



The EPISTLE

LATE SUMMER 2023

THE PEARSON
DOROTHY
AND TAYLOR

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A Letter from the Rector



The Rev. Oran E. Warder

Dear People of St. Paul's,

Welcome to this Late Summer 2023 edition of the St. Paul's Epistle Magazine. In addition to giving us a colorful snapshot of our common life and mission, this edition also provides us with a preview of the upcoming program year. And this is no ordinary program year. On top of all the worship services, formation opportunities, our expanding music program, and our ever growing outreach and service ministries, this is a year of celebration. On Sunday, October 15, we will celebrate and give thanks for the 200th anniversary of the founding of the Virginia Theological Seminary which happened right here at St. Paul's. The first classes were held on October 15, 1823 in the space that is today the Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

SUN 10.15



On Sunday the 15th regular services will be held at their usual time (8,9,11 & 5). At the 10 am forum hour we will combine the annual Dyer and Horne Lectures (both connected to the deep and long relationship between St. Paul's and the Virginia Seminary) and we will welcome The Rev. Dr. Judy Fentress-Williams as our guest lecturer. Dr. Fentress-Williams is a beloved professor of Old Testament at the seminary and will give a lecture entitled: "Generations: Genealogy as Story in Genesis". Children's programming will also focus on this historical celebration.

At the 11 am service, the Very Rev. Ian Markham, Dean and President of the Virginia Seminary will be our guest preacher for a special liturgy to commemorate this historic day. Immediately following the service will be the official launch of my book, *Rebuilding Zion: William Holland Wilmer and the Rebirth of the Episcopal Church in Virginia 1782-1827*. Among other fascinating stories, this book includes the tale of Dr. Wilmer's efforts to found the seminary and serve as its first professor. After the brief book launch, a festive lunch will be provided and the celebration will continue.



I am happy to promote this book for two reasons. First and foremost, it is the first biography of Dr. Wilmer and his story is deeply connected to our story as a parish. And it is a story worth knowing. Dr. Wilmer helped to set the foundation for St. Paul's (both literally and figuratively) and all these generations later we are still benefiting from his efforts. Secondly, all the proceeds from the sale of this book will support the St. Paul's Damascus Project (updates on the progress of this two phased project are also included in this edition). I hope that many will purchase this book to learn more about our history and at the same time connect this history to our continuing mission to the community in the present day.

We have much for which to be thankful. The pages that follow attest to the blessings upon blessings, and grace upon grace, that characterize our parish life and speak to our identity as disciples. I hope you will find ways large and small in the coming program year to connect and reconnect with the ongoing mission of St. Paul's.

Faithfully,

Mark your calendars!

Be sure to take a look at the preview of upcoming services and events for the 2023/24 program year on page 18.



Welcome, St. Paul's Seminararians


The Rev. Jenni Oventsone

As we prepare this October to celebrate the bi-centennial of the Virginia Theological Seminary and St. Paul's role in its founding, the passion for theological education and formation at the heart of St. Paul's for generations continues. This academic year, we are grateful to be receiving three seminararians from VTS!

As each of these students will be actively engaging in worship leadership, preaching, teaching, and serving throughout the life of St. Paul's, we hope you will take every opportunity to get to know them better as we grow in faith together over the coming year or more.

Please welcome...



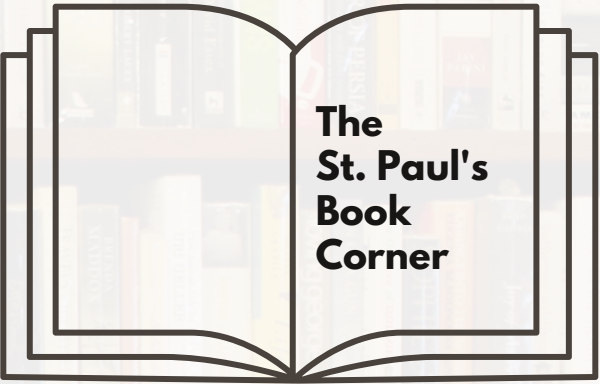
Jackson Davey will continue on at St. Paul's in the VTS Contextual Ministry program after his Young Priests Initiative internship ends in August. Jackson hails from Kalispell, Montana. While he is proud to be a fourth-generation Montanan, he has thoroughly enjoyed all that Virginia has to offer! Jackson studied at the University of Montana and has a Bachelor's in English and a minor in Journalism. After originally moving to Norfolk, Virginia for law school, Jackson felt a calling outside of legal advocacy. Now, Jackson is discerning a call to ministry within the Episcopal Church and is entering his second year at Virginia Theological Seminary. Within the church, Jackson is interested in evangelism and formation. Outside of church, Jackson enjoys coffee shops, reading, and being outdoors with his partner Emily and their dog, Rowan.



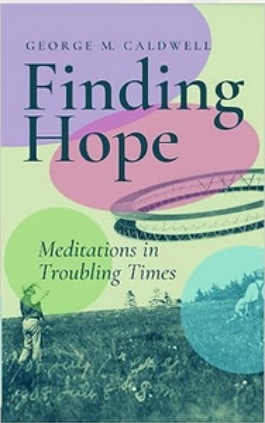
Eliza Brinkley is a postulant for Holy Orders from the Diocese of North Carolina entering her second year as a seminarian at VTS. She is from Raleigh, North Carolina, and grew up in the Episcopal Church. Eliza earned her BA in French and English Literature at Elon University and her Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Prior to attending seminary, Eliza taught high school English and journalism and served as digital evangelist in the Diocese of North Carolina. Eliza enjoys reading, walking and exercising outdoors, hanging out with friends and family, and singing.



Thomas Alexander is a third-year seminarian at VTS and a Candidate for Holy Orders, hailing from his home diocese of Arkansas. He received his B.A. in English and Literary Studies from Hendrix College. Before coming to seminary, Thomas worked as an organist in Episcopal churches in central Arkansas and western North Carolina. He is returning to us, having served as seminarian here at St. Paul's in Summer 2022, and then at St. Paul's, K Street in Washington during the 2022-23 academic year. He lives on the seminary campus with his spouse, Lillian, and their dog, two cats, and many plants



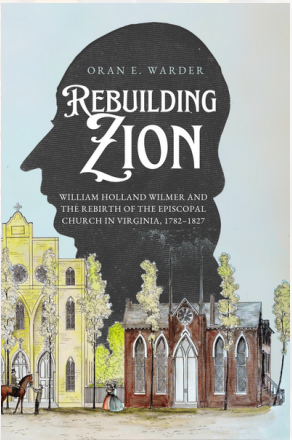
VTS Press publishes two books written by St. Paul's priests. The first, *Finding Hope: Meditations in Troubling Times* is by the Rev. George Caldwell and the second, *Rebuilding Zion: William Holland Wilmer and the Rebirth of the Episcopal Church in Virginia, 1782 - 1827* is by The Rev. Oran E. Warder. You can read more about the VTS Press at vts.edu/vts-press.



**Finding Hope:
Meditations in Troubling Times**
The Rev. George Caldwell

Published earlier this summer, *Finding Hope* is a collection of meditations written by George Caldwell for St. Paul's. From the book: "Without a doubt, we live in troubling times. Yet even in the middle of all that troubles us, we thirst for hope. We recognize that hope can nourish our spirituality, our friendships, and our communities. In *Finding Hope*, priest and spiritual teacher George M. Caldwell dives deep into the parts of life that trouble us. Wrestling with the angels of hope and the demons of despair, he leads us on a journey to discover how the light can shine even—and especially—in the darkness. Through this series of engaging meditations, readers will discover how they have the power to make things new."

Books are available on Amazon, and copies will be available for purchase and signing on September 24th during The Forum



**Rebuilding Zion:
William Holland Wilmer and the
Rebirth of the Episcopal Church in Virginia,
1782 - 1827**
The Rev. Oran Warder

Rebuilding Zion will be published this fall and tells the story of the imperfect yet extraordinary life of William Holland Wilmer, the second rector of St. Paul's Episcopal Church and reformer of the Episcopal Church. Dr. Wilmer helped unify and shape the newly formed Episcopal Church in America and was a key reformer who led the revitalization of the Church in Virginia. On May 4, 1814 Dr. Wilmer delivered the opening sermon of the Diocesan Convention and the inaugural sermon for the Monumental Church in Richmond. In this sermon he issues the call to rebuild the *desolate Zion* of the Episcopal Church in Virginia. This book tells the story of Dr. Wilmer's mission to rebuild.

Books will be available for purchase and signing at St. Paul's on Sunday, October 15th.

The Lazarus Ministry

Housing Stability and Healthy Communities



Housing is the most basic foundation of personal and community success. Healthy communities are built one household at a time. Alexandria is currently in the eye of a housing crisis storm. A year ago, a moratorium on evictions, which was put in place during the pandemic, was lifted. After this pause the average amount owed by some renters is \$5,000, a bill that can be insurmountable.

Last July, the City ran out of funds to assist people in need of housing support and referred residents to the St. Paul's Lazarus Ministry and other non-profit organizations to fill the void. Since that time, Lazarus has experienced an unprecedented increase in the number of requests for assistance and 98% are for rental or eviction expenses. Responding to as many as forty calls a day is a challenge, but Lazarus is committed to returning every call received.

Recent coverage in the local papers, as well as national attention, has brought devastating statistics to the forefront, and the strain on social services agencies, the court system, and landlords has been record-breaking. In June of this year court ordered evictions increased from 35% to 59%.

What affects one of us affects us all; the trauma to individuals and families who lose their homes through eviction impacts the whole community. When our neighbors are at risk our entire community is more fragile. People we see every day who work in our schools, restaurants, dry cleaners and office buildings struggle to stay afloat and work hard to pay their rent, utilities, and buy groceries. Many work multiple jobs, often for hourly wages and no benefits.

The mechanism and solutions to keep people housed are challenging. Policy solutions take time. A luxury that many of our clients do not have. Lazarus clients represent every age, economic status and ethnic background. Their stories are both heartbreaking and inspiring. Here are just a few:

Lisa is a young professional woman who moved to Alexandria with high hopes and a good contract job. The company she worked for was not awarded the contract for another year and Lisa was terminated. She signed a year's lease and exhausted her savings to pay for three months' rent while she looked for a new job. She did everything right. She worked hard to relocate to a new city, found a nice apartment and saved money, only to have it all fall apart and find herself on the brink of eviction. Even though she found a new job and started the same week she had a court date, she had no way to pay her rent.

Lazarus was able to send a pledge letter to her leasing company, issue a check and refer her to Northern Virginia Legal Services to help her navigate the eviction process.

Ahmed fled Afghanistan after working for the U.S. government. His parents, wife, sister and son came here together and received some assistance for six months. Ahmed is an engineer but has been unable to find a regular job. It takes a long time to acquire status and work papers. He is the only member of the family who speaks English and the only one able to work. His wife is learning English so she can find a job when she is eligible to work. Ahmed's parents died during Covid and he has been diagnosed with kidney disease which requires dialysis and eventually a transplant.

Lazarus was able to cover the rent for Ahmed and his family for two months.



Dorothy has worked in the Alexandria School System for over two decades. She is a smart and delightfully optimistic woman who has three grown children - one who struggles, and as a loving mother she helps support him. Her job provides health benefits and leave which she used recently for surgery. Her recovery took longer than her available leave so she came up short covering her living expenses.

The Lazarus Ministry helped her through her crisis so she could focus on healing and going back to her job.

Lazarus is fortunate to have the support of the St. Paul's community and we gratefully collaborate with the Emergency Funding Partners group, the City of Alexandria Director of Resident and Community Services with ARHA, and the Eviction Prevention Service Navigator with the Office of Community Services. With this support and these partnerships Lazarus will continue to keep our clients in their homes.



The St. Paul's Lazarus Ministry was founded in 1988 and has served grateful clients for 35 years...

I am so grateful to St. Paul's Church for helping my family. Thank you so very much. I wish the best to all of you and the best for your families.
-Mr. M

Thank you so much for helping me. I have never asked for financial assistance before. St. Paul's Lazarus saved me from losing my home. Now that I have found a job I will be able to provide for my children.
-Ms. D

If you are interested in finding out more about the Lazarus Ministry or about volunteer opportunities please email June Geoffray at lazarus@stpaulsalexandria.com.

Co-Housing in Old Town

The Rev. Oran Warder

From time to time over the years parishioners have asked if St. Paul's ever considered becoming part of the co-housing movement and perhaps even establishing a co-housing community in Old Town. I confess that everytime I looked into the possibility I was immediately overwhelmed by the complexity and the cost of pursuing this noble idea. While St. Paul's may not be involved and engaged in this movement, there are others who are, and I am pleased to make our parish community aware of their efforts.

First a word about co-housing. The basic idea is a return to the best qualities of a small town close-knit neighborhood, as well as a response to current social, economic and environmental challenges of the current day. In a co-housing community participants own their own personal living space and also have the benefits of shared community space and interaction with neighbors. Ideally, the arrangement helps create community and combat loneliness, exercises good environmental stewardship, and is usually more affordable than independent living.

The property under development in Old Town is a commercial building that is being transformed into a residential complex. Part of the transformation includes becoming a sustainable Net Zero building (balancing the amount of energy used in the building with the amount of renewable energy created on the campus). This project is being developed by a local company called Smart Neighborhoods of Alexandria LLC, and will be the first of its kind in our city. Again, while St. Paul does not sponsor or endorse this project, I wanted to make sure that you were aware it was happening and I look forward to watching it unfold. If you wish to know more, I would be happy to connect you with those leading this project.

The Damascus Project

Micro Loans, Macro Transformation

Steve Francis
and Sue Setliff



Throughout its history, St. Paul's has served the needs of our neighbors by bringing together the people and resources that can make a difference in our community. The Damascus Project, St. Paul's partnership with the Latino Economic Development Center (LEDC) that supports small businesses in our underserved community experienced the fruition of these efforts on June 27th. We celebrated the graduation of eight entrepreneurs who successfully completed the LEDC's small business training workshops.



Graduates with judges, Shannon Watson and Elizabeth Moon



The Rev. Oran Warder addresses the graduates



Judges panel listens to pitches

The businesses included - book keeping and consulting, catering, financial management, cellular service and sales, cat sitting, development of children's educational learning kits and two event planning firms. The graduation was held at the Garden at Building Momentum and featured displays showcasing each business's service while providing an opportunity to meet each entrepreneur to discuss their endeavor. Prior to the graduation ceremony, five judges asked the entrepreneurs questions to further clarify their business ideas to the audience. Two of the volunteer judges were St. Paul's parishioners, Elizabeth Moon and Shannon Watson. The parish was well represented with 13 members attending the graduation.

While we are delighted with the success we've had to date, we continue to focus on outreach and expanding awareness of the Damascus Project within St. Paul's and the Alexandria community. Thus far, we have had constructive meetings with organizations including the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership, Northern Virginia Family Services, ACT of Alexandria, ALIVE, Casa Chirilagua, Campagna Center's New Neighbors & Wright to Read. Continuous development of an informed and supportive network is invaluable in our effort to identify motivated and committed entrepreneurs who would benefit from the financial support, education and business training the Damascus Project provides.



This entrepreneur presented an educational learning kit company.



This entrepreneur presented a cellular service company.

For more information or to refer a candidate contact Steve Francis or Sue Setliff at damascusproject@stpaulsalexandria.com.

The Damascus Project




The Rev. Stacy Carlson Kelly

A Financial Ministry Supporting Daily Life and Long-Term Dreams

Since March, St. Paul's has been exploring options for a ministry to further support economic opportunity, seeking alternative solutions for individuals outside the traditional, brick-and-mortar banking services.

We cast a wide net with our first question: How can St. Paul's help ease, or even erase, the disparities people with low-to-moderate incomes, no credit history or a weak credit history face when they apply for consumer accounts and loans with mainstream banks?

St. Paul's has long been committed to promoting sustainable economic equity. The Lazarus Ministry has been meeting emergency financial needs for decades. Other outreach ministries offer a hand-up through tutoring, food banks, brown bag lunches and many other programs. Most recently, through the Damascus Project, we've partnered with the Latino Economic Development Center to support minority entrepreneurs.

"The Damascus Project - 2.0," as we've dubbed this exploration of alternative financial services, is in keeping with this longstanding focus. We're seeking program(s) and partner(s) to help us help those, like hourly workers, refugees, and struggling single parents, who don't fit the usual banking mold. We're seeking to end destructive, downward cycles of debt, insecurity, and indignity.

Our initial inclination was to "go big," à la the credit unions established by the Diocese of Los Angeles in 1992 and earlier this year by the Diocese of New York. We've given that big idea a closer look from many angles. We've had multiple conversations with St. Paul's parishioners with banking and financial services expertise; the leading lights of the New York effort; leaders of financial service non-profits; lenders and CDFIs; executives of non-faith-based credit unions; and even financial regulators. We have worked to honestly assess the situation in Northern Virginia, asking a second question: Are we a solution in search of a problem, or is there a credit and banking gap that needs to be filled?

The good – and yet disappointing – news is that there is a gap, and a definite need for alternatives, especially to replace payday lending and check-cashing services. There is also a sense that financial literacy training would be beneficial.

By the end of the summer, our research should be complete, and we'll be formulating options for the Damascus Project 2.0 to share with the parish in further conversation. The options must fit these parameters: A sustainable, transformative ministry that helps our neighbors build financial resources to elevate their daily lives and pursue their long-term dreams. Stay tuned; more to come!

Grateful Thanks for the Damascus Project

July 2
Dear Oran,
I turned 80 in May, and here is a small gift in thanks, for having St. Paul's in my life for more than four decades.
For the church and our community, the Damascus Project is, I think, one of the most impactful.
So I'm also thankful for your leadership in making that project possible.
Elizabeth

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For the church and our community, the Damascus Project is, I think, one of the most impactful.
So I'm also thankful for your leadership in making that project possible.

Oran,
It was an honor to serve as a guest judge for the Damascus Project- LEDC Business Trainee Graduation last night. What a wonderful program and what a great outreach by St. Paul's.
Thank you for including me and supporting this work.
Elizabeth





PILGRIMAGE^{2 3 / 2 4}

2023 St. Paul's Pilgrimage to Turkey and Patmos, Greece

Following in the Footsteps of St. Paul and St. John the Divine

The Rev. Oran Warder

This past June, twenty-one enthusiastic and intrepid pilgrims from St. Paul's embarked on an adventure in Turkey and the Greek Island of Patmos. The goal of the journey was to learn more about our beloved patron, St. Paul, one of the most influential figures in early Christianity, and St. John the Divine, who wrote the Book of Revelation. The journey was marked by reading scripture, by tracing their journeys, and with the help of our amazing guide, Aydin Agyun, immersing ourselves in the various contexts in which they lived. Along the way in this unique pilgrimage experience we had the opportunity to explore breathtaking landscapes, ancient ruins and vibrant modern cities, as well as sail the Aegean Sea.



In terms of following Paul, we visited many sites in western Turkey, with the most famous and iconic destination being Ephesus. In Paul's day, Rome was the political capital of the Roman Empire, but Ephesus was the economic capital. In this bustling port city of over 250,000 people Paul would have come into contact with visitors from all over the known world. It was here in this cosmopolitan city that he lived for three years, working, preaching, writing letters. Exploring the vast and beautifully preserved ruins of Ephesus allowed us to walk the same marble streets, visit some of the places

he surely would have visited, as well as stand in the theater (which can hold 25,000 people) where his preaching incited a riot. Words and descriptions fail to capture the significance of this incredible place in terms of our Christian roots and Paul's enduring legacy.

Following St. John the Divine leads pilgrims to the Greek Island of Patmos, perched in the Aegean Sea not far from Ephesus. While living in exile in a cave on a hilltop overlooking the harbor, John received his revelations from God. These divine prophetic visions, addressed to the Seven Churches of Asia (several of which we visited), formed the text for the last book of the Bible. Apocryphal and mysterious, this book still confounds us. Some think it was an interpretation of current events, some believe it a foretelling of future ones. Nevertheless, the Book of Revelation gives us some of the most compelling and beautiful images and language expressing God's never ending love and care for us and for all creation. Visiting this sacred place calls to mind the dramatic ebbs and flows of human existence, and the enduring loving presence of God.



Whether it be the places we traveled, the people we traveled with, or those we met along the way, the 2023 St. Paul's Pilgrimage brought us closer to Paul, to John, to God and to one another. Do watch for an upcoming Adult Forum to learn more about this pilgrimage and you can read more about pilgrimage to Egypt planned for June 2024 on the next page.

2024 St. Paul's Parish Pilgrimage to Egypt

June 10 – 22, 2024

Exploring Origins of the Christian Lineage in Ancient Egypt

Regina Roman

Many stories and traditions in the Christian religion have been modeled on ancient Egyptian practices and beliefs beginning with one God creating all that is seen and unseen. However, following this act follows a complex world full of ways to explain the creation of both the universe and humankind, and our role within the cosmos. These myths and symbols, developed thousands of years before the monotheistic religions appeared, created a basis for subsequent narratives.

The June 2024 St. Paul's pilgrimage to Egypt will explore several roots of the Christian tradition. Pilgrims will experience the great gift of western monasticism and the contemplative life, and discover why Christianity spread so quickly in Egypt after the arrival of the Evangelist and Gospel author St. Mark, founder of the Coptic Orthodox Church, one of the oldest branches of Christianity.



Our time begins in Cairo seeing the great pyramids and the Sphinx, and learning how the ancient Egyptians experienced their gods as a trinity. We will visit several churches in Old Coptic Cairo, pausing where the Holy Family rested after their journey to Egypt. Visiting the beautiful Mohammad Ali Mosque allows us time to ponder the 99 beautiful names of God. No trip to Cairo is complete without a visit to the famous Khan El Khalili Bazaar to shop, barter or sip tea at a lively café.

We then travel by bus through the Eastern Desert to two of the oldest monasteries in the world, St. Anthony, and St. Paul, to learn firsthand from the Coptic monks. Their chants in Coptic are the last direct link to the spoken pharaonic language of ancient Egypt and the earliest Christian communities. After an overnight at the guesthouse, we celebrate the Eucharist sitting by the Red Sea and enjoy a true Saturday Sabbath.




The last portion is a flight to Luxor to board a 4-night cruise to Aswan. In the cooler mornings we visit the great temples of Karnak, Edfu, and Isis experiencing them as a living Book of Common Prayer. We may begin to see threads connecting our understanding of the Christian trinity, holy family, Ten commandments, Psalms, the cross, icons, the power of a name, desert spirituality, and the contemplative life, with origins in ancient Egypt. Onboard the cruise, we relax and watch history pass by.

"Egypt is not a country we live in but a country that lives within us" wrote Pope Shenouda III, the 117th Pope of Alexandria and in the direct lineage of the Apostle Mark. Hopefully, at the end of this pilgrimage, Egypt and its many gifts will live within you.

For more information and registration contact Regina at rgroman@comcast.net with subject line "Egypt 2024 St. Paul's" or please visit www.journeywithpurpose.com.

Notes From a Sabbatical...

There's Something About Mary


The Rev. Alyse Viggiano



Other than being the area where my father's family came from, Viggiano, Italy is home to a Black Madonna, known as the Queen of Viggiano. This was my initial reason to visit the 3,500 person village in the south of Italy.

Black Madonnas are named as such due to their darkened skin, thought to be particularly spiritually powerful because by the sheer grace of God, they transcended to become Black Madonnas. This is mostly attributed to aging, weathering harsh conditions, and/or candle smoke, but regardless of how, believers take great solace from being in their presence.

All around the world the Black Madonnas share a connection to the divine as well as nature due to their origin stories, and the Queen of Viggiano is no different. Legend states, she was found by shepherds who noticed blue flames shooting from atop the mountain.

Upon investigation they found a cave where within lay a pristine Black Madonna. She had been hidden there centuries earlier by monks fleeing the area due to Christian persecution. It is said, "after the statue was discovered, it was taken to the town but soon disappeared to reappear again on the Sacro Monte, where the Sanctuary stands today and where, as per her wishes, it is brought back every year in the Marian month."

Most of the year, the Queen of Viggiano resides in the basilica of Viggiano in the heart of the village, but from May through the first Sunday in September, she lives in her "summer home", a small sanctuary atop the tallest mountain in Viggiano. The journey to the sanctuary is arduous; she is carried in procession by the faithful for seven and a half, incredibly steep (for those wondering just how steep approximately 3,500 feet above sea level) miles.



Other than the hope to complete the 14 mile pilgrimage from the basilica to the sacred mount and back, I didn't know what else to expect, and technically making this pilgrimage out of season. I was alone. Within the four hours, I experienced the breath of human emotions. A sense of gratitude to attempt to accomplish such a journey. Boredom, having intentionally left my headphones behind. Surprise, when hymns started playing in my head. Fear, since after six miles and a bit of altitude sickness, there was still an even steeper mile to go. Shock upon reaching the sanctuary door, as it was locked, but out of nowhere, an older Italian gentleman guided me to the side door to see inside. Peering in, a bit of dismay sunk in. The Black Madonna is not seated upon her throne, but lying on a table having some restoration work done. There was nothing left to do, but take it all in.

On some level, I thought transcendence would happen upon seeing the Black Madonna in the flesh, and to some extent there was. Yet, it wasn't until later a true revelation occurred. This pilgrimage connected me to individuals who've walked this path before me and to those who will walk after me. Regardless of age, language, upbringing, and nationality because of our faith we share a universal connection to each other and the love of God. And although it was incredible to see the Black Madonna, it was the seven mile journey up and back that uncovered God's transcendence.

Finally, while walking down the mountain, I couldn't help but laugh. Miley Cyrus's song lyrics never rang more true, "Ain't about how fast I get there. Ain't about what's waiting on the other side. It's the climb."



St. Paul's Music Ministry

Wednesday is the New Sunday


Eric Schnobrick

I should begin by saying that nothing will ever replace Sunday worship. (And for all of the sometimes necessity of viewing it online, nothing will ever replace being there in person!) But our tradition is full of meaningful, prayerful experiences that can extend to as many parts of our life as we let them. Bishop Mark Stevenson wrote a Christmas message in December that spoke to just one of these other experiences. Reflecting on a service of Advent Lessons and Carols he had attended at VTS, he wrote:

"Just before the service concluded, Dean Ian Markham made a comment along the following lines that helped me to grasp in some small way why it was that the service had such an effect on me. He said that, while he believed in the importance of sermons in a liturgy, there were occasions when it was even more important to simply embrace the rhythm of scripture being read and hymnody being sung. I took from his comment that there is something refreshing, something restorative, something akin to a system reset for one's soul in just being present with the Word delivered by the timelessness of the ages. That was how I experienced it. And it was holy indeed."

I think that we at St. Paul's tapped into a similar sentiment last year during Compline by Candlelight. We offered a chance to participate in sung compline on Wednesday evenings during Advent, Epiphany, and Lent. Familiar prayers, scripture, and chants from Taizé – nothing more offered or expected. The reception of this service was so warm that this year, Compline by Candlelight will become a pillar of our weekly worship schedule throughout the program year. **Please join us for the first of the season on Wednesday, September 20 at 7:30 in the sanctuary.**

But I've written articles about sung compline before, so this is about more than that. This fall, for the first time since January of 2020, St. Paul' Choir will again offer Choral Evensong. For those who know this service, it needs no introduction. For those that do not, this is your chance to experience one of the hallmark expressions of Anglican worship. The choir sings and chants prayers, sings the psalms of the day in full Anglican chant, offers beautifully composed musical settings of the canticles, and presents anthems to match the readings of scripture. Add a bit of candlelight and a couple congregational hymns, and you have a musical service of worship that is among the most beautifully distilled and transcendent. **The first Choral Evensong of the season will be on November 1st at 7:30 to celebrate All Saints' Day.**

One other Wednesday to mark will be **December 6**. St. Paul's Choir will again gather for an evening service, but this time for a **service of Advent Lessons and Carols**. This service, in an abbreviated form, has for several years been attached to a Sunday morning Eucharist. This year, we are allowing it to fill its own space and to tell its own story. If the observance of Advent, the preparation and the expectation, and the acknowledgement that not all of December is Christmas are important to you, this is a can't-miss service.



At their heart, all of these are simple services. They are drawn from the Bible; they are chosen from the hymnal. And we offer them to you and, of course, to God. **Come to church any Wednesday from September 20 through the middle of May**, and there will be a space held for contemplation and praise, for reflection and prayer, for the restorative rhythm of scripture and song. And with all of this, there will be music.

St. Paul's Episcopal Preschool

It's Back To School For SPEP!



Kristin Teeters, Head of School



Greetings from SPEP!

As we enter our 4th year at St. Paul's Episcopal Preschool we are eager to welcome 57 children through our doors for another year of learning through play! The fall is always an exciting time, when staff and students are ready to get back into the classroom, see friends old and new, rested and recharged for the challenges and fun ahead.

While the first days of school can sometimes be accompanied with a bit of apprehension, mornings are full and busy at SPEP, and the happy buzz of students eagerly anticipating what lies ahead can definitely be felt. Whether it's the joy of a first field trip, the first spin around the playground on a favorite bike, the first science experiment or artistic masterpiece of the year, or returning to the beautiful sanctuary for chapel, SPEP children are constantly engaged and nurtured to develop socially, emotionally, physically, and cognitively.

As always, we have lots of other fun to look forward to outside of the classroom. We invite you to join us at some of our annual events, and see first-hand all SPEP has to offer:

- SPEP Book Fair, Norton Hall, September 28th – October 1st**
- Episcopal School Sunday, October 1st**
- Annual Halloween Parade, Tuesday, October 31st, 11:15**
- Scottish Christmas Walk, Saturday, December 2nd**
- Christmas Pageant, Friday, December 15th, 11:00**

Or, come visit our students and teachers in action in our classrooms; call or email to schedule a tour – we love sharing our school with others! Tours are available throughout the year and applications for the '24- '25 school year will open October 1st.

We hope to see you at the preschool!

We are proud of our 2023 grads!



At the end of the 2023 school year we celebrated students finishing their last year at SPEP. Parents gathered for a graduation ceremony in the church and picnic in the courtyard followed. We are so proud of all of our students!

St. Paul's Children, Youth, and Families

Summer Recap



Lillian Hardaway



Vacation Bible School

VBS 2023 was such an incredible week. We had three classes of students rotate through art, free play, games, and a bible lesson. As a whole community we would have chapel and snack together! Vacation Bible School is an incredible gift for the St. Paul's Community because it draws people from the church, preschool, and Alexandria community.



Music Camp

The first St. Paul's Music Camp was a major success! We had three classes of students rotate through music lessons with Mr. Eric, art, games, and free play. Each day we had Group Sing and snack together in Upper Norton. We finished up the week by inviting parents to participate in the last group sing!



Save the Date

VBS 2024:
June 17-21, 2024

Registration opens
January 15th, 2024

Music Camp 2024:
June 24 - 28, 2024

Registration opens
January 15th, 2024

Summer Sundays at St. Paul's

Although our Sunday schedule changes in the summer, it's never quiet! Summer is a great time to do crafts on the steps and in the courtyard, eat popsicles while riding bikes, and sip on lemonade while catching up friends. We also launched a pilot program called "Littles Praydates" where we welcome families with little ones age three and under to the nursery for time to play, hear a story, and sing a song!



Looking to the 2023-2024 Program Year

Get excited for the return of our school year programming! Be sure to pay attention to the website and newsletters for dates and descriptions! Here are some things we have going on:

- St. Francis Animal Blessing
- St. Paul's Serves
- Sunday School
- Youth Group
- Youth Confirmation
- Youth Mission Trips
- Youth Service Projects
- Children's Choir
- Littles Praydates
- Family Worship
- Christmas Pageant
- Holy Questions
- Shrine Mont Parish Retreat
- Vacation Bible School
- Music Camp

Sunday Forum September Launch
2023/ 24 Program Year Preview



The Forum will launch our program year of weekly gathering and learning together on Sunday, September 17th at 10 am in Norton Hall! Grab a cup of coffee and gather with others as we hear from notable speakers and engage in topics at the intersection of faith and life.

Come listen, learn, and ask questions. Speakers and themes this fall will include:

- September 17th Rector's Forum: The Rev. Oran Warder "Third Time's a Charm: The Founding of the Virginia Theological Seminary"
September 24th The Rev. George Caldwell: "Finding Hope"
October 1st Episcopal Schools Sunday: Rode Molla, Ph.D. "May they flourish: how our faith in action creates space for the holistic nurture of children"
October 8th St. Paul Serves*
October 15th Dyer/Horne Lecture The Rev. Judy Fentress-Williams, Ph.D. "Generations: Genealogy as Story in Genesis"



In honor of the bi-centennial, VTS partnered with Watts and Co. vestment makers in England to commission anniversary stoles. From Watts' and Co. website: "Each stole uses a custom pattern, honouring the history of VTS in the weave of the silk itself. The 'Hilliard' pattern is an original design from one of our founder's: G. F. Bodley. Inspired by a medieval tapestry, and influenced by contemporary designer William Morris, the fabric is imbued with both history and modernity. It is therefore perfect as a symbol of both VTS's history and its future." St. Paul's clergy will wear these stoles on Sunday, October 15th as we celebrate St. Paul's role in the founding of VTS throughout the day.

- October 22nd Owning our Faith series begins (October 22, 29; November 5, 12)
This 4-week series will explore the foundations of our Christian faith and practice, designed for those new to St. Paul's and long-time parishioners seeking to re-engage their faith and learn more about what it means to be Episcopalian.

- November 19th Thanksgiving Brunch*
November 26th Thomas Alexander : "A Special Ministry of Servanthood:" The Ministry of Deacons in the Life of the Church
December 3rd Advent Wreath-Making*
December 10th Laura Francis: "Botanical Christmas Gift Boxes"
December 17th Christmas Carol Sing-Along and Festive Holiday Reception*

* Designates intergenerational forums and activities
If you have interests and ideas for future forum themes to explore, or are looking for more information, please contact me at jenni@stpaulsalexandria.com.

DATE Mark your calendar!
Mark your calendar for upcoming services and events at St. Paul's Episcopal Church. Stay tuned as more is added to the calendar this program year, for the latest event information visit our website, www.stpaulsalexandria.com

Table with 3 columns: Date, Day, and Event. Rows include September (Homecoming, Choir Begins, etc.), October (Lenten Series, etc.), November (Advent Wreath Making, etc.), and December (Christmas Eve, Christmas Day).

Table with 3 columns: Date, Day, and Event. Rows include January (MLK Service, etc.), February (Shrove Tuesday, etc.), March (St. Paul's Annual Meeting, etc.), and Easter Day (Sunrise Service, etc.).

Table with 3 columns: Date, Day, and Event. Rows include April (Bishop's Visit) and May (Parish Retreat, Pentecost).

From the Archives...

Grave Secrets



Corinne Marasco

Cemeteries are a valuable resource for historians. They contain a wealth of information, including the personal stories of those buried there and the beliefs of the people in the community where they lived. In many cases, the inscription on a tombstone may be the only written information left about that person. This is the first in an occasional series about the people whose final resting place is in St. Paul's Cemetery.

Little is known about **Margaret Payne (1872—1897)**. She was born November 5, 1872, to Henry and Anna Payne in Mercer Township, Loudoun County, Virginia. Maggie's birth record indicates that Henry was a miller by trade. Henry was listed as a widower with five children, including seven-year-old Maggie, and residing in the Mount Gilead neighborhood of Loudoun County in the 1880 U.S. Census. Unfortunately, the majority of the 1890 census records were destroyed in a 1921 fire at the Commerce Department, so we are unable to determine Maggie's whereabouts during that time. [1]

We know that she moved to Alexandria, where she had family, likely when she was about 18 or 20 years old. Maggie's cousin Margaret Luckett married **Calvin Butts (1850—1938)** in 1873 and they were living in Alexandria. Butts and his business partner **J.R.N. Curtin (1850—1911)** acquired an iron foundry in 1890; in 1902, they incorporated it as the Alexandria Iron Works. [2] We also know that Maggie was a clerk at John R. Chapman's dry goods shop at 424 King Street. Sadly, this information comes from the July 19, 1897, notice of Maggie's death in the Alexandria Gazette. "Miss Maggie Payne, niece of Mr. Calvin Butts, and who for some time was a clerk in the store of Mr. J.R. Chapman, died Saturday [July 17] at Rectortown. Her remains were brought here to-day for interment. The services were conducted by Rev. O.H. Seward, of the Free Methodist Church." [3] She was 24 years old.

There was no coroner's inquest given the short time between her passing and burial, which suggests the cause of death was not in dispute. An infectious illness like scarlet fever, which was frequently reported in the Alexandria Gazette in 1897, could have been a cause of death. However, a 16-year gap in Virginia's birth and death records means that we will likely never find out what happened. The General Assembly passed a statute requiring the statewide recording of births, marriages, and deaths in 1853. Cities and counties kept records of births, marriages, and deaths, and made yearly reports to the state. The General Assembly enacted a repeal of portions of the state code pertaining to the registration of births and deaths in 1898. Because of this, the vast majority of counties and cities did not keep records of births and deaths from 1897 to 1911. The requirement to record births and deaths was reinstated in a statute passed by the General Assembly in 1912, and a Bureau of Vital Statistics was created to gather the information.[4]

Maggie Payne's grave monument, whose bluish-gray tint stands out among the marble and granite, is what makes her final resting place distinctive. These markers were advertised as "White Bronze," except they were actually pure zinc. From the 1870s until the outbreak of World War I, the only manufacturer in the US was the Bridgeport, Conn.-based Monumental Bronze Company. Each monument was made to order because they were sold only through illustrated catalogs and sales agents. The company claimed that its products would "last as long as the Pyramids of Egypt."



The grave marker of Margaret "Maggie" Payne.



The reverse side of Maggie's grave marker.

The markers were sandcast in the Bridgeport foundry and then shipped to subsidiaries in Chicago, Detroit, Des Moines, New Orleans, Philadelphia, and St. Thomas, Canada, for finishing and distribution. Customers could choose from a variety of sizes, shapes, and prices, and customize the design according to their tastes and preferences. The monuments featured designs commonly seen on granite and marble headstones, such as lambs, obelisks, fraternal emblems, religious symbols, urns, and flowers. Each component was individually cast and then fused together with pure hot zinc, so no two monuments were alike. Only the panels could be removed to add names and dates of additional family members. The hollow feature of these markers led to stories of bootleggers hiding alcohol inside the monuments during Prohibition. [5]

The model of the grave marker from the Monumental Bronze Company, Bridgeport, Conn., catalog, 1905.



No markers were sold after 1914. The U.S. government had taken over Monumental Bronze's plant in Bridgeport to manufacture munitions for the war effort, resulting in a decline in business. Post-war public demand shifted away from white bronze to granite and other natural stones, further contributing to the decline. The company continued producing panels for existing monuments and parts for automobiles, radios, and kitchen equipment. However, the Great Depression eventually led to the company's bankruptcy in 1939.

The reverse side of Maggie's grave marker adds an intriguing element to her story. It features a cross entwined with flowers and the date 1905 underneath. This marker design can be traced back to a 1905 Monumental Bronze company catalog and would have cost \$30 at the time, equivalent to about \$1,000 today. One possible explanation is that there was a previous grave marker that was replaced in 1905, which the panel commemorates. It is possible that Calvin Butts, as a co-founder of an iron foundry business, was familiar with Monumental Bronze's products and purchased the grave marker for his young relative. If this is the case, it is a meaningful tribute to honor a young woman who passed away prematurely with a grave marker intended to "last as long as the Pyramids of Egypt."



End Notes:

The people whose names appear in boldface type are also buried in St. Paul's Cemetery.

- [1] Kelle Blake. "First in the Path of the Firemen. The Fate of the 1890 Population Census, Part 1" Prologue 28 (Spring, 1996). <https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/1996/spring/1890-census-1.html>
- [2] "Out of the Attic: Iron mill ornamented the White House, Masonic temple before becoming Safeway." Alexandria Times, August 18, 2011. <https://media.alexandriava.gov/docsarchives/historic/info/attic/2021/attic20210819ironworks.pdf>
- [3] Alexandria Gazette, July 19, 1897, 3. Rectortown is an unincorporated community in Fauquier County, Virginia.
- [4] "New vital statistics law goes into effect," Staunton Daily Leader, June 14, 1912, 5.
- [5] Barbara Rotundo, "Monumental Bronze: A Representative American Company." In Cemeteries and Graveyards: Voices of American Culture, edited by Richard Meyer, 263–91. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Research Press, 1989. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt46nqxw.18>. Also, Edward T. Howe, "Monumental Bronze Company," December 17, 2020 (<https://connecticuthistory.org/monumental-bronze-company/>)



So let us not grow weary in doing what is right,
for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up.

Galatians 6:9



On Sunday, July 9th the altar flowers at St. Paul's were given "In gratitude for a successful grain harvest at Grapewood Farm" by parishioners Cathy and Fred Sachs. The star of these beautiful arrangements (*pictured at left*) were stalks of wheat harvested at Grapewood Farm, owned and operated by the Sachs family. Established in 2000 and located outside Montross, Virginia, the property includes "130 acres farm land, new barn and mill, mixed wood lots, fruit orchards, wildlife set asides, wildflower meadows, streams, ponds and river land" [1]. Grapewood Farm specializes in "producing superior organic small grains and stone ground flour for our community." [1a]



A recent article in the *Rappahannock Record* highlights the way the Sachs family runs their farm and their focus on "regenerative organic farming." What started as a retirement activity has turned into a family business with Cathy, Fred, and both sons, David and Peter working to produce organic grains – sungold spelt, danko rye, and liberty soft red winter wheat. As they continue to improve and grow their farm their main goal of being good stewards of the land is constant. In addition to the farmland the land includes acres of wetlands, woods, and meadows. "The farm captures rainwater and solar energy to help run the grain processing" [2].

[Click here to read the Rappahannock Record story.](#)

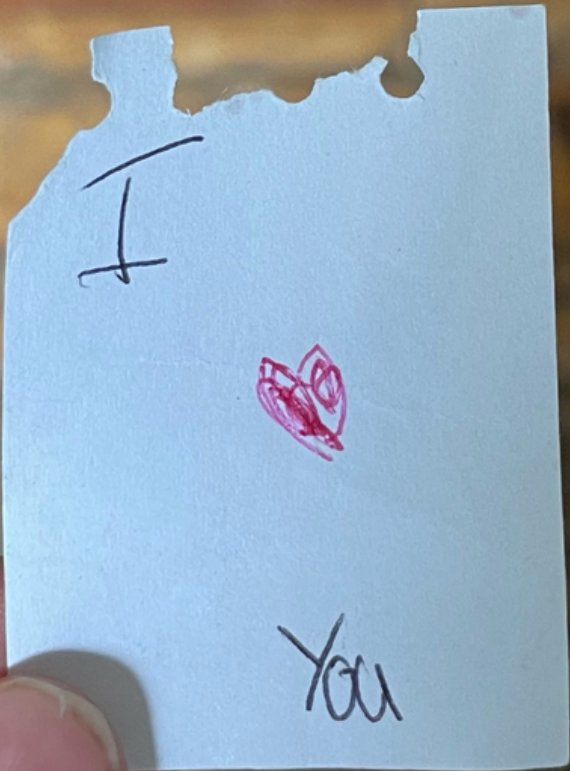


David, Cathy, and Fred Sachs

Just as the Sachs family carefully stewards the acres of farmland at Grapewood farm, we too are stewards. Not only are we stewards of God's gifts freely given in our own lives, but we are also responsible for our church home, St. Paul's, which has been entrusted to our care generations after its founding. As we move towards fall we will once again ask you to support the mission and ministry of St. Paul's during our annual operating fund pledge drive. Your financial support allows us to continue to serve the people of this parish with programs and ministries that deepen our faith and serve our community. Making a pledge to support the operating budget of St. Paul's is a gift of thanksgiving for the life we share at St. Paul's Episcopal Church; and a promise to future generations that this parish will continue to serve Alexandria for centuries to come.

[1], [1a] www.grapewoodfarm/about.com. Accessed 1 August 2023.
[2] Nunnery, J. (2023, June 1). Grapewood Farm goes against the conventional farming grain. *Rappahanock Record*, (6/01/2023), A17.

We are looking forward to another
great program year at St. Paul's!
Thank you for being
a part of this community,
we are so grateful for you.





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

The Regular Service Schedule Resumes Sunday, September 17th

Morning Prayer

9:00 a.m. in the chapel Monday - Friday

Join us Monday - Friday at 9:00 a.m. in the chapel for the quiet service of Morning Prayer

Wednesday Eucharist

12:00 p.m. in the chapel

Service of Holy Eucharist, each Wednesday at noon

☛ Livestream available

Sunday Services

8:00 a.m. in the church

Holy Eucharist: Rite One, a traditional spoken service

9:00 a.m. in the church*

Family Eucharist: Worship for all ages designed for children's participation with hymns and the *Damascus Road Dogs* musical ensemble

11:00 a.m. in the church*

Holy Eucharist: Rite Two, traditional language with hymns, organ, and choir

☛ Livestream available

***Childcare available for children 0-4yrs.**

5:00 p.m. in the church

Holy Eucharist: Rite Two, a contemplative service with candle lighting and prayers for healing

**Wherever you are in your life and in your faith,
there is a place for you here.**

www.stpaulsalexandria.com