



Volume 16 Issue 6
September 2023

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THE GOOD NEWS

TO KNOW CHRIST BETTER AND TO MAKE HIM BETTER KNOWN

Rector's Message The Rev. Dr. Mauricio Wilson Where's God

Most of you are aware that I spent the months of July and August on vacation/sabbatical. Besides fulfilling my normal expectations of taking time to travel and having more time with Karla and our children, including our annual road trip to a place unknown to us, I also like to spend some time in personal discernment. I am aware that for some people the idea of discernment means that I am looking for possible new positions in the church, and though that could be true, that is not all that it means to me. This year in particular I have spent the last 2 months trying to help myself answer the question that's the title of this message: Where is God?

In beginning to answer the question, I will say that in my personal theology I believe that God is everywhere. I believe in an ever present, all-knowing, all-powerful deity that we identify in short with the word "God." I also believe that it is very easy for the business of life (much more so the great hardship one might face) to cloud our vision, much like the thickest Bay Area fog, to recognize that very presence we espouse to believe. I am honest enough with myself to recognize that there are times when the business of being church makes me question God's presence. As a person who spends as much time as I do in worship, boards, committees, and other church-related endeavors, it is necessary to take time away to remember by whom and to what I have been called – to discern.

Toward the end of July, my children and I traveled to Montgomery, Alabama, to take part in the annual conference of the Union of Black Episcopalians. One of the events planned for the conference was a visit to The National Memorial for Peace and Justice. I am aware that some of you have visited the memorial and have stories, experiences and feelings to share. Besides the soul-moving reality that this sacred space should evoke in any individual with soul, I came away from there with a deep sense of being known.

What impacted me the most during my time there was just reading the incredible number of names of the people who had been lynched; but sometimes there were no specific names. There were places where there was knowledge of a lynching but no record of who they were. As I sat and thought about them my soul was filled with a sense of wholeness as I reflected on the fact that in the midst of all this unreasonable and undeserved suffering and pain, every single one of these individuals, unknown and unloved by their fellow human beings, were known and loved by God.

My soul was filled with the knowledge that not even the most hateful behavior by their murderers could separate them from the love of God. My faith was replenished and renewed in that place, for I believe that God's presence isn't simply to stop actions of cruel humans, but rather to carry the victims of such injustice in love and resurrection.

I return to you with a renewed commitment to fight for the least among us, the ones whom society, and even the church, has forgotten, oppressed and left nameless or unknown. I pray that you will join me in remembering that they are the ones whom Jesus loves and calls us to care for and love as they are the very presence of God among us. That is where God is in the streets of Oakland.

Celebration of Life of Rev. Anne Jensen

St. Paul's Episcopal Church—Jul 11, 2023

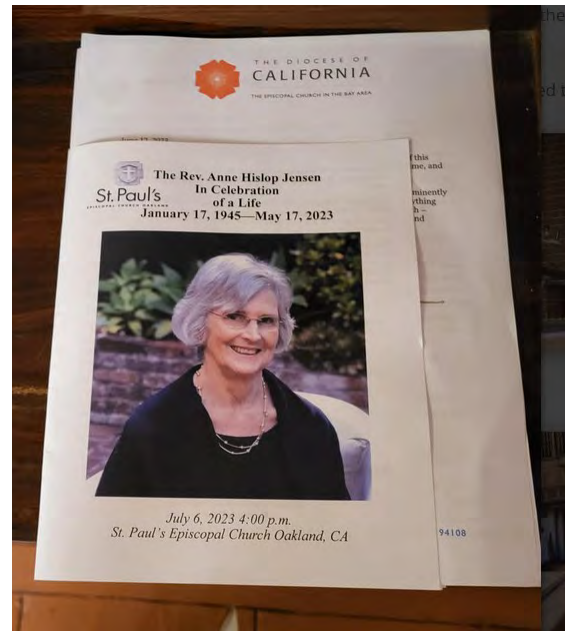
Story and photos by Cannon Debbie Low-Skinner

Family, friends, clergy colleagues, and the community of St. Paul's, Oakland gathered on July 6 for a requiem mass and celebration of life of the Rev. Anne Hislop Jensen.

The celebrant was St. Paul's Rector, the Rev. Dr. Mauricio Wilson, assisted by the Rev. Christian Harding, the Rev. Dcn. Gary England, and the Ven. Carolyn Bolton. The homilist was the Very Rev. Dr. Deborah White, who spoke of how loving, wise, and supportive Anne was in her ministry. Assisting in communion distribution were the Rev. Cn. Debbie Low-Skinner, the Very Rev. Dr. Deb White, and the Rev. Deacons Gary England, Vincent Jang, Stephen Tiffenson, and Archdeacon Carolyn Bolton.

Remembrances/Eulogies were offered by Anne's husband, Douglas; her children Elizabeth Jensen, Michael Jensen, and Christina Litter. Canon to the Ordinary Debbie Low-Skinner read a letter from Bishop Marc Andrus; the letter expressed his appreciation for Anne's valuable contributions for many years in the diocese as interim minister and spiritual director (she also served on the Episcopal Impact Fund Board).

At the end of the service, Anne's ashes were placed in a niche in St. Paul's columbarium, with Anne's family gathered there to say their goodbyes.



Our Back-to-School Supplies Drive Was a Grand Success

Thanks St. Paul's family for making this year's back to school effort a grand success!! Over 110 young people received bags of school supplies and each program received a bag of extra school supplies, setting another record for our program. Through our parish family's great generosity, we raised over \$1,200 – thanks so much. We are looking forward to doing even more next year's drive. We particularly appreciate the many hands that made filling the bags fun and easy. Below are pictures and letter of joy from some of the young recipients. Thanks much again!

Thanks, and blessings to all of you,

Canon Carolyn Bolton, Sharon Pilmer, Maura Lane, Lisa Strait, Matthew Schooler, Shelia Fischer, Sandra Robinson and Jeanette Dinwiddie-Moore



Dear St. Paul's church, August 16, 2021
 Thank you so very much for the donation of school supplies. Your generosity and kindness is so very appreciated by our school community. I am so grateful for our partnership as we help to grow the minds and spirits of our youth. All the very best,
 Mays Brooks ^{Director of} Lower School

Concerts at St. Paul's

Prometheus Symphony Orchestra
Eric Hansen, Music Director

Saturday, September 30, 2023

3:00 PM (Preconcert talk at 2:40PM)

First Concert

Robert Schumann: *Overture, Scherzo, and Finale*

Hector Berlioz: *Overture to Benvenuto Cellini*

Cécile Chaminade: *Callirhoë Suite*

Women Composer Series

Music Director Eric Hansen and The Prometheus Symphony Orchestra welcome you to our concert series for the 2023–2024 season, featuring well-established favorites as well as innovative, modern works.

Tickets are required for admission.

There is no admission fee for our concerts, but donations are gratefully accepted.

See our [website](#) for tickets, updates and parking details.



Celebrating 59 Years of Making Music

THE PROMETHEUS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Watch for more concerts coming this Fall!

Volti: Friday, November 6

Fog City Singers: Saturday, November 18

Prometheus Symphony Orchestra: Sunday, November 19

Choir of Clare College, Cambridge: Wednesday, December 14

Kitka Women's Vocal Ensemble: Friday and Saturday, December 15 & 16

San Francisco Choral Artists: Sunday, December 17

St. Paul's Choir: Sunday December 14

Details to come. Stay up to date at www.stpaulsoakland.org/concerts

Cottage Dinners Return This Fall!

The Stewardship Committee is working in concert with the Membership & Welcoming Ministry to organize a series of Cottage Dinners for Fall, which should begin in early October. What is a Cottage Dinner? Cottage Dinners are small group gatherings of 6-8 people around a dinner table and are intended to be a fun way to foster friendships and build relationships. We encourage everyone to attend a cottage dinner group! We want to gather because we value fellowship—the sharing of life together. We'd like to schedule the gatherings between Oct. 8 and Nov. 12.



Want to host a dinner? [Here are the very simple guidelines.](#)

Please reach out to Mirela Stanke at mirela.stanke2022@gmail.com or Pamela Kruse-Buckingham at pamela.kruse.buckingham@gmail.com to learn more or get on the schedule.

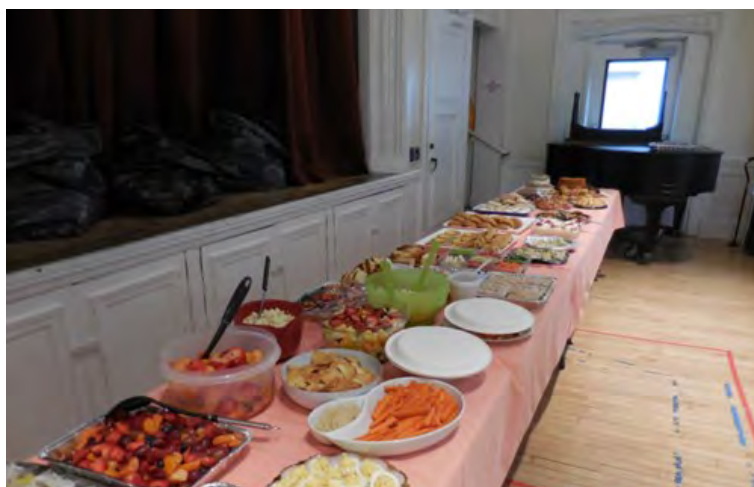
Connect with your fellow parishioners by joining a dinner group, and learn more about each other and the life of St. Paul's Episcopal Church.

Homecoming Potluck September 17

We're back. It's Homecoming, and we'll celebrate with a potluck on September 17.

Bring a dish to share, and give it to the ushers on your way into church. Then prepare for a shared meal, St. Paul's style.

See you there!



Spiritual Formation at St. Paul's Episcopal Church

Beyond the Word Book Discussion Group

Pamela Kruse-Buckingham, Leader

Children of All Ages! Let's read a book together during Advent!

Please join us to read [Voyage of the Dawn Treader](#) by C.S. Lewis. (The link provided leads to a .PDF version of the entire book, which is a short 138 pages.)

In the words of C.S. Lewis himself, *Voyage of the Dawn Treader* is about “the spiritual life”, or living the Christ-like life. You are invited to journey along with Caspian, Lucy, Edmund, Eustice and the others through the Narnian seas. Along the way, we will experience not only the outward adventures our voyagers encounter, but – more importantly – the internal trials and temptations they must overcome if they are to finish well the task they have been given: keeping their faith in Aslan, and living out their identity as Aslan's loyal subjects ([2 Timothy 4:7](#)).

We will meet twice during Advent: Ch. 1-8 Monday, Dec. 4 and Ch. 9-16 Monday Dec. 11 at 7pm, on Zoom.

Coming in Lent 2024

[The Church Cracked Open: Disruption, Decline, and New Hope for Beloved Community](#)

By The Rev. Stephanie Spellers

Sometimes it takes disruption and loss to break us open and call us home to God. The woman who cracked the alabaster jar and anointed Christ understood this. It's not surprising that a global pandemic and once-in-a-generation reckoning with white supremacy—on top of decades of systemic decline—have spurred Christians everywhere to ask who we are, why God placed us here and what difference that makes to the world.

Rev. Spellers explores the American story and the Episcopal story in order to find out how communities steeped in racism, establishment, and privilege can walk humbly with the most vulnerable and embody Christ in our own broken but beautiful way. This amazing book invites us to surrender privilege and redefine church, not just for the sake of others, but for our own salvation and liberation.

Dates and times yet to be determined.

You can reach Pam at pamela.kruse.buckingham@gmail.com



St. Paul's Social Justice Ministry Makes headlines!

Beating Swords into Plowshares in East Oakland

[June 17, 2023 Bill Joyce News](#)



The popular biblical phrase, “swords into plowshares,” is often used to describe turning weapons of destruction to something for everyday use.

Led by Paula Hawthorn and Cara Meredith of [St. Paul's Episcopal Church's](#) social justice ministry, the spirit of this idea settled like the early morning mist at last Saturday's local [Guns to Gardens](#) (G2G) buyback hosted by At Thy Word Ministries in East Oakland.

“Just as guns take lives, you get a garden tool to make and enrich life,” Mayor Sheng Thao told Oakland Voices after a press conference that kicked off the event. “This is also an educational, healing process,

people banding together to make our neighborhoods safe. We're working on creating another gun buyback, hopefully in a different location. I do understand that it has to be accessible. Not everyone has vehicles.”

From late morning to early afternoon, volunteers guided community members to surrender their guns along a line of red cones leading to the church's lot at 89th Ave.

At Thy Word Ministries in East Oakland held a gun buyback event in June. Photo by Howard Dyckoff.

Forty-two firearms were collected from the trunks of the gun owners' cars before being safely secured, and logged into a database by the Oakland Police Department. Each person who turned in a firearm received gift cards from Target and Chevron for gas worth up to \$300, Oakland A's tickets, and most poignantly, a hand-forged garden tool fashioned from the 131 retrieved at last year's gun buyback.



Despite the lower number of guns surrendered this year, spirits were high. “Every gun we can get off the street potentially saves another life, whether it's used in the streets or whether it's a gun accident in the home,” Minister Payton Silket of At Thy Word Ministries said at the event.

The 42 weapons, ranging from rifles to revolvers and semi-automatic pistols, represent 8% of all guns recovered so far this year by OPD. Each is destined now for the hammer of local blacksmith John Rogers, to be beaten and shaped into a garden tool.

For the full article and some excellent photos, see <https://oaklandvoices.us/2023/06/17/beating-swords-into-plowshares-in-east-oakland/>

Stained Glass Window Vandalized!

Richard Larson, Junior Warden

Last month, someone threw a rock through one of the stained glass windows in the Chapel. The resulting damage was limited to the window's lower glass panel, which contains the dedication wording ("Commemorating all who served in the Philippines 1808 – 1942") and the caption for the window's illustration ("American officer gives water to wounded foe"). This panel will be repaired, to as close to its previous condition as possible.



To this end, so far, we have:

- 1) Reached out to stained glass studios that specialize in such repair work, to ask for bids to renovate the window;
- 2) Started the process of filing an insurance claim; and
- 3) Taped a custom-fit cardboard panel to fill the area of the damaged stained glass panel.

While we (and some experts) are looking at our stained glass windows, we are also requesting proposals for a comprehensive assessment of all the stained glass windows in the church and chapel. After all, everything "buildings & grounds" requires maintenance at some point, and all of our windows are, shall we say, not new, with 12 apparently 100-years old, or older.

Six windows predate our present 1912 building (they were moved from previous locations of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Oakland). Ten were installed between 1912 and 1929. Fourteen were installed during the 1940's, and eight were installed between 1950 and 1980.

They are all beautiful, all help define the wondrous ambience of the church, chapel, and narthex, and all would surely benefit from some level of care. As we learn more about options to care for the windows, you'll be able to read about it, here in future articles of the Good News.

We must count ourselves lucky this summer, with our moderate weather (so far), even as we approach the historically hot time of a Bay Area year. Now as the solstice nears, we will prepare for rain, we'll be checking the church building's furnaces, and see what else catches our eye. And, always, please let me know of things you may notice, around our campus: rla.designoffice@gmail.com.

Music Notes

Ben Bachmann, Music Director

I noticed just recently that the sun is setting a little earlier, a sign among many that summer is ending. The children are back in school, and everywhere homecomings, initiations, and welcomes are happening. This means for us at St. Paul's looking forward to and planning the first part of our season, the journey that ends in Bethlehem.

The choir will resume singing Sunday services on 10 September, and our first Evensong of the year will be 1 October. Our next Compline will be 24 September. I was happy to see so many at our July Compline, including familiar faces from Sunday morning. I hope that the service was meaningful and prayer-deepening, and that you'll come back, and bring friends! Many people are drawn to Compline because there is not a great deal the congregation needs to "do" except pray, focus, and listen. And the candlelight.

Throughout our culture the first weeks of November are about remembering and celebrating our beloved dead. In many churches and cathedrals throughout the world services of remembrance are held. One way this is observed is with a Requiem Eucharist. This year, St. Paul's will celebrate a Requiem Eucharist on All Saint's Day, 1 November. The choir will offer Gabriel Faure's Requiem with orchestra in its liturgical context. The Requiem is a service for the dead and has original music set to ancient prescribed texts. Many people are familiar with Mozart's Requiem with its minor chords and fast and furious passages. Faure's Requiem is a portrait of serenity, peace, and rest. It is gentle music with harp and low strings. It features a beautiful violin solo of a soul wending its way to heaven. The Pie Jesu is also well-known and beautiful. This will be a very special service and is a wonderful way to remember those we love and see no longer, particularly those who have died in the last year.

St. Paul's Episcopal Youth

Youth Calendar of Events

| | | |
|---|---|-----------------------------------|
| September 10, 2023 | - | Sunday School Enrollment |
| September 17, 2023 | - | Sunday School Starts |
| | | Home Coming |
| September 24, 2023. | - | Fairyland - Toddlers |
| October 14, 2023. | | Skating |
| October 29, 2023. | | Youth Service |
| November 21, 2023 | | Thanksgiving bag distribution |
| November 25, 2023. | | Golfing |
| December 15, 2023. | | Game Night |
| December 25, 2023. | | Delivery – Christmas Brunch |
| January 14 th & 15 th . | | Martin Luther King Day of Service |
| February 10, 2023. | | Valentine Day Celebration |
| February 17, 2023. | | Rock Climbing |
| March | | Ice Skating |
| April | | Youth Service |
| May | | Pilgrimage |



St. Paul's Episcopal Church Youth

New Murals at Our Saviour, Oakland, Cover Graffiti

DioCal 6 June 23

Story by the Rev. Canon Debbie Low-Skinner; photo by the Rev. Merry Chan Ong

After suffering two traumatic events last month, an arson attack followed days later by a homicide on the building's steps, Episcopal Church of Our Saviour in Oakland's Chinatown continues to be hit with rounds of graffiti.



But in the words of Rev. Merry Chan Ong rector of Our Saviour:

"We won't give up. [We] continue to paint over the graffiti and [have] added murals. Beautifying our building. A message to the community. We care [for] our building. We are a faith community. We're not afraid."

Please continue to pray for protection and healing from trauma for Episcopal Church of Our Saviour, Oakland. And thank you for your donations to help with fire recovery.

To donate to the fire relief efforts, please send a check to the Diocesan House address (see below), noting that the donation is for "Fire relief for Our Saviour, Oakland" or [send a digital donation here](#).

DioHouse address:

The Episcopal Diocese of California
1055 Taylor Street; San Francisco, California 94108

Senior Warden's Message

Indira Balkissoon

Happy September!

As we settle into the fall, I want to reflect on the activities of our church over these past few months and say thank you to all who participated and contributed to our communities both inside and outside of the church. This summer St. Paul's hosted a Shakespeare and Friends concert, participated in Oakland's Gun to Gardens Tools event, celebrated Venerable Canon Carolyn Bolton's birthday with a DJ Party, distributed food via the Pantry of Hope, provided meals via our Loaves & Fishes ministry, raised funds and purchased important back to school supplies, and celebrated our families with a family picnic.

Also, thank you to those who led and supported our worship services these past months. Specifically, Reverend Izabella Sempari, Reverend Christian Harding, Reverend Gary England, Canon Carolyn Bolton, seminarian Cara Meredith, the lectors, intercessors and acolytes. Also, thank you to Ben Bachmann, our Director of Music and the summer soloists for your glorious music. Thank you to the Altar Guild for your beautiful altar flowers and always keeping things in tip top shape. Thank you to the Ushers who are always welcoming, make us feel safe and comfortable and who answer questions every Sunday. Thank you to those who have worked so diligently to keep coffee hour going each week.

There are so many others who work tirelessly behind the scenes who kept our little community humming this summer. Too many to name here. To you all thank you!

The Vestry has also been busy working on updating the 5 year ministry action plan for the church. Thus far ministry leaders have been interviewed and a template has been developed. You should have seen a short survey in your email. The goal of this survey is to find out about your experience at St. Paul's and your dreams for the future of the parish.

What's coming up? The Oakland Pride celebrations are the weekend of September 10. That's the day the choir returns. Homecoming is the following week: September 17.

Carolyn and Mauricio are working on the Sunday School schedule.

"You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven" Matthew 5:14-16



Vestry Highlights

June 27, 2023

Pamela Kruse-Buckingham, Clerk of the Vestry

Carolyn Bolton's Report:

Pantry of Hope

Giving 80-100 bags twice a month

We buy food at cost from the Alameda County Food Bank

Tom, Arnett, Fr. Maurico, Sharon Pilmer & Ann Del Simone pick up the food on Fridays; Greg Ward has helped out a lot as well. Youth have been participating, plus youth from Bishop O'Dowd

Who we serve: families, homeless men & women; 75% Asian 25% white, black, hispanic; Some bags are delivered to folks who can't get out; Need is increasing

Some food is being left behind because they don't like it

Children & Youth - Family Picnic on August 12

Carolyn must retire - Her involvement will decrease to Deacon & Food Pantry on the 2nd & 4th Sundays

Annual visit from Merrill Lynch Investment Advisor - Alina

Phenomenal June! It has been a good month. 1st half has been better than anticipated: cash can earn north of 5% right now, homebuilding starts are up, positive outlook overall going forward.

Last year (2022) very difficult: the only positive sector was energy, growth was very difficult

Our investments protect us on the downside with minimum volatilities indices, but overall performance was poor

This year (2023) – better: we are well positioned!, through May the S&P up 9.6%, big companies are doing great, we were up 8% on today's close and up \$470,000 over the time we've been invested.

Investment Policy Statement - We need to revisit it. Fr. Mauricio will send it around. It is 10 years old. Pam & Irene remember looking at it in 2016 or 17 when last on Vestry.

Cash flow \$15,000 per month

Additional draws as needed for capital improvements

Donation of Securities

It is very tax efficient

Merrill Lynch will walk our donors through it and explain all the advantages

Have our donors call Merrill Lynch directly or have their broker call them.

They will issue a transfer document for their taxes.

A white glove service for our donors!!

REPORTS

March Financials - Brian Stanke

- April & May Financials

March-April - May income going up, expenses coming down

We are at 82% of income year to date for May and exactly on budget

- Merrill Lynch Report - See above
- Finance Committee - NOT DISCUSSED
- Investment Committee - NOT DISCUSSED

Stewardship

New Committee Chairs - Pamela Buckingham & Mirela Stanke

Vestry Highlights Continued

The committee will meet over the summer to choose a theme & develop a plan

Buildings and Grounds Report - Richard Larson

No report tonight - Richard has been away

Now time to buckle down

Ministry Action Plan Report - Indira & Richard

Richard is creating a template

We are creating a survey instrument

We will reach back out to the committees to confirm their survey results

Parish-wide process of discernment

Town meeting style charette

Post COVID: Who are we now? Where do we want to go?

We started the process in March. We will have something concrete by September.

Membership and Welcoming - Pam

We need access to Breeze!

Focus on small group gatherings (Cottage Dinners at private homes) Fr. Mauricio will attend.

Rector's Report

Continuing Covid-19 Protocols

Small staff meeting this AM to map out support while Fr. M. is away

Everyone know what their roles are

Wardens are in charge

Admin through Jackie

Fr. Christian will give liturgical support

Pastoral Care - The Deacons

A preaching ROTA is set

Indira is meeting with Jackie on Thursdays

Major music events for Fall

Pride Mass @ St. Paul's on Oct. 9 @ 11am

All Saints Requiem Mass Evening Nov. 1

Evensong Celebrating Carolyn's Retirement on Wed. Oct. 4

Another seminarian is coming in Sept. Perhaps two.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- St. Paul's Fund-Raising Committee - NOT DISCUSSED
- Communications Committee - NOT DISCUSSED

Rev. Anne's service is on Thursday July 6 @ 4pm

We have a donation of \$1,000

We need to approve \$1875 to cover the cost of catering

Flowers are being donated by a Jensen Family Friend. No need for Altar Guild to arrange.

Next Meeting Tuesday, September 26 – 7:00 p.m.

Environmental Stewardship

Indira Balkissoon, Environmental Stewardship Chair

The Harvest and Fall are coming!

The first day of Fall arrives on the Autumn Equinox, Saturday, September 23, 2023. As we know the days will become shorter than nights as the sun continues to rise later and night falls earlier.

It is the summer's great last heat,
It is the fall's first chill: They meet.

-Sarah Morgan Bryan Piatt

The Hawaiians on Maui are in my prayers. Those fires are the result of our changing climate. Climate change makes weather more extreme and unpredictable. We are seeing these extremes in so many places. Climate change has been impacting Canada all summer, with the worst fire season in history. Phoenix saw 31 consecutive days of temperatures greater than 110 degrees. July was recorded to be the hottest month since record keeping began 174 years ago.

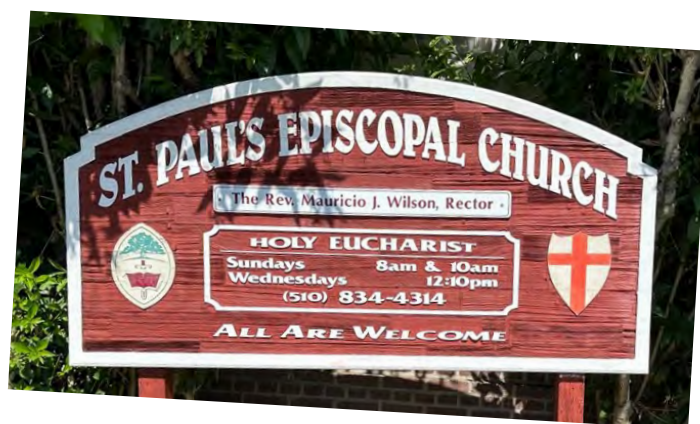


July 2023 saw multiple global temperatures that exceeded the 1.5 degree Celsius (C) climate threshold. This threshold is an indicator of how much the Earth has warmed compared to preindustrial temperature levels. In my mind we would exceed this threshold all at once. But what we saw this July is a preview of what life will be like when we cross the 1.5 degree C threshold.

(<https://www.cnn.com/2023/08/08/world/july-climate-record-paris-agreement/index.html>)

So with that in mind future stewardship articles will focus on actions we can take to help reduce our emissions that contribute to climate change. No matter how small that along with our neighbors can add up to something. So since it is harvest time, I am going to take another step toward fighting climate change by committing to eating in a more climate friendly way. That is to follow Michael Pollan's advice and "Eat food, not too much, mostly plants." To that end I am going to try to add more meat free days. According to the Suzuki Foundation skipping meat one day a week can reduce our annual carbon footprint as much as not driving your car for a whole month. (<https://davidssuzuki.org/living-green/food-climate-change/>)

Our newly
painted
sign.
Thanks
Indira!!



Summer Picnic a Great Success



Celebrating Carolyn Bolton's Birthday!





St. Paul's

EPISCOPAL CHURCH OAKLAND

114 Montecito Ave

Oakland CA 94610

Phone (510) 834-4314

Email:

admin@stpaulsoakland.org

Web:

stpaulsoakland.com

Dear Readers:

Currently, the newsletter is not being distributed by regular post. If you know of someone who does not have access to the electronic version, please contact Parish Administrator at 834-4314, Ext. 501 or admin@stpaulsoakland.org. She will make a hardcopy and send it.

From the Editors:

Starting next month, the Good News will be edited by Pamela Kruse-Buckingham and formatted by Vicki Larson. Thank you Pam and Vicki!!!

Newsletter contributors sought

We are interested in hearing from writers and photographers; please contact us if you would like to donate your talents. The deadline for each edition is the 25th of the month previous to publication. Please send submissions of no more than 400 words.

The Good News is a publication of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Oakland, California. Carolyn Knapp, editor, and Robert Knapp, composition and graphics.