

# THE EPISTLE

ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH, WALNUT CREEK | NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2020



## A Note From the Reverend Krista Fregoso

Dear People of St. Paul's,

Early this morning I heard a strange noise in my condo, it was a vague hum coming from the garage. I walked around and noticed a gust of warm air hit me as I walked near the vent.

Oh, the heater—right!

I looked at the thermostat and sure enough, it had gotten cold enough in the condo for the heat to kick on. What happened? Just a couple of weeks ago it was a sizzling upper 80s during the day! And just like that, we blinked and moved from a long hot summer into fall and winter.

I can't wait! I long for cozy nights around the fire that fall and winter bring. I long for warm cups of cocoa, fuzzy PJs, fleece blankets, and snuggling with a good book.

The Danish have a term for this cozy feeling: *Hygge*, which is used to describe the sensation of a cozy house or moment, but most importantly the warm, life-affirming things that come with family and friends. It is used as a way to describe how one sets up their home and life to enjoy the simple comforts of human companionship.

This year, like everything else, will be different. The pandemic will limit our ability to connect in person and share in the holidays. It will be about making much simpler, less elaborate plans.

*Continued on page 9*



### IN THIS ISSUE

A Search for Family

Why I Attend an Episcopal Church

Christmas Memories

Coronavirus Diaries

My Favorite Christmas Recipe

Angel Tree

Meet Jen Crompton

2020: a Different Celebration

Musical Notes

Anatomy of a Virtual Concert Series

*My Dear Hamilton*

Vestry Candidates

Inspiration | Reminders

A Look Back

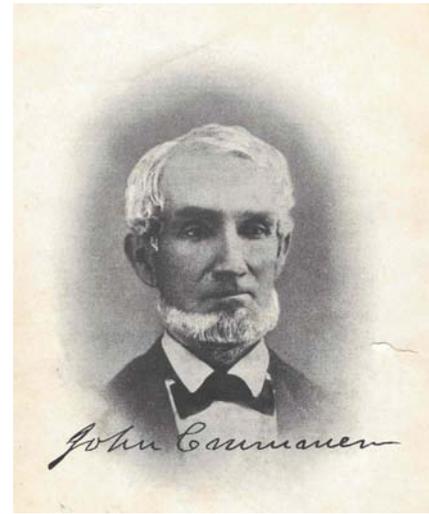


## Genealogy: a Search for Family

By DR. LARRY CRUMMER

Every year from my earliest childhood years, my father would bring out a little blue book, dated 1916, a “sketch” of the life of **Rev. John Crummer**, my great-great-grandfather. My father would read about the family journey to the United States from Northern Ireland. But the great anticipation led up to Dad turning to the page where my grandfather’s name was listed. Wow, I actually knew someone who was in a book! And it was my grandfather!

The seeds were planted for what would become a major avocation in my life—genealogy. After finishing my doctorate in 1983, I rediscovered that precious little book. I realized that there was so much about the family that I didn’t know... What were Rev. John’s parents’ names? Where in Northern Ireland had the family lived? And so on.

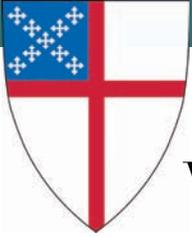


This re-discovery launched 11 years of research (pre-internet) culminating with the writing, typing, and publication in 1994 of a 600+ page family history, “*Crummer Families of the United States and Canada Who Came from Ireland.*” It was a labor of love, a present and thank you to my father. But to make my mother proud, I did the “unusual” by tracing all of the women, as well as the men, down to the present, something rarely found in genealogies. In that journey, I learned so much more than the vital statistics of my ancestors and relatives. I was led to further studies in geography, history, medicine, psychology, and religion. I also came to better understand family relationships.

But most importantly, this project allowed me to connect with a large number of wonderful relatives I would never have known existed, including my amazing cousins in the Cook Islands and New Zealand (another story) whom I visited on our recent world cruise.

We are not separate entities...we are the complexity (both good and bad) of those from whom we descend. Discovering all of the elements of that complexity can help us better appreciate the gifts of our “story,” and for some, lead to an understanding and healing from a past that may not have been so pleasant.

Now might be a good time to find YOUR story. Need help getting started? I can help.



## Why I Attend an Episcopal Church

By CHUCK GLASS

In 1965 I was assigned to Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington, DC for a three-year tour. I had been an inactive Lutheran and Carol was an Episcopalian, but not very active. We lived in Falls Church, VA and went to the same church that George Washington once attended.



No one talked to us at coffee hour. We went again and had the same experience. A friend mentioned an Episcopal church near his house named St. Patrick's, a spin-off from The Falls Church. We went, and on the way out I asked the Rector, "You had a question in your sermon, what was it?" He said, "It is the same in every sermon. Who do you trust?" Following his request, we gave our name and address to the secretary.

The following Thursday Bill, the Rector, was at our door. He said he usually didn't visit so soon, but he was visiting our neighbor a few houses away, and she could use our help. She was an Air Force wife with back problems, and her husband was in Vietnam. We went and discovered we could help, and soon became friends.

We met other parishioners at St. Patrick's coffee hour, and I was asked to help some men on Saturday. I declined. Again they asked, and I declined. The third time, I said, "Yes." We now saw church as an extended family. I was elected to the Vestry, and Carol also became involved. We enjoyed having friends who weren't in the Coast Guard.

In 1970 I was transferred to San Francisco and we made our home in Walnut Creek. St. Paul's was the nearest Episcopal church, we joined, became active, and found a new family. In 1973, we went back to DC, leaving many dear friends. In 1979, I turned down two suggested assignments and requested a return to San Francisco.

My prayers were answered. Here we are, among friends that are like family and a church that is like home.



### St. Paul's Columbarium

This peaceful garden respite is where we remember our members and their loved ones.

**Niche:** \$1200 (can accommodate two urns)

**Plaques** (on the granite wall): \$225 per plaque

To reserve a niche or plaque, or to learn more, please call the church office at (925) 934-2324.



## The Ghost of Christmas Past Cherished Christmas Memories



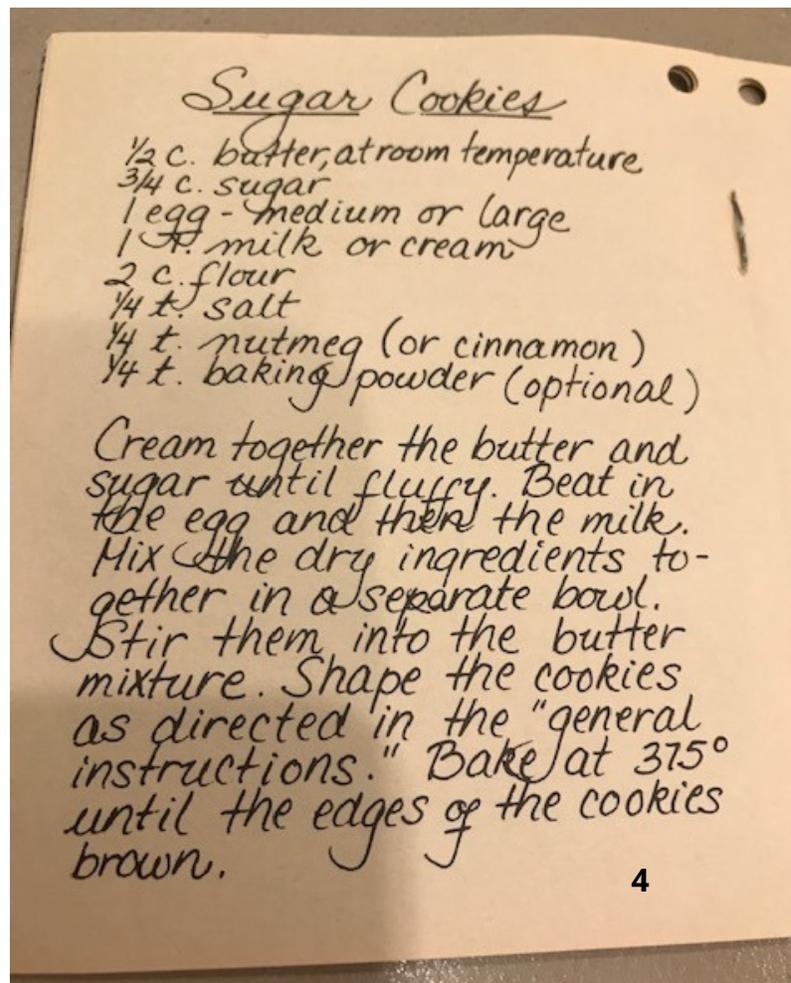
### Wayne Morris

Like so many people, Christmas to me means a time to be together with family and friends—with my partner Tom, my sister, son, daughter, and friends. I especially appreciate being together with family after the US Supreme Court allowed Tom and me to marry and live together in the US.

I also really enjoy following traditions over the years, from both the US and UK. These traditions include serving sauerkraut with the Christmas turkey (a tradition from Baltimore) or having Christmas “crackers” at the start of the meal (a UK tradition).

### Nancy Briggs

A lovely tradition in our family is making sugar cookies using my treasured snowflake terra cotta cookie mold. Every holiday season, I love to bake and include my daughter Allison and my granddaughters Emily and Peyton. We mix the dough, mold the cookies, and wait for the kitchen to smell like Christmas. When the cookies have been baked we enjoy eating them and packing some in a big box for them to take home.





### Jessica Beerbaum

I was raised mostly in California and didn't experience my first white Christmas until 2015. Our son was home on leave from North Carolina, a rare treat during his years of military service. Husband Walter, son Eric, and I joined daughter Kathryn in her little (and OLD) apartment in Mt. Shasta. The apartment building was a nuns' residence in the 1920s. When you opened the front door, it swung completely open all on its own. There was no room for a tree, but plenty of room for all of us to sleep, cook, eat, play games, watch the snow fall, and listen to trains blast their horns as they rumbled through town a few blocks away.



### Rhea Williams

After spending over a month with us, my mom had to return to New York. We were now "on our own." We celebrated our first Christmas as a family with two-year old Dana and six-week old Audrey. And, we can't forget Dana's favorite doll, Raggedy Ann. Thank goodness John could set up a tripod so we were able to take this family Christmas photo.

### Tom Tchong

An annual tradition for the Tchong family is attending the Great Dickens Christmas Fair & Victorian Holiday Party at the Cow Palace in Daly City. It really gets us into the holiday spirit, with characters from *A Christmas Carol* wandering around the set of Victorian London. Max frequents Professor Flockmocker's Laboratory and the Adventurer's Club with appearances by Jules Verne and H.G. Wells. Zoe enjoys waltzing at Fezziwig's Dance Party in Victorian costume. And we all love shopping for Christmas and sampling the candied almonds, roasted chestnuts, meat pies, and high tea.



## Coronavirus Diaries

By EMILY LAGRONE



Last March I started a new photo album on my computer. The title? What else but *Coronavirus Diaries*. Here are just a few impressions:

**During the first week**, we panic-bought a mini trampoline, art supplies, books and Legos—but no toilet paper or flour (oops). We quickly locked in our wonderful German babysitter as a part-time quarantine nanny, and Attie learned to count to ten in German while Cleo learned “Nein, nein, nein!”

I did a lot of baking, once we found flour again. Almost overnight, the kids learned to play well together, mostly. Our daycare set up morning Zoom calls with songs and storytime. We celebrated Cleo’s first birthday at home in March... Attie’s third birthday in May... and Gus’s sixth birthday in July.

**After three months**, our daycare reopened and our babysitter got a “real” job. Then Attie started preschool in a small pod. Now, after dropping off the girls, we log Gus into virtual first grade and start plowing through math and writing assignments. I translate whenever a job comes my way, and Wade’s home office is in use full-time. If anyone has a sniffle (including families in our daycare), everybody stays home and it’s like March all over again—cozy times in our 1.5-bedroom condo!

Luckily we can visit Granddad regularly in his backyard; we’ve reconfigured the kids’ room several times; and often camp out on the deck. The days are filled with dress-up, trains and blocks, elaborate webs of yarn and tape, Gus’s original recipes, coloring, and of course reading.



**Life is never boring**—one day I was signing up for a letter-writing program to help get out the vote, while watching a YouTube tutorial for a school art project. In the other room, I heard Cleo break a glass by whacking it repeatedly on the table. As I cleaned up the shattered glass, Attie came in from the kitchen, dragging a chain of sausages. Meanwhile, Gus was writing an essay: Would you rather jump into a pool of peanut butter or jelly? His answer: Water, “because it is possible.”

A wise answer indeed. Because these days, anything is possible.



## My Favorite Christmas Recipe

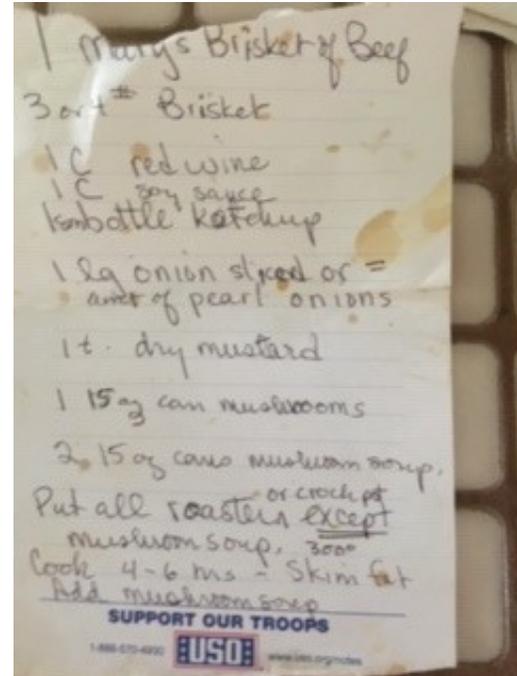
By SUE PHALEN

This is my mother-in-law Mary Phalen's brisket recipe. She's also known as Grandma or Grams. When she no longer could cook, our children let us know that Christmas dinner was not the same without Grandma's brisket. So, I sat by her bed as she dictated it to me, onto this now, raggedy old piece of paper, and I've been making it every Christmas ever since.

### Mary's Brisket of Beef

- 3 or 4# brisket
- 1 cup red wine
- 1 cup soy sauce
- 1 small bottle ketchup
- 1 large onion sliced or = amt of pearl onions
- 1 t. dry mustard
- 1 15 oz. can mushrooms
- 2-15 oz. cans mushroom soup (set aside)

Put all except mushroom soup in roaster (300 degrees) or crock pot. Cook 4-6 hours. Skim fat, add mushroom soup, and enjoy!



## Angel Tree in the Year of COVID-19

Each year at Christmas, the people of St. Paul's have the opportunity to give to families (mostly single parents and their children) of First Baptist Church in Pittsburg. These donations supply food and gift cards for a festive dinner on the table and gifts under the tree for the children.

This year, in the absence of angels hanging from our traditional tree in the narthex of the church, you can still help! Simply purchase gift cards (Target or Walmart are preferred stores) or write a check (with "Angel Tree" on the memo line).

- On the front of your envelope, write Bev Price; in the lower left corner, "Attn: Angel Tree"
- Put the cards/check in an envelope and slip it through the mail slot in the office door.
- OR mail the cards/check to: St. Paul's Episcopal Church c/o Bev Price  
1924 Trinity Avenue, Walnut Creek CA 94596
- OR bring your cards/check in a marked envelope to St. Paul's Food Drive from **9:00 - 11:00 am on Saturday, November 21** in the church parking lot, and give the envelope to a volunteer.



Mary Waddington will be responsible for getting the cards to First Baptist Church. Merry Christmas!

# Church Life



## St. Paul's Seminarian Meet Jen Crompton

Hello St. Paul's,

My name is Jen Crompton, and it is so lovely to meet you. I'm a second-year seminary student at Church Divinity School of the Pacific in Berkeley, and a Postulant for Holy Orders in the Diocese of El Camino Real, just down the coast.

Originally, I'm from Illinois but have called California home for the last six years. I worked as a higher education administrator in my previous career in a few different states, and am happy to share stories for those who might be curious. I found my way to Seminary after a very long discernment process and am so excited to have found such a welcoming community and congregation.

I love music and movies and try to spend time in nature when I'm not studying. While I am with you, some of my goals are to learn about your online worship production, engage with adult education, and preaching.

This community has been so supportive already in welcoming me, and I look forward to learning alongside you. In January, I hope you will join me for an adult education series that will focus on how we experience God in others, how that experience calls us to act in anti-racist ways, and some tools for this most essential work. Stay tuned; more information to come.

Thank you again for your generous and most gracious welcome.

Peace to you all.

## St. Paul's Online Book Clubs

Looking for good books and engaging conversations? Join our monthly afternoon and evening book clubs via Zoom!



**Afternoon: Thursdays | 1:30 - 2:30 pm**

**November 12:** *Where the Crawdads Sing* by Delia Owens

**December 10:** *The Little French Bistro* by Nina George

**Evening: Thursdays | 7:00 - 8:30 pm**

**November 12:** *The Dutch House* by Ann Patchett

**December 10:** For book title, contact Sue Busenius at [info@stpaulswc.org](mailto:info@stpaulswc.org)





## 2020: A Different Celebration

By LESLIE GLEASON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, TRINITY CENTER

Not long ago, I saw a bumper sticker that read “What Year Is This?” I could sure relate—as the days have slipped into weeks, into months, time seems multi-dimensional, and indeed, we are left wondering where and “when” we are.

What will Thanksgiving and Christmas be like this year? Who will we be with, and who will we be missing, either because we can’t be with them right now, or because they have passed on from this earthly home during this strangest of years? Who will we feed, and who will be left out of the celebrations?

At Trinity Center, we’ll be celebrating a little differently this year. We’re enjoying our new home, but missing our volunteers—and yet they are still finding ways to feed us, physically, financially, and emotionally. This won’t be the year when “Santa” visits in the form of young people bearing specially-chosen gifts for our members at our annual party, but we’ll find other ways to let each other know we care, and that no one is alone as long as Trinity Center is here. Maybe this will be the year when the truest meaning of the holidays comes into focus with laser-beam intensity, strong enough to guide us to a place where eternity and mortality come together to bring love into every day, every moment—and we receive the gift of grace to herald that love everywhere we go—in our homes, next door, on the street, in our cities, and across the world.

On behalf of our Staff, Volunteers, Board of Directors, and Members, we wish you the most joyous 2020 holiday season!



## A Note From Rev. Krista

*Cont'd.*

When I think about seasons past, I remember the fond memories of being with friends and family, but I also remember the frantic sense of shopping and preparing that the holidays bring. This new simplification process is a hard one, but not necessarily a bad one. This year, rather than cooking an elaborate meal, Tom and I will have a simple one, sharing pre-dinner cocoa with our North Carolina family and after-dinner dessert with our California family.

Our Christmas lists have changed as well. We are hosting a game night for the NC family and a bake-off with the CA family. We are working to find simple joys in being together online if not in person.

**I hope** that we embrace and keep the good parts of simplification long after the pandemic. **I hope** we leave behind the panic, rush, and hubbub about presenting a “perfect” holiday experience. And in its place, **I hope** we center our lives around true *hygge*, creating warm memories, living simpler lives, and enjoying the ups and downs of life together, as a community of family and friends. Happy holidays (and *hygge*)! **9**

## Musical Notes



By DEBORAH WEBSTER



While we traverse these times that remain stranger than fiction, our Music Ministry is busier than ever!

We love singing choral pieces in our Sunday services, and now have many pieces recorded, so we've made these available for everyone to hear any time on our YouTube channel at [stpaulswc](https://www.stpaulswc.org). Here, you'll see a playlist of "Digital Choir," and of Larry's "Preludes and Postludes" listed under our sermons in the same location. When playing these at your leisure, you'll

notice that many of the choral pieces were the arrangements of our own music director, Dr. Larry Crummer!

## Concert Review: DuoSF

On September 19, we were treated to a delightful concert of classical guitar music featuring DuoSF, a phenomenal guitar duet from San Francisco. This duo sent such delicate music wafting through the air like a summer breeze, waking our senses to the sweetness of Scarlotti's Sonata K #466, then to a modern beat of a Beatles medley, and even a hearty chuckle through the sounds of ducks taking flight in Domeniconi's "The Circus."



Guitarists Christopher Mallett and Robert Miller displayed the virtuosity of true masters, and treated us to an evening of musical joy. Just what the doctor ordered!



*Mark your calendar*

St. Paul's Concert Series Presents  
**Arthur Omura**

Saturday, November 28 | 7:00 pm

Welcome harpsichordist/organist Arthur Omura, live from the beautiful sanctuary at St. Paul's.

To register, visit [stpaulswc.org/concert-series](https://stpaulswc.org/concert-series)

## Anatomy of a Virtual Concert Series

By JIM WARD

Have you ever wondered what goes into producing one of our streaming concerts? You're not alone—early on, our Concert Series team wondered about that as well. We had a vision and desire to resume the concert series, but how?

Our production team jumped into action! Tom Tcheng, Deborah Webster, and Jim Ward started discussions of what technical equipment we would need and how to pull this together. Jessica Beerbaum helped define the requirements of re-gathering and COVID-19 safety for all those present, and our first online performer, Marina Tolstova, would provide instant feedback from home during the concert. After the concert, Pete Smyth, Pete Banwell, and Larry Crummer provided invaluable feedback for our review-and-improve meeting. Once we had a proposed plan, Tom then provided the sound equipment, Jim provided the camera equipment, and Deborah arranged dates with performers, and managed the publicity and ticketing aspects of the concert.

This photo captures our command center: a TV monitor shows what is streamed out to everyone, a peppy laptop handles three cameras and a sound mixer, lots of cables and tripods, six microphones plugged into the mixer, stage lights, and of course, performers!

**About four hours before the concert starts**, we begin setup, then Jim and Tom use a mechanical metronome to calibrate all the microphones and cameras. We discovered this eliminated the echo heard during the first concert. It also improved the video signal for smoother movements by the performers. Meanwhile Deborah, who developed a simplified ticketing process, is monitoring last minute tickets and access requests.



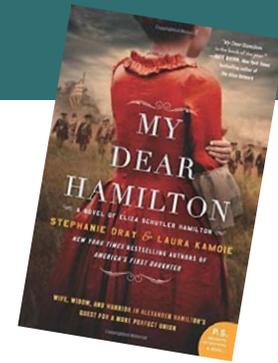
Once all is ready, the concert begins! Tom uses vMix software to knit together the various streams from cameras and microphones. At the same time, he checks the TV monitor to see what you see at home, making sure the quality is good. When the music ends, we spend at least an hour packing up everything. We hope you enjoy our efforts, and we look forward to providing more wonderful music in future concerts, live from St. Paul's!

## Church Life



### *My Dear Hamilton*

Book Review by SUE BUSENIUS



*My Dear Hamilton* by Stephanie Dray and Laura Kamoie is a must read. It chronicles Eliza Schuyler Hamilton's life from 1777 to 1854 when she died at age 97. She lived 50 years after Alexander's death. This book is written in first person, so you really feel like the events are happening. Even though there are two authors, it is impossible to know when the writers switch. The writing is so realistic that you have to keep reminding yourself that this is historical fiction.

As Eliza says at the beginning, "I was someone before I met Alexander Hamilton." Her married life is well told in the musical *Hamilton*, but with its time constraints, numerous dates and details were changed. Since this is the telling of her story, Aaron Burr is not a central character. We also learn that both Eliza and Alexander contracted yellow fever and almost died. This led to their reconciliation. But what is more important is what she did *after* Alexander's death.

She had to fight to get her husband's war pension. She and a friend founded the Orphan Asylum Society in NYC. All her life, she held a grudge against James Monroe for turning against her husband and siding with Jefferson. The Southern men stuck together. Eliza's and Lafayette's friendship lasted most of her life. In writing this book, the authors visited as many sites as possible connected to the Hamiltons. Most of the places no longer exist. They walked around Wall Street and Trinity Church where the Hamiltons and their son Philip are buried. They traveled to Harlem to one house, The Grange, where Eliza lived. The house has been moved several times but is now part of the National Park Service. The back of the book has a wealth of information about the writers and Eliza, and really completes the book. You may want to read it first, but that could spoil your enjoyment of reading *My Dear Hamilton*.

## Inspiration from the Notorious RBG

"I would like to be remembered as someone who used whatever talent she had to do her work to the very best of her ability."

"Fight for the things that you care about, but do it in a way that will lead others to join you."

"Real change, enduring change, happens one step at a time."

"So often in life, things that you regard as an impediment turn out to be great, good fortune."

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg 1933 - 2020



## Meet Your Vestry Candidates

### Susan Burpee



I am a life-long Episcopalian and long-term member of St Paul's. I previously served on vestry and was the clerk for several years. I am currently the directress of the Altar Guild and serve on the Pastoral Care team and Liturgy team. I have two sons who live close by, and five grandchildren who are the apple of Grandma Suzie's eye. I am retired after a 30-year career with Longs/CVS as a pharmacist and pharmacy manager. COVID-19 has emphasized to me how important my church family is. I believe St. Paul's can and does make a true impact, not only in the lives of our congregation but in the community around us. I look forward to serving and being a part of that positive impact.

### Ned Soares

I came to St. Paul's when I met Elizabeth in 2010. My early years as a Catholic, then 40 years as a member of Sufism Reoriented, continuing to be combined for the past 10 years with St. Paul's, have deepened my spirituality and focused my commitment to church and community service and outreach. My past community experiences include Navy pilot, Juvenile Probation Officer, software tester, and board member of several nonprofits. At St. Paul's, I am a Valentine Tea server, gardener, usher, photographer, and Epistle team member. Committees include Landscape, Contra Costa Interfaith Coalition, and Worship.



I appreciate the openness, diversity, and inclusion of our St. Paul's community and look forward to working for the increasing success of all our ministries, especially Outreach.



### Melanie Corry

My husband Jon and I have been attending St. Paul's since we moved to Walnut Creek two years ago. I have been actively involved in our previous churches leading multiple Bible studies, serving as a Worship leader, and on Outreach and Membership committees. At St. Paul's, I serve as a Lector for Sunday morning worship.

Professionally, I am a television producer at KRON4 in San Francisco. I grew up in Northern California the middle of four sisters, love cheesy movies, all things Christmas, and recently made my first quilt.

# Reminders

## Share-Our-Blessings Drive-Through

**Saturday, November 21 | 9:00 - 11:00 am**

Help support one, two, or all three of these worthwhile ministries at our drive in, drop off, drive out event. It doesn't get any easier than this! For a list of needed items, visit [stpaulswc.org](http://stpaulswc.org) and click on "News & Events."

## Drive-Through Food Drive

Donations support Monument Crisis Center.

## Drive-Through Angel Tree

For details, see page 7.

## Drive-Through School Drive

Donations support Meadow Homes Elementary School.

For Vestry Highlights and to learn about St. Paul's leadership and staff, visit [stpaulswc.org](http://stpaulswc.org).



## Blue Christmas

**Monday, December 21 | 7:00 pm**

On the longest night of the year, the winter solstice, join us on Facebook or YouTube as we remember loved ones gone.



## Lessons & Carols

**Thursday, December 24 | 7:00 pm**

Facebook & YouTube. Don't miss this beloved annual tradition!

To learn about additional holiday activities and services, visit [stpaulswc.org](http://stpaulswc.org) and click on "News & Events."

# Inspiration

## A Prayer for Families

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who sets the solitary in families: We commend to your continual care the homes in which your people dwell.

Put far from us, we beseech you, every root of bitterness, every desire for personal glory, and any over-pride of life. Fill us with **faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness**. Knit together in constant **affection** those who have committed themselves to each other. Turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the hearts of children to their parents; and so help us grow in **charity**, that we may evermore be in affection with one another; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

This is a modified version of Prayer #45 For Families, page 828, *Book of Common Prayer*. Shared with us by Rev. Laurie Moyer.

# A Look Back at 2020



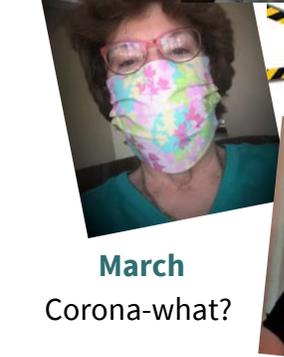
**February**  
Valentine's Tea



**September**  
Drive-through Food Drives



**May**  
St. Paul's Commons opens!



**March**  
Corona-what?

**September**  
With the removal of the pine tree, we have a bright new street view!

**October**  
Our newly renovated Parish Hall Kitchen

**October**  
Drive-Through Pet Blessing

**October**  
Our first outdoor service





TIME DATED MATERIAL  
PLEASE DELIVER PROMPTLY  
Address correction requested

1924 Trinity Avenue  
Walnut Creek, CA  
94596

(925) 934-2324

*info@stpaulswc.org*

Office Phone Hours  
Monday - Thursday  
9:30 am - 3:30 pm

Enjoy past issues of  
The Epistle online at  
[stpaulswc.org/newsletter](http://stpaulswc.org/newsletter)

