

An urge to repay God's gift

By Dan Fischer

Did you ever receive an unexpected gift? "Oh, but I didn't get you anything," might be a response in your own head. For some reason many of us have an innate need to reciprocate. The books need to be balanced in a practical way or perhaps even in a cosmic way.

So what are we to do for the big things in life? The biggest thing we come across as believers is the fact that Jesus willingly accepted his torture, crucifixion, and death for us, knowing we have not done anything to deserve it. We have been freed from sin and granted an imperishable inheritance. *That* is quite a gift.

For many of us, as we get older and perhaps a bit more introspective, we see the bigger picture in life and are acutely aware of how good our life has been. We see all the gifts and graces that have been bestowed on us. How can we repay that? It is quite impossible to do so, to the levels we would need to rise, in order to repay.

Many people, especially in our faith community of St. Paul's, have recognized the gifts they've been graced with and feel a definite need to say thank you and reciprocate in some manner. Also, many recognize the need to answer

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*To be
God's
hands
in the
world*

Five great questions

Want to know how to live a Christian life? Look no further than to your baptismal vows.

This was the message delivered to Episcopalians of the Diocese of Southwest Florida on Sept. 23 by the Very Rev. Dr. Tom Thoeni, rector of St. Paul's.

Five of the eight questions asked at baptism are meant to guide how we live our lives. They are our holy obligations, our part in a covenant instituted by God, to which the people respond in faith, as articulated in the sacrament.

We are reminded of this sacred covenant liturgically four times per year. Fr. Tom said it is a call to a life of continued grace, renewal, formation and reformation.

In a phone call immediately fol-

lowing the talk, the Most Rev. Dabney Smith, bishop of the diocese, called Fr. Tom to suggest he expand his research into a book. Fr. Tom said he would devote an afternoon a week to the project. It's a familiar subject for our rector, as it was the topic of his studies leading to his doctorate from Seabury Western in Evanston, Ill.

His talk was one of four workshops of the 2020 annual convention of the diocese, all delivered virtually. The hour-long talk is available for viewing through a link on our website, saintpaulsnaples.org

Annual conventions in recent years have been held at the convention center in Punta Gorda, fairly central for the 77* churches

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Urge to repay God's gifts

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God's call to serve, to be His hands in the world, and to use their talents and time for the good of God's people.

I wish to highlight three parish-ioners who have either answered the call to serve and/or feel the need to do for others, or "pay it forward." They recognize the gifts they have been graced with. I present Michelle Bright, Judy Martin and Peter Lund.

By many accounts you would say

Michelle Bright is

having quite a tough time. She was recently widowed and broke her foot, which compounds the

isolation of Covid-19 confinement.

Yet, Michelle in her zeal to serve, in her thanksgiving, acknowledges that it is a blessing to be allowed to serve, and serve she has. She has devoted 27 years of service to her faith community and to the



Five questions

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that comprise our diocese.

The other workshops, also available through our website, are "Deacons: Ministering at the Margins," "The Effects of Covid-19 on our Communities," and "Healing in the Time of Trial."

On the eve of the convention, Friday, Oct. 16 at 5 p.m., Bishop Smith will lead in Evening Prayer, virtually. The entire business session will be similarly available beginning at 9 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 17. Links are on our website.

** Soon to be 78, as the mission at Wesley Center, north of Tampa, is being welcomed as a parish at convention. The name? St. Paul's!*

Entering the Mission Field



Sign over exit Everglades Community Church.

community at large. She has been the recipient of numerous awards for dedicated service.

Michelle is humble in recognition of her service. She notes that it is because she listens to the voice of God. We are the only hands that God has here on earth to do His will and good works.

Judy Martin has a very youthful persona, especially in view of the numerous tasks, jobs, and volunteer work she engages in. Judy noted to me some of the trials that life has

placed in her path, but she is quick to say thank you to God for good outcomes and recognizes clearly how good God has been in her life. Judy has been involved with food pantries for many, many years, taking to heart the admonition of Jesus in John's Gospel to literally "feed my sheep." In an amusing twist, Judy volunteered so long at St. Matthews House that she was offered a paying job in another pantry. She accepted the job if she could continue her volunteer work as a side "job."



Peter Lund came to our parish with years of volunteer work from coaching to counseling and as a Stephen Minister. Peter brings com-

munion to home-bound or hospital patients. His list of roles at St. Paul's ranges from Eucharistic



minister to God's Gardeners and the Farmers' Market. I think it is safe to say Peter views his time, "after retirement" and after the primary role of raising a family, as a time to give back to God.

Like Peter, I found giving back to God an early calling, running bingo at the local senior center while in high school. Raising a family certainly places your priorities squarely where they belong, but the calling to serve never ends. What I needed to realize with a young family is that God is not asking us to take on a huge role to serve. We are instead called to serve as we can, when we can, with the talents and time God has graced us with.

We can change the world best sometimes by serving God in our own small family, neighborhood, or job. We are not tasked to change the world all by ourselves. We are all called to give thanks and serve God in a manner fitting our situation. What can you do? How can you—how do you say thank you?

**Go forth
and
serve...**

'...he spoke of loneliness'

By Ken Eastlack

As he lay there, in his littered one-room apartment, he spoke of God. He related how, in a relatively short span of his life, he had suffered a debilitating injury. It resulted in a drug-dependent existence which brought on behavioral changes that cost him his marriage. Now in his seventies, grossly over-weight and house bound, he spoke of loneliness.

He might have had a visiting nurse come by, though he only mentioned the "Meals on Wheels" delivery person as the total of human contact he experiences. "I've talked with God a lot. I let him know I am more than ready. I ask him for someone I can talk to now and then. Actually, a couple of ladies did come by not so long ago and talked about God. They were from some church and I thought I'd see them again. But they

never came back and I never heard anything else from their church."

Following my brief encounter with this very lonely old man, I couldn't help but think of Jesus and His message of love.

For reasons that I can't divulge, I could not have further contact and I wondered why a ministry of

Jesus had not more fully embraced this child of God? What, if any, ministry exists to address this level of loneliness? How many others suffer such a deep sense of isolation. Why does someone who speaks of God find Him so missing in his lonely, cluttered, and wretched life? We are more or less featuring "ministry" in this issue of Pathway. I hope my encounter will help our congregation to more fully embrace its meaning!

*There's a place for you
to exercise your
ministry at Saint Paul's
or in our
community. We are the
hands and feet of the
Risen Lord in the modern
world that is in great need.*

Farmers' Market to open, safely, Nov. 7

The 14th year of the St. Paul's Farmers' Market will open under terms of CDC guidelines on Nov. 7, 2020.

Vendors, patrons and our great volunteers will wear masks and markers will delineate safe distances for all.

Covid-19 still poses significant threats to health in America, and St. Paul's will do its part in helping all to stay safe.

Our gift shop and ladies garment shop will not be open, as the spaces are too confining. Likewise, the church will not be open for public tours.

Many of our vendors are disappointed they can't participate this year, and many patrons are also sad that such vendors as the book-

seller, crafts and artists must be absent.

The market was forced to close four weeks early in the Springtime, putting a premature end to thirteen years of a very popular and well run Saturday morning market.

The popular "welcome circle," where visitors were greeted with free coffee and hot dogs, also will not be operating, at least for this year. When it is safe to do so, the market will respond in its full glory, God willing.



Can you find St. Paul's cat pictured on the left? If so, please verify with Judy Allen —a cat lover, member of the Vestry, and chair of the Altar Guild!

A new Church is born in Naples

Our last issue concluded with the first service of St. Paul's Mission Church held at the Chlumsky store.

Recognizing the immense support that Trinity had provided, Fr. Bell sent a letter to his parishioners a few weeks later asking for a monetary pledge, "1968 finds us highly subsidized and it seems right to begin bearing some of our own weight financially." On January 18, 1968, the Bishop's Committee for the Mission Church met for the first time at the Chlumsky store where the wardens, treasurer, and secretary were determined. Subsequent changes in February brought a new senior warden; with Ralph Marlowe and the Rev. Charles Serson as members. Serson's appointment marked the beginning of many years of valued seasonal service at St. Paul's of this Canadian, a priest in the Anglican Church from Oakville, Ontario.

At the January 27, 1968, service, Suffragan Bishop Hargrave performed the first four confirmations and two baptisms at St. Paul's. The first mid-week Communion, with eight attending, was held on January 25.

For the first nine services, total attendance was 486 – an average of 56 a service and the total offering was \$530. St. Paul's was successfully under way with every indication of growth and accomplishment!

In late December 1967, Vicar Bell and his family had moved into the completed vicarage. The previous summer, Fr. Lambert and his Trinity vestry had retained architectural services to develop plans for the St. Paul's church building. When satisfactory modifications had been made on the plans after months of study and change, they were approved by Lambert, the Trinity vestry, Bell, and the St. Paul's Bishop's Committee to be put out for construction bids.

The one-story structure of concrete block and field-stone (now Trinity Hall) was designed with a single, large room to be used for both services and parish functions. There would also be a kitchen, office, and lavatories. Originally, the plans included Sunday School classrooms but these were eliminated to reduce costs. The exterior stucco was to be painted beige, with a red entrance door and white on the fascia and soffits. Seating capacity would be variable with about 100 on chairs which were intended rather than pews to permit the multi-use of the room.

After review of the bids, the F.B. Shreck Construction Co. in Naples was selected, and the contract was signed by the rector and wardens of Trinity on February 5, 1968. The total cost was to be \$68,639.11 for

BEGINNINGS



St. Paul's history by Lee Barron

construction and \$1,473 for plumbing and air conditioning. All the funding was provided by Trinity. In April 1968, Trinity applied for a mortgage of \$35,000 at 6% interest per year – the remaining amount came from available funds at Trinity. Years later, after St. Paul's had assumed final mortgage payments, ownership of the church was turned over to St. Paul's. What a magnificent gift it was from Trinity-By-The-Cove to enable St. Paul's to have its own church building far sooner than would have been possible if the new parish had to raise its own funds!

A week after the construction contract was signed, a groundbreaking ceremony was held at the church site. Watched by the 36 parishioners present, Rev. Lambert was the first to dig into the sandy soil with a shovel followed by the architect and then Vicar Bell. A few weeks later, Bell celebrated an outdoor Communion at the site on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 28, attended by 25 St. Paul's members and a few from Trinity.

As a start of the fund raising for the ongoing support of St. Paul's the first of a long series of annual suppers was held on March 31 with a ticket costing \$1.50 for a "Spanish Style" meal of rice and chicken, held at the nearby Naples School. By August, St. Paul's had 97 members and \$1,600 in the bank. Then came the completion of the new church, less than seven months after the groundbreaking.

The first service was held Sunday, September 8, 1968. A weekly kindergarten group began on September 9, with 20 children. Sunday School began on September 15 and a Gift Shop was opened, sharing space in the kitchen and office. The Gift Shop was a project initiated by the newly formed Episcopal Church women who elected its first president.

Through Advent and the Christmas season of 1968, there was continuing excitement and special meaning in the services as the growing parish worked together to prepare St. Paul's for the years to come.

Notes to 'Mom'

By Ken Eastlack

In which parishioners, wracked with guilt with the "What? You're too busy to write to your mother?" ringing in their ears, write home to let us know how they're doing.



When you comin' back, Red Ryder? (or Snowbirds)

I'm borrowing the title of a Mark Medoff play to appeal to the seasonal members of our beloved parish. It is becoming increasingly apparent that there are those of you who are not likely to rejoin us this season.

With that in mind, your Pathway (mother) would like to hear from each of you. Let us know your plans and we will publish them in an upcoming issue. It will make us feel more like the close parish we normally are; without pandemic forced isolation.

Please drop a line to Mother keneastlack@msn.com with your thoughtful notes, i.e., "Hi everyone, we can't make it back this year because..." or "I'll be home for Christmas..." or "We're on our way; expect to see us in church in mid-October!" Well, you get the idea.

You remain in our hearts, prayers, and thoughts. And, oh yes. If you are slow to respond, you can

expect a little prodding from mother... "What? You can't take a moment while you are fidgeting with that electronic device in your hand to let your mother know your plans?" Meanwhile, stay well and safe. God bless us everyone!

Parish prayer

Almighty and everlasting God, make our parish of St. Paul's truly a community of prayer and belonging.

Raise up in our midst the resources and leadership which will enable us to act upon what you would have us do, in this place and in a **ministry** of love and concern for others.

Open my mind and heart to discern what you would have me do, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen

✱

Lagniappe

Diane Breithaupt and her best friend were partners as interior painters. By Friday at 3 pm, after a week of painting, they would get giddy and tired. Of course, being the one on the ladder, Diane would inevitably come down and step in the paint pan that her partner had left on the bottom of the ladder. Rather than get upset, they would burst into laughter. Thank heaven for wonderful friends and partners!

After surviving 39 operations during her lifetime and being told that she would never walk again, **Van Geoghegan** now knows true happiness. Prayers, visits, and calls from her friends, including those at St. Paul's and her two former parishes, makes her feel loved and fortunate to walk again. That is true happiness...and thankfulness.

Tom Connolly was once asked to sing at the great New York venue, Carnegie Hall. You'll have to ask him the details...

—Carol Tracy

** pronounced lan-yap, roughly means "a little something extra for you." Have a little something extra to contribute to Lagniappe? drop Carol a line.*

Oh, HONEY!!

By Lee Barron

As you were buzzing around last year's Farmers' Market, making a beeline towards your favorite vendors, you may have accidentally flown by a stand with an important product owned and personally run by local beekeepers Tom and Kirsten May of Naples Honey Company.

The honey comes from the more than 100 beehives owned and administered to by Tom here in Naples in five different locations. Kirsten bottles the honey and labels it, and you have seen this sweetie behind their table on Saturdays. They also sell their honey at the Farmers' Markets in Marco Island (Wednesdays), and Coconut Point (Thursdays).

Tom learned about beekeeping as a youngster by working for his grandfather, who started the business, and his father in Illinois. Working for and with them kept him a busy bee, so much so, that it paid for his education! On their first wedding anniversary, in 1999, Kirsten gave Tom the gift of his first hive. This expanded over the years to the successful business they now run. Tom divides his time between the hives and being a cellist with the Naples Philharmonic, but apparently does not take his cello along to the hives for the bees' enjoyment—nor does he take bees to his recitals!

Many people do not realize how important honey can be to one's health. Honey can be considered the most sustainable natural food—it never goes bad and does not need refrigeration. It contains sugars, vitamins, minerals, and has high antioxidant values. Tom noted he read recently that scientists are looking into the seeming positive effects honey has on breast cancer and more research is being conducted.

There are several different kinds of honey that the bees make according to what is in bloom at the time—orange blossom at the end of March, saw palmetto in late spring, wildflower in the summer, and wild pepper in the fall. According to Tom, there have been times in which an empty hive can be occupied by "traveling" bees looking for a home, possibly creating a different flavor of honey.

Asked how much he has been stung, Tom responded with a laugh, "Very little." He wears the appropriate garb, face protection, and gloves, and uses a smoker to calm them if they seem a bit agitated. Surprisingly, it is pine needles that are burned in those smokers and not wood, as the needles ignite much faster. Queen bees are about 75% bigger than the other bees and he advised he buys



about 100 new queens each year as the existing queens die off. (Can you imagine having to produce hundreds of babies a year?! That would give you hives just thinking about it!) He noted that if the existing queen hasn't died by the time he acquires new ones, he must "terminate" the existing one and spread her remains on the back of the new queen in order for the other bees to accept the new queen.

In collecting the actual honey, Tom can address 50 to 60 hive boxes in one hour. There are 10 frames per box. He leaves some for the bees to use as their own food. The raw honey is put into two-gallon buckets and weighs much more than expected, as honey is almost 50% heavier than water. A gallon of honey is 12 pounds, while a gallon of water is eight pounds. Another little-known fact is that raw honey is considered a liquid!

The Mays render 10,000 pounds of honey a year, so there is plenty for you to purchase at our Farmers' Market, Wynn's Markets, Nature's Gardens, and South Naples Citrus. So, BEE A HONEY and purchase some sweetness for you or BEE a good friend and buy some as a gift. You will be supporting a local business and keeping healthy, too!

Fr. Tom's first wedding at St. Paul's

And in the middle of a pandemic.



Bill Baumann at 82 and Arlene Carney at 77 were married in August. Fr. Tom performed the beautiful marriage ceremony—his first at St. Paul's. The bride and groom each had two friends as witnesses. All members of the wedding party wore masks. The guests sat at safe distances.

And it makes the front page of the paper.



The wedding was featured in the *Naples Daily News*

And it makes national television.



and the *CBS This Morning* show shared a video clip of the ceremony (calling us only "a Naples church.")

To see this little clip, go to

<https://youtu.be/kltv6D7A2H8>

or visit our website

The media coverage was a surprise to St. Paul's!

Leadership in the time of Covid-19

By Charlene Connolly

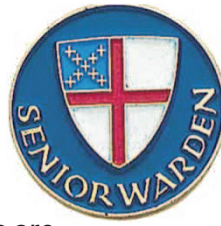
How has this pandemic year affected our vestry? Vestry usually meets in the library Serson Hall. Covid19 changed that to group phone meetings. Later we met in Trinity Hall, where we could sit apart while wearing our masks. Bishop Dabney Smith and his staff have required the 77 churches in the diocese to follow CDC rules and we consulted our insurance provider about carefully opening our meetings and buildings.

Farmers' Market ended last March, losing four weeks. Following research and discussion, the vestry voted to reopen the Farmers' Market Nov. 7. It will be a soft opening with chosen booths, spacing and CDC rules enforced. Temporarily eliminated will be the Unique Boutique, gift shop, and hot dog and coffee welcoming center. Church tours for the public will not return on market days until sanitizing rules are lifted.

When I was asked by Fr. Tom to be senior warden, I could not have known that my other volunteer positions would end because of Covid19. With no Sunday school classes in the morning or evening classes with the Haitian children, there will not be a Christmas pageant this year. I am sad about that. Coffee hour in Trinity Hall ended until we can use the kitchen again due to sanitizing issues. (Meantime, we welcome you to join Zoom coffee hour at 10:30 a.m. every Sunday after the 9 a.m. service). On the front page of our saintpaulsnaples.org website there is a link to coffee hour and other Zoom meetings. It is our way to reach out to each other for conversation.

Our vestry serves as "agents and legal representatives of the congregation

in all matters concerning its corporate properties and the relations of the congregation to its clergy." (Title 1. Canon 14, Section 2) Conversation through email helps us speak to the entire vestry during the week. Meetings follow an agenda. Reports are given from vestry members and we vote when changes are needed. We welcome parishioners to sit in on our meetings and to ask questions.



The parish voted at the last annual meeting to reduce our vestry to nine members from twelve. Fr. Tom presides over the meetings with Deb Avery taking notes which are posted in Trinity Hall and on our website.

I would like to urge my fellow parishioners to consider stepping into a leadership role. Please approach Fr. Tom or anyone on the vestry to signal your willingness to serve.

Our Diocese of Southwest Florida is holding its annual convention this weekend, Oct. 16-17. Normally lay candidates and clergy drive to the Punta Gorda Convention Center for a full Friday of workshop lectures to learn more about being a congregation, mission work, church insurance, outreach, growing the church, healing prayer, etc. The second day there is a diocesan business meeting.

Covid19 dictates a virtual convention on Zoom. That means all of us can go to the diocesan website to "see how the sausage is made," in the words of Fr. Tom.

Fr. Tom was to have given one of the workshops at convention. Lucky for us, he gave it before a "live audience" at St. Paul's, regarding Baptism (see story Pg 1).

Our delegates will gather in the

library to attend the business meeting on Saturday, where we will vote on issues. The rest of us can observe from the comfort of our own homes via Zoom. It will give you an insight of how your Church operates, a good thing to know when you put your name forward for membership on the vestry!

I am ending on a high note. Covid-19 helped us learn to communicate on a grander scale. Due to new technology, more of us can feel actively a part of the Episcopal church and of St. Paul's.

Tune in to convention

Bishop Smith will open this year's convention with Evening Prayer instead of the usual grand affair of all the delegates and vested parish priests attending a Holy Eucharist concelebrated by a dozen bishops and priests.

Mind you, this may conflict with "wine time" with Fr. Tom, as it begins at 5 p.m. and the bishop plans to give a homily. Fr. Tom probably will forgive latecomers to the popular wine time (link on website).

The link for Evening Prayer with Bishop Smith, and all other convention activities, is:

episcopalswfl.org/tv.html

There you will find all of the workshop videos, as well. They are: *The effects of Covid-19 on our communities*, *The Baptismal Covenant* (Fr. Tom's talk), *Healing in the Time of Trial*, and *Deacons: Ministering at the Margins*

If you forget the link to convention, turn to our website and click on "Convention Links."