The Sword of The Spirit

March 2012

Saint Paul’s Church

www.saintpaulsbrookfield.com

(203) 775-9587

The Wonderful World of Children
The Wonderful World of Children

The picture that you see on the cover of this edition represents our version of fulfilling Jesus’ call to welcome children, for in them we catch a glimpse of God’s glorious realm. Each Sunday at the start of the service, we have a large throng of Sunday School-age kids come up to the front of the church for the Children’s Sermon, and this is our way of liturgically symbolizing the importance of our children at St. Paul’s. As I invite them up to the altar steps, it is much like watching a wave gather strength and then roll right into shore. From out of various pews they emerge, gathering into one force as they make their way up the aisle with a bounce in their steps and something not always seen in kids: security. Watching their faces as they confidently march up to the front of the church, I am struck by how comfortable our children are. They seem right at home, for they know that this is their church, and it is here that they are loved, accepted and reminded that God’s love leads them to where they belong.

There was a TV show years ago called, “Kids Say The Darndest Things.” Each time our kids gather, and despite the fact that I control the microphone, one just never knows what might be said. Of course, this adds to the fun and the sense of freedom in God’s Holy Spirit present among us. When I asked, last Easter where Jesus went after his resurrection, one child blurted out, “He went to Florida.” For a while, one child kept greeting me as the Almighty, but we seem to have resolved that comical misconception. And last weekend, one of our little ones tugged on my heart when he announced: “My cat did died.”

When I spot a new child, I make sure that he/she sits right next to me on the steps, and then I take the little one by the hand and make sure that they catch the Sunday School “train” as it leaves after the sermon. Of course, this special ministry has its momentary challenges now and then. Recently one new child interrupted my message by declaring a familiar tactic in how to get out of class: “Teacher, I have to go to the bathroom.” I think to myself: “Hmm. How do I handle this?” But suddenly, one of our visitors appears and he decides that he can wait (more on this visitor toward the end of this article). One of the joys I experience when Patrick, our Family Minister, leads the Children’s Sermon, is that I not only gain a fresh vantage point as he draws out their sense of wonder coupled with their big smiles, but I get to offer the occasional high-five to this Sunday School train as it travels past my prayer desk where I am seated.

On the day this picture was taken, we had with us one of two visitors, The Rev. Audrey Scanlon, Canon for Mission Collaboration. I had invited Canon Audrey, who assists our

(Continued on page 3)
Diocesan Bishop in determining how the church can flourish in tough times, to “come and see” what we do. This is what she wrote on her Facebook page upon arriving back home: "Had a great morning with the people of St. Paul's, Brookfield. Anytime there's a drum set and more than 30 kids in church (on a holiday weekend!) you know it's gonna be good." And, yes, it was good indeed.

Now you may be wondering who the other special visitor was that distracted the little one trying to get away from the Children’s Sermon? That would be ‘Miss Lilly,’ the Shepley’s Himalayan cat who made a special surprise visit, allowing each child to pet her. I asked, “What color are her eyes?” Opinions ranged from black, to red, to white! Finally, her true blue color was agreed upon as Miss Lilly just stared at the kids nonplussed, perhaps thankful that God did not consult a committee when she was created. As I said, you just never know what is going to happen during this special time with our kids!

† Happy Birthday to You!

Parker Hofsess celebrates today! Michael Chengeri will be blowing out candles on Saturday. Arielle Zambello & Liam Connors will be another year older and wiser on Sunday. Throw a party for David Lindsay, Deanne Hobson, Harlan Jessup, Luisa Bernardo & Maria Beck on Tuesday. Have a blessed day each one of you!

† This Week at St. Paul’s

Thu., Feb. 23 - 7:30 pm - Music Night, Sanctuary
Fri., Feb. 24 - St. Matthias, Apostle
Sat., Feb. 25 - 7:30 am - Men’s Prayer Breakfast, Parish Hall
Sun., Feb. 26 - First Sunday in Lent
  8:00 am - Traditional Eucharist
  9:15 am - High School/Young Adult Bible Study, Youth Lounge
  9:15 am - Adult Christian Education, Guild Room
  10:30 am - Sunday School
  10:30 am - Contemporary Eucharist
  5:00 pm - Youth Group
  6:15 pm - Vespers
Tue., Feb. 28 - 9:15 am - Ladies Bible Study, Guild Room
  7:00 pm - Grief Group, Guild Room
Wed., Feb. 29 - 10:00 am - Holy Eucharist and Healing
  6:30 pm - Lenten Series, Parish Hall
Thu., March 1 - 10:00 am - Lenten Series, Guild Room
  7:30 pm - Mission Committee, Guild Room
  7:30 pm - Property Committee, Upper Classroom
  7:30 pm - Music Night, Sanctuary
Our annual Easter Egg Hunt will be held on Saturday, April 7th at 10 - 11:30 am for children pre-K to Grade 5. We will be accepting donations of wrapped candy and would love some help with this fun event. If you would like to help with planning a craft for the children, making a simple snack for the children to enjoy, please contact either Heather Melody or Lori O'Hara.

Healing Basics Workshop

The healing team invites all those interested to attend the Healing Basics workshop. The workshop runs for 5 weeks starting on February 29 and ending March 28th. Classes will run concurrently with the Lenten series; we will begin with the Lenten Soup Supper at 6:30pm and at 7 pm break off for our Healing Training. Attending the workshop may lead to participation on the Healing Prayer team. Healing in the name of Christ Jesus is a God given gift available to all - anytime, anywhere for anyone to His glory. Please contact Tara Shepley as soon as possible to sign up. 203-267-3231 Tbshepley@gmail.com.

Save the dates!

VBS 2012

Monday, July 16th
Friday, July 20th
9:00 am to 12:00 pm

Everything is possible with God

Andrew Peterson
March 30, 8:00 PM

Stay tuned for more details soon!
Last Sunday Mite Boxes were distributed which are for the children’s annual offering that supports The Bishops’ Fund for Children. We ask each child to contribute an offering daily during Lent to benefit those children in need. Mite boxes will be due back on April 15th. A 2012 Lenten calendar for use with the mite boxes has suggestions for contributions or other activities each day that help raise awareness -- for example, "For each pair of shoes or sneakers you own put 1 coin in your mite box" or "Pray for children who don't have enough to eat." It's a PDF you can download.
Our Bill Schrull is leading the music for this event.

† First Communion Classes
The first meeting for those children in Grade 2 (and above) to begin First Holy Communion Classes with Fr. Joe is April 22\textsuperscript{nd}. We'll meet in the Level 4 classroom at 9:45 until 10:15 on the following Sundays: April 22, April 29, May 6\textsuperscript{th} & May 12\textsuperscript{th}. First Holy Communion will take place on May 20\textsuperscript{th} during the 10:30 am service.

Annual Diocesan Mission Conference
Saturday, March 3rd, 2012, 8.30 a.m.—3 p.m.
Saint John’s Episcopal Church, Stamford

God’s Mission: Many Faces, Many Voices, Many Ways to Serve

Click Here to Register

Keynote Speakers

The Rev. Fernande Pierre-Louis, Rector
Saint Andrews Episcopal Church
New Haven, CT

The Rev. Tracy Johnson-Russell, Rector
Saint John’s Episcopal Church
Stamford, CT

Workshops

1. Getting Started in Mission
   Martha Hoffman, Don Ghostlaw

2. Connecting Local Churches to Neighbors
   Tracy Johnson-Russell, Ally Brumfield, Robert Hendrickson

3. Developing Multi-lingual Congregations
   Geoff Hahnian

4. Poverty and Hunger Eradication Through
   Empowering Rural Women
   Kim Pothierius, Rosemary Williams

5. Hispanic Cursillo Evangelism
   Jorge Rosa, Jose Diaz

6. Colonialism, Power and the Contemporary
   Anglican Communion

7. Intercultural Summer Camp Ministry
   Marc-Yves Regis, Alan McCollum

8. Disaster Relief Ministry
   Katie Mears, David Desmarais

9. Haiti: How You Can Make A Difference
   Fernande Pierre-Louis and the Haiti network

10. Financial Accountability between Mission Partners
    The Rt. Rev. James Curry, Bob Chagnon

Driving Directions and Free Parking
Visit www.stjohns-stamford.org
Bring your parking ticket to the conference

Mission Project Display Tables
For reservations, please call
Kate Hoehler
Phone: 203-415-1962

Nursery care available
If you were at the 8 am service last Sunday, you heard Father Shepley announce that the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper had been cancelled.

If you were one of the 50 people at St. Paul’s last Tuesday evening, you know it was un-cancelled and…..

It was party time. It was Shrove Tuesday. It was Fat Tuesday. It was Mardi Gras. It was pancakes. It was games. It was fun. It was community. In a little more than 48 hours a group of hard core revelers just couldn’t let the Pancake Supper die. Thanks for everyone who pulled it together.

Now, let’s get serious and have a Holy Lent.
Scholarly Speaking

Having a cheerful Lent

While this might, at first blush, appear to be an oxymoron, it seems to me that it fulfills the injunction in the Ash Wednesday Gospel: “And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites.”* Obviously the cheerfulness of la dolce vita is not what we look for in a time of fasting, but if we are keeping Lent as a time of living in, and into, Christ, then good cheer should still be a significant element.

A few years ago one of my colleagues used his blog to promote “Lent Madness” - a tournament-like faceoff to select a favorite saint out of a starting list of 32. Not only is it a great way to learn about some of the saints in our Calendar, but by the time the final rounds are reached there can be some real excitement - including forming blocks of voters to support your favorite - in picking the winner of the Golden Halo. This is now being sponsored by Forward Movement and has its own website at http://www.lentmadness.org/. The site has been up for several weeks with introductory material, but the voting starts today, so click on the link, read up on the saints for the day, cast your ballot, and then try to persuade a few friends to vote for your choice also. The site also includes a printable bracket sheet and calendar for tracking the results.

An interesting way to learn about what goes on in other churches (Anglican, and many denominations) is through the reports of the Mystery Worshipper on the Ship of Fools (http://shipoffools.com/mystery/index.html). Here volunteers report on visits to churches, and while some of these churches seem to be dying many of the chosen congregations are quite lively and vital.† Near the top of the page there are links to other areas such as “Gadgets for God” - some ridiculous, and some potentially quite useful. There are also a series of discussion boards under the general heading “Community.” http://forum.ship-of-fools.com/cgi-bin/ultimatebb.cgi?ubb=get_topic;f=6;:t=007348 has a newly started discussion of suitable music for Lent listening that includes some interesting suggestions.

Speaking of music, there are opportunities to listen to recorded services online from the BBC (http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006tp7r) with new postings each Wednesday remaining online until Sunday of the following week. The Ash Wednesday service (still online as you read this) is from Hereford Cathedral, and as I write I look forward to hearing it. Like Ship of Fools, this is available year round, but many Lenten practices can be seen as a way to start something which might well become a lifetime observance.

Finally, here is a real-life activity suitable for the season. Discovery Times Square has a current exhibit featuring the Dead Sea Scrolls. http://www.discoverytsx.com/exhibitions/dead-sea-scrolls will give you information and tickets (or discount certificates at Costco). Tickets are for scheduled times, and can be timed to allow a stop before or after at one of New York’s many churches. For example St. Mary the Virgin on 46th St. and St. Thomas‡ on Fifth Avenue‡ are nearby and both have choral evensong every Sunday (St. Thomas at 4:00 pm and St. Mary at 5:00 pm), though in rather different styles.

†Your scholar occasionally reports here; a recent one is at http://shipoffools.com/mystery/2012/2333.html
‡Our Priest in Charge, Fr. Shepley, served on staff at St. Thomas, while your Scholar sometimes took services at St. Mary while doing Graduate Studies at General Seminary and my Research Assistant used to be an Acolyte there.

- Fr. Bill Loring, Scholar in Residence
Gratitude is Good for Your Soul

By Bruce Rockwell

Two and one-half years ago, a parish in our diocese focused on gratitude as being an essential aspect of Christian stewardship. In fact, to remind members of the parish about the importance of gratitude, they gave away purple wristbands that said, “Gratitude is good for your soul.” When I visited the parish that November the stewardship chair gave me one of the wristbands. I wore it, until one very hot day last summer, it broke. But I wore it as a daily reminder about the importance of gratitude.

As the season of Lent approaches, one of the daily spiritual disciplines I plan to embrace is to pray the wonderful prayer of thanksgiving found on page 836 in the Book of Common Prayer.

Accept, O Lord, our thanks and praise for all that you have done for us. We thank you for the splendor of the whole creation, for the beauty of this world, for the wonder of life, and for the mystery of love.

We thank you for the blessing of family and friends, and for the loving care that surrounds us on every side.

We thank you for setting us at tasks that demand our best efforts, and for leading us to accomplishments which satisfy and delight us.

We thank you also for those disappointments and failures that lead us to acknowledge our dependence on you alone.

Above all, we thank you for your Son Jesus Christ; for the truth of his Word, and the example of his life; for his steadfast obedience, by which he overcame temptation for his dying through which he overcame death; and for his rising to life again, in which we are raised to the life of your kingdom.

Grant us the gift of your Spirit, that we may know Christ and make him known; and through him, at all times and all places, may give thanks to you in all things.

Amen.

This prayer reminds us that everything is a gift from God. In this prayer we are invited to give God thanks for all that is. We thank God for creation, the wonderful earth in which we live. We are invited to thank God for family and friends who love and support us, and we are reminded that our earthly accomplishments are only possible through the gifts God entrusts to us. Moreover we are invited to thank God for the disappointments and failures, not that they are things God did to us, but that they remind us of our total dependence on God. We give thanks for Jesus Christ who leads us each step of the way on our earthly journey. And finally, we give thanks for the gift of the Holy Spirit that empowers us to be the faithful, loving stewards God created us to be.

Gratitude draws us out of our self-centered nature and leads us to a focus on the loving God who gives us all that we have. May we strive to be thankful stewards during this coming Lenten season and always.

Bruce Rockwell, Assistant to the Bishop for Stewardship
Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts
brsteward@comcast.net
St. Paul’s OWN

February 26th - Youth Group 5-7pm
March 4th - Youth Group 5-7pm
March 11th - Youth Group 5-7pm
March 18th - Youth Group 5-7pm
March 25th - Youth Group 5-7pm

† What Did Jesus Eat? - Part 6

Vinegar

According to the Gospels, a sponge soaked in wine vinegar was offered to Jesus twice while on the cross. Jesus refused the first offering containing a mixture of a pain-killing narcotic herb and vinegar. He accepted the second offering which was likely the common drink of soldiers called “posca.” It would have contained vinegar, water, and eggs. Vinegar, including wine vinegar and apple cider vinegar, has been reported to slow the breakdown of carbohydrates in the digestive system, helping to support normal blood sugar health. Vinegar has also been shown to increase the absorption of calcium from vegetables, making vinegar a good ingredient for your salad dressing.

Aaron Tabor, MD is an anti-aging, weight loss, and nutritional cosmetic expert.

Valet Parking Attendants Needed

When: Saturday, April 28
Where: The Amber Room, Danbury, CT – 5 pm
Why: St. Paul’s volunteer efforts help a local nonprofit save on expenses by donating their fundraising Gala. It’s also a fun time of fellowship.
Buffet dinner is served to all volunteers.
Who to contact: Pam Szen or David Szen

Ability Beyond Disability supports over 1,700 people with disabilities in Connecticut and New York.
In the nine days of waiting between Jesus’ Ascension and the Day of Pentecost, the disciples remained together in prayer. During this time, Peter reminded them that the defection and death of Judas had left the fellowship of the Twelve with a vacancy. The Acts of the Apostles records Peter’s proposal that “one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us - one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection” (Acts 1:21–22). Two men were nominated, Joseph called Barsabbas who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. After prayer, the disciples cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias, who was then enrolled with the eleven.

Nothing further is told of Matthias after his selection. According to tradition he was an exemplary Apostle, but not much more is known. Matthias seems an appropriate example to Christians of one whose faithful companionship with Jesus qualifies him to be a suitable witness to the resurrection, and whose service is unheralded and unsung.

St. Matthias - Chosen by lot to replace Judas Iscariot, St. Matthias served as a missionary in Judaea, where he is said to have been stoned and beheaded, thus a battle axe on his icon.
† Choir Practice for Sword Points Readers
(click on the red links below to begin your personal practice)

Opening Hymn
Gradual Hymn
Offertory Hymn
Closing Hymn

Forty Days and Forty Nights
Christ, When For Us You Were Baptized Tune: Caithness
O Love, How Deep, How Broad, How High
Now Let Us All With One Accord

O Love, How Deep, How Broad, How High

This hymn looks with wonder on the love expressed through Jesus' life - how he came down from heaven to live among us (v. 1) - how he bore temptations for us and was baptized for our sake (v. 2) - how he prayed for us and worked for us (v. 3) - how he died for us (v. 4) - and rose from death to return to his heavenly home (v. 5). It calls us to give glory to "our Lord and God for love so deep, so high, so broad."

The author of this hymn, Thomas a Kempis, was a Catholic monk who is well-known for his devotional book, The Imitation of Christ, in which he calls us to live like Jesus lived. This hymn is very much in keeping with that book as it reminds us of the sacrificial life that Christ lived in our behalf.

We need to hear what Thomas has to say. We have heard so much about Jesus being born in a manger that we have largely lost our sense of wonder that God would come down from heaven to live among us - and to die for us. It is a true story of a prince becoming a pauper to serve his people. We need to be reminded that God loves us and has gone to great lengths to save us. We need to recover our sense of wonder that God would love us even when we don't deserve it.

Vespers
Sundays 6:15pm

Vespers is a time of worship and fellowship, with quiet moments to pray, and some upbeat music to lift our spirits.

You, LORD, keep my lamp burning; my God turns my darkness into light.
Transforming Stewardship

“After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God....”
- Mark 1:14

Do you ever think about how difficult it must have been for Jesus to come into Galilee, knowing that John had just been arrested for teaching the same message that Jesus was proclaiming. It must have taken great love and trust for Jesus to do what the Father had sent Him here on earth to do. In the same way, following a life of stewardship takes great love and trust from us. We must be willing to surrender completely to God, trusting that God will always give us all that we need to fulfill His plan for us.

Where Did You Go To Church Last Sunday
Outside Service in Sarasota, FL

Some people don’t understand that when you submit pictures for this column, you’re supposed to tell us the name of the church you went to, not the name of the restaurant you went to! Oh well, we’re glad just the same to hear from six of our snowbirds: John & Elaine Skewis, Bonnie & Larry Wanzer and Dave & Phyllis Baskett. They are all in Sarasota and brunched at Marina Jack’s. Bet their pancakes weren't as good as our Shrove Tuesday specials!

The GOSPEL of MARK
Told from memory by the Reverend Bert Marshall

Hear Mark's whole incredible mysterious story from beginning to end, as it may have been told in the early years of the Jesus Movement, before the rise of Christianity.

Come to
St. Peter’s-Trinity Church
160 Main Street; Thomaston
on Sunday, March 25th
at 4:00 pm and experience
For the Sunday bulletins please submit your information by the preceding Monday to bethmiller.stpaul@gmail.com.

For Sword Points please submit it by Wednesday afternoon each week to stpaulsswordpoints@gmail.com.

† Announcement Deadlines

Saint Paul’s Garden Ministry is seeking people to help with: Spring Cleanup in early April Help plant, prune and weed during the spring, summer and fall

Wanted: A person, small group or friends to Adopt-a-Garden
To learn how you can help to beautify our gardens please see Fr. Shepley or Pam Szen

† St. Paul’s Not So Top Secret Shrove Tuesday

Buttermilk Pancakes

Directions:
Preheat a lightly oiled griddle or fry pan. Sift and measure flour; sift again with sugar, salt and baking soda. Beat egg in medium bowl. Blend in buttermilk. Add dry ingredients, beating until smooth; blend in melted butter. Add up to 1/4 cup more buttermilk for thinner cakes. Adjust consistency as required to maintain a pourable pancake batter by adding additional flour or buttermilk. Cook on lightly oiled griddle or fry pan. Turn pancakes when surface bubbles begin to break. Serve immediately. Makes 14 to 16 three-inch pancakes.

Ingredients:
1 cup flour
1 tbsp. sugar
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. baking soda
1 egg
1 c. buttermilk, more if needed to thin out batter
2 tbsp. butter, melted
1/2 tsp. vanilla

And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. Genesis 1:31

A Special thanks to Gail Winley, Robin Powell, Susan Howell, Tom Tucker & Drew Crocker, who have all stepped forward with their green thumbs.
† Saints of God

February 23

Polycarp

Polycarp was one of the leaders of the Church who carried on the tradition of the apostles through the troubled period of Gnostic heresies in the second century. According to Irenaeus, who had known him in his early youth, Polycarp was a pupil of John, “the disciple of the Lord,” and had been appointed a bishop by “apostles in Asia.”

We possess a letter from Polycarp to the Church in Philippi. It reveals his firm adherence to the faith, and his pastoral concern for fellow Christians in trouble.

An authentic account of the martyrdom of Polycarp on February 23 is also preserved. It probably occurred in the year 156. The account tells of Polycarp’s courageous witness in the amphitheater at Smyrna. When the proconsul asked him to curse Christ, Polycarp said, “Eighty-six years I have served him, and he never did me any wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who saved me?” The account reports that the magistrate was reluctant to kill the gentle and harmless old man, but his hand was forced by the mob, who clamored that he be thrown to wild beasts, as was the fate of other Christians on that dreadful day.

Polycarp was burned at the stake. Before his ordeal, he is reported to have looked up to heaven, and to have prayed: “Lord God Almighty, Father of your beloved and blessed child Jesus Christ, through whom we have received knowledge of you, God of angels and hosts and all creation, and of the whole race of the upright who live in your presence, I bless you that you have thought me worthy of this day and hour, to be numbered among the martyrs and share in the cup of Christ, for resurrection to eternal life, for soul and body in the incorruptibility of the Holy Spirit. Among them may I be accepted before you today, as a rich and acceptable sacrifice just as you, the faithful and true God, have prepared and foreshown and brought about. For this reason and for all things I praise you, I bless you, I glorify you, through the eternal heavenly high priest Jesus Christ, your beloved child, through whom be glory to you, with him and the Holy Spirit, now and for the ages to come. Amen.”

† Using Your God-Given Talents to Serve God

For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Ephesians 2:10 (NIV)

Jesus Christ is the incarnation of God in human form. If Jesus is God how can we be expected to be like Him? Because Jesus came to this earth as a human—He fully embodies all of the attributes of God, but in a human body with the same limitations as ours. Likewise, we are created in the image of God. Like Jesus, we have been instilled with the abilities to serve God—He gave us these talents or abilities and allows us to decide how we want to use them or not use them.
† Your Prayers Are Requested For…

It is such an intimate time when praying for the health and well being of others and such a privilege. The people that we lift up to The Lord are part of our hearts for all time. Please pray for…

.....St. David’s, Gales Ferry; St. James’, Glastonbury; St. Luke’s, Glastonbury; Christ Church, Greenwich.
.....Dot Blake, convalescing from a stroke at Filosa in Danbury.
.....Sue Jennings, quick healing and a return to her home.
.....Gerry Mullen, strength and freedom from pain.
.....Bishops, diocesan staff, and parish employees, and their families.
.....Doug Azzarito, healing of blood cancer.
.....Paul Estok, healing of his broken leg.
.....Ginny Beck for continued healing.
.....David Palmer, strength and peace as he recovers from fluid on the brain.
.....Bill Mayers’ daughter, Kathleen for recovery from a heart condition.
.....Walter Biscardi for healing and strength. Sleep and rest, and blessings for Sylvia as his caregiver.
.....St. Paul’s prayer teams.
.....Harlan Jessup, prompt healing from his recent eye surgery.
.....Drew Crocker, for his continued healing, physically, emotionally, and spiritually.
.....Kelly & Tim Malloy, their children and their team, safety in Jos, Nigeria.
.....Tom Balash, strength and mobility.

Kings 20:5 "This is what the Lord, the God of David says, I have heard your prayer and seen your tears, I will heal you."

† Lenten Series Begins February 29th

Father Shepley will be offering a 5 week Lenten series entitled, “Becoming a Good Samaritan,” based on the World Vision-inspired DVD and outreach program. This study is a biblically-based follow-up to our World Vision Sunday and ongoing outreach from last year. The series will begin at 6:30pm with a soup supper, followed by the DVD presentation and discussion, and will conclude at approximately 8 pm.

Sign-up sheets are in the back of the church. Come join us, and bring a friend.

Sessions include: 1) Becoming a Good Samaritan 2) Caring for the Sick 3) Seeking Justice and Reconciliation 4) Honoring the Poor 5) Tending to God's Creation 6) Loving the Forsaken. Juststart.org is a website further describing this ministry.

The same Lenten series will be offered on Thursday mornings from 10:00-11:30 am in the Guild Room for those unable to come Wednesday evenings.
Sunday’s Readings
(click on the red links below to go directly to the text)

Empowered for Ministry

Our Hebrew scripture lesson tells of God’s promise to Noah and to future generations never again to flood all the earth. God establishes this covenant with a sign - the rainbow that is seen in the storm clouds. This covenant is made with the whole creation. It signifies God’s purpose to preserve and save the world, not to destroy it.

Psalm 25:1-9
A prayer for forgiveness and guidance and an expression of trust in the Lord.

1 Peter 3:18-22
This reading from the New Testament speaks of the significance of Christ’s death and resurrection. In the story of Noah’s salvation a prefiguration of our own salvation through the water of baptism is perceived. Portions of this letter are thought to have been originally composed for use in a service of baptism and Eucharist on the eve of Easter. Such a purpose would explain the association of the themes of Christ’s death, baptism, and his triumphal resurrection. It is uncertain who is meant by the spirits to who Christ preached after his death, but this activity may signify God’s intention for the salvation of all.

Mark 1:9-15
The gospel is the story of Jesus’ baptism followed by his temptation in the wilderness by Satan and his proclamation of the coming kingdom of God. As Jesus comes up from the water, the Holy Spirit descends like a dove and a voice from heaven tells him that he is the beloved Son. The Spirit then guides him out into the wilderness, where ancient Israel also met its temptation. Here Jesus has his first encounter with Satan, and then goes forth proclaiming the nearing reign of God: “Repent, and believe in the good news.”

Psalm 25
Show me your ways, O LORD, * and teach me your paths.

† Pick Up Your Copy Today!
Synthesis CE Study Guides for each week’s readings will be available at the back of the church.

† Photo Contest for April Sword of the Spirit
Calling all photographers! We are looking for a cover photo for our next monthly Sword. The April issue covers Palm Sunday, Easter and spring….be creative. Have fun. The deadline is March 26th. Send your pictures to stpaulsswordpoints@gmail.com.
Emphasizing the Transfiguration on the last Sunday of the Epiphany, Fr. Shepley illustrated the Christian life by looking at mountaintops and valleys as part of the pilgrimage of Christ. Drawing on Scriptures that speak to this reality, Fr. Shepley addressed the struggles of this life and the glory of the life to come. A pastoral emphasis is given in the message to those who grieve over the loss of loved ones. To replay sermons follow this link for The Sunday Sermons each week.

Welcome Newcomers!

Fr. Shepley will be offering a welcome class for anyone new to St. Paul's on Saturday, March 10th from 11:15am - 12:30 pm in the Guild Room. Come hear more about your church, who we are, where we have been and where we are headed. Please sign up at the back of the church if you plan to attend.

Girl Scout Sunday is March 11th!

This year's celebration is special because the organization is celebrating 100 years of scouting. Any Girl Scouts interested in participating should arrive at 10:15 am in uniform on March 11. Participating Brookfield Girl Scouts will receive a special Girl Scout Sunday patch. Please have any Brookfield scouts interested in participating contact me, so I may reserve a patch. My email is JohnRConte@msn.com. M.J. Hartell-Conte.

Spirituality at the End of Life

Presented by
Regional Hospice and Home Care of Western CT

For many people, spirituality nurtures healing and hope at every stage of life. This program provides a spiritual, non-denominational framework to discuss topics from spirituality’s place in healthcare to sensitive issues during end-of-life care. Led by Linda Pinckney, LPN, CHPN, and the Rev. Carolyn Legg, Chaplain at Regional Hospice and Home Care.

Monday, March 26th, 2012
7:00 – 8:00 Program
8:00 – 8:30 Refreshments

The Congregational Church of Brookfield
160 Whisconier Rd., Brookfield, CT 06804
Program location: Brooks Hall
(203) 775-1259

This program is sponsored by CCB Stephen Ministry
### March Lay Schedule 2012

**Lectors, Intercessors, and Lay readers**, please remember to check in before the service in the Vesting Room. Thank You!

#### March 4, 2012

**8:00 AM**  
Welcoming: Pat Brought  
Acolytes: O’Hara Girls  
**Lector:** *Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16* Mary Perry  
Intercessor: Sharon Simon  
Lay Reader: Lois Hunt  
Lay Reader: Mike Kirner

**10:30 AM**  
Welcoming: Denise McCormack/Doug Melody  
Acolytes: Stephen Werneburg  
**Lector:** *Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16* Sandy Chaleski  
Intercessor: Phil Hannah  
Lay Reader: Jim Castronova  
Lay Reader: Joe Bernardo

#### March 11, 2012

**8:00 AM**  
Welcoming: Rich & Joyce Emmett  
Acolytes: Sarah Shepley  
**Lector:** *Exodus 20:1-17* Mike Kirner  
Intercessor: Linda Pendergast  
Lay Reader: Debbie Barackman  
Lay Reader: Don Winkley

**10:30 AM**  
Welcoming: Dave & Connie Williams  
Acolytes: Audrey Powell  
**Lector:** *Exodus 20:1-17* Rose Barrett  
Intercessor: Connie Williams  
Lay Reader: Harlan Jessup  
Lay Reader: Jim Castronova

#### March 18, 2012

**8:00 AM**  
Welcoming: Pat Brought  
Acolytes: O’Hara Girls  
**Lector:** *Numbers 21:4-9* Pam Szen  
Intercessor: Mike Kirner  
Lay Reader: Susan Howell  
Lay Reader: Patricia Jennings

**10:30 AM**  
Welcoming: Bruce & Donna Betts  
Acolytes: Catie Richmond  
**Lector:** *Numbers 21:4-9* Phil Hannah  
Intercessor: Betty Gardner  
Lay Reader: Joe Bernardo  
Lay Reader: Ray Ferro

#### March 25, 2012  
**Healing Sunday**

**8:00 AM**  
Welcoming: Rich & Joyce Emmett  
Acolytes: O’Hara Girls  
**Lector:** *Jeremiah 31:31-34* Mike Ecsedy  
Intercessor: Linda Pendergast  
Lay Reader: Patricia Jennings  
Lay Reader: Debbie Barackman

**10:30 AM**  
Welcoming: Dave & Connie Williams  
Acolytes: David Werneburg  
**Lector:** *Jeremiah 31:31-34* Betty Gardner  
Intercessor: Connie Williams  
Lay Reader: Ray Ferro  
Lay Reader: Harlan Jessup
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Almighty God, keep us, we pray thee, from thinking of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, and ready at all times to step aside for others, that the cause of Christ may be advanced; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

† “Who’s That?”

We had only one try last week: “A guess (since I’m not even sure if it’s a boy or a girl) is Gail Winkley.” Wrong! We’ll help out a little this week and show more of the picture. If you think you know who “they” are, send your answer by e-mail to stpaulssword-points@gmail.com. Who knows you could win another one of our awesome prizes.

If you would like to submit a picture for “Who’s That?” send it by e-mail to stpaulssword-points@gmail.com. Or you can give it to Fr. Joe or the parish office. We’ll scan them and get them right back to you.

New Acolyte Vestments

Our acolytes have new vestments worn for the first time on Ash Wednesday by Emily Perry. They consist of a red cassock and white cotta.

AN IDEA WHOSE TIME HAS NOT YET COME: LENTEN GREETING CARDS

If you think your life’s a bust, just remember you are dust!

VINO, SUGAR, COFFEE CUP, NOWS THE TIME TO GIVE IT UP!

Think Lent is a downer? It’s really just an acronym: Let’s End Negative Thinking.

† It Takes An Editorial Board

Contributors to this Week’s Sword Points:

Chris Barrett, Phyllis Baskett, Dot Crocker, Lynne Donnelly, Bill Loring, Diane Loring, M.J. Hartell Conte, Lois Hunt, Beth Miller, Heather Melody, Patrick O’Connors, Lori O’Hara, Linda Pendergast, Ken Perry, Kirsten Peterson, Bill Schrull, Joe Shepley, Tara Shepley, David Szen, Pam Szen and Don Winkley.