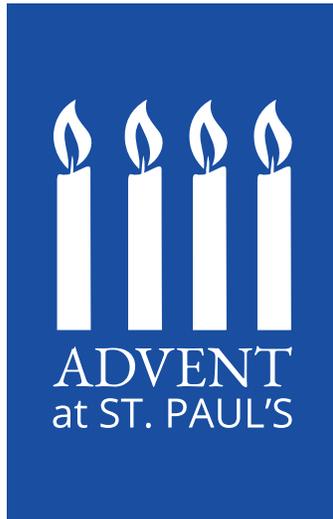




ST. PAUL'S
EPISCOPAL CHURCH
Seeking. Serving. Loving. Together.

Parish Notes

December 2021 • Vol. 64 No. 4



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Organist

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Kelsey Ferguson
Director of Children's & Youth Choirs

Lois Bell
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David Osburn
Carillonneur

Lauren Dockery
Director of Children's Ministries

Nathaniel Powell
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Pam O'Halloran
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Cover Photos

From our All Things Advent
celebration on November 28.

A NOTE FROM OUR RECTOR

Sabbatical

The Rev. Jeanne Leinbach



Dear Parish Family,

A custom and practice for Episcopal Churches is to offer their clergy a sabbatical, a time of leave away from normal duties in order to spend an extended period of time in study, reflection, and renewal. Sabbatical leave is not a vacation, nor is it only continuing education; it is time to promote a priest's spiritual, intellectual and emotional renewal and growth. Sabbaticals are also a time for the clergy to reflect on their life, parish, mission, call and goals for the future, in order to be a more effective minister of the Gospel and shepherd of God's people. I am grateful to you that my contract, following Diocese of Ohio Guidelines, offers a three-month sabbatical after six years of service. Having joined St. Paul's in September 2015, I am now eligible for a sabbatical. I have given careful thought to the best time for me to be away for three months. I didn't want to leave just as we were getting back to in-person worship and programming following safety precautions due to COVID. Plus, Jessie needed her maternity leave! With a couple of weeks to transition responsibilities after Jessie's return in January, I will take my sabbatical from February through April, 2022.

My sabbatical plans include two trips. In February, I will be traveling to the Holy Lands through Lightline Pilgrimages with a group from the Episcopal Church of the Nativity in Scottsdale, Arizona. My hope is that experiencing this trip as a pilgrim, I will be able to effectively lead a group from St. Paul's to the Holy Lands in the coming years. In March, I will be traveling with Globus Faith-Based Tours to see treasured shrines, pilgrimage sites, and spiritual places in Portugal, Spain, and France. In addition to these trips, I'm looking forward to reading the many books I do not have time to read during the normal course of my schedule. My list includes *How to Be an Antiracist* by Ibram Kendi, *Entertaining Race* by Michael Eric Dyson, and *The Practice and Presence of God* by Brother Lawrence. In addition, since my staff LOVES the Enneagram, a system of personality typing that informs relationships, I am diving in with books such as *The Road Back to You* and *The Path Between Us*.

I am so grateful to all of you for this time of renewal and look forward to sharing my experiences with you when I return in May. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Jeanne+

On Loving

The Rev. John Kennedy



Love: is there any word in the English language so overused, misused, and yet necessary? We hear it, see it, and sometimes feel it — in its varied expressions and meanings — with such frequency that we might sometimes lose any coherent

sense of what it is. In the words of the philosopher Dallas Willard, “Familiarity breeds unfamiliarity.” Through advertising, film, television, pop music, and everyday conversations we have or simply overhear, we are witness to an endless parade of conceptions of love — sometimes sincere, sometimes not, but in any case, often misguided. What defines our idea of love?

Christianity is based on the premise that love is the very foundation of the universe. It is the deepest substratum; the first principle. We do not live in a universe of cold, inanimate energy and matter, colliding and reacting randomly; we live in a cosmos that was intended and brought about as an act of love.

At the end of “Paradiso,” the third and final part of the *Divine Comedy*, Dante describes God as “the Love that moves the sun and the other stars.” In scripture, it is written that “God is love” (1 John 4:8). Speaking of unfamiliarity through overfamiliarity, this is one of the most popular and commonly cited verses in the Bible, but it is often quoted and heard apart from its context. What does it mean to say that God is love? Is it up to us to discern and define, or do we have something — or someone — to look to for direction and definition? The following verse in the first letter of John offers an answer: “God’s love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him” (1 John 4:9). Love looks like Jesus. Its ultimate

expression is in the cross: “In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins” (1 John 4:10). While the language of atonement, sacrifice and sin can call to mind thoughts and feelings that seem far from loving, perhaps it might help to think of this verse as meaning that Jesus offered himself in self-sacrificial love in order to bridge the gap between human beings and God (to atone literally means to make “at-one”). This love, unlike so many of the “loves” in our culture, is not possessive, insecure, self-regarding, or conditional. As our namesake St. Paul wrote, this love is patient and kind. It is not envious or arrogant. It does not insist on its own way. It is not irritable or resentful. It rejoices in the truth, bearing all things, believing all things, hoping all things, enduring all things (1 Corinthians 13:4-7).

This love is the foundation of our life in Christ just as it is the foundation of the universe. It is what makes our seeking, serving and, yes, loving possible. We are called to be a community of this kind of love — and indeed, we already are! But God always calls us higher up and deeper in. We are called to be a people with big hearts open to God and to one another — indeed, to all the world and its creatures. This calling, when we accept it, asks everything of us but it gives back even more. The way of love is the way to life. Let us continue walking in it together!

John+

Meet Another EpiscoPAL Pair



Amia Wheatley

A lifelong Clevelander, Amia Wheatley was looking for a welcoming church that aligned with her values. She liked that St. Paul's had a Young Adult Group since she was looking for a community with people around her age.

She first visited at the end of

January 2020, attending a few services before COVID changed how we worship. Life kept going at St. Paul's and Amia took advantage of the many programs that were offered. She participated in Episcopal 101, the Sacred Ground series, and several Young Adult events.

Amia received her undergraduate degree in History from Cleveland State University and attended Kent State University for her Master's in Library and Information Science. She is the branch manager of the Beachwood Branch of Cuyahoga County Public Library. Her job entails community outreach, library programming, reference work, and helping patrons. Being a librarian, it is no surprise she likes to read. As much as she would like to have a pet, she is allergic to cats and dogs — so no furry friends for her! She does share living space with over 30 houseplants. She enjoys knitting and over the last year has been learning to sew. She loves to hike and spend time at the North Chagrin Reservation. She also loves karaoke and musical theatre and is happy they are returning after their hiatus during the pandemic.

Amia has jumped into life at St. Paul's with both feet. She is enjoying being a co-leader in the Young Adult Group and has attended several Young Adult programs. In October she spoke to the Parish about stewardship. Amia was baptized at St. Paul's in June saying, "I felt like I finally found the right church home for me and trusted the St. Paul's community to do this." Welcome Amia! We are so happy to have you in our St. Paul's community.



Allison Paetz

Allison Paetz grew up in the Cleveland Heights/Shaker Heights area. She is a lifelong member of St. Paul's, and says she can't imagine going to church anywhere else in Cleveland, even though she and her husband Tyler now live in

Lakewood. She and Tyler are

currently looking to buy a house in Cleveland Heights or Shaker Heights.

Allison went to Case Western Reserve University where she studied music education and music performance. She also had the good fortune of meeting Tyler when they were both undergraduates. She earned a Master's of Music Education from Michigan State University. Currently she's halfway through earning her Doctorate in Music Education from Case Western Reserve University.

Allison is a choir and research teacher at Rocky River High School. Besides teaching she also directs extracurricular show choir, works with a cappella groups, and assists with the Rocky River High School musical. She enjoys reading, exercising, cooking, listening to podcasts, and spending time with friends and family.

Despite a full time job and studies, Allison is very involved at St. Paul's. She's been a chalice minister for fifteen years and is part of the leadership team of the Young Adult Group. Having grown up at St. Paul's and been an active parishioner, Allison is a natural choice to fill the role of EpiscoPAL. She and Amia have been getting to know each other and having fun as co-leaders of the Young Adult Group. Allison comments that "as a young adult, it isn't always easy to find your place in the life of the church, but I am so grateful for the feeling of belonging I have at St. Paul's." And in turn, St. Paul's is grateful to have Allison as such an engaged and faithful parishioner!

Pledge Campaign Update

Pam O'Halloran, Director of Operations



Thank you! We are enormously grateful to all those who have responded to the 2022 annual campaign. Your pledges of support reflect your commitment to the work of the church in this fractured world.

Pledges are not binding; sometimes life throws a curve ball and catches us by surprise. Because pledges are a form of prayer, God understands when we have to adjust. We invite you to speak to a member of the clergy if you have questions.

Campaign update: As of November 30, we have received 231 pledges or gifts totaling \$1,035,000, short of our goal of \$1,565,000 from 375 pledges. If you have not yet submitted your pledge to support St. Paul's in 2022, we encourage you to complete a pledge form which can be found either online at www.stpauls-church.org/pledge or in the church pews or information racks. Please help us meet our goal to maintain all programs at current levels!

Never pledged before? Not sure WHY we ask for your pledge of future giving rather than just encouraging gifts to the current annual fund or inviting your gifts in the plate as it goes by? The act of pledging is important to the church for two reasons. First, since 85% of St. Paul's annual income comes from its current members, annual budgeting can be difficult. Pledging enables us to create responsible budgets. The second benefit of pledging is far more personal. Pledging is about our faith and about offering our gifts to God as a prayer of thanksgiving, rather than giving from what is left over.

IRA Required Distributions

Are you over 70½ and have an IRA? For many people, contributing your IRA distributions to the church can actually save you money in several ways:

- Required minimum IRA distributions (RDMs) can push retirees into higher tax brackets.
- RDMs can increase your adjusted gross income which could trigger a 3.8% Medicare surtax.
- Withdrawals from a retirement account can cause Social Security benefits to become taxable.
- Large RDMs can increase Medicare Part B and D premiums.

IRA distributions can be easily directed to St. Paul's. Speak to your IRA administrator for more information.

Photo Gallery



On Wednesday, November 10, our youth choir lead a service of choral evensong at Trinity Cathedral.

Reflections of Gratitude

A Note of Thanks

The following note of gratitude is shared with the St. Paul's community at the request of Heather Pederson, the Dean of Students of EDWINS Leadership & Restaurant Institute. EDWINS is one of St. Paul's primary outreach partners and has a mission of giving formerly-incarcerated adults a foundation in the hospitality industry. St Paul's EDWINS ministry celebrates each graduate with the gift of an engraved knife set and offers ongoing coaching and mentoring to support their successful re-entry.

During this time of Thanksgiving, I wanted to send a special message to you all:

I just wanted to say how thankful I am to have such a great group of people rallying behind our students and staff and helping in any way that you can to make EDWINS and our mission stronger. It means more than words can express to know just how lucky we are to have your unwavering support and your continued involvement in our mission. Without your help, we would not be able to help the students in the capacity that we do. I can personally say that your mentorship and emergency fund donations have helped me to focus on the bigger aspects of my job more and find quick solutions to smaller problems, which at times are the most important ones. It has been a blessing to work with you and a privilege to get to know you better, and I thank you for all that you have done for us and all that we will do in the future together.

Being someone who is formerly incarcerated myself, I never really thought I would have the opportunities that have been awarded to me now. I couldn't fathom being in a role where I am helping the very people I used to be, and it means the world to me to know that there are so many people who still believe in real second chances and the ability for someone to make a true change in their lives. You have helped me to restore my faith in humanity and in my belief that you can be a whole person after incarceration and our interactions help me to bring that faith to my students and staff.

I thank God for you everyday and didn't want to go through this Holiday Season without you knowing just how special you are to me, and to EDWINS.

I wish you all a very Happy Thanksgiving and Holiday Season filled with peace, love, blessings, and lots of great food!

Heather K. Pederson
Dean of Students



Men's Council

On Tuesday, November 30, the Men's Council over \$3000 worth of clothing, toys, and personal care items to the Journey Center of Safety and Healing (formerly Domestic Violence Center).

Trust us that Journey Center's Lynnette Reddick is bursting with appreciation under her mask. This outreach was made possible due to profits from last year's sale of Christmas greens and poinsettias. Hopefully, this year's sale will be equally successful, allowing us to continue this vital ministry which Men's Council has maintained for over 15 years. Target at Steelyard Commons has been a loyal partner in this venture, which has allowed us to expand the reach of our mission. Online orders are currently being accepted. Pickup of poinsettias and greens will be available through December 12: www.menofstpauls.org

JOIN US FOR

Christmastide Worship

Advent Lessons and Carols

Saturday, December 11, 5 p.m.

Sunday, December 12, 5 p.m.^*

This candlelit service of scripture and music prepares us for the mystery of Christmas and features carols by the Adult and Youth choirs, and congregational hymns. Prelude music from the Handbell Choir begins at 4:30 p.m., and a carillon concert follows the service. A freewill offering will be collected to benefit non-profit organizations striving for equity and justice in the areas of housing, food and education: Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry's 2100 Lakeside Men's Shelter, The Greater Cleveland Food Bank, and Open Doors Academy. Registration is required and seating is limited. Register on our website.

Christmas Eve Pageant and Holy Eucharist

Friday, December 24, 2 and 4 p.m.^*

These two identical services will include a lively narrated Christmas Pageant with music and congregational hymns. Special Note: Seating is limited, and registration is required. The first two-hundred registrants will receive priority seating in the nave. We will have additional seating available in Tucker Hall with a live feed of the service. All will be able to participate fully. Registration begins December 6.

Christmas Eve Festival Holy Eucharist

Friday, December 24, 7[^], 9, and 11 p.m.

Join us for one of the most beautiful services of the year. Readings from Holy Scripture, favorite hymns, and seasonal choral and instrumental music all herald the birth of Christ. *Special Note:* Seating is limited, and registration is required. The first two-hundred registrants will receive priority seating in the nave. We will have additional seating available in Tucker Hall with a live feed of the service. All will be able to participate fully. Registration begins December 6.

Christmas Day Holy Eucharist

Saturday, December 25, 10:30 a.m.

This service of Holy Eucharist offers a quieter alternative to the festival services of Christmas Eve and features congregational hymns.

The First Sunday after Christmas

Sunday, December 26, 10 a.m.

Christmas Lessons & Carols and Holy Eucharist. This will be the sole worship service on this day.

Epiphany Celebration

Thursday January 6, 2022, 6 p.m.

We'll mark the arrival of the magi and this great festival of light with a brief service of prayer and song, including music from our Children's Choirs, followed by King's Cake and champagne (and sparkling cider) to celebrate! We'll also introduce the ancient Epiphany custom of 'chalking the doors' – a ritual to ask God's blessing on our homes and our lives - and send everyone home with chalk and special prayers to observe this custom in their own homes.

**ASL Interpreted*

^Livestreamed

Register online!

Or go to:

stpauls-church.org/christmas



Parish Calendar

Fellowship

Raising of the Wreath
Saturday, December 11, 9 a.m.

Thanks to our Men's Council, our two, large, 14-foot wide wreaths will be hoisted to the top of the south and west faces of our bell tower. They could use a few extra hands to help. Contact Michael Kechisen for more: kechisen@gmail.com



SAGES Outing
Tuesday, December 14, 11 a.m.

SAGES, our fellowship for active retired people, will gather at the Cleveland Botanical Garden for the exhibit, "A Garden Holiday." Beautiful holiday plants from a variety of poinsettias to evergreen conifers to trees decorated by affiliated garden clubs will be featured. The well-stocked gift shop at the CBG offers a terrific selection of gifts for gardeners and non-gardeners alike. The café at the Garden is open and those wishing to will meet after our self-guided tour to share a meal. Ample parking is available at the Garden.

The cost per ticket is \$10 and we ask that you bring that amount on the day of the visit so the church can be reimbursed. Make a reservation with Jenni Thomas by Monday, December 6 so we know how many tickets to order and pay for on December 7: jthomas@stpauls-church.org or (216) 932-5815. Look for more details in next month's *Parish Notes* about our January outings and events.

Young Adult Compline and Celebration
Thursday, December 16, 7:30 p.m.

The Young Adult Group will be holding our December gathering in the form of an Advent Compline service and White elephant gift exchange. Join us for a peaceful, reflective service in the Brooks Room on Thursday, December 16 at 7:30 pm followed by a celebration of our year together with coffee and dessert.

If you wish to participate in the optional exchange, bring a wrapped gift (please don't spend more than \$20. Silly or creative gifts are encouraged!). RSVP by December 13 to Allison Paetz at allison.paetz@gmail.com.

Adult Formation



Yoga Class
Mondays at 5:30 p.m.

Join trained yoga instructor Rebekah Colours and St. Paul's parishioners and friends for a weekly yoga class on Mondays from 5:30 to 6:20 p.m. in Brooks. Classes are free with the option of making a freewill donation to support our outreach partners. Bring your mat, blocks (if desired), and a friend. No registration required. For more information, contact Rebekah Colours: rebekahcolours@gmail.com



Advent Forum Series: Handel's Messiah

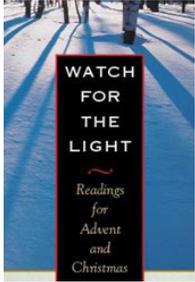
For each of the four Sundays of Advent, the Adult Forum will explore Handel's oratorio, Messiah, one of the best-loved musical compositions of all time. We will use it as an avenue into the biblical texts on which it is based, as well as deepen our knowledge and appreciation of Handel's masterwork.

These forums will be adapted from the Kerygma program Hallelujah: The Bible and Handel's Messiah, written by Carol M. Bechtel.

November 28: "Comfort, Comfort My People"
December 5: "Who Shall Abide the Day of His Coming?" / Rev. John Kennedy
December 12: "For Unto Us a Child is Born" / Kelsey Ferguson
December 19: "Glory to God in the Highest" / Rev. John Kennedy

Watch for the Light A Virtual Pilgrimage Through Advent

*Wednesdays in Advent, 7 p.m.- 8 p.m.
(December 1, 8, 15, 22)*



As the days grow shorter and Christmas draws near, you are invited to join together with members of the St. Paul's community from the comfort of your home. We will gather on Zoom for an hour of prayer and reflection based on a selection of readings from the book *Watch for the Light: Readings for Advent and Christmas*. No

need to purchase the book (although it is a great one to have!) as readings will be circulated via email the week before Advent begins. See below for the schedule of discussion leaders:

Wednesday, December 1: Rev. John Kennedy
Wednesday, December 8: Rev. Jeanne Leinbach
Wednesday, December 15: Rev. Brandon Ashcraft
Wednesday, December 22: Lauren Dockery



Spirituality on the Silver Screen

Beginning Wednesday, January 5, 2022, 6:30 p.m.

Spirituality on the Silver Screen returns! On Wednesday evenings between Epiphany and Lent, members of the St. Paul's community will host screenings and discussions of movies with spiritual significance.

Spirituality on the Silver Screen will be offered both in-person and virtually on an alternating basis this year. See the calendar below for more information. When we meet in person, light refreshments and popcorn will be provided. To learn more, or to indicate interest (signups appreciated but not required!), contact Rev. John at jkennedy@stpauls-church.org.

Spirituality on the Silver Screen 2022 Calendar:

- Wednesday, January 5:** *Contact*, hosted by Timothy Wutrich (In-person; Brooks Room at 6:30 p.m.)
- Wednesday, January 12:** *The Da Vinci Code*, hosted by Kelsey Ferguson (Virtual; Zoom discussion at 6:30 p.m.)
- Wednesday, January 19:** *Hunt for the Wilderpeople*, hosted by Lauren Dockery (In-person; Brooks Room at 6:30 p.m.)
- Wednesday, January 26:** *Invictus*, hosted by Sam Hartwell (Virtual; Zoom discussion at 6:30 p.m.)
- Wednesday, February 2:** *The Straight Story*, hosted by Liz Richmond (In-person; Brooks Room at 6:30 p.m.)
- Wednesday, February 9:** *The Way*, hosted by Sally Wilson (Virtual; Zoom discussion at 6:30p.m.)
- Wednesday, February 16:** *Samsara*, hosted by Kaneala Nelson (In-person; Brooks Room at 6:30 p.m.)
- Wednesday, February 23:** *Defending Your Life*, hosted by William Vodrey (Virtual; Zoom discussion at 6:30 p.m.)

Music and Art



La Nativité du Seigneur

Sunday, January 9, 2022, 4 p.m.

The performances of Olivier Messiaen's chef d'oeuvre, The Nativity of the Lord (La Nativité du Seigneur) were a mainstay in January of each year during St. Paul's organist Karel Paukert's tenure at the Cleveland Museum of Art. Following his retirement there, he has offered the cycle annually at St. Paul's

Nicholson B. White Gallery

Now through January 23, 2022

Be sure to view the original works by artists Charlotte Lees, Tom Jackson, and Amy Lewandowski. The show includes oil paintings, watercolors, and wooden organ pipes, enhanced with mixed media.



Meditations

Sunday, January 30, 2022, 4 p.m.

Parishioner John Orlock and organist Karel Paukert offer a program of meditations from American Trappist monk

Thomas Merton. Scheduled for the day before what would have been Merton's 107th birthday, it is interspersed with chorale preludes by J. S. Bach and Johannes Brahms.

Outreach



Episcopal Relief & Development

The ONE THOUSAND DAYS OF LOVE campaign supports Episcopal Relief &

Development's integrated programs and partnerships with local churches and communities in Africa, Asia, and Latin America to bring positive change and to nurture children up to age six so they are learning, growing, and thriving. The Parish is invited to help us raise \$10,000 online through our team page before the end of the campaign: my.episcopalrelief.org/team/312639

You can also make a special holiday offering through ERD's 'Gifts for Life' program by connecting families with everything from clean water to mosquito nets to bicycles to microloans for women-owned businesses. Explore the 'Gifts for Life' catalog page here: support.episcopalrelief.org/gifts/catalog

Annual Meeting

On Sunday, January 23, 2022 at 10 a.m. we will gather as a parish to reflect and look ahead to the coming year. We'll hear updates on current ministries and projects, and learn about programming. In addition, the 2022 Budget will be presented, and we will give thanks to outgoing Vestry members and elect new members. The Vestry slate will be announced soon.

Christmas Flower Donations 2021

Making a donation toward St. Paul's beautiful Christmas decorations is a meaningful way to remember or honor someone, or to give thanks for a blessing in your life. The names of those you wish to remember, honor, or give thanks for will be printed in the Christmas Bulletin. Since your donations are to be made directly to St. Paul's Church, they are tax deductible.

If you wish to donate flowers this Christmas, please complete this form and return it to the Parish Office, or call (216) 932-5815 with questions. Forms with payment are due back by Tuesday, December 14, 2021. Checks should be made out to St. Paul's Church with "Christmas Flowers" in the memo line. Alternatively, flower donations can be made online through the Giving tab on the church website and clicking on Give Now and choosing the Christmas Flower fund.

In Memory of: _____ In Honor of: _____

In Thanksgiving for: _____

Your Name: _____

Phone: _____

Amount Enclosed: \$25 \$50

\$100 Other _____



ST. PAUL'S
EPISCOPAL CHURCH
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JOIN US FOR

Christmastide Worship

Learn more on page 8