

The Epistle

Contents

From the Pile on Fr. Kirk's Desk.....	2
New Study Beginning in September.	2
Pinterest Interest Group.....	2
Outreach Report.....	2
August in the Food Pantry.....	2
Prayers of the People.....	3
Youth Group: EYC.....	3
A Big Thank You.....	4
Lectio Divina Bible Study.....	4
Recovery Groups at St. Paul's.....	4
The Daughters of the King.....	4
School Supply Drive:.....	4
Parish Photo Directory.....	4
We Are Thankful.....	5
St. Paul's Men's Escape Weekend.....	5
Parish Potluck: August 23 rd	5
Bishop Dan's 17th EPISTLE.....	6
Coming Events.....	9



ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

1135 12th Street

PO Box 737

Sparks, Nevada 89432

775-358-4474

www.StPaulsSparks.org

The Rt. Rev. Dan Edwards, Bishop

The Rev. Kirk A. Woodliff, Rector

The Rev. Chip Arnold,
Associate Priest

The Rev. Sherryl Netzler,
Assistant Priest for Pastoral Care

The Rev. Mike Margerum, Deacon

The Rev. Linda Smith, Deacon

August 2015

WHO ARE WE?

We, as St. Paul's, are a theologically diverse community who seeks to embrace our diversity in order to live through the Gospel of Jesus Christ and be a place of belonging for all people.



NICE WORK

From the Pile on Fr. Kirk's Desk...



For most of Washoe County, students will return back to school on August 10th. I spent part of this morning in the 9th grade counselor's office trying to straighten out my son's class schedule.

There is a long list of things he has to have completed before he graduates in four years. What classes to take now, what classes to take later? It is a puzzle of boxes that are in need of check marks. Once one of the requirements has been completed, the student is one step closer to being done with one level and moving on to the next.

Though the list of requirements has changed over the years, most of us have gone through this same box-checking ritual. Why is it that the list of requirements changes? Might it be that society is constantly changing which requires new perspectives, new knowledge, and new skills in order for our students to find success within the challenges they face?

What about the requirements for being a disciple, a student of Jesus? Do we as students of Jesus need new perspectives, new knowledge, and new skills in order for us to find success within the challenges the world throws at us?

Would you want to face the world with only the perspectives, knowledge, and skills of an elementary education? My guess would be the answer is no, not these days. This might have been true at one point in our history, but not now.

There was a time when having an elementary understanding of God worked okay too, but with modern scholarship and modern questions, those days are long gone. As students of Jesus, we need more than the elementary Sunday school education. We need a mature perspective and a mature level of

knowledge as our foundation to lift up the weighty mysteries of our God: Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer.


Join me in our next study beginning in September.

Kirk⁺

New Study Beginning in September

Beginning Wednesday, Sept. 2nd at 6:00 p.m.
Reading the Bible Again for the First Time: Taking the Bible Seriously but Not Literally, by Marcus Borg. This book can be purchased online or in larger book stores. (probably not in local Christian book stores) If you would like to take this class, please sign up in the narthex or email Kirk@StPaulsSparks.org.

Pinterest Interest Group

Come join us in the parish hall on  the first Monday of the month at 6:00 p.m. for food, fellowship, and fun crafts!

Outreach Report

Thanks to Bob and Peg Bibby for another successful BibbyQ! A total of \$1,125.00 was raised this year, with proceeds being used towards building improvements. Donations were received for the Food Pantry (\$180.00), Clergy Discretionary Fund (\$350.00), and the School Supplies Drive (\$100.00) this month. St. Paul's also donated the subscription cost of \$208.00 for Forward Day by Day booklets to Renown Medical Center. Patti Stine, Outreach Committee

August in the Food Pantry

"It's a wake-up call so rise and shine!"



Breakfast foods, cereals, breads, etc.

Prayers of the People

Please help us keep our Prayer Chain List up to date. Let someone in the Prayer Chain Group or Robin in the office know each month if we are to continue to pray for your special people. Thank you.



Prayer Requests

Forrest, Diane, Russ, Pat, Barbara, Larry, Rev. Karen, Anne, Shirley, Philip, Nancy, Nanette, Preston, Julie, Jameson Walker, Karen, Sven, Gracie, Jaemie, Rev. Bill, Vernice, Marilyn, Fiona, Robert, Kay, Bill, Brenda, Trudy, Lorrie, Dick, Stephany, Amanda, Brett, Victoria, Ella, Robin, Diana, Curt, Vickie, Ted, Patricia, Sharon, Steve, Sophia, Joann, Jeremy, Helen, Grace, Kathy, Peadear, Catherine, Tara, Daniel, Rachael, Baby William, Dave, Jim, John, Skip Patti, Barb, Sarah, Teresa, baby Ashton, Mason & family, Bobbie, Paul, Sarah, Joel, Marian, Meredith, Wendy, Jeff, Ali, Danny, Chris, Gretchen, Jo, Harry, Jane, Linda, Mikaela, Christine & unborn baby, Gloria, Renee, Mary, Kirk, Al, Suzanne, MeMe, Nathan, Connie, Siamundo family, Hannah, Peggy, Xochie & Eric.

Military: Andrew, Ryan, Jeffrey, Sierra, Owen, Brian, Lt. Col Bruce, Jordan, Evanne, Carl, Will, Alex & Suzanne.

Youth Group: EYC



EYC is an Episcopal Youth Community where all youth (and their friends) who have finished grades 6-12 are invited to come and participate. The focus will be different each week, but you can count on whatever the EYC is doing it will stimulate our growth with God

and with each other, and our growth in serving Christ in the world. We invite you to come join us for food, fellowship and fun!

If you are new to St. Paul's we welcome you to join us. If you have any questions, please contact Tricia Woodliff at triciawoodliff@hotmail.com or Tia or Jon Mittelstadt at 775-722-3469 or by email at tia.mittel@gmail.com.

EYC will meet in the youth room from 11:15 AM until 1:15 PM (notice time change due to summer schedule) unless listed differently in the schedule. Please join us for the following activities:

August 16: Confirmation Meeting

Meet in the youth room at 11:15 AM. We will watch one of the videos from Re: Form and discuss. The Re: Form videos and discussion are being used as our confirmation curriculum. These videos and discussions are for everyone even if you are not eligible or don't plan to be confirmed. Those who have committed to confirmation- attendance is mandatory! Lunch will be provided.

August 30: Bowl Painting at Playful Potter for "Empty Bowls" Community Food Pantry Fundraiser

Meet in the youth room at 11:15 AM. We will then carpool to eat lunch at a restaurant near the Sparks Marina (maybe Popeye's). After eating, our group will head to Playful Potter to paint bowls for the fund raiser. Please bring \$10 for the bowl and \$5 for lunch. Parents can pick up at the church or Playful Potter around 2 PM.

September 13: Weekly EYC Meetings will begin. Mark your calendars. More details later.

Need Baked Goods for a Special Party? Meeting? Birthday?



Sally Sue's Bakery is run by our very own Sarah and Hayley Lightfoot. ALL proceeds go to St. Paul's Church. For orders and questions call Sarah or Hayley 626-8519. Visit the website for a pricelist and pictures of their past works. Check out Sally Sue's Bakery at www.sarahlightfoot.blogspot.com

A Big Thank You

Thank you to all who helped make the Wesley Bell Ringers' recent visit a success! The help and support I received from the congregation is very much appreciated!

*Thank you to everyone who donated food for the dinner for the choir.

*Thank you to Jody Rolfson, Linda Devon and Barbara Monroy for all the help with the preparation, serving and clean-up of the dinner.

*Thank you to the overnight hosts who graciously opened up their homes for one or more of the ringers or chaperones.

*Thank you to all who came to enjoy the music and be a part of the audience.

Tia Mittelstadt

Lectio Divina Bible Study

Come and join us in the parish hall for this Holy Spirit guided study of scripture.
(no homework required ☺)

Combined Men's and Women's Group

Thursdays from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
Contact The Rev. Mike Margerum for more information. mgoodmarge@gmail.com or 775-229-2695.

Recovery Groups at St. Paul's

Mondays: AA Meeting @ 5:30 p.m.

Wednesdays: Women's AA @ 6:30 p.m.

Thursdays: Gama-Non Meeting @ 6:30 p.m.
and Ala-Non Meeting @ 6:00 p.m.

The Daughters of the King

Are you not quite sure who The Daughters of the King are and what it is they do? Contact Margaret Bouzek at Margaret.Bouzek@va.gov or by phone at (775) 424-3767.



School Supply Drive:

Through August 9th, The Daughters of the King are sponsoring a School Supply Drive. We have two lower socioeconomic schools in our neighborhood that really need our help. Over the last several years St. Paul's has made a significant impact in helping these children with the basics. We are hoping to continue what has become a tradition of helping our neighborhood children by "leveling the playing field" when it comes to education supplies. Now through August 9th there will be bins/ crates in the Narthex for you to drop off your donations. We get a discount at Office Depot and Office Max, so if you want us to do the shopping, we can do that for you. Just put your cash donation in an envelope marked "School Supplies" or put "School Supplies" on the subject line of your check and put it in the Sunday offering plate. Thanks to you all in advance. If you have any questions, email me at dbouzek@nvbells.com Margaret Bouzek

Parish Photo Directory

If you have not already done so, please get your picture taken in the back of the church following Sunday worship. We really need to update our directory. Thank you.

We Are Thankful...

How good it is to give thanks to you, O Lord, to sing in your honor, O Most High God. Psalm 92:1

Watch this space in the Epistle each month for stories of gratitude and belonging. This month we are very thankful that Margaret Bouzek shared part of her story with us.



How long have you attended St. Paul's?

Dan and I have been members of St. Paul's since April 1993.

What about St. Paul's makes it a church home for you?

The first time we came to St. Paul's we were made to feel welcome and a part of the family. We have had the most loving experiences here during the good times and bad times that have occurred in our lives in the past 22 years.

How have you experienced God's generosity in your life? In your church?

We have found that when we are fully participating in the parish, we are blessed in more ways than we can imagine.

What is one thing about St. Paul's you are most thankful for?

We are most thankful for the friendships we have made here. We didn't have any family in the community when we moved here but now we are part of an incredible family!

Please share a favorite story about your time at St. Paul's and/or tell a little about one of your favorite church activities.

Dan and I offered to coordinate a few social events at the church. We had an Oktoberfest with 12 attendees the first time. Then we added the St. Patrick's Day dinner. Now the events happen annually where we come together to have a meal and socialize. We enjoy hosting the meals and hope the congregation has a good time as well.

St. Paul's Men's Escape Weekend: Camp Galilee August 14-16

Beginning the evening of Friday, August 14 through lunch on Sunday the 16th, the men of St. Paul's are invited to a fun weekend at Camp Galilee on Lake Tahoe. This is not a "Spiritual Retreat", but a time for the guys to have fun and to get to know each other a little better. There are a variety of options in which to spend your time including: swimming, kayaking, hiking, playing cards, watching movies, or just chilling on the beach or in the shade reading a book.

The cost is \$120.00 per person which includes 5 excellent meals! To sign up or for more information, **contact Dick Stufflebeam ASAP** 313-3217. Make checks out to St. Paul's with Men's Escape in the subject line.

Parish Potluck: August 23rd

Don't forget the end of the month Parish Potluck Aug. 23rd after the 10:00 a.m. service. Bring your favorite entrée and/or dessert to share with others.

Bishop Dan's 17th EPISTLE TO THE NEVADANS

WHAT IS YOUR CONGREGATION'S TEMPERAMENT?

Therefore encourage one another . . . Live in peace with each other . . . Encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone. I Thessalonians 5: 11-14



Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

What is the temperament of your congregation? By “temperament,” I mean a habitual mood, a pattern of acting, a spiritual default setting. Just as individuals have temperaments, so too do congregations. Congregations have lots of feelings running about in them and various people behave in various ways. But the group has a basic way of being. Individuals have a lot of feelings in any given day, sometimes several feelings at the same time. But the individual has a basic temperament. It is the same with a congregation.

Just as some individual temperaments are attractive and others not, the same is true of congregational temperaments. Just as the temperaments of some individuals make them healers or leaders or friends, the same is true of congregations. There are people we gravitate toward when we need consolation or inspiration. Other people we flee from like the plague when we are a bit fragile. So what is your congregation’s temperament?

Often people describe their Church as “a friendly, caring family.” Sociologists have actually studied churches that describe themselves that way. They are the hardest congregations to break into, the least likely to grow, and the most likely to be dysfunctional. I interpret that to mean congregations that deflect the question of “what is your temperament?” with a cliché are the least self-aware.

Nothing is more important to a congregation’s life than its temperament (mood, behavior, default setting). People will come to a congregation or run away lickety split for their own survival depending on the congregational temperament. It isn’t the cool clergy. It isn’t the programs. Those things may bring visitors. But membership decisions depend on the feel of the place. Whether the congregation lives out the gospel and shows Jesus to the world on the one hand or discredits the faith on the other depends on the congregational temperament.

Each congregation’s temperament is unique. It’s much more complicated than good or bad. I have known hopeful, generous congregations; resilient, determined, rock-ribbed congregations; and prayerful, contemplative, reflective congregations – to name a few on the upside. I have also known congregations beset with a spirit of crankiness; others inclined to obstreperousness, hysteria, panic-based blame-shifting, and any number of traits that repel rather than attract and do not bespeak faith, hope, and love.

The temperament of a congregation, over time, affects the personalities of the members. Cranky congregations do not so much attract cranks as breed them. Prayerful congregations instill prayer in their members. Serving others is a habit one can pick up at a servant ministry congregation. To

belong to a congregation is to expose oneself to the risk of becoming like that congregation. That is why people choose their congregations carefully. And it is why many of the “nones” and “dones” today keep their distance. Sometimes they are avoiding the spiritual damage that congregations inflict all too often. See this Post Traumatic Church Syndrome Facebook page for an encounter with the wounded veterans of church life. It is an eye-opener. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/PTCSgroup/>

A lot goes into shaping a congregation’s temperament. History is a powerful influence. Each member is apt to bring to the congregation the patterns of feeling and behavior from his or her own family. The surrounding culture has an influence. But there are a few even stronger factors.

Clergy. The clergy do not singlehandedly set the tone of the congregation but they have more potential to influence the tone than anyone else. Yes, I know this is Nevada, we are anti-clerical, and we don’t have much use for I Thessalonians 5: 12-13, “Acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work.” But like it or not, if someone celebrates the sacraments, preaches the word, offers spiritual guidance, and extends pastoral care in our times of need, we are apt to catch a bit of their mood. The moral of this point is for clergy. It is good for you to know things, good for you to do the liturgy well, etc. But the most important thing is not **what** you do but **how** you do it. “Knowledge puffs up but love builds up.” I Corinthians 8: 1. “Be the change you want to see” in your congregation.

Covenant. Next, each congregation has a basic agreement on what they are here to do and how they are to do it. That agreement is usually implicit, unstated, and unconscious. It may be a good agreement or a bad agreement. But the very unconsciousness of it is a problem. It is so, so, so profoundly important for a congregation to intentionally reflect on “what we are about” periodically. The transition process as a parish prepares to call a new priest is, for many congregations, the only time they ever do the congregational equivalent of an “examination of conscience.” (St. Ignatius of Loyola) Some resist self-examination even then. When there are long rectorates or where the ministry model does not involve calling priests from outside the congregation, the result is that some congregations rarely check their spiritual blood pressure. If an annual check-up is in order for our physical bodies and a daily check-up is in order for individual souls, a congregation that has gone five years without some serious reflection is on thin ice. We need to be clear on what we are here to do and how God has empowered us to do it.

Individual. Each individual member of a congregation makes a contribution to the spirit of the group. The look on your face, the tone of your voice, the words you choose, your willingness of set aside your own agenda – or not – all nudge the congregational temperament one way or another. To participate in a congregation is a spiritual discipline. At weddings, we often read Paul’s Hymn to Love (I Corinthians 13). I encourage you to read back over it now but first remember that blessed Paul is not talking about how to live in a marriage. He’s talking about **how to live in a congregation!!**

Now here’s a little liturgical hint. Our clergy are appropriately focused on how we do the rituals. One part of the ritual that some of them get exercised about is the Exchange of the Peace. Their concern is that some congregations treat it as an occasion for socializing. The purpose of the ritual is a bit different.

Now let me be clear. I have no dog in this fight. There are perfectly good arguments on both sides. But the clergy are right that we should not miss the point of the ritual. It is from Matthew 5: 23, which says if you are about to present your gift at the altar (which at that point in the service we are), and we recall that there is some grievance between ourselves and someone else, we should go first to that person and set the grievance aside. In the ritual, we have just received absolution, just been forgiven for our sins. Jesus is emphatic that those who have been forgiven are obliged to forgive each other. Matthew 18: 23-35. We who have just been forgiven forgive each other in the Exchange of the Peace. We may or may not like the person we are exchanging the peace with -- but it doesn't matter. Ritually we represent each other's worst enemies. Ritually, we are laying down our grudges in order to purify our hearts before placing them on the altar of God at the next step in the liturgy, the offertory.

Now what does that have to do with how individual church members contribute to the congregational temperament? Just this: The Exchange of the Peace is not just the 7th Inning Stretch. It's a spiritual exercise, one of many. The Church is a spiritual gymnasium. Clergy, spiritual directors, etc. are like trainers. We are there to work out. The Church is a place to *practice* (as in to do it over and over until we get it right) certain virtues.

How should we behave in Church life if we want to grow into the likeness of Christ? Short but demanding answer: read the New Testament. Every page is about the answer. But Paul says it most clearly and most directly. It was the subject of most of his Epistles starting with the first one. He said:

Therefore encourage one another and build each other up . . .

Warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone. Be sure that no one pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do good for each other and for everyone else. Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. – I Thessalonians 5: 11-16

Does that sound like a tall order? It is. Impossibly so. That is why we need each other to do any part of it. Even then, it is an aspiration. "Ah but (our) reach should exceed (our) grasp or what's a heaven for?" Robert Browning.

I love to see self-aware congregations growing in grace through the hard discipline of being the Body of Christ together. I love it when people get past wanting the Church to suit their taste or give them their way because they have discovered there is a gospel to proclaim and there is a Kingdom Mission to accomplish.

If we are honest about the temperament of our congregation, we will probably find some grace and mercy there. I have never known a Christian congregation that was not the receptacle of some blessing. We will also probably find some traits that fall short of the glory of God. There is a cure for those failings. It is the gospel of Jesus lived out in the Biblical way. For example,

If anyone is caught in a transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness . . . Bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ. – Galatians 6: 1-2.

Over the years I have read many a book and gone to many a workshop on group processes and how to be a healthy, dynamic, life-giving congregation as opposed to (shall we say to be charitable) the other kind. After all that reading and study, I have stumbled upon the best guide yet: the New Testament. If we read, mark, and (most importantly) inwardly digest God's word to us, it will change how we are with each other in Church, which will change how we are with each other outside Church, which will change who we are inside.

Blessing Always, Bishop Dan

Coming Events



August 2015

Sunday	Aug. 2, 2015	Blessing of the Backpacks	10:00 am
Monday	Aug. 3, 2015	Pinterest Interest Group	6:00 pm
Saturday	Aug. 8, 2015	No Prayers & Squares	
Monday	Aug. 10, 2015	Vestry Meeting	6:00 pm
Friday	Aug. 14, 2015	<i>Men's Escape to Galilee thru Sunday</i>	
Saturday	Aug. 15, 2015	No D.O.K.	
Sunday	Aug. 23, 2015	End of month <i>Potluck after morning service</i>	11:15 am
Tuesday	Aug. 25, 2015	Epistle Deadline	12:00 pm
Wednesday	Aug. 26, 2015	<i>*Food Bank Truck & SNAP program only!</i>	10:00 am
Saturday	Aug. 29, 2015	Big, Beautiful & Broke Clothing Swap 11-3	11:00 am

Recurring Events

Summer Worship Hours in effect thru September 6th

EYC meets every Sunday @ 11:15 a.m. in the Youth Room.

Rector's Sabbath is every Tuesday

AA meets every Monday at 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. in the Choir Room

Choir Practice 5:30 p.m. Tuesdays (**off for the summer**)

Praise Team 7:00 p.m. on Wednesdays or (Check with your Team Leader)

D.O.K. will not meet during the month of August.

Prayers & Squares have also postponed meeting in August.

AA (Women's group) meets Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. in Parish Hall

Alanon meets every Thursday at 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. in Parish Hall

Lectio Divina – Bible Study meets Thursday mornings at 11:00 a.m.

Healing Service with Holy Eucharist Thursday Evening at 6:00 p.m.

Men's Bible Study Thursday evenings @ 7:00 p.m. (postponed for the summer)

Food Pantry is open Wed. 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. & Saturday 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

*Fourth Wednesday of the month is the SNAP program & Food Bank Truck **ONLY**.

Gam-anon meets every Thursday 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. in the Choir Room

St. Paul's Episcopal Church
(1135 12th Street)
P. O. Box 737
Sparks NV 89432

PLACE
STAMP
HERE

Phone: 775-358-4474

Fax: 775-313-0806

E-Mail: office@stpaulssparks.org

Web Site: www.stpaulssparks.org

Place Label Here

*St. Paul's
Episcopal Church*



Walking Together in Faith

- Sun., 10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist, style varies*
- Sun., 10:05 a.m. Children's Sunday School*
- Sun., 5:00 p.m. Traditional Holy Eucharistic, No Music*
- Thur., 6:00 p.m. Healing Service with Holy Communion*