



St. Paul's Episcopal Church

**Good News from St. Paul's
January 2007**

Dear Beloved in Christ,

This cover letter will be the longest one I have ever written. What I am about to write may be the most important teaching that I have ever shared with you and it comes straight out of the depths of my heart. So please be patient with me while you read this carefully. Let me begin.

There are **three assumptions** that I have made about our life in Christ. The **first assumption** is about us. It is that we have opened our hearts to Jesus and invited him in to transform us from the inside out. That Jesus has given us a new heart, a heart of flesh rather than a heart of stone -- that we are a new creation.

The **second assumption** has to do with the world in which we live. We are in a world at war. There is a battle going on and that battle is for our hearts. The Son of God, the second person of the Trinity our Lord Jesus came into this world to battle for our hearts, and now he intercedes for us before the throne of the Father on our behalf. The Holy Spirit has been given to us so that we might resist the enemy who would take us out. Jesus said that the gates of hell would not prevail against the church. The word "prevail" is an active word. In other words the church is taking ground against the enemy. The church is not passive and on the defensive in this statement of Jesus. The church is taking territory from the enemy and the enemy will not prevail over the church. The territory the church is taking from the enemy is the human hearts of those whom God calls to be his own, and we have been enlisted to be a part of that - - a part of the salvation of the world. "All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me, Go therefore, into all nations and make disciples, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you and, lo, I am with you always, even to the close of the age." Jesus has commissioned us to aid him in the salvation of the world.

The **third assumption** is that in this life we are all on a journey, each of

us, and we are all in different places in our maturity in the faith. When Jesus calls us, he takes us where we are. He rejoices in us. And like a father or a mother he delights in our first feeble steps toward him. I do believe, however, that just like any parent Jesus would not be satisfied with our growth if it languished with those first feeble steps. Jesus desires us to grow up in our faith -- that our faith will become deeper as we walk with God. He gives us the Holy Spirit to do just that - to grow up in our faith, while he continues to battle for our hearts.

Now having identified the assumptions I want to write now about what this might mean for us as we live together in community here at St Paul's. Because we are all brothers and sisters in Christ, and because we find ourselves in a world that is far more beautiful and more dangerous than we probably ever knew and because we are all in different places in the journey we must be incredibly gentle with one another. We must never forget that we are called to show mercy not judgment toward one another. "Judge not" Jesus reminds us, "Lest you be judged." And Paul reminds us in Romans 14, "Who are we to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Master is able to make him stand. Then let us not more pass judgment on one another, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother." (Romans, 14:4, 13). Paul is not saying that holiness doesn't matter. He is saying that our responsibility to our brothers and sisters is not to judge them, but to encourage them. Speaking the truth to them in love not in judgment.

Jesus in his ministry among us challenged (confronted) those who thought themselves mature in their faith, even if they were not. We see this for example, with the woman at the well. She thought she knew how to approach God, but Jesus challenged her to see it differently. Then there was Nicodemus who thought he knew what was right, but was confused, and so Jesus challenged him to see that relationship with God was a new birth, a new beginning, not just following a set of rules. And Peter before he denied Jesus thought he was ready to face persecution for Jesus. But Jesus knew his heart better than he did and so Jesus challenged Peter, but also battled for his heart, "Satan sought to sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail; and when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers." And the amazing thing is that in almost every case in the Gospel when a person is confronted by a challenge from Jesus, Jesus follows it with mercy. Have you

noticed that? The woman at the well is offered the water that springs up to new life in her. Nicodemus receives the words of promise in John 3:16, "For God so loved the world..." And Peter by the Sea of Galilee after the resurrection, is asked by Jesus three times if he loves Jesus. And Peter in his hurt and anguish responds three times that he does love Jesus. And then Jesus in his mercy restores Peter to leadership over his "lambs". We see another example of this with the man who desires that his son be healed. Jesus challenges his unbelief and when the man responds "Lord, I believe, help my unbelief," Jesus responds in mercy and heals his son. Challenges from Jesus are followed by mercy.

On the other hand, Jesus precedes the opposite way with those who are less mature. He leads with mercy and then follows with a challenge. We see this with the woman caught in adultery. Jesus in his mercy does not condemn her, but then challenges her when he commands her to go and sin no more. The paralytic by the pool Jesus in his mercy heals him, but later says to him, "See you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse may befall you."

Jesus cared for the hearts of the people and battled for them and encourages us to do the same. He challenges us daily to love the Lord our God with all our heart and soul and mind and strength -- to love him above even our families and friends, and cultural norms

(Matthew 10:37). That is the challenge for those of us who see ourselves as mature. And we are also challenged by Jesus to love our neighbor as ourselves and this challenge will require from us the gift of mercy.

Jesus demonstrates his love for us on the cross when he lays down his life for the likes of Zacchaeus, the woman caught in adultery, the unbelieving father, the paralytic, Peter, Judas, and even the Pharisees and Romans. Yes, even those who would deny him and betray him and kill him he would continue to fight for their hearts. Jesus is fierce in his passion for the hearts of the people, but he is never a bully. And neither should we be. We are to bear the fruit of the Spirit; love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Jesus manifested all of these and yet did so with strength and passion and we are called to do the same. Jesus does not call us to manifest a self-righteousness spirit, but rather to be willing to fight for the hearts of our brothers and sisters by both challenging them and by a willingness to lay down our lives for them.

Jesus doesn't call us to be righteous like Pharisees, but rather faithful like Peter -- to feed and tend his "lambs". And Jesus took a Pharisee, Paul, and

turned him into one who willingly laid down his life for the unclean, the Gentiles -- people like you and me. That is transformation. That is growing in the faith. It is time for us in this community of faith to reach out to be reconciled to God and to one another. Recently we have challenged one another to look carefully at what we believe, what we hold true. In the process of doing that there may have been some of our brothers and sisters who were wounded by words that we have said, or wounded by principles that we have stressed to the point of breaking fellowship with them. If we have bullied others let us repent of that. Let us repent also if we have loved something or someone more than we love Jesus. Let us repent if we have not loved our neighbors as we ought to have loved them. There is no place in our journey together for spiritual arrogance of any kind from any side. Repentance is called for in this. Jesus' strongest words, his most severe challenges were against the spiritual bullies of his day.

There is no question that we are called to holiness, but at the same time we are not to lord it over others, especially our brothers and sisters. There needs to be balance in our lives together, challenge and encouragement, truth telling and mercy. The amazing thing about Jesus is that while he challenged his disciples, challenged the tax collectors and sinners, challenged the Pharisees and the Sadducees, challenged the woman caught in adultery and even the thief on the cross, he died for the lot. The final word on his life was mercy, and through his resurrection he brings restoration. That is what we should be about too. Its time for us to demonstrate that kind of love for one another -- a love of restoration and mercy. It's time to prove once again that we are disciples of Jesus Christ by our love for one another. I'm planning on doing some of that in the days ahead. I invite you to join me in that. I believe it's time for mercy and restoration.

This is a good thing for Advent as we prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior. Our king and savior draweth nigh, O come let us adore him. What better way to manifest our love for him than loving one another. May you have a blessed Advent and a joyous Christmas rejoicing in the mercies of our Lord and King.

Love in Christ Jesus,
John+

Christian Education for the New Year: FDCM

Are you looking for some serious Christian Education to sink your teeth into during the coming year? Would you like to learn about the history of Christianity, beginning with the first century, and see how the church developed into its current form? Would you like to do all this as a part of a small, prayer centered group of adults?

Consider enrolling in "Foundational for Discernment of Christian Ministry". For anyone familiar with EFM, this new program is an orthodox alternative, focusing more on the traditional disciplines of Christian spirituality throughout the centuries, along with some fun and inspiring new exercises.

FDCM is the program featured in the AAC newsletter last October, and the Diocesan Newsletter last September. People looking to deepen their relationship with Christ and to discern the direction in which God is leading them, have all found FDCM to be very useful. People undergoing or contemplating life transitions such as job changes or retirement, and anyone seeking to gain momentum in their spiritual life, are particularly good candidates for this program.

The Rev. Kathryn Jeffrey, who is currently working to develop other courses within FDCM's program, has offered to start a group at St. Paul's. Although she would prefer a group that meets during the daytime,, she is also available for an evening group, if that time slot better meets the needs of interested parishioners. FDCM groups generally meet on a weekly basis.

Sample chapters from FDCM's Spiritual Guidebook are available on FDCM's website: <http://www.hopeanglican.us/fdcm/>. A sample syllabus and other information about the program can also be found there. The cost for the program, including all the textbooks, is \$295., which compares very favorably with similar programs. Although the course cannot be used for college credit, it can provide continuing education units for students who need them for their work, as well as a certificate from Trinity Seminary noting completion of the program.

It is hoped that a group might be formed during the first week of January, so that the first class here could be the second week in January.

If you are interested in the possibility of enrolling in FDCM, please contact Kathryn Jeffery at 651.787.9716 or Tori Marben at 651.771.0614

Annual Meeting Agenda for January 21, 2007

1. Call to order – prayer – Reading of Canon 30; Section 7
2. Appointment of Clerk
3. Appointment of Tellers
4. Minutes of the January 29th, 2006 Annual Meeting
5. 2006 Report
6. Special Presentations
7. Presentation by Father John and Father Derek
8. Ordering of the Budget for 2007
9. Resolution submitted by John M. Winslow, member in good standing:
 - Whereas TEC (The Episcopal Church) has abandoned the faith once delivered to the Saints by:
 - A. Repudiating the authority of Scripture
 - B. Compromising the uniqueness of Jesus Christ
 - C. Taking a universalist attitude toward salvation
 - D. Ordaining persons to the office of bishop and priest who are morally and spiritually compromised
 - E. Blessing unions that are not between one man and one woman
 - F. Elevation of “experience” as a justification for innovation
 - Therefore be it resolved: That St. Paul’s Episcopal Church affiliate with the Anglican Communion Network
10. Elections:
 - Nominees for one year terms
 - Senior Warden Alberta Rupert
 - Junior Warden Cinders Pogalz
 - Treasurer Steve Hamill
 - Clerk Kendra Ryder
 - Nominees for three year terms (vote for two)
 - Robert Brouillard Tori Marben
 - Kim Larson Paul McGinnis
 - Nominees for Delegates to Convention and Convocation one year tem (vote for 5)
 - Garrett Conover Cinders Pogalz
 - Nancy Firth Steve Pogalz
 - Carla Hamill Alberta Rupert
 - Steve Hamill Cal Wood
 - Tori Marben Amanda Wurtzberger

CELEBRATE BARB!!

Set aside Friday evening, February 16th, 2007! Our parish family and friends will gather together for dinner, to celebrate Barb Gaynor's continued progress and recovery.

All parishioners, including children, are invited.

Please sign up (in Narthex) so we can prepare enough food.

When: Friday, Feb. 16th, 2006

Where: St. Paul's Church Parish Hall

Time: 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Cost: \$20. Per adult or free will offering (for kids and adults)

What to bring: Your funny/sentimental/unforgettable memories of Barb

We will be preparing the food on Sat, February 3rd, 2007 from 9:00 a.m. until approximately 3:00 p.m. Please sign up (in Narthex) if you can help with the preparations...the more the merrier! Questions? Call Karen Solimar, Helene Jensen or Dorothy Ingram.

Menu: Meatloaf, baked potato, corn, rolls, salad, apple crisp and ice cream, beverages.

January Birthdays:

4 Deb Gillette
6 Jacqueline Kaasa
9 T.J. Barrette
Meghan McGinnis
10 Kate Peterson
11 Ryan Conover
12 Mackenzie Kaasa
14 Ralph Worrall
15 Amanda Solie
16 Iola McDiarmid
17 Jacob Ball
19 Zoe Larson
22 Richard Reed
26 Bob Brouillard

27 Tyler Hardman
31 Don Kadidlo
John Firth

January Anniversaries:

2 Russell/Violet Peters
10 Jon/Mary Place
19 Mike/Janet Allen
23 Bob/Deb Gillette
27 Scott/Kate Mensen

If your special day is not listed—Please contact the church office. Thanks!

St. Paul's Episcopal Church

January 2007

Non Profit Org.
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID #434
Hudson, Wisconsin
54016

We're on the Web!
Stpaulshudson.faithweb.com

Jesus is Lord, All the time!

St. Paul's Episcopal Church:

502 County Road UU, Hudson, WI 54016-7583
Office: 715-386-2348 Fax: 715-386-2542
E-mail = spechudsonwi@sbcglobal.net

Services:

Sun. 8:00 am Holy Eucharist Traditional Service
9:15 am Adult Bible Study/Sunday School
Children's Sunday School (Sep-May)
Youth Confirmation Class (Sep-Apr)
10:30 am Holy Eucharist Praise Service

Wed. 2:00 PM Women's Bible Study (Sep-Apr)
3:00 PM NETworks Youth Ministry Middle High
6:00 PM NETworks Youth Ministry Senior High

Thur. 9:00 am Hudson Mom's Group Meeting
11:00 am Holy Eucharist/Bag Lunch/Bible Study

Jesus is Lord...All The Time!

Clergy:

The Rt. Rev. Keith B. Whitmore, Bishop
The Rev. John E. Rasmus, Rector
The Rev. Richard McGinnis, Associate
The Rev. Derek Washington, Associate

NETworks Youth Director: Dave Pulsfus
Episcopal Church Women: Patti Muenich 715-386-8532
Band of Brothers: Fr. Derek Washington 715-386-2348
Men's Social Ministry: Ed Slamkowski 715-246-9989
Sunday School: Amy Dickerson
Operation H.E.L.P. Volunteer Phone Line 715-386-0881
*Small Group Bible Study: Sunday and Wednesday evenings
* Inquirer's Class is offered in the fall and early spring. Call the church office for dates, times and locations

