

# The Briefly

August 2012

The monthly newsletter for the community of  
**Grace St. Paul's Episcopal Church**  
2331 E. Adams • Tucson, AZ 85719  
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## Rector's Letter

**I**t bothered me more than I expected. General Convention is the triennial event of the Episcopal Church that brings us together in the unique manner established in 1789 by many of the same folks who formed the United States style of government. This summer's convention is now part of that history. What bothered me about it was that I was not there. One of the few downsides of leaving my former Diocese to be with all of you is that I gave up all that seniority and the opportunity to get elected to serve as a delegate to Convention. I admit that I missed being a part of it, especially since I had served on one of the subcommittees of liturgy and music.

Since General Convention has concluded, many pundits have weighed in on the resolutions passed, the tone of the discussion, and the future of the church. I have noticed a distinct tone of hand wringing in much of the aftermath conversation. I guess that is natural and expected for folks who have experienced the difficulties of declining dollars and membership to express fear. I am also aware that my own view is skewed because I have not been personally exposed to such scenarios. Since I was ordained, all the churches I have served were not only growing, but thriving, exciting entities that were making a mark in the world.

Perhaps my view is therefore a bit Pollyanna, but I remain energized and full of excitement and optimism about the future of our church. There is no doubt that the challenges we face are daunting. If we continue to “do church” like we did in the so called golden age of the 1950s, there is absolutely no question that we will be in serious trouble as an organization. That world does not exist and we are not meeting anyone's needs if we make believe the world is the same. It is more than that however. I believe, as Phyllis Tickle and others have written, that we are living in a reformational age. Christianity is due for and in need of, a massive

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**I remain energized and full of excitement and optimism about the future of our church.**



The Summer solstice service at GSP included live piano music, a communal walk on the labyrinth with a selection of solar medallions at the center, and a feast of fruits and vegetables in McBride Hall. A jar of solar medallions was placed in the center of the labyrinth. Upon reaching the center, everyone was encouraged to take a few medallions before beginning the walk back out of the labyrinth.

## Rector's Letter

*Continued from Page 1*

transition, on the same level as was experienced in the Protestant Reformation. The emerging church movement is a taste of where we are going. I believe that Grace St. Paul's is also an example of the beginnings of that new church, one that Diana Butler Bass articulates so well in her new book, *Christianity after Religion*.

What heartens me about General Convention is that our leaders recognize this. Though some remain fearful of the change we must undertake, we passed a resolution offering same-sex unions to those who are making lifelong commitments to one another. That is a courageous and major step. We also told our fellow Anglicans around the world that we want to stay in communion with all of them, but not at the cost of losing our

polity as Episcopalians. We therefore refused to take a position on an Anglican Covenant that conflicts with the vision of a church of all equals. Finally, we voted unanimously to change the structure of our church that was built in that 1950s business-oriented model. We voted to create a new structure that focuses us on mission.

Not only do these votes make me proud to be an Episcopalian, but they also convince me that we have the agility necessary to move into this new way of being church. Thanks to all of you for being willing to take up this challenge, and create the future church, a church that never loses its deep connection to everything Jesus taught us, but is willing to re-imagine that vision for a brave, new world.

*Steve +*

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## Liturgy Discussion of the Month

*by The Rev. Steve Keplinger*

Many things make up the essence of the Grace St. Paul's community, from the length and breadth of our social service ministry, our welcoming and hospitality focus, our health and healing ministries, through our extensive education and spiritual formation offerings and so much more. However, it is our style and focus on worship that defines who we are, both theologically and as a spiritual community.

In this column, I have had an opportunity to share with you some of the thought processes behind our liturgies and attempted to show the connections between our theology and how we worship. It is always our goal to create liturgies that encapsulate the essence of what it means to worship God at Grace St. Paul's.

Some astute parishioners have recently pointed out two things about this to me. First, these articles cannot possibly go into enough detail to capture the magnitude of what we are trying to do in the body of our worship. Second, this delivery of information has been one-directional. While all of you have recently had an opportunity to offer feedback on what we are doing, the chances we have had to talk about this in some sort of liturgical discussion

have been infrequent.

In an attempt to alleviate this, we are going to offer a new class. In Liturgy for the 21st Century, we will be discussing the history of liturgy, the elements of worship and where they come from, the cultural and historical basis of the act of worship, why we do what we do, where we see ourselves going, what this has to do with the emerging church movement, and the theology behind all of this. We will specifically talk about Grace St. Paul's liturgies, how they are molded together and the vision behind them. We will discuss the importance of our liturgies not just for this church, but for the wider Communion. We will ask what it means to be a progressive, liturgical church and if we are living into that vision. The class will be conversational and an opportunity for you to not only learn about liturgy, but also offer your opinions.

One of my ongoing statements in our liturgical meetings is that we must always be able to theologically justify every single word and movement within our worship. Our new class will be an opportunity for all of us to do that theological reflection together. At press time, the dates of this new offering were not yet set. Stay tuned for more information about that. I think this will be a great opportunity for each of us to deepen our understandings of liturgy and also to make our worship even more theologically meaningful.

### Submissions to The Briefly

Please submit articles to Lizzy Gooden, [BrieflyEditor@grace-stpauls.org](mailto:BrieflyEditor@grace-stpauls.org). Calendar items go to Wendy Pipentacos at [wendypipe@yahoo.com](mailto:wendypipe@yahoo.com). John Banks receives photos, charts, and graphics at [jdbanks@gmail.com](mailto:jdbanks@gmail.com).

# Notes from the Choir Stalls

By Christina Jarvis,  
Director of Music



The summer is half gone. Godzilla gulped it down in one big bite. Remember how when we were children time seemed endless? Wouldn't it be great to live as thoroughly in the moment as kids do? Meditate, people. Maybe we can make the summer longer.

Summer is a good time to take stock. We've been discussing various matters in liturgy meeting. A topic of recent conversation was the issue of applause in church after musical offerings and at other times. Some people feel applause is inappropriate at church. For them, it breaks the contemplative mood established by the music and is an unwelcome secular intrusion into sacred space. Others like the physical and emotional outlet that clapping provides. For them, applause is an upwelling of the Holy Spirit in response to feeling deeply moved. Of course, there are a few who don't care either way.

It's a complicated issue, and both sides have good points. We live in a society that values entertainment and turns it into a commodity, but the church is not a concert venue. As church musicians, we are praying, not performing. What we do is not easy—it takes practice and experience to do it well. The choir rehearses twice a week to sing to the standard we all prefer, and Pamela puts in many hours of practice over the course of a year. But it isn't about us, it's about the Holy Spirit working through us. Music is (hopefully) a seamless part of the liturgy.

Applause can put the emphasis on the wrong syllable. It makes me self-conscious; I never know what to do, and I feel guilty for being pleased about it. Then I start thinking, great, you like this one, but why didn't you applaud after the one last week? What was wrong with that one? This is a recipe for a terribly anxious swelled head.

Also, from the congregational perspective, if clapping is routine, do you clap because you're deeply moved by that piece of music or do you applaud simply because you think it's expected of you? Maybe you don't really like [fill in the blank], but your neighbors are clapping, so

you grudgingly clap, too. Then it ceases to be prayer, for sure. However, during and after a rousing gospel anthem, clapping seems so completely integral that it would be wrong not to do it. It's a kind of hallelujah.

The Vestry pondered this matter, as well, and came down on the side of not wanting to legislate someone's experience of God. Rather than saying, "No applause, please; we're Anglican," they decided to leave it with you, the congregation. You've come from many different faith traditions and backgrounds. Perhaps you're used to a more formal tradition of dress and behavior. Or perhaps you prefer a more casual style of worship, figuring God doesn't care whether you wear closed toed shoes. Or maybe you grew up "heathen," like I did, outside of a religious tradition and have zero frame of reference. There will be a certain amount of discomfort no matter what happens, but when it comes to applause in church, you may do as you are so moved.

Next month, I'll report on the Música sin Fronteras tour to Panama City and Havana. Wes Hunter and I are excited about being part of that ensemble and having the opportunity to sing at a music festival under the auspices of the Diocese of Cuba. In addition to our concert, we will sing during some of the nightly services through the week of the festival. I'll let you know whether they applaud or not.

Paz y amor,

*Christina*





A birthday party for Holly Shinn's bearded dragon lizards, Valkyrie and Falcor. They turned 10 years old in June and have been to GSP quite a few times in those years.

## Sunday School & Kids Stuff

by Jean Keplinger

Summer has been an oxymoron at GSP because while it has been so hot outside, we have had such a cool time of fun in our Sunday School. The One-Room Sunday School class has been focused on getting to know each other, team work and experiencing God through different media.

So far, we have discovered God in movies, animals and stories. We began with the movie *Up*, where we learned about being in community with each other. Then Miss Holly Shinn brought her ten-year-old dragon lizards to celebrate their birthdays with us. We held them, listened to a story about lizards, then had a party celebrating God's Creation.

Rev. Debbie Royals and her mom visited the next week. Rev. Debbie told us stories about Native American tradition, including the story of the dream catcher. Then she taught us how to make them. Her mom read us a book about a grandmother taking children into the forest to experience nature.

Miss Jill Clements spent two weeks with us. The first week, she taught us how to spin and weave yarn. The second week, we wove bookmarks and small purses out of the hand woven and hand dyed yarn.

The next week we read a book called *Elmer the Elephant*. We talked about why it is good to be different and how we are all special because

of our differences. We colored our own designs in elephant shapes. We learned that we are all totally beautiful and totally unique.

The Sunday School is also working on a project together. We are going to help design and paint new murals for the playground area. After discussing what we would like the most, we decided that we should have creation paintings, with lots of animals, especially baby animals. We are drawing images that will be turned into a full design for two of the walls in the playground. We are really looking forward to getting the design just right, and then helping to paint it on the walls.

Each week is a new adventure. Come and join us each Sunday during the 10 AM service. Children ages three and up are all welcome. We also have a nursery available for younger kids. Our One-Room Sunday School continues through September 2. Then on September 9 we begin a new fall curriculum.

Our youth group embarked on their first mission trip on Sunday, July 22. They worked in Los Angeles as part of the Sierra Service Project, doing housing and community building repair work, working with disadvantaged children in summer programs and touring social service agencies in East L.A. This is the first mission trip our youth have done in many years and we are very proud of them. Seek out a youth member and ask them to share with you their experiences.



## A Youth-to-Youth Interview with Lu

by *Funny Animoto (Andrew)*

**FA: How old are you?**  
Lu: 15, almost 16. I can drive in another month, legally, but I still need to learn how to drive.

**FA: What grade will you be in this fall?**

Lu: 11th grade.

**FA: What are some things you like in terms of music, books, TV shows?**

Lu: I mostly listen to the Beatles or current music. I'm a Harry Potter fan. I like to watch *The Gilmore Girls* or anything about dance or gymnastics. I did gymnastics when I was younger. *Big Fish* is a favorite movie, but I have a lot of favorite movies.

**FA: You lived in Germany. For how long?**

Lu: For three years. My mom worked for the Air Force and she had an assignment there. I didn't learn German because I went to The Department of Defense school on base, and I had a lot of American friends, and my German friends spoke English, so I wasn't really

exposed to the language much. While we lived there, I traveled to 19 different countries. I have been to a lot of places, seen a lot of things most people my age haven't seen. I adapted to travel and to different cultures and places.

**FA: Where would you like to travel next?**

Lu: Antarctica because I love penguins and that's someplace I've never been. Also, I was born in China and adopted at 10 months. I hope to go back to China soon to visit.

**FA: What is something that you like about Grace St. Paul's?**

Lu: I love that we have a very open community and it really feels like home. I'm an acolyte, and I have been for a few years now. I can do most everything, even baptisms, funerals sometimes.

**FA: Do you have any artwork for *The Briefly*?**

Lu: I took a photography class at my high school and we were supposed to look for things that would normally be thought of as ugly and find the beauty in it. I won Photo of the Year for a bird poop railing. Another time I took welding and made a cowboy out of horseshoes.

**FA: Something people will be surprised to know about you is . . .**

Lu: I love to bake! I bake cupcakes during the year on a lot of different occasions. I just baked a chocolate cake twenty minutes ago. (Note: Interview was conducted at 3:15 pm.)

**FA: Thanks! It was fun to learn more about you.**





## Saguaro Harvest

by Eric K. Carr

Once again, GSP was invited to participate in the Tohono O'odham sacred saguaro harvest with Stella Tucker, the official harvester for the Tohono O'odham nation. Stella is also the steward of the last remaining saguaro harvesting camp on the O'odham ancestral lands now controlled by Saguaro National Monument.

Our convoy left GSP early in the morning so we could start harvesting before it got too hot. Once we arrived at the camp, which is located in a restricted area inside Saguaro National Monument, we were greeted by Stella with lots of hugs. She remembered people like James Callegary and Tom Pitello from last year's harvest while warmly welcoming newcomers like Wes Hunter and Jill Clements.

After Stella gave a short demonstration, I led the groups out to our first saguaro, and

made sure everyone was well-versed in the traditions and instructions for the harvest. Using *kukuipa:d*, or traditional saguaro picking poles, we got fruit down off the arms of the cactus, and blessed ourselves with a traditional Tohono O'odham harvest blessing. We passed the first fruit around, using our fingers to put the bright red juice on our foreheads or over our hearts.

At this point we split off into groups, and I went between groups helping and answering questions. We saw all sorts of incredible things, like rattlesnakes sleeping quietly by our feet, beautiful green epidote stones, giant crested saguaros, and stunning vistas all around.

Some of the saguaro arms were low enough that we could simply twist the fruit right off with our hands, and some of the cacti were so laden with ripe fruit, they had crimson streaks of juice running down their trunks. Being out in an incredibly abundant harvest at a time of such dryness and heat turned our perceptions





Left, previous page: James Callegary separates saguaro seeds from the fiber in part of the ritual.

Right, previous page: A traditional picking pole leans against a huge, rare crested saguaro laden with fruit.

Left: Stella Tucker demonstrating a part of the syrup-making process.

Above: Kitt and Kelsea Cordero bless themselves in a traditional O'odham harvest blessing as the first fruit is gathered.

of drought and scarcity on their heads. There is so much food in the desert if you just know where to look, and that became a beautiful metaphor for life and community.

All the groups slowly made their way back to the camp for a meal of traditional foods like tepary beans, saguaro syrup, and melons. Stella then asked me to demonstrate how to make the saguaro syrup for the group, and for some travelers who had been directed to the camp by the Monument rangers.

I've been helping Stella with the harvest for over a decade, and it was a huge honor when she asked me to demonstrate the syrup-making process. It used to be a closely guarded secret, but Stella trusted our group so much she walked us through the entire process step by step, and even allowed all the people in the group to try their hand in this ancient practice.

It was an incredibly beautiful experience, and almost everyone who attended said they will never look at the desert the same way

again. We continue to be the only church invited to participate in this sacred event, and Stella enthusiastically invited us back again for next year's harvest as well. It is such a rare and meaningful experience, and yet an endangered one, as fewer and fewer O'odham continue to carry out the traditions of their ancestors. This is a reminder to us that we have so much to learn from other cultures and traditions. I am extraordinarily grateful to belong to a church that celebrates and embraces cultures rather than trying to colonize or convert them. I'm fairly certain that everyone who participated in the harvest this year had a powerful spiritual experience too.

## Solar Energy Baseline Proposal

The GSP Solar Energy Committee together with Solar H2O and Electric made a presentation to a joint meeting of Vestry, Long Range Strategic Planning, and Buildings and Grounds. The baseline proposal was well received and the committee is in discussion with the Blenman-Elm Neighborhood Association, Arizona Inn, and our nearest neighbors to the north. Additional approvals will be needed from the diocese of Arizona. The committee is reviewing options that include potential growth of our parish and solar power for the rectory.

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Angel Wang*



With the arrival of monsoon season, tomatoes are setting, and peppers are gearing up for production. We can look forward to midsummer harvests for the Pantry!

## Kinship Corner

Here it is the middle of July, and I'm already anticipating the fall because it is time to get the Giving and Receiving Ministry in full gear. One way to think of the Giving and Receiving Ministry is as a journey, grounded in gratitude and lived in action. We are always on that journey as we live out our faith at Grace St. Paul's. It's a journey that starts with recognizing

the gifts and skills that God has provided to our congregation to express our faith as a parish family and to give back to our community. And once we recognize those gifts and skills, then we use them to support our thriving, energized ministries that are transforming people's lives one by one, day by day.

If you're passionate about what God has given you and if you truly want to see our ministries continue to grow and thrive, don't miss the

opportunity to get involved in Giving and Receiving. Coming soon in September will be the Stewardship University, affectionately abbreviated "Stew U". We will be hosting this session here at Grace St. Paul's and it will be facilitated by the Rev. Canon Timothy M. Dombek. It promises to be an informative and fun day. More details to come.

*Blessings to all,  
Peggy Scott*



Far left: Kids of all ages enjoyed the ice cream and fun at GSP's Ice Cream Social on Sunday, July 1.

Left: Pete Weiblen, Martha Whitaker, Joan Cooney, and Lu Pipentacos scooped out plenty of fun at the Ice Cream Social Independence Day celebration at GSP on July 1.



# Suggested Technology Guidelines

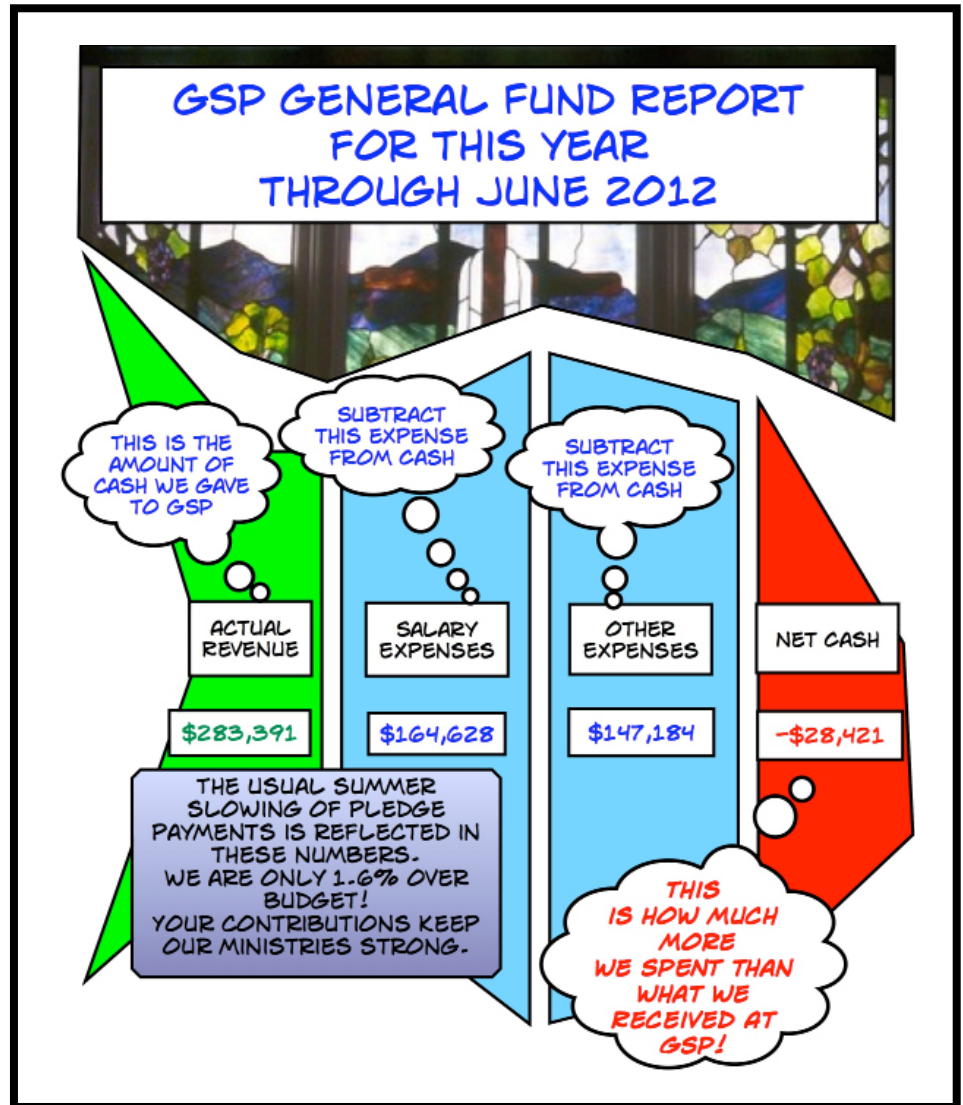
by Martha P. L. Whitaker, Senior Warden

Now that we have weekly access to an electronic copy of the Sunday Bulletin, and are beta-testing its use during Sunday services on smart phones, iPads, Kindles, Galaxy tabs and other tablets, it is an ideal time to review some technology use guidelines to consider during Church services. These guidelines were determined based on congregational feedback and discussion during the May Parish Wellness meeting:

- Technology such as smart phones and tablets may be used in the pews by the congregation, provided they make no noises, ringing or beeps.
- Please remember, use your tablet or smart phone only for the Sunday Bulletin PDF.
- No smart phones, cell phones, or tablets are permitted in the chancel, and this includes everyone: acolytes, clergy (minus pulpit technology), chalice servers, and choir members.

We value your feedback as we beta-test this exciting new experience of technology, and become even more green by printing fewer bulletins. Even if you don't notice anything different—perhaps you have not noticed anyone using an electronic Sunday Bulletin—that's important feedback, too.

Please send comments to Martha Whitaker at [seniorwarden@grace-stpauls.org](mailto:seniorwarden@grace-stpauls.org) or leave handwritten notes in my mailbox in the parish office.



## GSP on YouTube

by Kitt Cordero

Did you know Grace St. Paul's has a YouTube account?

YouTube is a website ([www.YouTube.com](http://www.YouTube.com)) where you watch and share original videos through the Internet. People upload and share video and then link to the videos from Facebook or other webpages.

To date, GSP has several videos posted on YouTube, including two of the Grace St. Paul's choir singing "I am the Bread Of Life" from Easter Sunday 2012 and the "National Anthem" for the opening of a UA baseball game.

These videos are posted on our Facebook page, and are also available for anyone to view on YouTube. So far 137 people have watched the Easter Sunday video, and more than 40 have viewed the National Anthem. Our audience has come from as far away as Switzerland.

GSP would love to post additional videos to share the talent, fun, and beauty of Grace St. Paul's Church. So to all you budding videographers out there, send us your videos! (Please don't use copyrighted music.) We will post them on our YouTube page to share with all at Grace St. Paul's and beyond!

# Adult Spiritual Formation

## **Spirit Players: A Play Reading Experience**

**Friday, Aug 3**

**6:30 p.m., Bloom Education Center**

Everyone is invited to participate in the wonder of play reading...no theater experience required. Non-readers can be the audience, too. Play readings are followed by discussions that examine family, class and cultural conflict in America. Readings are open to the public.

Led by Nanalee Rafael and Halsy Taylor. Both are employed in professional theatre and love to introduce others to a variety of scripts.

## **Readers Group**

**Mondays, Aug. 13 & 27**

**3 p.m., Bloom Education Center**

The Readers Group is a gathering of people who read and discuss books, chosen by the group, for ongoing growth in our personal/spiritual life. Books can be fiction or nonfiction, but with a goal to bring topics that stretch us as Christians and human beings in the world in which we live. Participation is open to everyone.

Facilitated by Linda Hutson, long time EfM mentor and avid book reader.

## **Film & Fellowship Festival**

**Friday, Aug. 17**

**6:30 p.m., Bloom Education Center**

The Potluck starts at 6:30 followed by the evening's excellent film at 7 o'clock. It's a great time for discussion and sharing on themes ranging from social justice to romance. The group selects each month's film, so think of your favorite!

Led by Kit Cordero and Eric Carr, active GSP members and film facilitators.

## **Ancient Future II: Emerging Church Voices**

**Monday, Aug. 13**

**7 p.m., Bloom Education Center**

What will the church of the future look like? And, how can we now best prepare for the inevitable changes that are coming? Join this discussion group to explore the latest information, research and observations about the coming changes in American and world religious culture. A 20-30 minute video vignette of an emerging church leader will be followed by lively conversation!

Led by Catherin Penn Williams, GSP member. She is currently a postulant for the priesthood in the Diocese of Arizona.

## **Jesus Through the Ages, Who Was Jesus?**

### **What Can We Know About Jesus (and How)?**

**Sundays, Aug. 5 & 12**

**9 a.m., Bloom Education Center**

Ever feel like Jesus has been kidnapped by the Christian Right and discarded by the Secular Left? This version of Living the Questions' popular "Saving

Jesus" series starts with 3 DVD sessions featuring leading religious voices of our day. Join in dialogue with respected theologians and scholars around the relevance of Jesus for today.

Facilitated by Peggy Scott, former EfM mentor and member of GSP.

## **Courage & Renewal Retreat**

**Friday, Aug. 24, 7 p.m.;**

**Saturday, Aug. 25, 9 a.m., Bloom Education Center**

This two-session Courage & Renewal Retreat is based on the work of Parker Palmer and the Center for Courage & Renewal. It is designed to help us understand how we hold the paradox of Abundance/Scarcity in our lives, and how we may live more authentically within this paradox. Friday evening and all day Saturday; lunch included. \$35 registration; limited to 20 participants.

Led by Brian Arthur and Jaimie Leopold, Courage & Renewal facilitators.

## **Social Justice & Banking**

**Sunday, Aug. 26**

**9 & 11:45 a.m., McBride Hall**

Discussion regarding the MoveYourMoney.org movement and issues related to GSP and personal parishioner finances. Presented in conjunction with the Episcopal Federal Credit Union.

Facilitated by Joan Zatorski and Janet Kaiser.

## **Gospel-Based Discipleship Group**

**Wednesdays**

**7-8:30 p.m., Mary of Bethany Room**

A new Gospel-Based Discipleship (GBD) group is forming and is open to anyone who would like to participate. The Rev. Debbie Royals is working with this group and the hope is that GBD may be implemented as a process for meetings, gatherings, and small groups/home worship gatherings. All are welcome!

Facilitated by Rev. Debbie Royals.

## **Education for Ministry (EfM)**

**Begins again in the fall on Wednesdays, 7 pm.**

EfM has been described by some in other churches as, "Every week, I pack up my Bible and head to EfM. I take more than my Bible—I also take my brain, my heart, and my soul. Each week, I join with other people who are serious about exploring their beliefs. Together, we explore what the Bible says, take in what the world around us says, consider our own lived experiences, and unpack how those sources affect our beliefs." EfM is searching for a few persons who would like to share their journey and join us on this search. The class is on break for the summer, but will start up again this fall.

Facilitated by Nanalee Raphael and Chris Ledyard.

## **Setting our Hearts**

Are you seeking a safe place to explore what it means to be a Christian in the 21st century?

Have you wondered what the term Progressive Christianity means?

Are you searching for a small group experience that allows you to get to know other people deeply?

Setting Our Hearts is a ten-week experiential small group that invites you to wrestle with what it means to live one's faith in this complex world that doesn't offer easy answers to life's questions. The course acknowledges the complexity of real life and helps participants make meaning of life as they live it. We grapple with our desire for "answers" and certainty in an ambiguous and often unfair world.

The course offers a model of faith that is an "Amen" to reality as we know it and to the God who created us. It promotes confidence in the way taken by

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Jesus, who joined us in our chaos, who lost everything, and who taught us that by being open to the reality of the chaos around us, we can discover the power of God.

The course is recommended for any adult —newcomer, old-timer, “cradle” Episcopalians, singles, couples and those who have previously taken the course.

The course consists of ten weekly meetings—Mondays, Sept. 17 to Nov. 26 (no class Nov. 19), 7 to 9 pm in the Bloom Education Center, plus two at-home retreats—Oct. 12-14 and Nov. 9-11.

Cost is \$75, which covers meals for both retreats—partial scholarships are available. Registration is through the church office at 327-6857.

Facilitators are Brian Arthur, Catherine Penn Williams, and Chris LaBour. For more information, contact Chris LaBour at 270-1766 or celabour@aol.com.

## The ABCCCS of General Convention

by the Rev. John Ohmer

**I**n case you need to catch up on your sleep when you get home, but you need to summarize General Convention for your parish or friends, here’s my “ABCCCS Plain Language Guide to What Happened at General Convention.”

**A—Anglican Covenant:** There were several proposals to reject the Anglican Covenant entirely and some efforts to adopt it. We approved two resolutions that say, “We commit ourselves to continuing partnerships in the Anglican Communion, but we think the most pastoral thing to do is to decline to take a position one way or another on the Anglican Covenant at this General Convention.”

**B—Blessing of Same-Sex Unions:** We passed a resolution that will give clergy resources that aren’t currently found in the Book of Common Prayer or the Book of Occasional Services for the “witnessing and blessing of a lifelong covenant in a same-sex relationship.” This is a huge victory for those who want and need a legitimate way to recognize gay couples who are making lifelong commitments to each other in church. But the resolution also has specific language saying that no clergy person has to use the materials if it goes against his or her beliefs.

**CCC—Connections, Corporate Worship and Communications:** Some of the most important things that happen at convention aren’t the official stuff. The connections we make with one another in the hallways, the lobbies, in the bars and restaurants, and at seminary diocesan dinners are amazing. The

daily corporate worship brings in all kinds of diversity in language and style. And I learned a lot about communication. Bishop Kirk Smith of Arizona said, “When we were having the debate on sexuality, we were in the top 10 trending [tweets], worldwide. That translates to over 10 million views. The millennial generation helps us understand that unofficial communication is far more vast than official communication, and so this convention was a good reminder of the importance of social media.”

**S—Structure:** We voted, unanimously, that the time has come to change our structures—the way the wider Episcopal Church is organized. Administrative and governance structures of the Church make up about 47 percent of the budget. There was a strong sense that the Holy Spirit is urging the Church to re-imagine itself so that—still keeping our rich heritage—everything we do is to support mission. And so change *is* going to happen. A group of 24 people, representative of the whole Episcopal Church, will be appointed by Sept. 30, to work outside the normal channels of the Church and come up with a plan for reform.

I’ll give the last word to Deputy Joell Szachara, Central New York, who said, “The Holy Spirit is at work at General Convention. It was very renewing, and powerful. I love the diversity: you get to see a bigger picture of God at work. The church is not just surviving, but thriving.”

*This article originally appeared in The Center Aisle, centeraisle.net, on July 12, 2012. Used by permission.*





# Grace St. Paul's

EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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## Grace St. Paul's: A Progressive Community—Loving God, Serving Others, Journeying Together

### What's Happening in August

#### WEEKLY SERVICES

##### Tuesdays

6 p.m., Evening Prayer & Communion  
7 p.m., Interfaith Meditation

##### Wednesdays

7 a.m., Holy Communion

##### Thursdays

6 p.m., Spirit Now

##### Sundays

8 a.m., Holy Communion  
8 a.m., Coffee & Conversation  
9:45 a.m., Child Care  
10 a.m., Holy Communion  
10 a.m., Summer Sunday School  
11:15 a.m., Coffee Hour  
11:30 a.m., GSP's GPS (11th & 12th grades)  
11:30 a.m., J2A Youth Group (9th & 10th grades)  
11:30 a.m., Rite 13 (7th & 8th grades)

##### 1st

10 a.m., Quilting Ministry  
Noon, Prayer Shawl Ministry  
7 p.m., Gospel-Based Discipleship

##### 2nd

9 a.m., French Class

##### 3rd

3 p.m., Healing Touch Clinic  
9:30 a.m., Native American Ministry Program Group  
2 p.m., Memorial Service & Reception for Jose T. Velez

6:30 p.m., Spirit Players: A Play Reading Experience

##### 4th

8:30 a.m., Altar Guild  
1 p.m., TiHAN Care & Support Training

##### 5th

9 a.m., *Who was Jesus? What can we know about him? The world into which he was born...*

11:45 a.m., Building & Grounds Committee Meeting

##### 6th

11:30 a.m., Spiritual Direction  
12:30 p.m., GSP Communications Group Meeting  
5:30 p.m., Spirit Dojo  
7 p.m., Green Church Committee Meeting

##### 8th

7:30 p.m., Healing Touch Clinic  
10 a.m., Quilting Ministry

##### 9th

7 p.m., Gospel-Based Discipleship  
9 a.m., French Class  
3 p.m., Healing Touch Clinic  
5 p.m., Congregational Development Committee Meeting

##### 11th

8:30 a.m., Altar Guild  
8 p.m., The Endicott Players of Boston—Piano Concert

##### 12th

9 a.m., *Who was Jesus? What can we know about him? The world into which he was born...*  
3 p.m., St. Andrew's Bach Society Concert

##### 13th

11:30 a.m., Spiritual Direction  
3 p.m., GSP Reading Group  
5:30 p.m., 4th Annual Interfaith Pride Service Committee Meeting  
5:30 p.m., Spirit Dojo

##### 14th

7:30 p.m., Healing Touch Clinic  
6:30 p.m., Long Range Planning Committee Meeting

##### 15th

10 a.m., Quilting Ministry  
10 a.m., Spiritual Directors Peer Group Meeting  
Noon, Prayer Shawl Ministry  
7 p.m., Gospel-Based Discipleship

##### 16th

9 a.m., French Class  
3 p.m., Healing Touch Clinic

##### 17th

9:30 a.m., Community of Hope  
6:30 p.m., Film & Fellowship Festival

##### 18th

8:30 a.m., Altar Guild

##### 19th

9 a.m., *Who was Jesus? What can we know about him? The world into which he was born...*

##### 20th

11:30 a.m., Spiritual Direction  
5:30 p.m., Spirit Dojo  
6 p.m., Primavera Meals—Third Monday Group

##### 22nd

7:30 p.m., Healing Touch Clinic  
10 a.m., Quilting Ministry  
7 p.m., Gospel-Based Discipleship

##### 23rd

9 a.m., French Class  
3 p.m., Healing Touch Clinic  
7 p.m., Courage & Renewal Retreat

##### 24th

8:30 a.m., Altar Guild  
9 a.m., Couragement & Renewal Retreat

##### 25th

9 a.m., Stewardship University  
9 a.m., Social Justice & Banking

##### 26th

11:45 a.m., Social Justice & Banking  
1 p.m., Mother's Kitchen (Primavera Cooking Team)  
2 p.m., St. Andrew's Bach Society Concert

##### 27th

9 a.m., Pastoral Care Meeting  
11:30 a.m., Spiritual Direction  
3 p.m., GSP Reading Group  
5:30 p.m., 4th Annual Interfaith Pride Service Committee Meeting  
5:30 p.m., Spirit Dojo

##### 28th

7:30 p.m., Healing Touch Clinic  
9 a.m., Primavera Cooks! Fourth Tuesday Primavera Meals Group

##### 29th

6:30 p.m., Vestry Meeting  
10 a.m., Quilting Ministry  
7 p.m., Gospel-Based Discipleship

##### 30th

9 a.m., French Class  
3 p.m., Healing Touch Clinic  
7:30 p.m., Choir Rehearsal