

Saint Paul's Messenger

February 2021



*As faithful stewards of God's Grace,
our mission in Christ is to foster
community through spiritual growth, witness, and service in the Episcopal tradition*

726 Sixth Street, Brookings SD
www.Stpaulsbrookings.com
<https://www.facebook.com/Saintpaulsbrookings>
605-692-2617

Established 1893

Messenger Editor, Chuck Berry

Rector's Report from Fr Larry Ort

It has been COLD!
Too cold to ice fish; besides,
any smart fish would stay
under the ice where it is
warmer! But the weather
shows promise, and there
should be some good fishing
before the spring thaw.



Several of our
members have received, or are in the process of
receiving, the Covid-19 vaccine. Please do so at
your earliest opportunity. If all goes well, we may
be able to resume more normal activities in a few
months – I am hungry for potato salad, burgers,
brats, and most of all, for fellowship!

Have you heard about Phil Baker's
grandson, Sean Baker? Sean is a sophomore at
Lincoln High School in Sioux Falls who happens
to enjoy making films. He recently completed a
documentary entitled "America's Creative
Economy: The Impact of Covid-19." The
documentary focuses on the hardships endured by
creative artists due to the pandemic. Americans
for the Arts asked Sean to write a blog post

concerning the documentary – check it out here:
<https://blog.americansforthearts.org/> . KELO also
featured Sean's work; see
<https://www.keloland.com/news/eye-on-keloland/sioux-falls-student-creates-documentary-on-the-pandemics-impact-on-the-arts/> .

The documentary has also been entered in the C-
span Student Documentary Contest. We should
know the results around March 10th. I viewed the
blog, the KELO story, and followed KELO's link
to the documentary. It is impressive! Check it out!

In response to encouragement from some
friends, I am organizing a book study group
through St. Paul's. I previously sent an e-mail on
this, so I will keep this rather brief. The group is
open to anyone in the community; a notice has
been sent to the Brookings
Register. We will meet every
other Tuesday evening via
Zoom from 7:00 – 8:30 PM
(March 9, 23; April 6, 20;
May 4). Our study will focus
on Rabbi Lord Jonathan
Sacks' *Morality: Restoring
the Common Good in Divided
Times*. If interested, please let



Rabbi Sacks

me know and order your book through Amazon,
Barnes and Noble, Better World Books, etc. If this

goes well, we will continue book studies as a form of community outreach.

I am writing this shortly after having conducted the Ash Wednesday Service. I will send a copy of the sermon separately; bottom line – I encourage you to observe a Lenten discipline. I have decided to follow two Lenten devotionals:



- The Creation Justice Lenten Resource (downloadable from <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#all/Whc tKJWQfIDgkLTwdTsRFLJrcxkZFKdhLfJ HSHLTbxmGqPJRXFzZFBgCscddQDN NPnQchVv>) and
- Episcopal Migration Ministries (sign up for their daily Lenten devotional at <https://episcopalmigrationministries.org/our-journey-through-lent/>).

Both look to be excellent resources. You may wish to consider one or both. I am also reading a book I recently encountered entitled *The Elements of the Spiritual Life* (F. P. Harton, B. D.). Harton was an Anglican minister. I have previously recommended a book by his wife to several of you – Sybil Harton’s *Doors of Eternity*.

If you read the minutes of the vestry meeting, you already know the vestry is going to complete a



Congregational Vitality Assessment offered through the Episcopal Church Foundation in collaboration with FaithX. This instrument asks for responses related to ten areas:

1. Vision, Mission, and Discernment;
2. Lay Engagement and Empowerment;
3. Context Awareness and inclusion;
4. Change Readiness;
5. Dealing with Differences;
6. Spiritual Life and Worship;
7. Formation, Education, and Training;
8. Outreach;
9. Leadership and Organization; and
10. Stewardship.

Once the vestry has completed and evaluated the assessment, we may expand the study to include a wider audience.

I close with a Prayer for Rest from Episcopal Relief and Development. You may find this prayer speaks to you.

Rest

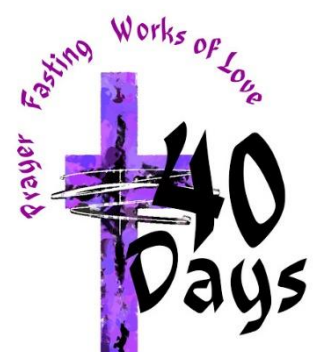
Jesus, I am stressed.

Help me to accept your invitation to come and receive the rest I need. Help me to willingly release my fear, my worries, my agenda and my to-do list. Ease the tension and replenish my body. Silence the voices of doubt and speak your words of truth. Remove the heaviness of my day and pour out abundantly into my life. Fill me with your peace, joy and love. Fill me until the overwhelm is consumed by your grace and my life reflects the beauty of resting in you.

Amen.

– Dr. Sandra Dalton-Smith

May you have a blessed and meaningful Lenten journey! Fr. Larry (purple colors for Lent)



St. Paul's Vestry Minutes Feb. 15

Lectio Divina: Matthew 6:1-4

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of January 18th were approved in a motion made by Lee Kratochvil (2nd, Lynn Hublou).

Rector's Report (Fr. Larry Ort): Fr. Larry attended the Congregational Vitality Assessment Seminar, the Church Pension Seminar on taxes, and the Clericus Meeting held in Webster. He reported that Fr. Chan is doing well after a short leave of absence, Fr. Parmeter had a knee replacement, and Mo. Paulis has some health concerns.

- ✓ Fr. Larry was appointed to the Diocesan Board of Examining Chaplains (the ethics portion of the exams).
- ✓ He has sent a notice to the Register regarding the "On Morality" study group.
- ✓ Mary Lou Berry has graciously consented to lead the Altar Guild.
- ✓ Brenda Kleinjan, SDSU student, will be making a documentary for a communications course on the stained-glass windows of four churches in Brookings, and St. Paul's will be included.
- ✓ We received thank-you notes from Habitat for Humanity, Episcopal Relief and Development, and Lutheran Social Services.
- ✓ The Parochial Report has been completed and filed.
- ✓ The opening balance of the Discretionary Fund was \$1489.23. A single disbursement (for gas) in the amount of \$56.50 was made, leaving a balance of \$1432.73. Additional recent deposits of \$500 and \$200 were noted by Treasurer Bob Klein.



Mary Lou Berry, the HyVee receipts lady and Altar Guild leader.

Senior Warden's Report

(Lynn Hublou): The Hoffmanns requested a banner catalog; Lynn will be in touch with them. It was noted that we



need to shake things up a bit at St. Paul's in order to attract new people.

Junior Warden's Report (Lee

Kratchovil): Lee reported that Fr. Larry opened up the bathrooms and took other precautions to save the water pipes during our recent cold snap.



Treasurer's Report (Bob

Klein): Bob reported that the January report had nothing unusual. He also reported that the investment account was down this past quarter. The Treasurer's Report was accepted in a motion made by Janet Gritzner (2nd, Carol Ann Klug).



Old Business: The Stewardship Drive 2020 responses have dwindled.



Janet Gritzner

New Business: The congregational Vitality Assessment scores 10 different aspects of a congregation. Fr. Larry will send this to the Vestry to complete and get feedback. He has visited with a few members to be on a special committee to revitalize St. Paul's. Lynn said that she had listened to part of the webinar on congregational vitality and she commented that we can't be a "zombie church"—doing what we've always done.

Some comments from the Vestry included Saturday night service with a more contemporary feel, or incorporated into a dinner service, more "Burgers & Brats" get-togethers, etc. Lee suggested beer and pizza! Fr. Larry has been reading about the loneliness of seniors, particularly those who live at home. Perhaps we could do a Tuesday/Thursday drop-in at St. Paul's for coffee and cookies (give them free bus passes).

On a different note, Carol Ann is concerned with the cleanliness of the dishes coming out of the dishwasher, which could be remedied by not rinsing them first.

Next Meeting: March 15th, 5:30 pm via Zoom
There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.



Respectfully submitted,
Marsha Klein, Clerk of the Vestry



February Birthdays

Jason Kratochvil, Everleigh Hovelson, Ryan Braun, Derek Clever, Jennie Hublou Mayer, Ian Greer, Ryan Woodard, Tasi Barondeau

March Birthdays

Aaron Hovelson, Don Norgaard, Abby Clever, Teadon Seaboy, Theresa Kratochvil, Andrea Woodard, Jenifer Lacher Starace, Ken Tjaden, Hay Lee Hovelson, Ben Taylor Sue Hoffman, George Gehant, Lynn Hublou.

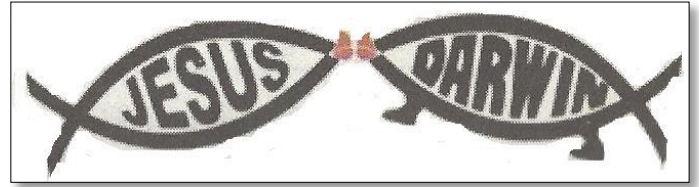
February-March Anniversaries

Doug and Connie Nelson



Evolution Sunday Feb 14

By St Paul's Natural Cathedral Committee



What has evolution got to do with St Paul's? Evolution Sunday isn't really about evolution at all, it is about the relationship between science and religion. It is just that the subject of evolution is one of the big discussions between science and religion. However, you know that St Paul's Natural Cathedral Committee is all about stewardship of God's Garden, Earth, our "island home in the cosmos."

We use science to tell us what is happening to the environment and how to care for, and repair the Garden, whereas religion teaches us why we should care, what our moral obligations are to God's Garden, and what the Bible has to say about man's relationship to the Garden.

In his Evolution Sunday sermon, Fr Larry preached that science affects theology in 3 ways. 1) Science provides us with the *data of danger*, that place environmental problems on the church's list of theological issues. 2) Scientific findings provide viewpoints on the natural world that we bring to our reading of the Bible as we open the dialogue between science and Scripture. 3) Theology gives us values that govern our interaction with the Creation, but our practice of those values is shaped by our scientific understanding of Creation.

Fr Larry cited the book *Creation Care: A Biblical Theology of the Natural World*, which has this line about Creation: "...the explication and revelation of its wonder and beauty through science or art can only enhance its mystery, recalling us to humility before the Creator of it all and inviting us into his worship." [interesting that the authors mention science and art; the wonders of nature is the theme of the current St Paul's Visual Arts Ministry display in Thorburn Hall]

Evolution Sunday is sponsored by The Clergy Letter Project. Some 17,500 clergy nationwide, including Fr Ort, have joined the Clergy Letter Project. This means that they have signed an open, simple, one-page letter stating...



Chuck Berry is the Chair of St Paul's Natural Cathedral Committee; shown with Earth Day display.

<http://www.theclergyletterproject.org/>

“Religious truth is of a different order from scientific truth. Its purpose is not to convey scientific information but to transform hearts. We the undersigned, Christian clergy from many different traditions, believe that the timeless truths of the Bible and the discoveries of modern science may comfortably coexist.”

St Paul's during Quarantine-time

Church services in person: OPEN with seating separation, modifications in service, and other safety features

Church services on line link for Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83255248573?pwd=NXcweGIRSGxaUkIRTXBqVFVOcUJlZz09>

Pledges: - use mail or in person
Compline: Wednesdays, 7:30; zoom

Are you satisfied?!

Back in the 50's, I never missed a high school football game – Dad was the coach. Oh, those were the days when small-town, Friday night, high school football was the biggest thing in town. My youthful vision was that, after the

big game, the star player and the prettiest cheerleader walked hand in hand through the golden fall leaves on campus.

I enjoyed every wonderful thing about game day, including the practiced, methodical cheers lead by the cheerleaders. But once in a while, a full-throated, raspy-voiced student in the stands would lead an unplanned, unorthodox cheer to the delight of the crowd, which knew that their part was a one-word response “SATISFIED!”



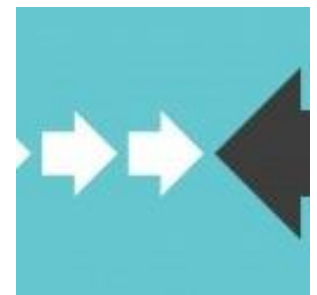
Vintage figure from 50's football program's Chesterfield cigarette ad

The cheer went like this: The boisterous student would stand up and shout: Are you satisfied with the team we've got? And the crowd would respond: SATISFIED!! Are you satisfied with the Coach we've got? SATISFIED!! Are you satisfied with the score we've got? SATISFIED!! Are you satisfied? SATISFIED!

“What has this to do with St Paul's?” you ask. Oh, it is just one of those odd connections that I have from time to time. Stay with me. I read that St Paul's was going to have a Congregational Vitality Assessment, and then I read an article from the Episcopal Church headshed that was titled “*Satisfied Churches Don't Change*,” and then I remembered the 1950s crowd yelling “SATISFIED.” Stay with me now because some mathematics is next.

The author of the article wrote about “The Satisfaction Problem.” One of the biggest impediments to positive change in faith communities can be that they are perfectly satisfied exactly where they are. The author presented a logic statement that looks like this:

$$\text{Change} = D \times V \times F > R$$



and the figure is a picture of the mathematical model.

Written out, it means: Change is made possible when D (Dissatisfaction with a current state) times V (Vision for a changed state) times F (First steps toward the vision) are greater than R (Resistance to change) in the system.

Our Math profs in the congregation, Lacher and Clever, will tell us that if either D or V or F are at zero, then they all come to zero. So, for example, if there is no vision, or no dissatisfaction with the current state, or no clear first steps, the movement toward change will not be able to overcome resistance. All three elements – including dissatisfaction – are necessary for positive change.

Last we heard: St Paul’s had a similar survey in 2015. We called it a mutual ministry review (mutual means reviewing the priest and the parishioners). We had meetings and discussions and identified issues and concerns, and things we did well.

The Vestry (I was Sr Warden) heard PB Curry’s line - “*We are not in the outcomes business, we are in the sharing the message business.*” So, we launched a plan called “ripples” to share our message in four, ever widening ripples: St Paul’s, Brookings, South Dakota, and the World.

Update: Vestry notes will show that over the last 5 years, we accomplished most of our 28 specific objectives for the ripples program, the most spectacular of which is our increase in outreach, which means contributing funds to charity or the needy. BUT we have a ripples paradox. We created some ripples, but the church didn’t prosper.

Wassup next: We’ll do a 2021 congregation assessment and determine what numbers to plug into the equation **Change = D x V x F > R.**

Upper: Snow the last time we waived palms at church on Palm Sunday 4/14/19 BC (before covid).

Lower: Gathering on Charlie’s Porch before the Palm Sunday procession.



Creation Justice Lenten Resource

(by Natural Cathedral Committee)

In Fr Larry’s lead article in this *Messenger*, he recommended a Lenten resource from Creation Justice Ministries (CJM). The National Episcopal Church is a member of CJM.

Our Natural Cathedral Committee has used Creation Care info from CJM in the past.

The Lenten resource is an action guide recommending small personal actions for each week in Lent. St Paul's Parishioners will be familiar with many of the actions because the actions have been part of our Creation Care Program. For example, they suggest (and give methods) for calculating your carbon footprint, much as we did to determine the carbon savings of our new windows (November 2020 *Messenger*).



The CJM Lenten series (8 pages) begins with this:

In Lent, we reflect on Christ's ministry, death, and resurrection. We slow down, and examine our internal spiritual lives as well as the way we live out our Christian faith in the world. Our faith teaches us that humans were put on this earth with the responsibility to be stewards. We also know our individual as well as collective U.S. lifestyles have led to serious harm to God's good creation. This Lenten reflection and action guide will help individuals take time to learn, reflect, repent, ask God for forgiveness, and take concrete steps to change course.

Another of their examples has been an annual practice at St Paul's for years – use Eco-palms on Palm Sunday. Still another action is “old hat: at St Paul's. CJM recommends participating in Earth Day Sunday. Another is: consider ordering a copy of *The Green Bible*. You may not have done this but you have heard a lot about *The Green Bible* from the Cathedral Comm. The Lenten material ends on April 4, Easter Sunday with this from Matthew 28:1-10

Do not be afraid! Go out into God's good world, holding onto God's steadfast love and joyfully answering the call to be Christ's disciple.

St Paul's In the News

Fr Larry's column in the Feb 18 (p7) edition of the *Brookings Register* was radical – such labeling!

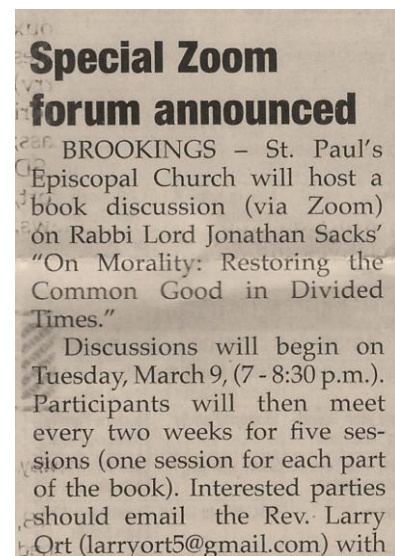


He wrote about “safetyism” meaning overprotection. He told the story of Jesus being baptized and then going into the wilderness. Apparently, God saw some value in subjecting Jesus to the wilderness experience. He did come out of the wilderness and made some changes. Our Mass in the Grass teaches us “wilderness” lessons in a very benign way.

Fr Larry thinks that Christians who experience wilderness-like troubles are better equipped to handle life. He cited a book titled *The Coddling of the American Mind* and called those subjected to safetyism “hothouse people,” who grow in a protected environment.

For example, he wrote that our inability to engage in healthy debate without taking offense is an example of hothouse-people-thinking.

Also in the *Register* was this note:

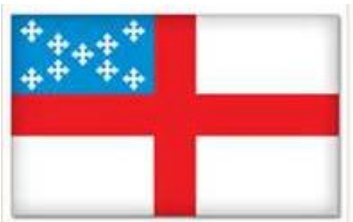


The Messenger

Newsletter of
St Paul's Episcopal Church
Church
Established 1893, Parish since 1952

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Saint Paul's Episcopal Church
726 Sixth Street,
Brookings SD 57006