



# *The Bell*

ST. PAUL'S, 301 E. 9<sup>TH</sup> ST. CHESTER, PA

Winter/Epiphanytide 2023

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Dear Parishioners of Saint Paul's,

As most of you know, my last Sunday at the parish will be on January 29th, the day that we will celebrate our patronal feast. Saint Paul made clear so many timeless truths in the very early church. One of his most potent messages is that we are living members of the Body of Christ. In his first epistle to the Corinthians, he writes: For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit (12:12-13).

Since my arrival in 2020, we have weathered much. The pandemic slowed us down, but to our credit we continued to worship in-person, while following diocesan guidelines. Many beloved parishioners have become ill and are housebound and many have died. We did baptize four children who are not members and have added one new member who consistently comes to Eucharist on Sunday and also attends Bible study. Nonetheless, attendance on Sundays remains bleak. What has been abundantly clear to me is that Saint Paul's will not see new growth until it turns outward to the city and community outside of its doors. The parish has a real opportunity to make Saint Paul's a prominent place in Chester. This can be done by opening our hearts and welcoming even more groups into our space and by being more welcoming and participating with the groups already present- both Chester Eastside and the Wellness Center.

In my time in the parish, I have reached out to both religious and secular groups in the city in order to foster a better relationship. The response has been one of surprise, as people had thought the parish closed long ago and the second response has been one of hope and gratitude as they see the parish and diocese as real assets to the city. In my sermons and addresses I have tried to be clear, in order to make Saint Paul's a beacon in the city, the parish needs to change its outlook. It will need to spend money on making our buildings more welcoming to these groups, which will draw potential new parishioners. In addition, my hope would have been to add another liturgy to our Sunday morning. This might mean restoring something like Mission San Pablo- the mission and liturgy to the Hispanic community, or starting a Eucharist with Gospel music for the African American

community. With our unused classroom space, a fine piano and outstanding organ, an afterschool sacred arts and music program could give the children of Chester even more opportunity. It could work in concert with the Chester Eastside afterschool program. Again, this would require increased funding for music from the parish. From the survey results compiled just before last spring's parish retreat lead by Canon Ivey, the majority of people responded strongly that Saint Paul's should be committed to serving the needs of the people of Chester. The surveys are in the main office for you to look at.

The Diocese has approved a grant of up to \$23,200 for the renovation of the third-floor gym. The city has granted use of the space up to 49 people. The space will be an excellent place for the recreational activities of Chester Eastside's afterschool and summer program. It will be an excellent space for the Wellness Center to hold educational classes and will be an excellent space for the parish to hold events. I regret that I won't be around to see this happen. Opening up the church building itself as a venue for outside use will also benefit the entire Philadelphia/Wilmington region. Our rededication organ recital brought many new people to the church and an ongoing organ recital series or concert series will also put Saint Paul's back on the map. All of these things would encourage new membership in the parish itself.

Despite the pandemic things were accomplished in our time together. These include the long overdue restoration of the historic pipe organ, improvement to the parish website, renewed interest in the historic burial yard- including working with Eugene Hough to ensure that his restoration and student education project becomes a reality. The side mosaics in the sanctuary have been restored, improvement to more cost effective and energy efficient lighting in the sanctuary, upstairs offices and Chester Eastside was completed and the renewal of a long overdue occupancy license which includes the gym was completed. In addition, some work on the basement flooring was recently completed. Chester Eastside donated materials and labor and painted the space they rent- including the parish dining room.

Many seeds were planted in our time together. As baptized members of the Church, we become part of the Body of Christ and have an obligation to spread the Gospel both in our words and in our actions. Christianity is a religion that is outward in its very nature. Jesus' entire ministry on earth, and his death, resurrection and ascension are all outward activities. The movement of the Holy

Spirit in our church and throughout all of creation is an outward movement. As a parish, as the Body of Christ, we are called to turn outward to the people in our lives including the community around us. We are called to make room for the Holy Spirit to do what the Holy Spirit wants to do in the Church, in this parish and in this city. Saint Paul's does not belong to one person, one family or one generation. Saint Paul's is not its endowment or even its beautiful worship space.

Saint Paul's belongs to Jesus Christ who reigns in love, mercy, justice, righteousness and truth. A crucial aspect of this truth is rooted in how he showed us how to live, to love and serve each other and this should inform what we value as a parish. The good news is that we are never alone in the decisions we make and how we put them into action. We have Christ as our chief cornerstone. He is a constant presence to us and His grace will lead us and give us what we lack in order to make His presence known to the city around us. And it is important to remember that he will hold each one of us accountable.

I truly believe that Saint Paul's is at a turning point. Christ is calling this parish to a new place in its history. My continued prayer is that Saint Paul's has the courage to accept that Chester is a different place than it was several years ago and that it is called to open its heart to a changed city that desperately needs its support and love. It is then that Saint Paul's will grow again.

It was a pleasure to know and serve many of you and I will miss you. Thank you! May you and Saint Paul's know the power of Christ's abundant grace and peace as you move into the future.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

Fr. Civale  
(Larry)

#### **A NOTE FROM THE SENIOR WARDEN:**

As we enter the new year of 2023 we find St. Paul's in a time of transition. I have been active at this church for about 10 years, starting with joining the choir at a time when we had seven church members singing and Father Keith Hudson was our Priest. In that span we have had the leadership of Father Keith, who sadly

passed away while in office, Father Mark Smith and Father Larry Civale. All three were men who tried to lead us spiritually, who reached out to the community and who tried to create opportunities for us to see growth in our numbers. At one time this was a mighty church, a community leader and home to the some of the most illustrious citizens of Chester. Chester was a mighty city – small in size but a real contributor to the welfare of our country and the growth of her economy. Time has eroded the city’s position and this change has had a serious impact on even our church. While our financial health is robust, due largely to careful management, our numbers have shrunk to a tiny, aging congregation.

I believe that it is within our reach to improve this situation, but it will take steps that not all are willing to take. For this church to be relevant to its neighborhood and to make an impact for the Gospel would require serious change and expenditure. As he leaves us, Father Civale had begun several projects that would open us to change and which would need leadership to put into effect. The restoration of the gymnasium is a prime example.

We have secured the proper documents to restore it to public use and now we have received a diocesan grant to renovate the space. Indeed, neighborhood leaders like City Councilman Stefan Roots are interested and ready to reach out to groups in the community who could use the space for civic and recreational activities. Stefan spoke with me recently, expressing his concern that with Father Larry leaving this opportunity will end. All that is needed at this point is someone who will step forward and offer to lead the project. Could that person be YOU?

Respectfully submitted,

Sandy Tutton  
Senior Warden

#### **FROM OUR ORGANIST AND CHOIRMASTER**

After much work with Stephen Emery and his organ team we have been fortunate to experience the wonderful sound of our newly restored Aeolian Skinner Organ. It was celebrated in an afternoon organ recital given by Richard Spotts featuring the works of Charles Tournemire. His style of music is a perfect fit for our

instrument and the program was well received. We are hopeful to have additional programs in the future featuring the organ.

We celebrated Christmas by offering a special 40 minute program of choral and organ music prior to our Christmas Eve Eucharist. This year's program especially featured the choral and organ music by composer Richard Purvis who is known for his long-time tenure at Grace Episcopal Cathedral in San Francisco.

We are in the midst of preparing music for the season of Lent and looking forward to what's ahead.

Bradley Bonam  
Choirmaster and Organist

### **FROM DR GRAY OF THE WELLNESS CENTER AT ST. PAUL'S**

Patient flow has been steady averaging between 3-6 patients each Wednesday. Our outreach attempts have slowed down for the Winter months and will reconvene in the Spring.

We are now close at 3P instead of 5P due to the lack of patients after 3P over the past year.

The Hypertension study will end at the end of April 2023. As the participants sign off on the study, they have verbalized their gratitude for the opportunity to have participated, so it seems that the results will be a success for the doctoral student's project.

Plans are underway to implement educational content regarding nutrition, asthma, diabetes and cardio-vascular disease that patients may be able to access on the web.

### **FROM BARBARA NAGEL, COMMUNITY GARDEN COORDINATOR**

2022 was the 5th year of the Chester Eastside-St. Paul's Community Garden. The children of the OST Program and Phoenix summer camp participated in all stages of growing crops including planting, tending, harvesting, and preparing the soil for a later season crop. They learned about the importance of pollinators; and the difference between insects that are good and those that are bad for the garden.

They also learned the cycle of the garden year from planting seeds, tending plants, harvesting crops, and composting plant waste which turns to soil they can use the

following spring. The children are proud to take home what they harvest. The remaining food is donated to the Chester Eastside Food Cupboard. We also share herbs and vegetables with neighbors who stop to admire the garden.

In 2023 our program will be growing. Thanks to the Penn State Extension program we have brought on teachers for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade nutrition and STEM classes. Next month we will plant seeds and start lettuce, spinach, kale, collards, broccoli, and cabbage to get started under grow lights. With Andy Jacob's help we have leased the open land adjacent to the garden and will be growing pumpkins, squash, pole beans and a butterfly garden arranged in a way that the children can interact and have some fun in this open area. We also, plan to bring back Eric Burley, owner of the Franklin Fountain, to make ice cream with our Phoenix summer campers. We are looking forward to a fun and productive year.

## **NEWS FROM CHESTER EASTSIDE**

Dear St. Paul's Faithful,

On behalf of the board, staff, and volunteers I offer a hearty Happy New Year, with hope that 2023 will bring unexpected blessings, abundant gifts, and renewed hope.

Things continue to bustle in and around Chester Eastside. The Food Pantry remains very busy – we ended up distributing more than 120,000 meals last year. The After School Program is currently welcoming 30-35 children and youth on a daily basis as they come for support, lessons, clubs, and fun! We distributed over \$8,000 worth of gift cards during the holiday season – all of them donated. We celebrated our volunteers and staff at a special event with awards, recognitions, great food, and lots of laughs. And we continue to support our partners: the Wellness Clinic and the Free Legal Aid service.

The big recent news is that our amazing Operations Manager, Lisa Sneed, has accepted a call to a new position. She will depart on January 20, and we wish, hope, and pray all the best for her.

We were gratified to finish the year with a deficit much smaller than expected, and plan on finishing this year with a surplus! We have a renewed Development

Committee that is focusing on how our ministries, programs, and services might be enhanced and expanded, as well as what new program initiatives might be born.

We consider all of these things as great blessings; they are both the cause and the effect of being deeply committed to our mission – to bring relief, comfort, and healing to those who live with less in our community. We are blessed to call St. Paul's our home, and to those with whom we share it, our partners in ministry.

Finally, with Fr. Civale's impending departure we wish him all the best in his next call. Larry will be deeply missed by the CEI family as throughout his time serving St. Paul's he has been a strong advocate and faithful supporter of our work and service. We will continue to keep Larry, and all who remain here, in our prayers.

May the light that flows from God's greatest gift, Jesus, bring you strength, courage, deepened faith, joy, and...

Peace,  
*Andy*

#### **A NOTE FROM THE ACCOUNTING WARDEN:**

I want to thank those who have submitted their pledge for 2023. A pledge card can be given at any time during the year. Your pledge can be amended should your financial situation change.

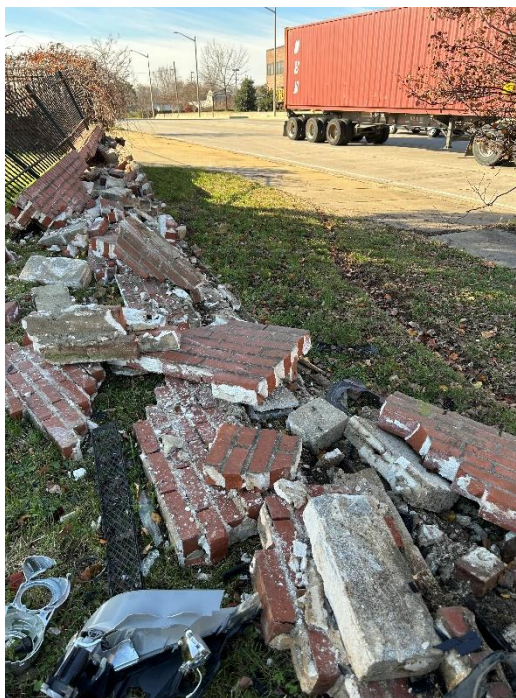
Contributions can also be given to other established funds. We have set up two new funds last year to help offset some of the costs incurred with the restoration of our Aeolian Skinner organ and with the restoration and maintenance of St. Paul's historic burial grounds. Contributions to either of these two funds may be made at any time. A donation to honor a loved one is most appropriate. Should you choose to make a donation, please make a note on your check indicating the fund. I.e: Organ Restoration Fund or Burial Ground Fund.

#### **BURIAL GROUND PROJECT**

On December 3, the wall of the Old Burial Ground on Third Street was hit and severely damaged. (see photos) The City of Chester immediately cleaned up the debris and will handle the insurance issues with the two companies representing the two involved vehicles which caused the damage.



Mr. Eugene Hough, of the Legacy Marker Program, has received some grant funds to proceed with the surveying of the graveyard. Mr. Hough arranged for ground penetration work to be conducted free of charge by a company from New Jersey. Markers have been placed identifying many unmarked burial plots. Various shards of pottery and a marble have also been uncovered thus far. Work continues, with the Research Team, in establishing a data base for all burials in the old graveyard and all burials conducted by St. Paul's to other cemeteries as well. Our goal is to eventually have all of our old records inputted and verified onto a data base. We get many requests from people doing genealogy research and this would save repeated handling of the old fragile records.



**DAMAGE OF CEMETERY WALL**



**GLORIAJEAN JACKSON & FR. CIVALE AT CONVENTION**

**Chester Eastside**



**After School Production of The Elves and The Shoemaker**





**Christmas Bazaar**



**Cooking From The Garden Program**

## **WEEKLY WORSHIP AND STUDY AT SAINT PAUL'S**

Holy Eucharist on Sunday at 9:00 with music.  
In-person or by live-stream on our Facebook page.

Morning Prayer Wednesday and major feast days  
at 10:00 live-streamed on our Facebook page

Bible study on Monday at 11:00

Spiritual counsel, Sacrament of Reconciliation  
and Sacrament of Healing  
are always available by appointment



**ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH**  
**301 East Ninth Street**  
**Chester, PA 19013**

### **Weekly Schedule**

Sunday

The Holy Eucharist 9:00 a.m.

Office Hours

M-F 9 am – 12 n

Office - 610-872-5711

Please call the office

with any pastoral emergencies