

# The Epistle



## ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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[www.StPaulsSparks.org](http://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. Hal Woomer,  
Assistant Transitional Deacon

The Rev. Mike Margerum, Deacon

The Rev. Linda Smith, Deacon

## December 2015

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### 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.

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

### Where do we go from here?



This is a big question and requires lots of input. This input has to come from you--each of you. This is not a question that can be answered by me alone, or by the Vestry.

We are on this journey together, and we need your help.

It's been 10 years since the parish has been asked to complete a parish survey. If you were at St. Paul's 10 years ago, it is plain to see that we are not the same community. We have lost some members over the years and though this saddens me deeply, it is okay. We have new people with new ideas and new vision. A healthy church continuously changes and allows the Holy Spirit to work in this place.

In the survey you will be asked the normal demographical stuff, but there is more. This survey gives you the opportunity to give input on things from service times and styles, preaching feedback, educational preferences, and direction for our outreach.

What is working, what is not? If you could change something, what would it be? Do you really believe we are a place where everyone belongs and doesn't have to try to "fit in" to attend? We say we are a congregation that is filled with both traditional and progressive minded people who put aside our differences and focus on what we have in common, Jesus Christ. Is this still true? Are we still a place where liberals and conservatives gather each week to share in common worship and share in the sacrament of Holy Communion?

Don't be shy...how is the clergy and lay leadership doing? What should be the focus of

the parish over the next 5 or 10 years? What new ministries might you support? What brought you to St. Paul's and what keeps you coming back?

This is why we need your help. **I don't flat out ask you to do many things...but I'm asking you to do this.** Please take the parish survey. This can be taken anonymously, but you will have the option to put your name on it. Either way is fine, the important thing is that you make the time to take it. Taking it online is best, but it can be taken on paper.

The survey is available online until Christmas. Make this one of your Christmas gifts to your church and help us prepare for the future.

Go to:

[www.surveymonkey.com/r/StPaulsSparksNV](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/StPaulsSparksNV)

I thank you for the love and commitment you have for St. Paul's.

Peace,



## Senior Warden's Report



Advent is upon us and during this season we prepare for the birth of Christ. Preparation for the work of Christ is important, which is why I want to reiterate what is in Fr. Kirk's article and what you are hearing from Jon

Mittelstadt. St. Paul's is doing a Church wide survey during the preparation time of Advent. Please take a few minutes during this season to reflect on where you think we are as a Parish and where you would like to see us go. Completing the survey on-line is easy at [www.surveymonkey.com/r/StPaulsSparksNV](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/StPaulsSparksNV)

If you need a paper copy, please let us know.

Barb Monroy

## Actors Needed ASAP

The Epiphany Play will be at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday, January 3<sup>rd</sup> and we need actors to have a play!

Cooper Woodliff is very excited that he will be the director this year. There are smaller and larger roles for both inexperienced and experienced actors.

We need to assemble the cast as soon as possible, so if the idea sparks your interest at all, don't be shy.

Fr. Kirk will be collecting the names. Please email him if you want to be part of this Epiphany gift to the whole congregation.  
Kirk@StPaulsSparks.org

## Special Holiday Worship Times

### Sunday, December 20th

Regular 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. services  
5:00 p.m. Blue Christmas Service

### Christmas Eve

5:30 p.m. Contemporary Praise with  
Holy Communion  
10:30 p.m. Traditional Holy Communion

### Christmas Day

10:00 a.m. Traditional Holy Communion  
(No music)

### Sunday, December 27th

10:00 a.m. Combined Service:  
Christmas Songs and Scriptures  
with Holy Communion  
5:00 p.m. Traditional Rite II, No Music

### Sunday, January 3rd

10:00 a.m. Epiphany Play  
with Holy Communion  
**(NO 5:00 p.m. service on this day)**

## Thanksgiving Dinner Thank You

A BIG thank you to John, Peggy and Jeremy Hannah for coordinating the Thanksgiving Dinner. Ken and Patti Rackley were great dishwashers too. We all had a wonderful time and outstanding food. Thanks to all who helped set-up and clean-up. From all us *Thanksgiving Eaters*.

## Christmas Offering

The Vestry has approved the Outreach Committee's suggestion for the Christmas Offering with money being split between St. Paul's General Fund and Eddy House. Eddy House originally started as transitional housing for young men who have "aged-out" of the foster care program. They have since expanded services to include a walk-in center in downtown Reno as well as life and career coaching and a group mentoring program for foster and at-risk youth. The walk-in center, located at 423 East 6th Street, is a place for homeless, runaway, foster and other at-risk youth between the ages of 12 and 21 to access "care and comfort services" and provides a safe place to spend time off the streets. The life and career coaching program serves Washoe County foster youth who are juniors and seniors in high school, and the group mentoring program provides opportunities for interaction with positive role models in our community.

The Outreach Committee is hoping to have a representative from Eddy House visit St. Paul's to answer questions about their services, programs, and volunteer opportunities for individuals and groups. If you would like to check out their website, visit [eddyhouse.org](http://eddyhouse.org).

If you want to give to this cause prior to our Christmas services, there are special envelopes in the narthex.

## Christmas Flowers

There are also special envelopes in the narthex if you would like to help purchase the Christmas altar flowers. This is a wonderful way to remember loved ones and to give thanks for God's blessings.

## Hanging of the Greens

Sunday, December 20<sup>th</sup>, 11:15 a.m. Please join in for the annual Hanging of the Greens. The more hands. . . the merrier the event.

## Blue Christmas Service

Sunday, December 20<sup>th</sup>, 5:00 p.m. Is Christmas time hard for you? There are numerous reasons why so many people struggle during this time of year. If you are someone that experiences more pain than joy around the holidays, you are not alone. Come and worship the Christ Child with others in the struggle. Come to our Blue Christmas service and invite those you know who might want to join you.

## The Daughters of the King

We will be collecting supplies for teachers at our neighborhood schools after Christmas. A list of items will be available soon.



Contact Margaret Bouzek at Margaret.Bouzek@va.gov or by phone at (775) 424-3767.

## Angel Tree

The Angel Tree is set up in the Narthex. This year we have requests for children and Seniors. Angel Toy tags for children are due back by Dec. 13. New this year are "Senior Silver" tags for our older Washoe County citizens. Those gifts will be due back by Dec. 6<sup>th</sup>. Please bring your gifts back Unwrapped.

## Monthly Receipt Summary



### St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Sparks Funding the Mission November 2015

For the 2015 year, our pledges and expected plate income is expected to be \$212,756, and should average \$4,091 per week from those sources.

25-Oct	\$2,175.00	1-Nov	\$2,550.00
8-Nov	\$5,059.00	15-Nov	\$1,481.00
22-Nov	\$2,759.00	Online	\$5,398.00
<b>November Total</b>			<b>\$19,422.00</b>

Ingathering Sunday has come and gone, but it is never too late to make a pledge. If you are a regular contributor, but don't pledge, it is harder to budget for your intended gift. If you donate online, we still need an old fashioned pledge card for the coming year.

In regard to the budget, we anticipate an all parish meeting in early January to address questions and plans.

The monthly Financial Statement of Mission contains detail on all our financial activity, and is posted in the narthex. You can direct questions to any Vestry member, Dick Stufflebeam, or Patti Stine. (Email: [dick@stpaulssparks.org](mailto:dick@stpaulssparks.org))

**AN IMPORTANT NOTE:** By all your gifts, we are blessed. For all your gifts we are grateful.

## 2016 Annual Parish Meeting

The Annual Parish Meeting will be Sunday, January 31<sup>st</sup> during a combined 10:00 a.m. service.

## Outreach Report



Besides Bishop Dan's annual visit, St. Paul's hosted the ordination of Hal Woomer as Deacon. A total of \$629.30 in non-pledge offerings was collected at the time of the Bishop's visit. This money is donated to his discretionary fund. Offerings collected during Hal's ordination service are donated to his discretionary fund and totaled \$453.50. Other donations for the month included \$130.00 to the Food Pantry, \$75.00 to the Prayers and Squares quilt ministry, \$550.00 in memory of Carolyn Longland, and \$250.00 in memory of Nancy Lerche.

Patti Stine, Outreach Committee

## St. Paul's Parish Survey

Advent is the church season of preparation before Christmas. This Advent Season, please help us prepare for St. Paul's future by completing our parish survey. Our parish survey will be available online through Christmas Day. St. Paul's is conducting this survey to evaluate our ministries and learn how we can become an even more vibrant faith community. Your responses will help us adapt to the changing needs and dreams of our parish.

The Vestry is asking all adult members of St. Paul's (16 years and over) to complete the survey. Here is the online link for the survey, [www.surveymonkey.com/r/StPaulsSparksNV](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/StPaulsSparksNV)

If you need a paper copy of the survey, or if you would prefer to do the survey at the church after worship, please ask Clergy or a Vestry Member for assistance. **Your feedback and ideas are needed! Please help us.**

## 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](http://www.sarahlightfoot.blogspot.com)

## St. Paul's Prayers & Squares



The "Prayers and Squares" ministry is a special "outreach" tool to share the love of Christ. The quilts bring a tangible example of the love we all share with those who are suffering in body, mind or spirit.

Prayers and Squares will be selling handmade items between services in the Parish Hall on Dec. 6<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>. The money raised will go toward purchase of quilting supplies. There are Christmas tree skirts, table runners, aprons, and more.

## Request from the Pledge Clerk

This time of year we have many checks, offerings and payments for various things. Please help with the record keeping by indicating on your checks and envelopes exactly what the funds are for. Example: Christmas Flowers, Christmas Offering, Wreaths or greens etc.

If your check is for your Pledge, please indicate whether it's for 2015 or 2016.

## Narthex Christmas Mail Box

Writing cards to other parishioners? Let us hand deliver them and write us a check for the postage. See *Page 10 below*.

## December in the Food Pantry



*"Holiday Fixins!"*

The stuff that compliments a holiday dinner such as dressing, boxed potatoes, gravy mixes, canned veggies, cranberry sauce, applesauce, etc.

### Food Pantry News

We have added an evening distribution to our current hours. We have felt for a long time that there is a need in the community for this and in October we did our first evening distribution. 28 people came through the door, for a total of 112 people fed, 58 of those were new to the pantry, and most of the remaining had not been to the pantry in months and in one case over 1 year. This was encouraging, and we believe that we are filling a need that is lacking in the community with an evening distribution. We will now do an evening distribution the 4th Wednesday of the month 5:30-7:00 pm.

We use social media heavily to announce what is happening in the pantry. Many of our new clients have heard about the pantry from Facebook. If you have a Facebook Account, please Like and Share Posts from The Community Food Pantry and Empty Bowls Reno/Sparks. There are many people struggling with hunger and missed meals in our community. You don't know how many of them may be your friends, neighbors, or co-workers.

Barb Monroy

### 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.

## Youth Group EYC



EYC is an Episcopal Youth Community where all youth (and their friends) who are in 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](mailto:triciawoodliff@hotmail.com) or Tia or Jon Mittelstadt at 775-722-3469 or by email at [tia.mittel@gmail.com](mailto:tia.mittel@gmail.com).

EYC will meet in the youth room from 10:15 AM until 12:15 PM unless listed differently in the schedule. Please join us for the following activities:

### December 6: Designer Waffles and Discussion

Meet in youth room. We will make our own designer (pick your favorite mix-ins) waffles and then have a discussion and fun activity exploring the meaning of Advent and Christmas. **6<sup>th</sup> graders are welcome to attend this activity.**

### December 13: Let's Get Crafty!

Meet in youth room. We will eat lunch and make snowmen out of socks. They are easy and very fun! Great gift for friends or for decorating your room. **6<sup>th</sup> graders are welcome to attend this meeting.**

### December 20: Christmas Photo Scavenger Hunt at Meadowood Mall

Meet in the youth room at 10:15 am. We will carpool to Meadowood Mall for a fun Christmas

scavenger hunt. We will return by 12:30 to eat lunch and view our pictures. We will end at 1 pm today. Bring money if you would like to get a snack at the mall. **6<sup>th</sup> graders are welcome to attend this meeting.**

**December 27: No Meeting- Merry Christmas!!**

**January 3: No Meeting- Happy New Year!**

## **Pinterest Interest Group**

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! (December 7) Here's how it works, someone brings dinner, someone else brings dessert and someone brings the craft. Let us know you are coming and bring your best Pinterest Idea! We have 1 craft committed for this session, if you have a glue gun please bring it.

## **We Are Thankful...**

*The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as they decided in their heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 2 Cor 9:6-7*

*Watch this space in the Epistle each month for stories of gratitude and belonging. This month we are thankful Daniel Villanueva shares his reflections with us.*



### **How long have you attended St. Paul's?**

About 3 years. I first came in July 2012 when I moved from Las Vegas to Sparks, and officially transferred my membership that November from Epiphany

Episcopal in Henderson, NV.

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

It's a combination of the friendly faces, the real feeling of belonging to an engaged faith community, and the 11 AM service. After a visit, you really see everyone is welcome no matter what, and you can't help but want to pass on that welcoming spirit to others. St. Paul's truly reminds me of my hometown church growing up in Southern California like no other place.

## **How have you experienced God's generosity in your life? And in your church?**

God has provided wonderful faith communities wherever I have lived, along with opportunities for service to others and solid spiritual encouragement. Particularly during the last three years where my wife and I had to live in different cities due to our jobs, St. Paul's has been a great source of community for which I am constantly grateful.

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

I am most thankful for the diversity – ages, political views, faith stories, a mix of cradle Episcopalians and converts like me – you name it. And still we all come around the Communion table every Sunday as one!

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

Besides weekly services, my favorite activities are the Rector's book studies and the Lenten soup evenings. Both attract somewhat different crowds so both are great ways to get to know other people at St. Paul's outside of Sundays, sharing our stories over a book or a bowl.

*Thanks for sharing your faith experiences with us Dan!*

## 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



### Prayer Requests

each month if we are to continue to pray for your special people. Thank you.

Forrest, Diane, Russ, Pat, Barbara, Larry, Anne, Philip, Nanette, Preston, Jameson Walker, Karen, Sven, Gracie, Jaemie, Rev. Bill, Fiona, Robert, Bill, Trudy, Lori, Dick, Keith, Brett, Ella, Diana, Curt, Patricia, Sophia, Julie, Paul, Eileen, Mary, Connie, Steve, Trisha, Sarah, Jerilyn & family, Rita & family, baby Naomi Joy & family, Laura, Bev, Maeghan, Cora & family, Cliff, Milt, Sixten, Mike, Lisa, Joe, Marge, Evelyn, Wendy, Scott, Jim, Kathleen, Janelle, Linda, Jane, Victoria, Shannon, Nancy Theresa Graham, Mara, Stan, Lorraine, Sharon, Jaime, Rev. Ken, Gene, Bill & family, Jan and Emma.

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

## Legacy Planning Seminar

A stewardship seminar about Legacy Planning will be held in the Parish Hall on Sunday, January 10, following a combined worship service. There will be resources available to help with trusts, writing your will, funeral planning, etc. Gary Fuller, Esq., will give an overview of estate planning and health care advanced directives.

This seminar will also be a chance to learn about the Society of the Magi. This Society was created by the Diocese of Nevada as a way to recognize those individuals who have chosen to remember their church in their estate planning. Members have made these gifts or bequests as a way to commit to a deeper

understanding of stewardship. Members are never asked for the size of their gift and may remain completely anonymous.

## 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.

### Men's Group

Join us Thursdays from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Contact Rev. Mike Margerum for more information or about setting up a new group, mgoodmarge@gmail.com or 775-229-2695

## Do you worship at 11:00?

If you worship at the 11:00 a.m. service, we need your help in the following areas:

**Ushers** (Pass out bulletins and other stuff)

**Lectors** (Read Scriptures)

**Eucharistic Ministers** (serve chalice)

**Adult Acolytes** (Carries the Cross in the procession and assists the clergy)

If you are interested, please contact Fr. Kirk.

[Kirk@StPaulsSparks.org](mailto:Kirk@StPaulsSparks.org) 358-4474

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WHAT DO YOU BUY THE GUY WHO HAS EVERYTHING, MADE EVERYTHING, AND HAS GIVEN US EVERYTHING?

12-22-2014

A graphic with a dark blue background featuring a bright light source in the top right corner with rays emanating from it. The background is filled with small, light blue snowflakes. In the foreground, there are dark, silhouetted hills. Several white angel figures with wings are scattered across the scene, some appearing to fly or stand on the hills. The text 'Blue Christmas' is written in a white, elegant font, with 'Blue' in a cursive script and 'Christmas' in a serif font.

# Blue Christmas

Is Christmas hard for you?  
You are not alone.

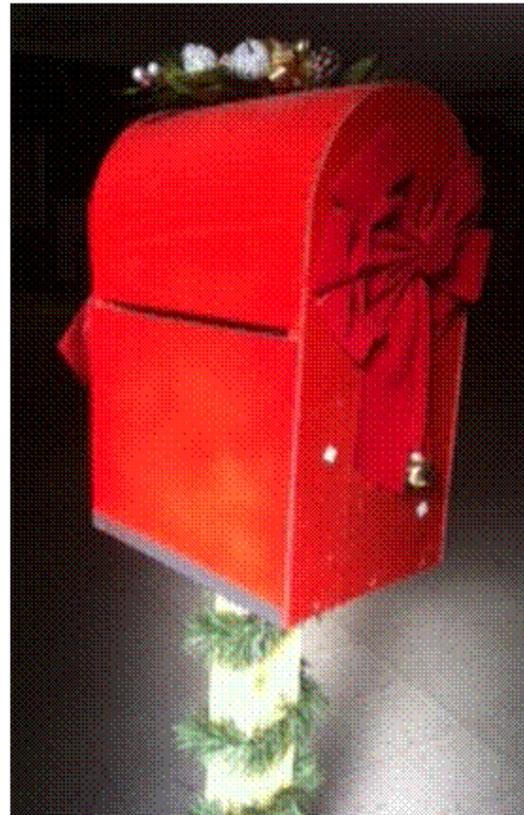
We invite you to the  
Blue Christmas Service  
December 20th, 5:00 p.m.  
at  
St. Paul's Episcopal Church  
1135 12th St.  
Sparks, Nevada  
[www.StPaulsSparks.org](http://www.StPaulsSparks.org)

# *It's Christmas Card Time Again*

Are you planning on sending Christmas cards to other members of St. Paul's? If so, instead of mailing them let the St. Paul's "elves" hand deliver them for you.

Here's how:

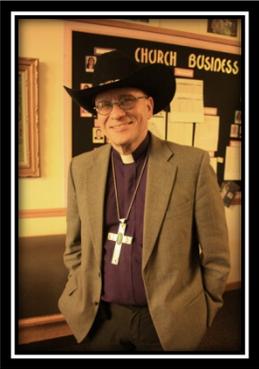
You will find a decorated Christmas Mail Box in the Narthex. Write the name of the people/person you would like your card to reach. (no physical address necessary). Don't put a stamp on the envelope. Instead, count the number of cards you are putting in the box and include an envelope that contains cash/check made out to St. Paul's for that amount it would have cost to actually mail them.



The St. Paul's "elves" will hand deliver your cards and the church will benefit from your donation. Every little bit counts with a deficit budget.

## Bishop Dan's 19th EPISTLE TO THE NEVADANS

### "A Little Bit of Advent"



*A cold coming we had of it,  
Just the worst time of the year  
For the journey and such a long journey:  
The ways deep and the weather sharp,  
The very dead of winter.*

T. S. Eliot

Eliot's famous poem *The Journey of the Magi* is about his own path from proud agnosticism to humble faith. A brutally honest poem, it does not shy away from the hardness of the spiritual journey. *A cold coming we had of it.* Not a feel good weekend. Not a Praise Jesus exuberance. But a grappling with the threatening fact that the spiritual life is all about transformation - **change**. *Do not be conformed to the ways of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.* Romans 12: 2. And change is hard. There is a grief in it. Eliot knew that Christianity would cost him something, maybe everything. It did not come easy.

*. . . Were we lead all this way for  
Birth or Death. There was a Birth certainly . . .  
I had seen Birth and Death  
But thought they were different. This Birth was  
Hard and bitter agony for us, like death, our death.  
We returned to our places, these kingdoms  
But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation . . .*

And he knew it was not a do-it-once-and-get-it-over-with thing but a lifelong process of surrender in faith, a process leading into the unknown. *Such a long journey.* The change we undertake is the birth of Christ. Christmas is always coming as Christ is always being born. He was not born just once long ago. He is *eternally begotten of the Father.* (Nicene Creed). So as we consider the spirituality of Advent, think of words like labor and transition. The coming birth of Christ is not bit of news that happens somewhere far off and we watch it on the news. It is far more intimate than that. It happens inside us. The 14th Century Dominican friar Meister Eckhart said, *It does not matter that Christ was born in Bethlehem long ago unless he is born in you today.*

Advent is not the birth. It is the pregnancy and the labor. This is the time when we sense change coming and we live in that expectation. From where I sit, I am acutely aware of impending change in three arenas - individual lives, congregations, the diocese.

The place I see it most clearly is in congregations. An unusual number of our congregations have been engaged in major shifts the past couple of years. For some that has involved clergy transitions. But other changes have been afoot as well. In some places those changes are coming to the final stage. They are in labor. A lay leader in one congregation has been saying for the last few weeks "It is Advent at our church." He means they feel a change a-comin', and the feelings are complicated.

There is hopeful expectation among some while others are lining up against a new clergy person they have not met yet. It reminds me of my Face Book friends who are in a frenzy of opposition to "the New Prayer Book" though not a word of it has been written; nor will a word of it be written for some year yet. It is perhaps unfair to poke fun at the irrationality of our resistances to change. We are all prone to it. I am kind of opposed to the non-existent new prayer book myself. We resist because though we may not know what change will bring, we do know what it won't be - it won't be the familiar past. We don't know what is being born. We only know what is dying.

Being a congregation is a frustrating proposition because sooner or later all congregations become bulwarks against change - but change is the grass growing up through cracks in the sidewalk. We can't stop it. It just keeps on a-coming. Birth happens. How shall we respond to it?

It matters how we cope with change in our congregations because that is part and parcel of how we cope with change in the rest of our lives. We may not have a priest, vestry, or bishop to blame for the shifting sand of our families, our health, our jobs, our homes, etc. But change will happen whether we can find someone to blame or not. Church is a training ground for life; so dealing with Church Change is our gymnasium for coping with Life Change. How then shall we go about the project of Advent?

Let's start by being honest about how change feels.

*A cold coming we had of it,  
Just the worst time of the year  
For the journey and such a long journey: . . .  
This Birth was  
Hard and bitter agony for us, like death, our death.  
We returned to our places, these kingdoms  
But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation . . .*

Change usually - at least often - feels more like this than Deck the Halls with Boughs of Holly fa la la la la.

So I suggest it is helpful to do three things at once. First, it is important to acknowledge what we love in the present and to allow ourselves to grieve it. And yes grief consists of denial, bargaining, anger, sadness, and resignation. (To see that concisely fleshed out, click the link here [7 Stages of Grief](#). We can't skip the process. As the great Lutheran theologian Paul Tillich said, *There is no truth without the way to truth*. So all those feelings are necessary. I have only one word of caution about them. The feelings generate thoughts that may not strictly conform to reality. So remember this dictum: don't believe everything you think.

Second, even though we are accustomed to the way things are, we are not satisfied with them. We feel something missing. It is the human condition to long for a better world in large and small ways. The lessons and the music of Advent express that longing. We are "captive Israel that mourns in lonely exile here. We need not be slaves to consistency. The fact that we are accustomed to the familiar ways of "this present age" (Galatians 1: 4) does not mean we are not also hungry for something we are not yet being served. Ambivalence is the human condition. That's why we are still

watching Hamlet. It is far more workable to acknowledge and experience our conflicting feelings than to acknowledge one side and stuff the other into our unconscious.

Third, when we turn our thoughts to expectation - when we imagine what is about to be born - it helps to cultivate an attitude of openness. That basically means a wait-and-see attitude. A few folks have exaggeratedly *optimistic* views. More of us tend to be *pessimistic*. If we want to be realistic, we will not be overconfident of our ability to predict the future. God may know what lies ahead. But we don't. I sometimes hear "I've seen it all before. This will be just like when . . ." It probably won't. The future does repeat the past a bit but mostly it is new. Even when it echoes the past to some degree, there are always interesting variations on the theme.

Often new things happen, but people whose minds are stuck in the past are simply unable to see them. They keep seeing and hearing the same old thing, though something new is really happening. That is why God was shaking Israel by the shoulders and shouting:

*Behold I am doing a new thing!  
Even now it springs up!  
Do you not perceive it?*

Isaiah 43: 19

When something new is happening and we cannot see it because our minds are mired in the past, we become unhinged from reality and ineffective at dealing with it. The spiritual discipline here is to watch and wait.

*As for me I watch  
for the God of my salvation.*

Micah 7: 7

Psalms 5: 3; Habakkuk 2: 1; Matthew 26: 38; Isaiah 40: 31. It is a practice of sitting still and keeping alert, waiting to see what comes instead of rushing in to fill the mysterious void with our own predictions.

In summary, I recommend a three part spiritual discipline for dealing with change (which is another way of saying "dealing with life.")

- 1. Acknowledge the grief.**
- 2. Acknowledge the longing**
- 3. Wait and see**

If we practice these attitudes in the Church - what a place to practice a spiritual discipline! - that discipline can become a habit that permeates the rest of our life in a gracious wise way. Such an Advent spirituality will get us to the stable so that we show up for the birth of Christ in our lives and in our souls.

Blessings always, Bishop Dan

## Coming Events



### December 2015

Saturday	Dec. 5, 2015	D.O.K.	10:00 am
Saturday	Dec. 5, 2015	Volunteer Food Pantry luncheon	12:00 pm
Sunday	Dec. 6, 2015	Advent II	
Monday	Dec. 7, 2015	Pinterest Interest Group	6:00 pm
Tuesday	Dec. 8, 2015	Nevada Big Horn's Food Drive	
Wednesday	Dec. 9, 2015	Nevada Big Horn's Food Drive	
Saturday	Dec. 12, 2015	Prayer's & Squares	9:00 am
Sunday	Dec. 13, 2015	Advent III	
Monday	Dec. 14, 2015	Vestry Meeting	6:00 pm
Saturday	Dec. 19, 2015	D.O.K.	10:00 am
Sunday	Dec. 20, 2015	Advent IV	
Sunday	Dec. 20, 2015	<i>Blue Christmas Service</i>	5:00 pm
Sunday	Dec. 20, 2015	<b>Christmas Flower deadline</b>	
Wednesday	Dec. 24, 2015	Christmas Eve Contemporary Service	5:30 pm
Wednesday	Dec. 24, 2015	Christmas Eve Traditional Service	10:30 pm
Thursday	Dec. 25, 2015	Christmas Day Traditional Service	10:00 am
Thursday	Dec. 25, 2015	Epistle Deadline	12:00 pm
Saturday	Dec. 26, 2015	Food Pantry <b>Closed</b>	
Sunday	Dec. 27, 2015	Combined Worship " <i>Christmas Songs &amp; Scripture</i> "	10:00 am
Sunday	Dec. 27, 2015	No EYC	
Wednesday	Dec. 30, 2015	Food Pantry <b>Closed</b>	

### Recurring Events

#### Winter Worship Hours in effect - Worship times, 9:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m. & 5:00 p.m.

EYC meets every Sunday @ 10:15 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 or (Check with your Team Leader)

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

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.

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

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Place Label Here

*St. Paul's  
Episcopal Church*



*Walking Together in Faith*

- Sun., 9:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Contemporary*  
*Sun., 9:05 a.m. Children's Sunday School*  
*Sun., 11:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite II, Traditional*  
*Sun., 5:00 p.m. Traditional Holy Eucharistic, No Music*  
*Thur., 6:00 p.m. Healing Service with Holy Communion*