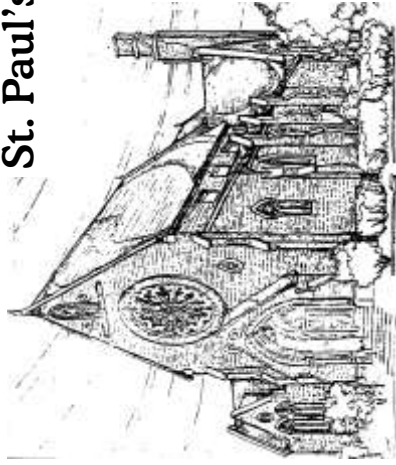


St. Paul's Episcopal Church—Monthly Newsletter



The Epistle

St. Paul's Episcopal Church
1006 Third St.
Muskegon, MI 49440
Phone: (231) 722--2112
Web: www.stpaulsmuskegon.org www.edwm.org
E-mail: office@stpaulsmuskegon.org
Facebook: St. Paul's Episcopal Church- downtown
Rector: Dr. Thomas C.H. Scott



December 2011

Volume 11, Issue 11

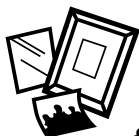
Working hands, accepting hearts and the welcoming love of God."

St. Paul's Episcopal Church

The Epistle

Upcoming Events to note:

- Dec 3: Quiet Day 10:00-3:00
 Dec 4: Family Sunday, Potluck
 Dec 9: ECW Christmas Lunch @ Holiday Inn 11:30
 Dec 10: Estate Sale 9:00-4:00, MCT 2:00-8:00
 Dec 11: Deadline for Christmas Gift Tree
 Dec 11: Festival of Lessons & Carols 6:00 pm
 Dec 12: 7th Guild @ The Lakehouse 5:30
 Dec 13: FSOC 12:15 Christmas at the Organ
 Dec 18: Final bidding for Christmas baskets
 Dec 18: Youth Pizza & Movie
 Dec 24: Family Service 4:30 pm
 Dec 24: Festival Service 9:00 pm
 Dec 31: Blood Drive 10:15-4:15
 Jan 9: New time for 7th Guild Meetings: 6:00



The Estate Sale for Richard Charles Ford will be held at St. Paul's in the Guild Hall on Saturday December 10 from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. Oriental rugs, antique furniture, artwork, fine china, glassware, kitchenware books, table lamps, and men's clothing

The Annual Meeting will take place on January 29th, 2012
ABSENTEE BALLOTS must be requested in writing, or by e-mail, and will only be distributed to those eligible to vote.
NOMINATIONS for Vestry will close on the third Sunday in Advent, December 11.

ATTN SNOWBIRDS: Please contact the office with your out-of town address before you leave. If we receive a returned Epistle, we will not mail you another one until May. Each returned Epistle costs us return postage at the 1st class rate.

St. Paul's Staff:

Dr. Thomas C. H. Scott: Rector
 Laura Elliott Masters: Parish Musician
 Marianne Case: Parish Administrator
 Scott Bartoszek: Sexton



Dr. Tom Scott

Rector's Note

Dear friends,

Happy New Year! I say this every year as we enter into Advent because, for Christians, this season is the beginning of the church year.

Advent is the season when we focus on how God prepared to enter into human life directly as Jesus Christ, and why that was necessary. This, frankly, is a two-sided proposition. The good news is that Jesus Christ came into the world. The bad news is why that was necessary: God needed to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. Thus, there is a certain "edginess" to Advent that is meant to have us seek a broader, deeper perspective on our lives and our times than we may ordinarily possess.

Of course, these next few weeks are going to be busy--even frenetic--for many of us, and Advent is easily pushed aside or crowded out. There is a relentless social pressure to be "merry" and to express the "holiday spirit" and to spend a great deal of money on many things. This season is the retail time of the year, and many of us depend on the outcome of this seasonal getting and spending, and that is a fact of life.

It's easy to talk about "crass commercialism" and to criticize what is done by businesses in the service of making a living in these times, and I won't do it here. Instead, I want to acknowledge that it takes some thought to discover how to keep the season for oneself. This is not easy, but it is worth it.

May I suggest three practices to help reclaim and focus your life? Any one of these will serve. Especially if you are feeling frazzled by the pressures of the upcoming holidays--for any reason. These are: having an Advent wreath, exploring the Jesse Tree, and observing the Advent calendar. You can find out about all of these on-line, at the public library, or in materials available in bookstores and religious supply houses. These resources overlap in some ways, but they also have their own distinct character.

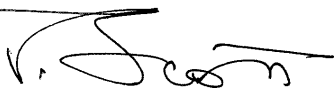
The Advent wreath focuses on the spiritual truths of the season: hope, peace, joy, and love. Visually, a series of candles is lit, adding one a week, until the wreath of light is complete and the time of celebrating the birth of the Messiah has come again. Short daily readings encourage us to explore the theme of the week. Our desires and yearnings are brought into focus.

The Jesse Tree is a tool for retracing what God has done through time to bless the human race and to call us into deeper life with God, from the beginning of Creation to the present day. Again, brief daily readings are used, but the visual component of the story--which is suitable for children as well as adults--is in the form of filling out a bare tree with symbols of the daily readings. This can be done simply by drawing or coloring in little line drawings that symbolize the text of the day (There are many different resources available).

Finally, the Advent calendar is a retelling of the Nativity story, combining elements of Matthew's and Luke's gospels, and certain Jewish Scriptures, to "prepare the way of the Lord" in our hearts and minds. This retelling is in the form of a calendar for the days of December. I need to say here that Advent calendars are of two kinds nowadays: traditional "bible scene" calendars with bible verses; other pictures and formats which may have little to do with the religious origin of the calendar. It's best to look for a note that says a bible verse is behind each window (and a holy family that is not blonde and blue-eyed).

This Advent, dear friends, I pray you will come to know more richly the deep Hope, abiding Peace, full Joy, and true Love of the season.

God's peace and joy, --TCHS



Junior Warden's Report

A Handle: has been installed at the steps leading from the vesting room to the Guild Hall.

The Sprinklers: have been turned off for the winter.

Courtyard Door: The grid has been permanently fixed on the courtyard door. Please remember to pull it shut tight to lock it.

The Lock: on the alley door has been tightened as good as it can be. It is always best to lock both the door and the bolt-lock.

A Security Camera: has been installed on the courtyard door. This will enable our secretary to see who is at the door and will record the video as the other cameras do. The entire cost of this installation is \$465.00.

Snow Plowing: We have contracted with D&D Excavating and Construction again this year to do our snow plowing. They will bill us monthly rather than at the end of the season.

Leaf Removal: Coke Billinghamurst arranged for the work day to remove the leaves from our property.



Guild Hall Floor: I will be bringing in someone to look at the risen floor area in the Guild Hall and see what has to be done to have it fixed.

Boiler: The condensation tank was not turned on which caused condensation in the boiler room. It is now on and everything taken care of by American Mechanical. The cost was \$112.50.

--Peggy Matrone, Jr. Warden

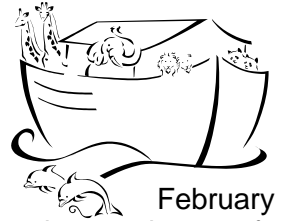
Christian Education

The holiday season is upon us and everyone is extra busy. A reminder for parents of Sunday School aged children: there will be no classes held on Christmas Day or New Years Day which fall on Sundays this year.

Family Sundays will be on December 4th and 5th. If your young person would like to have an active part in one of those services please be sure to talk to his or her teacher.

Scheduling ahead can be difficult but we do want everyone to be included if they would like to be.

Classes will be talking about Advent the next few weeks and one way you can share an Advent experience with your children is to bring them to Quiet Day on Saturday December 3rd. Especially for older kids, the quiet and peace of the candlelit church and chapel are something not available on hectic Sunday mornings. Give them the gift of a new experience by walking the labyrinth. Share this special time with them, perhaps for just half an hour. Come experience it for yourself as a time apart from the rest of the world . . . the gift of silence. --Linda Reynolds for the Christian Ed Department



February

Christmas Gift Tree



The Christmas gift tree is now on display in the Guild Hall. Please consider selecting a tag and purchasing gifts for needy children in the City of Muskegon. Please sign your name next to the gift tag number on the sign-up sheet. Gifts may be

wrapped or unwrapped and need to be returned to St. Paul's no later than December 11, 2011 with the gift tag attached.

Christmas Basket Auction

Please support the efforts of the young people of the parish as they raise funds for a variety of activities. We hope that this fund will defray the cost of activities for the young people, assist with mission trips, and contribute to our camp scholarship fund.

You can support this fund raiser by making a basket to be sold. Baskets submitted so far include prayer shawl, local wine and cheese, birds, Santa and English products. Last year we had 11 baskets. Won't you help us make it 12 this year?

We also need folks who will bid and buy the baskets. The final date for bidding is December 18, just in time for Christmas.

For more information, please see Heather Bloom, Judy Fleener or Greg Fleener.



Camp News



Attention Young People: Lots of changes are waiting for you at the Episcopal Church camp next summer. First there will be three weeks of camp. In order to avoid sports and band camp **Senior Camp has been moved to June**. The dates are June 17 to 23. **Middle schoolers** will have their own camp **August 5-11**. The exciting news is that in addition to **Junior Camp August 12-18** there will be 2 leadership opportunities. The usual CIT program will take place that week for 17-18 year olds. A new program for 13 – 16 year olds for **Leaders in Training** offers youth the opportunity to have a new experience at camp and learn new things. One note: St. Paul's has been paying for every youth from here to go to camp. It is not likely that we will be able to pay for two weeks for anyone, so you will need to plan accordingly.

Seventh Guild



In an effort to accommodate a larger number of parishioners, the 7th Guild meetings will be moved to 6:00 pm beginning on January 9, 2012. It is our hope that the new evening start time will attract additional members both working and non-working. A light supper will be served followed by a brief business meeting. For additional information please contact: Elly DeYoung at 798-2405.

Youth Group

Classes for the Youth Group are held each Sunday in the Parlor at 9:30 pm, with Judy Fleener, leader, except Family Sundays and Holiday Sundays. For more information on the Youth Group, please contact Judy Fleener, Greg and Trish Fleener or Heather Bloom.

Activity Schedule 2011/2012: All St. Paul's Youth and Friends, from 6th - 12th Grade are welcome!

Dec 18: Pizza and a Movie

Dec: Adopt a Family Outreach Project

Jan 15: Winter Sports Outing (Place TBD)

Feb 12: Valentine's Bake Sale

Feb 26: Bowling and Lunch

March: Christian Music Concert (TBD)

April 8: Easter Egg Hunt (Hosting for Younger Children)

May: Yard Work for Parishioners

May: Mother's Day Pie and Cake Sale



Summer Thoughts: Diocesan Mission Project, Episcopal Youth Camp, Annual Church Picnic, Unity Festival, Night Other TBD

Volunteer Opportunity!

Two of the most important things we offer at St. Paul's are a safe environment and true hospitality. In order to continue to do these things, we need helpful volunteers to serve as latecomer hosts.

The job is simple, but vital: we need to have one or two people to sit in the gallery walk area outside the Guild Hall for the first part of our Sunday morning 10:30 service to keep an eye out for late comers or others who walk into the building, and to be aware of our children as they move around the church complex before coming into be with the rest of the congregation for communion. You can welcome people into our worship with a smile and a bulletin, and this will be a good thing for both safety and hospitality.

Volunteer
Opportunities



If you would be willing to serve in this capacity on occasion, please let the church office know this. Or, you may speak to Sally Carmean, or put your name on the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board in the gallery walk area. Thank you for your help!

Top Ten



Reasons To Turn In An Intention Sheet:

10. You would like to have the Vestry stop making announcements that ask people to fill out intention sheets—because that announcement is nagging you

9. You want to help conserve paper by cutting down on the distribution of blank intention sheets every week by every means possible

8. You want to have your friends and family who serve on the Vestry be able to sleep during the months of December and January and not worry about budgets

7. You are impressed by the efforts of Vestry and Staff to make Abe Lincoln say “ouch” from all the squeezing of every penny that is contributed to operations

6. You want to know that you are supporting the Vestry and Staff because you have done your part to help those people plan for 2012

5. You want to be able to vote at the annual meeting and have your tax returns look good and proper

4. You want to be able to turn to your neighbor in your pew and say, “I’ve turned in mine—so, is it YOUR intention sheet the Vestry is still asking for?”

3. You want to feel more in control of your finances

2. You understand that making out and intention sheet is another way that you stay connected with St. Paul’s, whether or not you are able to be present each week

And the Number One reason to turn in an Intention Sheet is...

1. You are so grateful for all the blessings of your life

In Sympathy



St. Paul’s mourns the loss of member Richard Charles Ford, who passed away on November 14th.

The family of St. Paul’s also offers our sympathy to the family of Dolores Martinez, mother of Kristina Martinez-Precious, who passed away on November 3rd.

We offer our condolences to the family of Joy Lillie, mother of Dennis Lillie, who passed away on November 18th.

Blood Drive



By the time you read this, there will only be about four weeks before our annual New Year's Eve Blood Drive for the American Red Cross. This year we are lucky enough to have the drive happening on a Saturday when most folks are off work. Mark your calendars now: December 31, 2011 from 10:15 A.M. to 4:15 P.M. Schedule a time when you can come in and donate and help three folks with the gift of life.

Even if you can't donate blood, you still can help. We need two people every two hours for registration, the same for the canteen, and escorts to help folks from the donation area to the canteen. We also need some of our male parishioners to be on hand at 8 A.M. to unload the truck, set up tables, etc. The same goes for reloading the truck after tear down at 4:P.M. We will have to put the guild hall back in shape for the Sunday service.

Once again we will be serving hot homemade soup and bread. If you can make some soup, let Sally know. We don't want too much and aa variety.

Sign up sheets will be on the hall bulletin board. Thank you for your help in this special Outreach Ministry. --Sally Carmean and Carla Neading

Festival Of Lessons And Carols

At 6p.m. on Dec. 11th at 6:00 pm the Grand Rapids Choir of Men and Boys once again presents this timeless service of scripture & carols. Since this service was first presented at St. Paul's in 2000, the choir has grown to a group of 45 men and boys under the direction of Scott Bosscher. Parish members and community leaders will act as readers for the lessons.



**LESSONS
& CAROLS**

In 1880 E.W. Benson, then bishop of Truro, drew up a Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, based upon ancient sources, for use on Christmas, even in the wooden shed which served as his cathedral. In 1918 this was adapted for use in the chapel of King's College,

Cambridge, by its Dean, Eric Milner-White, who also wrote the Bidding Prayer. The Nine Lessons are ordered so as to tell the story of humankind's salvation through Jesus Christ, beginning with the Genesis account of the Fall, continuing through the several prophecies, and concluding with Christ's Incarnation. The various

carols and hymns are selected to highlight some aspect of the Lesson each follows.

The presentation of Lesson and Carols has been underwritten by Tom and Elizabeth Tuttle, Jon and Jane Blyth, and the Feeding the Soul of the City Concerts. The service is open to the public and there is no admissions charge. A reception will follow the service.

Feeding the Soul Of the City

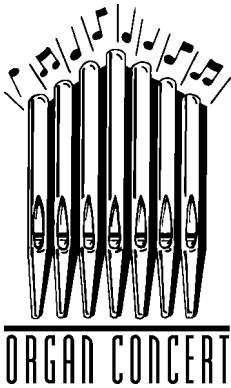
On Dec. 13 at 12:15 pm, FSOC presents Christmas at the Organ with Troy Carpenter. Troy Carpenter was named Minister of Music Emeritus of Central United Methodist Church in 1994, having served

the church for 28 years. In Muskegon, he directed the Cosmopolitan Male Singers for 18 years and taught organ for Muskegon Community College and Grand Valley State University. He previously held a similar position at First Presbyterian Church in Kalamazoo for seven years where he also taught organ for Western Michigan University and served as organist and harpsichordist for the Kalamazoo Bach Festival. Mr. Carpenter holds Bachelors and Masters degrees in music from Ball State University, and a Sacred Music Masters from Union Theological Seminary in New York City. His organ instruction

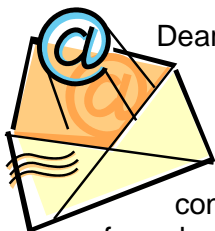
has been with Elaine Brown and John Huston and his choral study has been with Lemuel Anderson, Elaine Brown and Margaret Hillis. He has been a frequent lecturer and recitalist in the Michigan area and has performed in New York City and the Netherlands.

Organ Program:

Pastoral Symphony from the Messiah	G.F. Handel
Von Himmel hoch (From Heaven High)	J Pachelbel
Noel Suisse, Grand Jeu et Deu	Daquin
There's a Song in the Air	Arr. W Held
Impressions on "We Three Kings"	A Fedak
Puer Natus Est (A Boy Is Born)	E Titcomb



A Message From Your Vestry



Dear friends,

Your Vestry wants you to know how things stand as our fiscal year draws to a close. The good news is that many of you have been timely in making your contributions to St. Paul's, which makes the second piece of good news possible. We have been able to keep up generally with the most critical operations expenses.

We do have a concern, which we have written and spoken about previously. This has to do with our having to depend upon your year-end giving to bring our income to the point where we can meet our costs and obligations. And we DO depend upon it for everything from salaries to the electric bill.

To put it bluntly, we need \$21,000 in additional contributions to end the year so we don't burden ourselves with a deficit for 2012.

This target sum can be met if everyone will once again contribute an extra month's giving for this year--what we have been calling a "13th month" contribution.

Please join us in making this additional contribution.

God's peace and blessing to you all,

St. Paul's Vestry

St. Paul's Episcopal Church
1006 Third St.
Muskegon, MI 49440

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit Organization
US POSTAGE

PAID

Permit No. 355
Muskegon, MI