

THE EPISTLE

ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH, WALNUT CREEK | DECEMBER 2019



A Note From the Reverend Krista Fregoso

Dear St. Paul's,

I love this time of year. 'Tis the season of decorating and dreaming...what wondrous space will I create this year? Visions of storefront displays and catalog centerpieces topped off with a perfect Norman Rockwell family meal dance in my head. I imagine creating a beautiful home decked with candles, decorations, and an assortment of goodies that will delight my guests.

The truth? It never goes as planned.

Last December, after hours of shopping and performing MacGyver-like Christmas tree maneuvers, I found myself sitting in a pile of Christmas tree replacement bulb-shrapnel in front of a crooked half-lit Christmas tree. Not exactly a picture fit for the Restoration Hardware catalog.

But in the church, this season isn't about clearing a space for ornate decorations or fancy meals. Rather, it's a time when we're called to clear a space in our hearts and minds to just be present, with God and with each other. We don't need to do anything other than just be. No expectations, no judgement, no pressure. just love. Because after all, 'tis the season.

Manv blessings.

The Rev. Krista D. Fregoso

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Musical Notes

BY DR. LARRY CRUMMER

The time of one of the two seasons of Pentecost in Ordinary Time is coming to a close. At the end of Pentecost, the last Sunday is that of Christ the King. With the next Sunday, we move into my favorite time of year, Advent, the time for reflection and anticipation.

We are all familiar with the traditional definition of Advent, the four Sundays before Christmas where we adorn our church in purple and await the birth or “second coming” of Jesus, the Messiah, who will establish his Kingdom on earth. In liturgical churches, we light the Advent wreath candles, each candle representing one of four Advent themes. The first two Sundays tend to concentrate on the prophecies of the Old Testament with themes of repentance and redemption. The other Sundays highlight the Virgin Mary (Magnificat) and John the Baptist. The lighting of the Advent wreath candles has always been one of my favorite aspects of Advent's beauty and awe.

As Jesus is to be the “light of the world,” so each of our Advent candles will represent one of the four concepts of HOPE, PEACE, JOY, and LOVE. This year, we have chosen to highlight a word or concept that represents how Jesus' birth is/was to transform our lives and our world. A passage will be read highlighting the word followed by a sung congregational response which I have adapted from the anthem "Light One Candle" by Natalie Sleeth.

TRADITIONALLY, EPISCOPALIANS DO NOT SING ACTUAL CHRISTMAS CAROLS UNTIL 12 DAYS BEFORE CHRISTMAS DAY. BUT IF YOU LISTEN CAREFULLY, YOU MIGHT HEAR SOME FAMILIAR CAROL STRAINS...



Be sure to mark Sunday, December 15 at 7:00 pm on your calendars; it's our annual Festival of Lessons and Carols service where we hear nine readings pertaining to the season, enhanced and enriched by beautiful music. We will sing many of our beloved Christmas carols, and be enriched by the offerings of the many talented musicians of St. Paul's. You will also enjoy music featuring anthems sung by our Parish choir with solos and duets by our many talented choir members. Instrumentalists will also include a solo oboe and our own Festival Brass. We hope you will join us for what promises to be an evening of music and the Word.

Happy Advent and Merry Christmas to all. May your lives be enhanced by the beauty of the season's music.

Join us for these events celebrating the season

Advent Series & Potluck

Wednesday, December 4, 11 & 18
7:00 - 8:30 pm

Boy Scout Wreath Sale

Sunday, December 8 | after each service
Support our Boy Scout Troop 202

Lessons & Carols

Sunday, December 15 | 7:00 pm
A choir and brass ensemble

Are You Lonely Tonight?

BY NANCY BURCHETT

Loneliness is a universal condition expressed in song and poetry and found in our lives. I still occasionally hum, "Are You Lonely Tonight" by Elvis Presley. The tune addresses that feeling we all share at one time or another, and during the holidays it is especially relevant.



There are innumerable reasons for loneliness: a friend has moved away; we retire and miss our co-workers; we are ill or isolated...the list goes on. How do we deal with this? Since the condition seems to creep up on us, the first step is to identify our problem. Reviewing our day at bedtime or meditating in the morning should include an assessment of who and how we are. How am I feeling? Has that changed? What's going on in my life?

Only when we recognize loneliness can we then begin to deal with it.

Loneliness is not a reason for shame or panic, even though it seems out of our control. Consider how we express our loneliness: Do we ignore it? Withdraw from activities? Feel resentful? We can address the situation, such as reconnecting with the person we feel is causing our loneliness. We can mourn our loss and feel it head-on. We can be patient with our feelings and acknowledge that, in most cases, loneliness is temporary. We can adjust our behavior and pray daily for patience and insight and the strength given to us freely by The One who never steps aside; The One who loves us beyond imagination and wants to hold our hands every day.



Save the Date
Valentine Tea
Saturday, February 8, 2020 | 2:00 pm

Gather friends and family, don your favorite hat (optional, but encouraged!), and join us for this much anticipated annual fundraising event. Proceeds support both local and worldwide philanthropies, and this year will include Trinity Center, CCC Chaplaincy, and Puerto Rico Relief through Episcopal Relief and Development. Tickets are \$40 per person or \$320 per table (8 per table).

Want to help? The raffle committee is requesting:

- Gift certificates for raffle baskets
- Eight-ounce jars with screw-on lids
- Bakers and jam-making enthusiasts (contact Sue Phalen at info@stpaulswc.org)

We look forward to welcoming new and familiar faces at our tea! Many thanks for your support of this fun and worthwhile event.

Julie Layne
Valentine Tea Chair

St. Paul's "Band of Brothers" Men's Retreat

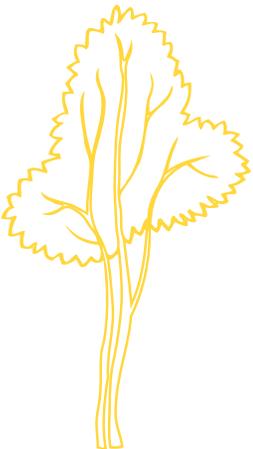
BY WALT BUSENIUS

Over the last weekend in October, 13 intrepid men of St. Paul's journeyed to the Walker Creek Ranch in Marin County for our annual men's retreat. We've always found our time at the ranch to be a soothing, contemplative, and "Band of Brothers" experience, away from the hustle bustle of daily life.

This year's presenter was Sean Potts, whom you might recall previously served our church family, first as a youth leader and then as Director of the Family Ministry Center. Sean now dedicates his life to coaching families. His retreat topic, *Connecting in the Garden of Gethsemane*, was based on Mathew's account of Jesus' Last Night in Gethsemane and presented as a Lectio Divina Bible Study. However, this was just the tip of the iceberg; it was the sharing and discussions over the weekend that allowed us to bond as Christians and connect with Jesus' Gethsemane revelations.

Walker Ranch is a beautiful place to connect with nature and to witness God's creation. It's also a wonderful place to relax and have fun. During our free time, a few rested, others hiked or cycled, and some drove to the town of Marshall to sample oysters. Of course, a men's retreat wouldn't be complete without one or two social times and happy hours.

The retreat closed Sunday morning with a New Zealand-style service and prayers, and a stronger desire to build community. Many thanks to Pete Banwell on keyboard and Sean Potts on bongo drums for providing uplifting music. Once again, the folks at Walker Creek Ranch were wonderful hosts, providing healthy and tasty meals, and a peaceful environment to reconnect and recharge.



First Row (L-R) Pete Smyth, Ken Jessup, Jerry Williams, Walt Busenius, Chuck Glass, Todd McCarl, Jim Bell.
Second Row (L-R) Phil Webster, Mike Yale, Pete Banwell, Lyle Morton, Mark Sturgess, Sean Potts, Glenn Shockley.

Women's Retreat: the Gift of Time

BY LINNEA JESSUP

For many St. Paul's women, a visit to the Bishop's Ranch in Healdsburg is a reunion. The women, some for the first time and others for yet one more retreat, join in fellowship and share the opportunity to study, relax, worship and rejuvenate. This year's retreat gave each of us the gift of time to share experiences and feelings and to contemplate Mary's acceptance of God's will.

Lisa Thorpe, the Ranch facilitator, encouraged each participant to put themselves into Mary's place and to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Through readings, discussion and music, we celebrated Mary's faith in God and her willingness to step out of her comfort zone, assuring us that we, too, can find similar joy in trusting God. Each person was given a "Mary bowl" and encouraged to create a piece of art that expressed her love of and trust in God. The results of the craft project were both beautiful and inspiring.

Comments from attendees included Nancy Robinson, who said she was surprised to have enjoyed the art project. "The presentation of the art and the symbols we studied inspired and re-energized us," she added. Barbara Bottomley noted, "I came away ecstatic about the presentations and all the efforts Krista made to assure that all participants could hear and join in the discussions." Laura Williams, who attended for her eighth year, said, "I just adore being with the women, that's the biggest takeaway of our retreats."

Perhaps the retreat was best summed up by Maureen Horton who said, "I always enjoy the weekend. The Ranch is a true retreat, with its peaceful and quiet setting. The retreat is just magical."



Back row (L-R): Emily Hopkins, Sheri Grosjean, Deb Webster, Julie Layne, Jessica Beerbaum, Susan Burpee, Carol Langford, Krista Fregoso, Danielle Haffner, Sue Phalen, Laura Williams, Frances Sturgess. Row 2: Nancy Lukens, Jan Williams, Jill McFadden, Barbara Bottomly, Kim McCarl, Maureen Horton, Mary-Jane Wood, Lynn Yale, Sherry Mattern, Linnea Jessup, Marion Perry. First row: Nancy Falkenstine, Anne Morton, Carol Glass, Kathleen McAdam, Brook Sheltower, Karen Smyth, Susan Busenius, Nancy Robinson



Highlights of the 2019 Diocesan Convention

BY SUSAN BURPEE

On October 25 and 26, four delegates, Susan Burpee, Mary-Jane Wood, Emily Hopkins, Gail Sheffield, and alternate Laura Williams, along with Reverend Krista, represented St. Paul's at our Diocesan convention at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco.

The meeting opened with the usual reports of committees and introduction of the resolutions we would vote on the next day. However, the highlight for me was a beautiful service in the evening with speakers from the indigenous tribes of California and the West. Utilizing the labyrinth for prayers and an eloquent explanation of the Doctrine of Discovery, we were all left with a better understanding of the original keepers of our land and an appreciation of our indigenous brothers and sisters.

Saturday began with a service that included a video sermon from Bishop Marc (who is on the road to a full recovery from his stroke). We then got down to business and passed the Diocesan budget for 2020. We elected delegates to National Convention with our own Emily Hopkins elected as an alternate. We are lucky to have her voice representing the East Bay and St. Paul's. We passed five resolutions, which included:

1. Emily Hopkins sponsored a resolution to set up a task force to study sabbatical leave for interim clergy.
2. We asked the diocese and its congregations to learn about and purchase carbon offsets when air travel is necessary.
3. A resolution to set up a liturgical commission to study new and revised texts (the prayer book) and report to the General convention in 2021.
4. A resolution to set up a task force on disability and deaf access to all our congregations and events.
5. An advocacy to support eliminating single-use plastics in all our events.

With much joy, the convention welcomed the new parish St. Anna's of Antioch, a joint congregation of Antioch and Brentwood. It was also announced that St. Luke's Rossmoor is now a part of St. Paul's.

Our church is alive and well! It made me proud to be a part of such a sharing, prayerful, diverse group of people doing our best to discern God's message. It gives hope in our divided world that God is truly among us.



Campus Cleanup Day

BY PETE BANWELL



Another successful clean-up day at St. Paul's has come and gone. With hard work from our many volunteers, we filled a 1-800 Got Junk truck with a variety of trash. Perhaps the biggest single task was removing a huge pile of stuff from the "back 40" ...the yard area between us and Walnut Creek Presbyterian. If you haven't seen it, now would be a good time. Very spiffy. We also cleaned the courtyard fountain, removed leaves and branches from behind the Chapel, emptied the 1944 Trinity house garage of the rest of its refurbishment refuse, and trimmed, washed, and cleaned.

Many thanks to Nancy Falkenstine, Ned and Elizabeth Soares, Mike Siebert, Jim Bell, Stephen Ingraham, Gerri Ayers, Jim Ward, Van Storer, Frank Holbrook, Susan Burpee, Mike and Lynn Yale, Maureen Horton, Richard Kemink, Anne and Lyle Morton and Emily Hopkins. Couldn't have done it without you!

St. Paul's Fall Concert Series Hits a High Note

BY DEBORAH WEBSTER

The fall St. Paul's Concert Series was a resounding success with brilliant performances by artists such as Marina Tolstova, Soprano, and Musalliance featuring Anna Kusner on classical guitar and Peter Omelchenko on domra/mandolin. Marina's medley of "Ave Maria," plus other romance period pieces were a treat to behold.

We also welcomed Greg Dufford, clarinetist, and Fernanda Nieto, pianist, with a spectacular program of contemporary pieces ranging from Gershwin's "Preludes for Clarinet and Piano" to the modern "North Beach Rhapsody," with a surprise visit by composer Martin Rokeach. In addition, we enjoyed the DVC Music Faculty featuring Joyce Pricco, mezzo-soprano, Christopher Vettel, baritone, and Dr. Bruce Cook, pianist. The ensemble presented German Lieder and English art songs, taking their rapt audience from somber love-is-lost darkness to lively love-is-found exclamations. Our fall series concluded with organist Jerome Lenk who treated us to a mesmerizing performance of Bach classics.

And, we promise you are going to *love* our 2020 concert series. Stay tuned for details coming soon!



Church Life



Rev. Krista with Attie during Spirit Sunday



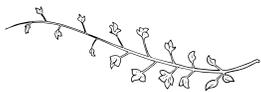
Capt. Emily Hopkins, USN, is recognized on Veteran's Day



Rev. Krista, Richard Kemink, and Kathleen Tiraino, Executive Director of the Episcopal Impact Fund with a grant for the kitchen project



Larry Crummer, Carol Langford, and Tom Tchong perform at Spirit Sunday.



Dear Lord,

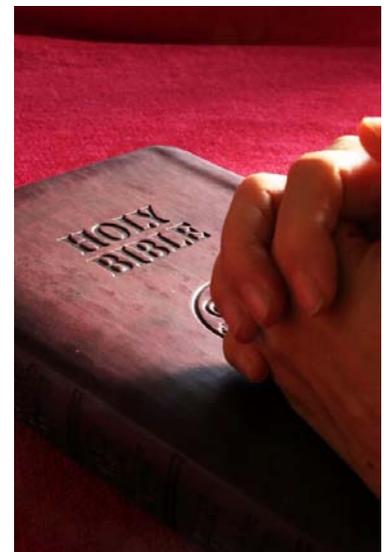
Give me eyes to see and ears to hear. I know there is a light in the darkness that makes everything new. I know there is new life in suffering that opens a new earth to me. I know there is joy beyond sorrow that rejuvenates my heart. Yes, Lord, I know that you are, that you act, that you love, that you indeed are Light, Life, and Truth. People, work, plans, projects, ideas, meetings, buildings, paintings, music, and literature all can only give me real joy and peace when I can see and hear them as reflections of your presence, your glory, your kingdom.

Let me then see and hear. Let me be so taken by what you show me and by what you say to me that your vision and hearing become my guide in life and impart meaning to all my concerns.

Let me see and hear what is really real, and let me have the courage to keep unmasking endless unrealities, which disturb my life every day. Now I see only in a mirror, but one day, O Lord, I hope to see you face to face.

Amen.

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The Crossroad Publishing Company



Vestry Candidates 2020

Jessica Beerbaum



Professionally, I've been many things: banker, office worker, and teacher. As a volunteer, I've been a PTA officer and librarian. Each experience has given me knowledge in government, accountability, organization, communication, and community-building.

Since retirement, I've served at St. Paul's in many roles and on several committees such as the Concert Series and Adult Formation. I was also a delegate to the College of Congregational Development. I look forward to continue serving our community.

Tom Chaffee



My children, Alex (16) and Will (13) and I have been members of St. Paul's since last year. I've been so blessed to have found such a welcoming faith community. Professionally, I'm a real estate attorney and a partner at Clark Hill, LLP in San Francisco, focusing on contractual, construction, and land-use matters.

I look forward to using my talents to assist St. Paul's any way I can.

Marianne Johnson



I've been a member of St. Paul's since 2003 when my family moved here from Minnesota. My children have been active in the youth group, went through confirmation programs, and served as acolytes. I taught Sunday School for several years, served on Vestry from 2009-2011 (including one year as Senior Warden), and am now a lector and regular attendee of the 7:30 am service. Soon I'll begin serving on the Altar Guild.

I'm interested in the ministry of Worship and Music and Faith in Action.

Kim McCarl



My husband, Todd, and I feel like old friends of St. Paul's, although we've attended for a short time. It's become the community and spiritual home we've been seeking. In my professional role, I've served as a public affairs manager at John Muir Health, the latest stop in a 20+ career in public and community relations.

I would be honored to utilize my skills on behalf of St. Paul's.

Trinity Center

Donna Colombo Receives Leadership's Judges Award



Congratulations to Donna Colombo for receiving the Judges Choice Award from the East Bay Leadership Council at their 9th Annual Philanthropy Awards in November 2019. The council created this award specifically for Donna in recognition of her unwavering determination and leadership. Donna has propelled Trinity Center from humble beginnings to one of East Bay's most influential service providers.

Carol Lombard Retirement Party

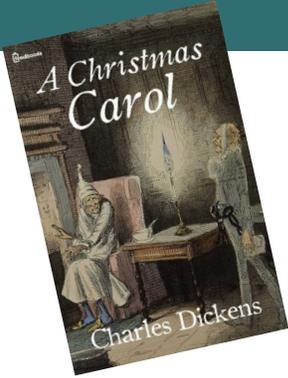


Join us for a celebration of our volunteers and to wish Carol Lombard "happy retirement" from Trinity Center. We'll be celebrating with great food, good drink and fun conversation.

Mark your calendar for Friday, December 13 from 4:00-6:00 pm at 1300 Blvd. Way, Walnut Creek.

To learn more or RSVP, email jennyq@trinitycenterwc.org.

Church Life



The Spirit of Ebenezer Scrooge

BY JUDITH DILLINGHAM

Imagine you have a very crabby uncle and one day he tells you he has seen ghosts. Not just one, but three, and because of them he is a changed man. Sound familiar?

On Thursday, December 12 at 1:30 pm, join the St. Paul's Afternoon Book Group for a spirited discussion of that quintessential classic, *A Christmas Carol*. Charles Dickens, often referred to as "The Man Who Created Christmas," is responsible for some of the secular aspects of the season, and theater productions of his story are a delight every year.

However, when first published, *A Christmas Carol* was not a delightful time for Dickens. His more recent book *Martin Chuzzlewit* had been published in installments starting January of 1843 and was not a financial success. That's why his publisher was reluctant to gamble on a slim book about ghosts. The publisher finally agreed to publish *A Christmas Carol*, but only as part of an inexpensive collection of Dickens' works or as part of a new magazine. Dickens refused both suggestions and, after some negotiation, the publisher agreed to print a high quality, stand-alone book, but only if Dickens paid all publishing expenses. The publisher would also be paid for printing costs and receive a fixed commission on the number of copies sold.

A Christmas Carol wasn't an instant money maker, but an impressive 6,000 copies were sold by Christmas and sales remained strong well into 1844. Today, the book remains as popular as it was 175 years ago.

Get in the spirit and join us for a discussion of this charming holiday favorite!

About the cover: photograph courtesy of Richard Kemink

St. Paul's New Deacon Meet Ari Wolfe



St. Paul's welcomes Ariane Wolfe as St. Paul's new deacon. She comes to us after serving one year as a deacon-in-training at Good Shepherd in Berkeley, and one year doing ministry with incarcerated women in San Francisco.

An El Cerrito resident, Ari and husband, Mark, have three adult children and four cats. When she isn't dividing her time as deacon between St. Paul's and St. Columba's in Inverness, Ari enjoys making wearable Anglican rosaries and loves to knit. She also shares that being near the ocean is her happy place. "I spent my early childhood living on the beach," she says, "so sitting on the sand listening to waves has always grounded me and reconnects me to God."

With degrees in Behavioral Science and Business Administration, Ari completed her Master of Theological Studies at Church Divinity School of the Pacific this past May. "My thesis focused on what Episcopal congregations can do to better welcome and support LGBTQ+ people of faith," she says, crediting her former church, All Souls in Berkeley, with her formation. Be sure to say hello when you see Ari on Sundays! We are delighted and blessed to have Ari join St. Paul's.

Just a Reminder

St. Paul's Boy Scout Troop 202 Wreath Sale

Sunday, December 8 & 15 | after services

Stars I Shall Find | Saturday, December 14 | 7:00 pm

Tapestry handbell and vocal ensemble

Lessons & Carols | Sunday, December 15 | 7:00 pm

Blue Christmas | Saturday, December 21 | 7:00 pm

Remembering those we have loved and lost

Christmas Eve Services | Tuesday, December 24

4:00 pm, 8:00 pm, 10:30 pm (carols) and 11:00 pm (service)

Christmas Day Service | Wednesday, December 25 | 10:30 am



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Monday - Thursday
9:30 am - 3:30 pm

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