



# THE EPISTLE OF SAINT PAUL'S

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## A LETTER FROM DEAN VANG

My Dear People and Friends of Saint Paul's:

With our Lenten observance well underway, our focus will soon be drawn to the most sacred time of the Church Year, Holy Week. The Sunday of the Passion, more commonly known as Palm Sunday, signals its beginning on March 29th.

Holy Week is a time when Christians are invited to make a journey. Indeed, Jesus

says to his disciples, "We go up to Jerusalem." It is interesting to note that he does not say "I" go up to Jerusalem but "we" go up. Numbers of the faithful make the journey to the Holy Land, as they have done since the earliest of times. Saint Paul's Church will soon become our Jerusalem. We will make our pilgrimage in heart and mind as we move through the sacred rites and ceremonies rendering present those once in a lifetime events of the last week of Our Lord's life prior to his resurrection. Entering into the mystery of our redemption is pure gift and hope-filled privilege. Surely we are enveloped in historic events; we are also welcomed joyfully into the future.

I have been reading lectures and sermons of the 104th Archbishop of Canterbury, The Most Reverend Rowan Williams, during this Lent. His reflection on the most sacred of weeks merits our attention.

"Holy Week, with all its intensity of ritual and imaginative elaboration, comes paradoxically to break down the walls of self-contained religion and morality and to gather us around the one, true, holy place of the Christian religion, Jesus himself, displayed to the world as the public language of our God, placarded on the history of human suffering that stretches along the roadside. This is a week for learning - not management, bargaining, and rule-keeping, but naked trust in that naked gift."

Most devotedly and faithfully,  
Dean Vang





## ST. PAUL'S LEADERSHIP

Parish Priest:

Dean Marshall Vang

Deacon:

Alicia Butler Todaro

Rector Emeritus:

The Rev. Leslie C. Hughs

Organist-Choir Director:

Steven L. Rosenberry

Office Assistant:

Nellson Moore

Sexton:

Matthew Vitti

Sunday Childcare:

Jescyka Thompson

Wardens:

Denise Mason

Mark Lowery

Vestry:

Jennifer Andrus

Eric Chan

Gillian Conover

Bill Harrison

Karen Hibbert

Melvin Hitt

Tristan Lowery

Kate Storms

Rachael Thomas

Secretary for the Vestry:

Sandie Feck

EPISTLE Newsletter Editors:

Susan Harwood

Kate Storms

Kelly Dalton-Trotter

## THE WARDENS' MESSAGE

Several members of St. Paul's are participating in the 2026 United Thank Offering Lenten Book Club. This year, the book club is discussing [The Serviceberry: Abundance and Reciprocity in the Natural World](#), written by Robin Wall Kimmerer. Dr. Kimmerer is a member of the Potawatomi Nation and professor at the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry in Syracuse. In [The Serviceberry](#), Dr. Kimmerer draws on her knowledge of the natural world to explore how we can emphasize gratitude, reciprocity and community in our personal lives.

As part of the discussion, one member of St. Paul's expressed gratitude for those who founded St. Paul's and have nurtured it through almost two centuries. Indeed, those who have gone before us have endured their share of challenging times, including financial stress, wars, conflicts within and without, and physical displacement. Yet they persevered, dedicating time, talent and treasure to maintain the St. Paul's community. Their contributions varied. Some served important leadership roles, some contributed more routine labors, many contributed financially, and a few made substantial financial donations that live on in the form of our endowment fund. In fact, an unrestricted bequest from several decades ago will provide the funds for the lighting improvements and design of the heating system upgrade described elsewhere in this issue of the Epistle.

In Dr. Kimmerer's view, sincere gratitude is more than a polite "thank you" but includes recognition that we have received a gift for which we are indebted. We don't repay that gift to the original donor. Instead we keep the gift in motion so that it does not stagnate but "keeps moving like the gift of berries through an ecosystem."

We often think in terms of scarcity. It seems there is never enough money, enough volunteers, enough leaders. Dr. Kimmerer argues we should instead think in terms of abundance: "Abundance is fueled by constantly circulating materials, not wasting them." We show our gratitude to those members of St. Paul's who have gone before us by treating the gifts they have left us with respect and doing our part to ensure we are creating abundance by circulating – not wasting – our time, talents and treasure – paying it forward, if you will. Something each of us might consider as we ponder our own contributions and responses to calls for leaders and volunteers.

And thanks to Bill Harrison for organizing the Lenten book club!

Blessings,  
Your Wardens  
Denise Mason  
Mark Lowery





## **BACH AT ST. PAUL'S**

**ORGAN RECITAL BY**

**Brian Hoffman &  
Justan Foster**

**SUNDAY March 22, 2026  
AT 3 PM**

**St. Paul's Episcopal Church  
21 Hackett Blvd, Albany NY**

**Including**

**Fantasia & Fugue in G minor**

**Toccata in E**

**Prelude & Fugue in C**

**Prelude & Fugue in G minor**

**Schmuecke dich**

**Canonic Variations on**

**Vom Himmel hoch**

**Organ by Casavant**

*Donations to benefit Music at St. Paul's*

## **Notes**

**from the  
Music Director**



### **SUNDAY APRIL 26 at 3 PM**

St. Paul's Choir will present a concert of three Bach Cantatas with chamber orchestra.

#4 - Christ lay in death's strong bonds

#182 - Heaven's king is coming

#196 - The Lord blesses us

## **ANNUAL DONOR APPEAL FOR MUSIC AT ST. PAUL'S**

Each year the donations of friends and parishioners makes not only our concerts possible, but also the on-going choral music program with our talented choir and soloists, including the special music on Easter with chamber orchestra and trumpet. "Music at St. Paul's" is tasked this year with raising over half of the yearly budgeted funds that support our music program. All contributions, large or small, are gratefully received, and donors' names are listed in the concert program.

The donor categories are:

Cherubim: \$2500 or more

Seraphim: \$1000 to \$2499

Archangel: \$500 to \$999

Grand Patron: \$200 to \$499

Benefactor: \$100 to \$199

Patron: up to \$99

Checks should be made to "Music at St. Paul's" and mailed to the parish office or placed in the collection plate.



## **ST. PAUL'S EPISCOBOWLERS**



Each year members of St. Paul's church gather to bowl for PAWS (Pets Are Wonderful Support) through the Damien Center, raising money to support those with HIV-AIDS in keeping their pets healthy and well-fed.

Photo provided by Lisa Walker. Pictured from left to right, Nicky Halloran, Karen Hibbert, Barb Walenta, Madeline Hibbert, Dan Halloran, Bob Walenta, Denise Mason, Sharon Lee, Candy Deisley, Paige Conover, Gillian Conover, Bob Englert.

Attendees not pictured: Raelynn Hibbert, Jackson Hibbert, Brandon Walker, Jenny Westphal, Chloe Westphal, Pierce Westphal, Lisa Walker.

## BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS



St. Paul's electrical contractor, Excel Electric, completed installation of energy-efficient LED bulbs in all 74 of the lighting fixtures located high on the ceiling of the nave and sanctuary on February 2. Accessing the light fixtures required use of a lift with a 60-foot boom and removal of pews. Thanks to the fortuitous discovery of the original lighting design plan, our contractor was able to obtain LED equivalents to the original bulbs so that we could see our main worship space illuminated as it was originally intended – a first for all but the most senior among us. Replacement of the original incandescent bulbs with more efficient LED bulbs will reduce electricity consumption and provide significantly longer service life, decreasing future costs to replace them – likely beyond any of our lifetimes!

St. Paul's is proceeding with a full replacement of the existing central heating plant located in the boiler room. The current boilers, pumps, and associated piping have reached the end of their reliable service life. Continued operation increases the risk of mid-winter failure, rising maintenance costs, and inefficient fuel use.

The project will replace the existing boilers with new high-efficiency, gas-fired condensing boilers. These boilers will be installed with new pumps, updated hydronic piping, and other associated equipment. Electrical service will be upgraded to support the new system and meet current code requirements.

The new boiler plant is being designed with redundancy. Two boilers will operate together under normal conditions for efficiency, but each single boiler will be sized to carry the church's peak heating demand. This means that if one boiler is down for maintenance or repair, the remaining boiler can continue to heat the building.

The existing thermostats will be replaced with wireless digital controls that more accurately relay temperature signals to the heating equipment. The upgraded controls will allow authorized staff to adjust temperature setpoints and adjust heating schedules remotely, providing improved control over temperature setbacks, allowing the church to reduce heating during off-hours while ensuring comfort during services and events.

Work will occur primarily within the boiler room and mechanical spaces, with no major architectural changes to the church building and will, to the extent feasible, be scheduled during the Head Start summer break. Work to date has included receipt and review by the vestry of technical drawings and specifications to be used in a request for proposals, and sampling for asbestos.

Submitted by Mark Lowery

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## THE DEACON'S CORNER

I have been at St. Paul's, Albany for a year now. I arrived last February, having served 16 years as the Deacon at St. Paul's, Troy. I expected to visit other parishes and take the summer off before resuming ministry. Instead, I felt at home so quickly here at St. Paul's, and fell so in love with the church and the congregation, that I never visited another parish.



It was a real treat last year to have no duties for Lent and Holy Week, but on Easter Sunday, I really missed proclaiming the Gospel. It was time to resume ministry as a deacon! Bishop Jeremiah, Dean Vang and I agreed that I would be assigned here.

So far my main ministries have been in the liturgy, preaching once a month, and teaching Bible Study. I will be expanding my liturgical role, chanting for the Good Friday liturgy and singing the Exultet for the Easter Vigil. I'm looking forward to participating fully in Holy Week this year.

Submitted by Deacon Alicia Todaro

## FROM THE CHURCH HISTORIAN

William Linn Keese, our rector from 1830 until 1833, was single-handedly responsible for St. Paul's surviving its financial crisis of the early 1830s. Keese not only served without a salary but made significant financial contributions to the parish. Already frail when he arrived in Albany, he further damaged his health during the cholera epidemic of 1832 by continuing his pastoral work among the people of both St. Paul's and St. Peter's, which was then without a rector. His health broken, Keese resigned in November 1833, and died of consumption February 19, 1836.

This plaque, originally placed in our church building on South Ferry Street, now lies beneath our altar.



Submitted by Paul Nance

## CHOIR ROOM ARTWORK



Mounted on the wall above the music library in St. Paul's choir room, you will find a triptych. Taken from the Greek word triptychos, meaning three-part, the form has its roots in religious art. At one time, portable altar pieces consisted of one central panel with two side wings, meant to represent the concept of the holy trinity.

Donated to Saint Paul's by singer, voice teacher, and artist Patricia Sheridan, the triptych was acquired at a time when Fr. Nixon McMillan was rector at Saint Paul's. When renovations to the choir room were under discussion, Fr. Nixon envisioned a time when the choir room might host small recitals, where the triptych would serve both as an acoustical device and a backdrop.

This triptych is a rendering of the architecture of the Brancacci Chapel, located in the church of Santa Maria del Carmine in Florence, Italy. Constructed by Antonio Brancacci beginning in 1387, no single architect has been credited with the design of the chapel structure. The famous frescoes there were commissioned by Felice di Michele Brancacci, (1382-1440) a Florentine silk merchant who was also a diplomat. The frescoes were painted between the 1420's and the 1480's by Masolino da Panicale (c. 1383-1447), Masaccio (1401-1428), and Filippino Lippi (1457-1504). Many of the paintings reflect the life of St. Peter, patron saint of Pietro Brancacci, from whom Felice was descended.

Artists such as Michelangelo studied the paintings there, considered to be the link between the international Gothic style and early Renaissance painting with its techniques of chiaroscuro, the effects of directional light, and atmospheric perspective.

Artist Bruce Drago (b.1950) painted the triptych after visiting the Brancacci chapel during the 1970's. A graduate of CalArts, Valencia, CA, one of the nation's top five art schools, Drago created this work from memory using spray paint to portray the architectural design over a black background on wooden panels. While most of the attention by visitors to the Brancacci chapel is directed toward the frescoes and altar pieces, Drago focused on the architectural design featuring its Corinthian style pillars and Roman arches, with the effects of the play of natural light.

Thank you to Mark Lowery, Tristan Lowery, and Eric Chan for mounting it. Do stop in and take a look.

Submitted by Susan Harwood

# ST. PAUL'S ANNUAL MEETING 2026



The Annual Meeting took place on the first Sunday in February this year, instead of the usual last Sunday of January, due to an impending snowstorm. On February 1st, following the 10:30 service, two new officers and two incumbent officers were elected, reports were given, and everyone went home full.

Photo provided by Bill Harrison. *Pictured from left to right: Sandy Lowery (Treasurer), Mark Lowery (Junior Warden), Denise Mason (Senior Warden), Dean Vang (Parish Priest)*

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## AN INTERVIEW WITH DEAN VANG

A few weeks ago, I asked Dean Vang if he would allow me to interview him for an article in the Epistle of St. Paul's. He kindly agreed. As we sat down in the Rector's office after the chapel service on Ash Wednesday, I mentioned that we at St. Paul's feel very blessed that he is our Celebrant, and that we are grateful for his commitment to stay until we find a new Rector. He responded by saying that he, too, feels blessed to be with us. Although he retired as Dean of the Cathedral of All Saints, Albany, in 2010, he is carrying out the words of Psalm 110, vs.4, "You are a priest for ever..."

After his retirement, the Very Reverend Marshall Vang served seven other congregations before being asked by Bishop Jeremiah to come to St. Paul's. We are fortunate to have his wisdom, knowledge, and experience to guide us through this time, especially as we are planning the celebration of our bicentennial. Dean Vang believes that as well as looking back, we must look ahead to determine what our future will be.

Dean Vang lives in Wilton, north of Saratoga. While he loves country living, he also enjoys being in the city of Albany. Born in Corning, New York, Marshall Vang is a cradle Episcopalian, growing up at Christ Episcopal Church, founded in 1841, part of the Diocese of Rochester. He was educated at the Trinity Episcopal School in Pawling, NY, now Trinity - Pawling, and completed his undergraduate studies at Kenyon College, founded by Episcopalians, in Gambier, Ohio. Ordained following graduate studies at General Theological Seminary in Manhattan, he began his ordained ministry as a Curate in Westwood, New Jersey, followed by becoming Vicar and then Rector at St. Anthony's, Hackensack, New Jersey. Returning to upstate New York, he served at St. George's, Schenectady, from 1987 until 1998. He became Dean at The Cathedral of All Saints in Lent of 1998.

When I asked Dean Vang who had inspired him, he mentioned his priest in Corning, as well as the influence of several bishops. As I questioned him about hobbies and interests, I learned that he likes to travel, and that he actually has a pilot's license. Between undergraduate and graduate studies, he spent a year working as a Purser, a head steward, with Pan AM airways. He has done the Bridge Climb at Sydney Harbor in Australia, and enjoyed his time exploring Tasmania. He also admits to being an Anglophile, loving all things British.

With a love of dogs, Dean Vang currently has a miniature Dachshund named Truffles. Combining his love of cooking with his fondness for dogs, he maintains a tradition of naming each of his dogs after an element of French cuisine. It is not surprising that as a native of Corning, he is a collector of crystal and is particularly interested in Steuben glass and the work of Frederick Carder.

Regarding the times in which we are living, Dean Vang has called them "challenging." Further, he went on to say, "Norms are being radically altered. Instability is surpassing stability. The dignity of humanity is eroding. Yet, there is a glimmer of hope in the gospel that we live."

Thank you, Dean Vang, for being with us to help guide us through these challenging times.

# UPDATE FROM THE SEARCH COMMITTEE

Our primary focus thus far has been the creation of a new Parish Website. We live in a world where almost everyone uses the internet to obtain information on any subject. This will be especially true for any priest who learns of our vacancy and might be interested. Before proceeding with the formal process of inquiring, they will go to our website. It is here that first impressions will be made, and here they will determine whether or not they offer themselves as candidates for our consideration.

I'm happy to say this should be the last time my Search Committee update contains this opening paragraph. I know for sure that none of us anticipated the amount of work and time required to make our new website a reality. The members of this committee are incredibly devoted and passionately invested in St Paul's Church, and in the creation of this necessary part of our search process. And without further ado, it is my pleasure to announce that the new website is now live! You can find it at our ongoing URL: [www.StPaulsInAlbanyNY.org](http://www.StPaulsInAlbanyNY.org). Our new website has been intentionally designed to fulfill 3 purposes:

- To impress and inform priests who are considering offering themselves as candidates to be our next rector,
- To be inviting to those in the Capital District searching for a church to attend, and
- A tool for our existing congregation to keep up to date with events, special programs, the parish calendar, and announcements.

The Search Committee has already completed several parts of the National Church and Albany Diocese requirements. The new website now allows us to initiate the next steps in the process. I have been in constant conversation with Bishop Jeremiah and our Diocesan Deployment Officer, Canon Bill Hinrichs. They have both offered St Paul's praise for not rushing into the search process without taking the appropriate steps in advance to present ourselves in the best possible manner. St Paul's is uniquely blessed and one of the premier parishes in the Albany Diocese. How long will the search process take? This is a question that cannot be answered. I can assure you that it is not our intent to settle on someone that is just okay in order to fill our vacancy. The family of St Paul's Episcopal Church in the City of Albany is strong, and the love that is shown continuously in action and deed is apparent. We are special and there is already someone special out there waiting for us to find each other.

**Website Committee:** Rachael Thomas - Chairperson, Kelly Dalton, Eric Chan,  
Adam Brunelle, Bob Walenta

**Search Committee:** Bob Walenta - Chairperson, Adam Brunelle, Bob Englert,  
Tom Lee, Terry Tamer, Rachel Thomas, Lisa Walker

Submitted by Bob Walenta, Chairperson

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## ST. PAUL'S SHADBLOW SERVICEBERRY

The Shadblow Serviceberry (*Amelanchier canadensis*) is a hardy, multi-stemmed native shrub or small tree (15-25 ft) favored for year-round interest, featuring early spring white flowers, edible June berries, and vibrant red-orange fall foliage. It thrives in moist, acidic, well-drained soil and is ideal for naturalized, woodland-edge, or pollinator gardens.

The tree has given its name to the book by Robin Wall Kimmerer [The Serviceberry: Abundance and Reciprocity in the Natural World](#), currently being read in St. Paul's Lenten Book Group. By chance, St. Paul's has three young serviceberries that have been planted over the past few years. Three years ago, Kate Storms obtained permission to plant three serviceberry whips which she purchased from the Arbor Day Foundation. They are in the area next to the driveway between the choir room and Samaritan Road. Kate put a colored stake by each small tree so the mower would not destroy them. One tree did not survive the first year, so Kate replaced it with one from a nursery last spring. The three should one day create a small grove of trees that will be among the first to blossom.

### Key Characteristics and Facts:

- **Appearance:** A deciduous, upright, multi-stemmed plant that often grows in clumps.
- **Flowers:** Fragrant, white, star-shaped flowers bloom in clusters in March or April before the leaves emerge.
- **Fruit:** Produces small, edible, berry-like purple fruit (pomes) in June that are popular with birds and humans.
- **Fall Foliage:** Leaves turn bright shades of red and orange.
- **Habitat & Soil:** Native to eastern North America, it thrives in wet to moist, sandy, and clay-like, or well-drained soil.
- **Hardiness:** Zones 4 - 8 (sometimes noted as 3-7).
- **Ecological Value:** Excellent for birds, pollinators, and as a larva host for butterflies.
- **Common Names:** Shadbush, Serviceberry, Juneberry, Indian Cherry.



## ENHANCING OUR WORSHIP



In my monthly Life in Christ class, at the diocese’s Christ the King Retreat Center in Greenwich, we are assigned reading each month in preparation for the rich discussion in our Saturday morning gatherings. In March, our topic was Worship. After reading chapter 11 in Celebration of Discipline by Richard Foster, I was inspired to reflect on how I approach worship and to try several of Foster’s suggestions for deepening that time with God. I share them here in hopes that they might aid in your worship too.

- **Preparing ahead of time** Foster suggests to prepare for Sunday worship by reviewing the hymns and scripture beforehand. I already practice Lectio Divina on the readings during my various gatherings throughout the week, but I had never thought to reflect on the hymns ahead of time. Since our bulletin is emailed on Fridays, we all have the opportunity to see the hymns that will be sung and the scripture that will be shared on Sunday.
- **Arriving early** Arriving 10 minutes early allows space for quiet before the service begins. This time can help us settle our hearts and become aware of God’s presence among the gathered community.
- **Releasing distractions** Foster encourages us to consciously let go of inner distractions. This can be challenging, but it is a gift when we succeed. Worship becomes richer when we are present with God and with the gathered Body of Christ, rather than dwelling on yesterday’s frustrations or tomorrow’s to-do list.
- **Praying for those who lead** Foster also suggests lifting the pastor and other worship leaders “into the light of Christ,” praying that they may speak and serve with boldness and faithfulness, with the power of the Lord.
- **Interceding for others** During our quiet moments before the service, Foster invites us to look around and notice someone who may need prayer. We can hold them in prayer throughout the service, trusting in God’s loving care.
- **Letting go of our own agenda** One insight that struck me deeply was Foster’s encouragement to release our personal agenda. Worship is not primarily about what we will gain from the service, but about offering our hearts fully in praise and honor to God.
- **Cultivating “holy dependency”** Foster speaks of cultivating a sense of holy dependency, recognizing that any transformation within us, within our families, and within our church community ultimately comes from God.
- **Receiving distractions with gratitude** Another surprising encouragement is to “absorb distractions with gratitude.” The sounds of children, the whisper of conversation, a dropped book, or someone arriving late are reminders that the church is alive with people. Rather than letting these moments frustrate us, we can receive them as signs of a living community gathered for worship.
- **Showing up even when we don’t feel like it** Finally, Foster reminds us that even when we don’t feel particularly inspired to worship, we are called to still show up and offer that time to God. Simply being present creates space for God to work in us and through us.

As I begin to practice even a few of these ideas, I hope to approach worship with greater attentiveness and openness. My prayer is that, in giving our full hearts to God in worship, we may all discover deeper blessing and inspiration in the time we devote to Him.

Submitted by Kelly Dalton-Trotter  
Your Parish’s Albany Blooms Coach

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## ST. PAUL’S SHADBLOW SERVICEBERRY (continued from page 7)

**Uses in Landscaping:** The Shadblow Serviceberry is ideal as a specimen plant, in small groups, or for creating natural privacy screens. It is relatively low-maintenance, resistant to deer, and can handle some salt, making it suitable for various, including urban, environments.

**Why "Shadblow"?** The name comes from the shadbush blooming at the same time the shad fish runs in the rivers in spring, according to the National Park Service.

**Why “Serviceberry”?** This name is said to have originated from New England settlers who noticed the tree bloomed when the ground had finally thawed enough to dig graves, allowing them to hold funeral services for those who died in winter.

# WHY IS LENT 40 DAYS?

## WHY IS LENT FORTY DAYS?

*“Lord, who throughout these forty days  
for us didst fast and pray,  
teach us with thee to mourn our sins  
and close by thee to stay.”* (1982 Hymnal-142, Claudia Frances Hernaman)

We all know that Lent lasts for 40 days, but this brings up an interesting question: What is the significance of the number 40? If we consider frequency as a measure of importance, the number 40 is indeed significant. It appears more than 150 times in both the Old and New Testaments.



Numbers held symbolic meanings in the cultures of ancient Israel, Egypt, and Babylon, and the human authors of the scriptures incorporated these symbolic numbers to convey deeper meanings. The number 40 symbolizes a significant period of testing, trial, purification, and preparation, often leading to a major transformation, new beginning, or divine judgment. While the authors may have used "40" to indicate a specific duration of time, they also used it figuratively to signify the length of time God uses to transform a person or a people for what comes next.

The 40-day duration of Lent is rooted in the biblical significance of the number 40. In the New Testament, Jesus' forty days in the wilderness is a pivotal event. In Matthew 4:2, we are told that, *"He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished."* During this time, Jesus faced temptations from Satan, but remained sinless and steadfast, demonstrating His obedience and readiness for His public ministry. Jesus' temptation in the wilderness not only strengthened Him spiritually but also serves as an example for believers on how to endure trials through prayer and fasting.

The 40-day period of Jesus' trial in the desert echoes several events in the Old Testament:

- **The Great Flood** - The first mention of the number 40 is found in Genesis 7:4, during the account of Noah and the Great Flood. God declares, *"For in seven days I will send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights; and every living thing that I have made I will blot out from the face of the ground."* Here, 40 represents a period of judgment, purification, and renewal. The Great Flood was not just an act of divine judgment, but the beginning of a renewed creation and a new covenant relationship between God and humanity through Noah (The Noahic covenant).
- **Moses on Mount Sinai** - Moses spent 40 days and 40 nights on Mt. Sinai before descending with the stone tablets on which God had written the commandments intended for the people's instruction (Exod.24:18). These tablets were later destroyed by Moses when he saw that the Israelites had turned away from God toward a golden calf in his absence. However, God called Moses back to Mt. Sinai for another 40 days and 40 nights (Exod.34:28). During this time, Moses fasted and interceded for Israel, marking this as a period of spiritual preparation. God re-wrote the commandments on a new set of tablets (renewing the Mosaic covenant). The people responded with a striking transformation from rebellion to obedience, generosity, and reverence.
- **The twelve spies** - Moses sent twelve spies to explore the land of Canaan, and they spent 40 days surveying it (Num. 13:25). This exploration was crucial for the Israelites, as it tested their faith and trust in God's promise to give them the land. Upon their return, ten of the spies delivered a fear-filled and discouraging report about Canaan. This negative report led the people to refuse to enter the land that God had promised them. Due to their unbelief, God made them wander in the wilderness for 40 years (Num. 14:33). This period became a spiritual journey marked by tests, trials, and ultimately, transformation. The number 40 in this context signifies a profound change from slavery to freedom and from unbelief to faith.
- **Elijah's Journey to Mount Horeb** - After confronting the prophets of Baal, the prophet Elijah fell into deep despair and wanted to die. An angel appeared to him, providing food and water that sustained him for 40 days and 40 nights until he reached Mt. Horeb (1 Kings 19:8). There, Elijah heard the voice of God in "a sound of sheer silence," which renewed his sense of purpose and zeal for his calling.

Submitted by Kate Storms

Written by Lorraine Simpkins, St. George's Church, Clifton Park

“For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”

1 Corinthians 1:18 NRSV



## **SAINT PAUL'S PRAYS FOR A NEW RECTOR**

Almighty God, giver of every good gift: Look graciously on your Church, and so guide the minds of those who shall choose a rector for this parish, that we may receive a faithful pastor, who will care for your people and equip us for our ministries; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*The Book of Common Prayer, page 818*

## CONTACT INFORMATION

CHURCH PHONE: 518-463-2257

FAX: 518-463-2981

St. Paul's Episcopal Church

21 Hackett Blvd

Albany, NY 12208

Church Website:

[www.StPaulsInAlbanyNY.org](http://www.StPaulsInAlbanyNY.org)

Church email:

[stpaulsepalbany@gmail.com](mailto:stpaulsepalbany@gmail.com)

Believe   
**OUTLOUD**



St. Paul's celebrates the Holy Eucharist on Sundays at 8 a.m. (Quiet Holy Eucharist in All Saints' Chapel) and 10:30 a.m. (Choral Eucharist in the Nave). Midweek Holy Eucharist is celebrated on Wednesdays at 12:10 pm in the Chapel. Morning Prayer is celebrated at 10 a.m. on Monday and Thursday in Chapel.