St. Paul’s Epistle
June 15th, 2020

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

www.stpaulsyr.org
Jesus said, ‘I came into this world for judgement so that those who do not see may see…’

Some of the religious leaders near him heard this and said to him, ‘Surely we are not blind, are we?’

John 9:39-40

Dear sisters and brothers,

In response to the waves of protest across the country, I have been searching for voices of wisdom. More than ever, I have been searching for voices of insight into our current situation and the way forward for our nation. I listened to a conversation between Ezra Klein and Ta-nehisi Coates a few days ago. I was surprised to hear Ta-nehisi say he is hopeful at this time. Ta-nehisi sees this moment as a turning point in the struggle for justice in America because, for the first time, most Americans are beginning to see the reality of daily life for black Americans. (You can read or hear the entire conversation by following this link: [https://www.vox.com/2020/6/5/21279530](https://www.vox.com/2020/6/5/21279530))

The first responsibility for those who follow Jesus is to see the truth of our situation. Jesus teaches us to love our neighbors and our enemies. Jesus teaches us to serve those in need. Jesus also teaches us how to see the truth. We cannot love and serve others if we are not seeing the truth.

Protesters in front of Syracuse City Hall on Saturday, June 6. You can see St. Paul’s in the background.
Our journey through recent weeks and months and years has included many tragic images, sounds and stories. Seeing these painful, distressing images, hearing the true stories, watching the videos that document the injustice has been difficult and exhausting for me and perhaps for you. This is a glimmer of the exhaustion and difficulty faced by Americans who are not treated as citizens with full rights under the Constitution every day. Seeing the reality and truth of the suffering and tragedy of our neighbors who are oppressed is the first step for us as Christians.

Jesus encourages us to let our eyes be opened to the truth. Then, we might love and serve as he loved and served the poor, the oppressed and the great masses of people, working and struggling to survive, in his time and place.

Fr. Philip

Upcoming Services

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

June 21st, 2020 ~ Third Sunday After Pentecost
Hymns: 178, 698, 296
Readings: Genesis 21:8-21, Romans 6:1b-11, Matthew 10:24-39
Psalm 86:1-10, 16-17 BCP p. 709

June 28th, 2020 ~ Fourth Sunday After Pentecost
Hymns: 488, 379, 410
Readings: Genesis 22:1-14, Romans 6:12-23, Matthew 10:40-42
Psalm 13 BCP p. 597


All right, does everyone have sound?

The Last Supper via Zoom
What Can I Do To Help?
—By Tiffany Miner

Since the protests incited by the murder of George Floyd began just after Memorial Day, I have felt overwhelmed by the need to “do something.” There is a need, but it's hard to know where to start. I am sure that many of you have felt the same way. I spent a lot of time thinking about it, and came up with a few things to take action during this event.

Stay Informed. Feeling overwhelmed by the news? It's okay to step away from the onslaught of media for a while. Most news sources, like NPR and the New York Times, have daily summary emails of the news that you can subscribe to so you can get your news in all one place.

Donate to a cause you care about. The NAACP and ACLU are great organizations to donate to right now. If that's not your thing, you can always support locally owned and black businesses by doing take out once a week.

Stay Connected ~ Make a Phone Call!

I continue to hear great reports about the ways our members are staying in touch through phone calls. I hope you will stay in touch with me as well. I’m happy to talk with you, even if there is no emergency or specific question or need. Please feel free to call me on my home phone any time. (422-7914) If I am not able to answer immediately, please leave a message and I will return your call.

I especially welcome your phone calls during my office hours:
Tuesday 12-2 p.m.
Thursday 1-3 p.m.
Notice this is a change from my office hours in May.

Fr. Philip
First Friday
—By Carol Decker

Bishop Duncan-Probe, on Trinity Sunday, asked in her sermon who God was for us. She reminded us that we are all children of God in relationship to others, and the world.

I always think of God as that Holy Spirit moving me to do something. That’s what First Friday has been all about. I miss it—the joy of cooking for others and the camaraderie of those who help, and those who come to dinner and enjoy, the hugs, and the smiles.

It reminded me of a long time ago when I was in a group that studied “Living the Benedictine Way”. As group members we tried to do the following 5 things every day:
- Pray
- Work
- Learn something new
- Do something for someone else
- Exercise

I offer these five activities as a recipe for your daily living.

When we physically meet again, may we be stronger, healthier, and remember we are all God’s children.

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Did you fill out the parish survey yet? Look for the above logo on the front page of our website and fill it out online. If you prefer a paper copy, email Judy at: offices@stpaulssyr.org. You can also call the church office and leave a message. 315 474-6053
Calendar June 14th through June 30th

Sunday, June 14, 9:00 a.m. Coffee Hour- Zoom
Sunday, June 14, 10:00 a.m. Sunday Worship– Live Stream
Sunday, June 14, 11:00 a.m. Coffee Hour- Zoom
Sunday, June 14, 2:00 p.m. South Sudanese Prayers– Zoom

Monday, June 15, 7:30 p.m. Yoga- Live Stream
Tuesday, June 16, 2:00 p.m. Bible Study- Zoom
Tuesday, June 16, 7:00 p.m. Feminist Theology- Zoom RSVP w/ Laurie Sanderson
Tuesday, June 16, 7:30 p.m. Compline with Words for Inspiration- Live Stream
Wednesday, June 17, 7:30 p.m. SPC Readers- Zoom RSVP w/Rev. Kathy Major
Thursday, June 18, 4:30 p.m. Father Philip’s Neighborhood- Zoom
Thursday, June 18, 7:30 p.m. Evening Prayer w/Music for Inspiration-Live Stream
Friday, June 19, 5:30 p.m. The Feast –Zoom
Sunday, June 21, 9:00 a.m. Coffee Hour- Zoom
Sunday, June 21, 10:00 a.m. Sunday Worship– Live Stream
Sunday, June 21, 11:00 a.m. Coffee Hour- Zoom
Sunday, June 21, 2:00 p.m. South Sudanese Prayers– Zoom

Monday, June 22, 7:30 p.m. Yoga- Live Stream
Tuesday, June 23, 2:00 p.m. Bible Study- Zoom
Tuesday, June 23, 7:30 p.m. Compline with Words for Inspiration- Live Stream
Wednesday, June 24, 7:00 p.m. Gardener’s Group- Zoom RSVP w/Jessica King
Wednesday, June 24, 7:30 p.m. SPC Readers- Zoom RSVP w/ Rev. Kathy Major
Thursday, June 25, 4:30 p.m. Father Philip’s Neighborhood- Zoom
Thursday, June 25, 7:30 p.m. Evening Prayer w/Music for Inspiration-Live Stream
Sunday, June 28, 9:00 a.m. Coffee Hour- Zoom
Sunday, June 28, 10:00 a.m. Sunday Worship– Live Stream
Sunday, June 28, 11:00 a.m. Coffee Hour- Zoom
Sunday, June 28, 2:00 p.m. South Sudanese Prayers– Zoom

Monday, June 29, 7:30 p.m. Yoga- Live Stream
Tuesday, June 30, 2:00 p.m. Bible Study- Zoom
Tuesday, June 30, 7:30 p.m. Compline with Words for Inspiration- Live Stream
Observations about growing as a community
during a season of physical distance.

The months when the ground is frozen can be a vital, even exciting time for a gardener. New seed catalogs would arrive in my mailbox in the dead of winter. I spent hours sitting near the woodstove in December and January poring over the pages of the catalogs. I read descriptions of different varieties of plants, studied directions for preparing the soil and pruning, and speculated on the relative usefulness for very specialized gardening equipment: drip-irrigation systems, soil-blockers, and a truly beautiful pitchfork!

Sometime in January I would sit down at the kitchen table with my catalogs, blank paper, last year’s garden plan and a few notes about what actually happened in the previous year. (Transplanted tomatoes May 20th. Planted peas on April 2nd.) There I would begin to sketch out a new garden plan for the coming year. I filled my garden plan with my favorite plants from the previous year, but each year I included something new: a new variety of squash, a new type of flower or a new garden bed.

This month, June of 2020, we are like gardeners in January. Our new season won’t begin for several months. This is the time for us to think ahead, to the time when our buildings will reopen and we will gather again for worship in one place, in a place that feels sacred because we and our ancestors have filled it with words and songs of prayer and scripture and praise for 135 years.

As we think ahead to the month when most of our activities will happen at St. Paul’s Church, we are like gardeners in January. When we are finally able to gather together, some of our activities will be exactly as they were before, only more so. When we are finally able to be together in coffee hour in the Brewster Room it will be like before, but perhaps even better.

At the same time, like the gardener in January, we see that next season might be the time to do something new, or to keep on doing something new. To take one example, a new book group has been meeting for the past six
weeks. The participants seem to be enjoying it very much. One of the things they enjoy is talking about the book and their own experiences as followers of Christ. Another thing they enjoy is meeting as a small, committed group of members. Perhaps some of them will continue reading and discussing books together. Perhaps some of the members will meet at the church and others will join via Zoom.

The question is, what is most important from what we did before, and what are the new things that are most important for us to do? In a strange way, just as the season of ‘not gardening’ is important for the seasons of actual gardening, this season of ‘not meeting in person’ is important for the time when we finally meet together in person. This is a time for us to think together and consider what is most valuable and what is not so important. This is the time for us to make plans that include familiar things we love and new things we have always wanted to try.

What is most important for you? I hope you will share your thoughts with me or with a member of our vestry. Feel free to call or send an email. I also encourage you to complete our member survey. You can find the link to the online version on our website, or request a paper copy of the survey by calling me or calling the church office.

Fr. Philip

St. Paul’s Gardens; A Team Effort

A big thank you to David Morgan for poison ivy removal, Bill and Betsy Elkins for planting and to Liz and Richard Handler for the mulch.
Black Lives Matter; What’s An Old, Privileged White Woman To Do?  
—By Betsy Elkins, Senior Warden

While I am 100% behind the Black Lives Matter movement, I was reluctant to attend the rally in front of City Hall last weekend. As a downtown resident I had seen a larger than usual police presence in my neighborhood during the days leading up to the event. Many small businesses were boarded up, either because they had been looted the week before or as a precautionary measure for what might happen this weekend. I heard from reliable sources that there might be troublemakers from other places coming to interrupt what was to be a peaceful demonstration of support for our black brothers and sisters. Even though I am an extrovert and love being with people, I have never felt comfortable in a crowd. You will never see me at a rock concert or the State Fair! And now, during this time where it remains important that we are physically distanced from each other, I was concerned that this would not be possible.

But I went. Bill and I joined a few others from St Paul’s (Laurie, David, Matthew, Kathy and Philip) and before we crossed into the Key Bank parking lot we had a little pep talk from my friend Clark, a young black attorney I had met working out in the SU gym when he was a law student. He assured us that this was to be a peaceful gathering but reminded us to be careful and vigilant as there could be trouble. He was working with others to help insure that we were safe.

And it was peaceful. We were able to stand comfortably at the edge of the crowd. Everyone was wearing a mask. And there was no trouble, neither then nor later in the evening. I was proud to be part of this rally, proud of my city and my neighbors. It was a powerful gathering. The vast majority of those who attended were white. Those who spoke were people of color. Many were young people. Everyone was attentive and respectful. There was a long moment of silence near the end of the rally where arms were held up in solidarity.
I saw many wonderful signs held by the participants that intrigued me and gave me hope:

- I understand that I will never understand. But I will stand with you.
- Silence is consent.
- I am called to help the poor, the hungry, the thirsty, the hurting, the broken.
- We have had enough!!
- Rebellions are built on Hope

Now what do I do? This was a discussion topic at a recent Diocesan Wardens’ zoom meeting. We learned of a variety of resources that are available to us on the Diocesan Website, the Racial Reconciliation Page: https://cnyepiscopal.org/resources/formation/racial-reconciliation/

We talked about listening to what our black friends are saying and work on building relationships with them. (I plan to have conversations with my friend Clark, who is a downtown neighbor now.) I also plan to read books by and about black people. The public library is now open so I will seek out some of the resources suggested in yesterday’s newspaper. But most of all I plan to stand, sometimes literally, with my black brothers and sisters as they demand that the systemic racial injustice that still exists in our country be addressed. The photo of me was taken across the street from our apartment. The fist is crocheted!
An Opportunity to Bridge Racial Division
—By Sue Wright

Last December, as part of our formation program examining Christian responses to racism in America, we conversed with the leaders of Newborn Community, who described the many ways they are slowly transforming their community. This summer, the people of St. Paul’s are invited to begin a relationship of prayer and mutual support with Newborn Community of Faith Church, a predominantly black church in the Sandtown neighborhood of Baltimore. Sandtown is “infamous for being the neighborhood of Freddie Gray, a young man who died in police custody by what the coroner ruled a homicide. It is also the site of much of the 2015 violence that occurred in response to Gray’s death,” says Darriel Harris, pastor of Newborn Community.

Pastor Harris, describes his neighborhood:

The life expectancy there is among the lowest in the city, more than 20 years lower than the affluent neighborhoods a couple of miles away. The liquor store density in Sandtown is almost twice the city average…lead paint violations are almost four times the city average, resulting in three times the city average of children with lead poisoning. There are no grocery outlets that regularly stock fresh produce…There are no banks or credit unions within the neighborhood.

This is the environment to which I am called. The assignment is simple. It’s to preach abundant life where life diminished is the norm. It’s to speak a true word from God, being a witness to God’s grace and God’s provision…Sandtown is not a valley of dry bones into which I, or some other person of God, must speak life. It is a valley of life struggling to exist in a world that has not heard its cry…Sandtown should speak life to the dry bones surrounding it,
bones that have neglected the fundamental moral and Christian call to love neighbor.

Entering into a relationship of prayer with Newborn Community and the residents of Sandtown is to enter into a relationship of vulnerability on both sides. First and foremost, we will be asked to listen. Might it be that the spirit of renewal that many mainline churches long for may be found in relationship with communities like Newborn?

All members of St. Paul’s are invited to join our regular prayer sessions (via Zoom) with members of Newborn Community of Faith Church. Please contact me at swright14620@yahoo.com to learn more.

To read the article by Pastor Darriel Harris quoted above: https://chreader.org/health-behavior-and-society/ For more information on Newborn Community of Faith Church and their ministries at Intersection of Change: https://newbornchurch.org, https://intersectionofchange.org

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**SPC Readers Group**  
—By Kathy Major

The SPC Readers group is near the end of their first book. We are in the process of choosing our second book.

Our new discussion group will begin the last week in June. If you are interested in joining us, please write to me at kscorley@aol.com, or call me at home at 474-9152, and we will make sure you are included in the group!
Jim Potts, our choirmaster and organist made this certificate for John Pizzi. You may have often heard John singing throughout St. Paul’s while he worked. He loved being an ‘Honorary Choir Member’ and made a copy of this for the bulletin board!

The knockout roses in the Nan Dorr garden are blooming and look so beautiful! (to view in full color, go to our website and click on the publications tab)
Trying out my ultra wide angle lens, I got this unique shot of E. Fayette Street on the way to St. Paul’s. See the spire! Even the local news liked it and used the photo. There are so many beautiful places around St. Paul’s—Judy
Deadlines for Upcoming Issues of The Epistle

Sunday, July 12 for July 1st issue
Sunday, June 28th for July 1st issue