

Get Set...GO!

Sunday, December 18, 2011

8:30 Cell
8:45 1st Service
10:00 Fellowship
10:30 2nd Service
12:15 Prophetic Team
12:30 Caroling in Darien
3:30 Pageant Rehearsal
5:30 Youth Group

Monday, December 19, 2011

Tuesday, December 20, 2011

9:30 Art Group
10:00 Holy Eucharist & Healing Service
12:15 Agape Luncheon
6:00 Band Rehearsal

Wed., December 21, 2011

12:00 Darien Clergy Association Luncheon

Thursday, December 22, 2011

7:00 Prayer

Friday, December 23, 2011

7:00 Christian 12-Step

Saturday, December 24, 2011

Christmas Eve
4:30 pm Family Service
(Pageant/liturg, carols, Holy Eucharist)
10:30 pm Festival Eucharist

Sunday, December 25, 2011

Christmas Day
10:00 Holy Eucharist, carols, Healing prayer
12:00 noon Christmas Dinner

THIS WEEK'S LESSONS

Isaiah 35:1-10 (p. 695)
Romans 16:25-27 (p. 1104)
Luke 1:26-38 (p.991)

CHRISTMAS DAY

Isaiah 52:1-10 (p. 716)
Hebrews 1:1-12 (p. 1161)
John 1:1-14 (p.1027)

Gluten-free wafers are available at all services. Just ask the priest when you come forward to receive.

Newcomers and guests at St. Paul's are invited to come to the Prayer Room after the service for a personal word of encouragement from the Lord. Our prophetic prayer team is ready to listen to God and ask Him to speak to you.



Dragon at the Manger

The Fourth Sunday of Advent marks the first anniversary of my preaching at St. Paul's Darien. I cannot believe that a whole year has passed! I can only say "Thank you!" – to God our Heavenly Father, to Fr. Christopher my mentor and partner in ministry, and to you our church family – for calling Leah and me to serve you. I can't wait to see where the Lord takes us together next year.

In my first sermon at St. Paul's I mentioned three animals that we should put at the manger. Do you remember them? A Pelican. A Dragon. A Lion. I am not going to recap all of the meaning here, but I did want to ask you one question: Did you know that Christmas marks the beginning of a fairy tale? I don't mean fairy tale in the sense that Jesus' birth is just a made-up story. Far from it! Rather, the story of Jesus' birth is THE story. It is THE fairy tale against which all other tales (true or false) are measured. Think about it.

Revelation 12 tells us of a great dragon, dropping out of the heavens, ready to devour an infant as his virgin mother gives him birth. Satan, the dragon, was indeed ready to destroy our Lord even upon the day of his birth. Yet Revelation 20 describes a rider upon a white horse, who leads a white-robed army against the dragon and casts down the beast forever. One day our Lord Jesus will indeed lead his church into battle, claiming final victory over Satan, the Enemy of the world. This is a fairy tale! The white rider has defeated the dragon and rescued his bride.

J. R. R. Tolkien said, "*There was not a tale ever told that man would rather find was true, and none which so many skeptical men have accepted as true on it's own merits.*" Christmas – the Mass of Christ, Jesus' incarnation – marks the beginning of the greatest and truest story ever told. You and I are characters in a grand fairy tale. There is an old English Christmas carol that sums it up nicely. Listen to the love-song of Jesus to his bride on the day before his birth:

Tomorrow shall be my dancing day;
I would my true love did so chance
To see the legend of my play,
To call my true love to my dance;
Sing, oh! My love, oh! My love, my love, my love
This have I done for my true love.

Your brother,

Jordan

The Rev. Jordan Easley
Assistant

The flowers on the altar today are given to the Glory of God by Diane Bell in thanksgiving for her family: Susan, Brent, Brian, and Beth.

Important Information about St. Paul's 40 Days of Prayer & Fasting

St. Paul's family began 40 days of prayer and fasting on Tuesday, November 22 and will end on Sunday, January 1. The emphasis has been on *faith for miracles, financial provision, and freedom* for St. Paul's Church family. As of today, Sunday, December 18, we are on Day 27, and we are continuing to believe God to be faithful. We cannot wait to hear the testimonies from all of you about how God showed up for you in these past 40 days! We are sure it will be an encouragement to the body of Christ.

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40 Days of Prayer & Fasting – continued

As we said in the beginning, we are planning a designated time for prayer walking around the property during the last seven days, and hope that as many of you who can will join and be part of these final days which we believe will not only be powerful but could be the most important part of the 40 days so far! We will begin this on Sunday, December 25 (what better day to begin than on our Lord's Birthday!) at 6:30 p.m. and we will meet in the church parking lot. (This will take no more than half an hour). There will be **NO** sign-up sheets. We are **TRUSTING** God to put it on your hearts to take part in this momentous time in the history of our life together at St. Paul's. We will end the prayer walk on New Year's Eve, December 31 before or during our celebration to bring in the New Year...and our Senior Warden **will be blowing the shofar!**

There are many reasons why the Shofar is blown by the Jewish people, but one in particular that we believe is significant to these 40 days is simply this: it is the **She'Hecheyanu Blessing** which is said to thank God for, simply, giving us life, and allowing us to reach this moment and this new experience, of hearing the sound of the Shofar in the New Year! We hope and pray every one of our families at St. Paul's will be joining us! If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask anyone on the Vestry.

Tony Schell, Sr. Warden
Joann Cerretani, Jr. Warden

Caroling in Darien

Today, immediately after the second service, we will carpool downtown to sing carols to merchants, patrons, firemen, passers-by... This annual event is great fun for everyone. Musical ability is NOT a requirement; all that is needed is the joy of the Lord and a desire to share Him with our neighbors.

Christmas Dinner

Please check the poster in the narthex to see what we still need in order to prepare Christmas dinner for about 200 people! We also need drivers to bring our guests from the Norwalk shelter. If you can help please call **Josephine Rojas**.

Nominations

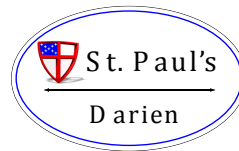
Is there someone you feel the Lord is calling to serve on the St. Paul's vestry? This is a critical time in the life of St. Paul's and we want His choices leading us! **Kim Stumpf** has agreed to serve as chair of the Nominating Committee, so if God is suggesting someone to you, please speak to Kim or the other committee members.

Christmas at St. Paul's

December 18 (today) – 12:15 p.m. – Caroling in Downtown Darien
December 24 – Christmas Eve
4:30 p.m. - Family Service
Christmas Pageant/liturgy
10:30 p.m. – Festival Eucharist
December 25 – Christmas Day
10:00 a.m. – Holy Eucharist, Healing Prayer, Carols
12:00 noon – Christmas Dinner – all are welcome

Adult Education

Beginning January 8, join Leah Easley in the Parish Hall immediately after the second service for "Rhythms & Seasons – Making the Church Year Matter in Your Everyday Life", a seven week overview of the church year, focusing on the major seasons – Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, and Pentecost, and on the major feasts. Leah will show us the Biblical and historical perspective of each season – and finish each session with practical ways to bring it into your life at home and in the world.



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Staff

The Rev. Christopher P. Leighton, Rector
The Rev. Jordan Easley, Assistant
Pat Poremba (Bookkeeper)
Phyllis Schlemmer (Parish Secretary)
Andy Thomas (Sexton)
Noel Thomas (Assistant Sexton)

Assisting Clergy

The Rev. Gabrielle Beam
The Rev. Gail Paige Bowman
The Rev. Bonnie Brown
The Rev. Barbara G. Lachance
The Rev. M. Blake Greenlee
The Rev. Roberta Schneider

Vestry

Sr. Warden Tony Schell
Jr Warden Joann Cerretani
Treasurer – Phil McClain
Clerk - Adelaide Waring

Class of 2012: John Donovan (*Anglican Relations*)
Babs Ward (*Mercy*)
Julia Nichols (*Mercy*)

Class of 2013 Sandra Monahan (*Anglican Relations*)
Judy Robson (*Evangelism*)
Polly Verrico (*Healing & Intercession*)

Class of 2014: Steve Miserocchi (*Buildings & Grounds*)
Alberto Daniels (*MiC*)
Josephine Rojas (*Hospitality*)

**To Know Christ
And to Make Him Known**