



St. Paul's Episcopal Church
San Rafael, California

The Epistle

On the Web

November, 2001

Volume 22, Issue 11

All Good Gifts. . .

Jean Hicks, Stewardship Team Leader

*All Good Gifts Around
Us Are Sent From
Heaven Above;
Then Thank the Lord, O
Thank the Lord,
For All God's Love*

*Hymn by Matthias
Claudius (1740-1815)*

So many things have happened in our world in the last two months that have caused us to stop and think about what is really important in our lives. Suddenly, things that were insignificant or taken for granted are placed in a new perspective. The reality of life is that everything that is good, and nourishing, and warm, and loving, and kind, and supportive in our lives is a blessing, a gift from God. God cares about us and provides for us. Because we are each a

unique creation, God provides for us and blesses us each in different, unique and special ways. Many of these blessings we take for granted, but these days, watching the faces and conditions of others in the world, and even here in our own country (and even here in San Rafael), we know that we have been blessed with a great deal: with skills, talents, abilities, and the fruits of our labors from our use of those skills, talents, and abilities.

God does not ask us for much. God does ask that we return a one-tenth portion of the fruits of our labors to God. In biblical times, this portion, called a tithe, was given to the temple to provide for the temple and those who cared for it and

served the people as priests, etc. In later times, this portion was used by the church to provide for the many ministries of the church, such as the hospitals and other things to support people in need. Today, there are many, many non-profit organizations which provide the social services once provided by the church, although there are still many church-supported social service organizations as well, such as those within the Episcopal Charities.

Think of the many ministries of St. Paul's right here in San Rafael. We provide a lovely, warm, inviting place for people to come for worship; comfortable gathering rooms for support groups to help people in addiction recovery, grief

(Continued on page 2)

Articles Inside:

Thoughts from the Rev	2
Tips on Using the Epistle's Navigation Aids	3
Mary Frances Schjonberg on Faith and Patriotism	4
Netweavers: Good to the Last Drop	5
Webpistle Closing Looms	7
Stewardship Report	8



All Good Gifts, contd.

recovery, healing, prayer and meditation, and community groups helping many others in San Rafael. During the recent times of anguish, grief, and stress, we were able to provide immediate, compassionate support within the community. We have a growing group of people reaching out across the continent and supporting global ministries in Mexico and in Cuba. We have people visiting those in our local nursing homes, and in the prison and jails in this area, to bring them nurturing love and worship. We provide an inviting place for families to come and grow together and teach their children about the love that God has for them. We have a warm and welcoming fellowship and sharing time on Sunday mornings with coffee, juice, pastries, and other “munchables,” not to mention the plates, napkins, cups and setups that make the fel-

lowship time more convenient and enjoyable. We have a rector and assistant rector who use their special gifts as ordained priests to shepherd and pastor us and lead us in worship. We have an outstanding organist and choir director who uses his skills and talents to provide an exceptional music program and encourages us to use our own talents as well.

All of our “ministry” at St. Paul’s is supported by an often invisible web: We have an administrative staff to help keep things in the parish running smoothly. We have many forms of communications, such as our Sunday worship service leaflets and monthly newsletter to share news within and outside of St. Paul’s. Being good stewards of our facilities, we must carry insurance, and we must perform the routine maintenance that our historic property needs to be a safe

place for us and those who share this wonderful place with us. We have restrooms and a kitchen to facilitate the use of our meeting spaces. We have maintenance staff who keep the grounds and interior spaces and restrooms clean and welcoming. We have furnaces to keep our spaces warm in the winter, and lights to let our spaces be inviting and functional. Being hospitable folks, we see to it that there are paper towels and tissue in the rest rooms for those who use our facilities, including ourselves. We are limited in our ministries only by the funds needed to underwrite them, because the reality of today’s world is that all of these ministries, even providing the paper towels and bathroom tissue for our restrooms, have a cost.

The Episcopal church parish is traditionally self-supporting and

(Continued on page 3)

Thoughts From the Rev

Rev. Lynn Oldham Robinett

It seems like ages since I last wrote an article for the Epistle. So much has happened in the time that I’ve been gone from the parish. As most of you know, Ryan and I had a baby girl named Kelly Elizabeth on August 15, we bought a house in San Rafael and moved when she was 9 days old; and Ryan has been traveling back and forth to Philadelphia for the last 2 months. It was a busy maternity leave, so you’ll know why

when you ask if I’m glad to be back, I may pause before I answer. I **am** happy to be back, and am still adjusting to all the changes God has added to my life in the past few months. And thank you to all of you for the prayers and help you have given me as I’ve been adjusting to a new baby, a new house, and being back at work.

The fall is moving right along, and we’ve already cele-


brated St. Francis Day and will soon be celebrating Halloween and All Saints Day. We are still planning fall and winter events for our families and we will send out mailings to let you know when we will be having activities. One big event that we will soon begin planning for is an Epiphany pageant. Since Epiphany is on a Sunday this year, we will be having a pag-

(Continued on page 4)

Tips On Using the Epistle's Navigation Aids

The Epistle on the Web is easier to navigate than a paperback book— if you use its *bookmarks, thumbnails and links*.

When you start the Epistle in your browser, a frame on the left side (called the Navigation Pane) shows all the article titles in this month's Epistle. Click the title to go straight to the article. You can get back to article listing at any time by clicking on the *Bookmarks* tab in the Navigation Pane. Click the *Thumbnails* tab in the Navigation Pane. Pictures of each of the pages of the *Epistle* appear. Double click the page to go directly to it.

Tired of looking at the navigation Pane? Clicking the Show/Hide Navigation Pane icon,  shown here, will turn the Pane on and off.

The Table of Contents

(“Inside This Issue”) on page 1 of the *Epistle* is also *linked* to the article; just click on the title or page number to go to the article.

On articles that continue on later pages, the last column on a page contains the phrase “(Continued on page x).” This phrase is itself a link; click on it, and you'll be carried to the next page. How do you know it's a link? Whenever your mouse cursor turns into a pointing finger when you pass over text or a picture, that area's a link.

Want to go back to the page where you clicked that “(Continued. . .)” message? Just click the title of the article.

And if you see a Web address, or a word underlined in blue, click on it, too— the click will send you on your way to the website.

The same principle applies to pictures. If you see a picture or a piece of art you like as you

browse through the Epistle and want to take a closer look, pass your mouse cursor over it. If it turns into a pointing hand, the picture is a link to a larger version of the artwork, and your click will take you there.

But, you say, these are all frills. The big problem with the Epistle on the Web is that it loads too slowly, right? Well, there's an easy fix for that, too. Save it and read it offline, then delete it when you're done. You save it by clicking on the Save icon, the one that looks like a floppy, and then selecting the file name you like and the folder you want to save it in. From that point on, when you click on the file, it will open itself in your Acrobat Reader in a flash, and you can read it at your speed, instead of the speed of your Internet connection.

All Good Gifts, cont'd

does not receive outside support for its financial needs. Many parishes in older, financially well-off areas rely on endowment income to support their parish financial needs. We at St. Paul's are lucky enough not to have too large an amount of endowment income. This encourages each of us to consider what we give to God each year from our income to support God's work in the world, particularly here at St.

Paul's, as God has asked people to do, for it is in giving that we will receive. God has promised, through the prophet Malachi (Mal. 3:10), that when we give our full share, or tithe, to God in love, God's love will pour down overflowing blessings on us.

Today people often speak of the “modern tithe,” which means giving 5% for the work of the church and its ministries, and giving the remaining 5% to their choice of the many wonderful and deserving organizations helping those in the community and the world. Many people then be-

gin to quibble about “5% of what” or “before tax or after tax.” Or they say, “I've always given \$xxx and that's enough.” Or - “My Dad always put a dollar in the plate on Sunday.” Or - “I don't have anything to give.” But the truth is that we are to give to God *from our hearts* in response to the level of our faith, and these hallowed excuses that come easily to the tongue can weigh heavily on the heart.

Read and reflect on the story

(Continued on page 6)

Faith and Patriotism

Mary Frances Schjonberg

Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that I need, or I shall be full, and deny you, and say, "Who is the LORD?" or I shall be poor, and steal, and profane the name of my God.

— Proverbs 308-9

It has become a common mental exercise in recent years to reduce the enormity of the world's population to 100 people and then do the math that helps us understand how we live. In light of the events of September 11, it is an exercise worth repeating.

If we shrank the earth's population to a village of 100 people, here is what those people would look like, according to various versions of this exercise including one from the United Nations:

57 would be Asians.

21 would be Europeans.

14 would be from the West-

ern Hemisphere, both north and south.

8 would be African.

70 would be non-white.

30 would be white.

"Bishop Vincent Warner of the Diocese of Olympia framed the question facing us very simply. "What does it mean," he asked, "To be faithful and patriotic?"

70 would be non-Christian.

30 would be Christian.

6 people would

possess 59 percent of the village's wealth and all six would be from the United States.

80 would live in substandard housing.

70 would be unable to read.

50 would suffer malnutrition.

1 would have a college education.

1 would own a computer.

Or think of it this way, according to figures in Time magazine and on National Public Ra-

dio:

\$25 million is the amount of the wanted-dead-or-alive price on the head of Osam bin Laden.

Between \$1 and \$3 trillion is the estimate of what we in the United States can and will spend to recover from the September 11 attacks.

\$15,000 is the value of the life insurance policy for a worker at Windows on the World.

\$800 is the per capita Gross Domestic Product of Afghanistan.

What stance ought those of us who profess to follow Jesus Christ take in light of these disparities? Who are we ignoring these days, in our desire to return to normal and to bring about peace? Whom did we step over before September 11 who rose up and demanded to be recognized in the most terrible way?

Does anything in these questions imply that we deserved what

(Continued on page 5)

Thoughts from the Rev, contd.

erant for Christmas/Epiphany on Sunday, January 6. We will have it during the 10:30 service and would love to have every family involved. To really make this pageant successful we need the help of parents and anyone else in the parish who feels they have something to offer a pageant of this sort. Please let me know if you can help and if you have

ever done a pageant like this before. (And if you wonder what "Epiphany" is all about, or what "a pageant like this" really means, please ask me about that, too. It's OK to ask questions—you may not be the only one who is wondering!)

The Rev. Lynn Oldham Robinett is Assistant Rector at St. Paul's.

The St. Anne's Thursday Lunch Bunch

St. Anne's Guild is the longest continuing group at St. Paul's. All women in the parish are welcome to have lunch in Duncan Hall on Thursdays at noon at the regular St. Anne's get-together. When you taste St. Anne's fellowship, you'll know why it's been around so long.

Netweavers: Good to the Last Drop. Is This the Last Drop?

Medora Gordon

St. Paul's has a vision! And part of that vision is that hospitality is one of those things that we do best. Or at least that is what we thought. Sadly, an institution that we take for granted is in danger of collapsing. After pleading for help for over a year, the strong and wonderful people that provide our bountiful coffee hours have finally retreated to sanity. They have talked amongst themselves, asked for volunteers, put in long hours, and finally decided that those who set up, and clean up, are only going to stay for the time that they signed up for – not four hours longer than planned. When we started having three services on a Sunday morning we thought that there would be one coffee hour after Wild Things beginning around 9:30 and ending at the 10:30 service. We all loved coffee

hour so much that we insisted that there needed to be Coffee Hour after the 10:30 service as well. The net result is that there is now one VERY LONG coffee hour that begins usually with Wild Things around 9:00 – 9:30 am and then just continues on until 12:30 or 1:00 PM. We are eager to come and eat and visit, but somehow, few of us take any real ownership of Coffee Hour. Somewhere along the line we have failed in the message that we are a family and that everyone who comes to coffee hour is in some way responsible for it.

Part of community building is the construction of a safety net so that we look out for each other. It is the responsibility of each of us to look around and see who is doing too much and how we

can help. It is important for us to listen to the voices of the coffeemakers who have been setting up, providing food, keeping track of trays of cookies and cheeses, and wonderful things and then cleaning it all up long after everyone else just walks away. There are some coffeemakers who come to set up after Wild Things at 9:00 AM and are still in the kitchen cleaning up at 1:00 PM.

It is true that everybody's business becomes nobody's business and for the last two Sundays Lynn and I looked around and discovered that by the end of coffee hour we are the only ones left to clean up. Literally, the two of us stand

(Continued on page 6)

Faith and Patriotism, contd.

happened to us that day? No!

Does anything in these questions imply where we ought to go from here? Yes!

Here is where we can transform bad into good, evil into healing. We must now ask, with a new urgency, how are we connected to the rest of the world? What do we know now of fear and victimization and fundamentalism and anger in a way we never knew before? What does it mean to lose our sense of immu-

nity and face our vulnerability? Will this knowledge prompt us to act according to our inter-relatedness or will it drive us farther back into our old isolationist ways of relating to the world?

At a meeting of the bishops of the Episcopal Church [a few weeks] ago, the bishops pledged to "wage reconciliation" in the midst of the rhetoric of war in these post-September 11 days.

They vowed to do that work by reordering and transforming

the patterns of our common life so that they may reveal God's justice— not as an abstraction but in bread for the hungry and clothing for the naked."

They spoke of the absolute demands of justice and the countervailing demands of mercy, echoing a prayer in the Episcopal Book of Common Prayer in which we admit that Christians follow a God who displays power chiefly by acting

(Continued on page 8)

All Good Gifts, contd.

of Jesus in the Temple watching the rich man giving his tithe and the poor widow giving hers. (Mark 12:41-44 or Luke 21:1-4) Jesus reflected to his disciples that the rich man gave much, but gave out of his excess, and even then gave only with much fanfare to garner favorable attention. The poor widow gave only two coins but that was all she could give. She gave from her heart, quietly.

Try to remember that the amount you choose to give back to God—your personal commitment for God's work in the world-- is itself a commitment between you and God. God already knows what you can give, and how you should give it. The Poor Widow's story teaches that the *value* of the giving has a lot

to do with the state of mind in which the gift is given. So even if you are able to pledge only 25 cents a week, it is the commitment to God to give that amount that is important. And you should feel good about it. You may think that 25 cents is too little to bother with, but that comes to 13 dollars a year to help cover the cost of paper or postage for the monthly newsletter, or to offset telephone charges so people in need can reach us at St. Paul's and find help, or to keep the lights on for support group meetings at night in Duncan Hall.

Regardless of the amount, we need to feel good about what we promise to give to God. If we do not feel good, then we should look at the amount again, and look at what we make and have, and think about giving more, until we do feel

good about the amount we decide to give. For example, if you don't feel good when think about pledging 5% of your income, think about trying 6% or 8% or more, until you DO feel good about your commitment to God. God loves a cheerful giver.

The Bible tells us that God will bless us with abundance when we are generous. (2 Cor. 9:6-15) God knows that when you feel good about giving, other things in your life will change as well. This is why it is said that those who do tithe are happy people. And if giving financially does not feel like enough, consider giving of your time as well. There is room for a lot of ministry at St. Paul's, and the ministry God is calling you

(Continued on page 7)

Netweavers, contd.

in Duncan Hall and watch 15-20 people walk away and leave a HUGE mess. We don't feel that we can leave food spread out all over the tables and coffeepots plugged in, so we stay and clean up. There are no magic fairies here. If the people who enjoy Coffee Hour don't set up and clean up there is no one else to do it. As Christians we are called to live and worship in community, and that community really does require that we

all assume responsibility for some part of the life that we share. Housekeeping may not be our bag, but if we don't want to be responsible for Coffee Hour then we should not have it. Nothing at St. Paul's is up to someone else. Each of us is responsible for two things in the life of the parish. We are each responsible for one thing that nurtures and sustains others, and one thing that nurtures and sustains ourselves. What shall we do with Coffee Hour?

For Those in Need

Nov 4, 11, & 18 Thanksgiving-related, assorted non-perishable food items such as canned yams, canned pumpkin, stuffing mix and cranberry sauce.

Nov 25 Peanut Butter

Please try to bring one or more of these items to share with those in need in our community

Items should be placed in the large wicker basket in the rear of the church.

All Good Gifts, contd.

to do is waiting to be done, and waiting for you to step out in faith and make it happen. This is what giving to God is all about. Dare to put God to the test, and your faith as well. Do you not believe that God will continue to provide for you?

As we draw closer to Thanksgiving, take the time to think about all God's blessings in your life and what you are able to give back to God out of those blessings. On the Sundays in November, there will be short thoughts and reflections about

stewardship included in the Sunday announcements and service leaflets. And soon you will be receiving a packet from St. Paul's asking you to pray about God's work in the world and the work God is asking us to do through the church community at St. Paul's in San Rafael.

When acting as individuals, we are limited in our impact, but together as members of the Body of Christ, and as members of the faith community of Christians that is St. Paul's, we have the potential to do great things for God. God has called us, and given us a vision of what

we are to become and do in Jesus' name, as we minister in our world. We have only to listen.

This Thanksgiving season, I ask you to prayerfully open your hearts and consider what God would want *your* commitment to God and to the church to be. After you have prayed and asked God for insight and guidance, please bring your pledge card to church on November 25, the Sunday of Thanksgiving weekend, as we honor the abundance of God's blessings in our lives.

Webpistle Closing Looms

Jay Luther, Editor, Epistle on the Web

When *The Epistle on the Web*—the *Webpistle*—started operations in May, its intention was to provide the parish with something that wasn't available in the published *Epistle* mailed monthly to parishioners. Unencumbered by space considerations, it would have original, long, articles., such as May's *A Death in the Parish: The Execution of Robert Lee Massie*. It would have scoops, such as August's report on the hacking of the National Church's Website, reported nowhere else. It would have the main articles from the published *Epistle*, augmented by color, and art, and lots of pictures of our favorite Carpenter Gothic church in San Rafael. It would have Mary

Frances' column and national news of interest.

What it proved not to have, sad to say, is readers. Notwithstanding extensive attempts to publicize its existence, and many requests for input of the "Tell us what you want" variety, the hit counters have barely turned and the email in-box has remained empty. Hence, absent an epiphany in public demand over the next few weeks on the part of its potential readers, the December edition of the *Webpistle* will be the last monthly edition in the current format.

Will December's be the last *Webpistle* forever? Probably not. From time to time, something sufficiently important will happen at St. Paul's— or elsewhere in the Episcopal Church— to call for a

Want to pledge right now? Your online pledge card is available [here](#).

special issue. And there may be reason to occasionally run a *Best of the Epistle* issue as well. So, too, if some software changes are made by the published *Epistle*, it is possible that a simple Adobe Acrobat copy of the paper version could be posted monthly on the Website, with little additional difficulty. Finally, an independent monthly *Webpistle* might find a deeper following sometime in the future, when broadband Web connections are more common and download times become insignificant. As always, the rule that governs content on St. Paul's website, and the future of *The Epistle on the Web*, is one of readers' choice: If you don't see what you want, ask for it.

Faith and Patriotism, contd.

with mercy and pity.

It is hard to know who to be in these days since September 11. We long to comfort each other. We have comforted our friends and been comforted by them. We have also cringed from what we perceive as the criticism of our way of life we've read in the papers and heard on the airwaves and even from the pulpit.

For awhile, I wondered if we as Christians were supposed to be comforters now or were we supposed to be prophets? Then I realized that God calls us to be both.

Acting as both comforters and prophets will not be easy. It may appear to put us on the wrong side of the equation that

President Bush formulated when he said, "either you are with us or you are with terrorists."

Bishop Vincent Warner of the Diocese of Olympia framed the question facing us very simply. "What does it mean," he asked, "To be faithful and patriotic?"

The Rev. Mary Frances Schjonberg, St. Paul's Church's former seminarian, is curate at Christ Church in Short Hills, NJ. Some of her current sermons can be found on the Christ Church Website [here](#), and are well worth reading. Another reflection on September 11 is [here](#).

Centering Prayer and Waiting for God

The fundamental disposition in centering prayer is opening to God. Christian practice can be summed up by the word "patience." In the New Testament, patience means waiting for God for any length of time, not going away, and not giving in to boredom or discouragement. . . . If you wait, God will manifest Himself. Of course, you may have a long wait.

— Fr. Thomas Keating

Centering Prayer is a regular Wednesday night event at St. Paul's Please join us every Wednesday evening at 6:00 pm before the 6:30 Eucharist. Both beginners and experienced par-

ticipants are welcome. Instruction in Centering Prayer is available at 5:45 by prior arrangement for those with questions or who are new to contemplative prayer and meditation. Now also at 9:30—10:30 on Sundays in Room 7. Call Chris Olson (479-0409) for more information.

The Mission Statement of St. Paul's Episcopal Church

We are called to be a diverse and inclusive community of Christians in the Anglican tradition. We offer a compassionate haven for reconciliation, spiritual growth and commitment to social justice.

November Birthdays

- 11/1 Clifford Simpkins
- 11/2 John Surinchak
- 11/3 Zoe Albina Hauser
- 11/3 Larry Holman
- 11/17 Larry Quenzer
- 11/28 Nicholas Vitas



Being Good Stewards Financial Statements

October

Pledge Income	\$11,144
Total Income	\$22,401
Expenses	\$27,233
Deficit	(\$4,822)

Year to Date (as of 10/31)

Pledge Income	\$135,030
Total Income	\$232,244
Expenses	\$274,088
Deficit	(\$41,843)

There are always many demands on us at the Holidays., and St. Paul's tries hard to deserve your support then and during all the rest of the year. Please keep up your pledges and pledge generously in 2002.

St. Paul's Episcopal Church

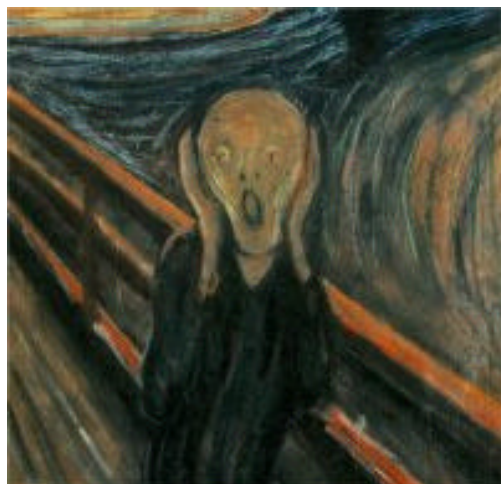
On the Web



1123 Court Street
San Rafael, California 94901

Phone: 415-456-4842
Fax: 415-456-1096
Email: info@stpaulssanrafael.org
Web: <http://www.oldstpauls.org>

Founded in 1868, St. Paul's parish worships weekly at the most beautiful and second oldest church in Marin County, a classic Gothic Revival structure built of 19th Century California Redwood. With a mission of providing a "compassionate haven for reconciliation, spiritual growth and commitment to social justice," it has been in the forefront of superb Anglican liturgy and music, healing and contemplative ministries, social action, and the building of Christian communities for decades.



Oh, no! I started a ministry. Now I'll have to do it forever.

Wrong again, Edvard.

A person's participation in a ministry should have a very definite beginning, middle and end, and those limits should be decided in advance. And whether you form your own ministry or join one that's been around for a long time, we know you'll need help. Helping people find and enjoy their ministries is the only ministry the Empowering Team has. So stop screaming and call Jay Luther at 456-6197 to start down the path of your very own Vision process.