

ST. PAUL'S NEWS

ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH - LANSING, MICHIGAN

Volume 34, Issue 10

December 2015



From the Rector

Advent and Money

By The Rev. Karen C. Lewis

The two do go together you know. Advent is the first season of the new church year. Advent is the season of preparation and expectation. Advent is when we ready ourselves once again for the birth of our Savior. We do this through prayer, reflection, and scripture readings that remind us of the sacrifices John the Baptist and Mary made in their lives so that Jesus might live and minister in our world. Advent is a time when we discipline ourselves and repent our sins as we prepare spiritually for the joy of God entering our world as flesh and blood. Advent is when we remember why we have church in the first place. To gather as a community of Christ's disciples giving thanks for all that we have and for the work God has called us to do.

Advent is also when we spend a great deal of time pondering and seeking just the right gift for the ones we love. Whether it is for our partner, child, grandchild, grandparent, friend or co-worker, we tend to spend considerable time and money in selecting the gift that best expresses our feelings of love and care. Gift-giving is our way of celebrating God's gift of life to us through his Son. It is also our way of celebrating and giving thanks for the love we receive from family and friends.

Advent is the perfect season for gift-giving not only to family and friends, but also to your church. I ask you to reflect and pray on your love for your St. Paul's community as you consider your financial gift for 2016. I ask that you spend equal time in pondering your gift to the church as you do in seeking the right gift for the one you love.

Please prayerfully consider giving St. Paul's the financial gift that best expresses your love and care for this community and for God's church. It is your gift that keeps our doors open, our rooms warm, purchases our children's Sunday School materials and our choir's music, and pays for our Bhutanese Monday morning interpreter.

May God bless you with patience, love, and quiet during this season of preparation and gift selection. May all of you feel God's love as you give of yourselves and your resources for ministry in 2016.

Inside this issue....

Advent/Christmas Schedule	2
Book Study.....	3
Financial Update	3
Youth	4
Calendar	6

...and more!



We're on the web!
www.stpaulslansing.org

Advent & Christmas Worship Services

The seasons of Advent and Christmas always bring the joy of special worship services we only share once a year. Mark your calendars so that we may gather with one another in worship and thanksgiving.

Sunday, December 6: 10AM service – St. Nicholas – Don't forget to bring your slippers to wear as St. Nick will fill all the shoes left in the cloister hallway with goodies.

Sunday, December 20: 10AM service – Advent Lessons & Carols – Join us as we journey through toward the manger through scripture readings and music.

Tuesday, December 22: 7PM service – Blue Christmas – We gather together in prayer and song to find the joy of the Christmas season while recognizing the loneliness of the holidays for so many who have lost loved ones and celebrate this time alone.

Thursday, December 24: 4PM service – Christmas Eve Family Service – Our first Christmas service, geared especially for those with children.

Thursday, December 24: 8:30PM – Christmas Choral Music – Our choirs prepare us for worship with music that rejoices in our Savior's birth

Thursday, December 24: 9PM – Christmas Eve Festival Worship – We gather to celebrate the nativity of our Lord

Friday, December 25: 10AM – Christmas Day Worship – contemplative celebration of our Lord's birth

Book Study December: Jesus was an Episcopalian

By The Rev. Karen C. Lewis

Finally! For three Wednesday evenings in December, we will gather to discuss Chris Yaw's book *Jesus was an Episcopalian* (And you can be one too). Beginning at 6PM on December 3, 9, and 16, we will have an opportunity to discuss what being an Episcopalian is about as presented by Yaw. We'll also have a chance to expand on his thoughts in our group conversations.

This is an opportunity for all – from cradle-born Episcopalians to those who are brand new in the Episcopal tradition. We will have a good time, learn a lot, and get to know each other more. If you would like dinner, it will be provided by Catered Affaire at 5:30 pm at a cost of \$6. Please sign up in the Merrifield Room if you would like dinner.

Financial Update

By Jeffery Irwin

Financial Information as of
October 31, 2015

Through October 31, 2015, the church's financial condition is good for 2015. We have paid our bills timely without the need to use Perpetual Fund money.

Having said that, overall we are behind in pledge collections for 2015. If there is no increase in the portion of pledges paid in the last two months of the year we could be as much \$15,000 short in 2015 pledge revenue. Please make every effort to complete your 2015 pledge by December 31, 2015.

In October there was a \$27,074 increase in the value of the investment funds. This makes the year to date a positive amount of \$10,086.

“Let Every Heart Prepare!” - The Greening of the Nave

Our Christmas Eve services are among the best attended and the most important of the year. And when something is important it takes time to get ready. Parishioners of all ages are invited to join together to create a warm, nurturing community for the Greening of the Nave.

Monday, December 14th – Feel free to come and go between 4 and 7 PM

Monday, December 21st – Feel free to come and go between 4 and 7 PM

Letters to the Parish

Hello,

I work across the street at the State Capitol and I park in the Roosevelt ramp behind your church. I just wanted to take a moment to say that the company who does your grass mowing is very courteous and professional. Each week as I walked by he stopped to let me pass and always had a smile and a wave for me.

I also noticed this fall that your planting beds were worked on and the church looks wonderful overall. I normally come in around 7:30am and have occasionally heard organ music playing too. Just wanted you to know the little details don't go unnoticed!

Regards,
Barb



Dear Members of St. Paul's,

Thank you so kindly for your generous gift from the congregation to the Bishop's Discretionary Fund in the amount of \$442.20. It is gratefully received and I thank you for your thoughtfulness and continued support.

May God bless and keep you this day and always.

Faithfully,
The Rt. Rev. Wendell N. Gibbs, Jr.
Tenth Bishop of Michigan

Listen for a Change: Sacred Conversations for Racial Justice

We are pleased to announce that we have been asked by the Diocese of Michigan to be a partner site for Trinity Institute's 45th National Conference "Listen for a Change: Sacred Conversations for Racial Justice".

From **January 22-25, 2016**, St. Paul's will be a webcast site for a leading group of activists, scholars, authors, artists and experts on racial inequality. They will come together to hold life-giving conversations on the racial issues of our time, including structural racism, mass incarceration, and policy change.

Conference participation is open to anyone interested in a practical, theological perspective on racial equality. The live conference will be held at Trinity Church Wall Street, New York, and St. Paul's will offer all aspects of the conference in real time – where participants can submit questions for speakers via email following panel presentations.

Keynote speakers for this year's conference include: Nicholas Kristof, columnist for The New York Times; Michael Curry, presiding bishop of The Episcopal Church; Michele Norris, journalist and former host of NPR's "All Things Considered"; Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, PhD, Professor and Chair of the Sociology Department at Duke University; Victor Rios, PhD, author, speaker, and Associate Professor in the Sociology Department at UC-Santa Barbara; Kelly Brown Douglas, M.Div., PhD, Professor and Director of the Religion Department at Goucher College.

Registration information will be available mid-December. The conference is scheduled for Thursday evening, and all day Friday and Saturday.

YOUTH

Play Time!



The youth group attended the performance of Guys and Dolls at DeWitt High School. Our own Emma Clark was one of the leads. We had a great time!!!

A Special Visitor!

By Jackie Womble

December 6th is the Feast Day of St. Nicholas. The true story of Santa Claus begins with Nicholas, who was born during the third century in the village of Patara. At the time the area was Greek and is now on the southern coast of Turkey. His wealthy parents, who raised him to be a devout Christian, died in an epidemic while Nicholas was still young. Obeying Jesus's words to "sell what you own and give the money to the poor," Nicholas used his whole inheritance to assist the needy, the sick, and the suffering. He dedicated his life to serving God and was made Bishop of Myra while still a young man. Bishop Nicholas became known throughout the land for his generosity to those in need, his love for children, and his concern for sailors and ships. Join in celebrating St. Nicholas Day on **Sunday, December 6th**. Bring your slippers to church, leave your shoes in the Cloister and during the services St. Nicholas will place goodies in your shoes!



Karen Visits Sunday School

Give the Gift of Reading With Your Child



*There are two
Gifts we should
Give our children;
One is roots, and
The other is wings*

By Barb Lindquist

Can the literature of childhood help us communicate the Christian faith?

Absolutely! Children's literature is one vehicle that transmits our understanding and insights from one generation to the next. Religion is the story of our spiritual quest. It is a journey. We need to illustrate the meaning with new stories about the human condition, about the way life is lived and can be lived and should be lived.

The literature of childhood can be an effective common language because it contains stories we can all listen to and learn from together. It is full of incidents and characters that we can respond to with varying degrees of understanding as we study and worship as one body. Read simply because literature is one of God's good gifts.

Literature can help us learn about giving – how God has given to us and how we may give to others. Children may think that tangible things like toys, food, and trips are significant gifts. It is often difficult to illustrate gifts that are intangible or sacrificial. Let the St. Paul's Youth Library help you!

A Taste of Thanksgiving

By Sue LeDuc

Every Monday a group of hardy souls arrives at St. Paul's at 9AM and stays for two hours. They take the CATA bus and come whatever the weather: rain, snow, and frigid temperatures. The number varies from 14 or so to 25 – they are our refugees from Bhutan (and now two from Myanmar, although they steadfastly say "Burma"). They come to learn about this country that has accepted them and to practice English.

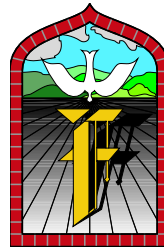
As part of our Mission and Outreach Ministry, we have supported this group for more than a year – giving them tea, coffee, breads and fresh fruit as well as two bus tokens. And we also pay for interpreter in Nepalese, the language they speak. Our interpreter is a young woman, and the niece of one of our members. She, too, is a refugee, and hopes to take her citizenship exam in the near future. She is happy to earn a little money and we are happy to have her.

Bhutan is a small country nestled in the Himalayas next to Nepal, with borders on China to the north and India to the south and east. These refugees lived in the south of the country and were originally from Nepal, encouraged by the British to settle in Bhutan and farm. They differed from the Bhutanese in culture and religion. They were driven to refugee camps in the early 1990's. Most of our group spent 15 or more years in the camps before the U.S. agreed to take 60,000 refugees beginning in 2008.

This brave band of mostly elders struggles with a new country, a new language, and a new alphabet. But their eyes shine when we talk about the freedoms in the First Amendment -- religion, speech, assembly and press. They are Hindu and were persecuted for it. On Monday, November 16, we had a "Taste of Thanksgiving" party to illustrate the Thanksgiving holiday for them and to celebrate. (One of the 100 possible questions you can be asked on your citizenship exam is to "name two national holidays").

So we had turkey, pumpkin pie, cranberries, mashed potatoes and all the trimmings, and the our refugees brought spicy Bhutanese food as is their custom when invited as guests to a party. Our refugees learned about Plymouth Rock and Squanto and the first Thanksgiving feast. We all laughed about the "mistake" that named the Native Americans there on that first day "Indians." We knew we had a lot to be thankful for and as we all discover every Monday morning – we have so much more in common than we have differences.

If you might be interested in volunteering for this ministry contact Sue LeDuc at 349-4079 or sueleduc67@gmail.com – we can always use your presence.



4F's December Program - Holiday Choral Music

By Mark Rudd

Are you ready to start celebrating the Christmas Season? Please join us on Monday, December 7, to hear East Lansing High School's choral group, the "Elsingers," share some Holiday music.

Established in the late 1960's, this choral group has been under the direction of teacher Jeff English since 1988. The "Elsingers" include St. Paul's own Justin Green and Matt Wiesner.

Lunch starts at noon in the Merrifield Room, followed by a brief Bible study with Karen. The choral program will begin in the sanctuary about 12:40 p.m. This is a great early opportunity to get into that Holiday spirit!

Music Notes

By Jeff Walker, Minister of Music

The choir will open each of our Advent services with one of the great "O" Antiphons. In Catholic as well as Anglican usage, Evening Prayer (or Vespers) always includes the Song of Mary, the Magnificat (My soul doth magnify the Lord). In the last seven days of Advent that canticle is preceded by one of these special antiphons.

Written in the seventh or eighth century by monks, each begins with the exclamation "O" and ends with a plea for the Messiah to come. These antiphons are the basis of each of the seven stanzas of the hymn "O Come, O Come Emmanuel." We will sing the corresponding stanza as the presentation each Sunday. Lutheran composer Carl Schalk adapted a Mode ii plainchant to the English version of these texts.

Calendar

December

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29 ADVENT ACTIVITY IN SS & COFFEE HOUR 8:00 AM Worship & Holy Communion in Chapel 9:15 AM Choir Rehearsal 9:45 AM Church School 10:00 AM Worship & Holy Communion in Sanctuary 4:00 PM Lange Ensemble	30 9:00 AM Bhutanese Refugee Support Group-Merrifield	1 12:00 PM Worship & Healing Service 5:00 PM Lange Ensemble Rehearsal 6:00 PM Stewardship Ministry Team	2 10:00 AM Staff Meeting 12:00 PM AA Meeting 4:00 PM St. Aelred's Ministry 5:30 PM Boys & Grace Choirs/Cherub Choir 5:30 PM Dinner before Book Study 5:30 PM Mission & Outreach Ministry 6:00 PM "Jesus Was an Episcopalian" Book Study	3 6:00 PM HS Choir 7:15 PM Chancel Choir	4 OFFICE CLOSED 12:00 PM AA Meeting	5 9:00 AM Pet First Aid 10:00 AM Lange Ensemble Rehearsal
6 FEAST OF ST. NICHOLAS FOOD BANK SUNDAY 8:00 AM Worship & Holy Communion in Chapel 9:15 AM Choir Rehearsal 9:45 AM Church School 10:00 AM Worship & Holy Communion in Sanctuary 4:00 PM Lange Ensemble 5:00 PM High School Youth Group @ Karen's 7:00 PM Lange Ensemble Concert	7 9:00 AM Bhutanese Refugee Support Group-Merrifield 12:00 PM 4F's Christmas Luncheon	8 12:00 PM Worship & Healing Service 6:00 PM B & PW	9 10:00 AM Staff Meeting 10:30 AM Trinity Inst. Website Test 12:00 PM AA Meeting 5:30 PM Boys & Grace Choirs/Cherub Choir 5:30 PM Community Life Ministry - Library 5:30 PM Dinner before Book Study 6:00 PM "Jesus Was an Episcopalian" Book Study	10 6:00 PM HS Choir 7:15 PM Chancel Choir	11 OFFICE CLOSED 12:00 PM AA Meeting 5:30 PM Larissa Clark Student Rehearsal	12 9:00 AM Larissa Clark Student Recital 9:00 AM Pet First Aid
13 Baptism Anniversary Celebration 8:00 AM St. Elizabeth Guild Corporate Communion & Breakfast 8:00 AM Worship & Holy Communion in Chapel 9:15 AM Choir Rehearsal 9:45 AM Church School 10:00 AM Baptism/Worship & Holy Communion in Sanctuary 11:30 AM Communications Committee	14 9:00 AM Bhutanese Refugee Support Group-Merrifield 4:00 PM Greening of the Nave-tree set up 6:30 PM Building & Grounds Ministry	15 12:00 PM Worship & Healing Service 11:59 PM SPN Deadline!!	16 10:00 AM Staff Meeting 12:00 PM AA Meeting 5:30 PM Boys & Grace Choirs/Cherub Choir 5:30 PM Dinner before Book Study 6:00 PM "Jesus Was an Episcopalian" Book Study	17 The Rev. Lewis-- Fresh Start All Day 7:00 AM Men's Breakfast 6:00 PM HS Choir 7:15 PM Chancel Choir	18 OFFICE CLOSED 12:00 PM AA Meeting	19 9:00 AM Altar Guild Meeting
20 Decorate Sanctuary 8:00 AM Worship & Holy Communion in Chapel 9:15 AM Choir Rehearsal 10:00 AM Lessons & Carols with Holy Communion in Sanctuary 5:00 PM High School Youth Group 6:30 PM Bible Study @ Karen's	21 9:00 AM Bhutanese Refugee Support Group-Merrifield 4:00 PM Greening of the Nave 6:00 PM Vestry Dinner - Meeting @ 6:30 pm	22 12:00 PM Worship & Healing Service 12:30 PM St. Elizabeth Guild 7:00 PM Blue Christmas Service	23 10:00 AM Staff Meeting 12:00 PM AA Meeting 5:30 PM Boys & Grace Choirs/Cherub Choir	24 CHRISTMAS EVE OFFICE CLOSED 4:00 PM Worship & Holy Communion 8:30 PM Christmas Choral Concert 9:00 PM Worship & Holy Communion	25 CHRISTMAS DAY OFFICE CLOSED 10:00 AM Worship & Holy Communion 12:00 PM AA Meeting	26
27 8:00 AM Worship & Holy Communion in Chapel 9:15 AM Choir Rehearsal 10:00 AM Baptism/Worship & Holy Communion in Sanctuary 11:30 AM Manson Family Luncheon	28 OFFICE CLOSED	29 OFFICE CLOSED	30 OFFICE CLOSED 12:00 PM AA Meeting	31 OFFICE CLOSED	1 FEAST OF THE HOLY NAME OFFICE CLOSED 12:00 PM AA Meeting	2

Christmas Altar Flower Dedications: Just a reminder that altar flowers are no longer a budgeted item. Altar Flowers are dependent upon parishioners' donations. Christmas flowers must be ordered weeks ahead. If you are planning on dedicating flowers at Christmas, please complete your dedication forms as soon as possible.



Christmas Altar Flower Dedications

I would like to contribute \$ _____

This contribution is from: _____

In Memory of: _____

In Grateful Thanksgiving for: _____

St. Paul's Episcopal Church
218 W. Ottawa St.
Lansing, MI 48933

