

Saint Paul's Messenger

October 2018



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

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October Birthdays/Anniversaries

- 1 *Donald & Amanda Norgaard*
- 5 Shirley Christiansen
Preston Severson
- 10 John Whalen
- 11 *Kenric & Shannon Malmberg*
- 14 *Larry & Judy Ort*
- 15 *Pete & Judith Petersen*
- 16 Kevin Bogue
Elsie Jane Carruthers
- 17 *Sue & Paul Gillespie*
- 19 *John & Lynnette Taylor*
- 21 Marsha Klein
- 22 Sueellan Strong
- 25 Pete Petersen
- 26 Mark Reif

From our Rector - Fr Larry Ort

Our summer is over and fall is upon us, and with that we return to our “regularly scheduled programming.” Last week was a high energy week as we prepared for the annual wild game feast. I think I was assigned one of the more enjoyable tasks in that I wandered some back roads in search of prairie grasses and weeds to use in centerpieces. Patty Kratochvil wove some of my pickings into a beautiful decoration over the serving counter. I always enjoy hearing the positive comments from people as they depart the dinner! I did not hear a single complaint. Thanks to all of you who made this event the success that it was. At times I heard some grumbling, but that

is what families do! And it just so happened that I preached a sermon last Sunday on confession with no thought of the grumbling at all. Sometimes God knows what we need to hear. And sometimes someone tells me how much they appreciated a sermon which I consider to be one of my “lesser” efforts – something that did not quite come together the way I had hoped! God knows what is needed – we must learn to listen to the still small voice of the Spirit.

This week sees the start of church school, soup suppers, and the monthly pancake breakfast. We are always glad to see the return of these event, but we also are ready for the summer break when it comes.

And now for some words about soup suppers and coffee hours. It has become increasingly difficult to fill the schedule – and a few people have found themselves providing both every four or five weeks (and even more often). When we discussed this at our last vestry meeting, we noted that both have turned into far more than is expected. At one time, coffee hour was a coffee hour – you might get a cookie with a cup of coffee. Over time, things have escalated to the point where fresh fruit, muffins, crackers, cheese, sausage, cookies, cakes, etc., have been supplied. It is entirely possible to scale back – after all, coffee hour and soup suppers are really about the feast of fellowship. If we scale back so these events are less burdensome (and less expensive) more people are likely to sign up.

With this in mind, the vestry decided to establish and publicize the expectations for coffee hours and soup suppers:

Coffee Hour – provide regular and decaffeinated coffee, tea, juice, and cookies or donuts. Anything beyond this is at the discretion of the host, though we ask those hosting not to forget our theme of simplicity.

Soup Supper – provide soup, bread and butter, decaffeinated coffee, tea and juice. Peanut butter and jam should be available for the children in case they do not want soup. Anything beyond that is at the discretion of the host, but again, keep it simple.

In last month's report, I mentioned the importance of hospitality. Our hosts go to a lot of work. Let's remember to appreciate what we have and not to ask for things that are not provided or expect other things to be provided. When we order at McDonald's we might ask, "Where's the beef!?" That is a better question to ask of McDonald's than of one of our hosts.

Remember, the feast of St. Francis occurs on October 4th. With that in mind, we have scheduled the Blessing of the Animals (real or favorite stuffed toy) for Sunday afternoon, October 7th, at 4:00 PM in the court yard. I always enjoy this blessing! It is a fun time. Come, even if you do not have an animal, and thank God for the creatures which bring us so much joy. It is also time to begin feeding the birds and the squirrels, and yes, I confess, I'm the guy who even feeds the rabbits. After all, St. Paul's is a certified wildlife habitat!

Blessings,

Fr. Larry

September Vestry Meeting

. Rector's Report (Fr. Larry Ort):

- The book Walk in Love: Episcopal Beliefs and Practices has arrived. Father Larry will attempt to organize the text into 6 power point sessions of "Episcopal 101" for use after the soup suppers.
- Eighty-five people attended the Oman Reborn talk on campus.
- The Brookings Human Rights Commission "Take Back the Night Walk" will be held on October 24th beginning at 7:30. St. Paul's courtyard will be included as a venue.
- Discretionary Expenditures totaled \$265.06, leaving a balance of \$419.86.

Senior Warden's Report (Lynn Hublou):

- The Vestry discussed a plan for the Stewardship Drive, which will feature brief messages to the Congregation from various Vestry members on Sundays in November, culminating on Nov. 19th. Fr. Larry will compose a letter and pledge cards will be due on Dec. 1 to allow for budgetary planning.
- The Vestry will be approaching members of the Congregation to assemble a slate for the three upcoming Vestry vacancies well in advance of the annual meeting.
- Lynn suggested that we move announcements from the middle of the service to before the service starts. This would allow the service to flow in an uninterrupted manner. The Vestry decided to try this for a while, then get feedback from the Congregation.

Junior Warden's Report (Fr. Larry):

- The following projects have been completed or acted upon: the ordering of the Rectory doors; the chimney base in the Rectory (expanded to include walls and

painting); the ordering of the heating system for the Rectory; the replacement/repair of drain spouts by the columbarium; shelving for the Vesting Room and for storage of Centennial books, etc.

- The bell tower will be built next year, according to Lee Kratochvil; the cost has been covered.
- Fr. Larry wants to reroof the shed before the snow flies. The work will be provided by the recovery group that meets at St. Paul's.

Treasurer's Report (Bob Klein):

Bob reported a capital expenditure for \$4,200 for the Rectory doors. There was some discussion about memorial funds. The treasurer's report was accepted in a motion (with thanks) made by Lynn H. (second, Jean Lacher). Carol Ann Klug brought up the \$50 ECW dues for St. Paul's, which the treasurer will pay. Additionally, the Vestry will consider including the state ECW dues (\$3@woman) in the new budget.

Old Business:

Discussion of a possible display of historical objects was tabled. Discussion continues on the topic of security cameras. Possible nominees for Vestry membership were noted.

New Business:

We need more people to volunteer to host coffee hours and soup suppers. Fr. Larry will address this issue in the upcoming Messenger.

Blessing of Animals **(by Natural Cathedral Committee)**

Six Canine Americans and their owners received a blessing from Fr Larry during the Blessing of the Animals service on October 7. The blustery weather chased us into Charlie's Porch for the Service.

St Francis, whose feast day is October 4th, wrote a Canticle of the Creatures, an ode to God's living things. "*All praise to you, Oh Lord, for all these brother and sister creatures.*" The feast day of St. Francis is celebrated every year on October 4, and blessing of the animal services are usually scheduled for the Sunday closest to that day.

Our short blessing service has been attended by dogs, cats, and plush animals. It includes a collect, biblical readings, a prayer of St Francis, and a blessing of each pet, which is as follows:

“(pet name) may you be blessed in the name of God who created you and may you and (owner's name) enjoy life together with our God

The focus of the service is on pets and companion animals. The message is to take care of them as you would take care of yourself. Show gratitude; they are gifts from God.

However, St Paul's Natural Cathedral Committee suggests that these days the ceremony has a broader meaning. The focus is not only on pets but on all animals and our stewardship of all creatures on Earth.”

Theologians say that this broader idea is what St Francis had in mind. He called creatures his brothers and sisters. He emphasized that creation includes more than humankind and preached that humans and creatures are in the same relationship with God. He found in all created things some reflection of the Divine.

When we think of all animals, we might remember also the endangered species. We are accountable for the survival of all parts of the Earth community, especially "the least of them" who are most endangered. When we discuss saving a rare species that seems to have no value, it gives us an opportunity to dig deeper into our own values and motivations."

It was St Francis who first introduced the idea that human beings are only one of a myriad of creations of God and all are blessed in God's "eyes." Psalm 104 is probably the longest reflection on creation in the Bible. There are sections that sound like something out of a modern ecology text. It celebrates a world that includes humans, but does not center on them. Trees and grass, goats and lions, people and birds, day and night all are tied together in a joyous and gracious community of life.

Today, St Francis is the patron saint of animals and the environment.

Blessing of Animals Photos



Fig. 1. Chuck and Higgins. William, you will get your turn soon.



Fig. 2. Mary Lou and William (Photo by C. Berry)



Fig. 3. Al and faithful pal.



Fig. 4. Fr. Larry, assembled animals, and animal friends.

