

# The **EPISTLE**

Fall 2020

ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH



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*Senior Associate Rector*

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*Seminarian*

Kurt Unangst  
*Seminarian*

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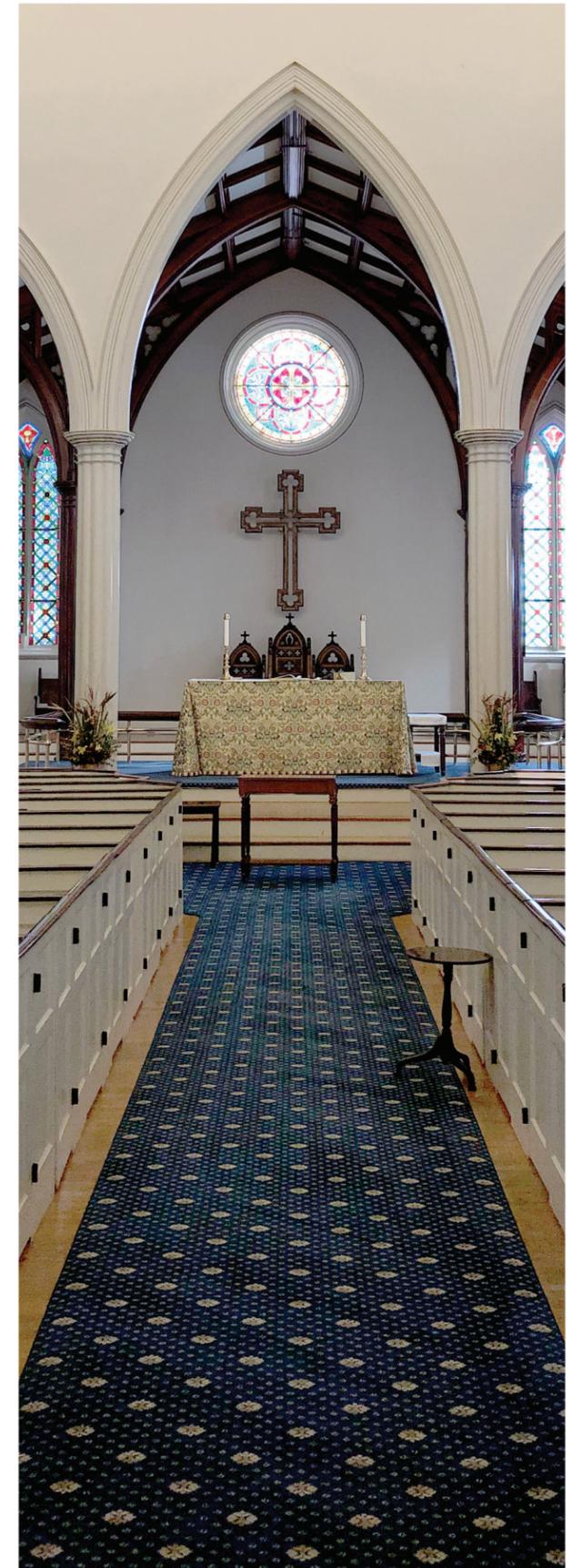
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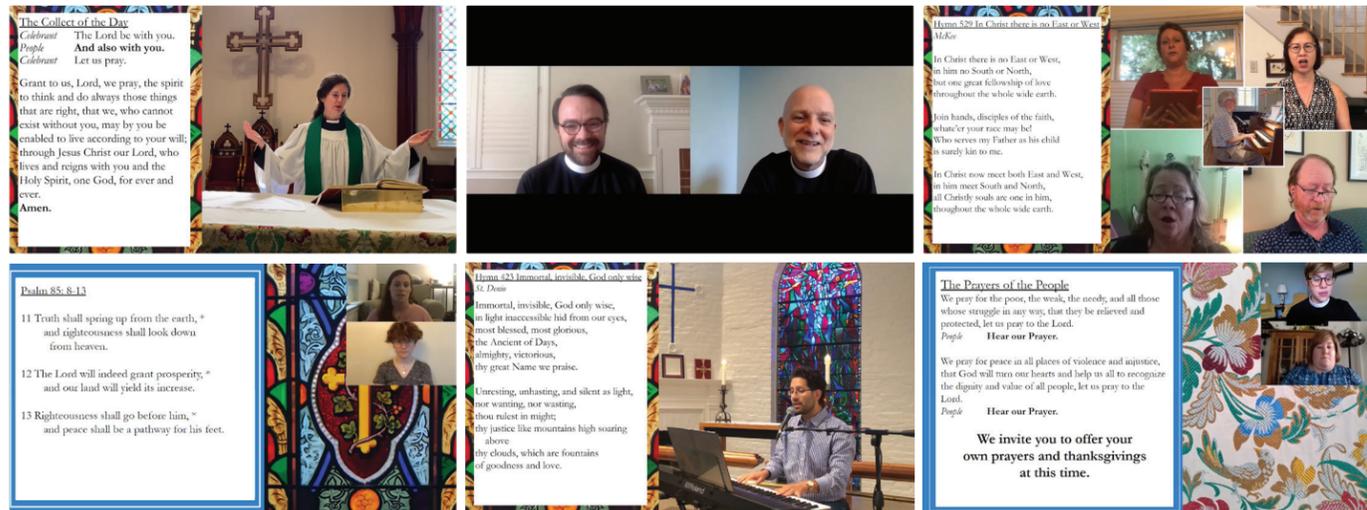
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## Contents

2	Staff and Church Leadership
4	A Letter from the Rector
6	Bidding Farewell to Grant Hellmers
7	Virtual Music Direction
8	St. Paul's (New) Community
10	Regathering Survey
11	New Seminarians
12	Outreach at St. Paul's
13	Summer Outreach
14	Reaching Out While Shut-In
15	Angel Tree at Home 2020
16	Sacred Ground
17	Prayer Walk for Peace and Justice St Paul's Yard Signs
18	More to the Story
22	St. Paul's Episcopal Preschool
24	Norton Roof Repair
25	2021: Light in Darkness





## A Letter from the Rector

vir·tu·al  
/verCH(oO)el/

Adjective

*almost or nearly as described, but not completely or according to strict definition.*

*not physically existing as such but made by software to appear to do so.*

Virtual Church?

*Virtual Church* is a bit of a misnomer. I contend that we need a new and better name for how we gather as the people of St. Paul's in the age of Covid. True, we are not physically present with one another. True, according to strict definition, we are not gathered in the same place at the same time. And true, it is only by the miracle of modern technology and software that it appears as if we are, if fact, together. However, in spite of all these things, there is nothing virtual about God's presence. Through the mysterious workings of the Spirit, even in these challenging days, or perhaps especially in these challenging days, we are connected one to another and to God whose presence is real. Whenever we click on the link to our weekly services, and wherever we are when we do it, we are tapping into the Living Word of the Living God and we are connecting to all the others in our community who do the same.

It could be argued that we are actually reaching more people these days and that the boundaries of the parish are expanding. We have heard from numerous parishioners, who because of their geographical distance or physical circumstances were not able to come to church even before the pandemic, and who are now feeling deeply re-connected to St. Paul's. We have heard from a couple on active military duty who join us every week from South Korea. We have heard from family members of parishioners from places far and wide who email to tell us how much they love our services, are fed by our corporate worship, and feel supported and sustained in these often lonely and isolating days. Not only is God's presence real, the church's presence is real.

After the last several months one thing is clear, when we are able to safely be together again, St. Paul's will continue to offer this "virtual" experience. While I confess that there is no replacement or substitute for live, in-person, sacramental, communal worship, this alternative clearly has real and substantive value in the lives of God's people. We are planning now for a future that does not force us to choose one form of worship over another, but offers both. Our aim is to reach the people in front of us as well as those across the miles.

I am deeply grateful for the creativity, flexibility, perseverance, and ingenuity of the parish staff, who have consistently met the challenges of the day, seeing them not as obstacles but as opportunities. The pages of this Fall 2020 Epistle Magazine are filled with signs of the life of the St. Paul's community, shining through this dark time. And none of this would be possible without you. You have done your part to help us remain connected and continue to generously support the mission and ministry of the church; you have been overwhelmingly generous as we strive to serve our Alexandria neighbors who are struggling in these difficult days; you have embraced the call to end racial violence and injustice and to live out our baptismal promise to respect the dignity of every human being. There is nothing virtual about God or St. Paul's Church. Though the bricks and mortar of St. Paul's church have stood for over 200 years, they do not comprise the church. We are the church; shining throughout this city and around the world like a light, to the glory of God.

The Rev. Oran Warder



*Bidding Farewell to*

# Grant Hellmers

After nearly 10 years at St. Paul's, Grant Hellmers, Organist and Choirmaster, announced his retirement from full-time active ministry. He is the rare organist and choirmaster who in addition to possessing amazing musical skills and abilities, also embraces his role as a pastoral presence to those he is called to serve. On top of that, he is a genuinely gracious, kind, and thoughtful human being.

As these pictures attest, Grant has helped bring beautiful and worship-filled music to St. Paul's throughout his tenure.

From the adult choir, the St. Cecilia and children's choir, to the bell choir, Grant has nurtured the development of musicians of all ages. He is deeply loved and will be sorely missed.



## Hymn Will You Come & Follow Me?

*Kelvingrove*

Will you come and follow me  
if I but call your name?  
Will you go where you don't know  
and never be the same?  
Will you let my love be shown?  
Will you let my Name be known?  
Will you let my life be grown  
in you and you in me?

Will you leave your self behind  
if I but call your name?  
Will you care for cruel and kind  
and never be the same?  
Will you risk the hostile stare  
should your life attract or scare?  
Will you let me answer prayer  
in you and you in me?

## Virtual Music Direction

BY ERIC SCHNOBRICK

All musicians are accustomed to performing together. From our early days of Morning Prayer on Zoom to the more produced Liturgy of the Word from inside the church, the one consistent thing about music in this time is that I sing songs of praise in a room by myself. As our physical separation has dragged on, we have sought new ways to involve more people in creating our worship experience, which has meant finding ways to produce music together while apart.

It takes about two weeks to put together what we used to do in a single morning. The rough process looks something like this: Two weeks before a service "airs", ensemble music will have been selected. I sit in the chapel and record myself playing and singing my part to create a guide track for other musicians. Then I spend time at the computer adding a click track (to make sure that everybody starts together) and writing the sheet music for the players. An email with the guide track, music, and instructions for the week is sent out eight or nine days before the service airs. Musicians take two or three days to create their own videos by filming themselves as they play along to the guide track from my email, and as long as everybody plays in time with that recording, we will all be together in the end!

As musicians return their videos, I load them all into my sound editing software to line them up, clean up the sound, and mix the instruments together. Then I load this finished music into my video editor where I place and sync everybody's videos together into one frame. The finished music replaces all of the raw sound from the individual videos, and the video is ready to hand off for inclusion in the final service video for Sunday.

We may not be playing in the same room, but the opportunity to communicate about music, the chance to hear each other play, and the gift of being able to work together to create something in service of our present worship experience have made this an adventure well worth taking. I will be continuing to reach out to other members of the St. Paul's musical family to bring more familiar voices and faces into our services. If you would like to be a part of making music at St. Paul's, in whatever way you have to offer, there has never been an easier opportunity to dip your toe in on your own time. Feel free to send me an email at [music@stpaulsalexandria.com](mailto:music@stpaulsalexandria.com), and I would be happy to talk with you about it!

# St. Paul's (New) Community

## Online Worship

BY ALYSE VIGGIANO

Are virtual services an effective form of worship? If you asked me that at the beginning of the pandemic, I would have replied no. Ask me that question today, and my reply is a resounding yes! My mind didn't change overnight, but steadily and slowly over the past months, God's grace through the Holy Spirit has done it's usual work.

Initially, I was focused on fitting the virtual services into the same category as in-person worship, and by doing so the beauty of virtual services was lost on me.

With a virtual service, you can watch at any time. We are no longer bound to our traditional service times. You've always wanted to attend the 7:45 service, but wished it was 8:00 am, now it is! With a virtual service, you can rewind and fast forward. We are no longer bound to the ordinary speed of life. You've wanted to skip my sermon, now you can, just fast forward. You've wished the choir would sing an encore, now they can, just rewind and watch again!

With a virtual service, you can worship anywhere. We are no longer bound to sitting in pews. You've always wished to watch the service while on the elliptical, now you can, just watch the service on your cell phone.

But in all seriousness, a virtual service will never replace the experience of being inside a sanctuary and amongst the community of St. Paul's. There is nothing like receiving the body of Christ in the palm of your hands and feeling that tactile, unconditional love within your soul.

Yet, over these last months, my eyes have been opened to see that God's grace works through everything and anything imaginable, even a virtual service. No, it's not in-person worship, but God's grace still succeeded in permeating my closed mindedness. At this time, our service style may have changed, but God has stayed the same. God is still unconditionally ever present and ever loving. If that's not effective, I'm not sure what is.

## Zoom Coffee Hour

It's no secret that engaging in conversations and sharing cups of coffee bring communities closer together, and that has remained true even amidst a pandemic over a virtual platform. From the start of the pandemic, St. Paul's parishioners have logged on to Zoom every Sunday at 10:00 am excited to connect with other parishioners. The conversations have ranged from checking in regarding high and lows over the week to reflecting on questions such as "what's a piece of wisdom you would offer a young person today?". It's amazing to hear how vast the community of St. Paul's experiences are and how those experiences shape our faith journeys. No matter who logs on or how many log on, there's an overwhelming sense that Zoom Coffee Hour has kept people encouraged and connected even though we're not in the Johnston room. If you're looking to join the conversation, you can find the link in either the Friday E-News or the Sunday Morning Virtual Service email. We hope to see you via Zoom!



# St. Paul's (New) Community

## Children and Youth

BY KATIE MAY

### Virtual Vacation Bible School Summer 2020!

What a year it has been! Due to COVID-19, we were unable to gather in person for our yearly Vacation Bible School in June but we are so thankful that we still found a way to connect in a special way. The last week in June, campers and their families were able to take a virtual journey through the parables. VBS campers received a gold VBS bag that included daily crafts, ideas for nature walks, community service projects, and so much more. Each day, campers logged onto Zoom for a 30 minute Godly Play story - they learned about the Parable of the Sower, the Parable of the Great Pearl, the Parable of the Good Shepherd, the Parable of the Mustard Seed, and the Parable of the Good Samaritan. Even though we could not be together in one place, we still had a blast!

### Children's Formation

Welcome back to Sunday School! Due to COVID-19, Sunday School will not be meeting in person this fall. Instead, each week enjoy a video lesson, craft, and faith questions with your family from the comfort of your own home. Families will have the chance to opt into a monthly craft box that they can pick up at the beginning of each month. Print off crafts and other Sunday School take home resources will also be available. Every Wednesday, enjoy a Bible lesson on Ms. Katie's Reading Corner. Be on the lookout for great service opportunities for your family this fall!

### Youth Formation

Youth Group is back! We have missed seeing our youth each week. We have some changes coming your way due to COVID-19. Youth Group will now meet weekly on Sundays from 4:30 to 5:30 pm. Our first meeting was held on Sunday September 13th with two 30 minute sessions for Middle School and High School. Middle School and High School will trade off weeks and there will only be 20 spots available each week. Youth and their families will be required to sign a Youth Group Covenant and COVID-19 waiver and reserve their spot before attending Youth Group. High School Girls Bible Study will resume this fall as well. Exciting service opportunities will be coming your way this fall!



# REGATHERING SURVEY

## KEY INSIGHTS AND TAKEAWAYS

This August parishioners took part in a survey regarding the return to in-person worship at St. Paul's. The goal of the survey was to gather information to help guide the clergy and Vestry as they develop a holistic strategy and plan for worship services and other gatherings in the midst of the evolving COVID-19 pandemic. Here are a few takeaways from the survey results:



### Community Engagement

The shift from in-person to on-line worship services and gatherings has not diminished parishioner satisfaction and engagement with the St. Paul's community.

**97%** OF THOSE SURVEYED ARE VERY SATISFIED WITH ST. PAUL'S AS A CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

**98%** WOULD RECOMMEND ST. PAUL'S TO A FRIEND



### Satisfaction with Online Services

On-line worship is viewed mainly as a necessary measure. While most people would prefer to worship in person, most are satisfied with the online worship experience St. Paul's has created.

**79%** WOULD RECOMMEND ST. PAUL'S TO A FRIEND

**55%** OF THOSE SURVEYED VIEW THE ONLINE SERVICE AS AN "ACCEPTABLE ACCOMMODATION"



### Return to Worship

While most surveyed participants are eager to return to in-person worship, there are varying levels of comfort with when we return. Overall, a conservative approach to returning to indoor, in-person worship is preferred.

**30%** WILL RETURN TO INDOOR WORSHIP AT THE FIRST OPPORTUNITY

**24%** WILL RETURN TO INDOOR WORSHIP ONLY AFTER ALL SAFETY PRECAUTIONS ARE MET

**21%** WILL RETURN TO INDOOR WORSHIP ONLY WHEN A VACCINE IS AVAILABLE

## New Seminarians

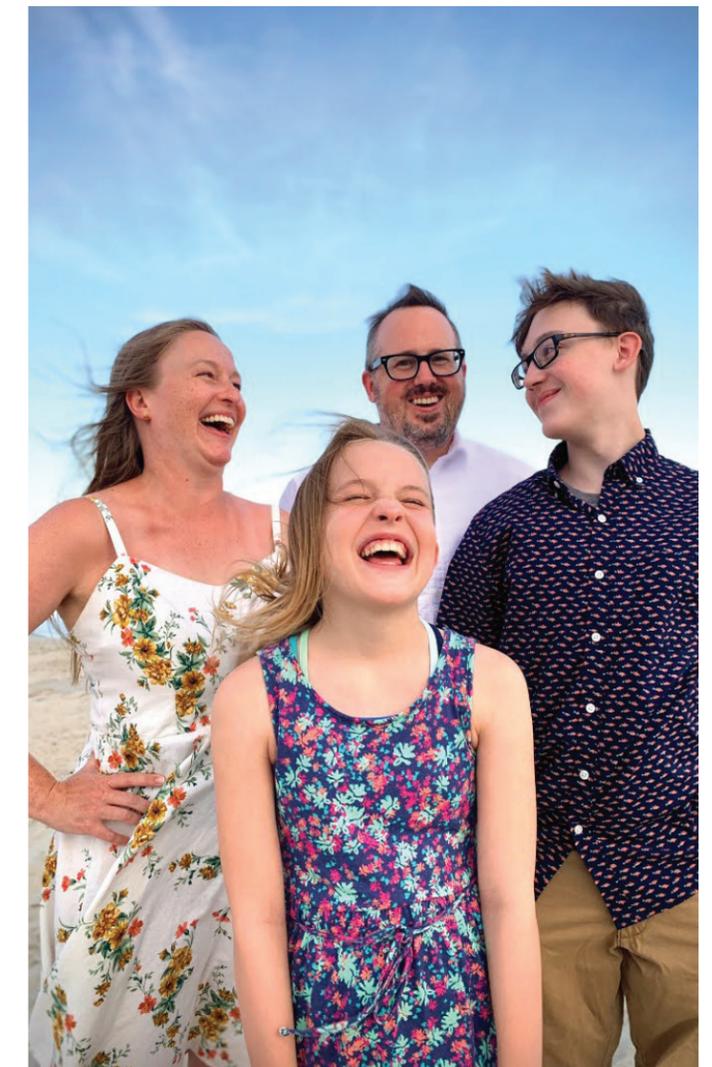
St. Paul's is pleased to welcome Joanna and Kurt Unangst who will serve as our seminarians starting this fall. The Unangsts are the first married couple to serve as seminarians at St. Paul's.

Kurt Unangst (he/him) is a second year seminarian at Virginia Theological Seminary. Born on Cape Cod, he grew up in rural northeast Ohio before attending Calvin University in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He graduated with a degree in Sociology and began working for the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. Kurt has always felt a draw to serve others and spent the past twenty years in the social work field, focusing the last thirteen years primarily with families in underfunded public schools. Kurt's concentration while at seminary is on new mission practices which explores creative ways to engage Christian communities. He also spent the previous three years studying under Sr. Carmelita Switzer, OP, at the Dominican Center for Spirituality. There he studied the contemplative practice of wisdom listening. Kurt's passion is feeding people on all levels, he loves cooking and getting creative in the kitchen, a love that was started by his mom sending him off to college with a small handwritten cookbook. Carrying on a surprising St. Paul's tradition, Kurt is also the new manager at The Flamingo coffee shop.

Joanna DeHaan Unangst is a second-year M.Div. student at Virginia Theological Seminary and is delighted to be welcomed into the St. Paul's community. Joanna was born and raised in Calgary, Montreal, Toronto, and Chicago. She graduated with a degree in Communication Disorders and Psychology from Calvin University in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and a master's degree in Counseling Psychology from Western Michigan University. She's passionate about understanding, reframing, and connecting the stories we tell of ourselves and our communities with the transformative truth of grace, redemption, accountability, and reconciliation. She worked as a gerontological social worker, helped found a counseling center specializing in respectful and excellent treatment for people

with persistent mental health and substance use issues, and, later, at her own psychotherapy practice specializing in perinatal mood disorders and grief work. Her concentration at VTS is Christian Spirituality which focuses on feeding those who hunger with bread that will last and living water that will quench soul-deep thirst. Joanna loves spontaneous adventures, poetry, eating great food with old friends and new, yoga, and singing Broadway songs wholeheartedly and with acceptance for atypical tonality

Joanna and Kurt live on the VTS campus with their son, Koen (Grade 9 at St. Anselm's Abbey School), and their daughter, Anneke (Grade 7 at George Washington Middle School). We are excited to have their family with us at St. Paul's!





## Outreach at St. Paul's

BY LAURA SIMMONS

2020 is proving to be one of the most challenging years many people have ever experienced. Telecommuting, virtual schooling, social distancing, and mask wearing are all now part of our daily lives. But for large swaths of Alexandrians, especially immigrants and women, these are minor inconveniences compared with the threat of eviction, food scarcity, and the inability to provide basics for their family. The COVID-19 pandemic is causing catastrophic job loss, many of them permanent, creating an economic meltdown for many within our community. The Lazarus Ministry at St. Paul's is working overtime to meet the needs of those affected. Volunteers are working Monday through Friday, using phones, texts, and emails, to connect with clients and help keep them in their homes and fed while they search for jobs.

Whereas a normal, full year for Lazarus would have us helping a little over 600 people, through the end of August, **our amazing volunteers have assisted almost 700 people.** Our clients have lost jobs in construction, house cleaning, home healthcare work, restaurants and Uber and Lyft driving. We have only been able to accommodate this increase in need through the generous donations from St. Paul's parishioners, committed supporters outside of St. Paul's, and community grants from ACT and the Washington Forrest Foundation. The amount donated this year compared to the same time in 2019 has tripled - we are so grateful for your support.

2020 is drawing to a close but our service to those in need in Alexandria is far from complete. With

fewer jobs coming back, and many of those with only part-time work options, the Lazarus Ministry expects to continue to see larger numbers of very desperate, scared, and depressed clients. These are our neighbors, most of whom came to the United States from Central America, Africa, and the Middle East to have a better life. Lazarus Ministry volunteers will continue to provide financial support, information on services, and links to food resources. But most importantly, every volunteer is providing kindness, a willingness to listen, and assurance to those suffering that they are not alone or forgotten. Please continue to support this vital ministry - you can make a gift to the Lazarus Ministry at any time at [www.stpaulsalexandria.com/lazarus](http://www.stpaulsalexandria.com/lazarus).



In August the Lazarus Ministry collected school supplies and personal care items for families in need in Alexandria.



# ST. PAUL'S

## summer outreach

### 2020

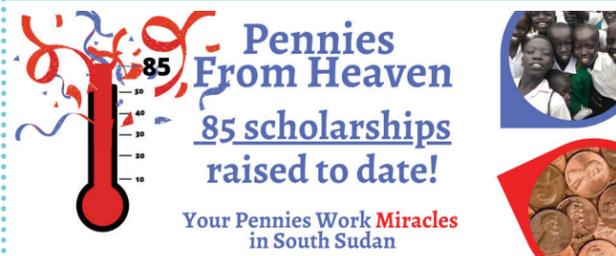


### JUNE



Not far away from St. Paul's, the Alexandria neighborhood of Arlandria was hard hit by infection rates of Covid-19, job loss, and food insecurity. And so in March, Casa Chirilagua, a Christian non-profit serving the neighborhood, shifted from providing after-school programming for kids and leadership development and language classes for adults, to providing a reliable source of healthy food to local families in need. Over the summer, St. Paul's partnered with Casa Chirilagua, hoping to raise \$4000 -- enough funds to provide a giant refrigerated truck each week of June to bring donated fresh produce, milk, eggs and chicken to a thousand families each week in the neighborhood. But thanks to the generosity of St. Paul's parishioners, we raised more than \$14,000! About a dozen parishioners also got to see the ministry in action, volunteering to assemble boxes and help guide the people waiting in line.

### JULY



Our annual Pennies from Heaven scholarship drive raised \$25,456 which will support 85 scholarships. This surpassed last year's record-breaking amount of \$24,000. The money donated will support tuition, school uniforms, and school meals for children at the Renk Basic School in Sudan. We are proud of our legacy of support for this vital ministry in South Sudan. What can feel like pennies to us work miracles in the young lives of the students in the Basic school.

### AUGUST



In August, St. Paul's helped families and children in need in the city of Alexandria with donations of personal care items and school supplies. Two carloads of boxes filled with soap, laundry detergent, school supplies, and more were delivered to ACPS social workers at the end of August. Parishioners also gave monetary donations to the Lazarus Ministry to support rent and utility bill assistance for residents in the City of Alexandria in need of help. Two matching gifts totalling \$6,000 helped us raise over \$21,000 for the Lazarus Ministry.

# Reaching Out While Shut-In



## St. Paul's Phone-A-Friend Project

Soon after St. Paul's suspended in-person worship, a group of a little over 50 volunteers divided the St. Paul's directory and placed calls to all St. Paul's parishioners. Volunteers were able to get updated contact information, answer questions about church closure and online services, and, most importantly, have conversations with others and offer support to those in need while we all endure this difficult time.

## St. Paul's Gleaners

St. Paul's gleaners have collected more than 1,600 pounds of perishable food so far this season! Volunteers meet at the Alexandria Farmers' Market on Saturdays to hand out crates to the vendors who are willing to donate to the program. The donated produce goes to Friends of Guest House.



## St. Paul's Feeding Ministries

This summer St. Paul's continued to feed the hungry in Alexandria by preparing meals and bagged lunches. We also have created a new ministry leadership team that will work together to organize our three feeding ministries in the local community: Carpenter Shelter (a monthly dinner on the 4th Wednesday of each month); Christ House Shelter (a dinner about 5 times a year on any month with a 5th Monday); and Meade Memorial (several bagged lunches provided each month).



# 2020 Angel Tree at Home

## October 1st-19th

### Collecting Gift Cards and Donations for families in need in Alexandria.

For over 20 years, St. Paul's has brought sheer joy and the magic of the season to our neighbors in Alexandria with the Angel Tree Ministry. With the uncertainty of the months ahead, we are going to approach our outreach a little differently this season and truly hope that you will be able to help!

We will once again be working in collaboration with the Alexandria Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) as well as the Lazarus Ministry at St. Paul's to help serve families in need in the city of Alexandria. DCHS has decided that they will not be offering their Holiday Sharing Program in the same manner as in the past in order to ensure the safety for all but are asking donors like St. Paul's to provide gift cards.

**Here's how you can participate with Angel Tree at Home!**  
**Please consider either making a donation to the Angel Tree Fund or purchasing one of the gift cards as outlined below:**



**Make a donation to the Angel Tree Fund** to help offset costs to purchase gift cards. Go online to [stpaulsalexandria.com/angeltree](http://stpaulsalexandria.com/angeltree) to donate or you can send a check to the church office payable to St. Paul's with Angel Tree in the memo line.



**Purchase gift cards to Target, Walmart or Amazon.** We need 15 \$50 cards, 60 \$75 cards, and 50 \$100 cards. **You can also purchase \$25 gift cards to CVS or Walgreens,** we need 15 \$25 cards.



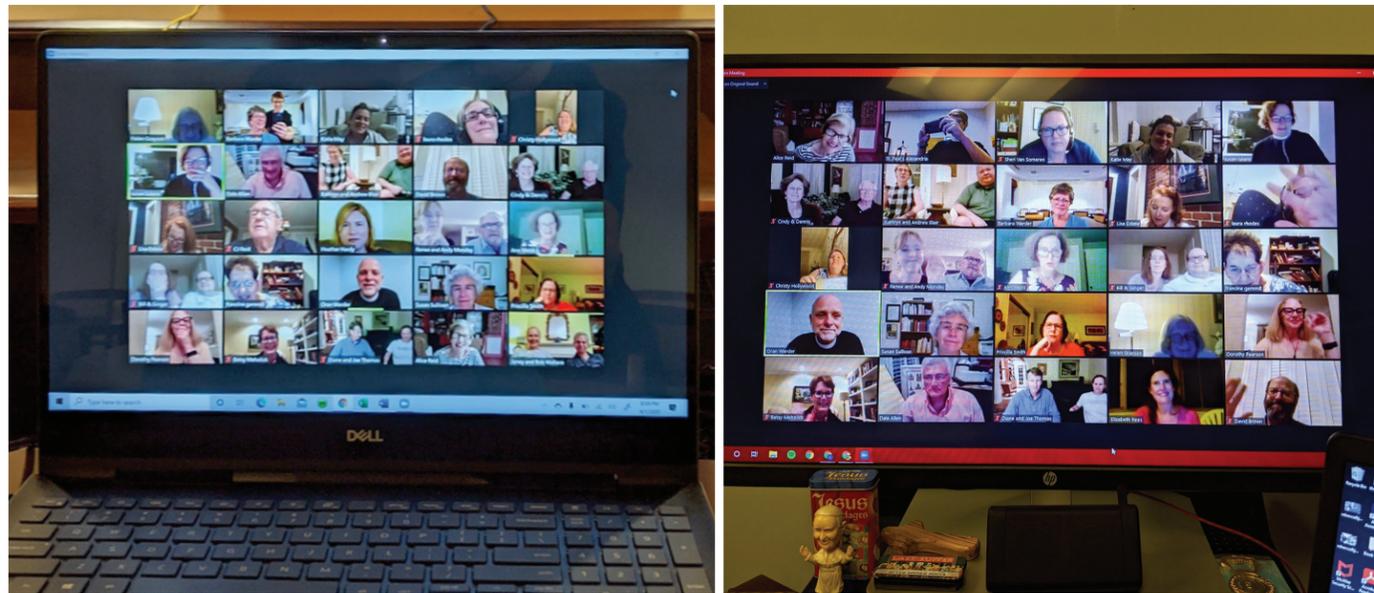
**Purchase \$50 gift cards to Giant, Safeway, Aldi or Harris Teeter.** We need 35 cards for DCHS families and seniors.

**Help us meet our goal of raising \$12,000 in donations and gift cards this season!**

Gift cards or checks can be mailed to the St. Paul's office marked:  
St. Paul's Church, Angel Tree at Home,  
228 S. Pitt Street, Alexandria, VA 22314.

**All donations (contributions or gift cards) must be received by no later than Monday, October 19th.**

For information or questions, please contact Liza May at 703-915-4953 or [lizacmay@gmail.com](mailto:lizacmay@gmail.com)



## Sacred Ground

BY ELIZABETH REES

### *50 St. Paul's Parishioners Share Holy Conversation About Race & Faith*

In early July, responding to the renewed national commitment to racial justice, 50 St. Paul's parishioners began a journey together. Every other week, they have been meeting in 4 small groups for deep and personal dialogue based on the Sacred Ground curriculum created by the national Episcopal Church in 2019. Preparation for each session is intense — with powerful documentary films and eye-opening readings focused on the history of race and racism as a jumping-off point for conversation. Over the past two months, we have walked through the disturbing history of race in the United States, from the genocide

of the indigenous people to the complicity of the entire country in the slave trade to the erasing of Latino history. As we learn, we have waded uncomfortably but necessarily into our own stories and experiences of unconscious racism and privilege. It has definitely been sacred ground as we've tread difficult but transformational conversations together. Although we know we have a lot of work still to do, slowly but surely we feel ourselves growing closer to becoming the Beloved Community — where all people are honored and protected and nurtured as beloved children of God.



## Prayer Walk for Peace & Justice

On Sunday June 14, St. Paul's clergy and about a dozen parishioners joined the Prayer Walk for Peace and Justice sponsored by our sister church, Alfred Street Baptist, and the NAACP.

We met early in the morning at the National Museum of African American History & Culture and walked to the Black Lives Matter Plaza, where thousands of people knelt for 90 seconds and were led in prayer by Pastor Howard-John Wesley. Along the way were stations suggesting prayers for justice and racial equality. Not only was it an incredible gathering of peaceful and joyful people, but the safety protocols were superb, with enforced social distancing and mask-wearing. It felt like church!



### St. Paul's Yard Signs

Maybe you've seen St. Paul's yard signs around town but if not, here are a few! St. Paul's parishioners displayed signs in yards and windows across the city. The powerful words of our baptismal covenant serve as a reminder of our calling as Christians to help end racism in our country.

# MORE TO THE STORY...

Rector's Note: This article is the first in a series that I am calling **More to the Story: Race and the History of St. Paul's**. This St. Paul's history project is a response to the legacy of racial injustice and violence that, as people of faith, demands our attention and action. The hope of this project is a deeper understanding of our own St. Paul's story so that we might be better informed and perhaps be better equipped to engage in the hard work of racial reconciliation and healing that is before us. This essential work involves transformational change that addresses systemic and structural injustice as well as the biases and prejudices that infect our own hearts.

Of course, none of us were born when these systems and structures were put into place and cannot be held directly responsible for their existence, yet there is no denying that we are inheritors and in many ways beneficiaries of this legacy. The goal of this project is to tell a more complete story, both the good and the bad, rather than simply ignore the parts of the story that we would prefer not to know or somehow try to erase. Indeed, there is more to our story and now is the time to tell it.

I am grateful to our fellow parishioners Tal Day, Michael Pope, and parish archivist, Corinne Marasco, who have joined me in this effort. Lastly, I would like to invite others to share their particular stories and institutional memories of St. Paul's, especially those with generational history in Alexandria and in this parish. All of these stories are part of our common story and have shaped our identity as a congregation. I pray that they also hold the key to leading us into a brighter, more faithful and more just present and future.

## Race and the History of St. Paul's

The history of St. Paul's Episcopal Church is often told through the lens of reverence for our ancestors. But, like us, those ancestors were flawed human beings; and they lived in a different time. As difficult as it may be to face those flaws, it would now be irresponsible to ignore the role slavery played in the construction of our historic church and in the community where members of our church were prominent, or, for that matter, how institutional racism continued to affect our church and our community for generations after the Civil War. We need a new lens.

Providing a more complete history is different from rewriting history. A more complete telling of the story of our common life does not strike out what remains true, but rather provides additional voices which have

### A Prayer for the Human Family

O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son: Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that, in your good time, all nations and races may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

previously not been heard, and provides additional details which had previously not been uncovered. With every new generation, historical perspectives shift, new information

The number of Persons within my Division, consisting of the Town & County of Alexandria, appears in a Schedule hereto annexed, subscribed by me, this 26<sup>th</sup> of January of Columbia in the year one thousand eight hundred and twenty-one. N. Rounsavell - Assistant to the Marshal of the District

Schedule of the whole number of Persons within the Division allotted to N. Rounsavell

Name of the County, Parish, Township, Town or City, where the Family resides.	Name of Heads of Families.	Free White Males.					Free White Females.					Slaves.					Free Colored Persons.				
		Free White males under ten years.	Free White males of ten and under sixteen.	Free White males between sixteen and twenty-one.	Free White males of twenty-one and under twenty-five.	Free White males of twenty-five and under thirty.	Free White females under ten years.	Free White females of ten and under sixteen.	Free White females between sixteen and twenty-one.	Free White females of twenty-one and under twenty-five.	Free White females of twenty-five and under thirty.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.		
	Augustine Newton	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		
	Mrs. H. Wilmer	3	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1		
	Abraham Corning	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		
	John S. Taylor	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		
	Francis Maffeo	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		
	Mrs. Smith	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		
	Augustine Newton	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1		
	Mrs. H. Wilmer	3	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1		
	Mary Jacob	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		
	Mrs. Cranch	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		
	Sarah Fannery	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		
	George S. Hough	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		
	Mary Cole	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		
	Catharine Roche	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		
	Michael Wright	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		

This 1820 census gives us a snapshot of Rev. William Holland Wilmer's household when he lived in Alexandria: Nine free whites, two slaves, and one free Black. On the line above Rev. Wilmer is Augustine Newton, one of the founding vestry members of St. Paul's.

is revealed, and hopefully a fuller picture and more profound truth begins to emerge.

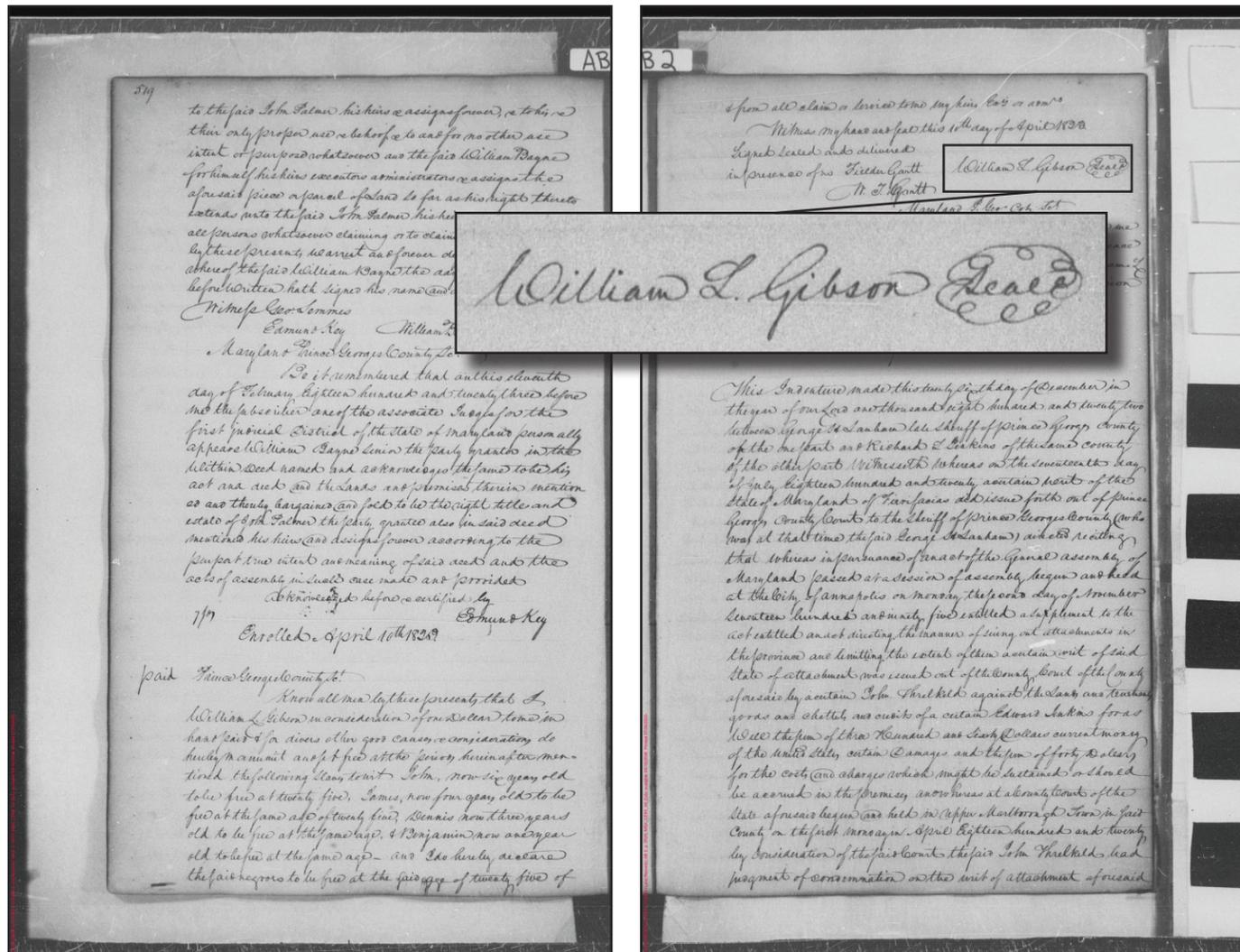
Now is the time for us to engage this work, to bring into the light more of the story of race in St. Paul's history, even if discovering more will be challenging and uncomfortable. Yet this additional knowledge will add to our understanding of what happened in our past and why.

None of these questions have been easy to ask. For years we may have buried them in notions of tradition and history. Now it's time to take another and deeper look. By shining more light on the moral dilemmas exposed by a new lens, we may ultimately, and with more humility, be empowered to reflect more deeply on the moral challenges of our time.

## Early Rectors and Lay Leaders

Living in a slave economy before the Civil War, or even in the North where mills spun southern cotton, was not unlike living in the modern fossil-fuel economy; there was no escaping it. Even those who drive electric cars are connected to a system that revolves around fossil fuel consumption, including the manufacture of the vehicle, the electricity at the factory, the shipment of it to the dealership, and any electricity to charge the vehicle that is drawn from the grid.

Even for those who choose not to own a car, the streetscape and the sidewalks have been designed to facilitate automobiles. We offer



In April 1828, Rev. William Lewis Gibson filed a deed of manumission in Prince George's County for John, age six; James, age four; Dennis, age three; and Benjamin, age one, all of whom were scheduled to set free at age 25. The witnesses were members of his wife's family, who were slaveowners, and Rev. Gibson may have been paid to free them.

this analogy not as an attempt to draw a moral equivalency between the slave economy and the fossil-fuel economy, but rather to try to show how the slave economy was completely pervasive and for many of our forebears an unconscious and unquestioned reality. To be clear, the purpose in suggesting this parallel is to illustrate how ubiquitous slavery was; we are not suggesting there is a parity between owning a car and owning a person. However, it is important for us to recognize this was a time when the institution of slavery was just everywhere. This analogy does not seek to excuse, but rather seeks to explain.

Thus it becomes immediately and abundantly clear that the early rectors and founding vestry members of our parish were whites who owned and rented slaves and enabled St. Paul's to benefit from a race-based system that enslaved people of African descent, whether they acknowledged the moral and ethical issues or not.

The construction of the church took place in 1817 and 1818. Considering the era, it is most likely that our builder Jeremiah Bosworth, used enslaved persons in the

construction of the church. St. Paul's currently does not have Bosworth's spending records, but the building trades in almost every state augmented their workforce with slave labor, especially in the Potomac region. While it's probably not possible to know definitively whether enslaved people were rented to Bosworth during the construction of the building, it is almost certain that slave labor was used to produce materials, support the supply chain, and attend to the myriad other tasks surrounding this building project.

Our research will begin with the early rectors of St. Paul's and how they accommodated the moral and ethical dilemmas of their era. For example, The Rev. William Holland Wilmer was a founding member of the American Colonization Society, which was established in 1816 to assist free black people in emigrating to Africa. At the time this was viewed as a somewhat progressive posture and a compromise position that acknowledged that people should not be enslaved forever, but also insisted that free whites and free blacks could not coexist in the same society as equals.

During the Civil War, St. Paul's clergy were decidedly Confederate in their sympathies. The Rev. George Hatley Norton left Alexandria to become chaplain to the 17th Regiment of Virginia, although records indicate he never actually served in the field. Rector emeritus The Rev. James Johnston assumed some of Norton's duties during the war, although he was living in Charlottesville and Richmond because his home had been taken by Union troops and converted into a hospital. He would travel to Alexandria to perform baptisms and funerals.

This begs the question about how we, in the current day, balance their service to the church with any support they may have

given to the military insurrection waged to preserve slavery.

In addition to researching our parish clergy, there is also much to learn about St. Paul's from its early parishioners and vestry members. Ruth Lincoln Kaye's indispensable research has documented all members of the vestry from the creation of the church to the outset of the Civil War. One thing she did not document was how many of those men were slaveowners, and the role slavery may have played in the wealth that helped finance St. Paul's and account for their prominence in the community.

Just as other institutions and churches are currently investigating the uncelebrated features of their history, St. Paul's, as a prominent church in Alexandria's slave-based economy, is doing so as well. Knowing more about our history and its context may spare us from retrospectively claiming moral high ground. At the same time, a fuller knowledge of that history may help to frame the moral issues of that time and our own in ways that more fully enable us humbly and effectively to engage both that legacy and the analogous challenges in our time.

### A Prayer for Social Justice

Grant, O God, that your holy and life-giving Spirit may so move every human heart and especially the hearts of the people of this land, that barriers which divide us may crumble, suspicions disappear, and hatreds cease; that our divisions being healed, we may live in justice and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

# St. Paul's Episcopal Preschool

## Celebrating our new St. Paul's Episcopal Preschool

BY ELIZABETH REES

Things are no longer so quiet on the St. Paul's campus as St. Paul's Episcopal Preschool makes a safe start to the school year!

There was a flurry of outdoor activity this summer getting ready. A new bronze plaque was put up outside the Duke Street entrance denoting the new school. Masked youth volunteers from St. Paul's gathered in the courtyard to scrape paint and glitter from tables and tiny chairs before they were sanitized for a fresh new year.

And the work was going on inside too. There's a new, giant, colorful decal with the school's logo inside Wilmer Hall. Our Interim School Director, Chris Byrnes, cleaned out closets to make space for new toys and learning materials. Our incredible teachers have prepared their classrooms to make inviting spaces for incoming



students. Everywhere you look, there are signs of new life and excitement for our new Preschool opening for in-person learning and play for children ages 18 months to 5 years.

Behind the scenes, a diligent committee worked closely with the School Board and the Vestry to create detailed safety and cleaning protocols to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The safety and health of children and teachers are our highest priority, and so we have created protocols that include mask use, eliminating large group activities, adjusted dropoff and pick up procedures, monitoring and required reporting of symptoms, and frequent handwashing and sanitizing of shared spaces and materials. We will continue to evaluate and modify all health and safety procedures as needed.

We are so grateful to have such an experienced leader and educator as Chris Byrnes guiding the school forward during this incredibly unusual time. And we are thrilled to have an amazing group of dedicated, experienced, loving teachers who are excited to be part of the school. Finally, we are so thankful for the parish's unfailing support for the school, particularly this year as we launch this wonderful new program. This venture is a true partnership between church and school, and we are excited to see where it might lead.

In late August, there was a town hall gathering for school parents, who gathered in the Church to learn more about the school year and ask questions about what might look different this year.

And finally the big day has come and kids are once more on campus for school. Things may look and feel a little different this year, and running a school during a pandemic is certainly not without challenges, but we know that the care and formation the children receive at St. Paul's Episcopal Preschool will remain constant.

If you are interested in hearing more about St. Paul's Episcopal Preschool, or hearing about any possible openings, please contact Chris Byrnes [preschool@stpaulsalexandria.com](mailto:preschool@stpaulsalexandria.com) and check out the school's new website at [stpaulsalexandria.com/preschool](http://stpaulsalexandria.com/preschool).



NURTURING CHILDREN.  
SERVING FAMILIES.

# Norton Roof Repaired

As the dust settled after the Norton Hall and sanctuary HVAC renovation project a new problem arose in Norton Hall. The old building had sprung several leaks over the years and the source of the leaks has been difficult to pinpoint. With contractors on site and a beautiful new space to conserve, this summer was the time to fix the Norton Hall roof. Exterior Medics was hired to do the work and completed the job in June.

The project consisted of removing all layers of the existing roof - made up of sections of slate tiles, sections of copper roofing, and copper flashing. Many sections of the wood underneath were rotten causing leaks in several places. Sections of the wooden underlayer were replaced, all slate tiles were

inspected and reused or replaced, and new copper roofing and flashing was installed. We now have a beautiful new roof over our beautiful new space in Norton Hall.

The maintenance project was fully funded by the St. Paul's Foundation. The Foundation was created in 1992 with the purpose to

support the maintenance of the buildings and grounds of St. Paul's. The vision of the first board of trustees was to create an endowment that could someday help St. Paul's fund proactive maintenance projects. Instead of patching together small solutions, the ability to replace the roof of Norton Hall will alleviate future parishioners from this headache. And, fully funding this project means the operating budget of St. Paul's can remain dedicated to mission and ministry. With the endowment around \$4M, this is an exciting new chapter in the life of the St.

## The St. Paul's Foundation

was established in 1992 to build an endowment for the support, care, maintenance, and restoration of the buildings and grounds owned by St. Paul's Church and to support and benefit the Christian mission of St. Paul's Church outside the parish. Donations from parishioners over the past 26 years have grown the endowment from \$100,000 to over \$4 million making the St. Paul's Foundation the financial backbone of this parish. Each year the Foundation directs 4.5% of its average portfolio value to restoration projects at St. Paul's.

We welcome your gifts and support as we guide the Foundation into the future. The Foundation grows in three ways: gifts made in thanksgiving or memory of loved ones, market appreciation, and legacies and bequests. The Covenant Circle, St. Paul's legacy society, acknowledges members who have included St. Paul's in their estate planning. Established in 2001, the Covenant Society has grown to over 87 members. If you are interested in learning more about the St. Paul's Foundation or the Covenant Society, please contact Maria Halloran, Director of Stewardship, at [stewardship@stpaulsalexandria.com](mailto:stewardship@stpaulsalexandria.com).



# 2021: Light in Darkness

2020 started with a call for vision. With the renovation of many areas of Norton Hall completed and the replacement of the HVAC system in Norton Hall and the church finished, we were looking forward to what the future might hold. But 2020 soon revealed a vision of its own - a global pandemic closing the doors of St. Paul's. Suddenly our greatest treasure, gathering together as a community, became our biggest threat. Time to pivot.

**“With you as our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, {and} lose not the things eternal”**

Moving from the sanctuary to the computer screen was no small task. Filming services, online coffee hours, and Zoom compline are not covered in the Book of Common Prayer. Uncharted territory indeed. The staff and clergy of St. Paul's, along with the Vestry and volunteers, worked tirelessly to bring the essence of worship to living rooms and laptops. New computers, new microphones, new cameras; 1809 felt farther and farther away and, in many ways, this unprecedented church closure has catapulted St. Paul's into the third century. And this is a good thing. So what next...

**“This is another day, O Lord. I know not what it will bring forth, but make me ready, Lord, for whatever it may be.”**

As we look toward funding a program year in 2021, we are certain of one thing: the parishioners of St. Paul's **care deeply about our church community and about those in need around us.** Parishioners have sustained the ministry of St. Paul's throughout 2020 with steadfast commitment to pre-pandemic pledges, made when the vision of 2020 seemed bright.

Each fall we ask you to make a pledge to support the Annual Operating Fund in the upcoming year and we do so again this fall. We do not know what 2021 will bring, but our prayer today is that **we are ready for whatever it may be.** Much like everything else, the 2021 fall pledge campaign will look different this year. We are skipping the glossy brochure and crisp pledge card. We simply are asking you to continue to support this community as we brave these uncertain times together. You will receive further communications from St. Paul's in the upcoming weeks about how you can make your pledge for 2021.

We patiently await the Sunday we are all gathered together once again. In the meantime the people of St. Paul's will continue to shine as a light to the glory of God wherever they are.

In 2019, St. Paul's parishioners pledged \$1.23 million to support programs and ministries in 2020.

These pledges sustained and supported this community throughout the unprecedented church closure caused by COVID-19.

**Thank you for your unwavering support of St. Paul's.**

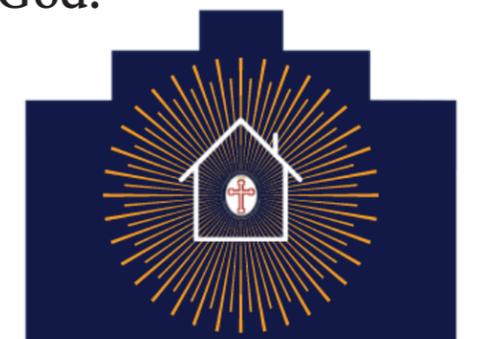
## NOW WHAT?

As we worship from laptops and tv screens  
**the work of St. Paul's does not stop.**

We continue to serve this community, providing  
opportunities for worship, fellowship, and service.

From homes across Alexandria and around the globe, the  
people of St. Paul's continue to shine as a light in the world  
to the glory of God.

**We are counting on your  
pledge this fall to support  
the 2021 Operating Fund.**



shine where you are

**October 12th - Check your INBOX not your mailbox for information about making a pledge to support St. Paul's in 2021**



St. Paul's Episcopal Church  
228 South Pitt Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314

RETURN SERVICE REQUEST

## BACK-TO-SCHOOL BLESSING

Gracious and loving God, fill us with courage and hope for this school year.

It will look different and feel different,  
yet we trust that you are with us always.

Prepare hearts for new experiences.  
Open our eyes to joy and wonder in surprising places.

Help us to stay focused on learning. Give us an extra measure  
of patience and understanding - for ourselves and for others.

Show us your mercy when we get frustrated. Fill our spirit with desire  
to be good friends. Remind us of the special talents you have given  
to each of us. Inspire us to be creative.

Hold us in any uncertainty and fear.  
Draw us closer to one another and to you.

We give thanks for the chance to learn, grow, and live into  
the loving and remarkable people you have created us to be.

We also pray for our teachers (and their families) as they try their  
best to continue their work of teaching, tending and supporting.

Hold us all in your hand as we find our way.  
Amen