

St. Paul's Episcopal Church



St. Paul's Church Statement of Mission and Ministry

St. Paul's Church, Wickford, is a loving community of Christians seeking to be faithful to God and renewed through the Gospel. We of St. Paul's aim to love God through:

- The sharing of the sacraments, worship and prayer,
- Ministering to people and spreading God's word,
- Seeking to become better stewards of God's gifts,
- Working toward the Kingdom of God within us and in the world.



Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love:

Where there is injury, pardon:

Where there is doubt, faith:

Where there is despair, hope:

Where there is darkness, light: and where there is sadness, joy.

*O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;*

to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive;

it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;

and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen

On October 4th, we recognize St. Francis of Assisi.

From the Interim Rector

Dear Friends,

Our Legacy series continues this month, offering the opportunity to deal with some of the realities of life and death that have to do with our eternal nature being caught up with mortality. Jesus asks us to consider the importance of holding onto our mortality with the perspective of eternity when he says:

If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? (Matthew 16:23ff).

It appears that “life” is one thing and our “soul” is another. Jesus seems to be saying that we need to give up our attachment to preserving our mortal life, and embrace the reality of death, in order to preserve our soul. Life and death is the nature of the body; the goal of our journey with Christ is the preservation of our soul. Our soul is eternally bound up with God, and cannot but love to do God’s will whatever the consequence. Our soul grows through deeply experiencing all that life offers. A flourishing soul knows how to carry its mortality lightly, not driven hither and thither by a fearful clinging to life over death. Another story emerging in the middle east some centuries after Jesus picks up the same theme:

The disciple of a Sufi of Baghdad was sitting in the corner of an inn one day when he heard two figures talking. From what they said he realized that one of them was the Angel of Death.

‘I have several calls to make in this city during the next three weeks,’ the Angel was saying to his companion.

Terrified, the disciple concealed himself until the two had left. Then, applying his intelligence to the problem of how to cheat a possible call from death, he decided that if he kept away from Baghdad he should not be touched. From this reasoning it was but a short step to hiring the fastest horse

available and spurring it night and day towards the distant land of Samarkand.

Meanwhile Death met the disciple’s Sufi teacher and they talked about various people. ‘And where is your disciple so-and-so?’ asked Death.

‘He should be somewhere in this city, spending his time in contemplation, perhaps in an inn,’ said the teacher.

‘Surprising,’ said the Angel; ‘because he is on my list. Yes, here it is: I have to collect him in four weeks’ time at Samarkand, of all places.’ (“When Death came to Baghdad” an eighth century tale recounted by Indries Shah in Tales of the Dervishes).

It is interesting to note that Death and the Sufi teacher were on good speaking terms. You and I can be as well, for in Christ, death is not something to be terrified of but a chance for us to have another experience of life changed but not ended. May the resources offered through the legacy program help us all to pick up our cross, embrace our mortality, and serve Christ with boldness and peace.

Love.

David+

W. David Dobbins
Interim Rector

As the hand is made for holding and the eye for seeing, you have fashioned me for joy, O God. Lead me to find that joy everywhere, in the violet’s beauty, in the lark’s melody, in the child’s face, in a mother’s love, in the purity of Jesus.

- Ancient Gaelic prayer

*From the
Assistant Rector*



While I was attending Virginia Theological Seminary one of the ways I was financially supported was assistance from St. John's, my home parish.

Each semester, when I would receive my check from St. John's, I would struggle with the question of tithing. If St. John's was giving me this money, if they were looking at this contribution as outreach, would it be right to then give them some of it back to them? Wouldn't they rather have the money be used for what they intended, rather than coming back to them? Each semester I struggled with these questions, and each semester I missed the point.

Over this past year I've come to see just how much I was missing the point when I would struggle with these questions. My mistake was that I was looking at tithing as giving money to the St. John's. I was thinking, when I tithe, I am giving to the church to do churchy things. What I failed to understand was that tithing isn't about giving money to the church; tithing is about giving money to God. Yes, the church is the intermediary, and acts as the manager of that money, but the money isn't the church's, it belongs to God.

The purpose of tithing is not to fund this ministry or that ministry. It's not to support clergy, staff members or upkeep of property. Yes, it accomplishes these things, but that is a side effect, we are not buying or supporting any service or membership. We tithe for a couple of reasons. First, to use the language of the ancient Israelites, it is a freewill offering. It is a gift to God not to earn God's favor, not to make right some wrong we have done, but simply to say thank you. By giving up a piece of our worldly treasure we are saying to God, "thank you for all that you have given me." Doing this, we also prioritize our lives, as Jesus said in the Gospel of Matthew, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

In tithing we give thanks to God for all the blessings that we have been given and we say to

God that we recognize that our material wealth is secondary to God's love, to God's presence in our lives. When I was at VTS I was withholding from tithing because I thought it would be foolish to give the church back money they had given me. As I said, I missed the point. I should have been tithing, because I wouldn't be giving St. John's back their money, I'd be giving them God's money, to do God's will. I would have been saying thank you to God in a real and tangible way for the overwhelming support I had through seminary. I would have been ordering my life in a way that showed that I recognized God as central in all parts of my life.

Since starting here at St. Paul's with all of you, I have been tithing. One of the first things I did when I arrived was set up a PayPal account and an automatic deposit for my tithe. Some months money has been tight and I was unsure about whether or not I'd be able to make ends meet, but I never lowered the amount of my pledge and things always worked out all right for me. Looking back, I'm glad I never lowered my pledge. Not only do I see it as a tangible prayer of thanksgiving for all the wonderful blessings in my life, but tithing has given me a deeper and greater appreciation for all the wonderful blessings I have been given.

I recognize and understand that the financial realities of our lives can make it difficult and sometimes impossible to tithe, to give ten percent of our income over to God, and that's OK. As we approach our stewardship campaign this fall, I urge you all to prayerfully consider a few things. First, remember that in pledging any amount to the church you are not supporting a particular ministry, a particular staff person or a particular utility bill, you are giving of yourself in thanksgiving to support the coming of God's Kingdom. Pray about all the blessings in your life, about all the gifts that God has given you, and approach pledging in the mindset of a thank offering to God for all these blessings. As you pray about these things remember Jesus' words that 'where your treasure is, there your heart will be also'.

Yours in Christ,
Patrick



Friends,
 October is upon us so
 that means it is time
 for Halloween

Happenings. We'll be meeting on October 2nd from 12-1 to begin planning for this, and on October 23rd at a time we will determine as a group on the 2nd. Halloween Happenings will be taking place on October 28th, the Friday before Halloween. I encourage all youth in the parish, middle and high school, to come out and help us put on this exciting event. Any high school youth interested in taking part in this year's Mission trip should plan on being a part of this event. As for the Mission trip, I'm still putting things together, but hopefully I'll have information available soon (possibly even before this is in your hands).

Also this month, the Middle School Youth will gather on Sunday, October 13th to watch a movie in the parish hall from 5-7. Please come on out and join us for that. As always both middle and high school youth are invited to come join us on Wednesday Evenings from 5:30-7:00 for a brief service of evening prayer, some dinner and some time to just relax and have fun.

Yours in Christ,
Patrick+

Sabbath

Gracious God, you have sanctified days of rest for all your people and have called us to bear witness before the world to the graciousness and wisdom of the Sabbath. Be with us now as we lay aside our work; hallow our rest, our recreation and our leisure, and bring us to the new week refreshed and restored in body, mind and spirit.

-Br. Mark Brown SSJE



Prayers
 FOR HEALING

HEALING MINISTRY AT ST. PAUL'S

All of us are in need of healing in one way or another. Many of us hurt emotionally, physically or spiritually. Healing Ministry is for those who believe in the power of prayer, especially intercessory prayer. "Where two or three are gathered together I am in their midst". Those who are hurting and in need of healing prayer may come to the Chapel during communion time at the 9.30 service. There will be two or three volunteers waiting to pray with you. Such a prayer may include the awareness of God's love and mercy, forgiveness, healing power, presence, guidance etc. Anointing with oil is part of the healing service depending on the need and the desire of the person. This is a physical symbol of the healing love poured on each of us by the loving Father through the Holy Spirit. "Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord." James 5: 14

We are also in need of volunteer prayer partners for all the services who are willing to spare half an hour every other Saturday/Sunday. A short training will be provided. You may contact the church office or me, James Jacob Jacob@organomed.com

Thank you.

James Jacob



from the Dir. of Music and Liturgy:

We are pleased to be instituting a new choral college Intern program at St. Paul's. I will be mentoring Bridget Nixon, a sophomore music concentrator from Brown University, in her role as director of St. Paul's Royal School of Church Music (RSCM) Youth Choir. Bridget was a member of the Senior division of the Elm City Girls' Choir in New Haven, CT for six years. Her responsibilities included teaching music theory and ear training. She has also held Choral Scholar positions at two churches in the greater New Haven area. She is a member of the Brown Chorus, a conducting student, and member of the a' capella group "The Higher Keys." Bridget is a very talented singer and music theorist, and has a great sense of humor!

The RSCM program is a great opportunity for the youth of our church to develop their talents. (See the letter from Ellen Abell elsewhere in the Communicant). St. Paul's Youth Choir will be open to 4th graders and above and will meet in the Chapel following Church School, Sundays from 11:00AM -12 noon. The youth will learn music reading skills, ensemble skills, proper breathing, and spiritual concepts.

St. Paul's Youth Choir will be helping provide music with the other RSCM Youth Choirs from the state at the RI Diocesan Convention to be held at St. Luke's Church on Nov. 11 as well as upcoming Advent Lessons and Carols and Christmas services. Please contact me at 294-4357, ext. 106 or at coffee hour to take part!

As of this writing, teams of leaders are forming who will be working musically with the younger children (kindergarden-3rd grade) during church school. If you have music abilities you could share in this capacity, please let me know.

The Parish Choir is going on our annual retreat to St. Matthew's Church, Jamestown October 1. We will have a guest vocal workshop with the very talented Ms. Kathyne Jennings who has taught voice at Brown University since 1990. She is a well-known soloist throughout the United States and has many prize winning students. This team- building day will continue with lunch and rehearsal. Please contact me if you would like to take part!

Please join us for St. Michael and all Angels Evensong Sunday October 2 at 5:00pm St. Paul's Church. The Parish Choir will sing the Evening Service in e by the English composer William Child (1606-1697) and the motet "Danksagen wir alle Gott," by the German baroque composer Heinrich Schütz. Schütz (1585-1672) studied with Giovanni Gabrieli at St. Mark's Cathedral in Venice. St. Mark's is famous architecturally for it's chancel which has two choir lofts facing each other. This influenced the composition of music and the development of double choir or "polychoral" music . Schütz is responsible for bringing the "polychoral" style from Venice back to Germany where he ultimately settled. Bach himself adapted the polychoral style in his music.

One of our other special October offerings will occur Sunday October 23. The music for that day will honor the Hungarian composer Franz Liszt (1811-1886) whose 200th birthday would be October 22. The Parish Choir will sing the amazingly moving and chromatic "Ave verum." Voluntaries will adorn the liturgy by this master keyboardist who lived throughout Europe in a fashion larger than life, but was also a Franciscan brother.

All Saint's Day will be celebrated on Sunday November 6. Because "Choir Alumni Sunday," was so much fun last year, we decided to have it again this year on All Saint's. Anyone who has sung with St. Paul's Parish Choir is welcome to sing with us that day, no vesting necessary. We will be singing the hauntingly beautiful motet "Lux aeterna" from Rutter's Requiem as well as "Lacrimosa" from Mozart's Requiem. I do ask that you pick up the music in advance from the choir librarian or myself and attend at least two rehearsals! Save the date for ADVENT LESSONS AND CAROLS: SUNDAY DECEMBER 11 at 4:00pm St. Paul's. All of the Choirs take part in this service of traditional readings and music for the Advent season.

I would like to thank our Interim rector, the staff, the vestry and people of St. Paul's for your gracious support of the music ministry at St. Paul's.

Peace,

Mark



Excitement is in the air. It was so much fun seeing new and returning families on Parish Day. We have a number of new teachers all excited about this coming year and our returning teachers have some great ideas to make this year the best one ever. If you haven't already

registered for Sunday school classes, registration forms are available on the children's snack table before and after classes on Sunday mornings. Sunday school is open to all children age three and above. Classes take place during the 9:30 am service, and toddler care will be available for children ages 1-3.

Thank you to all the people who have volunteered to help teach this year. We still have a couple of openings for co-teachers, if anyone is still interested. No experience is necessary; you will be paired with a more experienced teacher. We would like to have three teachers per grade to allow teachers flexibility in their scheduling so they could attend services or for personal matters. If you are interested and would like to speak to me, please call me at 294-9908 or speak with me on Sunday mornings. It is a fun experience, really. We have some teachers who have been doing this for over 40 years. Presently, here is the list of teachers for this year:

- PK/K Bonnie Smith, Barbara Jean Mancini, Linda Kesner
- 1st Sindy Hempstead, Haleigh Freeburg, Rachel Nutt, Eileen Tobin
- 2nd Auston, Katarina, Kelli Gillis, Bill Haberman
- 3rd Rini GeorgeKutty, Beth Khalfayan, Sarah LeBlanc
- 4th Connie Calabrese, Sheryl MacDougall-Fusco, Rose Moretti
- 5th Lori Lamb
- Middle school Beth, Pete Bergwall, Jayne McBride
- HS/ Confirmation Pam Boldgett, Jane Morgan

We have a number of teens who are helping teach this year and I am so grateful. We can always use teens as classroom helpers also, just talk to me on Sunday mornings. Community service hours are available. I would also like to thank all the parents who helped out with Parish Day. We registered over 50 children on that day alone. It is looking like another great year.

Remember, it is never too late to register, and friends are always welcome.

Important Sunday School Dates

October 2 This is the first Day for the HS/ Confirmation class to meet, in the Belden Room, following the 9:30 am service. There will be an important parent/student meeting at 11 am. Registrations forms for this class will be available that morning. Confirmation is open to all teens in 10th grade and older. The HS class is open to all HS students and covers a variety of topics of interest to this age group.

October 2 Pumpkin Sunday Come "Dressed for Mess". We will be painting pumpkins, as we learn about the importance of Habitat for Humanity.

October 9 Columbus Day Weekend No Sunday school; enjoy worshipping together for our first Community Worship of the year.

October 16, 23, 30, November 6 Regular Sunday School

Lori



Parish Day Thanks

Thank You Leslie Kershaw for making our Parish Picnic such a success this year and to all those who participated in bringing those wonderful dishes that made this day complete. Last but not least, our great chefs David and Peter who provided the tasty cheeseburgers, hamburgers and hotdogs .

Peace,
Ann Waring, Fellowship

THANK YOU

Dear St. Paul's Families
I want to give a Thank You to all the families that have been helping make the 9:30 coffee hour successful.

I enjoy coming to mass on Sunday and seeing your tables looking nice and welcoming.

I want to Thank all the parishioner for supporting coffee hour ministry.

Enjoy
Jane-Marie Winter
Coffee Coordinator for St. Paul's Church



News

St. Paul's "Weekday" Nursery School

I am sitting here tonight, Sunday September 11, 2011, on the eve of the opening of our 54 year of

continuous operation as a preschool. As I am preparing to write the entry for the October *Communicant* (we write it a month in advance) I am compelled to reflect on the school's mission to the community and why it has endured for so long. Many church schools have come and gone, but St. Paul's Nursery School has been steadfast. We have faced many challenges in the past and have triumphed. Let me share with you our history, mission and philosophy, which is stated in our parent handbook, and perhaps this may explain our longevity.

Our History:

St. Paul's Nursery School was founded in Wickford, RI in 1957 by Dorothy Belden, wife of the Rector, Canon Frederick Belden. Mrs. Belden initially started the school as a preschool & kindergarten before public kindergarten was offered in the North Kingstown. Once kindergarten was instituted into the public schools, St. Paul's Nursery School evolved into the developmentally appropriate preschool program for 3 and 4 year olds that it is today. At SPNS, we have aligned our curriculum to meet the RI Early Learning Standards. These standards help provide guidance to administrators, teachers and families on what children should know and be able to do before entering Kindergarten. St. Paul's is licensed by the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families and our teachers are fully certified. Our student-teacher ratio is within the state guidelines, 1 to 9 for three year olds and 1 to 10 for four year olds.

Our Mission:

St. Paul's Nursery School, a ministry of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, provides high quality, affordable, early learning education to preschool children from the surrounding communities. Our goal is to help young children develop a basic foundation of Christian values, social skills and love of learning that empowers them to grow into successful students and good citizens.

Our Philosophy:

We believe children are active learners. They learn best through interactions with adults, other children, and materials. Teachers provide hands-on activities that are relevant to the child's own life experiences. Our school provides an introduction to academics with an emphasis on play, in accordance with the RI Early Learning Standards. Our environment is one in which boundaries and consistency help create security, warmth, and acceptance to foster your child's social, emotional, physical, and cognitive self. Family engagement is an important part of our school. Evidence has shown that when families are involved with their child's learning, the children do better in school.

Our Future

As times have changed and running a school in this new environment has become more complicated, the school and the Vestry are in the process of establishing a more formal school board with by-laws and officers to more actively govern the operations of our school under the oversight of the Vestry. We welcome all interested individuals, from the parish or surrounding communities, who would be willing to serve on this enhanced board. If you would like to help please contact the Reverend David Dobbins, Cheryl Suglia, Rini Georgekuty, or me, Linda Taraborelli.

God Bless,
Linda



Episcopal Charities

Fellow Parishioners,

As of mid-September, our parish annual Episcopal Charities campaign has resulted in \$29,322 in pledges and gifts from 114 households, for which we are indeed very grateful in an austere economic climate. This represents 73% of our goal of \$40,000. While it is no surprise that our parish leads all others in the diocese in terms of total pledges, the same cannot be said for our participation rate. In fact, several smaller parishes have met or exceed their annual goals at this point.

We need everyone's participation if we are to meet our goal. There are 268 pledging units of record in our parish, and even more households. If you have not yet pledged, it is not too late to join with those who have already given. Your gift, no matter how large or small, can make a difference. Please consider renewing or increasing your gift to Episcopal Charities, restoring your support if it has lapsed, or become a new supporter. If you are able to help, please make checks payable to "Episcopal Charities Fund" or use a pledge card and envelope from the tract rack in the narthex, and place it in the offering or send to the church office.

We hope and pray that before the year is done, we will be able to meet our goal. With your help, and through your generous giving by God's grace and blessings, we can provide much needed resources to support so many of our Rhode Island neighbors whose needs exceed our own. Christ has no hands but ours...

Let's continue the tradition of people helping people

Faithfully,
Thomasine and Jeff Manickas
Episcopal Co-Chairperson

The Paradoxes of Life

When I give abundantly to God and charity, I find my resources increasing instead of diminishing.

A Message from the Annual Pledge Team:

As the leaves begin to turn and the days grow shorter, we can feel change in the air. At St. Paul's, we have moved into the "search" phase of our transition time – a change is in the air for our spiritual community as well. It is an exciting time, filled with promise and potential. It is also a time for patience and faith as we allow our search committee to do their work. Even in this transition time, we too can be purposeful in our work and in our commitment to Christ through St. Paul's.

As we look back on our last year we can be grateful for many things: our faith community worked through a difficult time in the life of St. Paul's; we welcomed Patrick and fully supported his role as our Assistant Rector; the Self-Study committee completed an extensive document to forward on to the Search Committee; we have grown to love and respect our interim team and work with them in a healthy, positive way. As we look to the future we can be assured that the solid foundation we have been working to shore up brick by brick will support us into the future. We have much to be thankful for.

The pledge season is beginning. As you reflect on the challenges and accomplishments of the past year, and as you continue to participate in the life of St. Paul's moving into the future, please consider this: together *we* provide the resources to do the important work of St. Paul's Church. *We* are the body of Christ and through us, his work can be done. *We* create the healthy, stable parish that continues to be a beacon of light throughout our community. Our continued support and faithfulness is vital. In this time of transition, it is important to remember that we still pray together, we still celebrate and mourn together, we still provide services to those in need, we still go about living as people of Christ. We therefore must still be generous with our gifts of time and resources. Enjoy these beautiful days of autumn and thank you for your prayerful support of St. Paul's Church.

Blessings,

Tabitha Jorgensen on behalf of the Annual Pledge Team

Foyer Groups Food and Fellowship

Since parishoners who participated in last year's Foyer Groups enjoyed the fellowship, we will offer them again this year. Foyer Groups meet in the homes of members throughout the year to share a *simple meal and friendship*. There is no agenda other than gathering for fellowship and spending time together to build Christian community in St. Paul's parish. The lack of formal structure facilitates open conversation and free access to the Holy Spirit.

Groups of seven or eight adults will be formed and ready to begin fellowship together by late October. The Foyer Coordinator will notify a 'kick-off' host or hostess, who will contact the other members to organize the initial dinner. The role of host/hostess rotates throughout the year. Groups are encouraged to share the work of preparation by using a pot-luck approach in which the host/hostess provides the main course; other couples in turn provide appetizer and wine; another couple bread and salad; another couple dessert.

Groups meet four times: once before Thanksgiving; again in January - February; March - April; and May - June. Each group decides its own schedule and method of dining.

Questions? Please contact the Foyer Coordinator, Thomasine Manickas at manickas@cox.net.

"Love one another, as I have loved you"

Foyer Group Signup

Please return to the church office by October 10, 2011.

Name(s) _____ and _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

____ I / we are not able to commit to a complete series of four Foyer dinners, but would like to be contacted to fill in as an alternate if any Foyer Group member(s) cannot attend their next scheduled dinner.

Education for Ministry

Education for Ministry, affectionately known as EFM, is a program of theological education at a distance, offered by The School of Theology at The University of the South. The Diocese of RI is a sponsoring Diocese.

Every baptized person is called to ministry. The EFM Program is preparation for this ministry to which we all are called. It is that vocation for which we pray at the end of the Eucharist: *And now, Father, send us out to do the work you have given us to do, to love and serve you as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord.*

Students of EFM sign up one year at a time for this four year program. It covers the basics of a theological education in the Old and New Testaments, Church History, and Theology. Students meet regularly, usually once a week, in seminars under the guidance of trained mentors. The program grants a certificate of completion of the four years and 18 Continuing Education Units for each year's work.

An EFM course will be offered at St. Paul's beginning the first week of October. If you are interested and need more details, please contact Ninni Jacob at ninnijacob@hotmail.com or 294 3004.



Experience with the RSCM

We wanted to relate the experience and training our children and grandchildren have had as participants in The Royal School of Church Music choir training program. This program trains youth choirs in a disciplined music experience unlike any other. I am sure most of you have heard the choirs at English royal ceremonies. Those young people and many youth choirs across the world are part of the Royal School of Church Music Program.

Our oldest son, David Charles Abell started in this program at a young age. He received great choral and conducting experience at no cost to our family through the RSCM program at our church. As a graduate of The Yale School of Music and Julliard, he has conducted orchestras and choruses all over the world, most recently the PBS Performance of the 25th anniversary concert of Les Miserables.

Our other children did not end up with musical careers, but appreciated the discipline, leadership training and fun they had in this program with the choir itself, concerts with other choirs, and concerts and travel to England and cities in the U.S.

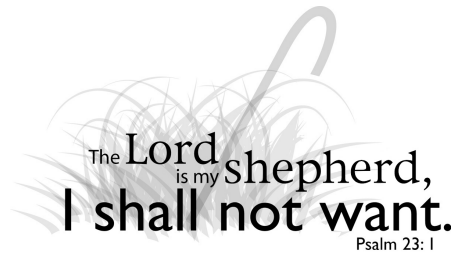
David and I are supporting the institution of this Program at St Paul's both spiritually and financially because we greatly appreciate the effect on our family and want very much to see this happen at St. Paul's. We are blessed with a wonderful music program and see the RSCM program as another part of the rich heritage of St. Paul's. We urge others to do the same.

Ellen Abell 294-3624

If you would like to know more about this excellent program, have children who may be interested, or know community members to recommend this to, you are encouraged to speak with Dr. Mark Steinbach.

Psalm 23

A Psalm of David.



The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures;

he leads me beside still waters;* he restores my soul.*

He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley,

I fear no evil; for you are with me;

your rod and your staff—they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;

you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me

all the days of my life,

and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.

Because this beautiful, comforting psalm is very familiar, you may be inclined to rush past it. Instead, try to savor the words through the practice of divine reading - *lectio divina* *- reading scripture slowing and listening for what speaks to you. Read the psalm; then close your eyes and try to recite it from memory. Reread it again. Pause after each phrase that seems to speak to you. Perhaps “my shepherd” or “still waters” or “my cup overflows” catches your attention. Let the images or feelings that emerge rest gently on your heart. What is God inviting you to think or pray about today?

* Accepting the Embrace of God: The Ancient Art of Lectio Divina - a slow, contemplative praying of the Scriptures which enables the Bible, the Word of God, to become a means of union with God. This ancient practice has been kept alive in the Christian monastic tradition and is one of the precious treasures of Benedictine monastics and oblates.

Fr. Luke Dysinger, **O.S.B.**