



THE EPISCOPAL MESSENGER

SEPTEMBER 2025

SAINT PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

During these recent months, I have found comfort in the 23rd Psalm. *"The Lord is my shepherd . . . he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul."*

As I write to you today, I am aware that it has been since Ash Wednesday that I have been able to be with you without a wheelchair or walker. Russell and I have the same questions as all of you. Why is this happening? What might be causing it? We got a pacemaker, which helped so much, but then my legs began to gyrate in circles as I try to walk forward. It is easy to fall. The most frustrating part of all of this is that my wobbly legs happen intermittently.

I find the brain fog is also difficult to predict. I have received so much grace over these months as even more than day to day – sometimes it's hour by hour I try to keep up with how my body is functioning. It can certainly feel like your body is betraying you. I am waiting for one more specialist referral to Johns Hopkins.

These many months have allowed me to begin a journey to consider if my body will go back to normal? If not, what can I expect? My PCM said this might just be how things are now. I couldn't have heard those words back in February. During these months we have prayed and cried together as we didn't know if I was dying.

Realizing that I was declining to that degree has been really difficult.

My passion and my love are our ministry here at St. Paul's. I want to be able to continue to lead you, alongside Deacon Jim, and to be well enough to be a true partner for Jim and Alan in worship. I don't yet know if I can and will improve to that degree. I have learned in my life, God is with me and whatever happens it will be what is best for St. Paul's and for us. This will all happen in God's time.

*With love in Christ,
Mother Allison+*



These flowers grew from seeds distributed on Rogation Sunday and planted by Val Evert.

Adult Education Opportunities:

An Invitation to a Holy Autumn, from United Thank Offering (UTO)

This offering from UTO is a meaningful option for individual study during September. Centered on the theme of rest, it will resonate with many of us. Printed copies will be available in the back of the church starting Sunday, September 7th. You can download your own copy by searching: UTO Holy Autumn. For more details see the UTO article in this newsletter.

The Work of the Holy Spirit

The prophets of the Old Testament foresaw a future outpouring of the Spirit of God (Isaiah 44:3; Joel 2:28-29). Jesus promised to send his Spirit as a friend and helper (John 14:16-17). Every follower of Jesus Christ carries the Holy Spirit within. Yet the Spirit is often described as the quietest member of the Trinity, never calling attention to Herself. (Interestingly, the Hebrew word for “spirit” is feminine—while not definitive, it offers food for thought.)

This 7-week study, running through October and November, will explore Scripture to better understand the work of the Holy Spirit.

Meeting times:

- Sundays at 6:00 p.m. on Zoom
- Mondays at 10:30 a.m., in person

and on Zoom

Questions? Contact Susie Vollmer.

UTO Ingathering 2025: Invitation to a Holy Autumn



Although UTO boxes are available all year round, fall is traditionally a time for St. Paul's to focus on ingathering so we can send our donations to United Thank Offering in early November.

For 2025, UTO has added a 4-week study option. Rooted in this year's theme, *An Invitation to Holy Autumn*, we are asked to consider what *rest* looks like for us. A booklet, created by two UTO board members, provides the resources for individuals or groups to pray, read Scripture, journal, and reflect on the spiritual aspects of *rest*. The program includes suggestions for prayer and Scripture along with reflection questions, response journal pages, and other activities.

As a self-directed study option, the educational resources will be available in the back of the church on September 7. To preview or download your own copy, search *UTO Holy Autumn*. The first or second option should be *An Invitation to a Holy Autumn* – the booklet for this self-directed adult education opportunity.

THE EPISCOPAL MESSENGER

A newsletter for the parish family of

St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Bloomsburg

Please send articles and other correspondence to

Doug Hippenstiel * Dch17846@gmail.com

Blessing the children

On August 24, we celebrated the start of the school year with a special blessing of the children. The cake—decorated with the words “*The Blessing of Children*” – carried a double meaning: not only did we offer a blessing for the children that day, but we also celebrated the truth that the children are a blessing to the entire St. Paul’s community! A heartfelt thank-you to the parents, grandparents, and aunts who faithfully bring the children to church!

Kids’ Sunday School is offered for school aged children on the 2nd and the 4th Sunday of each month during the 10:30 service. This fall, we’ll continue exploring stories from the Early Church.

Questions? Please see Susie Vollmer



‘Noisy’ Collections

In September, the Noisy Collection will go to the Bloomberg Women’s Shelter. If you do not have the opportunity to place your coins in the collection plate during Sunday services at the church, you may send a check and write “Women’s Shelter” on the memo line.

September Baptismal Birthdays

Margaret Williams * Jeremiah Hess *
Lauren Baran * Phil Driscoll * Eric Nock

Fair Ministry

The example table in the foyer has donation envelopes, “needs” lists, and, most importantly, volunteer sign-up sheets!

ITEMS NEEDED FOR FAIRWORKERS 2025

Volunteer Opportunities:

2025 Sorting date: Saturday, September 13th 9:00 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall at 1st Presbyterian Church, 345 Market St., Bloomsburg.

2025 distribution date: Thursday September 18th : Clothing will be transported from the churches to Arena Building at the Fairgrounds with setup starting at 12:00 PM.

Distribution of clothing will be from 4 PM – 5:30. Clean-up/tear-down begins at 5:30 pm.

Shoes, Clothing & Bedding

Not Needed: Women’s black pants.

Needed:

Donations of both men’s and women’s clean, used clothing, sizes S - XL:

- Men’s black/blue denim jeans women’s blue jeans
- Sweatshirts, sweatpants, t-shirts, sports shirts.
- Work boots and sneakers (especially men’s work boots or shoe sizes 9, 9.5, 10, and 10.5)
- Wind breakers, hoodies, jackets
- Rain gear (ponchos, raincoats/pants)
- Used clean blankets
- Used sleeping bags
- Children’s clothing in good condition: infant to size 6 only

Donations of new items include:

- Colored T-shirts or athletic shirts for men (S, M, L, XL)
- Men’s colored briefs or colored boxer briefs (S, M, L, XL) (No white briefs/boxer briefs)
- Men’s ankle socks (small & large)
- Women’s ankle socks (medium/large)
- New blankets preferably twin or throw size
- 5 new pillows with COLORED pillowcases from each church (no white pillowcases).

As the volunteer pool gets smaller, IT IS MOST HELPFUL IF DONORS:

- bring women’s clothing in white trash bags.
- bring men’s clothing in black or green bags.
- sort clothes by size & label the bags S, M, L, and XL.
- Please do not donate dress shoes, dress clothing, or used socks/underwear.

Envelopes for monetary donations are on the ‘example table’. Checks may be written to CCCFM and placed in the offertory. Donations are used for new clothing for adults and supplies/clothing for children traveling the circuit with their parents.

St. Paul’s: Please bring your donations to the collection area between the church and the parish hall.

Other churches involved in CCCFM will take their clothing donations to 1ST Presbyterian. Thank you for your continued participation in this mission. *Please be aware that after the clothing giveaway, remaining used clothing will be given to AGAPE and used for the needs of local residents. Remaining new clothing will be stored for 2026.*

Operation Christmas Child: St. Paul’s will be participating in Operation Christmas Child again this year. Summer and back-to-school sales provide excellent opportunities to find treasures. Lists are on the Outreach table in the foyer; boxes will be available in September. We will be able to send many of the same types of items we sent last year. **Do Not Include:** toothpaste, used or damaged items, scary or war-related items. Seeds, food, liquids or lotions, soap, medications or vitamins, breakable items, glass containers, or aerosol cans.

OOM Dessert Mission: The August-November schedule for “dessert mission” at Our Orangeville Manor is ready to go! If you have thought about signing up, but have never gotten around to it, summer and fall are great times to participate in this sweet mission! It is not necessary to provide homemade items, but it is important to keep the “people connection” that occurs when you drop off the treats.

August 17 _____ Susie Volmer _____

September 7 _____ Patty Creasy _____ September 21: **Tastykake round-up*** _____

October 5 _____ October 19 _____

November 2 _____ November 16 _____

*September 7 -21 we are asking the congregation to donate multipacks of Tastykake items (Tandykakes, Krimpets, cookie bars, mini-donuts, etc.). Outreach will deliver them during fair week.

In December we will request desserts for the Christmas social. To sign up, or if you have questions, contact Elaine Pongratz @ mdmep@ptd.net

A New Season of Music Ministry

As we turn the page to September, I hope each of you found time over the summer to rest, recharge, and reflect. After a well-deserved break, I am filled with anticipation and joy as we prepare to begin our second season of music-making together at St. Paul's.

Our first official rehearsal of the season will be held on Thursday, September 25th at 7:00 p.m., and I look forward to seeing familiar faces and welcoming any new singers who may wish to join us. Whether you are a seasoned choir member or simply curious about lending your voice from time to time, please know that there is always space for you in our choir.

We will begin the season by revisiting a familiar arrangement of "On Eagle's Wings" from earlier this spring, which beautifully complements Psalm 91:1-6 slated for our first Sunday of singing on September 28th. Its timeless message of trust and protection sets the perfect tone as we center our voices and hearts on worship.

This season, our focus remains clear: to glorify God through music that deepens our connection to one another and to the sacred rhythm of our worship. As we step into fall, let us do so with open hearts, ready to lift our voices in song and celebration.

– Dr. Alan Hack, Music Director

September Lectionary

9/7 – 13th Sunday after Pentecost

Jeremiah 18:1-11

Psalms 139:1-5, 12-17

Philemon 1-21

Luke 14:25-33

9/14 – 14th Sunday after Pentecost

Jeremiah 4:11-12, 22-28

Psalms 14

1 Timothy 1:12-17

Luke 15:1-10

9/15 – Holy Cross Day

Philippians 2:5-11 or

Galatians 6:14-18

John 12:31-36a

Psalms 98

9/21 – 15th Sunday after Pentecost

Jeremiah 8:18-9:1

Psalms 79:1-9

1 Timothy 2:1-7

Luke 16:1-13

9/22 – St. Matthew, Evangelist

Proverbs 3:1-6

2 Timothy 3:14-17

Matthew 9:9-13

Psalms 119:33-40

9/28 – 16th Sunday after Pentecost

Jeremiah 32:1-3a, 6-15

Psalms 91:1-6, 14-16

1 Timothy 6:6-19

Luke 16:19-31

9/29 – St. Michael and All Angels

Genesis 28:10-17

Revelation 12:7-12

John 1:47-51

Psalms 103

Parish Leadership

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Altar Flowers

If you would like to provide altar flowers for a special occasion, please send your request to Patty Creasy at the Church Office (Post Office Box 764). Flowers for one Sunday cost \$45, plus \$6 for delivery, but you are welcome to contribute whatever you can.

Please make checks payable to St. Paul's Episcopal Church and mail to P.O. Box 764, Bloomsburg, PA 17815. Please include a note with the following information:

- The Sunday you would like to provide the flowers.
- Notation: The Altar Flowers are given by _____ in loving memory of _____, or in thanksgiving for _____.
- Your name and contact information (phone number, email address, etc.)

New prayer list starting

Because the prayer list has grown so long and outdated (names are rarely deleted), we will start a new list on this Sunday, September 7.

Names from the weekly 8 and 10:30 services will be added. Names may also be sent the church office or to The Messenger by emailing dch17846@aol.com.

My 46-year connection to Maui

In August 2023 I stood before you on a Sunday morning and explained that the fires that had just occurred in Maui were not just another in a list of natural disasters we have heard about in recent years. We just seemed to be going from one disaster to another. Flooding, hurricanes and the fire had all been recent news stories. As I explained my personal connection, I was so touched that Alan Hack, who was our visiting organist at the time, reached out that afternoon to offer support and care.

One day in 1979, just on a whim, I asked my general manager (GM) if it were possible to transfer to another Sheraton. He asked me what area I might be looking at. As a girl who was born and raised in Minnesota, you can easily understand that I told him I was interested in the Sheratons on Hawaii. He said he had a good friend who was GM for the Sheraton in Maui and he would reach out to him. A few days later, I had a phone interview and was bound for Maui.

A little background information you will need to know. I was the youngest of three girls and in 1974, ten years before I would marry Russell, my sisters married three months apart. I went from a household of five with three busy daughters, to being an only child at home. Unfortunately, from 1974 to 1979 my parents were both active alcoholics and so I was neglected during my high school years.

My grandparents were very influential during this time since I would often spend

the weekends with them. I loved being with them so much.

This move was really my first time away from home and so there was certainly the excitement of what I was doing, but there was also some trepidation. When I arrived at the hotel, they said I would be staying at the hotel until I found a place to live. I was put in a room in the middle of the lush tropical plants. That first night as I settled in, I pulled out my blanket. Yes, I was like Linus, and my blanket was all I needed to feel the courage and reassurance about what I was doing.

I went to sleep and during the night I awoke to a terrible pain in my hand. I turned on the light and suddenly saw a long black thing wiggling inside my blanket. I jumped to the other bed which was still untouched. I called the front desk and explained that something had just bitten my hand and was still in my blanket. One of the security guys came and took care of it. However, in my panic about being bitten by some unknown creature when I spoke to the security guard on the phone I said, "something just bit me – I think it was an eel or something." I would just remind you that Minnesota is a landlocked state and I didn't know much oceanography! The entire time I worked with him, that security guard would always ask me how my eel was doing!

It turned out I had been bitten by a centipede which grow very long in Hawaii and have a venomous bite. The bite only impacted the nerves at the site of the bite.

It just took a couple of days for it to start having feeling again.

On my first day at work, Tarcila, who worked for housekeeping, came by the front desk and let me know that she and her family had a room to rent if I wanted to come and look at it. After work I went over to see the room. I immediately felt so welcome and cared about. I needed to feel that so much. Loreto also worked at the hotel, as did Tarcila's sister Virgi. She worked at the front desk with me. I loved living with the Juian family. Tarcila and Loreto had three children. They were in middle school and early high school and so I wasn't much older than any of the kids.

I'm including some Halloween photos because Tarcila even made me a Raggedy Ann costume to wear for Halloween at work.

In 2011 I was able to take Russell and his mom and her husband over to meet the Julian family. When Tarcila and I hugged we were both crying so hard. She kept saying, "She never thought she'd get to see me again after almost dying in 2007."

At the time of the fire, the only contact information I had for Tarcila and Loreto was a house phone number and the physical street address. From the very first news reports, I realized that our house had been destroyed. We were on a hillside just above Lahaina. I began a process then that I would repeat often over the couple of years. I would go online to look at the list of those who had been killed or were missing after the fire. Their names never appeared, but I didn't know what might have happened.

Last Christmas, as I was addressing my Christmas cards, I wrote on the envelope for Julian's, "Please forward, if at all possible, due to the Maui Fire." Christmas came and went and then one day I got a phone call, and it was Tarcila. She said the day of the fire Loreto was working outside and heard the first announcements to evacuate. They did so and then got an all clear and returned. Not long after that, the fire reignited and came down the mountainside to Lahaina.

When they heard the second evacuation, they drove to their daughter's home in another part of the island. They took only their medications because they were told they would be home later in the day. They moved into their daughter's home and just this past November they were moved to a home that was near the high school, which is down a few miles than where we had all lived. Ironically, the area of the high school is where the first flames were seen that day.

In the months since receiving their letter, Tarcila and I have exchanged cell phone numbers and emails, so we won't lose touch again. We spoke on Mother's Day, and I explained that I was working on a special project – a photo book of my Maui experience for her and for me. The Julian family didn't have any photos after the fire, and now she has so many that show the beauty of Maui and the special people in our lives. This has been a project of love. The book includes such beautiful moments in their home with the love between us when we saw each other for the first time in over 30 years.

On August 4, 2025, I received a message from Tarcila that Loreto passed away that morning from prostate cancer. She said the saddest part was that Loreto had not been able to enjoy their new home because he was in and out of the hospital so often.

I pray that her new home will be a place of love and comfort. Since being reconnected, I have felt such a strong yearning to visit as soon as we can, before Tarcila also passes away. She would be in her 80s now. Russell and I are hoping to see Tarcila and her family again soon.



My grandparents saw me off at the airport when I left for Maui in 1979.



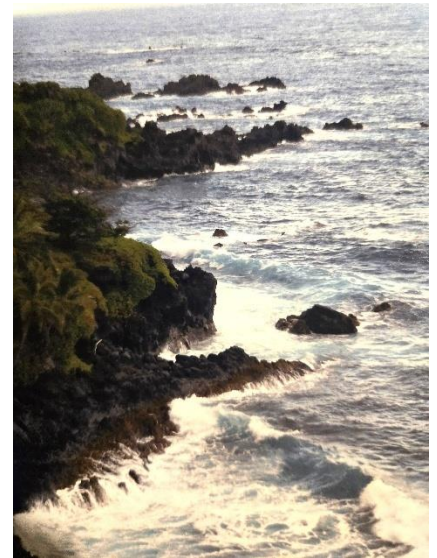
1980 Christmas in Maui (ocean can be seen in background.)



Tarcila made a Raggedy Ann costume for me to wear for Halloween at work.



I walked across a beach to get to work.



The view of the ocean from in front of the hotel.



When I returned home in 1980.



Hugging Tarcila during 2011 visit, the first time we saw each other since I left in 1980.



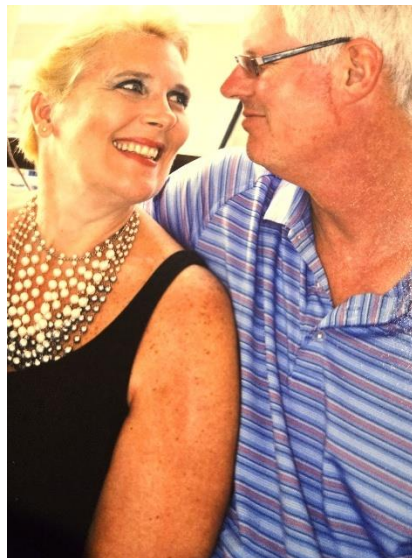
With Tarcila and Loreto during our visit in 2011.



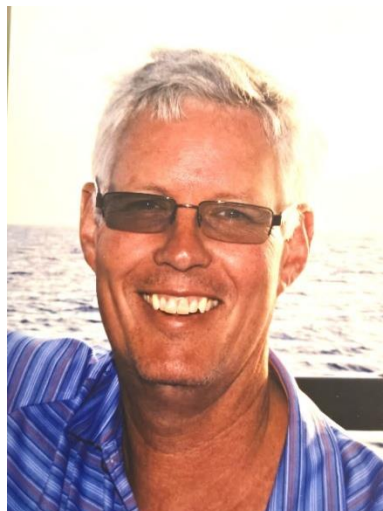
With Tarcila during 2011 visit.



Out for dinner with Loreto and Tarcila in 2011.



During 2011 visit to Maui.



Fishing boat like those used at Lahaina before the fire.



Lahaina before the disastrous fire that destroyed it.

Baptism Day



Jack Buck's big day: His baptism in June.

Vestry notes (July)

Priest's Report

- Health issues persist and more tests are being completed
- Discussed having supply clergy as needed
- Will be in the office on Monday and Tuesday for bulletins and beginning to return to writing sermons

Treasurer's Report

During the treasurer's report Dennis gave us a better understanding of the data provided in the various reports each month. No major items to discuss or report

Old Business

- Website—new website is launched and automatically connected from the old website:
<https://saintpaulsbloomsburg.org>
- Choir robes
 - A sample has arrived.
 - The committee is hoping to have a robe customized. It costs \$25 for each customization. Could also address the different sizes

New Business

- Stewardship
 - Pledge cards: discussed how important it is for personalized distribution. Somebody handing it to someone goes a lot further and is much more important than saving the cost of a stamp. Val will do the 8 a.m.

service, and Katherine will do the 10:30 service.

- We will also look at people who may be willing to offer a witness statement for October Sundays.
- Rachel offered to look through the old pledge cards and where people have volunteered to serve and put together a spreadsheet with the information for all of us to refer to as a basis to get new volunteers.
- Budget: Discussion based on plan to get the budget submitted early. Committee chairs should get the information to Dennis on what you want to change in your department's budget.
- Linda Candlish discussed **AIRE** - Association for Inclusion, Respect and Diversity and **CARA** - Cultural and Religions Affiliation (a working group of AIRE in Bloomsburg).
- Reminded all to be sure all doors are locked and everything turned off by the ushers first. We discussed having a vestry member also confirming that we are secure each Sunday and after special events.
- Name tags: Discussed how much the name tags would be helpful. Ian will do the research on possible name tags for us. Temporary type could be used for visitors and a plastic cover for members of the church and the vestry will have permanent styles for the vestry members on the of nametags to be easily identified by visitors.

Committee Reports

- Outreach
 - **CCCFM:** The next Columbia County Christian Fair Ministry meeting will be held on Saturday, August 2. After the meeting we will begin collecting gently used and new clothing and/or monetary donations. Volunteer schedules will be posted in mid-August.
 - **Foster care support mission:** Outreach has contacted Dwell, a program that provides for the needs of local foster children. The Columbia County “office” is currently operating through Wesley United Methodists Church. More information will be available after we hear from the program coordinator.
 - **Operation Christmas Child:** St. Paul’s will be participating in Operation Christmas Child again this year. Boxes and information will be available in September.

Finding things on our website:

<https://saintpaulsbloomsburg.org>

If you haven’t explored the new St. Paul’s website, we really encourage you to do so.

- **Home screen** You can find our worship services schedule in the RED BAR. Included are service times and printable worship materials (service bulletins and readings). You will also find our Zoom recordings of worship services there.

- **Happenings** and the **Newsletter** are also in the RED BAR on the Home Screen
- The **Events** button is under construction and will have our usual activities (Weekly Backyard/Rectory gathering, Paint and Wine and English dancing) on it, and whatever out of the ordinary is happening.
- Adult **Christian Education** and Children's Programming are under construction
- You can find out about our **history and leadership** under the ABOUT US tab.
- Our **outreach** activities with the community are also under construction

And if you are willing to **help** with the website, I would be ever so grateful.

– Victoria Wilcox

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Energy Audit

We have done some work and encountered some problems in the process of reducing our carbon footprint. We had a Comprehensive Energy Audit done, looking at every aspect of energy use in the church and rectory buildings. EMAT analyzed and described the energy-using systems of the buildings, resulting from the on-site observations, measurements, and engineering calculations. The building systems documented include the following: Envelope, Lighting, Appliances, Domestic Hot Water and HVAC.

The Strategic Planning Committee and Property Committee met to discuss their recommendations, which included replacing the room air conditioners with more energy efficient models, replacing the boilers in both buildings with more energy efficient models, changing all lightbulbs to LEDs, upgrading toilets with low flow models, and upgrading the gas heaters in the offices and lower parish hall.

Looking at the costs of the upgrades vs. the amount of energy savings led us to focus on smaller things that can make a more immediate difference, including changing more lights over to LED and increasing efforts at sealing the heat leaking areas of the buildings. We decided to replace the air conditioner in the Rectory that is used most heavily, but that the infrequent use of the other air conditioners would not make a significant difference in energy usage. We will be asking PP&L to help us isolate the most major heat loss areas so we can weatherproof them in cold months.

We discussed the pros and cons of replacing the boilers with heat pumps: The

“pros” of getting off fossil fuel and potential for air conditioning were heavily outweighed by the cost of installation, upgrading the electrical system, the inefficiency of mini-splits in large spaces during winter months, and discouragement from local heating contractors. We cannot put solar panels on our roofs, and a solar array in the backyard will likely not generate enough electricity to defray the long-term cost.

Let me know if you have any questions or suggestions for other ways to reduce our carbon footprint. – *Victoria Wilcox*



Sidewalks repaired

The sidewalks from the Iron Street door to the street and from the Sacristy to the ramp had subsided. They have been repoured and made much better!