

The Gospel Truth

A publication of St. Paul's Episcopal Church

September/October 2023



In This Issue

From the Editors:

Our goal is to share parish news, introduce each other, and foster community. If you know of news, events, or information of interest to the St. Paul's community, please email us. Feel free to toot your own horn! We want to hear all the news that's fit to print. We welcome your ideas and suggestions and will try to incorporate as many of them as we can.

Contributors:

Gay Clyburn gclyburn49@gmail.com

Jo Singer singer0517@gmail.com

Melinda Plue melindaplue@gmail.com

Nicci Brown brownlot65@gmail.com

News You Can Use

Wingate U. Seminar

St. Paul's in Action

Commemoration of All Faithful
Departed

Updates

Musical Notes

Vestry Reports

Getting to Know You

From the Rector's Desk

Lining Up for Communion

News You Can Use



Police Night Out

The Monroe City Police Department will be hosting Police Night Out from 5-7 p.m. on Tuesday, October 3. Wear your St.

Paul's shirt and come out and celebrate with our good neighbors in the center of the Historic District.



The Blessing of the Animals



Please join us with your animal friends as we observe the Feast Day of St. Francis of Assisi. We will gather in the St. Francis Garden at 2:30 p.m. on Sunday, October 1 to celebrate the Saint who preached to animals and moved throughout the known world sharing God's unconditional love for all beings. All are invited to bring their pets for a blessing and encouraged to welcome their friends and neighbors to do so as well. Please be sure your pet is on a leash or in a carrier - and if your pet is carrier averse, or too large to travel, feel free to bring a photo for the blessing. Donations for the Union County Humane Society (towels and blankets, pet food, monetary donations, etc.) are welcomed. It is often said that St. Francis sang and preached directly to birds and other animals, and called them his sisters and brothers, praising God's presence in each of them.



SAVE THIS DATE!



Birthday Bags

The M & Ms are asking the good folks of St. Paul's to consider assembling a Birthday Bag for Loaves and Fishes to distribute as needed. Each bag should include the following items: a blank birthday card, candles, a birthday banner or balloons, a disposable 9x13 cake pan, napkins, plates, and tissue paper. These items, along with the bag, can be purchased from Dollar Tree for \$10. A cake mix and icing provided by the rector's discretionary fund completes the bag, which will be offered at Loaves and Fishes to those who need them. We encourage parishioners to donate bags in honor of a loved one's birthday or in thanksgiving for one's own birthday. Place your bags in the big green bin in the office hallway.

Annual Meeting

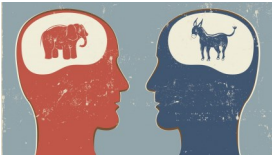
Sunday, November 12

ONE SERVICE at 10 a.m.

Potluck Luncheon to Follow

Seminar: Do We Really Hate Each Other?

Wingate Event Addressed Political Polarization



“Is America as politically divided as we all assume? And if it is divided, can we fix it?” asks Dr. Joseph Ellis, a St. Paul’s parishioner and Wingate University political science professor who organized the recent day-long seminar, “Do We Really Hate Each Other?: Democracy and Polarization Among Americans,” held at the Levine Center at Wingate.

Panelists included Ellis and other political science faculty members, Drs. Jake Wobig and Chelsea Kaufman. Participants included a large St. Paul’s contingent. The answer to Ellis’ query was “it’s complicated.” Kaufman showed that recent studies indicate that there are certainly differences in views on issues between Republicans and Democrats, but there are also inflated and incorrect perceptions, and the bottom line is that we shouldn’t make assumptions. An anonymous poll of the participants illustrated this. Kaufman said that there are many issues in which both parties agree, but because of political posturing and rhetoric, there is an increase in voter dissatisfaction with both parties that could lead to disengagement from the political process. Kaufman suggests that to move forward as a nation we need to focus on what we have in common, which is surprisingly more than we think.



Professor Ellis addressing a rapt audience hoping for some reassurance.

Wobig sounded the alarm about the consequences to the country if we don’t find a way to narrow the political divide and go about the work of government. “Divided societies are weaker societies,” he said. If left unchecked the country would face social, economic, and political consequences. “Pernicious polarization threatens all democratic institutions,” he said. “At high levels, it can lead to violence and could result in international weakness. Reducing polarization should be a top priority for those that favor the American experiment.”

Ellis closed with solutions. He reminded participants that dissent is not new to the United States. Citing one of the founding fathers, James Madison in the 1788 Federalist Papers, he reminded participants that liberty and factions exist because they are essential to a democratic government and society, “like air to fire”. The

“fix” even then was to establish a representative government and a separation of powers. He further explained, again using accepted historical texts that support a robust and fair government, that silencing discourse of opposing factions both discourages the ability to address change and extinguishes a healthy democracy. To engage in respectful and productive discourse requires being vulnerable and entering the conversation with the possibility that you could be wrong. He also suggested not only choosing your battles but where those battles are fought and the importance of acknowledging that some speech is unacceptable and can damage the possibility of any progress. He also cautioned against “lumping,” judging others by their party affiliation, for example.

The seminar is available to civic groups and other organizations and can be arranged through Joseph.



There are some familiar faces in this crowd.

St. Paul's in Action



Robert Heath, Jo Singer, and Joseph Ellis were happy to help a community member.



Some plants-run-amok get a good trimming.

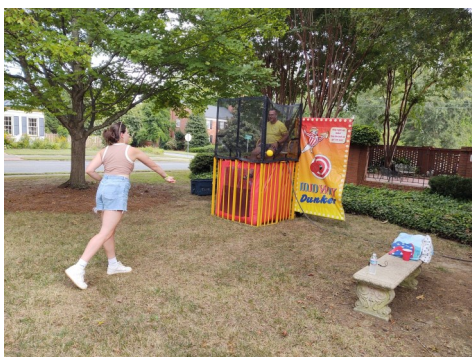


Ship-shape!

A team from St. Paul's was happy to participate in United Way's Day of Caring on August 19. A Union County senior homeowner needing help with landscaping and trimming was very happy to see the team arrive. You can see the difference in the before and after photos. The team felt they received a blessing by providing this help.



On August 12, St. Paul's invited their neighbors for backpack and school supply giveaways. There were games, drawings, a dunking booth, and a delicious nacho bar. The Fire Department and Police Department dropped in to meet and mingle with members of the community.



Kevin Plue getting dunked by his daughter, Georgia, who did not intend to miss such a golden opportunity.



Members of Monroe Fire Department playing badminton on this beautiful summer evening.

The Commemoration of All Faithful Departed

Thursday, November 2

6:30 to 8 p.m.



“All Souls Day . . . is a time when we particularly remember those who have died. The prayers appointed for that day remind us that we are joined with the Communion of Saints, that great group of Christians who have finished their earthly life and with whom we share the hope of the resurrection from the dead.” (Bays, Patricia; Hancock, Carol L. (2012). *This Anglican Church of Ours*. Wood Lake, ISBN 978-1-77964-439-7.)

The Commemoration of All Faithful Departed is a quiet and contemplative observance in remembrance of those who have gone before us. The ringing of the church bell calls us to gather in the Nave for prayer and The Reading of the Names, followed by time for rest and reflection in the Nave, the Memorial Garden, and the Courtyard. You are invited to light a candle or place a flower on the Easter Cross in thanks to God for our loved ones as we profess life eternal through the resurrection of His Son, Our Lord. Reverend Candis will also be available in the Nave should you wish to share what is closest to your heart.

Names of those to be remembered may be submitted to office@spechurch.org marked as “All Souls Remembrance.” Or, you can fill out the online form at <https://spechurch.org/all-saints-day-names>.

All members of our community are welcome to join us as we remember our loved ones.



Capital Campaign Update



As of September 25th we have reached 64% of our \$65,000 goal in our Capital Campaign. The money raised will be used to paint the outside of the church and to get new flooring inside. Both of these areas are in much need of repair/replacement and we are still hoping to raise the money needed for these projects. If you have not given, I ask that you prayerfully consider donating. If you lost your campaign card, please let me know and I can get you a new one. With our upcoming Sesquicentennial next year, we are trying to get these projects completed prior to our celebration.

~Lisa Hilbish

Labyrinth Update

Work begins on the St. Paul's labyrinth on Oct. 9 on the church property at the corner of Windsor and S. Church streets and will be completed in time for the dedication after the 10:30 a.m. service on the 15th. We'll recess from the church to the lawn for a special litany of a sacred space. The community is invited, as always, to church services that day, but especially for the labyrinth dedication.



The Labyrinth will be a beautiful addition to downtown Monroe, providing a place of serenity and reflection. Please join us for the dedication following the 10:30 a.m. service on Sunday, October 15.

MUSICAL NOTES

An Old-fashioned Hymn Sing



Do you love to sing the hymn “Amazing Grace”? Then mark your calendar for October 22 at 12:30 p.m. in the Parish Hall. St. Paul’s is hosting a community hymn sing

using the Sacred Harp, a hymnal first published in 1844. Some of our most popular hymns, such as “Amazing Grace,” “How Firm a Foundation,” “Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing,” and “What Wondrous Love Is This” were originally written for hymnals in colonial New England and then the American South.

One of the best things about these early hymns is the four-part harmonies. To our ears, the harmonies sound almost medieval, hauntingly beautiful. The movie *Cold Mountain* featured several hymns from the Sacred Harp. And if you ever get a chance to attend one of the big state hymn sings in Alabama or Georgia, it’s the closest you’ll get to being inside a human bagpipe or organ - the sound is phenomenal!



Unlike our modern hymnals that use round, circular notes, the Sacred Harp notes were printed in shapes, such as squares, triangles, or diamonds. From Wikipedia:

“The idea behind shape notes is that the parts of a vocal work can be learned more quickly and easily if the music is printed in shapes that match up with the solfège syllables with which the notes of the musical scale are sung. For instance, in the four-shape tradition used in the Sacred Harp and elsewhere, the notes of a C major scale are notated and sung as follows:



A skilled singer experienced in the shape note tradition has developed a fluent triple mental association, which links a note of the scale, a shape, and a syllable. This association can be used to help in reading the music.” Now, for those of us who already read music in the modern way, the shapes can be very confusing. But it’s possible to sing the hymns just as you normally would - you don’t have to learn the shapes to sing the hymns.

If you want to learn more about the history of shape notes, the Smithsonian Institution has a fun tutorial here:

<https://folkways.si.edu/shape-note-singing-lesson/music/tools-for-teaching/smithsonian>

Please join us on October 22, and bring a friend!

~Kathleen Prevost



VESTRY NOTES FROM AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 2023

- A professional photographer was procured by John Ashcraft to take photos of the church for insurance purposes.
- We are considering an art show for our Sesquicentennial.
- A date was chosen for the installation of Rev. Candis (October 23 was agreed upon).
- Servant Keeper was agreed upon as our new church organization/communication software; it will be purchased and installed.
- Idea discussed of installing bocce ball court.
- Discussion of hiring arborist to look at our crepe myrtles.
- Pistos will resume after Labor Day, and the Men's Group in September.
- Discussion of Men's Group hosting a game night.
- Lisa Hilbish reported that we are about halfway there on the Capital Campaign.
- Elaine Clark and Jo Singer completed a cleanup of the nursery area.
- Discussion of holding an outdoor service.
- The police department has been contacted to make sure the grounds are secure.
- The Annual Meeting date has been set for November 12, 2023.
- Kevin Plue, Jo, and Jimm Wetherbee are rotating off the Vestry this year. New candidates need to be solicited.
- Robert Heath and Steve Clyburn are serving as Convention delegates, with Gail Heath as an alternate.
- Tina Taylor will chair the Every Member Canvass.
- A first Sesquicentennial Committee meeting has been held to start making plans.
- The sump pump had to be replaced.
- The Labyrinth is on schedule to be installed in October.
- Rev. Candis has been working on getting estimates for new automated external defibrillators (AEDs), as ours are out of date.



We are preparing to celebrate St. Paul's 150th year in 2024. We are so grateful to everyone who has gone before us and kept this place vibrant and welcoming over the generations.

Getting to Know You

Gail and Robert Heath: A Match Made on HGTV



Robert and Gail at the North Carolina Arboretum in Asheville last May.

Home improvement and St. Paul's brought Robert and Gail Heath together. Both were widowed and both had spent quite a few years taking care of family members. In Robert's case, he was the live-in caregiver for his mother-in-law and then for his wife Joy who had cancer and died in 2014. Gail's husband John had been in poor health a long while and passed away in 2015.

After several years of being alone, but certainly still very active in both the community and St. Paul's, Robert was ready to be in a relationship. From his interactions with Gail during St. Paul's Tuesdays Together, he knew three things for sure: he was attracted to her, she was smart, and she had her own

woodworking tools. He made his move—several actually; he complimented her one evening at the restaurant, he got her chocolate pie from the dessert counter, and he invited her to bring her tools over and help him fix an antique bed. Both agree that after 34 years of marriage to John, Gail was not used to dating and missed the cues that Robert might want to be more than friends. But when he asked her to go with him to Wadesboro to work on a bit of genealogy (both had family history in Anson County) and visit antique shops—two things Gail loved doing—she was nervous that this might be a date. So much so, that she talked non-stop the entire time. Robert was unfazed and undeterred. He thought it was charming. When she called him to ask for help with a plumbing issue (Robert was an engineer, after all), he turned a one-hour project into three visits so he could see her.

The rest, which included many, many opportunities for Gail to use her woodworking tools and decorating skills, is as they say, history. After two proposals, Gail said yes. The wedding was at St. Paul's in March 2019. They honeymooned in San Miguel, Mexico, and came back to the real work of turning Robert's 1948 family home into a an inviting, modern yet traditional place for them both. Many hours watching HGTV provided inspiration and having to stay at home during Covid created the necessity. Gail had the expertise. And Robert

provided the raw materials—a house, at least three households worth of furnishings, and patience.

Their time at St. Paul's made being together easy. They had been in each other's company for years. Gail became a member of St. Paul's when her husband wanted a less stressful lifestyle than what they had in Charlotte and thought Monroe would provide that. She had worked as the parish administrator at Holy Comforter in Dilworth and she jumped right in at St. Paul's, working as interim parish administrator for six months. She helped host Lenten lunches, made baskets for the annual fall fair, served on the vestry, and organized vestry retreats. She served and continues to serve as a Lay Eucharistic Minister and lay visiting minister. She is a Bible Study regular, and in both marriages, has been a choir "widow," giving up Wednesday nights for choir practices. Robert serves on the vestry, sings in the choir, is a regular at Bible Study, and spends untold amounts of time as the church's unofficial "IT guy" since his career was in technology. As our outreach into the community grows, he'll most likely be called upon to put his language skills to good use as well. During his career, he traveled the world and is comfortable either speaking and/or reading six languages, an affinity he inherited from his mother, an educator and former Pentagon recruit who spoke seven languages.

Both agree that St. Paul's needs parishioners who get involved in its renewal. "We are not a church that is going away; we are a church that keeps fighting," Gail said. And both are committed to supporting a vision for outreach and growth.



Gail and Robert on March 2, 2019—a very special day, indeed.

From the Rector's Desk

Agapimenous—Beloved Ones—

Your prayers and presence are requested for our **Renewal of Ministry with the Welcoming of a New Rector** which we will celebrate Thursday evening, October 28 at 7 p.m.

Bishop Sam Rodman will be here to officiate and celebrate this Rite that sets ordained leadership within the context of our Baptism and raises up the variety of gifts that we all share here at St. Paul's. The ministry we share is much more than that of your clergy leadership. It is a covenant relationship between the congregation and the clergy very much akin to "with all that I am, and all that I have, I honor you..." The Book of Common Prayer defines the ministers of the church as "lay persons, bishops, priests, and deacons" (BCP 1979, p 855). Our ministries include all that we do within our parish family, the Diocese, in our community, and in the world. This corporate focus of the liturgy is very exciting and will feature many of you, as well as our clergy colleagues from the Charlotte convocation and the Regional and Diocesan Canons. The evening will conclude with a festive reception in our Parish Hall.

The clergy will all be vested in red stoles to indicate the presence of the Holy Spirit among us that evening, and I invite you all to wear red as well. Let us show forth the gift of the Holy Spirit we all received at our Baptisms and will celebrate with the renewal of our Baptismal Vows.

Grace to you and peace,

Candis+



Lining Up for Communion

We are going to try something a little different at communion. It boils down to this question: Are you a dipper or a sipper? Back in the before times (pre-COVID), we used one chalice. Some people chose to sip from the chalice, while others kept their wafer until the chalice got to them and dipped their wafer into the wine (intinction). During the pandemic, we began to use a chalice for sipping, and a small bowl for intinction. As the months have passed, it's gotten a little confusing, and people aren't always sure where to line up. Beginning this Sunday, we are asking that everyone form **one single line** down the middle, as we used to. If you prefer to sip from the chalice, please go to your right, and use the right-most two kneelers (filling in from right to left.) If you prefer to intinct, please go to the center of the rail and fill in from right to left towards the Sacristy. This will enable a much smoother flow behind the altar rail, and will make it easier for everyone to get back to their pews without too much traffic.



If you would prefer to intinct your wafer, please begin kneeling (or standing) at the center of the altar rail, filling in towards the Alpha symbol on the altar.



Only about a third of us sip from the chalice. So we don't need as much space at the altar rail. Please use these two cushions to the right (no further than the Omega symbol on the altar.)

Our Social Media Pages

Are you following St. Paul's on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [YouTube](#)? We would love to have parishioners and friends of St. Paul's interact with us. Please share with potential visitors, too.