

## A journal entry on gratitude...

There is something about the month of November that just speaks to "gratitude". Hymns we learned as a child like "We Gather Together to Ask the Lord's Blessings" or "Now Thank We All Our God" quickly come to mind. Images of family and friends gathered around a Thanksgiving banquet show the hungry with heads bowed, offering prayers of gratitude for all the blessings of this life. Generosity comes to the surface more easily this time of year.

Gratitude is an "attitude" of thanksgiving. It begins by recognizing God as the source of all that is good. We acknowledge that when our liturgy proclaims, "All things come of thee, O Lord, and of thine own have we given thee." Gratitude reminds us that we can not even give to each other but that we have first received from God's bounty.

One of the most outrageous images Jesus gives us of generosity is that of the farmer who spreads his seeds on the road, then the gravelly plots and finally the weed infested soil. It's his final toss

that is on the rich soil where the seeds take root and produce with abundance. But that's not where the farmer starts. In this story Jesus is inviting the listener to imitate the farmer, to be irrational with seeds of grace, even when we know it may not produce any decent outcome. Jesus wants to invite us into the joy of just tossing seeds of generosity with abandon, foregoing an investment in the outcome so that we can experience the sheer joy of tossing!

How holy absurd!

There are two things I notice when reflecting on this story:

- ◇ I can lose the "joy of tossing" when I become anxious that there may not be enough "seed" to cover my needs.
- ◇ I can lose the "joy of tossing" when I judge the adequacy of the soil to respond appropriately to my "gift".

So this November I invite you to join me in learning how to become an irrational farmer! What is something that you can wastefully give away for the sheer joy of it, disre-

garding any outcome or benefit you might derive from the giving?

May the Holy Spirit shape our hearts anew this Thanksgiving Season.

Blessings,

*Lynell+*

The Rev. Canon Lynell Walker+

Priest-in-Charge

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## Convention Highlights and Volunteer Opportunities!

### Diocesan Convention

I have just returned from our Diocesan Convention that was held here in Sacramento. While the convention itself had very few contested items – for example the resolution that had the most “heat” from commenters was one that strongly urged the churches to limit the use of commercially bottled water at our events and meetings. However, the call from the Bishop of North Carolina, The Rt. Reverend Michael Curry at the opening Eucharist and at the banquet certainly got my blood flowing. Bishop Curry’s preaching style is certainly inspiring. He is more Martin Luther King jr. than he is a staid episcopal preacher! In fact partway through his sermon he took pains to reassure us that he was indeed a cradle Episcopalian and the son of an Episcopal priest! One of the main messages in his sermon is that we are all called to be witnesses to the world of the message of love and acceptance contained in the Gospel. He recited both Old and New Testament mandates for us, as followers and disciples of Jesus to be witnesses to the world. And if that was not enough for good Episcopalians he cited reference in the Book of Common prayer to be witnesses – in such places as the Baptismal Covenant and the Catechism. Bishop Curry’s banquet address expanded that to include the concept that family is bigger than our biological family. That while we can be dysfunctional – both in our biological families as well as in our church family – we are still bound to each other by

love. A love that transcends all other labels. It was indeed a strong biblical and stirring message and a call to take the good news of the love of god out into the world. To be witnesses of that love in all that we do in the world.

In addition to the business resolutions and the calls to action in Bishop Curry and Bishop Beisner’s addresses we had two wonderful resolutions that called for celebrations. At the beginning of the convention St. Bridget’s in Rio Vista was formally recognized as an organized mission church in the diocese. Prior to this year St. Bridget’s had been recognized as an unorganized mission. On the second day St. James in Lincoln was formally recognized as a Parish after many years as a Mission Church. With all the national attention on mainline church’s closing and getting smaller it was wonderful to recognize tow churches that are growing and doing great things in their communities as witnesses to the love of Christ.

### Volunteer Opportunities – St. Matthew’s Needs our Help

St. Matthew’s can use our help! Recently St. Matthew’s received a grant to become a regional family resource center. That means that the wonderful outreach that the small congregation is already doing is expanding and they could use our help with the food closet ministry, the Health Outreach program (primarily they need health professionals for that) and the After School pro-

gram. See below for days and times. In addition they could use any financial help that we can provide. Recently their walk-in freezer needed major repairs – to the tune of \$2,500 which means that they do not have the resources left to do the big Thanksgiving food give away that they have done for many year as their out-reach reserves are gone. If you wish to donate money you can make check payable to St. Paul’s and put St. Matt’s in the memo line. If you can volunteer please call them Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 9am - 12:30 pm at phone (916) 927 0115.

### St. Matthew’s Volunteer Opportunities

- ◇ Food Closet Tuesday and Thursday 10-11:30 AM
- ◇ Health Outreach Tuesday and Thursday 9:30 – 11:30
- ◇ After School Program\* – Monday thru Thursday 2:00 pm

\*If they can get enough volunteers St. Matthew’s would like to expand the after school program to include Fridays.

## How do I try to plan music that speak to the beating heart of our congregation?

When I plan services, I look for music that will connect with people on a deep level. I want to bridge the gap between people's heads and hearts. It's about coloring in the dotted line between what they know to be true, and what moves them to act on what they know. The only problem is there are so many different kinds of people in my church that it's nearly impossible to plan a music that will connect with everybody. A certain portion of our congregation connects really well with hymns. Others think hymns are outdated, and they feel like they need something newer to connect with. Others feel that music is not an important part of worship and would prefer the service to be devoid of any type of music, vocal or instrumental. It's all about perception.

It seems to be the age old issue of the music planner. How does one plan a worship set that will connect with the greatest possible number of people in a very diverse crowd? Some churches resign to the fact that they will never appeal to everybody, and they just look to hit one style. Some keep their choirs and orchestras alive and stick to traditional music. Others feel like it's time to move on. They put traditional music away, and move to whatever is current.

Then there are churches who try to split the difference. They do traditional music during their early services. Then they do modern services later in the day. None of these ideas are wrong. In fact, they paint a beautiful picture of the diversity of the body of

Christ. That's one of the things I love about church music. It presents the beautiful mosaic of personality that exists within the church. Speaking to that beautiful mosaic is one of my favorite things about planning music for the services at our church.

When I plan music for services, I frequently look to build a diverse set that speaks to different generations, and engages the greatest possible number of people at once. Essentially, there are three eras of church music that are essential to speaking to the generational mosaic: hymns, contemporary songs and modern songs.

**HYMNS** are the songs that have stood the test of time. Many of them written before our parents were born, these tunes are typically composed with the lyrical complexity needed to communicate deep theological truths. For most they bring back childhood memories, which could be good or bad. In younger churches, this era of music might be honored best with revitalized versions of these songs that use updated instrumentation and dynamics. At St. Paul's, it is important to maintain the tradition of hymns that has prospered for over a century. For many people the melody to *Amazing Grace* is as sacred as the truth it communicates. Change the vital elements of a hymn and it could turn it from a fond memory of God's truth into a frustrating distraction.

**CONTEMPORARY SONGS** are anything written between 1970 and 2007...ish. These

songs are special. They're the ones that a lot of people associate with the beginning of their relationship with Jesus, especially if they were not brought up in an Episcopal tradition.. For most of Generation X, these are the true worship tunes. At St. Paul's, these songs make up a small proportion part of our repertoire. Many of these songs are contained in the supplement to the *Hymnal 1982*, entitled *Wonder, Love and Praise*. Many of these songs are becoming an important part of the makeup of today's church.

**MODERN SONGS** are any songs written in the last 5 years. They're the bread and butter of the worship leader who wants to be relevant. They are important because they speak to what matters to people today. If you've noticed, a lot of the songs that they're playing on your local Christian radio station are openly acknowledging people's brokenness. They are preaching the heart of today's generation, which is no longer content putting on a smile on Sunday and remain miserable for the rest of the week. These songs speak for the people who want real change. I use them in choir anthems to acknowledge what everyone is already thinking. Every church has a slightly different culture. Which means that the ideal mix of these three will be slightly different for everyone. I've found that at St. Paul's the right mix is generally 20% Modern, 70% Hymns and 10% Contemporary. That appears to be the mix that best speaks to the heart beat of our church.



## Treasurer's Corner

### Financial report October 2013

<u>Budgeted Income</u>	Jan-Oct	Budget (Jan-Oct)
Pledge	56,592	57,083
Giver of record	10,370	7,083
Loose plate	2,610	3,000
Special offerings	1,331	1,167
Interest	56	---
Building use	2,020	1,833
Altar guild	215	417
Bequests	<u>7,923</u>	<u>12,179</u>
Budgeted income	81,267	82,762
<u>Budgeted Expense</u>		
Office/telephone	3,585	3,771
Insurance & taxes	8,623	7,917
Repairs & maintenance	2,076	3,750
Utilities	<u>- 9,422</u>	<u>- 8,333</u>
Subtotal	20,121	20,000
Diocese apportionment	8,073	9,167
Altar guild	2,292	1,667
Endowment	1,688	1,771
Stewardship	812	417
Outreach	<u>3,537</u>	<u>2,292</u>
Subtotal	16,546	15,314
Payroll	<u>54,430</u>	<u>44,494</u>
Budgeted Expense	92,682	83,577
<u>Other Income</u>		
Building fund	8,911	
Music fund	40	
Funeral	250	
Restricted Income	<u>2,744</u>	
Other Income	11,688	
<u>Other Expense</u>		
Building fund expense	16,534	
Music expense	875	
Other non budgeted	235	
Adjustments	<u>(1,456)</u>	
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>(16,268)</b>	

Douglas Clay  
Treasurer

# Stewardship Update

Sunday November 10, 2014 marked the beginning of the Stewardship Pledge Ingathering for 2014.

This is, of course, the time in which we can give thanks for all the blessings we so freely receive from God in our lives by committing to return a small portion for God's work in Sacramento as performed here at St. Paul's.

After our initial Sunday we have received commitments from 22 households.

2014 Pledge Comparisons						2014 vs 2013
	2014	2013	2012	2011		% of prior year
<b>Total Pledges</b>	\$ 47,250.00	\$74,530.00	\$74,422.00	\$75,650.00		63.40%
<b>Total General</b>	\$ 43,760.00	\$69,810.00	\$72,702.00	\$74,110.00		62.68%
<b>Total Building</b>	\$ 3,490.00	\$4,720.00	\$1,720.00	\$1,540.00		73.94%
<b>Total # Pledges</b>	22	40	44	42		
<b># increased</b>	6	11	12	14		
<b># same</b>	8	18	23	17		
<b># decreased</b>	3	4	3	6		
<b># new</b>	5	7	6	5		
<b># discontinued</b>		9	5	8		
<b>Average Pledge</b>	\$ 2,147.73	\$1,863.25	\$1,691.41	\$1,801.19		

We will keep you updated as our ingathering continues.

Your Stewardship Committee

## Deanery News

**We are in the Capital deanery**, along with Faith (Cameron Park), St. Michael's (Carmichael), St. George's (Carmichael), St. Mary's (Elk Grove), St. Francis (Fair Oaks), Trinity (Folsom), St. Luke's Mission (Galt), Our Savior Parish (Placerville), St. Clement's (Rancho Cordova), Trinity Cathedral (Sacramento), All Saint's (Sacramento), St. Matthew's (Sacramento) and Trinity Parish (Sutter Creek). Our deanery has developed three areas of shared ministry as a focus for our work together, and at the fall convocation the groups working in each area reported on their activities.

### Outreach and Social Justice

Training in community organizing with Area Congregations Together (ACT) is coming in March 2014

Our deanery will support the expanding outreach ministries at St. Matthew's, which has been designated a Birth and Beyond Center with funding by First 5.

### Children's/Youth Ministry

An event is being planned in 2014 to support those doing ministry with children and youth

### Adult Formation/Retreats

On Saturday December 14 there will be an Advent retreat day at Faith Church in Cameron Park. The theme will be *The Three R's of Monastic Living for Everyday*

A weekend spiritual retreat is planned for August 22-24 at Mercy Center Auburn

The deanery planning group meets monthly. For more information about the deanery and ways to become involved, contact our dean, the Very Rev. Dr. Ray Hess, at [FatherRay@frontier.net](mailto:FatherRay@frontier.net) or 916-753-9939.

## SAVE THE DATE!

Sunday November 24	10AM	Michael and Lisa Lawson will provide special music before and during the service
Sunday December 1	8AM and 10AM	First Sunday in Advent
Monday December 9	6:30PM	Vestry Meeting
Sunday December 22	10AM	Advent Lessons and Carols
Tuesday December 24	8PM	Christmas Eve Service
Wednesday December 25	10AM	Christmas Day Service

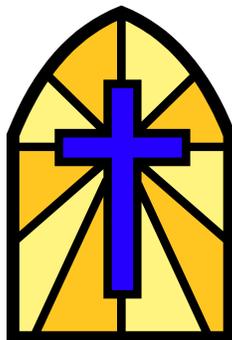
## GLUTEN FREE COMMUNION WAFERS AVAILABLE!

Gluten free communion wafers are available at every service. If you would prefer a gluten free wafer, just let the celebrant know when you come forward to receive communion. The wafers are not co-mingled with the bread, and you will take the wafer directly from the container to avoid cross-contamination. If you have any questions, please see Lynell, Eric, Anne or Rik.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

We celebrate the birth of Dorothy Elisabeth Larkey, daughter of DJ and Alex Larkey.

We pray for the repose of the soul of Emmett Gonzales, husband of Carol Gonzales , and Nancy Hardy, mother of Linda Hardy. May light perpetual shine upon them and God's grace comfort their families in their time of sorrow.



# Education Opportunities

## Hallelujah—The Bible and Handel's Messiah

"Christmas is just around the corner!" The commercial world has been telling us this for months, urging us to get in the holiday spirit and go shopping. But for Christians, the weeks before Christmas are set aside for a specific purpose—as a time of preparation and expectation for the coming celebration of our Lord's nativity.

Beginning November 24, we will be using portions of Handel's *Messiah* as an avenue into the biblical texts on which it is based.

Classes will be held on 4 consecutive Sundays after the 10 a.m. service.

November 24	Comfort, Comfort My People
December 1	Who May Abide the Day of His Coming?
December 8	For Unto Us a Child is Born
December 15	Glory to God in the Highest

This course, a Kerygma program, is designed to deepen appreciation of both the words and the music of Handel's *Messiah*. It is primarily a bible study, but people who have taken this course say that after participating you will never listen to Handel's *Messiah* in quite the same way. Leaders of this series include the Rev. Anne Slakey, Andrea Patten-Weerakoon, and the Rev. Rik Rasmussen. We hope you will join us!

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## Advent Retreat

<b>When:</b>	December 14, 2013
<b>Where:</b>	Faith Episcopal Church, 2200 Country Club Drive, Cameron Park, CA 95682
<b>Time:</b>	9am-2pm. Simple lunch provided.
<b>Retreat Leader:</b>	The Rev. Veronica Ritson, Archdeacon, Diocese of Arizona
<b>Theme:</b>	<i>The Three R's of Monastic Living for Everyday</i>

Today's culture is a "24/7" day of busy-ness. With social media and the ongoing changing of, and growing of technology, we are always in motion. Yet we yearn for something – quietness, being more prayerful, exercising our creative senses – but HOW? One way is to retreat to a monastery for a week or a few days – but there's NO TIME! Another is to be intentional with one's own time – create a personal Rhythm [The Rule].

Let us explore the "Three R's" of monastic living:

**The Rule** – to gain an understanding of the development of the monastic life of the early church to the purpose of "The Rule of Saint Benedict"

**Relationships** – to understand where does God, family, friends, work, community, etc. fit into an intentional "Rule"

**Rhythm** – To develop a Personal Rhythm of life

Cost: Freewill offering

For Questions Call Faith-Cameron Park (530) 676-3754

*Presented as a Partnership between the Capital Deanery & Faith-Cameron Park*



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### St. Paul's Vestry

Diane Richards, Senior Warden (2014)	Rik Rasmussen (2014)
Alex Larkey, Junior Warden (2014)	Leigh Stamets (2015)
Doug Clay, Treasurer (2015)	Daryl Reiber (2015)
Andrea Patten-Weerakoon, Clerk (2016)	Keith Askew (2016)

### Clergy and Staff

Rev. Canon Lynell Walker, Priest-in-Charge	st1849paul@sbcglobal.net
Rev. Eric Symons, Associate Priest	st1849paul@sbcglobal.net
Rev. Anne Slakey, Associate Priest	st1849paul@sbcglobal.net
Rev. Rik Rasmussen, Deacon	st1849paul@sbcglobal.net
Mark Robinson, Music Director	goldenfalconjet@comcast.net
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Pat Underwood, Parish Administrator	st1849paul@sbcglobal.net