

**71<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

**THE CHURCH OF ST. PAUL IN THE DESERT**

**January 24, 2010**

**Mission Statement:**

**God has invited us to share the Abundant Life of Jesus Christ  
through the Church of St. Paul in the Desert, by serving  
Christ in others and by gathering to Praise and Thank God in worship.**

**We are a Welcoming, Empowering, Supportive Community.**

1 The church of Christ in ev - ery age, be - set by  
 2 A - cross the world, a - cross the street, the vic - tims  
 3 Then let the ser - vant church a - rise. A car - ing  
 4 For Christ a - lone, whose blood was shed, can cure the  
 5 We have no mis - sion but to serve in full o -

change but spir - it led, must claim and test its her - i -  
 of in - jus - tice cry for shel - ter and for bread to  
 church that longs to be a part - ner in Christ's sac - ri -  
 fe - ver in our blood. And teach us how to share our  
 be - dience to our Lord: to care for all with - out re -

tage and keep on ri - sing from the dead.  
 eat and nev - er live un - til they die.  
 fice, and clothed in Christ's hu - man - i - ty.  
 bread and feed the starv - ing mul - ti - tude.  
 serve. And spread Christ's lib - er - a - ting word.

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### Senior Warden's Annual Report

Like all years, this has been a busy one for your Vestry. And I would like to take this opportunity to thank each one of them for their dedication and support. No is a word they don't seem to have in their vocabulary and their willingness to take on new tasks and challenges is awesome. We are indeed

fortunate to have such a dedicated group leading us through what sometimes can be difficult and troubling times.

At our Vestry retreat this past year we identified five specific Action Plan goals with Vestry members assigned to each task. This is an on-going project for your Vestry that deals with our day-to-day operation as well as long-term goals. They are:

1. Assess long-term maintenance and repair of capital facilities and projected costs
2. Develop a long-term plan for financing annual operating costs
3. Build the membership of gay families with children
4. Develop a comprehensive communications plan
5. Enhance our hospitality

Staffing changes have been a big item for us this year. In June, Father Fred Myers accepted the position of Vicar at St. Anthony's in Desert Hot Springs. His receptionist duties have been filled by an awesome team of volunteers, under the leadership of Orin Ellingson, whose combined efforts have provided outstanding service for all of us in ways far too numerous to count.

Brother Michael-Gregory Norrie moved from a familiar volunteer to the staff position of Ministry Coordinator in October and has been hard at work organizing and reorganizing our entire office and business structure. Valerie Winters, with the title of Pledge Secretary, keeps things running and our cadre of volunteers on task.

In November we bid a fond (and sometimes emotional) farewell to Mother Stephanie Parker who had enriched our spiritual lives for five years. We wished her well as she moved on to her new challenges as Rector at St. Stephen's in Seattle.

The Abundant Living Action Team, under the leadership of Gene Walker, and the Action Team Associates, led by Ray and Cheryl Kelley, continue to help us develop our year-round ministry of stewardship and thanksgiving. Certainly the festive dinners sponsored by these groups in November were a wonderful and informative event for all of us.

The Finance Committee (Roy Cody, Hap Blaisdell, and George Holliday) continue to provide financial leadership and guidance to us. Their assistance during these financially troubling times has been invaluable.

And the list could go on and on. St. Paul's is truly blessed with the leadership of Father Andrew, our staff, and our volunteers. Together, and with His guidance, we made it through a very challenging year. And now we begin a new year. Let's continue our positive journey giving thanks and praise for all of our many blessings.

**Jan Heller**

Senior Warden

## Report from the Chancellor

All legal disputes involving St. Paul in the Desert were resolved during 2009, except for the pending lawsuit regarding office equipment leasing. That litigation is expected to continue for the next year. The Church is actively pursuing the entities and individuals who should be liable to the plaintiff.

**Douglas Stenzel, Esq.**  
Chancellor

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### St. Paul's in the Desert Vestry Communications Committee Survey Summary

A total of 116 surveys were received by the Vestry Communications Committee. Following is a brief summary of the results of the surveys received.

1. How well do you feel that you know what is taking place at St. Paul's in the Desert?  
79% of the respondents ranked the Vestry's and St. Paul's Church's communication at the 4 - 5 level. 6% ranked the communication at a 1-2 level. The Communications Committee presented the written comments to the Vestry at the November meeting. Two areas specifically mentioned in the surveys that are being given special focus include: 1) regular updates by the Clergy following Vestry meetings and 2) greater transparency of information.
2. Do you receive/read *The Abundant Life*?  
78% of respondents indicated that they do receive *The Abundant Life* via e-mail. 1-2% responded that they would like to have it mailed. Due to the fact that we did this anonymously, we do not know who those people are. If they would contact the office we would be happy to see that it is mailed to you.
3. Rank these areas for what you look for in *The Abundant Life* (1 highest)  
Respondents ranked the use of *The Abundant Life* as follows:
  1. Source of Upcoming Events
  2. Bible guidance
  3. Review of current and past eventsThe two areas people requested more information included the National Church and financials of the church.
4. What would be your ideal means for getting information about Church Community and activities?  
80% of respondents said that they access information via the Church's website and the weekly newsletter. 19% requested a hard copy. These are provided in the narthex of the church each Sunday. However, if someone wishes to have it mailed to their home, please contact the church office.

The Vestry Communications Committee would like to extend our deepest appreciation to those who participated in our survey and we look forward to continuing to improve our methods of communication with our faith community.

**Peace and Justice Ministry**

The intent of this ministry is to help and encourage the members of our faith community to fulfill our Baptismal Covenant to “strive for justice and peace among all people” by informing them about practical ways to influence the powers of the world to resolve conflict without violence and to end unjust conditions and practices. Our fellow human beings, victims of war and oppression, cry out for relief. God asks us to help them. Please contact Michael Howard at (760) 323-1050.

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### **Services and Overnight Shelter (SOS) Report**

The Services and Overnight Shelter (SOS) ministry at St. Paul in the Desert has been a very well supported outreach program for the past 4 years. In 2009 we had over 40 church volunteers involved in preparation of Friday night meals, setting up the Parish Hall for our homeless guests and interacting with them before, during and after dinner. In addition, a large number of parishioners contributed undergarments and other clothing as well as financial support for SOS program needs. Between the first of May and the middle of December we averaged approximately 15 homeless guests each Friday evening. Their expressions of appreciation were heart-felt and heart-warming.

With the move of the S O S program to the new Roy’s Desert Resource Center, the nature of our involvement with this homeless program will change, but we anticipate a continuing meaningful and rewarding relationship with St. Paul in the Desert.

Respectfully submitted by **Hap Blaisdell**

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### **Altar Guild Annual Report**

I am happy to report that the Altar Guild has had a busy year, and the dedication and commitment of the Altar Guild Members for this past year has been phenomenal. The members on each weekly Altar Guild Team make sure that the Saturday evening and Sunday morning services are properly set up to facilitate a meaningful worship to all attendees. We also make sure the church is clean and inviting to everyone attending our services.

In addition to our weekly duties, our members gave the church a special cleaning in preparation for Holy Week and Easter Services. We made approximately 400 palm crosses for our Palm Sunday Services. We participated in the stripping of the Altar at the Maundy Thursday Service and also for the first time set up the Altar of Repose.

Our membership for this ministry has increased this past year, and we joyfully welcome new members. We held a get acquainted/welcome back dinner at The Old Creek House in September to celebrate the beginning of the season.

On the first Saturday of December, our members again gave a church a special cleaning in preparation for Advent and Christmas, and our members again provided the dedicated service to make our Christmas Eve/Christmas Day Services inviting and meaningful to all who entered through our doors.

I know that I speak on behalf of all the Altar Guild members when I say that it is an honor and privilege for us to serve God at His Altar.

Respectfully submitted,

**Kathy Kilmer**, Altar Guild Director

### **Usher Ministry Report**

The Usher Ministry at the Church of St. Paul in the Desert is at twenty-two active members.

The 8:00 am. Service is currently coordinated by Tim Steele, joined by Harry Fowler, Will Bodine, Jay Cabbage, Bruce Crawford, and Rosanna Langley. Ron Langley serves as a sound coordinator and fills in to usher when available.

For the 10:30 a.m. service on Sunday, we are proud to include the Greeter Group in the ministry. Harvey Trackman, Ruth Kraus, and Brenda Richard greet the congregation as they arrive. Brenda also serves as usher along with John Murren, and Ron Shepherd on most Sundays. They are joined regularly by Ron Hull, Ned Smith, Jacqui Chandrasena, Kathy Kilmer, Joe Ellenich, Ed Ellenich, George Holliday, and Rick Tinsley. Additionally, Kathy, George, and Rick serve on the Altar Guild, George also serves on the Vestry, and Rick serves as an acolyte. These dedicated ushers provide an efficient group to accommodate any service. Ushers also assist at funerals. Lou Thibault and Ben San Doval frequently help out in these services.

First impressions are important in this ministry. The manner in which our ushers carry out this ministry can add dignity and reverence to the worship service and lends much warmth and hospitality to the fellowship hour that follows. Our ushers become the image of the parish and must therefore be devoted, loyal, interested, proud of their calling, and eager to serve. In the background, ushers are aware of safety and comfort factors of the congregation. Water, tissues, and mints are available in the narthex. Ushers are aware of the location of first aid supplies and warm shawls to ward off a chill, and are acquainted with the location and use of fire extinguishers.

Ushers try to be prepared for any situation, including getting the children from Godly Play on time for Communion.

New members of the St. Paul Community are invited to join this valuable and active ministry. You may find your place in other ministries.

Submitted by **Ron Shepherd**, Usher Coordinator

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### **St. Paul's Campers**

Our August weekend proved to be surprisingly, but delightfully visited by early morning rain Saturday. No one got too upset with the damp tents as it really settled the dust and welcomed in a great time. Bonnie, Billy, and Brenda had led the way for new camper, Valerie Ferguson, to find Idyllwild campground on Friday. Ronn and three of his kids had come the day before and gotten the bikes in gear. When George and Rick and their beautiful big poodle arrived the party really began, as being the chef that Rick is they had lots of food. It was funny to see them arrive in their open air jeep tied up with bungee cords. Sleeping bags and frying pans and equipment were sticking out in several directions. We had two wonderful campfires with the youngest to the oldest telling jokes and stories. We could use a few choir members to keep us on key next time. The special chicken cooked with fresh rosemary and veggies blended with hot dogs and salads, as we all shared at Saturday's feast. We hiked the nice Ernie Maxwell Trail, shopped a little, and several of us ended the weekend at St. Hugh's Episcopal Church, 10 AM service, where they recognize us and welcome the St. Paul in the Desert campers. Think about escaping the heat next summer and coming on the trip which will be publicized in the late spring. Call Bonnie Stroock at (760) 324-7949 if you want to join in on an occasional hike. Get out and appreciate the beautiful world that God has given us here in the desert and the mountains.

### **Episcopal Church Women Annual Report**

The evening of February 17<sup>th</sup> was a banner night for the Episcopal Church Women. Our annual Spaghetti Dinner and White Elephant Sale was a fun evening. Parishioners and friends were seated at candle-lit tables, partaking of a delicious meal while chatting with one another. There was a selection of desserts and a glass of wine available for a nominal price and a selection of interesting items for sale. This is an annual event to raise money for St. Paul's and the community. We appreciate the support our congregation has given us over the years. This past year most of the money that was raised after expenses were taken into account went to St. Paul's to make repairs to the church kitchen. The fan over the stove was not getting the kitchen cool enough and conditions were miserably hot for preparing food. The balance of the money left over went to the Well in the Desert and to Camp Stevens. We meet the first Wednesday of the month at 11 a.m. for a business meeting and adjourn for lunch at 12 noon. The structure of the ECW is more casual now. Our president, Anne Harrah Jennings, for

personal reasons left Palm Springs the Monday after the dinner to return to Fresno were she had lived previously. At the next meeting, no one wished to become president yet we wanted to continue to meet on a monthly basis. When we met in October of this year we decided that Jane Thompson would be our coordinator and we would take turns doing the other necessary tasks.

The ECW sponsors the Prayer Shawl Ministry and the semi-annual collection of contributions to the United Thank Offering.

Respectfully submitted,

**Ruth Kraus**

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## **Daughters of the King Annual Report**

The Order of the Daughters of the King began in 1885 at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in New York City. The women who join this Order pledge to live by a Rule of Life and of Service, besides praying daily for our church and the clergy. We meet on the fourth Monday evening of the month at 7 PM in the homes of members or Marie Callendar's in Rancho Mirage. We support special Quiet Days both at the Church of St. Paul in the Desert and St. Margaret's Episcopal Church for Lent and Advent. We wear our special DOK crosses humbly and we invite interested women to call and attend a meeting.

Our membership has 4 active members – Alice Sleight, Bonnie Stroock, Sandy Allen, and Barbara Villani – and we will soon install 4 new members. They are Moira Raush-Thane, Susan Lake, Dee Barnes, and Anne Harrah. Two ladies went to the spring assembly in La Jolla. We have written letters and sent a package to a woman Marine in Iraq. We enjoyed having the Holiday Tea at Bonnie's house where clothes were collected for the Well in the Desert. We attend the Labyrinth Society monthly at St. Margaret's. Currently, we are making prayer shawls to hand out to sick or older parish members to help them feel blessed and in God's hands. In 2009, the group will offer rides up to Camp Stevens for the Women's Diocesan Retreat and Bonnie will attend the National Convention in Anaheim this July.

In closing, here is a thought on prayer from our handbook: "Prayer is so simple. It is like quietly opening a door and slipping into the very presence of God. There in the stillness we can listen to His voice or even petition. What we have to say matters not ... just to be there ... in His presence ... is prayer."

**Bonnie Stroock**, Chapter President

Phone: (760) 324-7949

### **Abundant Living Action Team "Deeper in Christ, Further in Mission"**

Several years ago it was realized that "old fashioned" stewardship methods failed to capture the fullness of our life at the Church of St. Paul in the Desert. In April 2007, the Rector formed a Stewardship Ministry group to help us celebrate and acknowledge the gift of God at work in our midst.

This new group adopted the name Abundant Living Action Team (ALAT) as it best described its purpose to develop a year-round ministry of stewardship for the parish that focused on generosity welling up from gratitude and being expressed through the giving of time, talent, and treasure. Members of ALAT are: Jim Franklin, Jan Heller, Cheryl Kelley, Gene Walker (Team Chair), and Bob Yeorgan.

Upon the recommendation of ALAT, the Vestry adopted the definition of stewardship developed by the Ecumenical Stewardship Center as the guiding definition of stewardship for the parish.

"Deeper in Christ, Further in Mission" was selected as this year's theme as it expressed a living communion with Christ giving rise to the mission of the church. Once again Valerie Winters designed the campaign material.

The centerpiece of the fall's annual financial giving celebration was two festive dinners held on successive evenings. Members of the parish received an invitation to participate at one of these dinners. The two evenings found 147 parishioners meeting new friends and enjoying the company of old friends rejoicing in the blessings we share at St. Paul in the Desert. On November 21<sup>st</sup>, we observed Celebration Sunday with the In-Gatherings of Pledges for financial giving for 2010.

An important part of the stewardship campaign was the contribution of the Action Team Associates (ATA).

Ray Kelley served as the Financial Giving Chair of ATA. He was assisted by Glen Calvin, Mike Funke, Cheryl Kelley, Peter Rittenhouse, and John Westaway.

The Abundant Living Action Team thanks everyone for their continuing investment and participation in the financial support of the ministries of the Church of St. Paul in the Desert.  
**Gene Walker**, Chair

### **Caring Ministry Report**

The Caring Ministry program at St. Paul's offers us one opportunity to respond to God's invitation in our mission statement

...to share in the abundant life of Jesus Christ by serving Christ in others...

The Caring Ministry is a group made up of your fellow parishioners who exercise their gifts for ministry in reaching out to other members of this parish family who need to have some support and care in times of temporary need or crisis.

Our Caring Ministry addressed four questions as part of a group visioning process:

- Who are we? We are God's family caring for God's people.
- Where are we now? We are always evolving on our journey to fulfill our mission in God's kingdom.
- What is our reason for being? We are instruments of God's love and compassion.
- What do we as individuals find as our passion for this ministry? We are people whose joy is found in making God's love tangible.

Our core activities have included:

#### **Phone Friends**

for those who might benefit from a caring call during illness, after a hospital stay, or for those who might appreciate a friendly voice

#### **Visits and monthly Eucharist service for residents of Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Facilities**

#### **Visits to members in hospitals, facilities or at home**

#### **Card Ministry**

Get well, sympathy, thinking of you, birthday and anniversary cards – when we are aware of special needs and dates

As we reflect on the activities of the Caring Ministry, we are very aware that we are not the only ones in our church who reach out to others in a similar way. We see evidence of mutual caring and concern among every group within our church, as well as those who sit near each other in church and during the fellowship time after services. We want to acknowledge, celebrate and encourage the caring ministry throughout our church.

Respectfully submitted by **Jenifer Carson**

### **Family and Children's Ministry**

Our ministry serves the children and families of our church. Unfortunately, we don't have a lot of children in the parish, consequently, our ministry is rather limited. I know the vestry is taking a proactive approach in trying to attract more families to the church, especially gay families who may be searching for a church where they would be welcome and feel comfortable. Hopefully that will attract more children.

The main focus of our Ministry is Godly Play, our Sunday School curriculum. The curriculum is geared towards younger kids, so many of our "tweens" no longer attend, which has reduced the number of kids substantially. Sometimes we only have 2 children in the Godly Play session. We also try to bring the Godly Play experience to the parishioners: last Spring we told the parable of the mustard seed to the congregation, and created large props that the children helped distribute to them. One of our goals is to make the children part of the service whenever possible – we feel it's important for them to feel like St. Paul's is their church, not just the one room in Hogarth Hall, and also we want to congregation to see that we do have children!

Our fundraising has been put on hold due to busy schedules, but we are planning a late winter/spring fundraiser for the Heifer Project that the older children will oversee.

We are also planning on taking a more active role in the nursery. It is our goal to make sure any parent who wants to leave their child in the nursery will feel confident that their child will be in a safe, loving and happy environment.

Another part of our Ministry that we feel is important is to have fun with the kids. We have taken the kids bowling, on a couple of hikes, and last month we tried to organize a trip to a local casino (it's not as bad as it sounds!) for an Indian Powwow. We will be planning more activities in the near future and have discussed trying to have a sleepover at the Living Desert for an end of the year event.

Our ministry could not survive without the dedicated people involved – Beth Owsley, Craig Ewing, Bonnie Strook, Jan Heller, Michael Howard, Cheryl Kelly, Ray Kelly, Barbara Villani, and John Hampson, who has recently graciously agreed to help out in the Godly Play program.

Thanks very much, **Claudia McVeigh**

### **Music Ministries Annual Report**

The **Adult Choir** of St. Paul in the Desert enjoyed a year of fellowship and making music together. They provided music for the 10:30 service as well as for special services during the Church Year. In June, Sandra Shaw and Bruce Blauvelt hosted our year-end party. The Fall began with an all-day retreat at

Hope Lutheran Church in Palm Desert where we welcomed new members and enjoyed an overview of music to come. The day ended with a Bar-B-Q supper hosted at Bob and Connie Dean's home in La Quinta. Sunday, December 13<sup>th</sup> was our annual Lessons and Carols program during the 10:30 service which included the Children's Choir singing with the adults. This choir meets Wednesday nights from 7:00 to 8:30 for rehearsal and on Sunday at 9:30 for a warm-up.

Our **Children's Choir** met on Tuesday evenings at 6:00 in the Spring and returned to Wednesday rehearsals this Fall. They sang individual anthems several times as well as working with the Adult Choir for Palm Sunday, Pentecost, and Lessons and Carols (always a treat for singers and congregation alike). Consisting of children ages 5 and older, this small but enthusiastic group enjoy learning musical skills together. The Owsleys hosted a year-end swimming party in June where thawing frozen T-shirts was one activity.

**All singers of the Parish and Community are welcome to join these dedicated groups of volunteers who supply our wonderful music.**

In addition to Lessons and Carols, the Music Ministries hosted two other **Concerts** to welcome the greater Desert community. On Sunday, April 5<sup>th</sup>, we presented "Little Windows" with Mark Weems and Julee Glaub in a meditative concert of traditional Irish, Appalachian and Sacred songs appropriate for Palm Sunday. On Saturday, November 21<sup>st</sup> Cappella Gloriana, a San Diego based chamber choir under the direction of Dr. Stephen Sturk, presented a program of music honoring the birthdays of Ste. Cecilia and Benjamin Britten.

The dedicated singers, contributors to our concerts, and the clergy and staff all help me to fulfill the role of Music Ministry here at St. Paul in the Desert. I trust that 2010 will give all of us the opportunities to grow and provide the best music possible as we Gather to Praise and Thank God in Worship!

Respectfully submitted,

**Nathan B. Ensign**  
Director of Music