



# THE GOOD NEWS

TO KNOW CHRIST BETTER AND TO MAKE HIM BETTER KNOWN

Volume 16, Issue 10

December 2022

## Touched by the Spirit

Carolyn Knapp

### In This Issue:

"Touched by the Spirit"

Rector's message

Spirituality with Rev. Anne

Advent and Christmas worship at St. Paul's

St. Paul's Annual Meeting 2023

Stewardship update

2022 Diocesan Convention

Sr. Warden's message

Outreach & Social Justice

Be a Coffee Hour host!

Reading & Discussion group update

December music notes

Environmental Stewardship & Creation care

St. Paul's Legacy Society

Faith & Mission available

November Vestry report

All Saints at St. Paul's

Greening & Cookies & Carols

Treasurer's Report

Concerts at St. Paul's

Passings: Ginny McCormick

Windows of St. Paul's

Give *Faith and Mission*, the great St. Paul's history by Liz Hook, for Christmas! [Click here](#) for more info.



Derek Holstein was a youngster growing up in Piedmont in the 1950's and 60's, a musical child who started playing the keyboard at age six, and also a self-described "spiritual kid." He says his parents were nominal members of St. Paul's, but it was the sixth grade Sunday school teacher at the church, Peter Valerio, who brought him into the church by recruiting children who were on the roster but not attending. Peter went around the city and picked up the kids, including many of Derek's friends, to participate in what became a popular program.

In those days, the altar was against the east wall, and the chancel (the area from the communion rail to the space behind the altar) was more separated from the congregation than it is today. For Derek, who was fascinated by the organ, the chancel became a special place. Music meant safety to him. He loved the hymns and, with the organ playing so loudly, felt he could really sing out. "I could feel the organ in my body," he says.

As he entered puberty, his home life became especially difficult. One day, as he was feeling particularly distressed, he stood in the chancel as the organ played and knew that "God was telling me everything was going to be fine" in this place. "I will never forget the day that I was touched by the Spirit," he says of that inspirational and life-changing moment. "I have thought of that profound moment many times in my life, and somehow, I think it is something that every teenager should probably experience. I feel lucky and that it somehow provided kind of a light in the darkness whenever I needed it even as an adult."

Derek continued as an acolyte, even working as a paid crucifer (\$5.00 an event!) at weddings, and music remained an important part of his life as he pursued a pre-med course and then, when he realized his true vocation, became a winemaker in Sonoma. For the last couple decades, as he eases into retirement, he works as a consulting winemaker and has rearranged his Santa Rosa home to create a music room to house his new Bösendorfer piano and other instruments he plays, including a cello, flute, and a couple bass guitars.

Despite decades of experience with keyboards, he says he's only played an organ once – on a youth church trip to Vancouver! -- but he's looking forward to a chance to try out that inspirational Austin organ at St. Paul's when students in his piano class play it this coming February.



St. Paul's chancel, Easter 1956

## Rector's Message

### 'TIS THE SEASON

**The Rev. Dr. Mauricio Wilson**

Every December we find ourselves consumed by what feels and seems like a vortex of never-ending reasons to spend and consume. As the years go by, we should probably be getting better at holding to something real and not allowing ourselves to get sucked in -- or at least be saved from going so deep into the vortex that we are tired and beaten down by the demands of the many well-wishers that we have happy holidays. As December begins to show itself each year, more and more I pray and wish that we each could get a better grasp of the simple -- though theologically complex -- meaning and purpose of Christmas, along with the things we do before and after.

Many of you have heard me say that Christmas is my favorite celebration of the Christian calendar. This has been my truth for a very long time, indeed, ever since I was in my teen years. Though my theology has evolved a little over the years, the basic idea of God becoming one of us to save us blows my mind and heart. Even if we chose a different date to observe the fact of Jesus' birth to fit the historical data that suggests it was more likely that he was born in the springtime, the fact of his nativity would remain just as baffling.

Santa Claus, reindeer, trees, presents and the other artifacts created by the modern Christmas machine are irrelevant to the birth of Jesus. As God's people who follow Jesus as Lord and Savior, the feast of his birth centers us around God's past promises fulfilled and future ones being alive and true. The Word of God became flesh as Mary's son, with Joseph, a descendant of King David, as His earthly protector, father. This is a big deal for us and doing the heart and mind work to understand its implications should keep us grounded and unaffected by the vortex of bright Christmas lights.

Nevertheless, though we are God's people, we are still people. We are the products of our environment, sometimes an environment that we ourselves have created. We also have the ability to change our surroundings. I have heard some Christians on television speak of the need to put Christ back into Christmas. But Jesus never left Christmas, and therefore there is no need to bring him back to it. What I do suggest is that we have to help God's people around the world attain a better understanding of the action of God that generated this feast and that it gives reasons for humanity to express our joy in knowing the limitless dimension of God's love and grace.

The ancient prophecies, angelic visitations, astrological events, and heavenly choruses that we read, pray and sing about during the seasons of Advent and Christmas are on-

ly the opening acts and supporting cast for the main event: the beginning of the Good News of God in the Nativity of the Eternal Word.

May God give us the strength to persevere in sharing these glad tidings, even in the midst of the vortexes of life.



## Spirituality: Advent

The Rev. Anne Jensen

The thought of Advent conjures up two images that are opposites. First there is the vision of preparing for Christmas in all the usual ways: baking goodies spiced with cinnamon and nutmeg, putting a wreath on the front door, getting wish lists from family members and then finding and wrapping the presents in colorful paper. Add to that attempting to write a newsie letter to accompany Christmas cards, which, if I'm diligent, will get out in January. Each of these activities is about the pleasure of making and giving which brings joy to both.

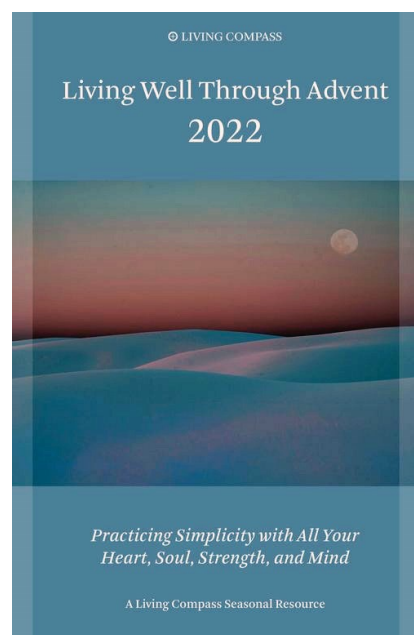
The second image is one that I would like to have and yet only minimally practice. This is the one in which I would withdraw from the pre-Christmas hustle and bustle. I would find a quiet place for meditation and prayer. I would read scriptures and the writings of the spiritual giants, hoping to find a way to go deeper in my relationship with God.



I have yet to succeed in doing justice to either vision. Most of us weave together a mix of both images, which is what we can do in the context of work and family life. Finding time for prayer is essential. By registering to get daily readings from either of the websites we have chosen to offer, we will have structure to support a spiritual preparation for Christmas. I'll make an Advent wreath and light a candle each evening. I am going to be part of a retreat at Bishop's Ranch. Both the preparation to present and listening to other leaders will enrich the quiet time. In silence and stillness, we can be in God's presence and find ourselves opening to God's love and deepening relationship.

On Each Sunday we will have beautiful music as we gather to hear the scriptures that point to the coming messiah. Even in the more solemn time of Advent, we come together, finding joy in singing hymns, receiving communion, and in being in each other's company.

In this season we remember those for whom Christmas is a struggle, those who have no family, others who are homeless and food insecure, children who need warm jackets. Our Christmas will mean more when we make their holiday better, and there will still be time to bake, decorate, and be with friends and family.



Starting on Sunday, November 27, St. Paul's is offering an online format from Living Compass titled "Practicing Simplicity with All Your Heart, Soul, Strength, and Mind." Through reflections based on the readings for each Sunday, we can slow down and prepare our hearts to once again encounter how God came to live among us. You can download the entire booklet for free at any time or sign up to receive a free daily email by going to <https://www.livingcompass.org/advent>. Scroll down to the form that you want to order. Another option is a free e-mail subscription to Forward Day by Day: <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/su/tL0oK4F/email>





## Advent and Christmas Worship Calendar

### December 4: Second Sunday of Advent

8 am Regular Sunday service. 10 am—Lessons and Carols.

4 pm Evensong with St. Paul's Choir

### December 11: Third Sunday of Advent.

8 & 10 am— Regular Sunday services

### December 18: Fourth Sunday of Advent

8 & 10 am— Regular Sunday services

Cookies & Carols. Come early to sing carols before the 10 a.m. service. Stay after to help green and decorate the Church for Christmas and eat some cookies. Please bring some cookies to share!



### December 24: Christmas Eve

5 pm Family Service with Pageant

10:30 pm St. Paul's Choir Christmas Concert

11 pm Sung Holy Eucharist

### December 25: Christmas Day

8 & 10 am— Regular Sunday services.

No Compline on December 25.

The church office will be closed the week after Christmas.

### January 1: First Sunday of Christmas

8 & 10 am— Regular Sunday services

Wednesday noon services are streamed only (not live). All other services are streamed. Consult the church's website for details: <https://www.stpaulsoakland.org/>

## St. Paul's 2023 Annual Meeting

The annual meeting will be held on February 5, 2023, during the 10 a.m. Choral Eucharist service. Besides receiving committee and ministry reports, we will also be electing five persons to the Vestry, two to complete unexpired terms and three for a regular 3-year term. We will also be electing Deanery Delegates and alternates. The vestry nominations committee has received names of potential vestry nominees, but others are welcome. Please let Sharon Pilmer, Ann Gregory, or Will Cowart know if you are willing and able to serve as a Vestry member or Deanery Delegate.

## Celebrating God's Gifts

### Sharon Pilmer, Stewardship Chair



The season of Advent is upon us, with its existential tension between darkness and light.

The shorter days and presence of physical darkness are compounded by disturbing trends in our social discourse, mass shootings, the continuing war and suffering in Ukraine, and the grinding on of the pandemic. As Christians, though, we look forward to the light in anticipation of God's greatest gift, the birth of his Son.



At St. Paul's we are also experiencing some tension as we experience the rebirth/growth of several ministries, balanced with the possible departure of our beloved Rector in the event he is called to serve as Bishop of New Jersey. Whatever happens in January, I know this to be true: God is with us. Our community is strong. As I write this on this Thanksgiving morning, I am thankful for my church family and all of you!

A month has passed since Pledge Sunday on October 23. We have received 56 pledges for \$176,420. A huge thanks to all who have turned in pledge cards; we are extremely grateful. Of the 56 pledges, 10 are from folks who have not pledged before, some of whom are new to St. Paul's. We are hoping to receive \$200,000 from 70 pledging units, and it is not too late to submit a pledge for 2023. The stronger our giving, the less we need to rely on our investments to close the gap between income and expense.

2023 will be a year of consequence for us. We will need the support of our whole community—our collective time, talent and treasure-- to continue the work and ministry of St. Paul's. Will you join us?

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## Diocesan Convention 2022

Last month, Tom McGarrell, one of the St. Paul's Deanery representatives, gave us some highlights of the late October 2022 Diocesan Convention. Among the resolutions passed were those for

- full inclusion of disabled and deaf people in all aspects of Church life through sensitivity training
- establishing a Task Force on Truth Telling, Reckoning, and Healing, the Task Force to consult with the Episcopal Coalition for Racial Equity and Justice
- establishing a Task Force on Young Adult Ministries to consult with the Faith Formation Working Group
- affirming the commitment of the diocese to listen to the global voices of the Church that came together at Lambeth Conference 2022
- establishing a new assessment formula (kind of like a tithe each parish gives to the diocese) and a new salary resolution

For fuller information please click [here](#).

You can access a recording of the Convention [here](#).

## Senior Warden's Message

### Communication and Many Stories

**Maura Lane**



I've been thinking about all the changes many of us have gone through in the past 3-5 years - the pandemic, moving to other states, lost jobs, the deaths of loved ones and so on. Nancy Pelosi and Michelle Obama have written and talked a lot about change. In spite of the fear many of us encounter when we think about change - whether imposed on



us or selected - I believe change can make our respective worlds a little bigger.

Nancy Pelosi talked about making room for younger leaders in politics after a horrific attack on her husband. As we all know by now, the attack was meant for her. She also showed us her values. The safety of her family and time with them were her first priority. Yet, she also will stay in the House (for now) as younger leaders move forward. It's not always about going after the top job (Speaker of the House). After all, she'd already been there and done that.

Michelle Obama writes about what the road not taken would have meant for her family and the United States had she not agreed to support Barack in his quest for the presidency. She could have stayed in her comfort zone. She was happy with her job and living in Chicago with her family. We all know about the security our comfort zones can provide. But this is a false comfort zone because we don't know where the road not traveled would have taken us, whom we might have met, what we may have learned, who we might have become.

As many of you know, I recently retired. Others with more experience had told me I would know when it was time. My body told me. Yet, I was afraid and anxious. After all, I'd spent the majority of my life working for others. What would I do with the time? Didn't my value as a person depend on my title and how I spent my days? We all know that is the voice of fear. We cannot evict it from our minds. It has real estate. Yet, once I recognized that I was lucky to be able to retire, I started to relax. My faith helps me daily to override fear with positive thoughts and endeavors. And I also respect my fear and acknowledge her as a part of me.

The same holds true in a faith community. The older members make way for the younger members while they are still (hopefully) around to support them and encourage their growth and risk-taking as they take on new/different roles. We hope to share our knowledge and experience but recognize others may do things differently. We celebrate and encourage. This, too, is faith.





## Community and Outreach and Social Justice at St. Paul's

### Matthew Schooler, Vestry liaison for Social Justice & Outreach



We wait with joyful anticipation of the gift of Jesus Christ among us. Our season is full, and of course St Paul's Oakland remains committed to those around us. Deacon Bolton and a bunch of volunteers have delivered bags of food for those who are alone and have no family. There were an estimated 300 bags delivered by all the lovely people of St. Paul's the first Sunday of Advent. Thank you, and please look forward to delivering meals again on Christmas. We who have much must be held responsible for those who are in need. Look for coming announcements about the next food delivery -- and the Pantry of Hope still needs financial donations and volunteers.



We will continue to walk in Friday Night Ceasefire Walks and we remain standing with the Soldiers Against Violence Everywhere. Please look for future announcement of upcoming events.

The Center for the Vulnerable Child has given us a list, and we would like to give the families we've adopted around 70 presents. This is an achievable goal, and we know that the St. Paul's community can do it. If you are able, we need \$25 gift cards for GameStop and Target Stores. We also need many other gifts. These are difficult times for many, and we can spread a little joy to those who might need some encouragement. The Giving Tree will be set up on December 3<sup>rd</sup> and the tree will be up on Sunday December 4<sup>th</sup> and December 11<sup>th</sup>. If you can stop by and take one or two gift tags for items to purchase and wrap, we can bring joy to these wonderful families. All gifts must be brought to St. Paul's by Thursday, December 15<sup>th</sup>.

My heart is full from the love I receive from St. Paul's, and I hope you, too, feel the love here. Let us take what the Lord has given to us and help spread his love to the community. Thank you for the kindness.



## Be a part of bringing back the fellowship!

### Be a coffee hour host!

It's fun, it's easy, and it's a wonderful way to donate your talent to St. Paul's. Setup and cleanup, the difficult parts of any event, are done by Dan, our sexton. He starts the coffee and the hot water for tea, too, so all you have to do is bring a few things for people to nibble on. **THIS IS NOT SUPPOSED TO BE A FULL-SCALE BRUNCH OR LUNCH!** – just a light snack.

All you need to do is bring a couple bags of cookies to open and put on the plates Dan sets out. Fresh fruit in season (think mandarin oranges right now) is welcome, too. You can also team up with another parishioner to divide the work of supplying the goodies.

Want to help? Want to know more? Please get in touch with [Alice Brilmayer](#).

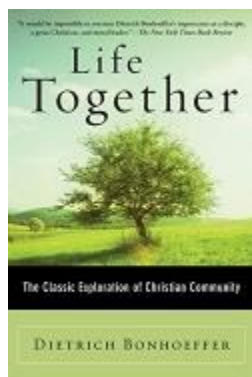
## Beyond the Word: A Reading & Discussion Group

Select Wednesdays @ 7pm on ZOOM

**Pam Buckingham, Co-Leader**

The next book in the series is: ["Life Together" by Dietrich Bonhoeffer](#)

The next sessions are Jan. 11 and Feb. 8



We are halfway through our reading list for this program year with the completion of [Life in Christ: Practicing Christian Spirituality](#) by The Rev. Julia Gatta. The group enjoyed the exploration of the prayers, rituals and practices of our own Christian faith. We discussed, in particular, the practices that inform our own journey with God, the need for contemplative prayer both in private and in community, what we did during the pandemic to keep our faith alive, our favorite liturgical time, and which liturgical time is the hardest to connect with. Many of us were drawn to [The Examen](#) and [Apophatic Prayer](#) as



additional practices to explore.

If you missed the last book, that's OK! Each book stands alone. You are most welcome!

To join us, email [pamela.kruse.buckingham@gmail.com](mailto:pamela.kruse.buckingham@gmail.com). I will send you the orientation document and the Zoom link.

## December Music from

**Ben Bachmann, Director of Music**

The season of remembrance and thanksgiving gives way to the magical anticipation that is the season of Advent. Advent has some of the most wonderful and distinctive music and hymns. Its themes and stories, from the anticipation of the end of the world, to the Angel Gabriel's visit, and to John the Baptist's prophecy have inspired artists and composers throughout the world. J. S. Bach was so inspired by the hymn tunes "Nun Komm" (Savior of the nations, come), "Wachet auf!" (Sleepers Wake!), and "[In dulci jubilo](#)" (In quiet joy) that he composed numerous illustrative settings. Olivier Messiaen's meditation on the various characters of the Nativity, like "Les Bergers" (The Shepherds), included melodies and rhythms from a modern imagination of shepherds' tunes played on ancient instruments. The tune "In dulci jubilo", most well-known to us as "Good Christian friends, rejoice," is one of the most frequently used tunes as a theme for organ works. The great French organist and composer Marcel Dupré imagined a still and Impressionistic setting. The American Leo Sowerby made a 30's style jazz setting of variations written especially for an organ of the vintage of ours.



There is no time of year when more traditional music is sung than at the Advent/Christmas season; its repertoire is international and timeless. From the ancient chant "O come, O come Emmanuel," to "The Angel Gabriel" from the Basque region of Spain, to the spirituals "Go, Tell it on the Mountain" and "Mary Had a Baby," to carols of unknown authorship from the Americas and England, we sing music of wonderful variety. As many other Christmas traditions are assimilations, so the best comes from the rich variety of resources. I am excited to experience new Advent and Christmas traditions at St. Paul's. What are our local traditions, customs, songs? I look forward to observing the season with you, to celebrating in music with you. I hope to see you all at as many of our services as is possible for you. I wish you a blessed, peaceful, and hope-filled Advent.



# Environmental Stewardship and Creation Care

## Theology of Food

Indira Balkissoon

Vestry Liaison for Environmental Stewardship



Our little pollinator gardens are still growing and loving the rain. Liz Hook thought that our back pollinator garden looked happy with the exception of the narrow leaf milkweed. So we moved them a bit closer to the sprinklers. Also, she visited East Bay Wilds and added two native epilobiums, 2 lupines, 1 orange monkey flower and a pipevine. The big news is Liz made a sign for the garden (see photo).



As we move through the season of Harvest and Thanksgiving the focus of Creation Care 101 this month is on “Good” food and food justice. How can we align the food we eat with our Christian values? We are asked if Jesus came to dinner what would we serve him?

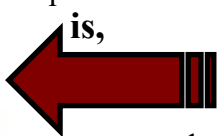
The Creation Care 101 session compared the transactional values of efficiency, profitability and growth in our industrial food system with the values of relationship. A framework for “good” food is to choose good foods--food that is good for us, good for our neighbor and good for creation, today, tomorrow and seven generations into the future. Eat a [Mediterranean diet](#). If you eat meat

reduce the amount to 4 ounces. These changes have big impacts on carbon emissions. **A saying to remember**

Eat whole foods, mostly plants, not too much.

- Michael Pollan

is,



Support small local organic farmers via community-supported agriculture (CSA) at <https://www.localharvest.org/locations/>, or purchase organic food online at [www.misfitsmarket.com](http://www.misfitsmarket.com) or [azurestandard.com](http://azurestandard.com)



At our future St. Paul’s celebrations, perhaps we could serve “Good” food?



For more information on food and faith see [Food and Faith: A Theology of Eating](#) and [Agrarian Spirit: Cultivating Faith, Community, and the Land](#) by Norman Wirzba, Distinguished Professor of Christian Theology at Duke University.

“For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me...” (Matthew 25:35-40)

## Recognition of Legacy Society Members, November 6<sup>th</sup>

Doug Jensen



We celebrated the founding members of the St. Paul's Legacy Society at the 10am service on All Saints Sunday, November 6th. Since then we have added three new members. Congratulations to all the members listed below! We plan to make the Legacy Society Celebration an annual event to be held on All Saints Sunday.



### St. Paul's Legacy Society

#### FOUNDING MEMBERS

CAROLYN BOLTON

ALICE BRILMAYER

WILL & JAMES COWART-KADLECK

FRANCIS DIBBLE

PAULA HAWTHORN

ELIZABETH HOOK

ANNE & DOUG JENSEN

MAURA LANE

VICTORIA & RICHARD LARSEN

SHARON PILMER

GEORGE & LISA STRAIT

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### ***Faith and Mission, Liz Hook's history of St. Paul's, is available!***

You can catch Liz after a service or email her: [eahook@comcast.net](mailto:eahook@comcast.net) If you would like a copy mailed to you, please contact Robert Knapp ([rcknapp2@gmail.com](mailto:rcknapp2@gmail.com)) and he will arrange this. The suggested donation is \$35 which goes far toward covering the actual cost of each book (\$46).

*Any member of the Parish may attend Vestry meetings, which are at 7:00 p.m. on the fourth Tuesday of the month, unless otherwise noted; the full minutes of the meeting are available to parish members upon request by contacting the parish administrator or a member of the Vestry*

#### 2022 VESTRY

The Rev. Dr. Mauricio Wilson Rector

Maura Lane Senior Warden

Will Cowart Jr., Junior Warden

Brian Stanke, Clerk

Ann Gregory Treasurer

#### VESTRY BY CLASS

##### Class of 2022

Will Cowart

Ann Gregory

Sharon Pilmer

##### Class of 2023

-vacancy-

Brian Stanke

Maura Lane

##### Class of 2024

Indira Balkissoon

Matthew Schooler

Irene Plunkett

#### DEANERY DELEGATES 2022

Delegates

Melanie Blake

Jeanette Dinwidie-Moore

Tom McGarrell

Alternates

-vacancy-

## Highlights from the November 2022 Vestry Meeting

At the November meeting the vestry's primary focus was review of a draft budget for 2023. Because previously vacant positions have been filled, and a diocesan mandated cost of living increase for staff, we are looking at a significant gap between revenue and expense of approximately \$200,000. This budget has not been approved yet, and the vestry is actively considering ways to increase revenue and close this gap through fundraising, use of our space by outside groups, and church growth.

COVID protocols continue unchanged and are consistent with Diocesan recommendations (indoor masking strongly recommended).

Outgoing vestry members (Will Cowart, Ann Gregory and Sharon Pilmer) are working to fill their positions.

The rector updated us on the New Jersey Bishop search. He will be away for a Walk About January 9-13 and the election will be held on January 28. Please hold all of us in your prayers.

## All Saints at St. Paul's!



On November 6th we celebrated All Saints Sunday. A large gathering worshipped together in remembrance of those that have gone before us. A special event was the baptism and welcoming of two new saints-in-waiting, Olivia Ifeoma Obimdike and Anna Mae Murphy.





## The Greening of the Church and Cookies and Carols

On Sunday, December 18th, our traditional Cookies and Carols celebration will be held in tandem with the Greening of the Church in anticipation of Christmas Day. Please come a half hour or so before the 10 am service for Cookies and some Carols led by Ben Bachmann at the piano. After the service, Greening will proceed. It is a fun time with fellowship and the satisfaction of seeing our beautiful church decked out in its seasonal finery.



## The Greening of The Church

### Cookies and Carols

Cookies and Carols on December 18th needs you! We will have coffee and tea and juice for everyone...

BUT...

### **WE WILL NEED COOKIES.**

Please bring along some home-baked or store-bought goodies to share. We'll have them set out in the back of the church for us all to enjoy both before the 10 am service and afterwards, during the Greening of the church.



## Treasurer's Report

### Ann Goggins Gregory

As we move into the last few months of the year, we continue to be slightly below budget on both revenue and expenses. As such, we are just about where we expected to be on net operating income (NOI). As you'll see below, our NOI year-to-date is -\$158K vs. budget of -\$154K. As a reminder, St. Paul's budgets a deficit most years, pulling from operating reserves in our investment accounts to cover the difference.

	Year-to-date actuals as of October 31, 2022	Year-to-date budget through October 31, 2022
Revenue	\$ 243,608	\$ 276,655
Expense	\$ 401,759	\$ 430,969
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>\$ (158,151)</b>	<b>\$ (154,314)</b>

#### REVENUE DYNAMICS:

Pledge revenue remains ahead of budget for the year by \$6K, but it is worth noting that October saw a drop in pledge revenue (\$6.8K vs. budgeted of \$14.1K). We hope to see an increase in donated revenue – whether plate or pledge – as we head into the holiday season.



Plate remains considerably under budget, with a shortfall of \$25K (50% less than budgeted). Plate is almost always a highly variable figure and often declines when pledges go up (as parishioners switch their gift to a pledge).

Our investment income – specifically interest and dividends on our portfolio – is also down (by \$400K, or 22%) commensurate with a struggling market.

Rental revenue associated with space usage (for things like music concerts) is down by \$8K year to date (or 12%). This is likely due to COVID restrictions in the first half of the year, and the open music director role in Q2/3.

#### EXPENSE DYNAMICS:

Personnel remains under budget year-to-date, largely because the Children & Youth Ministry Director role was open for much of the year. Thankfully, Deacon Carolyn is now in this role, and the children and youth programs are up and running again.

On the balance sheet / investment side of things, the financial markets continue their volatility. We continue to monitor the market and are in frequent touch with our Merrill Lynch financial advisors.

As always, I'm available for your questions or comments at [goggins.gregory@gmail.com](mailto:goggins.gregory@gmail.com).

## Passings

### Virginia (Ginny) McCormick

**Robert Knapp**

Ginny McCormick had a wickedly piercing smile, sharp wit, nimble fingers, an unquenchable love of all things beautiful—and a heart that knew no bounds. Those of us who knew her knew a very special person. She was raised in Texas and in Yuma in southern Arizona. She fondly recalled those early days and loved to share stories. Her career took her to service with the armed forces in Western Europe as a librarian. She took advantage of the opportunity to travel widely to visit the beautiful architecture and art all around her. Her exposure to the beauty of European stained-glass windows inspired her to write a booklet with descriptions and history of our own beautiful windows.



Ginny with her mother and dear pooch

Ginny connected with St. Paul's in the 1980s. Here she found a place where both her religious and artistic lives could coalesce as she served and inspired us in a wide variety of activities. Besides serving on Vestry and as its Senior Warden, Ginny was a long-time volunteer in the church office. She was easy to work with, flexible, and very efficient. When rummage sale time came, Ginny was front and center, taking on the curating, display, and selling of books. She was an enthusiastic and very faithful member of the Altar Guild and was also a Lay Eucharistic Minister.



Ginny was inspired to express her artistic genius in imagining and creating beautiful needlework. She would solicit and grab volunteers from the parish with a brusque and vaguely intimidating, "Can you sew? Show up Saturday at 9 am!" Seated all around the table in the Chapter Room, each volunteer would be given a task based on their skill level and interest—cutting, machine sewing, hand stitching, whatever—and work and chat would go on for hours and hours.



At work in the Chapter Room!

At St. Paul's her gifts are many. She made the hand-embroidered white ribbons that we use at Christmas on the aisles and wreaths. She worked on vestments. But to me, the best gift was the St. Paul's banner we have used regularly in processions at the cathedral. As St. Paul was called by the Holy Spirit to serve Christ in the world, Ginny was called to bring Christ alive with her nimble mind and fingers.

Ginny was laid to rest in St. Paul's Chapel of Peace on Sunday, November 13, 2022. May she rest in peace!





## Concerts at St. Paul's

### Wintersongs

#### Kitka Women's Vocal Ensemble

#### TWO DATES THIS YEAR:

**8:00 pm, Friday, December 16, 2022**

**8:00 pm, Saturday, December 17, 2022**

*Wintersongs*, Kitka's critically-acclaimed and wildly popular December concert offering is back! This year's concert program will feature sacred and secular Ukrainian songs for the season while raising awareness of, and funds for, a variety of organizations addressing the current humanitarian crisis in Ukraine.



The theme of this year's program is *Shchedry Vechir*, a common refrain in Ukrainian winter holiday carols that translates into English as "a generous evening." In addition to offering an abundant feast of songs, these concerts will serve to raise awareness of, and funds for, several organizations providing critical humanitarian aid to victims of the war in Ukraine. "Through the sharing of songs and opportunities to provide assistance, we hope our voices can, in some small way, contribute to the protection and renewal of Ukrainian culture," said Kitka's Executive Artistic Director Shira Cion.



**TICKETS:** Advance tickets are priced between \$25 and \$50 and may be purchased online at <http://www.kitka.org/events>



### Christmas Postcards

#### San Francisco Choral Artists

Magen Soloman, Artistic Director

**4:00 pm, Sunday, December 18, 2022**

We'll sample 500 years of seasonal music and the rich diversity of cultures, languages, and traditions here in the Bay Area and across the world, from exciting new works to spirituals and audience favorites. With emphasis on local composers and three world premieres.

Get your tickets at <https://www.sfca.org/season-order-form/>

## The Windows of St. Paul's

Robert Knapp  
Nativity and Epiphany

The windows, each a single lancet with trefoil arch, capture the birth of Jesus at Christmas and the ensuing worship of the Three Kings at Epiphany. Mary sits in a stable holding the Christ Child in her lap. Where one expects St. Joseph, a winged angel in armor stands behind looking on and holding a cruciform staff with tassel. A shield with an IHS monogram is at the crossing. A crèche with straw is beside Mary. The brick and wooden stable forms the background. A window of the stable is in the usual lunette position above. The cypress trees seen in the distance in the background adumbrate Jesus' death, while the path winds to a summit that reminds us of Golgotha and Christ's ultimate sacrifice. To the right, the three Magi kneel in adoration. They wear headgear to identify their trans-national identities: from left to right, a diadem (European), a cap (African), and a turban (Asian). They are dressed in their (since the sixteenth century) traditional royal colors: red, purple, and green. The palm tree tells us that they are from an exotic land. Of the three gifts brought, only the box containing myrrh is readily discernible; the gold may be on the ground in front of the red-robed man, but the frankincense seems to be hidden or missing. The symbolism of the three gifts presented to the Christ Child is evident. Gold represents homage to Christ's kingship, frankincense to Christ's divinity, and myrrh to a foreshadowing of his death. The comet in the lunette is the Star of Bethlehem.



A catacomb depiction of the adoration of the Magi

These Three Kings do not appear in the Gospel story (Matt: 2); there, the "wise men" (*magi*) are not given a number, nor are they called "kings." It was not until the third century A.D. that the theologian Origen related the three gifts for the Christ Child to three individuals; he is probably also responsible for their names. His contemporary, Tertullian, inferred that they must be royalty—so, voilà, the Three Kings, Caspar (Gaspar), Balthazar, and Melchior, were born. As early as the second century catacombs in Rome and elsewhere they appear in their eastern forward-flopping hats, a symbol of Persian foreigners known to be "magi". These floppy-hatted kings hold the stage until the 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries when the kings begin to be dressed as, well, kings—sumptuously. The Renaissance invented another now-accepted aspect of the three: one was Black, a detail that our window does not include.

The text on the glass reads *The Gentiles shall come to thy light and kings to the brightness of thy rising.* (Isaiah 60:3) Two names appear below: left, Bettie Ann Gaskill; right, Rollin Carolus Gaskill.

Nothing is known of Bettie Ann Gaskill except her death date, 1909. R. C. Gaskill was a prominent Republican and mucky-muck in Masonry in Oakland. He had come to Butte County in the 1850s and was elected a state senator there in 1860. He subsequently moved to San Francisco, then to Oakland.

*Continued at the bottom of the next page*



# St. Paul's

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## Dear Readers:

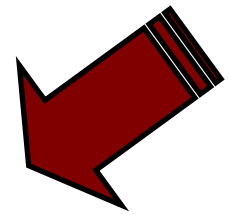
Currently, the newsletter is not being distributed by regular post. If you know of someone who does not have access to the electronic version, please contact Parish Administrator at 834-4314, Ext. 501 or [admin@stpaulsoakland.org](mailto:admin@stpaulsoakland.org). She will make a hardcopy and send it.

## Newsletter contributors sought

We are interested in hearing from writers and photographers; please email us if you would like to donate your talents. The deadline for each edition is the 25th of the month previous to publication. Please send your submissions of no more than 400 words to [csknapp@earthlink.net](mailto:csknapp@earthlink.net)

The Good News is a publication of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Oakland, California. Carolyn Knapp, editor, and Robert Knapp, composition and graphics.

## From the Editors:



Watch the next *Good News* for Parish events in January!

St. Paul's 97 years ago...

## St. Paul's Crusader

Onward Christian Soldiers!

A thematic "take" for a newsletter that is rather different than the *Good News* of today...



He was a strong anti-Prohibitionist (i.e., pro-saloon man). He was a postal official and later the Wells-Fargo Company's representative in the city. He died of "cerebrospinal meningitis" while on a trip to Pittsburgh in 1889. It is interesting to view him through his obituary. He was "an aggressive politician, firm in the courage of his convictions...honest in his prejudices as he was sincere in his friendships, he made bitter enemies as he gained staunch friends...he was a very forcible debater ... the earnestness in expression of his arguments oftentimes exceeded the bounds of policy...he seldom yielded his opinions even under the strongest pressure." R. C. Gaskill looks to have been a force to be reckoned with.

We do not know who created this window. It must date from after 1909, the date of Bettie Ann Gaskill's death. Probably it was paid for by Varney W. Gaskill, one of her children.



R. C. Gaskill.