

"Greeting" (2008)

Sister Claire Joy, Community of the Holy Spirit, New York

# THE EPISTLE

OF SAINT PAUL'S PARISH—K STREET

AN EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE DIOCESE OF WASHINGTON

DECEMBER XXV NUMBER II

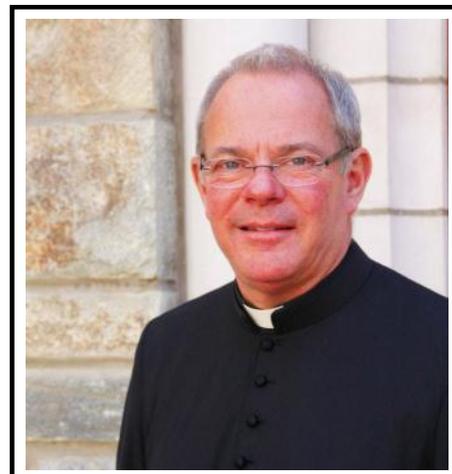
From the Rector

## “Because Thou didst send thy beloved Son to redeem us...”

*My dear Parishioners and Friends of St. Paul's,*

The second day of the month of December is the first day of the church's new year; Sunday, December 2, is the First Sunday of Advent.

As I'm sure I have said every year, Advent is really one of my favorite times of the church year. It is filled with magnificent, exhilarating and majestic images and themes. Some of us are old enough to remember the "good old days" when The Last Things was the theme of Advent, namely, death, judgment, heaven and hell! In these days, I think we do Advent an injustice if we limit it simply to preparation for the Feast of the Incarnation, or Christmas. I really do believe that the focus is on the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and not just my end but The End. This theme is reflected in the Collects and, of course, in the wonderful Proper Preface for the season of Advent: "Because Thou didst send thy beloved Son to redeem us from sin and death, and to make us heirs in Him of everlasting life; that when He shall come again in power and great triumph to judge the world, we may without shame or fear rejoice to behold his appearing." And that Preface beautifully combines not only the anticipation of the Incarnation but



THE REV'D ANDREW SLOANE

the anticipation of the Second Coming.

One of the best attended and most well-known services in the entire year here at St. Paul's is, of course, our service of Advent Lessons and Carols. I am always amazed at how deeply this affects those who attend the service. It is a service of darkness to light and a service of reflection on the Word through the beauty of music. Perhaps it is because these liturgies point to another realm that they are so attractive in a culture that is reduced to the superficial and commercial observation of Christmas as merely a social rite of passage in some way. These

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ST. PAUL'S PARISH SEEKS TO RESTORE ALL PEOPLE TO GOD AND TO EACH OTHER, THROUGH SACRAMENTAL WORSHIP AND CHRIST-LIKE LIVING.

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liturgies are the opposite of that in their content and, if we will, they can lift us to a transforming realm. We will, as always, offer exactly the same service of Advent Lessons and Carols on both and first and second Sunday of Advent, that is Sunday, December 2, and Sunday, December 9, at 6 p.m. and followed of course, as always, by Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

On the First Sunday of Advent, December 2, we will have the pleasure of welcoming the Bishop of Milwaukee, the Right Reverend Steven Miller. Bishop Miller will have been in our area to ordain our very own Deacon Kyle Oliver to the Sacred Order of Priests at the Virginia Theological Seminary at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, November 29. Bishop Miller will preach at the 9 a.m. Mass and will preside and preach at the 11:15 a.m. Mass, at which the newly ordained Kyle Oliver will be the celebrant.

Another perennial observation in Advent in this parish is the Advent Quiet Day. Again, in a culture that is rushing headlong in a frantic way into "the holiday season" the Advent Quiet Day always provides us with an opportunity to simply stop, calm down and reflect. The Quiet Day will be on Saturday, December 8, and as always will begin with Morning Prayer at 9:15 and Mass at 9:30 a.m. The day will conclude with Simple Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament at 2:30 p.m. The theme for the Advent Quiet Day is "Prayer and Action." I shall be conducting the Quiet Day and in the course of the Quiet Day will be reflections on the well-known and wonderful poem "Prayer" by the great George Herbert. Unusually, I am attaching a second part to the Quiet Day which will, in fact, not be quiet but will be action! Following Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament at 3 p.m., those who have been part of the Quiet Day will, I hope, prepare Christmas bags for our homeless ministry, the Grate Patrol. The production and contents

of these bags have been a wonderfully collaborative project between a number of ministries: the Monday evening Hic et Nunc group have provided the actual bags; the Boy and Girl Choristers will have decorated the bags with Christmas images and messages; our Carpe Deum group will have gathered toiletries; the Commission on Mission will have purchased sturdy winter socks; and the young married and about-to-be married group, Fidelitas, along with the children and young people of our church school will have provided some sort of fun and cheerful and simple gift to be put into the bags. All this will be collated on the afternoon of Saturday, December 8, at 3 p.m., and I am grateful to Deacon Eric Lobsinger, Jeremiah Cassidy, and Rosi Meza-Steele, who are coordinating the collation of these bags at that time. If you are not related to any of the groups described above, please feel welcome to join us on that afternoon, when we will put together 200 bags to be taken out on the Grate Patrol on the weekend immediately before Christmas.

Some other significant events: I am not the only one who will be retiring in the upcoming months. As you have already heard from me – no need to repeat it all here. I shall be retiring from my work here on January 31 and moving to London, where I am happy and privileged to join the clergy staff of our sister parish of St. Paul's, Knightsbridge, in London. Our very own Father Tony Lewis will retire from the Virginia Theological Seminary in this month of December and that significant milestone in his life will be recognized by the Seminary at the Seminary on Friday, December 14. Father Lewis is one of our many dedicated Honorary Assistant Clergy. As many of you know, Father Lewis's roots go back here a long time, when he was in fact the Seminarian Assistant here at St. Paul's under the direction of Father Richards. I am delight-

ed that Father Lewis will not be moving away from the area and will still very much have a connection with St. Paul's and his vital ministry here will continue.

On the very next day, Saturday, December 15, another one of our Honorary clergy, Father Robert Gillespie, will celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood. Obviously, this is no mean achievement! To that end, Father Gillespie will be the celebrant at the 9:30 Low Mass on Saturday, December 15. His family are providing a reception in the Atrium following that Mass. It would be wonderful if people in the parish could come to that Mass and show their support of one of God's faithful priests and a faithful minister in and from this congregation.

You will remember that the 2012 budget was not able to continue to fill the position of Assistant Music Director. Thanks to generous, special giving by parishioners above and beyond their own pledges, we were able to defer the termination of John Bohl's brilliant tenure of this position until December 31, 2012. I think the reality of the budget being able once more to support the position as it is currently constituted is well-nigh impossible for the foreseeable future.

So it is with regret but with enormous gratitude that we shall say our "farewell" and "Godspeed" to John Bohl on the last Sunday of December, December 30. John has used his considerable talents to enhance graciously and generously our important music program. Much of his work has been very public, but much also has been unrecognized. In addition, of course, he has become very much an important member of our parish family.

Obviously, Robert McCormick with the talented and generous support of our volunteer Assistant Organist, Bob Motes, will not be able to do the work of two full time people (even though John's time was theoretically

half-time). I have urged Robert to make the necessary adjustments to quantity and repertoire to ensure his own health and vitality. Likewise the congregation must adjust its expectations to a realistic level consistent with what is healthily possible from the point of view of financial and human resources. And I know Robert well enough to know that the quality and professional standards of our music will not be compromised.

While we spend a lot of money on music as the "handmaid of the liturgy," I fear that we have little notion of what we get for what we pay for!

Please come and thank John Bohl on December 30 for his faithful and fruitful ministry among us.

Elsewhere, please find the schedule for our observation of Christmas, which remains much as it has for the last few years.

As I move towards the end of my own time with you here and the transition in my own life, I am so pleased that this great season of Advent provides us with a whole month to be focused on the ultimate things and to be very keenly aware of the mission and ministry that God has for us in and from this place, now and in the future.

With my gratitude and love in Christ, as always,

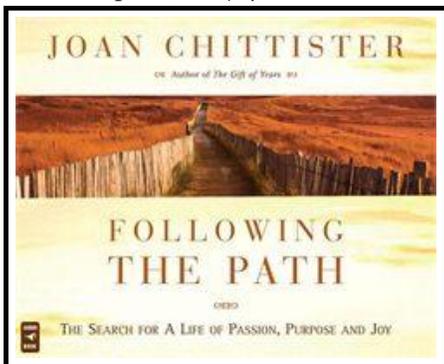
Fr. Andrew+

Father Andrew's new address in London can be obtained from the Parish Office at St. Paul's K Street.

# EDOW People of the Way Book Group

Kyle Babin

On Saturday, November 3, a small but enthusiastic group of book lovers met at St. Paul's as part of the diocesan-wide discussion sessions for Bishop Mariann's "People of the Way" book study. The fall book of choice is Joan Chittister's engaging look at vocation and call: *Following the Path: The Search for a Life of Passion, Purpose, and Joy*.



The meeting was led by a well-known friend of the parish, Ellen Spencer, who also serves on the staff for the congregation of the National Cathedral. While most attendees at the St. Paul's gathering were members of our parish, there was one participant from St. Columba's. The meeting provoked much food for thought, lively discussion, and warm fellowship.

In addition to reading some very interesting literature, Bishop Mariann's book study initiative is a brilliant way of engaging the diocese in collaborative conversation. I would highly recommend participating in future book studies, at the very least, in order to meet some of the lovely and intelligent Episcopalians of other parishes in the diocese!



# Loving Welcome to the Family of Christ

Photography by Mr. William L. Ryon Jr.



Ivan Mitaire Ojaruega was baptized on October 28, 2012. He is the grandson of Lucky and Betty Ajueyitsi.



Michael Sebastian Freeland was baptized on November 4, 2012. He is the grandson of Lynne and Weldon Walker.



## Choir Profile: Kris Brown-Coleman



We arrived at St. Paul's in September 2001 with a timid, seven-year old aspiring chorister (Ben) to audition for Jeffrey Smith for the Choir of Men and Boys. I have a vivid recollection of Jeffrey putting Ben through his paces before he enthusiastically invited him to sing. From that moment, we launched into a rich set of experiences for Ben, starting with his visit to the "boring row" for wiggling too much during rehearsal, on to many hours of unique and exceptional musical training, and what I would characterize as transformational learning and growth opportunities beyond music throughout his youth. Ben's development from that little choirboy to a contributing member of the parish each and every Sunday evening, and then to Head Chorister, served as a foundation for him. His experiences at St. Paul's contributed to his faith and a commitment to serving others. Ben also discovered ways to serve beyond music in our parish community, becoming an acolyte and serving on the Rector's advisory committee in the search for a new music director. His senior year sermon last June [see The Epistle July-August 2012] and his choice to write his college essay about his life at St. Paul's, were evidence of the tremendous impact of St. Paul's on Ben.

After Ben, another aspiring chorister emerged in our family! Alistair started at St. Paul's as the toddler we had to keep quiet and content during rehearsals and Evensong each week. He became the boys' choir groupie, joining the Choir of Men and Boys at age six. Following his older brother, he progressed to a competent chorister, on to Head Chorister and became interested in the organ. The impact of his experiences at St. Paul's on Alistair's formation as a musician are readily apparent. Last year, he was given the opportunity to regularly play an improvisation for the postlude at Evensong. He composed an anthem for the choir, and performed a benefit concert for the earthquake victims in Japan. This fall, Alistair began assisting Robert in training the boys and girls each Friday, which he loves to do. Finally, he has developed a strong commitment to serving our parish community, recently joining the task force for youth formation, designed and opened the parish store and has grown into a faithful and enthusiastic servant in the parish.

Being a St. Paul's choir parent can be a daunting task. Over the past 11 years we have logged well over 1600 hours of rehearsal and service time, not including the time commuting three or more times per week from our home in Bethesda. The return on investment was far beyond our expectations. We were attracted to St. Paul's by the reputation of the boys' choir. The education musically and spiritually was and is truly exceptional. The value of the time and energy we have devoted and the blessings bestowed upon our family over the past 11 years are immense. But that's only the beginning. My role as a choir parent was just the tip of the iceberg!

As a musician myself, it was impossible to avoid being drawn in to

what is undoubtedly one of the best programs to serve God as a musician. As a full-time working mother, I initially resisted Jeffrey Smith's pleas to join the choir. I sang with the boys for special services and later starting subbing in the parish choir. In the end, I was so attracted to the magnitude of what we do at St. Paul's – the opportunity to sing the repertoire, a full Mass and the beautiful music we sing each week, and most significantly the spirit and love the choir devotes to one another and to the parish as a whole.

The choir is a wonderful family—the friendships I have made throughout these past years are so vital and dear to me. We are a tremendous team—Robert and John lead us each week in truly wonderful music making with a great deal of energy, passion and care. As a church musician, it really doesn't get any better than this!

Finally, like many of my colleagues who started at St. Paul's in the choir and are now actively engaged in so many other ministries and work in the parish, my service in the choir has led to me to serve the parish in other ways. First, at the age of thirteen, Ben was influential in our move to join St. Paul's as members. I had the opportunity to serve on the Rector's advisory committee in the search that led to Robert McCormick's appointment as music director, and this fall was the start of my second year on the Vestry.

St. Paul's is truly a blessing in the life of our family. The depth of what happens each week at St. Paul's is tremendous, and my experiences have fostered growth in faith. We are grateful for the solid foundation the life at St. Paul's has provided for our sons, for the opportunity to serve God and others with our musical gifts each and every week, for wonderful friends, for love, and for this truly special community.

# Meet St. Paul's Specialist Photographers

*Editors' Note:* St. Paul's is blessed with many excellent photographers. See, for example, Bill Ryon's photos spread of two recent baptisms on Page 4. Here, we wanted to take this opportunity to introduce to you three of our specialist photographers who have made and continue to make exceptional contributions. We have been very fortunate to have their work to show-case activities and record in images the life of the parish.



## Laurita Liles

Photography is one part of my life as an artist, which developed both from my early childhood exposure to photography and from my portraiture work. I have always had a love of portraiture: oil portraits, charcoal and acrylic. I have done many children's portraits. When I worked for the Smithsonian Institution, Marc Pachter, Director of the American Portrait Gallery, encouraged me to join the American Portrait Society.

My father loved taking photographs, and he shared that love with me from a young age. He loved taking photos of the mountains in Asheville,

NC where I grew up. I began to develop my photography more so that I could take my own photos of my art portrait subjects (especially children). Now, I love photography as its own form of portraiture. I also love to paint and do sculpture. (The white Corpus Head and Madonna and Child in the Guild room are my work.) I have loved doing photographs for St. Paul's and feel it is a way to contribute to my church family.

I was confirmed at Old St. Paul's in Baltimore in 1979 and transferred to St. Paul's K Street after I moved to the DC area. I was walking in the neighborhood during lunch one workday when I discovered our St. Paul's about ten years ago. I think I knew when I walked into the church that it was special. The next Sunday, I attended the 11:15 service and knew I was home. The last few years have had its challenges, but my faith has sustained me. It is impossible to say how much I value St. Paul's and my "Church" family. I look forward to new things, and many more spiritual treasures of worshipping at St. Paul's.



## Janet Wamsley

**Q** How long have you attended St. Paul's? How do you find the parish? What parish and tradition did you transfer from?

I found St. Paul's in the mid-90s when I got involved in the Altar Guild at Church of Apostles in Fairfax. I had some friends at COA who had attended St. Paul's. They said if I wanted to understand the Altar Guild, St. Paul's was the place to go.

For a long time, I came to weekday Masses, feast days, and Walsingham Pilgrimages. I appreciated the hospitality and community. I finally transferred in 2011 when picking my way through construction zones to get to Fairfax became too much.

**Q** What Mass do you usually attend on Sundays?

It varies, depending on if I'm going to a Nats game or a belly dancing class afterwards, but usually the 7:45 or 9:00 am.

**Q** When did you start taking photography seriously? Did you take any courses? What subjects first caught your interest? When did you first start taking St. Paul's pictures?

I started dabbling in photography with various Washington Photo Safaris and a course through Arlington County Adult Continuing Education. Then I moved on to the New York Institute of Photography Complete Course in Professional Photography and Jay Maisel's week long New York City Photography Workshop. I started taking pictures at St. Paul's somewhere around 2008, although I'd taken pictures on the Walsingham pilgrimages in 2005 and 2007.

**Q** What kinds of photographs do you most like taking?

I like taking pictures of people that capture a moment and tell a story.

**Q** What do find most rewarding about taking photos for the church?

It's fun to chronicle the life of the parish.

**Q** Where do you live?

I live in Arlington with my cockatiels Nikolai, Peewee and Kiwi, and my rabbits Topaz, Daisy and Sasha. Fr. Andrew has blessed all of them – he's even blessed Topaz twice!

**Q** Do you pursue interests or hobbies other than photography?

So many hobbies, so little time...I read, participate in Toastmasters, swim, figure skate, take classes in ballet and belly dancing, follow the Nationals and Capitals.

**Q** Where did you grow up? Tell us about how you ended up in the D.C. area.

I grew up in Charlottesville, and moved to the DC area when I was in college. After I graduated, I went to library school at Catholic University, and I didn't want to leave.



## Gwyneth Zakaib

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

I have attended St. Paul's for about 13 years now.

**Q** What keeps you coming back to St. Paul's?

Not only are the music and liturgy superb, but the warm and loving St. Paul's community has become a second family.

**Q** What Mass do you usually attend on Sundays?

Choir members come for both morning services!

**Q** When did you start taking photography seriously? Did you take any courses? What subjects first caught your interest? When did you first start taking St. Paul's pictures?

I first started getting serious about photography when I went to graduate school to be a science journalist. There, I took a short course on photography that launched my current interest. I love to take pictures around my Eastern Market neighborhood, and started taking pictures for St. Paul's last year when I joined the web development team.

**Q** Do you have any current thoughts on photographic projects for St. Paul's?

I would love to start an online photo album that features all the various ministries at St. Paul's. As a pilgrim two years ago, I learned that there are more volunteer opportunities at our church than I ever imagined and I think it would be a great way to help others learn about the possibilities!

**Q** What do find most rewarding about taking photos for the church?

It's fun to see some of my photos online and on Facebook. Plus, I'm getting in a lot of good picture-taking practice.

**Q** What is your job outside of St. Paul's?

I'm a science writer for an online publication about Alzheimer's disease. Though I don't get to take any pictures for it, I do get to explore another fun medium—audio!

**Q** Do you pursue interests or hobbies other than photography?

I like to dabble in video and audio as well. In my journalism training, I was fortunate enough to work at a couple of radio stations and also learn the ins and outs of video making. In addition to the introductory video that I and a few others created for St. Paul's earlier this year, I hope to make another video for St. Paul's in the near future.

**Q** Where did you grow up? Tell us about how you ended up in the D.C. area.

I grew up not far away, in Bowie, Maryland. I suppose that makes me one of the few DC area natives!



# News from the Music Department

Robert McCormick, Director of Music



Michael Fili



Paige Fedon



Stephen Caracciolo

St. Paul's welcomes three new singers: Paige Fedon has joined the soprano section. Michael Fili has joined the choir as tenor section leader. Singer, conductor and composer Stephen Caracciolo is serving as "acting" bass section leader. We are also saying farewell to two of our singers: David Thompson, one of the tenor section leaders, and Esther Williamson, longtime member of the soprano section, who has moved to New York City.

St. Paul's music staff's are engaging in "extra-curricular" activities that connect St. Paul's to the wider world. **Robert McCormick**, Director of Music, has been asked to join the Alumni Council of Westminster College, his alma mater, for which he will travel to Princeton, NJ twice a year. Robert is serving as the co-chair of the 2014 National Conference of the Associate of Anglican Musicians (AAM), which will be held in DC and which will open with a Solemn Mass at St. Paul's.

The British music publisher Encore Publications has just published a second piece by Robert: his setting of *Come, thou long-expected Jesus*, which Robert wrote in 2009 for the St. Paul's Advent Lessons and Carols.

**John Bohl**, Assistant Director of Music, continues to be very busy beyond St. Paul's serving as Associate Conductor of the Washington Chorus. Recent activities include conducting concerts at the Armed Forces Retirement Home, Collington Episcopal Life Care Center and The Willard Hotel in



Esther Williamson

DC with the Outreach singers. At a reception and concert at the Embassy of Finland in honor of Maestra Marin Alsop of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, John conducted a select group of 30 singers from The Washington Chorus (accompanied by St. Paul's Fellow in Music **Joshua Stafford**) in works of William Dawson, Leonard Bernstein, and an arrangement of his own! John also made his Kennedy Center vocal performance debut as Countertenor soloist in Bern-



David Thompson

stein's *Chichester Psalms* and *The Lark*. John will be the organ accompanist and soloist at The Washington Chorus's upcoming Candlelight Christmas Concerts (5 of them!) at The Kennedy Center and The Concert Hall at Strathmore. To find out more about upcoming performances of The Washington Chorus, visit [www.thewashingtonchorus.org](http://www.thewashingtonchorus.org).



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# Grateful Stewardship—God’s Gift—Our Response

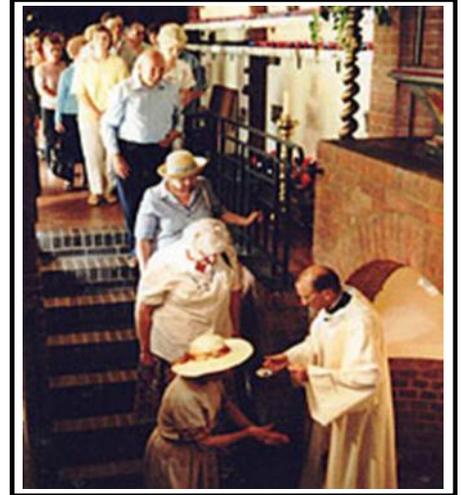
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*Jeanne Smith and the Stewardship Committee*

In his opening Stewardship sermon on November 11, Fr. Andrew brought forth the image of holy water being abundantly poured through the hands of the Pilgrims at the Shrine of Our Lady at Walsingham, as a symbol of God’s abundant Grace being showered upon us. He then asked if we are like the pilgrim who attempts to hold onto the water in clenched fists or do we allow it to flow through us

and then back to God’s creation. In this way, how do we regard the gifts of time, treasure, and talent? Do we clench them with tight fists or do we openly return a portion back to God?

***Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham: Sprinkling at the Holy Well***—the pilgrims make their way to the well where they receive a sip of the water, are signed with cross on their foreheads and then have water poured through their hands.



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## Ministry Resident Program

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*The Rev. Dr. Alvin Johnson, Director*

### Part Two: WHY?

The year was 1981 and my time as curate was coming to an end at St. David’s Episcopal Church in Glenview, Illinois. Those first two years were extremely rocky characterized by a poor relationship with my boss and my own arrogance as a young man recently graduated from seminary and ready to save the world. When I showed up for the vestry meeting in September, now a brand new father with a wife out of work, and discovered that my departure from St. David’s was on the agenda, my anxiety rose as did my frustration. The Bishop sent me to look at several congregations all of which were depressing, impoverished and angry. For the first time since believing and acting on a call to become a priest, the alternative presented itself that perhaps this was not working and it was time for me to explore some other work. I actually met with two businessmen to figure out where my skill sets might be best utilized in business. Sales of course! And then the Bishop, in a brilliant move, entered the picture and asked me if I’d like to start a new church. My answer was yes. His intervention and

his love for my wife and me kept the fires of vocation burning and growing within me.

I’ve thought about those first two years many times over the past 33+ years. The first rector had no interest in supervision, mentoring or working with his new clergy. After three months that realization set in and the scenario became sink or swim. Swimming meant finding appropriate adult supervision, mentoring and acceptance. While my youthful arrogance gave off one impression, underneath, at the age of 26, was a young man seeking to learn who he was and what being a priest meant. Thrust into a role that drew immediate expectation, showing vulnerability appeared to carry too much risk. Trust in God, good friends, loving spouse, aware Bishop, self-differentiation and motivation, combined to move me forward into this vocation and reveal places of need, want and desire in becoming a priest.

The Ministry Resident Program is intended to provide effective environments for students as they transition from seminary to life as parish

clergy. Leaving them alone isn’t nearly as helpful as is inviting them into a relationship of accountability with God, themselves and a parish community. And, by involving the parishes in becoming teaching congregations, MRP also says that the formation of our clergy isn’t the sole prerogative of the seminary environment, community and faculty but revolves around the crucible created by the people they are being trained to actually serve.

Over the next several months I invite you to keep learning about MRP, about your particular resident, your supervisor, the curriculum, about becoming a teaching congregation, about how your parish church is engaging the process of changing how our clergy and our congregational communities are formed in the Christian faith. Next month: so what happened?

You are always welcome to write me at [alvinjohnson@ministryresidentprogram.org](mailto:alvinjohnson@ministryresidentprogram.org) or call at 847-651-1323.



# SERMON SERIES

## FEAST OF DEDICATION

7 OCTOBER 2012,  
11:15 A.M.

The Reverend Fr. Alan Gyle

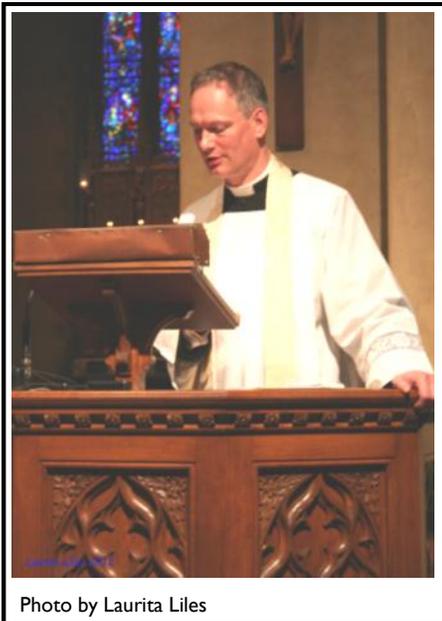


Photo by Laurita Liles

Fr. Alan Gyle

*Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, '*

*Surely the Lord is in this place-and I did not know it!'*

*And he was afraid, and said, 'How awesome is this place!*

*This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.'*

As a child, at the tender age of seven, one of my most treasured Christmas presents was a conjuring set: a cardboard box filled with tricks, and simple illusions which — with a bit of practice — could be used to stun and amaze tired family members and relatives late on Christmas Day and in the days following. In all honesty, and with the benefit of an adult perception of it all, “stun and amaze” is probably to overstate the case: I was only seven, never a particularly dextrous child and the gasps of wonder and astonishment made by family members were, in very truth, only made by doting aunts who probably hoped that by making such noises I would be satisfied and would go away! My sister, who throughout my life has been one of my most robust and reliable critics, I remember, took one look at one of my magic tricks and said “that's rubbish!” — and in truth she was probably right. Being a convincing stage magician, after all, takes a lifetime of practice, not just a few hours after church on a Christmas morning; but on that Christmas day some forty years ago now, I was — in my mind at least — the great Tommy Wonder, the new Harry Houdini!

One conjuring trick I do remember and used assiduously until it broke, sometime around the Feast of the Epiphany to the great relief of my family, was a small box with a cunning spring-loaded sliding mechanism inside it: small objects placed in the box could be made — with an incantation and a great wave of the hand (and, more importantly, the touch of a small concealed button on the bottom

of the box) to disappear and then to reappear: “now you see it, now you don't!” It was, in honesty, the most effective but least satisfying of all the tricks in the box, because it required no real skill on the part of the performer, other than that of remembering to press to button. I suspect that, around the world, the real satisfaction for illusionists and stage magicians is not having clever props and devices, but lies rather in the human art of being able — through persuasion, diversion and distraction of the audience, to convince people that what they think they are seeing is the truth.

Everybody knows that, in fact, you can't make someone just disappear: but our minds are more than ready to believe otherwise, our credulity one of the last childlike qualities to go to sleep in us — and, of course, *we* are hampered, and *magicians* aided, by having a number of in-built weaknesses in our ways of perceiving the world. One of these is our ability to be habituated very, very quickly: so that, having looked only for short while at something very intently, our brains our minds step in and, as if to give our eyes a rest, fill in detail... We *think* we are looking, but in fact the image we have is a mixture of reliable data from our eyes and the clever work of our minds, which leap in and fill in the gaps. Technically it is called “habituation.”

You have all experienced this: when last you moved house, or changed job, or bought some thing, an object, or a piece of art perhaps. At first, you see it with an almost dizzying clarity. You notice what is there: you see what's *really* there! You see that crack in the cornice of a room which you resolve to have fixed; you notice that the paint finish isn't quite right, and you make a mental note to change it; you are aware of a particular new way of doing things, someone's ticks or habits, which you

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decide to change or, wearily, to be reconciled to... and all of this, all of this novelty — because it is all new — runs at you, with a vibrant clarity and an ability to make an impact. But then habituation steps in. And what happens? Well, it isn't so much that we *stop* looking — for we look all the time, otherwise we'd bump into things, knock them over — but it is a strange and universal experience that, though we still look, we don't see with anything like the same immediacy, or clarity or accuracy. Our minds, as if to give our eyes a rest, fill in bits and with this slip into half seeing, comes half remembering...and so that crack in the cornice, well, we hardly notice it and its repair becomes less important; we stop noticing that new way of doing things because, well, it is no longer new (and indeed, quietly, without even our noticing it, it becomes *our* way of doing things too). And those new and arresting behaviours in others, well, they cease to impact upon us, or we stop noticing when they do.

Habituation — which is a psychological process — can happen in a few seconds, or over a much longer time... but it happens, to all of us.

You know, habituation is one of Scripture's greatest themes. And why? Well because, in honesty, habituation is much more than just a psychological or physiological process; it is a spiritual process. From the very first moments in the story of God's dealing with mankind, mankind — confronted with a vision of the glory of God — has been drifting into complacency: we *see*, and then seeing, we become complacent. Our hearts, our minds, our sight recognise the beauty of God's justice, glimpse God's majesty, sense God's truth... but as quickly as we see, we become habituated to it, and stop noticing. The story of God's engagement with us is told...

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but we have heard it before, and what once arrested us, now doesn't.

This theme of seeing then not seeing ("now you see it, now you don't") is one of the recurrent themes of the Psalmist: for it is not only foreign gods and idols that have eyes but cannot see: seeing clearly and attentively is one of the Psalmist's great metaphors for spiritual health (the wise look to God and see his goodness); blindness and failing, any more, to notice is a metaphor for spiritual malaise.

And if the theme is alluded to by the psalmist, its greatest outworking is in the account of the Wilderness Wanderings of God's people after the Exodus. For what is their recurrent failing during the forty years of their time before they enter into the Land Promised by God? Well, simply that time and time again they ceased to see what should have been self-evident if only because God has set it before them: His goodness to them, His willingness to save, to intervene, to feed, to bless. What Scripture describes is not that they hung on His every word, but that time and time again they forgot him in the desert. In their complacency, in their preoccupation, they so quickly became habituated to something that once seemed astonishing and new. And what a pitiful read it makes, in this great story of slow progress from captivity in Egypt to the Promised Land, that they so quickly

— following God's interventions — drift away into half remembering; having become habituated to God's goodness. What was once new had become over-familiar: and familiarity, if it doesn't always breed contempt, *always* results in complacency and a dulling of our sight. Now you see it, now you don't!

And on this Feast of Dedication, habituation is — I want to suggest — the theme of this story of Jacob and his dream. Jacob (a wretch don't forget!) — a patriarch and of noble lineage, son of Isaac and Rebecca, the grandson of Abraham, Sarah and of Bethuel, a child born into a dynasty in which the hand of God has been at work and *is* at work anew in this generation (that is what his grandfather and his father knew and taught — it is what his grandmother and his mother had spoken of to their children...and make no mistake, Jacob *will* be someone who — in time — will do great things), but when we meet him in this story this morning he is no spiritual giant and sage, just a very ordinary human being. That is Scripture's point. He is a type of us and like us predisposed to being distracted. He is a very human character. Very, very human... And this encounter, this dream, occurs on a journey which is, in truth, flight from the consequence of his past actions: his deception of his Father, his being embroiled in family infighting, his collu-

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sion with his mother and the theft of a birth-right. Like so many of us he is not entirely proud of all that has been. So do not imagine that this dream that occurs is a reward for godliness of life: it is anything but that.

The point, rather, is that Jacob has become blind to what he knew and saw as a child. He has become habituated to the story of God's power and goodness. And Jacob is mired in sin. You could say that to his very human habituation to the things of God is added a weary-blindness of sin. And there is still more than this: for his sight is further dulled by distraction. He is on a journey to...well, he knows not entirely where and he isn't sure what the future holds for him! (Habituated and complacent; mired in sin and past failure; uncertain about what lies ahead — he is just like us in so many ways!)... And, travelling, (wearied by the rigours of the day, fearful of going further because the sun had set and in his anxious and preoccupied state he could not be sure that he'd be safe in the darkness...) he lay down — and taking a stone for his pillow, Scripture tells us, fell into a restless sleep. And in a dream he left behind, for a moment, all that weighed upon him and saw a ladder, a stairway, between heaven and earth — and on it angels of God ascending and descending.

We tend to assume that this was something new: a vision of something he hadn't seen before. But this dream is, in fact, a return to something he'd known about all his life: he'd learned it at his mother's knee; his own father told the story of how *his* father had been visited by angels and of God's miraculous intervention — an intervention that had, ultimately, resulted in him, Jacob, being there... Something new? No, rather the return to something he'd known about from his earliest years, but *to* which he'd become so habituated that his mind had

become closed and the implication of it for his life had been forgotten... And in that moment he woke up to something he already knew: and waking, opening his eyes to the new day, could only stutter and, in astonishment, falteringly exclaim: *"Surely the Lord is in this place-and I did not know it! How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."*

Now, you can read the passage simply (as many biblical scholars do) as an etiological narrative that explains the existence of an ancient shrine at Bethel, the account merely of an ancient legend — *or* you can enter into it and read it as an almost Damascene moment in which the eyes of Jacob are opened to something he already knew: and his life, in that moment, *re-orientated* to the destiny that was his in the mind and design of God: his weary habituation stripped away, and his clarity of vision restored.

And surely the question — the point of this long, meandering sermon is clear: what is it that *we* have become habituated to? What is it that *we* once knew, once saw and grasped, that made our hearts stir and our pulses race, that — through weary habituation — we have stopped noticing? Perhaps some of you are thinking about a relationship; or a vocation; a sense of call; others — perhaps — about a place which, through weary familiarity and habituation, you have stopped noticing or caring about. And if so, you know what you have to do, don't you...

On this Feast of Dedication, perhaps the implications of the question for us as a congregation are starker still: to what extent have we forgotten what once *we* knew? How far have we drifted from that sense of God's presence and action that first brought us to this place? Has our social instinct, or love of pattern our need for routine

dulled us to what this mass in this place is about and to what is happening here? You know, we Episcopalians, we Anglicans, so readily become habituated by our liturgy, our preferences, our strong social instinct and need to belong (we like to come along with the *same* people at the *same* time and to do the *same* things week after week, don't we!) that over time we become blind to what really happens here: to the presence of God: to the possibility of transformation; to the fact that here we encounter God's very self in word and sacrament and are shaped by him for Christ-like service of his world, nothing less. Sunday mornings not a social habit, a quaint tradition or a comforting custom: but a return to our first love, and to the very source of our being.

And if it is, in any way true, for you that habituation has dulled that sense, then this Dedication festival is a chance to rededicate yourself to that truth, that with Jacob you may blink and stumblingly exclaim:

*Surely the Lord is in this place-and I did not know it!*

*How awesome is this place!*

*This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.*

To that same living God, be all praise and glory, power and dominion, world without end. Amen.



# Exciting Growth in the Acolyte Corps

*Katherine Britton*

The St Paul's acolyte corps approaches the end of 2012 in a promising stage of growth and change, according to acolyte coordinators Allen Payne and Michael Vreeland. New members representing a broader range of ages joined in 2012, training and advancement opportunities have been accelerated, and active efforts to develop and nurture acolyte leadership for the future are bearing fruit.

Probably most noticeable to people in the pews is the recent addition of two boys serving as boat bearers (they carry the incense) — Savva Brown at the Sung Mass and Juan Pineda at the Solemn Mass. It is wonderful to welcome them into the acolyte corps, and exciting to realize that they may one day progress through the various altar server roles, from torch bearer to acolyte to crucifer to thurifer, even to Master of Ceremonies. Indeed, there have been several teenage MCs at the Sung Mass in recent years.

The past year also has been significant in that three young and recent acolytes have taken on the leadership role of Master of Ceremonies: Steven Chlapecka (Solemn Mass); Jack Raffetto (Sung Mass); and Sarah Zygmunt (Solemn Evensong and Benediction).

The current corps of altar servers has become noticeably more inter-generational. While recent year graduations have reduced the number of school age acolytes at Sung Mass, any given group of acolytes is likely to comprise a wide range of ages. In 2012, in addition to Savva and Juan, the acolyte corps has been delighted

to welcome: Christopher Barajas, a former acolyte here while a student at GWU (Solemn Mass); Ed Britton and Katherine Britton (Solemn Mass); Frank Brown, Savva's father (Sung Mass); Trevor Fortenberry, who moved to Washington following college graduation (Solemn Mass/Evensong and Benediction); Robert Armidon, a recent transfer in and acolyte at his former parish (Solemn Mass/Evensong and Benediction/Tuesday mornings); and Charles Miller, a recent Pilgrims Class member and church musician (Evensong and Benediction/Tuesday evenings). We also have benefitted greatly from the service at Sung Mass of our seminarian, Jonathan Chesney and our ministry resident-to-be, Jean Beniste.

It is an exciting time of rebuilding for the future of the acolyte corps. New acolytes for all services, men and women of all ages, and girls and boys, are invited and welcomed to become an altar server.



# Meet the Newest Acolytes



Savva Brown is Russian and was born in Moscow. He is in Fourth Grade at Sligo Creek Elementary School. He enjoys reading, fishing and nature.



Juan Pineda is 11 years old and attends Fifth grade at Cunningham Park Elementary School in Vienna, VA. Although Juan was born in Virginia, his mother is from Peru and is learning English. Juan played baseball in the Vienna Little League and likes reading and playing video games. Juan has been coming with Glenn Cain to St. Paul's since July 2012.

# Vestry Report

Steven Chlapecka

At the October regular meeting, the Vestry continued its discussion on HVAC remediation. The building committee offered its approval on the proposal received from Harvey Hottel, Inc. and recommended the proposal be referred to the finance committee for final consideration before the next regular meeting.

The Vestry also discussed the need for additional security enhancements on the physical plant due to recent breaches in parish security. The security door proposal was referred to the building and finance committees for review.

Fr. Humphrey reported on the recent diocesan regional assembly meeting and the creation of the Taskforce for Families, Children and Youth. The taskforce members have been recruited and will have their first meeting on November 13th.

Additionally, over the last month the Vestry stewards worked with individual ministry groups to review par-

ish growth through the lens of the growth model presented previously by Canon Rick and compiled the feedback into a comprehensive report. The Vestry hosted Bishop Mariann on November 7th for part two of a parish growth workshop. At the workshop, the Bishop discussed the many challenges facing a parish like St. Paul's and offered valuable insight and recommendations for growth.

Following the announcement of the Rector's retirement, the Vestry held a special meeting on November 3rd to begin preparations to celebrate Fr. Andrew's time at St. Paul's and discuss the next steps for the interim period and the search for a new rector.

If you have any thoughts or concerns on any parish matters, please feel free reach out to one ore more of the Vestry members. Their names and emails can be found on the parish website at <http://www.stpauls-kst.com/vestry> or on the Vestry bulletin board in the hallway in Pillsbury House.



# Special Services

The whole music department is preparing the St. Paul's service of Advent Lessons and Carols, which will be given on December 2 and 9. The music will include music of living American composers David Ashley White, David Hurd, Robert Lehman, and Michael Harrison. Michael Harrison's piece was commissioned for St. Paul's by choir member Barbara Hollinshead.



A Thrilling Voice is Sounding  
Advent Lessons & Carols

On December 2 & 9 join us at 6:00 p.m. as we prepare our hearts for Christ's coming through music, prayer, and candlelight.  
All are welcome.

## YOU ARE NEEDED! - CAN YOU HELP

St. Paul's strives to apply our talent, time, and treasure to reach out and uplift those in need both in our neighborhood and across the world. We welcome your involvement in:

**Grate Patrol** – Delivery of Breakfast to Washington's homeless population

- Food Preparation: 2.30-4.30pm every Friday; Contact Lucky Ajueyitsi: [akpoyoma@hotmail.com](mailto:akpoyoma@hotmail.com)
- Food Delivery: 5:30am each Saturday & Sunday, Contact Glenn Marsh: [Marsh\\_Glenn@emc.com](mailto:Marsh_Glenn@emc.com)
- Bag Set-up: Anytime before 3pm Friday; Contact Tina Mallett (202-965-9324 or [tmallett@si.edu](mailto:tmallett@si.edu)).

**First Fridays** – On the first Friday of each month, St. Paul's provides an evening meal for 100 homeless persons to be delivered from a special Salvation Army vehicle. Preparation help is needed (5:30 - 7:00 pm in the church kitchen). Contact Nancie Majkowski at ([nmajkows@ngs.org](mailto:nmajkows@ngs.org), 202-857-7115 or 301-513-9563).

**Washington Interfaith Network** (WIN) is committed to training and developing neighborhood leaders, to addressing community issues such as homelessness, poverty, and injustice, and to holding elected and corporate officials accountable in Washington. Volunteers are desired to join in advocacy efforts and represent St. Paul's at meetings. Contact Deacon Eric Lobsinger: [elobsinger@stpauls-kst.com](mailto:elobsinger@stpauls-kst.com)

SAINT PAUL'S PARISH  
COMMISSION ON MISSION



# December ON K STREET

## UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS AT ST. PAUL'S PARISH

1   Gregory Capaldini Jackson Cox	15   Linnie Condon Mitaire Ojauega Sarah Zygmunt
2   Janice Fulger Elisabeth Braw	16   Tarpley Long
3   Anne Abbott	21   Beverly Dame Robert Menzer David Webber
4   Jean Groves Anne Stone Debra Loucks	25   Lucky Ajueyitsi Michelle Freeland Brooks Randolph
5   Philip Schlatter	
8   Devon Hill David Schnorrenberg	27   Peter Pham Jessica Simpson
11   Robert Bullock Peter Yeager Helen Zughuib	28   Lesley Cross
13   Douglas Purvance	29   Gabriel Benn
14   Craley Funfgeld	31   Mary Malcolm Anne Catherine Sloss



### Transfer Out

Peter Laugesen transfer to All Souls, Washington DC

### Deaths

John F. Klein - November 2, 2012

Laurie Susan Litwin - October 21, 2012

## Support Episcopal Relief and Development Hurricane Sandy Relief

Episcopal Relief and Development has established a fund to support recovery efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy. Consider lending your support to those who were not spared the wrath of the storm.

You can find out more about what Episcopal Relief and Development is doing by going to this URL:

<http://www.er-d.org/Hurricane-Sandy-Caribbean-East-Coast-Oct-2012>; and you can donate at this URL: <https://www.er-d.org/donate-select.php>.



## MAJOR FEAST DAYS

### Friday, December 21:

Thomas the Apostle  
Low Masses at 7 am and 6 pm

### Monday, December 24:

#### The Eve of the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ

4:45 pm Confessions, *Fr. Andrew and Fr. Humphrey*  
5:30 pm Prayers at the Shrine of our Lady of Walsingham  
5:45 pm Evening Prayer  
6:45 pm Procession, Blessing of the Creche and Sung Mass  
11:00 pm Procession and Solemn Mass

### Tuesday, December 25, 2012:

#### The Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ

9:45 am Morning Prayer  
10:30 am Procession and Solemn Mass  
5:30 pm Prayers at the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham  
5:45 pm Evening Prayer  
*Note: No evening Mass*

### Wednesday, December 26:

St. Stephen  
Low Masses at 7 am and 6 pm

### Thursday, December 27:

John the Apostle  
Low Masses at 7 am and 6 pm

### Friday, December 28:

Holy Innocents  
Low Masses at 7 am and 6 pm





# SAINT PAUL'S PARISH

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**Remember to mark your Calendar—**

**Christmas Eve: 6:45 pm Procession, Blessing of the Creche, Sung Mass;**

**11 pm Procession and Solemn Mass**

**Christmas Day: 9:45 Morning Prayer; 10:30 Procession and Solemn Mass**



*Botticelli, (1445-1510) The Nativity*