St. Paul’s Epistle
June 1st, 2020

No Matter Who You Are, Or Where You Have Been, There Is A Place For You At St. Paul’s

www.stpaulsyr.org
Dear brothers and sisters,

We continue to make our way through this place I have called ‘the valley’. I hope you feel you are making your way through this strange situation with other people, with others at St. Paul’s, with friends or with family members. I hope you are seeing beauty and goodness around you, along with some situations of pain or grief that many of us are seeing.

If you feel tired of this place we are in, know that I am in agreement with you. The part of this situation that is most exhausting for me is that we can do many things together, but we cannot be together. If you feel scared about the virus, know that I feel a bit scared about the virus too. We need to continue to be careful and to take precautions. The danger of the disease is real, and at least a bit scary.

At the same time, our community has made good progress in curbing transmission of the coronavirus. We can begin to make plans, to take the first steps to having some very small, in person gatherings. The Diocese has created a wise, safety-oriented framework for these first steps.

Our vestry will be creating and submitting a proposal for our first phase of reopening during the month of June. I am calling this first phase: Small Pastoral Gatherings. The purpose of this phase is to create a safe way for members of St. Paul’s to gather with or without me in small groups of 4-6 people for the most essential purposes: prayer and being present to one another. I hope these gatherings might begin in July.

Since many parts of our life together have changed in the past two months it seems important to check in with our members about which things are working and which things are not working. I encourage you to participate in our Member Survey. It is easy and quick and sort of fun to complete the survey, especially if you follow the link in our e-blast and complete the survey online. If you would prefer to fill out the
survey using a paper form, we will be happy to send you a paper version of the survey. In order to request a copy, please call the church office at 315-474-6053.

On May 24th, I made a quick visit to Bob Frye on the occasion of his 92nd birthday. I dropped off a few birthday cards, a present, a box of cupcakes and Bob’s favorite lunch: a generous antipasto platter, including deviled eggs from Patty Glavin. Bob described how wonderful it was to hear the voices of many friends from St. Paul’s who have called him on the telephone. I know what he means. In many cases a telephone call can be much better than emails or text messages back and forth. I would be very glad to talk with you sometime soon. Please feel free to call me at my home phone at 315-422-7914.

Fr. Philip

Fr. Philip is on Vacation June 1st-7th

Fr. Philip will be on vacation from June 1st-7th. The Rev. John Rohde will be leading our Tuesday and Thursday evening worship services, leading Tuesday Bible Study and providing pastoral coverage. The only part of our weekly schedule which will be changed is that St. Paul’s will not hold our worship services on Sunday, June 7th.

On June 7th please join Bishop DeDe Duncan-Probe for diocesan worship services at 8 and 10 a.m. In order to join please visit our diocesan website: cnyepiscopal.org. St. Paul’s Zoom Coffee Hour will be held at our regular times: 9 and 11 a.m. on June 7th.

In case of pastoral emergency during the week of June 1st, please contact one of our wardens, Tom Cantwell and Betsy Elkins, or Pastoral Care team leader, Laurie Sanderson. Our lay leaders will then contact John for further support.
Upcoming Services

May 31st, 2020 ~ The Day of Pentecost
Hymns: 507, 508, 511
Psalm 104: 25-35, BCP p. 736

June 7th, 2020 ~ Please join Bishop DeDe Duncan-Probe for diocesan worship services at 8 and 10 a.m. In order to join please click on the special link on St. Paul’s homepage or on the Diocesan website. St. Paul’s Zoom Coffee Hour will be held at our regular times: 9 and 11 a.m. on June 7th.

June 14th, 2020 ~ Second Sunday After Pentecost
Hymns: 9, 401 (v. 1-3), 686
Psalm 116:1, 10-17, BCP p. 759

Phone A Friend for Services
—By Laurie Sanderson

A few Sundays ago Jean Avery called Bev Bolton right before the service started and placed the phone next to the computer, Bev got to hear the service and loved it. This Sunday Kira Dirghali called June Bisson and I called Barbara Allen, both felt such joy! Are there others who would like to listen to a service or who are willing to be the connector? Please call me, Laurie Sanderson at 315-420-1518 and I will help this happen.

June Anniversaries: Philip & Kathy Major 6/1, Dick & Neva Pilgrim

Two years ago—May 2018, Mark McGrath started cooking with the First Friday crew. I remember giving him a recipe and saying, “Here. Can you make this?” He said, “Why don’t you just tell me what to do.” That was the beginning of a wonderful relationship.

He showed up when he said he would, worked hard at any task I asked him to do, and had a sense of food—how it should go together, what needed stirring, or turning, how to make a dish look good. He remembered to check the ovens, was content to help cleanup, setup, chop, stir, lift, carry, and all with joy at being there. He thanked me for the opportunity of helping put First Friday dinners on the table. Mark’s sudden death saddens me. Many people will miss his cheerfulness, the time he gave a friend of surprise birthday party, instituted movies and popcorn on a Saturday afternoon at St. Paul’s. He leaves a hole at church and in our hearts.

On a happier note, Beverly Bolton is doing well. She will celebrate her 98th birthday on June 7th. Happy Birthday and Thank You for your contribution to FF!

May God’s blessings be with us all at this time of year when we remember the people who have gone before us, those whose shoulders we stood on, those who died to give us liberty, and good health. We give thanks—to them, and to God.

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Thank You to Doug Mouncey
—By Debbie Bogan, Mission and Service Ministry

Many thanks to Doug Mouncey for delivering house plants to five women who reside at the senior apartments at the Downtown YMCA. Doug also wrote a note saying we are thinking of them and hope we can get out before too long. Since we unsure of when we will have social events at St. Paul's, Doug wanted to remember the ladies in a special way.
This is the beginning of week 11 of staying at home. And like most of you, the only person I have seen except in passing or on a zoom screen or a video phone call has been my husband. While this is not a bad thing, I love Bill and spending this time together has been wonderful; I am not being sarcastic! But like many of you, I have longed to be with other people and have a face to face conversation, even if 6 feet apart and wearing a mask! While we have settled into a routine that is comfortable it is getting harder as summer has arrived and the things we enjoy about summer, particularly gatherings with others, can’t happen right now. I have even found myself looking at an empty Hanover Square wishing I could be sitting down there at the bar across the street having a beer and some chips with a group of friends.

When times get tough we get creative. We have found ways to get out of our cozy apartment by taking rides in the country and hikes in the woods. If we are friends on Facebook you have seen pictures of our adventures and many of you have “liked” what I have shared. But as the state begins to open up and as much as we want to be with others, we are not ready to change much of what we have been doing to keep us and others safe at this time. The medical experts and scientists keep reminding us that “the virus is still out there; there is much we don’t know.”

So we have begun to have driveway visits. And since we don’t have a driveway or a big enough space for friends to come to us, we travel to them. We now have lawn chairs and sometimes even snacks in our car and stop to see friends as we travel around. Bill has questioned whether it is “ok” to just drop in on folks. At this time I think it is, calling ahead first of course. We haven’t found anyone who said, we have company or we are too busy! Our friends are more than glad to see us for the same reason we want to see them. We are lonely for each other.

I hope if we are in your neighborhood and we call, you will invite us to sit at the end of your driveway and visit. It is the summer of “bring your own everything.” You don’t need to provide anything for us. We have chairs and snacks with us.
Saint Paul's has had an active prayer shawl ministry for several years. During the past year we began sending some to Upstate Medical Center, Spiritual Care as their source had dried up. With the Covid 19 Pandemic, their supply of shawls has been exhausted, so once again we are warming up our hooks or needles to create more. Please consider joining us, if you need a pattern contact Laurie Sanderson at lascsw3@aol.com and she will send you a pattern. The Reverend Terry Culbertson asks that they be washed and put in zip lock bags. Let Laurie know you have one to share and she will pick it up and deliver it to Terry's home. Thank you!

**Calendar June 1st through June 15th**

**Monday, June 1st** 7:30 p.m. Yoga- Live Stream  
Tuesday, June 2nd: 2:00 p.m. Bible Study- Zoom  
Tuesday, June 2nd: 7:30 p.m. Compline with Words for Inspiration- Live Stream  
Wednesday, June 3rd: 7:30 p.m. SPC Readers- Zoom RSVP with Rev. Kathy Major  
Thursday, June 4th: 4:30 p.m. Father Philip’s Neighborhood- Zoom  
Thursday, June 4th 7:30 p.m. Compline with Music for Inspiration-Live Stream  
Sunday, June 7th: 8:00 a.m. Worship with the Bishop– Special Link  
Sunday, June 7th: 9:00 a.m. Coffee Hour- Zoom  
Sunday, June 7th: 10:00 a.m. Worship with the Bishop– Special Link  
Sunday, June 7th: 11:00 a.m. Coffee Hour- Zoom  
Sunday, June 7th: 2:00 p.m. South Sudanese Prayers– Zoom

**Monday, June 8th** 7:30 p.m. Yoga- Live Stream  
Tuesday, June 9th: 2:00 p.m. Bible Study- Zoom  
Tuesday, June 9th: 7:30 p.m. Compline with prayers in memory of Mark McGrath – Zoom & Live Stream  
Wednesday, June 10th: 7:30 p.m. SPC Readers- Zoom RSVP with Rev. Kathy Major  
Thursday, June 11th: 4:30 p.m. Father Philip’s Neighborhood- Zoom  
Thursday, June 11th 7:30 p.m. Compline with Music for Inspiration-Live Stream  
Sunday, June 14th: 9:00 a.m. Coffee Hour- Zoom  
Sunday, June 14th: 10:00 a.m. Sunday Worship– Live Stream  
Sunday, June 14th: 11:00 a.m. Coffee Hour- Zoom  
Sunday, June 14th: 2:00 p.m. South Sudanese Prayers– Zoom  
Monday, June 15th: 7:30 p.m. Yoga- Live Stream

**Prayer Shawl Ministry**  
—By Laurie Sanderson

Saint Paul's has had an active prayer shawl ministry for several years. During the past year we began sending some to Upstate Medical Center, Spiritual Care as their source had dried up. With the Covid 19 Pandemic, their supply of shawls has been exhausted, so once again we are warming up our hooks or needles to create more. Please consider joining us, if you need a pattern contact Laurie Sanderson at lascsw3@aol.com and she will send you a pattern. The Reverend Terry Culbertson asks that they be washed and put in zip lock bags. Let Laurie know you have one to share and she will pick it up and deliver it to Terry's home. Thank you!
Even before the first day of June, daytime temperatures have surpassed 90 degrees in Syracuse. The plants in my garden are growing tall and lush during these long, sunny days. Yet, in our hearts, we still feel a bit like a gardener in winter.

Two weeks ago, I described the sudden closure, the immediate loss of connection and the chaos of the last weeks of March being like the sudden end to the gardening season brought by the first hard frost of November. What follows is four or five months of freezing cold, darkness and snow. If you are a gardener, trying to keep going through the cold dark months, it helps to build some sort of structure, some sort of way to continue to grow plants through the winter.

My very first winter gardening structure, 34 years ago, was just an eight foot long fluorescent light I found at a salvage yard, with simple wooden brackets to hold it above my trays of seedlings. In our next apartment it was a three-season glassed in sun porch which was warm enough to grow seedlings in February. I really love growing plants, so when we built our first house, twenty-nine years ago, Nancy and I built a 20 foot long greenhouse along the south side of the living room.

In the greenhouse I would start a new crop of lettuce and mesclun plants in September. These wouldn’t grow very quickly, especially in December and January, but we could continue cutting fresh greens for salad all winter. In January I would start a few dozen tomato plants from seed. My professional farm and garden friends told me January was too early, that there was not enough light, but I planted the seeds anyway. For my own health I just needed to see something growing in the cold and the dark.

As a gardener, it really helped to have some sort of structure, like a set of grow lights or a greenhouse, to keep me going through the winter. As Jesus’ disciples, it really helps us to have some sort of structure, to help keep us on track, through good times and difficult times. When our buildings closed in the middle of March, many of us lost the structure of our spiritual lives.
Especially at St. Paul’s, our buildings are safe places where we can go almost any day of the week with some expectation of having a ‘God conversation’. This might not be a conversation about God, but it would be a conversation or an activity which is framed by the awareness that each person in the room is created in the image of God.

With the closure of our buildings, many of us have lost a vital structure of our spiritual lives. Like the gardener in winter, we have to get creative. We have to develop some new structures that provide a safe place for our spiritual flourishing.

It took a lot of effort and expense to build a 20-foot greenhouse. It was well worth the effort. It will take some effort, and perhaps even some expense, to create new structures to support our spiritual flourishing during this period when our buildings are closed. It will be well worth the effort.

**Warden’s Zoom**

—By Betsy Elkins, Senior Warden

For the last month I have attended weekly meetings for wardens in our Diocese via Zoom. These meetings are led by Carrie Schofield-Broadbent and as many as 40 wardens have attended. Sometimes the Bishop has joined us as well. It has been interesting to compare notes with other wardens regarding what they are doing in their parishes at this time. I am very proud of what we have managed to do with streaming services with music, zoom meetings and bible study, small group discussions and even yoga classes to keep us strong. We are doing a great deal to help our members at St. Paul’s stay in touch with each other and informed (like with this Epistle.) In these Zoom meetings we have begun to talk about what it will look like when we re-open our buildings for worship and you will hear more about that in the coming weeks. We talk about moving forward, rather than going back to the way things were. The Diocese has placed a much useful information their webpage. Check it out if you wish: [https://cnyepiscopal.org/faithful-response-coronavirus/](https://cnyepiscopal.org/faithful-response-coronavirus/)
In Memory of Mark McGrath

Our brother and friend, Mark McGrath, died unexpectedly early in the morning of May 24th. Mark has been working full time in recent weeks and seemed to be recovering well from a round of chemotherapy in April and early May. He felt ill Friday evening, May 22nd and was taken to Upstate hospital, where he was admitted. The immediate cause of death appeared to be pneumonia.

Mark first came to St. Paul’s two and ½ years ago. He participated in new member classes in 2018 and was confirmed by Bishop DeDe in December of 2018. During a conversation with Bishop DeDe, Mark said something I will never forget: Most families don’t really act like families. St. Paul’s is like a true family. People at St. Paul’s treat each other the way people in families are supposed to treat one another.

Mark was right. St. Paul’s is like a true family. Mark really loved all of you as his sisters and brothers. And you really cared for him as a brother. Many, many people at St. Paul’s did everything in their power to take care of Mark, like a brother. Your love and care for him has been one of the most beautiful, inspiring acts of community I have ever witnessed.

At 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, June 9th, we will set aside an hour to give thanks to God for the grace and love we have seen in Mark’s life. We will
devote the time of our Compline service to prayers and words in memory of Mark. This service will be held via Zoom but will also be accessible through our live stream.

Since we are not able to gather in small groups or for a reception, I am asking our members to share their memories of Mark during our prayer service. If you would like to contribute your memory of Mark’s life during this service, please:

- Compose your thoughts in a few paragraphs, no more than 200 words.
- Send these to me via email by noon on June 9th. This will allow me to arrange them within the service.
- Let me know if you would like to read your remembrance or if you would prefer that I read it.

If you would like to make a contribution to help cover end of life expenses for Mark, please consider making a contribution to St. Paul’s Rector’s Discretionary Fund.

On May 24th we prayed this prayer from the Book of Common Prayer: *Into your hands, O merciful Savior, we commend your servant Mark. Acknowledge, we humbly beseech you, a sheep of your own fold, a lamb of your own flock, a sinner of your own redeeming. Receive him into the arms of your mercy, into the blessed rest of everlasting peace, and into the glorious company of the saints in light. Amen.* (BCP p. 465)
Deadlines for Upcoming Issues of The Epistle

Sunday, June 7th for June 15th issue
Sunday, June 28th for July 1st issue