



The  
**EPISTLE**  
ADVENT 2023

.... He went to be registered  
with Mary, to whom he  
was engaged  
and who was  
expecting  
a child.





The Rev. Oran E. Warder

## A Letter from the Rector

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be **taxed**. (And this **taxing** was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)  
And all went to be **taxed**, every one into his own city.  
(King James Bible)

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be **registered**.  
This was the first **registration** and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria.  
All went to their own towns to be **registered**.  
(New Revised Standard Bible)

About that time Caesar Augustus ordered a **census** to be taken throughout the Empire. This was the first **census** when Quirinius was governor of Syria. Everyone had to travel to his own ancestral hometown to be **accounted for**.  
(The Message Bible)

*Luke 2: 1-3*

The Roman Empire may have been cruel to those who opposed it, and cruel to those forced to build it, but it was a marvel of organization and administration. Romans were experts in road building and infrastructure. Romans were adept in spreading a unifying culture and language. The conquered lands and conquered people provided food, and goods, and raw materials such as money and resources flowed from the territories back to Rome to continue to fuel a growing empire. Mary and Joseph, as Roman subjects, were summoned to Bethlehem to be counted---so that they could be taxed, registered, and accounted for. Even today, 2000 years later, we in the United States undergo a census every 10 years and for similar reasons.

What has all this to do with us? **Let it be known that in Advent of 2023 a plea went out from the Vestry of St. Paul's that a parish census should be taken so that all of the members of the congregation may be accounted for.** Yes, a St. Paul's parish census. Yes, we want to reach every parish household. And yes, we need and want your participation.

After a time of historic disruption brought on by the pandemic, the goal of the census is to connect and reconnect with every member of the St. Paul's community. To be clear, this effort is not about being taxed, and is in no way connected with pledging or fundraising. Rather, it comes from a deep desire to demonstrably communicate to every person within the parish that you are known, loved, and belong to this local expression and manifestation of the Body of Christ. I am particularly drawn to the Gospel writer Luke's language of Mary and Joseph returning home to be accounted for. That is precisely my wish for all of us and the aim of this census.

We are using the season of Advent 2023, which this year coincides with the month of December, to undertake this census. Like the holy family we encourage you to take the time to be counted. You will be receiving an email survey in your inbox in the early days of December. Among other things you will be asked for information about yourself and any members of your household and will be asked to answer some questions about your involvement and experience at St. Paul's. All of this information will help us to reestablish a personal connection, update our parish rolls, and will also help us to plan for our future. Your participation is essential.

Wishing you every blessing in this Advent and coming Christmas season.

Faithfully,



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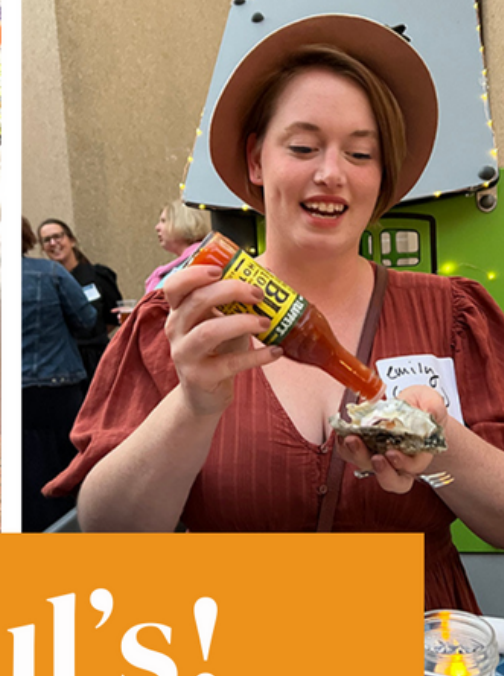
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Most photographs taken by volunteer parish photographer, Dennis Brack.



# Fall at St. Paul's!



# How Church is Good for Us

  
The Rev. Jenni Ovenstone

This fall at St. Paul's, we approached our annual "Owning our Faith" fundamentals forum series with a bold premise: while there are many ways people may nurture their spiritual lives, being with Church---and being at church---is good for us!

Dean Ian Markham of Virginia Theological Seminary started the series citing multiple research studies finding the significant mental, emotional, and physical benefits of church attendance. (A 2017 Vanderbilt University Study showed that middle-aged (ages 40 to 65) adults---both men and women---who attend church or other houses of worship reduce their risk for mortality by 55 percent!) There is clear evidence that social support and meaningful engagement with something "bigger" than ourselves helps us live healthier lives.



But in our series, we went further, exploring theologically and spiritually what helps us be people of gratitude, of attentiveness and joy, and of trust, able to embrace the realities of life and the reality of God's life in the world in ways that impact us deeply for the better:

- in the shape of the liturgy,
- in the act of corporate prayer,
- in the regular hearing of Scripture and listening for God in community,
- in receiving the sacraments.

Opening ourselves to hear Scripture together, and learning Scripture with each other, reminds us that we are a listening people who expect to be spoken to by God, and who in turn have something to say to the world. Our lives have hope, expectation, and meaning. (1)

Lifting our hearts at the Eucharist (The Great Thanksgiving) and receiving the gifts of God's table actually changes us in ways that lead us to bring positive change to others around us. Our lives are transformed and transforming.

Joining in the tradition of Common Prayer together orients us in a vision of the world and offers a language to help us bring the hope we have in God's love and grace into the brokenness and sin that can so often overwhelm us.

Our lives have healing beauty.

Yet all of these benefits---what makes church good for us---belong to "us" as community. They happen in community. For us to be shaped by, and give new shape to, the stories of faith in our own times, it matters who is here. The gathered church changes with the presence of each person and all that they bring. What we hear and receive from God is richer. In other words "we" are not the same without you! If "we" (the part of Christ's Church we know and love as St. Paul's) are good for you, it is because you also are good for "us." The goodness--and the "mattering"---are mutual.

(1) Williams, Rowan. *Being Disciples*. 2016

# St. Paul's ADVENT ERA

  
The Rev. Alyse Viggiano

Whether you like her music or not, the force that is Taylor Swift is undeniable. This past summer, some economists claim that the nation was saved from going into a recession because of her Eras Tour. "Swifties", self-named rabid Taylor Swift fans, packed like sardines into the largest stadiums, and if they couldn't purchase tickets, filled those same stadium parking lots to merely listen to the concert. They were decorated with friendship bracelets and wore bejeweled outfits, all to pay homage to their favorite Taylor Swift album with glitter trailing their paths like Pigpen's dust clouds.

If after reading this you feel called to witness this experience, it's not too late. You can visit your local movie theater to watch her LA concert on the big screen along with Swifties screaming with glee in the seats around you. But before you do, a warning---you will be changed by it. You'll be exposed to an energy that will be hard to shake off if you ever wish to do so. There will be lyrics that strike emotions you didn't know you had. There will be melodies and rhythms that will endlessly resonate with your core. You'll walk away on a high; feeling seen, fully accepted, and freshly bonded to a worldwide community. Another warning, and take it from a fringe fan like myself, this "state of grace" will fade away.

But here's the good news, our worth is not given to us by Taylor Swift and as much as we try, we are not made in her image. And more good news, the season of Advent is upon us, which is the perfect salve for what our souls truly long for. Advent offers space to re-center and the opportunity to remember where our hope truly lies. Unlike a concert, loud and glittery, worship during this season is quiet and offers a singular message of the nature of God. Jesus, God incarnate, revealed to this world that God is love. Jesus came into this world to experience life as we live it. Jesus came into this world to show us that regardless of who you are, God values every single life. Jesus came into this world to convey that the state of grace and the love we've been given is unconditional, unwavering, and endless. And a warning, this good news and the season of Advent will change you.

To be clear, we should absolutely listen to Taylor Swift songs, attend her concerts, and remain fanatics. But when we find our castles crumbling and a bit lost in her lavender haze, thanks be to God, Advent arrives again and again --- always just in time to reorient us to our true hope that we are always beloved by God, our souls are always carried in God's loving arms, and while concerts always come to an end, God's love will never fade away.



# The Lazarus Ministry

## Housing and Eviction Crisis - No End in Sight?!



June Geoffray

Although the pandemic may have been the catalyst for long-term economic upheaval, the current housing and eviction tsunami in Alexandria and across the nation will be with us for the foreseeable future. Nine out of ten clients that the Lazarus Ministry has served over the last five months have requested assistance for rent and eviction prevention for higher than usual amounts, and the number of requests far exceeds our capacity to help them all.

In September, as a recipient of funding from the city, Lazarus participated with other Community Access and Emergency Support grantees to gather and acknowledge the impact that the \$400,000 grant, which was used in less than three months, and was distributed by the grantees to assist Alexandrians in need of emergency housing funds. The partnership that developed beyond the grant has allowed Lazarus to collaborate with these other grantees and city agencies. It allows us to create outcomes that serve clients who have large debt that none of us could fund individually.

This collaboration includes a weekly virtual call to discuss client cases. In a recent call, an attorney with Northern Virginia Legal Services led a training session on Tenants Rights and the Eviction Process, which included a discussion on how to approach an advocacy role on behalf of clients facing untenable living conditions.

A question was posed recently referring to the current challenge ---“Will Lazarus get back to a pre-COVID operation?” It won’t happen any time soon. The housing crisis and shortage are not easily resolved and are not a short-term problem. The need will no doubt follow us into 2024.



Lazarus will continue to serve clients in person on Tuesdays by appointment and by phone. We currently cover rent, security deposits, utilities, and medical expenses. Please consider supporting Lazarus during this season of giving. **If you are interested in volunteering contact June Geoffray at [lazarus@stpaulsalexandria.com](mailto:lazarus@stpaulsalexandria.com)**

*Lazarus volunteers work with clients to assist with their requests for financial assistance. They listen with compassion, advocate for their clients, and offer additional resources available to help with food insecurity and job searches, and provide links to other organizations that offer financial assistance.*

The Oyster Roast returned this year! In October we gathered in the St. Paul’s courtyard to enjoy oysters and chili in fellowship to benefit Lazarus Ministry. Thanks to everyone who joined us and generously sponsored the event.



# The Damascus Project



The Rev. Stacy Carlson Kelly

We’ve continued to explore options for Damascus Project 2.0, to ease the disparities our neighbors with low to moderate incomes face when they apply for banking or credit products. As we began looking for options beyond forming a credit union, we made a disturbing discovery: the destructive systems of short-term, predatory priced loans, often called “payday loans”, that first alerted Oran to the lack of fair credit access in 2017, haven’t changed much at all, despite the reforms enacted by Virginia’s 2020 Fairness in Lending Act.

No one should feel shame for needing short-term credit, especially for emergencies like a car repair or health care expense. But it seems these specialty lenders can take advantage of those who don’t have traditional bank accounts or weak credit history by charging annual percentage rates that, even after reform, can be more than 200%.

Fair lending watchdogs and the faith community have long been concerned about these expensive loans and have made multiple attempts to advocate legislative change or offer alternatives. We’ve found one such model at an innovative non-profit in St. Paul, Minnesota, Exodus Lending, which grew out of a Lutheran Church. We’ve talked with and learned from them about their successful model that refinances payday loans for Minnesotans at 0% interest and fees, and their repayment rate exceeds 80%. We’ve developed a preliminary plan to adapt what works well in the Exodus Lending model into what St. Paul’s might offer. We have also begun early discussions with our friends at the Latino Economic Development Council (LEDC) about a joint effort. As a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) and a leader in supporting underserved communities, LEDC could be an invaluable partner if we determine there is a feasible ministry possible in this space.

It’s very early days but exciting to think what might be possible. We are reaching for the same goals for Damascus Project 2.0 that we set out in the Summer Epistle: a sustainable, transformative ministry that helps our neighbors build financial resources to elevate their daily lives and pursue their long-term dreams.



On November 15, the Damascus Project team from St. Paul’s and the Latino Economic Development Center (LEDC) witnessed the culmination of an impactful initiative as five enterprising women showcased their entrepreneurial ideas with their newly acquired business skills at the Empowered Women International (EWI) Fall 2023 Bootcamp. Taking place at the Dar-Al-Hijrah Islamic Center (DAH), the bootcamp graduates also had the opportunity to display their story boards, retail items, and other visual attractions associated with their businesses.

The businesses these aspiring entrepreneurs are starting include:

- Afghani Fashions:** Fashionable, stylish Afghan clothing, and custom tailoring
- Fatima’s Fashion:** Physical store located in Alexandria, VA since 2017---sells African and Muslim clothing, fashion accessories and home goods
- Loyola Day Care:** Day care center for children also providing music, sports, arts and languages
- Virtually Yours, Saffy:** Online retail store for clothing, home décor, accessories, children’s books, etc. Saffy buys at a lower price and sells at a markup but less than retail.
- You Don’t Do It Squad:** Brokerage service for housing repairs and maintenance primarily for women-run households.

The entrepreneurs completed a series of five in-person classes, led by an LEDC trainer specializing in support to aspiring business women. Following each business plan presentation, a judge asked the participant questions regarding their business model as well as offered suggestions to consider incorporating in their businesses. At the conclusion there was a graduation and each woman received a certificate of completion. Congratulations to Riham, Henrietta, Yasmin, Saffa and Marie. St. Paul’s was well represented at the event by the Reverend Oran Warder, Dede Stanko, Linda Surles, and Steve Francis. Linda and Steve offered their services as judges.



We ask our fellow parishioners at St. Paul’s to be ambassadors for the Damascus Project, knowing that it could play a role in the futures of people with whom you interact in our Alexandria community. We would welcome support in creating awareness and expanding our network to help us identify entrepreneurs that will benefit from our support.

**For more information or to refer a candidate, contact Steve Francis at [damascusproject@stpaulsalexandria.com](mailto:damascusproject@stpaulsalexandria.com).**

# St. Paul's Music Ministry



Eric Schnobrick

There are times for articles full of imagery and imagination, for sharing my story in the hope that it will connect with yours. There are articles that reflect and look inward, searching out and hopefully finding something deeper that we all can share. This is not one of those articles.

Truth be told, while these deep connections---to worship and music, to community and communal experience---are at the heart of everything that we do, sometimes we have so much actual doing that we need to stop for a breath, look up at the 12-month calendar hanging on the wall, and be grateful for all of the opportunities to live out the work we have been talking about. So take a breath and let's have a look at the calendar. . .

**Music at St. Paul's** is the new series of concerts produced at St. Paul's, by St. Paul's. There has been no shortage of excellent concerts here in the recent past---Washington Bach Consort, Alexandria Symphony Orchestra, The Thirteen, Alexandria Choral Society, and many others have been presenting music here regularly---but none of them has originated from within our congregation to shine out into the broader community. That changes on December 2 with *A Classical Christmas with Barclay Brass*. Our friends from Barclay Brass, the ensemble that sends us musicians for Christmas Eve and Easter, are bringing a full ensemble of eleven musicians to St. Paul's to make sure that we are all feeling ready for the Christmas season. Adriano will join them at the organ for much of the concert. The concert follows the Scottish Walk parade on December 2, beginning at 2:00 pm in the sanctuary.

While I am sure that everybody has heard about the Christmas concert, I want to give you a peak at the three concerts that will follow it as we move through our season. On January 13, Adriano will take center stage, conducting and playing a program of Baroque music called *Rejoice!* He will be joined by a chamber ensemble of other musicians, as well as soprano Suzannah Waddington. In speaking about the program, Adriano says, "What we want above all to share with you in this concert is joy. The joy that bathes the works performed in this program and that is fundamental in the Baroque era. Sacred or secular music for Bach, Vivaldi, and Handel, as for their contemporaries, must express joy, which is both spiritual and aesthetic."

On March 2, Seán Heely will come to St. Paul's to share an evening of Celtic music. Seán released an album in 2023 called "Dramagical" that, besides presenting achingly beautiful soundscapes, spent a week as Album of the Week on BBC Radio nan Gàidheal, the BBC's Gaelic language broadcaster. Seán is a U.S. National Scottish Fiddle champion, singer, songwriter, and multi-instrumentalist. Maybe most importantly, he has been to St. Paul's and understands what a gift we have in this building. He is crafting a program that allows him to take full advantage of the natural acoustics of the space. This is not going to be just another pub performance!

Closing our first season will be a vocal recital on April 13. We are extremely fortunate to be joined by soprano Joëlle Harvey. Highlights of her 2022 season include appearances with the New York Philharmonic (Beethoven's Symphony Number 9), The Metropolitan Opera (Pamina in The Magic Flute), Cleveland Orchestra (Schubert Mass in E-flat at Carnegie Hall), Chicago Symphony (Carmina Burana), and the Chamber Music Societies of Lincoln Center and Philadelphia. This all occurred before she headed overseas to star in the title role of Handel's Semele at the Glyndebourne Festival and to sing at the BBC Proms. Beyond this all, she is a kind and generous artist and person. I hope you join me in welcoming her to St. Paul's.

Most importantly, none of this takes away from what we have always done. Children's choirs continue to grow, both in number of singers and in musical ability. St. Paul's Choir, in addition to helping lead worship every Sunday, sang its first choral evensong since before the pandemic on All Saints' Day, and will be singing a service of Advent Lessons and Carols at 7:30 on Wednesday, December 6. Other evening choral services will take place on Wednesday evenings during Holy Week, and in May as we celebrate the Ascension. Taken together with our Taizé Ensemble at Compline by Candlelight, **Wednesdays are a day for music at St. Paul's.**



## St. Paul's Presents a 4-Part Concert Series for the 2023/24 Season All Concerts are held at St. Paul's Episcopal Church 228 South Pitt Street



December 2, 2023 | 2:00 PM

### A Classical Christmas with Barclay Brass

Get in the holiday spirit at St. Paul's! The Barclay Brass are joined by internationally acclaimed organist Adriano Spampanato to present sounds of the season. Music will range from familiar carols to classical masterpieces, with a few surprises along the way.



January 13, 2024 | 7:00 PM

### Rejoice! with Suzannah Waddington

Experience the sheer joy of Baroque music! A joy that is both worldly and divine, that bathes over you and radiates from within. Soprano Suzannah Waddington, praised for her "bright, penetrating soprano," (Opera News) returns to St. Paul's to join Adriano Spampanato conducting a chamber ensemble from the keyboard in works of Bach, Vivaldi, and Handel.



March 3, 2024 | 7:00 PM

### Celtic Music with Seán Heely

U.S. National Scottish Fiddle Champion Seán Heely visits St. Paul's. The DC-based award-winning Celtic fiddler, Scots Gaelic Singer, and harpist takes his audience on a magical tour through the Scottish Highlands and across the rugged Irish coast. This program will be tailored specifically to the uniquely beautiful acoustic of St. Paul's for a one of a kind performance!

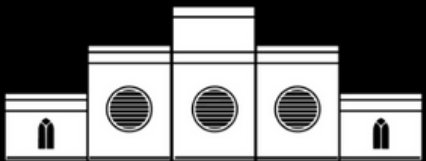


April 4, 2024 | 7:00 PM

### Joëlle Harvey

Joëlle Harvey is a concert and opera artist of international caliber, performing regularly with opera companies and symphony orchestras around the country and overseas. This season features performances with, among others, the San Francisco Symphony, Chicago Symphony, Handel & Haydn Society, the National Symphony Orchestra, and a decidedly more intimate recital right here at St. Paul's. Eric Schnobrick accompanies as Joëlle shares some of her favorite music.

Tickets for concerts can be purchased on our website [stpaulsalexandria.com/concerts](https://stpaulsalexandria.com/concerts)



# From the Archives...

## Charles Lloyd Neale



Corinne Marasco

Charles Lloyd Neale (1800-1886) was Alexandria’s foremost stone carver for nearly 50 years. Of the more than 200 markers in Alexandria cemeteries that are attributed to C.L. Neale & Sons, approximately 20 can be found in St. Paul’s cemetery.

Neale was born on September 26, 1800, to Charles Neale and Mary Mareman in St. Mary’s County, Maryland. The family’s American roots go back to 1660. He moved to the District of Columbia in his twenties and married Ann Johnson in January 1829. That same year, the first of 12 children, Charles Washington Neale, was born. (Four children died in childhood.) Neale fell on hard times: In May 1837, he appealed to the D.C. Circuit Court to release him and his family from imprisonment under an act for the relief of insolvent debtors. In order to discharge the debt, Neale surrendered nearly everything he owned to be sold by his creditors.

Neale was likely very motivated to be successful after his experience in debtors’ prison. He may have entered the stone cutting business not long after his release; the earliest headstone attributed to him was carved in 1837. In February 1848, an ad for marble monuments, tombs, and headstones “executed in the best manner and on moderate terms” appeared in the Alexandria Gazette, signed “H. C. Neale & Bro.”

The business didn’t last long. In January 1850, H.C. Neale announced that the partnership had dissolved and he would continue the business. In February, Charles Neale announced the opening of his marble yard, “prepared to make to order any kind of work in his line” including monuments, tombs, and headstones. He set up his new business at the corner of Fairfax and Duke Streets, one block away from his brother’s at Fairfax and Prince Streets.

In January 1851, the Alexandria Common Council hired him to carve a block of marble that would be part of the construction of the Washington Monument. (The block appears at the 280-foot level of the monument.) Three of Neale’s sons eventually joined him in the business, though there was enough work for Neale to advertise for an apprentice in 1853.

Neale’s style is stately and clean, which likely appealed to the public, but he was also capable of creating larger as well as more intricate monuments. For example, the large obelisk memorial to Charles Calvert Smoot Sr. (1798-1867) measures 15 feet high and three feet square at the base. By comparison, the headstone of Elizabeth Page (1837-1861) features a delicately carved shell and flowers arched over a shield with a Bible verse carved in italics, flanked by two thin columns on each side.

The design he is most associated with (though not an original one) is a double column-and-arch design that can be found in four family monuments in Alexandria, one of which is the Bossart/Schwab family monument in St. Paul’s cemetery. The monument has a three-tiered base, two 14-inch cubes, two two-foot-high columns, and an arch. At the apex, Neale placed an urn for Protestants and a cross for Catholics. Neale’s own monument in St. Mary’s Catholic Cemetery is a variation of this design, with a two-tiered base supporting four columns and topped by a canopy.

Neale was not the only stonecutter in Alexandria but his tenure was the longest. Prior to Neale, Thomas Baird (1817-1833) and his partner John Tyler had a marble yard on Water St. (now N. Lee St.) between Cameron and Queen Sts. They offered “All kinds of Free stone work executed with neatness and despatch (sic).” Edward Colgate (or Colegate) appeared in the 1834 Alexandria city directory, then relocated to Maryland.

Other stonecutters were in business around the same time as Neale. Thomas Lang advertised his services in 1853 after buying H.C. Neale’s entire stock of marble. William Chauncey (1834- 1900) was a native Alexandrian and William Owens (1838-1876) immigrated from England to Alexandria with his family. (Owens died January 5, 1876, from an accident.)

Example of advertisement by stone cutter William Chauncey (Chataigne’s Alexandria City Directory, 1876)



Not only was the image of a mourning mother and child intended to evoke emotion, Chauncey also invoked William Owens to attract Owens’ former clients. By 1881, Chauncey and Neale appeared in the Alexandria city directory, along with their sons; Neale had a display ad that is clearly based on Chauncey’s earlier ad but it had an obvious error.

1881 Advertisement for S. C. Neale & Sons in the Alexandria City Directory



Sidney Chapman Neale was a prominent attorney and businessman in Alexandria, and was not related to Charles Lloyd Neale. The error was a little awkward, no doubt.

By 1887, Neale and Chauncey had turned their businesses over to their sons, who continued to advertise, but only C.L. Neale & Sons continued using display ads. Neale died June 8, 1886, of pneumonia, likely brought on by his habit of showering each morning outdoors year-round in his stone yard. He was remembered for being one of the oldest citizens of Alexandria and for his civic activities, including captain of the night watch, city councilman, board of health member, and clerk of the market.

### Inventory of Markers in St. Paul’s Episcopal Cemetery Attributable to C.L. Neale & Sons



Elizabeth Page’s gravestone. C.L. Neale’s name is inscribed in the lower right hand corner

Barrett, infant – 1863	Hooff, Rebecca – 1882
Beckham, Leslie – 1880*	Hunter, Margaret – 1876
Bossart, Mary A. – 1881	Janney, Elizabeth – 1884*
Browne, Ellen Douglass – 1861	Lindsay, Jane W. – 1872*
Carmichael, Sarah L. – 1869	Lindsay, Samuel – 1857*
Claggett, Ann – 1861	Linton, Lewis C. – 1876*
Dentinger, Bessie C. – 1880	Machenheimer, Eliza – 1864
Diez, Eve Catherine – 1859	McLean, Martha – 1858
Dorsey, Mary – 1875	Milburn, B.C. – 1862
Dulany, Getta – 1868	Milburn, Thirza – 1862
Emerson, Aquilla – 1850	Page, Charles H. – 1865
Fairall, Grafton – 1854	Page, Elizabeth B. – 1861*
Fairall, Sarah – 1881*	Page, Emily Handy – 1878
Hall, Joshua – 1871*	Price, Sarah Jane – 1865
Hall, Mary Ann – 1872	Price, William – 1866
Hall, Thomas – 1887	Smoot, Charles Calvert, Sr. – 1867*

Note: Most of these were identified by David Finnell. (\*) Carvings later identified as the work of the Neale firm

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# St. Paul's Episcopal Preschool

Never too old to learn!

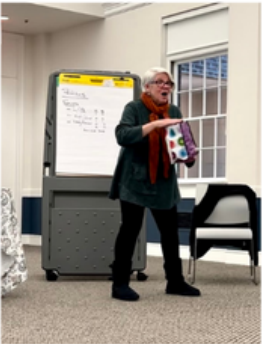


Kristin Teeters, Head of School

SPEP's mission to 'educate the hearts and minds of young people for lives of learning, leadership, and service' reaches beyond just our preschool students. The adults in our SPEP community are also busy engaging in learning opportunities!

## Parents

A multi-week parent workshop series for SPEP moms and dads was held for the first time this fall. Parents discussed and learned strategies and solutions to some common and challenging situations---separation anxiety, setting limits, tantrums, and screen time were just a few of the topics covered. SPEP parents reported that having this chance to come together and hear and learn from others was reassuring and a reminder that parents "are not in this alone".



## Teachers

SPEP staff routinely participate in a variety of professional development courses. Twice a year SPEP brings in early childhood professionals from a variety of fields. These valuable programs provide our staff with current and innovative approaches to further enhance skillsets in support of educating the whole child. Topics vary and include best-practice techniques and actionable takeaways.

Recently, Wolf Trap provided an engaging and energetic session in which staff moved to various beats and rhythms, hummed melodies, and created silly lyrics. Inspired, staff have identified even more ways bring music into the classroom, further enhancing daily classroom routines and supporting curriculum learning objectives.

Each fall Staff also attend the Mid-Atlantic Episcopal School Association's (MAESA) annual Early Educators Conference. This year, staff had the opportunity to hear and learn from experienced early childhood educators on topics such as artist studies and related activities, 'building brains', social emotional health, getting into the garden, and fun with phonics.

Following professional development programs, staff collaborate and share how to incorporate new approaches into classroom routines.

Offering additional tools to the toolkits of parents and staff helps all of us better understand the needs of our youngest learners, while providing them with rich activities, resources, and skills, as we work together to support students' learning journeys.



# SPEP STUDENTS THIS FALL!



# St. Paul's Children, Youth, and Families

Fall Recap



Lillian Hardaway

## Blessing of the Animals 2023

The first Sunday in October is always an exciting time in the St. Paul's Courtyard. Each year members of the church and community gather with their pets to remember St. Francis and give thanks for the diversity of creation and especially for animals that our companions. This year the weather was beautiful and there was an incredible turnout for the St. Paul's clergy to bless.



*A Prayer attributed to St. Francis*

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace: where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.*

## Children, Youth, and Families

The Fall of 2023 has been a busy one at St. Paul's! It felt good to get back in the swing of regular programming like Sunday School, Youth Group, and children's choirs. In addition to all of the weekly programs, we seem to always have something special going on like Little's Praydates, Angel Sing-a-longs, Parent Gatherings, or Holy Questions.

### Some fall highlights include:

- Youth Group:**
  - Carving and Painting Pumpkins in October and the Old Town Ghost Tour with the Alexandria Episcopal Churches
- Sunday School:**
  - Hearing the Godly Play students retell the stories they have heard with the story materials
  - Putting together hygiene packs for the Meade Memorial Lunch Program
- Holy Questions:**
  - Making 3 new banners for the Jesse Tree Service in December
- Children's Choirs:**
  - Having the first Angel Choir Sing-a-long in October



## Are you smarter than a youth at Youth Group?

Find answer key on page 22

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. What is traditionally the last service of the day in monastic communities?<br>a. Vespers      b. Evening Prayer<br>c. Confession   d. Compline | 3. What is the most requested piece of St. Paul's Merchandise?<br>a. T-shirt      b. Socks<br>c. Bucket hat   d. Sweatshirt |
| 2. What page does An Order for Compline begin on in the Book of Common Prayer?<br>a. 127   b. 355<br>c. 75   d. 351                               | 4. How many Chocolate Molten Lava Cakes come in an order from Dominos?<br>a. 1      b. 4<br>c. 3      d. 5                  |

Exploring the Beauty of the Season

Faith Formation in Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany

The Rev. Jenni Ovenstone



Throughout these upcoming seasons in the Church, we prepare for, we celebrate, and we wonder at the Incarnation of Christ---at God entering fully into the world in Jesus, engaging with creation and embracing an embodied human life. Our forum and retreat offerings during these seasons will engage the experiences of our own creative and embodied lives as they enliven our faith. We will draw on the beauty of nature, on music and song, on art and architecture, on questions of technology and innovation, and on our concern for the relationships we nurture every day. The forum takes place on Sundays at 10 AM in Upper Norton.

The Forum in Advent

- December 3 - Advent Wreath-Making\*  
The tradition of the Advent wreath helps us prepare for Christmas by marking hope-filled signs of life and light amidst the winter darkness. Make a wreath for your home using fresh greens. Forms and candles available for purchase.
- December 10 - Laura Francis, "Botanical Christmas Gift Boxes"  
Laura Francis, parishioner and member of the Hunting Creek Garden Club, offers a floral demonstration, making botanical Christmas boxes inspired by the gold, frankincense, and myrrh presented to the Christ child by the Magi. These beautiful boxes, used to brighten our homes or share as gifts, help us keep our focus on Christ this holiday season, from Advent all the way through to the Epiphany.
- December 17 - Christmas Carol Sing-Along and Festive Holiday Reception (begins 9:45)\*  
All are invited to a celebration following our 9 am Christmas pageant to enjoy holiday treats and join in beloved carols led by St. Paul's musicians.

Advent Saturday Morning Retreat

December 9 - "Sleepers wake!", 8:30 am - 12:00 pm  
During this busy time, spend a morning at St. Paul's for guided reflection, conversation, and prayer. With the poetry of Advent hymn texts as our focus, we will explore the powerful and prophetic themes of Advent longing and hope in our lives. Please RSVP to Jenni (jenni@stpaulsalexandria.com)

The Forum in the Season after Epiphany

- January 7 – Tucker Eskew, "Crossing Chasms: the American Movement to Depolarize our Lives and Families, and the Role of the Church". Tucker Eskew is a longtime parishioner and former deputy assistant to President George W. Bush. He is a founding partner of the bipartisan strategic advisory and crisis communications firm Vianovo. He serves on the board of directors of the News Literacy Project and the advisory council of With Honor.
- January 21 - John Slattery, Ph.D. "Faith in a World of Artificial Intelligence". St. Paul's parishioner John P. Slattery is the Director of the Carl G. Grefenstette Center for Ethics in Science, Technology, and Law at Duquesne University. From 2018-2022, he served as a Senior Program Officer with the Dialogue on Science, Ethics, and Religion (DoSER) program of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) in Washington, DC. An ethicist, theologian, and historian of science, Slattery works at the intersection of technology, science, religion, and racism.

January 28 – Latrobe Lecture: Barbara Boehm Read more on page 21.

February 11 - Peggy Parker: "Preparing for a Holy Lent"\* Artist and seminary instructor Peggy Parker will lead us in a visual arts project that will help us include acts of seeing as an intentional part of our Lenten devotions.

\* Indicates intergenerational formation times  
For more information, please contact me at [jenni@stpaulsalexandria.com](mailto:jenni@stpaulsalexandria.com).  
For a complete listing of all forums visit our website at [www.stpaulsalexandria.com](http://www.stpaulsalexandria.com).

20 St. Paul's Episcopal Church

23 Advent and Christmas

Please note that in addition to these offerings regular Sunday worship services take place each week at 8 am, 9 am, 11 am, and 5 pm.

- Dec 2 @ 2 pm CHRISTMAS CONCERT  
Kick off the holiday season with the inaugural concert of the St. Paul's Concert series. The family-friendly concert will feature Barclay Brass and St. Paul's Organist Adriano Spampinato.
- Dec 3 @ 10 am ADVENT WREATH MAKING  
Advent wreath making and hot chocolate. To-go kits also available!
- Dec 6 @ 7:30 pm ADVENT LESSONS AND CAROLS  
We prepare for the birth of Jesus at Christmas, moving from darkness toward light, through readings from Holy Scripture, hymns, and seasonal choral music presented by St. Paul's Choir.
- Dec 9 @ 8:30 am ADVENT SABBATH DAY  
From 8:30 until 12:30, a time and space for reflection and gentle conversation as we prepare for the coming of Christ.
- Dec 10 @ 9am JESSE TREE  
A lessons and carols service for families.
- @ 10 am BOTANICAL CHRISTMAS GIFT BOXES  
The Rev. Oran Warder will present the theology and Laura Francis, flower designer, will present flower decor and arrangements sure to awe this season.
- Dec 17 @ 9 am CHRISTMAS PAGEANT  
Our annual retelling of the birth of Jesus. Children can grab a costume and join the lively nativity scene.
- @ 9:45 am CHRISTMAS CAROL SING-ALONG  
Treats and Christmas carol sing-along!

Christmas Eve Service Times

- 12:00 pm - Contemplative  
2:00 pm & 4:00 pm - Family services  
with special sermon presentation  
Nursery care available
- 6:00 pm & 10:00 pm - Festive Rite Two  
with choir and candle lighting featuring  
the Barclay Brass quintet

Christmas Day Service

10:00 am\* - Rite One, with organ

First Sunday after Christmas

10:00 am\* - Christmas Lessons & Carols

\* This is the only service on this day.

# Stewardship

## Connecting God's People / Carrying God's Light

  
Maria Halloran



Connections happen every day at St. Paul's. In worship, formation, service, and fellowship, we connect with God, with our families, and with our fellow parishioners at St. Paul's.

During the season of Advent, as we return to the familiar liturgical rhythm of this sacred season, we remember our connection to those who came before us. The advent wreath and candles, along with the familiar hymns and readings link us to generations who have welcomed this season in the same way. During our Jesse Tree family service, we remember the stories of Jesus's family tree. A Jesse Tree, a tradition dating back to the Middle Ages, represents the family tree of Jesus. During the service, a Bible story is read relating to God's people and Jesus's family, starting with Creation and ending with the Birth of Christ. An ornament is placed on a Jesse Tree after each story. Remembering all of the members of Jesus's family illuminates how God prepared for Jesus to be born through many generations. And it places us amongst this great cloud of witnesses. **We are connected.**

Together, with those before us and those to come, we carry God's light in our daily lives, in our community, and to the world. Your commitment to the life of this parish connects you to the faithful stewards who came before us and whose financial gifts made St. Paul's what it is today. And your offerings, made today, will sustain and preserve this place for the generations that will come long after we are gone. Thank you for being a part of St. Paul's.



The St. Paul's Foundation continues its important work of managing the endowment of St. Paul's Episcopal Church. Currently valued at \$6.8 million the endowment, managed by Lynx Investment Advisory, has two funds---the Simmons Fund and the Foundation Composite Fund.

The Simmons Fund, valued at just under \$2 million supports the Music Ministry, the Lazarus Ministry, the Cemetery, and the St. Paul's Episcopal Preschool Scholarship Fund. Each quarter, 4.5% of the average fund value is distributed. These distributions are providing vital support to these ministry areas.

The Foundation Composite Fund supports ongoing maintenance needs of the buildings and grounds of our historic parish. Through regular support, totaling just over \$70 thousand in 2023, the Foundation supports ongoing maintenance contracts freeing up funds in the operating budget to support other vital ministries at St. Paul's. Gifts to the Foundation can be made on our website at [stpaulsalexandria.com](http://stpaulsalexandria.com).

### Foundation Sunday, January 28, 2024



The St. Paul's Foundation is proud to welcome Barbara Drake Boehm, the Paul and Jill Ruddock curator emerita of the Met Cloisters, who will deliver the annual Latrobe lecture. The presentation will focus on the fire and restoration of Notre-Dame de Paris, which will reopen in December 2024. **The lecture is at 10AM in Upper Norton.**

Barbara Drake Boehm holds a Ph.D. and an M.A. from the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, and a B.A. from Wellesley College. She began her career at the Met as a Curatorial Assistant in the Department of Medieval Art in 1983 and rose through the ranks, with her promotion to Curator in 1998 and assignment to The Cloisters in 2008.

## In Memoriam...



On September 10 at the 11 am service, St. Paul's dedicated a flagon, a large vessel that holds communion wine, to the memory of Donna Lefevre.

*Almighty God, we remember before you today your beloved child Donna to whom you have opened the gates of larger life. We pray for her and for all those whom we love but see no longer, knowing that you are doing for them better things that we can desire or pray for; and, we give thanks that you have put it into the hearts of your people to make offerings for your service, and have been pleased to accept their gifts. Be with us now and bless us as we consecrate this flagon for service in your Church in Donna's memory. We offer and dedicate this gift in the name of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. AMEN*



On Sunday, October 15, 2023, we honored the bicentenary of Virginia Theological Seminary with many celebratory events. Among them, a plaque commemorating the founding of VTS was dedicated in St. Paul's chapel.

*Everliving God, watchful and caring, our source and our end: All that we are and all that we have is yours. Accept us now as we dedicate this plaque in thanksgiving for the founding of the Virginia Theological Seminary and for our 200 years of partnership in mission. Grant us your grace that we may continue to form leaders for your church and that we may be sent forth into all the world to proclaim the Gospel. We ask this in the name of God: Father; Son; and Holy Spirit. AMEN*

## YEAR END-GIVING - DATES TO KNOW

- DEC 3 A Qualified Charitable Distribution**  
For parishioners 70½ or older, a qualified charitable distribution allows individuals to make certain charitable contributions directly. If you would like to make a contribution to St. Paul's from your IRA, please speak with your IRA administrator.
- DEC 21 Make A Gift of Appreciated Assets**  
Gifts of appreciated stock should be initiated by December 21, 2023. Contact Maria Halloran, [stewardship@stpaulsalexandria.com](mailto:stewardship@stpaulsalexandria.com), for delivery information for the church account at Morgan Stanley.
- DEC 30 Donate by check in the mail**  
You can mail a check to the parish office or place in the offering plate. All gifts must be postmarked Saturday, December 30. The mail slot for the parish office is on the bottom of the Pitt Street doors to Wilmer Hall. Checks delivered by hand may be put through the slot.
- DEC 31 Donate online**  
Visit [www.stpaulsalexandria.com/donate-now](http://www.stpaulsalexandria.com/donate-now) to make a year-end gift, complete your 2023 pledge, or make a pledge to support the 2024 Operating Fund. You can also make a gift to a specific ministry in honor of a loved one. Please note that all gifts must be received by 11:59 pm on December 31.



# ST. PAUL'S ...UNDER YOUR TREE

Looking for a present for that hard-to-please family member or friend?  
Look no further than St. Paul's! We are fully stocked with presents to please  
even the most discerning gift recipient on your list.

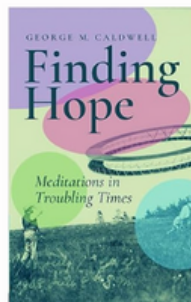
You can order online, or come by the parish office to purchase. Please email Maria  
Halloran at [stewardship@stpaulsalexandria.com](mailto:stewardship@stpaulsalexandria.com) if you are interested.



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**Rebuilding Zion  
By Oran E. Warder**

**Available online at  
[amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)**

Are you smarter than a youth at Youth Group? Answer Key  
*D. Compline , A. 127, C. Bucket hat, C. 3 , Waking, sleeping*





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