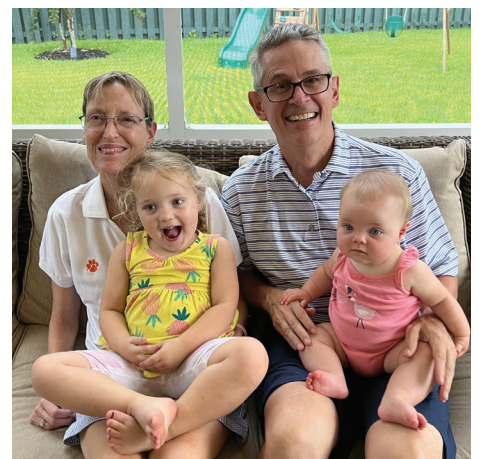
life and in our community through St. Paul's, and how you can financially support the mission and ministry of our church.

In addition to your financial commitment, I would ask each of you to also think and pray about who you could invite to join you for worship—or a Wednesday Night Supper, or Lessons and Carols, or whatever else is important to you. It is easy to forget that Evangelism is often as simple as asking someone to “come and see”—to walk beside you on your journey, and to trust that Jesus will be there with you.

As has been our tradition at St. Paul's, we encourage you bring your estimate of giving cards with you on **Gratitude Sunday, October 22**, and place them



in the offering plate to be blessed at the altar. We will celebrate with a cookout at 11:30 a.m.—an excellent opportunity to introduce some of your friends to our hospitality! We look forward to seeing you there, and to your continued support of St. Paul's. ■



Many times, indeed all throughout the New Testament, the Church is called the “household of God.” A diverse group of people who gather together, who belong and commit to each other, who share life together. And this sharing life together, this is very good (even when it’s hard!). Think of the goodness of our life together at St. Paul’s. The joy of worship, the beauty of the music and the readings and the flowers, and even more so, the beauty of the people we share the pews with. Remember how our hearts are lifted up as we receive the grace of God with thanksgiving? Think of our warm hospitality, to friend and guest alike, how our Lenten Soup Suppers nourish our bodies and souls, as do our funeral receptions, and so many other opportunities for meal fellowship. Think of the impact we have in Murfreesboro and beyond. In this house, St. Paul’s, we love God, each other, our neighbors, and the world.

All of this, the goodness of our life together, is possible because of generosity. I like to think that generosity is love that takes material, physical form. Love is commitment to the well-being of another, and usually that costs something. But this interconnecting of generosity, love, and commitment all creates a household where we all belong.

We (the Whitnachs) give to St. Paul’s because we love you. We give because we love Jesus. We give because we love the Church. We give because we belong to the household of God, and you belong too. Probably my favorite part of our Baptismal liturgy is right at the very end, when the whole congregation says together, “We receive you into the household of God. Confess the faith of Christ crucified, proclaim his resurrection, and share with us in his eternal priesthood.”

We are the household of God, bonded together by love, with Jesus Christ as our Lord. He is the one who holds all things together, including his Church. We belong to Christ, and to each other, and generosity of all sorts makes our life together rich and deeply joyful. In this house, St. Paul’s, that’s how we do life together. ■

Michael

The Rev. Michael Whitnah
Associate Rector



▶ David Fowler



David Fowler came to St. Paul’s just a few years ago. He worked at the Nashville Department of Veterans’ Affairs and was transferred to the Alvin C. York VA in Murfreesboro. David was a member of Christ Church Cathedral in Nashville for a very long time and in fact has a columbarium spot reserved there. However, once he

moved to Murfreesboro, he decided to look for a church home here. David said, “I went to both Episcopal churches here in Murfreesboro and felt at home at St. Paul’s.”

David attends the 10:00 a.m. service because he enjoys the choir. He feels comfortable and welcomed at St. Paul’s. He participates in a Discipleship Group that meets via Zoom weekly and he also serves as an usher.

By Anna Stewart

The Call to Give

David supports and gives to the church because of St. Paul’s vision and mission. He said, “My support is through prayer, attendance, and financial stewardship.” David’s favorite scripture verse reminds him that wherever he is, God is also there: “Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you or forsake you.” (Deuteronomy 31:6).

► Kyle and Ryan Nix

The Nix family came to St. Paul's in June of 2018. Their friend, Robert Willis, had always spoken very highly of St. Paul's. Kyle and Ryan had both grown up in the Episcopal church but hadn't found their church home in Murfreesboro yet. But they knew from day one that St. Paul's was going to be just that! They attend with their daughters Kinsley and Emery.

For the Nixes, St. Paul's is so much more than just a place of worship; it is truly a home. Kyle stated, "Belonging at St. Paul's means being surrounded by people who will not only walk with you in faith, but will walk with you in life as well. We have found comfort, support, and strength through our St. Paul's family; and we are forever

grateful for those that have embraced us with open arms from day one."

The Nixes are mainly involved in the family and children's ministries at St. Paul's, with Kyle and Ryan being active members of the Parents Group, and Kinsley and Emery regular attendees of Catechesis. Kyle serves on the Vestry as liaison to the family and children's ministries, so she works closely with Cindy Guevart and our children's ministry leaders as well as Chase Benefiel, our new youth minister.

The Call to Give

Aside from giving regularly through their pledge and plate offerings, the Nixes give back to St. Paul's most with their time and involvement, through

By Anna Stewart

Vestry membership and helping out at church events. They give to St. Paul's "because we strongly believe in the mission of St. Paul's and the good that will come from stewardship in our church and community." Their active roles reflect their favorite scripture verse, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phillippians 4:13).



► Sharon and Nick Dieringer

Sharon Dieringer and her husband Nick began attending St. Paul's when they moved to Murfreesboro in 2004. To Sharon, belonging to St. Paul's means being a part of the Christian tradition and she celebrates the beautiful Episcopal liturgy. Sharon said she appreciates knowing, "millions of faithful Christians all over the world are also saying those words, as they have done in the past and will continue to in the future."

Catechesis, the Parents Group, the Youth Group, the Junior Flower Guild, Vacation Bible School, the Christmas pageant, the annual Blessing of the Animals, the Pilgrimage program, are just a few of the programs the Dieringers have been part of over the past 20 years. Currently, Sharon is in her third year on the Vestry. She was the liaison for Children and Youth Ministries for two

years and now serves as Senior Warden. Sharon is grateful to be able to give her time in this way and says of being on the Vestry, "it is wonderful to see all our various ministries working together, and to be able to support our parishioners, clergy, staff, and administration. The dedication and effort that all these individuals have for St. Paul's is incredible. We are truly blessed."

The Call to Give

Sharon gives her time, talent, and treasure to St. Paul's because giving these resources enables our church to have the opportunity to engage in ministry here at church and in the community. She believes, "Giving of yourself helps others, and it blesses us because it is how we do God's work." Financially, Sharon and her family make an annual pledge and give to the Sunday collection plate. In the past, they donated to

By Lynne Miller

the Parish Hall building fund, as well as capital campaigns and other projects.

One of Sharon's favorite scriptures is John 1: 1-5: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."



► Dixie and Mike Groutt

By Lynne Miller

Impressed with St. Paul's efforts to worship safely during the COVID pandemic, Dixie and Mike Groutt began attending services during Lent 2021 and immediately felt welcomed. The outdoor service was a very important part of their decision to visit, and they thoroughly enjoyed worshipping in God's creation. Completing Pilgrimage in 2021-22, they made many good friends while digging into what it means to be part of this church. Dixie and Mike said, "Belonging to St. Paul's means friendship, inclusion, caring for one another, and serving our fellow parishioners and the greater Murfreesboro community."

During the abbreviated summer schedule, the Groutts worshipped at either the 7:30 a.m. or the 10:00 a.m. service, happily visiting with folks they did not get to see regularly. Dixie and Mike are integral members

of the usher team. Dixie serves on the Altar Guild as well.

In addition to ushering, the Groutts give to St. Paul's in many other ways. They contribute to the CONNECT Ministry, the Nourish Food Bank drives, and the Angel Tree program. A particular ministry they actively support is the Little Food Pantry. Dixie and Mike bring food each Sunday for this blessing box, and try to add food at least one other time during the week. Regular attendees of the Wednesday Night Suppers and Lenten Soup Suppers, they also like to go to the Ladies' Nights (Dixie) and Men's Club (Mike) gatherings.

A favorite Bible Verse, Matthew 22: 37-40, guides Dixie and Mike. They keep in mind the words of Jesus, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your



mind" and "Love your neighbor as yourself"

The Call to Give

Over the more than two years the Groutts have been at St. Paul's, they have jumped right in serving and supporting various ministries, and stewardship is a significant part of belonging to St. Paul's. They shared that, "We have been very fortunate and feel that it is our responsibility to share what God has provided for us with others who have not had the advantages that we have enjoyed."

► Mary Beth Wilson

By Lynne Miller



Mary Beth Wilson joined St. Paul's about 15 years ago. She had many friends already at St. Paul's and she desired the grace and love they exemplified. Completing the Pilgrimage program helped Mary Beth make even more friends.

A favorite Bible verse, 2 Timothy 1:7,

states, "For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control." Mary Beth claims this God-given spirit as she worships and serves at St. Paul's. She believes that belonging to St. Paul's provides many opportunities to be involved and one place she has found to serve for many years is with planning and hosting the Lessons and Carols reception. Mary Beth believes the December Lessons and Carols "has to be one of our greatest gifts to our community."

Another area dear to Mary Beth is the CONNECT

Ministry. She contributes financially to the program through the first Sunday offerings. She is also part of the team which meets twice a month to provide financial assistance to our neighbors in need. Mary Beth notes that "often we provide something much more—encouragement!"

Mary Beth experienced first-hand the comfort of the St. Paul's food ministry. During an illness, she appreciated the delivery of home-cooked meals and now is an enthusiastic contributor when called upon to provide food for parishioners in need.

The Call to Give

Making a financial commitment to St. Paul's is important to Mary Beth. She says "I give to St. Paul's because as a parishioner I can help us provide our ministry to others and our church family. I never think twice about pledging!"

Alicia and Alex Hollis

Inspired by God's Abundance

By Gina Urban

Alicia and Alex Hollis arrived in Murfreesboro from Memphis in 1986. Alex had just completed his dentistry studies at The University of Tennessee's College of Dentistry and was opening his oral surgery practice here. Their daughter, Ann, was nine months old. The Hollis' second child, Mary, arrived some two years later.

"St. Paul's was the only show in town if you were an Episcopalian," said Alicia. "We walked in the door and were taken under the wings of Debby and Jeff James, Charlotte and Newt Molloy, and Olin Williams." Alicia recalled when Charlotte Molloy, along with her young daughter Meghan, picked up Alicia and Ann for Bible Study (which had a nursery).

Now both Hollis daughters live in Nashville with their families. Alicia and Alex have four grandchildren, who are "an absolute joy!"

Memories of Belonging

"I cannot imagine our lives without St. Paul's, either now or in all the years past," said Alicia. "It is where we have experienced God's love and abundance, as well as the place where He has called us forward and challenged us." Alex added, "St. Paul's is my extended

family. My largest core of friends is at St. Paul's."

Alicia and Alex have many fond memories of their life at St. Paul's. "We call them 'Red Letter Days,'" Alicia said. "Sometimes it's the music on a particular Sunday, or a moving homily—the moments we are all responding as one to the blessings God has given us."

"In 1986 we were such a small church that we didn't have critical mass," Alex said. "There were not enough people to do all the things we needed to do to grow as a church. Father Gene Wise changed that. He taught our congregation, 'We are all ministers.' That expanded people's willingness to get involved, and helped the church grow and thrive. Alicia added, "We have been blessed with wonderful priests ever since."

Alex recalled leading a Parish Weekend at Cedars of Lebanon State Park, attended by 30-40 people. "We had the men in one dormitory and the women in another, and nursery care for the children," he said. "We are looking forward to the upcoming Parish Weekend at Henry Horton Park, and how it will bring us together."

"And of course," Alex added, "there have been many, many beautiful funerals celebrating the lives of people we have loved."

Years of Ministry

Alicia and Alex have served in many leadership roles over the years. Both have served on the Vestry multiple



times, and both have served as Senior Warden. Alex was on the building committee for the new nave in 2000; "We didn't even have a picture of what it would look like," he recalled. Both Alicia and Alex were on the fundraising committee for the Parish Hall.

"I have enjoyed and grown in the Spirit through every ministry to which God has called me at St. Paul's over the years," Alicia said. "Two in which I have worked a long time are as a lay eucharistic minister and as a choir member, and these are dear to me. I receive way more than I give to these two ministries. Alex and I are also currently participating in Meat and Potatoes. This class is in part a ministry of Christian sharing, praying with each other, and considering different points of view, along with learning."

"We cannot leave out being the recipients of the wonderful Sunday morning Christian Education Classes through the years," Alicia added. "These classes have been taught by both priests and lay persons, and have been the basis of our Christian formation."



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Alex has enjoyed his time in many different ministries at St. Paul's including the Long Range Planning Committee for the Nave, Capital Campaign for the Nave and Parish Hall, Acolyte Master, and the Cursillo reunion group. He currently serves on the Tech Team, the Medical Response Committee, and as an usher.

The Call to Give

"When we were young and I was just starting my career, we struggled to give regularly to the church," Alex said. "As time went on, we committed to give a fixed percentage of our income. We were fearful of making this commitment. But we made it a goal, and

increased our giving each year. Once we made that mental and spiritual commitment, we never looked back. We learned that if it's the first check you write each month, it's easy. Ever since then, we have never struggled with what to give each year, because we know it will be that certain percentage."

Alex also noted that, while they do provide some support to our Outreach Ministries, "We feel it is important to de-specify our gifts and let the Vestry guide our gifts for the church's ministry as a whole."

Alicia added, "The wealth of St. Paul's lies in our love for God and each other, in our hospitality and spirit of

fellowship, in our putting the work of love before uniformity of opinion, and in our brilliant community of sharing, teaching, and learning. Even a brief reflection on all these treasures, given to this church family by God through His grace and mercy, creates within me a debt of gratitude and love that leads me to give generously to Him in return."

"I can't imagine what our lives would be like without St. Paul's," Alicia said. "They would be much less rich. We are thankful for God's leading us here." ■

▶ Tristin and Matthew Casteel

By Anna Stewart

The Casteel family came to St. Paul's in 2019 when a close friend recommended they check it out. After visiting a few times, learning more about the Episcopal Church, and interacting with so many wonderful people, Tristin and Matt knew St. Paul's was the church for them. They attend with their daughters Nora and Maggie Kate.

For the Casteels, belonging to St. Paul's means comfort, connection, and a worship community. They had searched extensively for a church; the moment they walked into St. Paul's, they knew they were home.

Tristin and Matt both serve as ushers. Tristin said, "We enjoy that opportunity to welcome members and visitors as they arrive for service. We also enjoy ushering because we get to participate in parts of the service." Additionally, Matt serves as the liaison for Adult Discipleship on the Vestry.

The Casteels are passionate about supporting the food drives for Nourish Food Bank, donating supplies for the Coldest Nights shelter, and contributing to the offerings for the CONNECT ministry. Tristin stated, "We appreciate these opportunities to play a small part in providing food, shelter, and other support for members of our community during the most challenging of times."

The Call to Give

The Casteels answer the call to give financially through their annual pledge, loose plate offerings for the CONNECT ministry, and giving to the debt reduction campaign. They give to St. Paul's because they believe in the mission and know that their investment helps put the mission in action. They feel confident that St. Paul's mission not only helps our congregation, but impacts and improves the lives of so many within Rutherford county and beyond. Their faith in the difference St. Paul's makes in the lives of those around us is reflected in their favorite scripture verse, "For with God nothing shall be impossible" (Luke 1:37).



CONNECT Ministry Partners with United Way

By Gina Urban

St. Paul's CONNECT Ministry is collaborating with United Way of Rutherford and Cannon Counties on its new program, Launch Point.

Launch Point is a United Way initiative designed to improve the financial stability of families residing in Rutherford and Cannon Counties. The program is a free service that connects individuals to a network of providers. Participating individuals receive up to 18 months of coaching with a Launch Point Success Coach; financial assistance for services like childcare, transportation, housing, etc.; and are connected to resources including food, education, and medication assistance.

Launch Point began in 2019 with a grant from State Farm. Then in late 2022, United Way applied for and received a \$1.6 million grant from Tennessee Department of Human Services to expand the program. While this is a two-year grant, United Way is hopeful that if they meet their Launch Point outcomes, they will be able to renew it. The program has defined, measurable outcomes in the categories of Financial Stability, Higher Education, Health and Well Being, and Social Capital advancement.

Vicki Weatherford, Coordinator of Launch Point, and her team are connecting with churches and employers to partner on this program. "Typically, people will come to a church first when they need help," she explained.

The CONNECT Ministry meets twice a month to make a difference in our community by providing financial assistance, making judicious use of parishioner contributions, to households having difficulty paying utility and housing bills. So far this year, CONNECT has aided 91 households, awarding nearly \$25,700 to help cover their expenses.

The CONNECT Team is excited about this partnership with United Way. According to Liz Huber, "CONNECT strives to provide connections and offer direction to help people get to a better place. Launch Point will help us do just that." The plan is that CONNECT will help with the client's immediate crisis need—a rent payment, a car repair—then Launch Point will work with these individuals on a longer-term basis to increase their financial stability.



There will be a Launch Point representative at each CONNECT meeting. The CONNECT committee members, when meeting with individual applicants, will screen each person for Launch Point eligibility, then immediately introduce the applicant to the Launch Point representative. "This saves the person from having to go to yet another stop," Vicki explained.

Vicki added that the presence of a Launch Point team member with a social services background might help the CONNECT team assess whether the applicant truly wants to seek financial stability. "You have some people

who come back to the church year after year," she explained. "We want to help change that behavior."

"Our goal is to serve 400 families in Rutherford and Cannon Counties," Vicki said. "We have defined outcomes we need to meet to increase participants' financial stability through counseling, planning, budgeting, and continuing education." ■





Launch Point applicants must meet eligibility requirements, including income at or below 185% of Federal Poverty Level.

Applicants must be experiencing one or more of the following conditions:

- At risk of losing employment
- Experienced a reduction in income
- Experienced a significant unexpected expense
- Loss of transportation
- Loss of childcare

Book Review - Helpful Titles on Stewardship

By David L. Rowe, Assistant to the Rector for Christian Formation

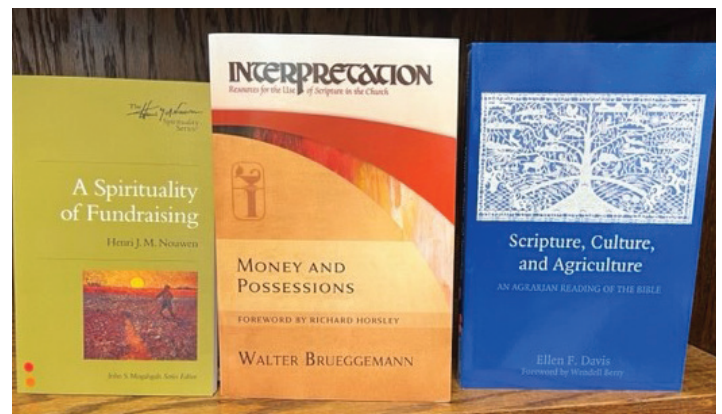
Studies of stewardship generally fall into two categories—how to plan and execute programs to raise money for the church and more thoughtful “stewardship as spiritual expression.” Our library at St. Paul’s places stewardship materials in the *Spirituality* section, recognizing the central role it plays in our relationship with God, God’s creation, and each other. The environmental movement has inspired major reflections on how we can better manage not only our money but our living together as God’s people on this planet. Here are some important and inspirational books for anyone thinking about their personal giving or those who are engaged in stewardship ministries at St. Paul’s.

Henri J. Nouwen, *A Spirituality of Fundraising* (Nashville: Upper Room Books, 2010). In a scant 60 pages Nouwen lays out the essential meaning of stewardship as relational, uniting us to God, to community, and to the great work of making God’s Kingdom a reality among us. It transforms the giver and the receiver; by it we invite the giver into engagement in God’s exciting enterprise of renewing the face of the earth. Anyone active in the ministry of stewardship should begin by reading this book to understand why we do that and how to do it more faithfully.

Walter Brueggemann, *Money and Possessions* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2016). Perhaps our foremost interpreter of the Old Testament today, Brueggemann brings a prophetic vision and voice to the biblical theme of money and wealth and, in this study, extends it to a reflection on what the New Testament says about the

nature of possessions and their role in the coming Kingdom. “Instead of our present economy of capitalist extraction and the greed that drives it,” writes Gale A. Yee, “Brueggemann urges an economy of restoration, based on debt forgiveness and mutual aid, as a radical economic alternative.”

Anyone who appreciates the environmentalist vision of Wendell Berry will love Ellen F. Davis’s *Scripture, Culture, and Agriculture: An Agrarian Reading of the Bible* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). With a captivating introduction by Berry, the book examines contemporary land use through the lens of biblical practice “against the background of the geography, social structures, and religious thought of ancient Israel.” Thus rooted in scripture, she sees the land not so much as a place on which we live but as a gift that we are called to steward properly lest we risk the danger, as we do today, of becoming estranged from it, from each other, and from God. ■



“Just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness, and in your love for us—see that you also excel in this grace of giving.”

2 Corinthians 8:7

Treasurer's Reflection

By Don Whitfield, Treasurer


I am excited and honored to assume the role of St. Paul's treasurer, as appointed by the Vestry. And, I am grateful to our outgoing treasurer, Jeanne Potter, who has served St. Paul's with distinction and grace since spring of 2019. Jeanne has skillfully managed our parish finances through a number of challenges, including our clergy transition in 2019, the acquisition of JR's Foodland property in 2021, and, of course, the COVID-19 pandemic. Thank you, Jeanne, for your commitment and service to St. Paul's.

This is my second time to serve as treasurer at St. Paul's, and so much has changed since I last held this role! Our campus is markedly different, having been transformed by construction and renovations over the years to include new and upgraded spaces for worship, Christian education, youth ministry, fellowship, child care and administration. Church programming has expanded dramatically over the years as well, as new staff positions have been created to meet a variety of ministry needs. This growth—in both facilities and programming—reflects the steadfast generosity of our parish and the manner in which we have responded to God's calling in our lives and ministries.

We are now being asked to again consider our annual commitment to St. Paul's, as budgeting for next year begins this fall. Creating the budget is a complex process requiring input from our clergy, staff, vestry members and others—but the key element in our budgeting process is a determination of next year's expected pledge income. Pledges from parishioners comprise approximately 85% of our income, and it is vitally important to the budgeting process that we have the best estimate of pledge income possible.



As our 2024 stewardship campaign begins, I encourage each of you to reflect upon your blessings, to prayerfully consider your financial commitment to St. Paul's, and to memorialize that commitment with a pledge. Thank you in advance for supporting the budgeting process through the timely completion of your pledge. ■

		TREASURER'S REPORT			
		YEAR TO DATE THROUGH JULY 2023			
	ACTUAL	BUDGET	VARIANCE	PRIOR YEAR	VARIANCE
REVENUE					
Pledges	445,080	489,100	(44,020)	508,065	(62,985)
Unpledged Gifts	46,763	50,933	(4,170)	50,814	(4,051)
Other Income	47,455	25,774	21,681	33,730	13,725
TOTAL REVENUE	539,298	565,807	(26,509)	592,609	(53,311)
EXPENSES**	585,373	610,671	(25,298)	570,289	15,084
**includes repayment of principal					
NET CASH FLOW	(46,075)	(44,864)	(1,211)	22,320	(68,395)
	PLEDGED	Pledges Rec'd 10/2022 thru 7/2023	Matching Gift Rec'd 10/2022 thru 7/2023	TOTAL Gifts Rec'd 10/2022 thru 7/2023	Amt Applied to loan balance thru 7/2023
DEBT REDUCTION GIFTS	148,695	124,626	150,000	274,626	268,766
Current loan balance 7/2023 **not including accrued interest	149,061			Debt reduction account balance	5,860

Upcoming Events

By Chase Benefiel

Sunday, September 10 | Fall Worship Continues on Summer Schedule | Christian Education Resumes

Throughout the summer, a number of parishioners asked if we could continue our summer worship schedule of services at 7:30 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. We will keep our summer worship schedule through the fall semester. In December, we will re-evaluate and determine what is best for the common good going forward.

Tuesday, September 19 | Over 70 Birthday Celebration

Seniors age 70+ enjoy a delicious luncheon with celebration of birthdays occurring this quarter. Birthday celebrants receive a card, birthday cake, and an opportunity to win a door prize. Lunch is at 11:30 a.m. in the Parish Hall.

Monday, September 18 | Pilgrimage Begins

This year-long introduction to Christian faith and the Anglican tradition is for adults who are seeking Baptism, Confirmation, or Reception into the Episcopal Church, and is also a place to deepen your faith while building Christian friendships. Classes are on Monday evenings, 6:30–8:00 p.m., and nursery is provided. For more information, contact Joyce Adkins at joycea1010@gmail.com.

Sunday, September 24 | Undie Sunday

Dry socks and fresh underwear help every person feel basic dignity. A collection box is available in the parish hall and items are welcome any time in September. Donations will be distributed by the Journey Home to the homeless population in Murfreesboro. If you plan to give a check, please put Undie Sunday in the memo line of your check or online donation through Realm.

Sunday, October 8 | Blessing of the Animals

The Episcopal Church has long believed that animals are gifts from God, and that people are responsible for being good stewards of the earth and all its inhabitants. Bring your pets—leashed or crated, please—to the courtyard at 4:00 p.m. for a blessing.

Friday, October 13 - Sunday, October 15 | Parish-wide Family Campout | Henry Horton State Park

Join your St. Paul's family as we enjoy a beautiful fall weekend at Henry Horton State Park! There are options for tent sites, a lodge, cabins, and RV campsites. Or you may choose to make a day trip! Check the weekly eNewsletter for more details and a sign-up link.



Saturday, October 14 | St. Paul's Ken Sloan Memorial Golf Tournament | Henry Horton State Park

Sign up as a foursome, a twosome, or as an individual for this annual golf tradition. Food and festivities will follow the competition. Golfers of all ages and skill levels are welcome! Questions? Brad Miller, bradford.l.miller@gmail.com, 770-616-6001.

Sunday, October 22 | Gratitude Sunday

After the 10:00 a.m. service, we are hosting a picnic to thank you for your generous support of the church's ministries. Please bring a side dish to share! Contact Allison Kellermann at agkellermann@gmail.com to let her know what you'll bring.

Thursday, November 23 | Thanksgiving Service and Potluck Dinner

Join us for a longstanding St. Paul's tradition: Thanksgiving service at 10:30 a.m., followed by Thanksgiving luncheon. Bring your favorite Thanksgiving dish to share.

Sunday, December 3 | Advent Wreath Party

On the evening of the first Sunday of Advent, we will make Advent wreaths and enjoy dinner together. Please keep an eye out for more details including RSVP in the eNewsletter.

Sunday, December 17 | Lessons and Carols

On Christmas Eve, 1918, the Chaplain of King's College, Cambridge took a Cornish Christmas tradition and brought it to the world. Weaving together biblical readings with seasonal music, the service prepared participants to hear the announcement of the birth of Jesus Christ. For over 20 years, St. Paul's has hosted its own service. We look forward to seeing you there!

St. Paul's EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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St. Paul's EPISCOPAL CHURCH

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

SUNDAYS

7:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist Rite I—*in the Nave with Gospel piano*

9:00 a.m. Christian Education—*for all ages resumes*

September 10

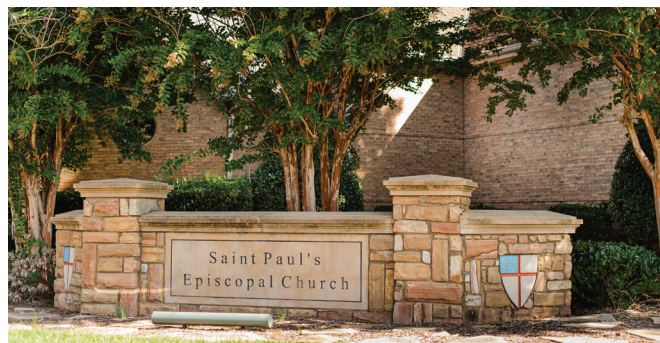
- Nursery for children under 3

10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist Rite II—*in the Nave with organ*

- Children's Church
- Nursery available during service
- Available via livestream each Sunday

WEDNESDAYS

7:00 a.m. —*Holy Eucharist in St. Andrew's Chapel*



The Epistle is a publication of St. Paul's Episcopal Church and is shared with members and friends to engage and inform readers about what is happening in the life of our church community.

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We are forming people into the Body of Christ.