

# The Epistle

Fall 2014



ST. PAUL'S  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

## The Three "H"es

by the Rev. Christopher H. Martin

Eight years ago the community embraced a tagline that said to Marin that St. Paul's is 'A Sacred Space for Your Busy Life.' Four years ago, after a long and careful process, we embraced a new mission statement of 'Following Jesus together in Prayer, Worship and Service.' Now, I invite you to engage with another brief expression of who we are and who we are becoming. These are the three "H"es:

**Household.** How is our church family doing? How can we strengthen it?

**House of Hospitality.** In an average week up to 500 people, and sometimes more, come onto our campus for any one of the wide range of activities we host. How are they treated? Do they feel welcome?

**Hub for Christians.** We have always been good citizens of the Episcopal Marin Deanery. Recently we've become

closer to Grace Marin and, through The Restoration Project, have extended our reach even further. How can we continue to build life-giving connections?

In this Epistle, you'll read brief articles from a range of people who are part of our extended community. We start with one of our own leaders, Maggie Baxter. Then, this Epistle highlights voices in each of our three areas of relationship—Household, House of Hospitality and Hub for Christians.

I invite you to reflect with me and with our Vestry leadership as we do the work of celebrating our current strengths and then moving into an unknown future. As we do so, and as we explore the language that best suits us, we can be confident that we are already one of Marin's deeply rooted centers for prayer, service and hospitality. ●

## Our Safe Haven

by Maggie Baxter

It's been more than 15 years since I first came to St. Paul's. I remember walking into the beautiful church and feeling such a sense of peace. It was as if being in this space not only brought me closer to God, but brought God closer to me. I know that may not make sense, but after you read a little further, it might. Now, as I look back, I realize that this will always be one of the most important places in my life....a special community, a sanctuary for worship, and a place for me to feel that sense of tranquility.

That's why I wanted to get involved in SPRIF....St. Paul's Restoration & Improvement Fund. Maintaining our beautiful space for now and for our children's future is important to so many of us. For me, it falls back to something I've said to my kids for years. Nick is now 18 and Emilie 15. They don't even know a life in which St. Paul's doesn't exist. I am grateful for that, but they haven't

always been so sure why this matters. Then one day, after observing how many families in Marin choose not to go to church, they asked me, "Why do you think it's so important we go to church, Mom?" My answer, "Because I want you to believe in a power greater than yourself." When



Maggie, Nick, and Emilie in the Redwood Garden

all roads seem to be leading down difficult paths in life, it's so reassuring to have your faith to lean on. And in the end, we learn to become better, kinder people. At St. Paul's, that faith extends beyond scripture and prayer, but into a whole family of love and support. My kids have experienced this first hand for years; meals when they are sick, coming to their basketball games, birthday cards from St. Anne's, and

just simply being asked from someone who truly cares, "How are you?" (article continues on p. 2)

## A St. Anne's Welcome

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by Ann Jolly

When I moved to San Rafael in August, 2008, I didn't know anybody other than my daughter and her family and my former college roommate, who lived in Mountain View. My daughter and her family were members at St. Paul's because of her husband's background, so I attended services there occasionally. I am a member of a mainline Christian church called "The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in which my deceased husband was a minister. That denomination has no churches in Marin County, so not wanting to cross bridges to go to church, I spent months visiting various protestant churches in this county.

In March 2009, I spoke to Christopher about my situation, telling him I was not an Episcopalian but might attend sometimes and wanted to do some service work. He said that would be fine and invited me to the Rector's class on Wednesday mornings in which they have mostly been studying the Old Testament for a few years. Later that year he referred me to the Ritter House ministry and I began handing out food there two afternoons a month.

One of the St. Paul's women working there invited me to come to St. Anne's, which I had never heard of, and explained a little about what it was. I said, "ok, thank you," and didn't go. However, in January, 2010, when it was rainy and gloomy, I was asked again to come to St. Anne's and this time I went. Stranger that I was, I felt very welcomed there. There were several ladies about my age, plus or minus a few years, knitting sweaters for a World Vision project to clothe needy children in cold countries. I had knit one sweater in my life when I was a college junior. However, encouraged by the women, I began a sweater, that I had to be helped on about every week.

It was very calming and interesting to just sit around knitting and talking that Winter, and while some people knit four sweaters, I did finish my one by the next fall.

While a core of women were usually there, different women came and knitted or came just to eat lunch at various times. Through this beginning, I finally met a number of church members and gradually over the years since, have been happily drawn into a variety of other church-related activities. I helped address envelopes at St. Anne's for a church mailing on a couple occasions; helped send birthday and get well cards to congregation members; started to go to the Friday night once-a-month book club; often attended the Friday movie night with dinner at Aroma Café and film at the Rafael theatre.

Through helping with the fall book sale, the Harvest and Bazaar, and the Christmas luncheon sponsored by St. Anne's, I have met other church men and women who came in just to work on those projects. I am basically an introverted, shy person, not a joiner, not particularly interested in or good at "crafts" or preparing food for potlucks, etc., but St. Anne's has made it easy to do pieces of some these things, helping others and the church while doing them. Our projects have, for example, raised money for the chair lift to the second floor, and for supplies for San Rafael public school teachers. And, of course, best of all has been the friendship and conversation, and feeling of belonging to a church "family." Perhaps, the core of "hospitality" that is displayed at St. Anne's, is the quality of acceptance of everyone there and genuine caring concern for church members. ●

## Our Safe Haven (cont. from p. 1)

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But one of our family's most profound moments came from my husband, Jonathan. He never considered himself a man of faith, so his enjoyment of St. Paul's started with the people, whom he loves. He has met so many wonderful people volunteering at the Community School or just attending church with me. But then something happened that made it clear his experience at St. Paul's led to something much deeper. When his mom passed away more than 18 months ago, his heart was devastated. Within an hour of learning the news, he found himself in our beautiful church, by himself, praying. It was where his Mom would want him to be. But it was also clear that he had found his own sense of faith, a power greater than himself. And it brought him peace.

Experiences like this I truly believe bring God closer to me. I see His love in so much around me that maybe I didn't see before. I see it in the children, in the Memorial Garden, in the respite of the Redwood garden, and in the faces of all of those at St. Paul's who continue to help the homeless, needy, and isolated every day.

SPRIF III is important to me because I want my family, and other families for generations to come, to have a chance to enjoy this safe haven for worship, prayer, and service. We are the proud caretakers of one of Marin's oldest churches, a sacred treasure. Its history is vast and its importance in the community continues to evolve. I am honored to take on this work of keeping it strong, healthy, and restored. It's a beautiful gift to share with our community, just as it was shared with me 15 years ago. ●

## Our Youth

by Vladimir Sovyak

My name is Vladimir Sovyak, and I am a youth ministry volunteer. My first experience in youth ministry was in the summer of 2011 when Hannah Dreitcer was leading a group called COOKIES, that is, "The Cool Operation Of Kindness, Integrity, Excellence, and Service." It was obvious right away that Hannah had a very natural sense for connecting with kids when I saw her handing out fist bumps in the Sunday morning communion to the older boys in the group. Hannah unfortunately had to leave St. Paul's to start her ordination process, and to be honest I did not think that I would be the person to fill try and fill her place. I had worked with children for two years

through work, but the thought of youth ministry was not something I had considered before. After some thought, I came to the conclusion that the kids may have a void where they may have had fulfillment before, and I let Hannah know that I would be happy to help.

On a typical Sunday morning, the members of the COOKIES and I will share how our weeks have been, and go over the lectionary readings until we join the rest of the congregation in the sanctuary. Regardless of each person's behavior and level of verbal participation every child who comes to COOKIES contributed something meaningful.

(article continues on p. 7)

## St. Paul's and My Child

by Keira Vicente

St. Paul's San Rafael is my Sacred Space. I always knew when I had my own children I would start going back to an Episcopal church, because growing up and going to church was good for me. I started coming to St. Paul's when I was pregnant with Marcus. The joy of expecting a child and coming back to a church to worship weekly was wonderful. I felt supported by a very familiar community right away. I've continued to come every Sunday with Marcus from one month old to now two and a half. He is

growing up here and it is amazing to see how comfortable and happy he is at both the 8:00 and 10:00 services. We have recently added taking the bus to our Sunday morning routine. It's great! 🌟



Keira & Marcus

## St. Paul's and Parents

by Tenesa Vuillement

I'm in the unique position of being a parishioner at St. Paul's who has taken on an additional roll of kids' program coordinator. My favorite image of our communal life together is that of my husband and I walking up to take communion with our young children. It fills my heart with joy to receive bread and wine in the midst of this truly multigenerational community. We are all fed with spiritual food, all equal, no one more important than the other.

Within our community life I am so comforted to be among

other parents who seek to raise their children with church woven into the fabric of their familial lives. Many of us are pulled in so many conflicting directions with work, school, extracurricular, extended family, etc., but there is a joy and peace when we gather together.

As my children grow up, I am so glad they will be invited into the worship experience through Sunday school, our family worship, and eventually our youth group. I know I have other trusted adults that will help guide them along their own spiritual journey. 🌟

### Some other elements of our Household

- Home Visits
- Worship Teams: Ushers, Acolytes, Readers, Altar Guild
- Sunday Hospitality
- Discipleship Groups
- Outreach—Goes beyond our walls like the Teen Success Breakfast, our ministry to San Quentin's Death Row, to Ritter Center and to the San Rafael Health Care Center
- So much more!

## HOUSE OF HOSPITALITY

*Here are a few voices to give you a feel for some of the ways we engage with the wider Marin community.*

### Young Moms Marin: My Hospitality Experience with St. Paul's

by Angelina Rodriguez

My name is Angelina and I am currently a member of a Group Called Young Moms Marin that is hosted at St. Pauls' Church every Friday from 3-5PM. First and foremost I would like to express that the people that are involved in the St Pauls' church have always been inviting in any event that they have had, and that includes church on Sunday mornings. I have experienced hospitality at St. Pauls' in a few different ways, a few of which I am now going to share. St Paul's church has opened their doors to the Young Moms Marin group for some time now and I as well as the group members have been very thankful for all of their support. Not only has St. Pauls' given us a place to host our weekly meetings but they have also been very much involved, some members from the church volunteer every week to play with the children and provide them with fun and engaging activities as well as healthy snacks. They absolutely love the children like their own family, which makes me very happy and inspired that a total stranger can give some of their time and love a child that isn't related to them through blood. Other members from the church have involved themselves in other ways such as sitting in on group meetings and giving advice that is much needed and wanted from the members in the group.

Not only are members from the St. Pauls' church friendly and generous with their time but they also don't hesitate when it comes to inviting the group to events, one of



The Hands of Young Moms Marin

which is now I think of as a tradition, the book sale. I am absolutely blessed that St. Pauls' has invited myself as well as the group to the book sale. I love to read to my son, and my son loves for me to read to him so it is great at I can have access to books at a low cost or even free because they can be expensive. Also, at the book sale there are many different kind of books so not only can I get books to read to my son but for myself as well and although I don't read as much as I would like, I like that I can get books from the St. Pauls' book sale and have a chance to read a book and learn something new when I get the chance to finally read. (article continues on p. 7)

### Marin Day School

by Genevieve McGee

St. Paul's warmly welcomed our "Marin Day School Family" into the fold in 1989. I have been very blessed to be a part of this extended "family" since our partnership began.

We have shared this warm and welcoming space, over these many years, and thoroughly enjoy and treasure the amazing sense of community we have built together.

Many, many, many children and families have been a part of our history here, enjoying a very enriched educational experience in this beautiful setting. I hold many fond memories of joyful sing-a-longs and rainy day recesses in Duncan Hall with excited and exuberant children dancing and singing. Many a parade has been launched from this plaza, to town, pausing on the steps downtown to share loud and energetic songs with our larger community.

Our courtyard has experienced 26 preschool graduations, (including my own son's and many of my faculty's children), which has filled the plaza with family and friends joyfully singing, clapping, crying, laughing and celebrating the passing of a great era in their children's young lives.

Too numerous to cite, but none the less noteworthy, are the experiences and challenges we have experienced in our tenure here. Through patience, acceptance, tenacity, humor, flexibility and communication with our St. Paul's "extended family" we have overcome. We are pleased and excited to continue to provide exceptional early childhood care and education to our community as we continue our journey and shared mission here at St. Paul's. We extend a heartfelt **thank you** for your on-going love, hospitality and support. ●

## St. Anne's Guild

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by Ronnie Dodds

It was during the early 1950s that M'Lou Goetz, the wife of Rector Henry Goetz, decided that St. Paul's should have a service guild. Its name was chosen to honor the mother of the Virgin Mary, and the guild came into being. Since that time many thousands of dollars have been raised to support the church and various local charities and causes. For instance last year the guild contributed money to Davidson Middle School's marching band to enable it to buy much needed uniforms.

Besides charitable giving, the Guild focuses on hospitality.

Every Thursday the group gathers for lunch in the Parish Hall. Everyone is invited to bring a brown bag lunch, join in a lively discussion and enjoy the tea and cookies that are provided.

In the fall, the Guild revs up in preparation for the Holiday Bazaar, its principal fund raiser. After weeks of collecting items for the rummage sale, they also provide home made goodies for the Harvest Cupboard. Sue Adamson and her crew have a following of pilgrims who come to buy pies that are sold still warm from the oven. That event is always followed by a  
(article continues on p. 7)

### Other People We Regularly Host

- Over 100 People in three Alcoholics Anonymous meetings and one AI-Anon meeting
- Violin, Piano and Cello Lessons
- Tourists like the Glass Artists of Dominican University who come to see our stained glass
- People in Need
- The San Francisco Boys Chorus (we are their Marin Campus)
- The Mountain Source Buddhist Sangha

## Youth and Creativity

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by Alfred Petrie

Over the years St. Paul's has sought ways to include youth as creative artists in its active community. Young musicians have performed, folded into our Sunday services. Practice rooms have been set up in the school house for the benefit of their music making. Visiting youth choirs have been invited to perform at St. Paul's as well.

Moving forward we see ourselves casting the net wider, envisioning St. Paul's as a hub of hospitality that includes the extended community. Current conversations include providing young artists designated art studio space

in the school house, envisioning a newly renovated St. Paul's courtyard as an open air venue displaying youths' art and a revitalized Duncan Hall, sharing its generous space as a community hospitality house, providing young musicians with an additional performance room.

I feel confident that as we continue to acknowledge our youth in their creativity and entrust them with actual standing in this sacred community a natural reciprocity begins to occur, for they return to us lost articles of imagination. ●

## The Friday Afternoon Playroom

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by Clarissa Montanaro

On Friday afternoons, I volunteer at St. Paul's in the Playroom, a program parishioner Janet Ward started for the children of Young Moms Marin. If you love children as I do, it's heaven.

But it's a heaven that includes heartbreak. These are the children of poverty: some are homeless, poorly nourished. Some have inadequate medical care. Some are emotionally impoverished. They may come to us anxious, disorganized, fearful, and sometimes aggressive.

Our approach with these children has been to offer them deep hospitality, that particular brand of gracious welcome that seems endemic to St. Paul's. I see this welcoming

spirit everywhere at this church. It's genteel and unforced, spiritual, a natural part of a soothing landscape.

In the Playroom, we volunteers have been amazed to see how beautifully this welcome and acceptance has worked. The children now come into the Playroom smiling and eager to be with us. They play dress up, build train tracks, make art projects. They sit in our laps for story time. For two hours on Fridays, they sink gratefully into that St. Paul's welcome.

I leave St. Paul's on Fridays tired, but always renewed. I've discovered that when I join in and offer that St. Paul's-style welcome, that hospitality, it comes back to me in spades. ●

# HUB FOR CHRISTIANS

*Here's the voice of a member of Grace Marin giving a feel of the ways we are serving as a Hub for Christians.*

## Sister Churches: Grace and St. Paul's

by David Lessin

I am a member of Grace Church of Marin—a church without a physical building. We worship on Sundays in the Student Center at the College of Marin. Throughout the rest of the week, we can be found gathering in homes, cafes, restaurants and parks.

About a year ago, Christopher Martin invited my friend Mike and I to relocate the Grace Men's Weekday Prayer Group from a barbershop in Terra Linda to the church at St. Paul's. The members of St. Paul's and Grace Church have been gathering to pray together ever since. Both congregations are growing stronger and deeper because you have graciously opened your doors and your hearts to us.

I believe that Christ is constantly calling us to be more generous and more open-hearted--and St. Paul's has modeled this beautifully for me.

Your generosity of spirit is contagious—it is taking root in my heart and enriching my relationship with Christ and my relationships with my friends, family, fellows and neighbors. St. Paul's has given me opportunities to make new friends, worship with my mother, serve on service projects, make my Cursillo, pray on weekdays and meet with my discipleship group. I feel at home here—welcome and safe.

Thank you St. Paul's for stepping up to answer the call of hospitality and for allowing your hearts to touch ours. It has been an amazing year for all of us—a testimony to the power and promise of the Christian spirit in action—I cannot wait to see what happens next!

Thank you for all that you do. ☀

### Other Ways we serve as a Hub for Christians

- Marin Deanery—the 10 other Episcopal Churches of Marin
- Grace Marin is using Room 7 as their meeting space
- The 'Second Office' for St. Aidan's
- Two Bible Studies each week
- The Restoration Project—Come and See Retreat next May
- Weekend retreats for the leadership of Cursillo and Kairos

## Thursday Morning Prayer

by Bobbe Rockoff

Early on Thursday mornings we meet in Duncan Hall. We have come, week after week, these eleven or so years to sit through our changes, joys and sorrows.

Sometimes we are more intentional, sometimes less. We center ourselves in the psalms using the St. Helena Psalter, quite similar to the BCP but with inclusive language - often followed by one of many contemporary translations. Periodically, we read sacred poetry or seasonal reflections. Always, we return to the psalms.

We read, we meditate, we talk about our lives. During our meditation we hear the faint sound of the Buddhist chants upstairs.

Lately we are aware of the singing of morning prayer in the chapel where Grace Marin convenes. Feeling the intention all around us grounds and strengthens our prayer. Thursday mornings are a rich time at St. Paul's where so many are welcomed and at home, reaching for the sacred in our diverse ways. ☀



Pajama Day at Marin Day School

## Our Youth (cont. from p. 3)

For some, it is being able to start delving in to the subtext of a Biblical passage, for others, it may be that moment of clarity when God's instruction is so plain and simple. For others, having a time to be quiet and watch can lead to an understanding of how another person may be feeling. When a member is having a hard time behaving, we can talk together about how we can help bring a sense of peace back to the person that is having a hard day. ☀

## St. Anne's Guild (cont. from p. 5)

Christmas luncheon to which all parishioners are invited. It's always fun, and a great way to get to know people and to begin the holiday season by enjoying a flaming Christmas pudding and singing of carols.

Another aspect of St. Anne's service over the years has been to host receptions after funerals. And sometimes a reception is provided for parishioners who might be moving away or a staffer leaving.

The Guild considers everyone in the parish to be a member, so everyone is invited to participate. ☀

## Young Moms Marin (cont. from p. 4)

Now, there are a lot more great experiences that St. Paul's has provided when it comes to hospitality and if I could, I would go on and on. But for now I will keep it short and sweet. Thank You St. Paul's For all that you have done for Young Moms Marin and me. ☀



Some Active Members of St. Anne's Guild

## Communications at St. Paul's

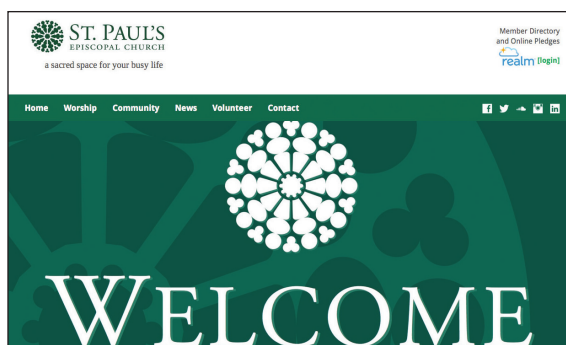
by Shelley Champine

As Communications Manager during the last year, I've been given the task of revamping many aspects of our online communications. If you haven't had a chance to check them out, please do:

- Visit our updated website at [stpaulssanrafael.org](http://stpaulssanrafael.org) (It also looks great on your phone or tablet!)
- Weekly calendar and Christopher's newsletter under the News tab
- Audio sermons and printable PDFs of Sunday bulletins
- Bio info & photos of our church leaders
- Descriptions and contact info for our many volunteer opportunities
- Photos from our events (email us any photos you have)
- *Coming soon:* SPRIF III fundraising

Our new Realm private online database is there for you to use at [onrealm.org/StPaulsSanRafael](http://onrealm.org/StPaulsSanRafael)

- Update your family's contact info (Only members of our church see this and you can adjust privacy settings.)
- Contact others at St. Paul's
- Pledge online or set up a recurring pledge
- Review your contributions history & print your own year-end statements



The recently updated St. Pauls' website, [stpaulssanrafael.org](http://stpaulssanrafael.org)

We post frequent updates on Facebook & Twitter – Please follow us!

[facebook.com/stpaulssanrafael](https://www.facebook.com/stpaulssanrafael)

[twitter.com/stpaulssr](https://twitter.com/stpaulssr)

We also have a new general email that both Christopher and I check: [stpauls94901@gmail.com](mailto:stpauls94901@gmail.com). Of course you can always email me directly at [schampine@stpaulssanrafael.org](mailto:schampine@stpaulssanrafael.org) if you have any questions. ☀

Members of the St. Paul's Vestry, Our Board of Directors



- Hear a few voices from our St. Paul's family
- Learn how we engage with the wider Marin community
- Discover how we serve as a hub for Christians

Inside:

ST. PAUL'S  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH



# The Epistle



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