



St. Paul's
EPISCOPAL CHURCH OAKLAND

July-August 2020
Volume 14, Issue 6

THE GOOD NEWS

To know Christ better and to make Him better known

NO SPORTS?!?!

LET'S EXPLORE THE BIBLE

by the Rev. Dr. Mauricio Wilson



I believe I have the qualities that allow me to call myself a sports fan, instead of a sports fanatic. I watch all sports, but I'm truly devoted to baseball, basketball and

understand the mind and actions of two quite different teenagers, I've been spending more time with the Bible. Maybe it would be better said that I have been spending time coming up with biblical questions to which I want to find an answer someday.

football, with some cultural attachment to soccer (the real foot ball). As we all know, because of the Covid-19 pandemic, all sporting events have been cancelled. There was no NCAA tournaments, no NBA playoffs, so far, no MLB baseball and we have no idea if there will be an NFL season. So, what does a sport fan do when there are no live sports to follow on television and no Oakland A's game to go watch and eat a Polish dog? Besides spending more time with my family, trying to

I am also almost certain that I'm not alone when I say that the more I read the Bible, the more questions I have about what it contains. This is one of the main reasons I am happy that my parents brought us up in the Anglican/Episcopal tradition. We believe in the centrality of Holy Scriptures; however, we hold them up to the light of Tradition and Reason. This allows us to ask questions and encourages us to seek the answers. Pride Month, for example, always calls for a deeper reading into the biblical texts espoused

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LETTER TO BISHOP MARC ON SPEC REGATHERING

The Right Rev. Marc H. Andrus
Bishop, Diocese of California
1055 Taylor Street San Francisco, CA
94108

Dear Bishop Marc:

Greetings in the name of Christ

Since the beginning of the Covid-19 crisis, St. Paul's in Oakland has been carefully following the guidelines set forth by the Diocese of California, the City of Oakland, Alameda County and other authorities. We began with the restrictions regarding the distribution of Holy Communion and continue to follow the shelter in place guidelines

that are still in place.

Throughout, we have continued offering our regularly scheduled Sunday Services at 8 and 10 a.m., though we have done so via Facebook live stream. We have a consistent team of less than 10 individuals who gather in the building to offer worship, plus a group of folks who gather via Zoom for coffee hour at 9 a.m. from their homes. The group that gathers physically in the building follows the rules for wearing face masks and we have created a distance of approximately 12 feet between us. We are alternating between Holy Eucharist and Morning Prayer

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PRESIDING BISHOP MICHAEL CURRY'S WORD TO THE CHURCH: *WHEN THE CAMERAS ARE GONE, WE WILL STILL BE HERE*

PANTRY OF HOPE

Item of the month

During this time of sheltering in place and physical distancing, we are working on trying to find creative ways to continue the process of serving the needy members of our community.

Thanks for your continued support and prayers.

“Our long-term commitment to racial justice and reconciliation is embedded in our identity as baptized followers of Jesus. We will still be doing it when the news cameras are long gone.”

In the midst of COVID-19 and the pressure cooker of a society in turmoil, a Minnesota man named George Floyd was brutally killed. His basic human dignity was stripped by someone charged to protect our common humanity.

Perhaps the deeper pain is the fact that this was not an isolated incident. It happened to Breonna Taylor on March 13 in Kentucky. It happened to Ahmaud Arbery on February 23 in Georgia. Racial terror in this form occurred when I was a teenager growing up black in Buffalo, New York. It extends back to the lynching of Emmett Till in 1955 and well before that. It's not just our present or our history. It is part of the fabric of American life.

But we need not be paralyzed by our past or our present. We are not slaves to fate but people of faith. Our long-term commitment to racial justice and reconciliation is embedded in our identity as baptized followers of Jesus. We will still be doing it when the news cameras are long gone.

That work of racial reconciliation and justice – what we know as Becoming Beloved Community – is happening across our Episcopal Church. It is happening in Minnesota and in the Dioceses of Kentucky, Georgia and Atlanta, across America and around the world. That mission matters now more than ever, and it is work that belongs to all of us.

It must go on when racist violence and police brutality are no longer front-

page news. It must go on when the work is not fashionable, and the way seems hard, and we feel utterly alone. It is the difficult labor of picking up the cross of Jesus like Simon of Cyrene, and carrying it until no one – no matter their color, no matter their class, no matter their caste – until no child of God is degraded and disrespected by anybody. That is God's dream, this is our work, and we shall not cease until God's dream is realized.

Is this hopelessly naïve? No, the vision of God's dream is no idealistic utopia. It is our only real hope. And, St. Paul says, “hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit” (Romans 5:5). Real love is the dogged commitment to live my life in the most unselfish, even sacrificial ways; to love God, love my neighbor, love the earth and truly love myself. Perhaps most difficult in times like this, it is even love for my enemy. That is why we cannot condone violence. Violence against any person – conducted by some police officers or by some protesters – is violence against a child of God created in God's image. No, as followers of Christ, we do not condone violence.

Neither do we condone our nation's collective, complicit silence in the face of injustice and violent death. The anger of so many on our streets is born out of the accumulated frustration that so few seem to care when another black, brown or native life is snuffed out.

But there is another way. In the parable of the Good Samaritan, a broken man lay on the side of the road. The religious leaders who passed were largely indifferent. Only the Samaritan saw the wounded stranger and acted. He pro-

vided medical care and housing. He made provision for this stranger's well-being. He helped and healed a fellow child of God.

Love, as Jesus teaches, is action like this as well as attitude. It seeks the good, the well-being, and the welfare of others as well as one's self. That way of real love is the only way there is.

Accompanying this statement is a card describing ways to practice the Way of Love in the midst of pandemic, uncertainty and loss. In addition, you will find online a set of resources to help Episcopalians to LEARN, PRAY & ACT in response to racist violence and

LETTER TO BISHOP MARC ON SPEC REGATHERING

from week to week. On Eucharist Sundays we fast from the physical reception of the sacrament as we continue living in solidarity with those who are unable to be with us in person.

We have continued the work of our Pantry of Hope. The initial process was slow to take off due in part to the restrictions set by our partner organization COVIA in relation to services offered to seniors in our community. St. Paul's is now unilaterally carrying forth this ministry, bringing significant relief to members of our community, while following social distancing and other guidelines from health experts.

In May, we applied for and received a P.P.P. loan through the S.B.A. stimulus program and therefore our staffing levels have not changed. Our office staff have been working from home and, if necessary, we come to the building on different days of the week. Our sexton and housekeeper, who reside on the premises, continue their regular routine to keep our spaces clean and running.

We currently are not allowing any out-

side groups that use our space to be on the premises. St. Paul's School has been closed for onsite instruction since the shelter in place order began. At that time, they moved to a distance learning platform. Though some of their staff have needed to come to the premises, they have been diligent in following the health and safety guidelines. Their leadership in currently working on plans for the upcoming school year with significant input from health experts and adherence to county and Board of Education standards.

Opening and changing hearts does not happen overnight. The Christian race is not a sprint; it is a marathon. Our prayers and our work for justice, healing and truth-telling must be unceasing. Let us recommit ourselves to following in the footsteps of Jesus, the way that leads to healing, justice and love.

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We have formed a committee to develop a detailed plan for how St. Paul's will welcome back face to face worship for groups of more than 10 individuals. Because of my planned time off in the month of July, my expectation is that such changes will begin happening towards the beginning of August. Until then, we will continue our status quo in accordance with the present guidelines from your office.

Faithfully in the service of Christ,
Mauricio+

2020 OFFICERS OF THE VESTRY

The Rev. Dr. Mauricio
Wilson – *Rector*
Allison Sass
Senior Warden
Bill Davis
Junior Warden
Erica Terry-Derryck
Clerk
Ann Gregory
Treasurer

VESTRY BY CLASS

Class of 2020

Allison Sass
Dylan Versteeg
Bill Davis

Class of 2021

Erica Terry-Derryck
Sergio Prieto
Lisa Strait

Class of 2022

Will Cowart
Ann Gregory
Sharon Pilmer

Future meetings:

June 23
September 22
October 27

DEANERY DELEGATES AND ALTERNATES 2020

Delegates

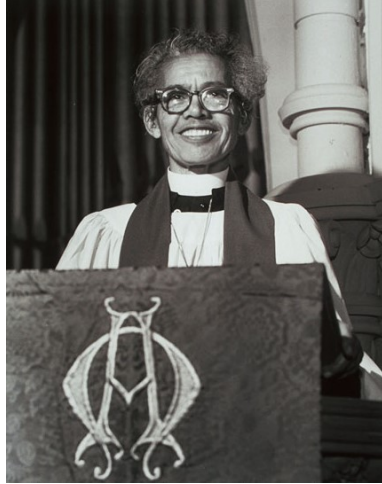
Melanie Blake
Tom McGarrell

Alternates

Sandra Anderson
Jeanette Dinwiddie-Moore

SAINT OF THE MONTH— JULY

Pauli Murray, Priest, 1985



Pauli Murray was an early and committed civil rights activist and the first African American woman ordained as a priest in the Episcopal Church.

decisive Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954.

Committed to dismantling barriers of race, Murray saw the civil rights and women's movements as intertwined and believed that black women had a vested interest in the women's movement. In recent years, scholars have brought to light Murray's complex sexual and gender identity, including her attempts to access testosterone therapy as early as the 1930s.

In later life, she discerned a call to ordained ministry and began studies at General Theological Seminary in 1973. She was ordained as a deacon in June 1976, and, on January 8, 1977, she was ordained as a priest at Washington National Cathedral. Murray served at Church of the Atonement in Washington, D.C., from 1979 to 1981 and at Holy Nativity Church in Baltimore until her death in 1985.

Murray's books include the family memoir *Proud Shoes: Story of an American Family* (1956) and the personal memoir *Song in a Weary Throat: An American Pilgrimage* (1987).

Liberating God, we thank you for the steadfast courage of your servant Pauli Murray, who fought long and well: Unshackle us from the chains of prejudice and fear, that we may show forth the reconciling love and true freedom which you revealed in your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Born in Baltimore in 1910, Murray was raised in Durham, North Carolina, and graduated from Hunter College in 1933. After seeking admission to graduate school at the University of North Carolina in 1938, she was denied entry due to her race. She went on to graduate from Howard University Law School in 1944. While a student at Howard, she participated in sit-in demonstrations that challenged racial segregation in drugstores and cafeterias in Washington, D.C. Denied admission to Harvard University for an advanced law degree because of her gender, Murray received her Master's of Law from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1945.

In 1948 the Women's Division of Christian Service of the Methodist Church hired Murray to compile information about segregation laws in the South. Her research led to a 1951 book, *States' Laws on Race and Color*, which became a foundational document for Thurgood Marshall in his work on the

Newsletter contributors sought

We are interested in hearing from writers and photographers; please email 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 your submissions of no more than 500 words to: halice@pacbell.net.

DONATIONS TO ST. PAUL'S

Using your smartphone, scan this QR Code to make a digital offering to St. Paul's Church. Your donation will be processed through SPEC's PayPal account.



SAINT OF THE MONTH— AUGUST

Jonathan Myrick Daniels



Jonathan Myrick Daniels was born in Keene, New Hampshire, in 1939. Like many young adults, from high school in Keene to graduate school at Harvard, Jonathan wrestled with vocation. Attracted to medicine, ordained ministry, law, and writing, he found himself close to a loss of faith until his discernment was clarified by a profound conversion on Easter Day 1962 at the Church of the Advent in Boston. Jonathan then entered the Episcopal Theological School in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

In March of 1965, the televised appeal of Martin Luther King, Jr. to come to Selma to secure for all citizens the right to vote touched Jonathan's passions for the well-being of others, the Christian witness of the church, and political justice. His conviction was deepened at Evening Prayer during the singing of the Magnificat: "He hath put down the mighty from their seat and hath exalted the humble and meek. He hath filled the hungry with good things." He wrote: "I knew that I must go to Selma. The Virgin's song was to grow more and more dear to me in the weeks ahead."

In Selma he found himself in the midst of a time and place where the nation's racism and the Episcopal Church's share in that inheritance were exposed. Greatly moved by what he saw and experienced, he returned to seminary, asked leave to work in Selma while continuing his studies, and returned there under the sponsorship of the Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity.

After a brief return to Cambridge in May to complete his exams, he returned to Alabama to resume his efforts assisting those engaged in the integration struggle. Jailed on August 14 for joining a picket line, Jonathan and his companions resolved to remain together until bail could be posted for all of them, as it was six days later. Released and aware that they were in danger, four of them walked to a small store. As sixteen-year-old Ruby Sales reached the top step of the entrance, a man with a shotgun appeared, cursing her. Jonathan pulled her to one side to shield her from the unexpected threats and was killed instantly by the 12-gauge blast.

Jonathan's letters and papers bear eloquent witness to the profound effect that Selma had upon him. He writes, "The doctrine of the creeds, the enacted faith of the sacraments, were the essential preconditions of the experience itself. The faith with which I went to Selma has not changed: it has grown ... I began to know in my bones and sinews that I had been truly baptized into the Lord's death and resurrection ... with them, the black men and white men, with all life, in him whose Name is above all the names that the races and nations shout ... We are indelibly and unspeakably one."

O God of justice and compassion, who puts down the proud and mighty from their place, and lifts up the poor and the afflicted: We give you thanks for your faithful witness Jonathan Myrick Daniels, who, in the midst of injustice and violence, risked and gave his life for another; and we pray that we, following his example, may make no peace with oppression; through Jesus Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

SAVE Stand-Ins against gun violence

SAVE (Soldiers Against Violence Everywhere) Oakland is taking a non-violent stand against the rampant murders in our community. Though the "Stand-Ins" are on hold, the advocacy work does not stop until no one is killed on our streets. Please contact Paula Hawthorn, 510-601-8388, if you would like to participate.

Contact Save@Truevine-Ministries.com to be put on the email list for future Stand-Ins.

VESTRY REPORT

WORSHIP ROTA ONLINE

The current rota for the Sunday worship services is posted on the St. Paul's Web site at :
<http://www.stpaulsoakland.org/readings--rota.html>

The rota includes the names of readers, sub-deacons, intercessors.

New volunteers are always welcome. Please contact Fr. Mauricio or the Ven. Carolyn Bolton to volunteer or if you have any questions.

In order to keep the Parish informed of the work that the Vestry does as the elected volunteer leadership of the church, we will be reporting monthly on the Vestry meetings and sharing a written summary each month in the bulletin and newsletter.

As a reminder, any member of the Parish may attend Vestry meetings which are every fourth Tuesday of the month, unless otherwise noted, and the full minutes of the meeting are available to parish members upon request by contacting the parish administrator or a member of the Vestry.

What follows is a summary of the key decisions made by the Vestry at the May 26, 2020 Vestry meeting.

⇒An update was given on the Lay Discernment Process for Stephen Tiffenson

⇒There was discussion of moving the 150th anniversary celebration to begin with the 150th anniversary and carry on through the following year, rather than culminating with the 150th anniversary given the COVID-19 pandemic

⇒Church giving levels have been relatively stable which is positive given that there has not been in-person worship since March 2020.

⇒St. Paul's Episcopal Church applied for and received a \$56,397.97 PPP loan that will enable the church to maintain its current operations through the summer without accessing funds from its investments.

⇒The loan will not have to be repaid if the federal requirements are met around how the dollars can be applied (salaries and operations primarily).

⇒The food pantry continues to serve residents while volunteers and staff adhere to social distancing guidelines. Donation needs have been outlined and

will be shared with the Parish.

⇒A committee has been formed to discuss the plan for reopening the sanctuary to parishioners for in-person worship with a recognition that some form of online access to Sunday and other services continues.

What follows is a summary of the key decisions made by the Vestry at the June 23, 2020 Vestry meeting.

⇒An update was given on the initial meeting of the Regathering Committee which met on Tuesday, June 16, 2020 to discuss the development of a plan to possibly reopen the church to parishioners with framework and guidelines to be based on Diocesan, county and state guidelines.

⇒The church is going to get an estimate to see what it would cost to install a more permanent system to continue broadcasting services, even once in-person worship is able to resume.

⇒Outgoing St. Paul's Episcopal School Head of School Josh Stern gave an update on the school's current plans to reopen their campuses to students in August for in-person instruction.

⇒The plans include use of the Parish Hall as instruction space which would make it unavailable for Church use and some plant improvements that need to be made in order to increase the number of handwashing facilities.

⇒Plans to extend the Montecito Avenue entrance are still on hold as the City of Oakland has not yet approved the building plan.

⇒There will be continued discussions between the church and school about opportunities to share cleaning services and use of the sanctuary space as large-groups gatherings such as chapel will not be allowed.

⇒The Sesquicentennial committee is reaching out to the Lake Merritt Hotel to allow the deposit for the celebration event to either be refunded or to be used at a future date since it's not clear when an in-person gathering of this type could be held.

⇒Despite no in-person gathering for worship, parishioners have continued to make donations enabling the church to keep summer operations going.

⇒The Vestry voted for St. Paul's Episcopal Church to become sponsoring members of the Union of Black Episcopalians.

⇒Fr. Mauricio will be on vacation starting July 5 for three weeks. Anne Jensen and Christian Harding will independently hold services when Fr. Wilson is away and the choir will be on break during this time.

ST. PAUL'S FINANCIAL UPDATE FROM THE TREASURER

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 shelter-in-place orders, we have been monitoring the church's financial position carefully. Thus far, St Paul's has remained relatively stable on both the revenue and expense side. Both are down slightly, but expense savings are greater than decreases in revenue; this means that our year-to-date net income is actually better than we'd budgeted.

On the revenue side, the primary decline has been in investment income, and this is consistent with drops in the market overall since the pandemic began. Looking at year-over-year donation data, we do not see significant changes as a result of COVID-19, though we realize that the environment continues to be challenging for many households. About 50% of church members are giving regularly using online platforms such as PayPal; this is a significant increase in online giving over 2019 and overall a good develop-

ment as many contributions are recurring.

On the expense side, we are tracking about 20% below budget. This is driven almost entirely by savings in our children-and-youth ministries, where we have an open position.

The parish did receive a Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan as part of the federal stimulus. Receiving this loan means we don't have to draw down on investment income over the summer when plate and pledge donations are historically lower. By adhering to the terms of the loans, we should be able to avoid having to repay the loan if we use 75% of the amount given to cover salaries, which is our intent.

Thank you for your continued support of the ministries of our congregation. We will continue to provide updates as we learn more.

Dear Readers:
In an effort to reduce paper waste and printing/ mailing expenses, we are asking anyone who gets the online version of The Good News and no longer needs a paper version mailed to his or her home to let us know. If you don't get the newsletter online and would like to, or if you want to take yourself off the snail-mail list, please contact Parish Administrator at 834-4314, Ext. 501 or admin@stpaulsoakland.org. Many thanks.

REGATHERING SURVEY

The Regathering Task Force is hard at work preparing the details of St. Paul's specific proposal that has to be presented to the Bishop's office for approval before we can move into any new phase. One of the steps in this process is to gather the thoughts and opinions of members of the congregation to help determine your particular needs and expectations. Please be on the lookout for the survey arriving by email or a phone call from one of our volunteers to assist in completing and submitting your responses. Your participation is essential.



St. Paul's

EPISCOPAL CHURCH OAKLAND

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dio **CAI** **17th Convention** of the Episcopal Diocese of California Friday, October 16 & Saturday, October 17, 2020

Services

Available via Facebook
live stream

SUNDAYS

8 a.m. Holy Eucharist or
Morning Prayer

10 a.m. Choral Eucharist or
Sung Matins

4 p.m. Evensong
(First Sundays, Oct.-June)

8 p.m. Compline
(4th Sundays only)

WEDNESDAYS

(TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED)

12:10 p.m. Holy Eucharist
(with Healing prayer on
the 1st Wednesday of the
month)

NO SPORTS?!?! LET'S EXPLORE THE BIBLE

(Continued from Page 1)

by LGBTQ+ detractors so that we can better understand what the writers' messages and intentions were, and how they speak to us today. I think of the book of Leviticus and its very long list of abominable acts that would have put places like Macy's and JC Penney out of business before any influence from shelter in place.

Over the last month I have been keenly focused on the Genesis story of Abraham, Sarah, Hagar, Ishmael and Isaac. It is not my first go round with the text of chapters 11 through 21 of Genesis, but as I said before, with no sports distractions, I have more time to ponder. I must be honest and say that Abraham and Sarah's treatment of and behavior towards Hagar, and later towards her son Ishmael (Abraham's oldest son) feels despicable to say the least. In a recent conversation with my mother about this section of Genesis I suggested

that this is where the current Jewish/ Arab conflict began. Though it might be considered a simplistic way of looking at that age long conflict, the reality is the mothers of the Arabic nations (Hagar) and Israel (Sarah) did not get along. Over my years of hearing this story read in church, it seems to me that preachers have consistently glossed over the fact that a young Egyptian girl was forced to have intercourse with her mistress's husband so she could bear an heir for him. When she does, she is banished from them with the child because the mistress now has a son of her own.

The Bible is full of very interesting stories. I encourage you to take some time to read some of it, ask the hard questions and work on finding answers. I believe your faith will be strengthened in the process.