

SAINT PAUL'S Epistle

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Volume 67, Number 1

THE PROMISE OF THE LILY

In September 2007, 16 months ago, we began our exploration through our stained glass windows. This month we come to the last window, one depicting a simply three-flowered lily. The window can be found in our balcony.

Perhaps if I had thought this through better, we might have begun this series a few months later so as to end in April to coincide with Easter. After all, for generations the lily has been used by the Church to symbolize Jesus' resurrection. Yet, I think it fitting to end our journey at this time of year, to coincide with a new year, a time of new beginnings and hope.

As symbols tend to go, there is rarely unanimity in regards to the various symbolic meanings of the lily. While the lily has been used as a symbol of Jesus' resurrection, and the three-flowered lily, pictured here, often symbolizes the Holy Trinity, its color (pure white) and simplicity has reminded many of the Virgin Mary, a symbol of faith and purity in her own right. Tradition has it that the "Madonna Lily" was yellow until Mary plucked it, where upon it turned white. According to historians, the lily, or in French, Fleur-de-lis, was used predominantly throughout the first half of the Middle Ages to symbolize Jesus. As time went on, however, its connection to the Virgin Mary became more common. Fulbert of Chartres (bishop of Chartres Cathedral from 1006 until his death in 1028) drawing upon Song of Solomon 2:2, described the Virgin Mary as, "a lily among thorns (lilium inter spinas), preserved from all impurity of the flesh and the spirit because she was to be the receptacle of Divine Wisdom." By 1300 the lily's symbolic connection to Mary was firmly established.

In the Protestant churches, however, the tendency is to understand the lily as symbolizing Jesus' resurrection. Around Easter time countless Sunday School

children are reminded of this symbolism when they are given a seemingly-dead bulb to bury in soil (to symbolize Jesus' death and burial) only to witness its springing forth into a beautiful white lily (to symbolize his Resurrection) a short time later.

For Christians, the resurrection of Jesus is the single most important event that defines our lives and empowers our faith. Like a spring lily pushing up out of the earth, our hope (rooted in Jesus' triumph over death) can spring up anew from the cold wintery ground of our lives. When we have lost hope, when we have fallen into despair, the promise of the lily, which is the promise of the resurrection, is that in Christ, hope and new life has become our inheritance. Death (especially including its myriad forms that tend to define us as lacking in worth and drawing us into meaninglessness and despair) has been overcome. We can greet the future with a renewed hope and confidence.

January 1st marks a new year in our secular calendars. It is quite common, therefore, to use the beginning of a new year as an opportunity to take stock of our past and to look forward in hope and renewed commitment towards our future. For the people of St. Paul's, in January we will begin holding a series of house meetings as a way of starting a process of

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OFFICIAL NOTICE:

**The 66th Annual Meeting of
St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church
of Wethersfield, Connecticut**

**will take place on
Sunday, January 25, 2009
following the late service.
Please plan to attend.**

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spiritual renewal and discernment for the whole congregation. (See article for more details.) And while it may seem that a daunting task lies ahead, we go into the new year, and into this time of discernment, with the promise of the lily: Where faith abides there is no barrier, not even death itself, that can keep us from fulfilling God's will for our lives. Like the lily that pushes up from the sepulchral ground into the light of spring, we too face the promise and limitless possibilities of our future. Through Christ, our hope is secure, our future is bright.

Pastor Hugh Haffenreffer



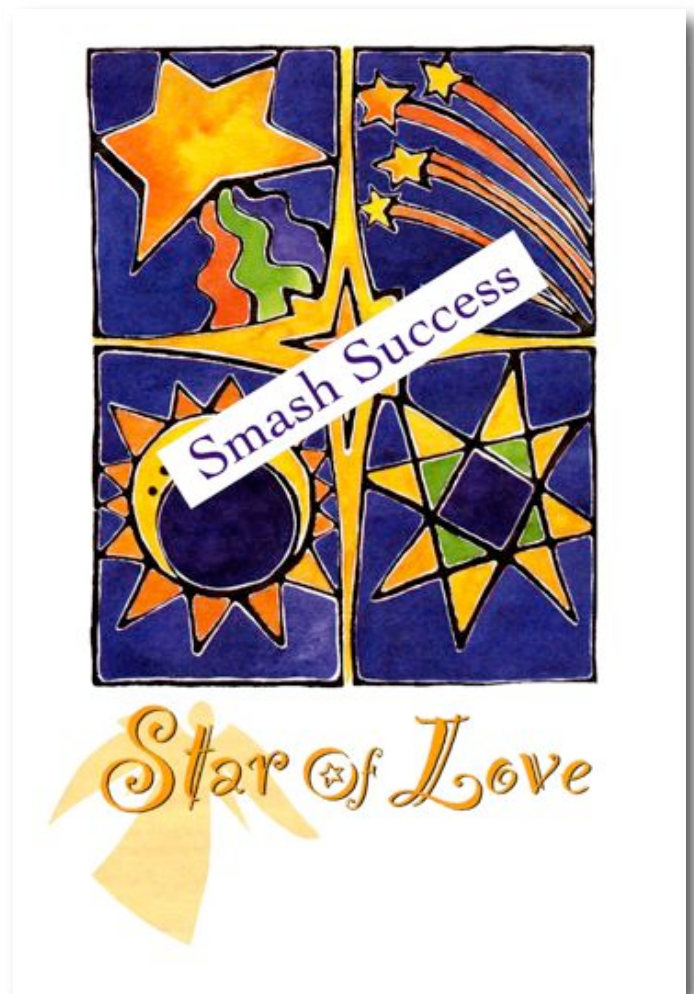
Dear People of Saint Paul's,

Thank you for the generous check I received as a Christmas Gift. More than the amount given, I give thanks to God for the generous way that so many of you give to the mission of Christ through the ministries of St. Paul's. Our partnership, and I consider it a very real partnership, is a sign of our health and vitality as a congregation. And your personal support of me and Debbie has been the most important gift that anyone could ever receive.

Again, thank you for the Christmas gift.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Hugh



**SUNDAY CHURCH SCHOOL'S
"STAR OF LOVE"
CHRISTMAS PAGEANT
WAS A SUCCESS!**

Thanks to all who helped make this year's Christmas Pageant such a great success. To the Sunday School teachers, actors (young and old, alike), and the musicians . . . your participation was a wonderful gift to us all!

From the comments heard following the service, this was one of the best pageants ever!

Thanks !

Pastor Hugh

**RENEWING OUR VISION TOGETHER:
CELEBRATING OUR PAST, ASSESSING OUR
PRESENT,
DISCERNING OUR FUTURE**

According to those who study congregations, for a healthy congregation to remain healthy and growing, it must go through some kind of discernment or revisioning process every 4 or 5 years. The purpose of this process is to make sure that the ministries and programs of the congregation are what *God* wants at this time and in this place. It is time for us, the people of St. Paul's Church, to undergo such a discernment process.

In 2009, with the full support and endorsement of St. Paul's Council, the people of St. Paul's will begin a process of discernment that will include everyone who wishes to participate. We are calling the process: **Renewing our Vision Together**, and it will include opportunities to celebrate our past, assess our present, and discern God's will for our future.

The process will start in January and conclude on Pentecost Sunday, May 31. It will include the following 5 steps:

1) Late January through early February 2009:
"Ministry Assessment Home Meetings"

Members will be invited to attend one of several "home meetings" that will take place during this time to share their wisdom and insight into our present ministries. Guided by a member of the "Visioning Team" and hosted by one of our member families, we will assess the strengths as well as the challenges of our present ministries and programs in an effort to get a clearer idea about the kinds of goals we should set to guide us into our future.

If you would be willing to open your home to 8 to 10 people on a morning, afternoon or evening during late January to early February, please contact Pastor Hugh and let him know. By Sunday, January 4, there will be a sign-up poster in the fel-

lowship hall with some dates, times and locations of the home meetings. Our expectation is that the number of home meetings will grow as people learn more about it and are willing to open their homes for them.

2) Saturday, February 28, 2009 (time to be determined): **"An Evening to Remember: We Celebrate our History"**

We will come together as a community to remember and celebrate our history as a community of faith. Ours is a rich history. And as we remember and celebrate it together, we will discover clues to what makes us who we are, where our unique strengths and gifts lie, and how God has lead us to this point in time. From these conversations and remembrances, we will draw out insights that will help guide us as we discern God's calling for our future.

3) Saturday, March 28, 2009 (time to be determined): **"An Evening of Norm Identification: Discovering our 'Secret Handshakes'"**

Every congregation has its own distinct "culture" or set of "norms" that determines how we do what we do and why we do it that way. It is like our church "DNA", which shapes both our ministries and programs, and the way we act together. Every congregation also has a story that reflects this culture and captures our understanding of who we are. On this evening, we will gather to try to come to a deeper understanding of our culture, our "secret handshakes" and our story so that we can better identify which parts God wants us to keep and build upon, and which parts God wants us to change.

If we are truly committed to building a new and vibrant future together, we must not skip this evening. While it promises to be challenging (any

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honest look at ourselves will reveal areas in need of growth and change) it also promises to be the most important gathering we will have during this process.

4) Saturday, May 16, 2009 (time to be determined): **“Our Vision Revealed”**

On this evening, the congregation will at last come together for a comprehensive look at the renew set of ministry goals and priorities for the next 5 years. It is our hope that the congregation will unanimously support these ministry goals and that each of us will personally commit to supporting their becoming our new reality. By the time our evening is over we will all have a very clear sense of where God is calling us.

5) Pentecost Sunday, May 31, 2009: **“We Celebrate our New Direction!”**

It is by the power of the Holy Spirit that we will move into our future with a clear sense of direction and a confident hope that with God all things are possible. It is fitting, therefore, that we celebrate our Renewed Vision on the day when we celebrate the Holy Spirit, God’s gift of power and presence.

Over the next few weeks you will learn more about our discernment process and how you can participate in it. At the present time we are gathering a team of 6 to 8 people to form a visioning team, a task force responsible for listening to the wisdom and insights of all those who participate and then gather that information together at each step along the way to aid in the discernment process.

During the month of April, after having completed the first three events— Ministry Assessment Home Meetings, an Evening to Remember, and an Evening of Norm Identification—the whole congregation will be invited to join the Visioning Team and council

in prayer (and fasting, for those who feel so called) as we sift through the many possible directions we might take together to discern God’s will and vision for us.

What can you do now? First, please pray for St. Paul’s and its Visioning Team as we begin to plan our gatherings and gather up the resources necessary to this endeavor.

Second, mark your calendars now with the above dates. While there may be some slight modification to our schedule, it is absolutely essential that everyone participate. Discerning God’s will for us is done through prayer and the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit works through groups of people coming together for a common purpose.

Third, if you are willing to open your home to a small group during late January or early February, please let us know.

Please join us in this important journey of discovery as we “Renew our Vision Together”.

For more information or to find out how you can participate more fully, please talk with Pastor.

**WE SAY THANKS TO
LINDA ANDERSON**

Dear People of Saint Paul’s,

With our Annual Meeting coming up at the end of January (on Sunday the 25th), we, as a council will be saying good-bye to Linda Anderson in her role as our President. Linda will have served 2 full terms on council, with a number of those years serving as Vice President and this past year as President.

Linda has been a source of solid and faithful leadership to all of us at St. Paul’s.

Beyond her tenure as President, Linda has shown leadership in countless ways, big and small.

Thank you, Linda for your leadership, love and faith. You are a role model for us all.

St. Paul’s Council



Valentine Fellowship Dinner

FEBRUARY 2009 FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITY!

SHARE YOUR LOVE ON VALENTINE'S DAY WITH THOSE WHO NEED IT THE MOST

On Valentine's Day, Saturday, February 14, starting at 2 PM, Jim Newmark and up to 10 volunteers will be meeting at St. Paul's to prepare a meal to be served at South Park Inn.

Please consider being one of these volunteers! Share your love on Valentine's Day with those less fortunate. Jim and all volunteers will meet at Church at 1:30PM to prepare, transport and serve dinner at South Park Inn.

To participate, please contact Jim at (860) 231-2769 or james.newmark@goodrich.com

PLEASE NOTE:

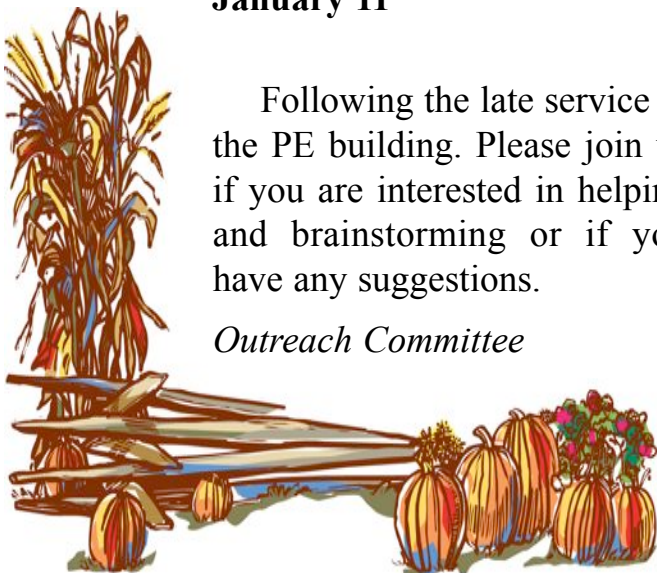
Altar Flowers for 2009 have gone up to \$40 for two (2) bouquets.

HARVEST FAIR MEETING

January 11th

Following the late service in the PE building. Please join us if you are interested in helping and brainstorming or if you have any suggestions.

Outreach Committee



JANUARY BIRTHDAY'S

3	Rebecca Malinguaggio	11	Steven Bengston
3	Richard Kratzer	11	Daniel Hube
4	Emil Bengston	13	Emily Lourigan
4	Jane Matteson	14	Grace Durkin
6	David Bayek	15	Dan Gellner
7	Jean Frame	15	Les Lourigan
8	Lorraine Cogswell	22	Margaret Carlson
9	Kevin Kratzer	25	Steph Lohmann
9	Beverly Liegey	28	David Leibenguth



Dear St. Paul's family,

We all feel incredibly blessed to have such a wonderful family here at St. Paul's!

Thank you for the love, the prayers for Alex and us all, for the steady stream of calls, Manna meals, get well cards, visits and most recently the wonderful Christmas "surprise gift" you sent us! While the true message of Christmas is not one of material things, part of the excitement for children is giving and receiving gifts. Your wonderful gift will help our household and ensure a happy Christmas for Celia and Cameron.

It has been a difficult year, but your love, prayers and support have considerably eased many of our burdens and for that we will always be grateful.

Love,
The Cheyneys

ST. PAUL'S MEMBERS IN SERVICE FOR January 2009

ACOLYTES:

Linda Anderson, Coordinator, 659-4094

- Jan 4 - Celia Cheyney
11 - Amanda Piscitello
18 - Josh Marzano
25 - Gretchen Schultz

ALTAR GUILD:

Linda Anderson, Coordinator, 659-4094

- Jan 4 - Ann French & Winnie Sawrun
11 - Mary Procyk & Cindy Seip
18 - Jennie Dotts & Betty Lamo
25 - Ann Baledes & Elaine Strecker

ASSISTING MINISTERS:

Kathy Coyle, Coordinator, 529-5983

- Jan 4 - Kathy Coyle - 8:00
Emily Lourigan - 10:30
11 - Jim Newmark - 8:00
- Bill Fischer - 10:30
18 - Patty Bengtson - 8:00
Mary Procyk - 10:30
25 - Jim Newmark - 8:00
- Art Bruce - 10:30

COMMUNION ASSISTANTS:

Sue Agne, Coordinator, 563-0776

- Jan 4 - Helen Peterson
11 - Dick Agne
18 - Sue Agne
25 - Curt Leonard

USHERS:

Brian Beckwith, Coordinator, 8AM, 563-4066

Louise Lostocco, Coordinator, 10:30AM, 529-3079

- Jan - Suzanne McDonald- 8:00
- Carol Farley & - 10:30
David Bayek

TAPING MINISTRY:

Coordinator Needed

- Jan 4 -
11 - We need volunteers for this
18 - imporant ministry!
25 -

FELLOWSHIP HOUR HOSTS:

Winnie Sawrun, Coordinator, 529-7588

- Jan 4 - Lillian Doerschler & Winnie Sawrun
11 - Ellie & Charles Bengtson
18 - Carol & Art Bruce
25 - Grace & Robert Durkin

FINANCE:

Mary Procyk, Coordinator, 257-4793

- Jan 4 - Art Bruce
11 - Mike Coyle
18 - Debbie Viola, Winnie Sawrun, Mary P.
25 - Lillian Doerschler

LECTORS:

Lillian Doerschler, Coordinator, 529-1939

- Jan 4 - Patty Bengtson
11 - Joan Kratzer
18 - Mary Procyk
25 - Art Bruce

NURSERY:

Ann French, Coordinator, 529-3245

- Jan 4 -
11 -
18 - Matt & Julie Perry
25 - Matt & Julie Perry

EUCHARISTIC MINISTER:

Kathy Coyle, Coordinator, 529-5983

January 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 4 Holy Comm. 8:00 AM Holy Comm. 10:30 AM	5	6 Epiphany Outreach Com. 7PM OA 7:30 PM	7 Youth Pot Luck 5:30 PM Conf. Class 6:15 PM Scouts 6-8 PM AA 7 PM Choir 7:30 PM	8 Thur. Grp. 10 AM	9 AA 10 AM	10 AA 7:30 PM
11 Holy Comm. 8:00 AM Holy Comm. 10:30 AM Harvest Fair Meeting after 10:30 service.	12	13 OA 7:30 PM	14 Conf. Class 6:15 PM AA 7 PM Choir 7:30 PM	15 7:30 AM Men's Breakfast Thur. Grp. 10 AM Epistle Deadline	16 AA 10 AM	17 AA 7:30 PM
18 Holy Comm. 8:00 AM Holy Comm. 10:30 AM	19 Martin Luther King Jr. Day	20 OA 7:30 PM Par. Adm. 6:30 PM Council 7:30	21 Conf. Pizza 5:30 PM Conf. Class 6:15 PM AA 7PM Choir 7:30 PM	22 Thur. Grp. 10 AM	23 AA 10 AM	24 AA 7:30 PM
25 Holy Comm. 8:00 AM Holy Comm. 10:30 AM Annual Meeting 12 PM	26	27 OA 7:30 PM	28 Conf. Class 6:15 PM AA 7 PM Choir 7:30 PM	29 Thur. Grp. 10 AM	30 AA 10 AM	31 AA 7:30 PM

SAINT PAUL'S **Epistle**

SAINT PAUL'S EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH

371 Wolcott Hill Road

Wethersfield, CT 06109

www.stpaulswethersfield.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

SAINT PAUL'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Worship at 8:00 and 10:30AM

SCS & Adult Ed. at 9:00AM

OFFICERS AND STAFF

Rev. Hugh R. B. Haffenreffer, Pastor.....	Office: (860) 529-5397
	Cell Phone: (860) 966-7360
	<i>pastorh@stpaulswethersfield.org</i>
Office Manager	Janet Vasel: <i>janet@stpaulswethersfield.org</i>
Council President.....	Linda Anderson
Treasurer	Tom Grottko
Financial Sect'y.....	Mary Procyk
Minister of Music	Melissa Cheyney
Superintendent of Sunday Church School.....	Alice Ruppap

REMINDERS:

Sign up in January to attend a "Home Meeting!"

Jan. 25th Annual Meeting following late service!

January 2009