



Consecration Sunday Is Coming Nov. 7th

Congregations that approach financial stewardship from a biblical perspective do not view the money Christians give to their church merely as a way to pay its bills. Rather, such congregations see financial contributions as a way to help people grow spiritually in their relationship with God by supporting their church's mission and ministry with a percentage of their incomes.

Our congregation's finance committee has selected the New Consecration Sunday Stewardship Program as a way to teach the biblical and spiritual principles of generous giving in our stewardship education emphasis this year.

New Consecration Sunday is based on the biblical philosophy of the need of the giver to give for his or her own spiritual development, rather than on the need of the church to receive. Instead of treating people like members of a social club who should pay dues, we will treat people like followers of Jesus Christ who want to give unselfishly as an act of discipleship.

New Consecration Sunday encourages people toward proportionate and systematic giving in response to the question, "What percentage of my income is God calling me to give?" During morning worship on Consecration Sunday (both in person and online), we are asking our attendees and members to make their financial commitments to our church's missionary, benevolent, and educational ministries in this community and around the world.

Every attendee and member who completes an Estimate of Giving Card does so voluntarily by attending morning worship on Consecration Sunday. We urge people to attend who feel strongly opposed to completing a card. The procedure is done in such a way that no one feels personal embarrassment if he or she chooses not to fill out a card.

We will do no home solicitation to ask people to complete cards. During morning worship Fr. Phil will conduct a brief period of instruction and inspiration, climaxed by members making their commitments as a confidential act of worship.

We will encourage participation in Consecration Sunday events through the Consecration Sunday team and Vestry. Since we will make no follow-up visits to ask people to complete their cards, we will make every effort to inform, inspire, and commit everyone to attend Consecration Sunday worship.

Thanks in advance for your enthusiastic participation in Consecration Sunday events.

Steve Johnson
Stewardship Committee Chair



"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."
Luke 12:34

The new members of St. Paul's

On Sept. 29, three of our newest members made a trip with Fr. Phil to Trinity Cathedral to be welcomed officially into the St. Paul's family. Cara Warren and Bob Frank reaffirmed their Episcopal faith, and Demetrius Carrothers was confirmed. Diocese of Ohio Bishop Mark Hollingworth Jr. officiated.

Here's a bit more about the trio of our newest members.

Demetrius Carrothers

It takes Demetrius Carrothers (a.k.a. Demi) about 45 minutes each Sunday to get from his home south of Carrollton to the doors of St. Paul's. But his journey to the Episcopal Church actually took a bit longer.

Born in Lancaster, Demi was adopted at age 8 1/2. What began as a less than ideal childhood became, well, idyllic – summers at Tappan Lake boating, water-skiing and fishing. But it also left an appreciation for the long odds many children face and stimulated a lifetime commitment to changing those odds.

"I was a statistical anomaly" he said of being adopted at an older age. "There was divine intervention there, and the fact that I was given that opportunity weighed a lot and kept me hopeful."

So after a bit of a detour and a change of majors from engineering to psychology, he spent 18 years doing forensic investigations of child abuse and criminal neglect cases. In 2018, Demi became chief juvenile probation officer for Harrison County.



Demetrius Carruthers, Cara Warren and Bob Frank formally became members of St. Paul's at the Trinity Cathedral service. (Photo by Fr. Phil)

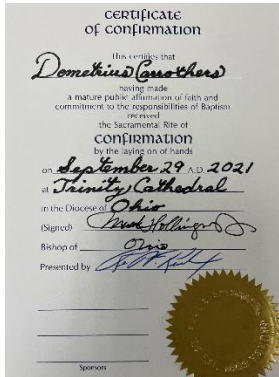
"I know life isn't fair, but I feel very strongly a need to help (kids) ... and that it's partly what I was called to do."

His faith journey began growing up in the Presbyterian Church, then converting to Roman Catholicism when he and his wife, Cynthia, got married.

"I loved the liturgy, the Eucharist, reading scripture," he recalls, and he became active in the church. But he was troubled by some of the political/social stances of the church and his fellow members, especially after Covid hit and many rejected masks and other protections to stop the deadly virus from spreading. So he began to study other churches, looking

for the combination of the joy of the presence of Christ in the Eucharist with social justice positions he could embrace. It was in the early days of the pandemic that Demi arrived for the first time at St. Paul's or, as he calls it, "home."

“As soon as I walked in, meeting Dave (Lewis), hearing Fr. Phil, as soon as I knelt, I knew, ‘I’m home.’”



His confirmation by the bishop at Trinity Cathedral on Sept. 29th affirmed his choice.

“We’re always striving to be closer to Jesus. ... I’d really like to thank the parishioners of St. Paul’s for welcoming me and helping me grow in

my faith in a genuine love-for-people way.”

Demi and his wife recently celebrated their anniversary at St. Paul’s. They have two sons, Noah, a senior studying chemical engineering at Ohio State, and Alex, a sophomore studying mechanical engineering and physics at Mount Union, where he’s also on the wrestling team. (Both boys wrestled and ran cross-country and track.)

Cara Warren

The news clip included fundamentalist evangelicals giving religious cover to President Trump’s policies forcing the separation of young children from their parents at the border.

That horrified Cara Warren.

“It just made me sick that someone would use Scripture to justify that. ... And it made me wonder, ‘Is this what the church is like now?’”

She decided to find out by visiting St. Paul’s one Sunday morning. It was the Prayers of the People that reaffirmed her faith and that “made me realize people do care about others,” and Christ’s church cares for all.

The prayers continue to speak to her.

October 2021

“Almost every week, there’s something topical. ... We were praying for those with depression, and the phrase ‘those whose darkness has no name’ really resonated with me. Because I think everybody has something that is a struggle even if it doesn’t fit in other categories.”

Cara’s joining St. Paul’s is actually a return to the Episcopal Church. She grew up in Canal Fulton and spent 25 years as a Baptist. When she broke the news to her mother that she no longer felt like a Baptist, her mother encouraged her to explore other churches. The rules of the Roman Catholic church made her feel “like I was trespassing,” and she eventually found St. Timothy’s Episcopal Church in Massillon.

Some of it was reassuringly similar to the Baptist services – the Apostle’s Creed and the Lord’s Prayer, for example. And some of it was dramatically different. “I was completely blown away by the interactivensness of it,” she recalls, and “especially when I experienced the Eucharist in the Episcopal Church, that’s what sold me.”

Cara moved to Akron and Medina and eventually got out of the habit of Sunday churchgoing before moving to Canton and finding St. Paul’s.



When St. Paul’s resumed in-person services, Cara Warren (center in pink) said, ‘I just realized that the quality of my life is better.’ (Photo Rick Senften)

Then came the isolation of Covid. Her boyfriend lives in Pennsylvania, and that meant six months without seeing him; her job -- a business analyst for underground

damage prevention for FirstEnergy -- moved to work-from-home. And St. Paul’s opted for on-line only worship for awhile.

When St. Paul's reopened in-person, "I just realized that the quality of my life is better overall."

While Cara's comforted by the affirmation of core beliefs she's found at St. Paul's, she's also an avid reader (she loved her job at Borders Books and Music) and counts on that reading to explore the tenets of other faiths. On Twitter, she follows rabbis, Jesuits, Mennonites and a span of others.

"I think it's important to know what we believe, but it's also a way to know what other people believe – not just as a way to show respect for other people, but as a way to solidify your own beliefs."

Bob Frank

Bob Frank is home, and home is St. Paul's.

When Bishop Hollingsworth affirmed Bob in September at Trinity Cathedral as a member of St. Paul's, he rejoined him with the faith he had known as a youngster in Sandusky and missed as an adult in recent years.

"I missed being an Episcopalian," Bob, 75, said during a conversation last week. "I needed to return to the church of my youth."

Bob was a seeker from the start, his faith forged by parents who valued a liberal Christian point of view and clergy at Sandusky's Grace Episcopal Church who were happy to provide it.

Lessons learned at home bolstered his beliefs when, after graduation from Sandusky High School, he joined the United States Air Force. There, he continued his interest in religion, especially his beloved Episcopal Church and learning more about Unitarianism, a Christian denomination that rejects the concepts of a Holy Trinity and eternal punishment.

In 1978, having left the service and landed a job as a security supervisor at Belden Village Mall, Bob met Deborah Lee Bester, a Lehman High

School graduate and a mall employee who returned his interest. Religion and moral matters were often the main meat of their conversations, and those conversations continued during their more than three decades of marriage.

They leaned toward a liberal social viewpoint, still desiring to contribute to the world. But they grew increasingly uncomfortable with churches and leaders whose beliefs didn't jibe with their own, especially on social issues. They fell away from regular church attendance.

They were in such a state on Feb. 7 of last year, when, at age 65, Deborah died unexpectedly. Bob reflected on his life and decided he wanted another try with the Episcopal church.

"I feel that I've not been a good Christian, and I mean to remedy that," he said. "St. Paul's seems a good place to be. I'm comfortable."

A place to reflect

Two benches have been added to the memorial garden at St. Paul's, honoring two of those we've lost over the past year: Jared Marcum and Judy Arrington.

Earlier this month, Jason and Nicole and the rest of the Marcum family joined



us in dedicating the bench to Jared, who was just 18 when he died last year in a car accident.

He was studying civil engineering at the University of Akron after graduating from GlenOak High School, where he was a member of the band and theater tech department.

Many of us watched Jared grow up at St. Paul's, where he was a child of quiet energy who dug in and helped wherever he was needed.



The bench at the east end of the memorial garden was dedicated in Jared's memory on Oct. 3 with the Marcum family.

Here, in part, is the dedication:
 “Almighty God, we thank you that you have put it into the hearts of your people to make offerings for your service and have been pleased to accept their gifts. Be with us now and bless us as we set apart this bench to your praise and glory and in loving memory of Jared Marcum; through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

The bench honoring Judy will be dedicated with the Daughters of the King, of which she was so much a part.

A change in the search for St. Paul's new priest

The Vestry is changing its charge to the committee searching for a new priest for St. Paul's.

The Vestry is in the process of asking the Search Committee “to initiate a search for a priest-in-charge, whereupon the Diocese will submit one candidate at a time to the Search

Committee for consideration and review, until such time as a suitable candidate is discerned.”

The anticipated change follows a joint meeting of the Vestry and Search Committee, in which Search Chair Barbara Anderson outlined a three-year process that, to date, has yielded no candidates for rector who are a good fit with St. Paul's. The discussion included the spiritual, philosophical and practical pros and cons of three options: 1) full-time rector, 2) part-time priest or 3) priest-in-charge. We had been looking for a full-time rector.

We'll continue to update you as the process unfolds.

Heritage House lives on

Heritage House, the blond-brick apartment building northwest of St. Paul's, is no longer the “ecumenical witness of churches working together for the good of the community” as it was designed to be when it was built in the 1960s. A private company bought it two years ago.

But indirectly, Heritage House is a key reason Tomeka Cundiff and her 9- and 4-year-old children – as well as two other families -- moved into new homes on Canton's northeast end two weeks ago.

Here's how the two connect:



The new houses are this year's interdenominational "Faith Build" by Habitat for Humanity's East Central Ohio chapter. The chapter ("unapologetically Christian but radically inclusive") is a little over 30 years old and one of the busiest in the country. It has built



Habitat Director Beth Lechner says the Heritage fund was a boost at a crucial time.

and rehabbed nearly 600 homes under a nonprofit model that combines donations, volunteer labor, sweat equity from would-be homeowners and payments that current Habitat homeowners

make on zero-interest mortgages.

Back in late 2019, everything looked like it was a go for three more homes to be built. For \$1, Canton City Schools had donated a piece of land on 23rd Street NE that once housed a school. The designs for the homes -- with open floor plans, natural light, porches across the fronts and spacious yards out back -- got the OK. Three families, each headed by working mothers, had been screened, enrolled in homeowner education classes, set up escrow accounts to save for taxes and insurance and prepared to invest their own time with volunteer crews.

Then came 2020. And Covid 19.

With the pandemic came doubts about the safety of volunteer crews working together, the ability of struggling businesses to make in-kind donations, even the ability of prospective homeowners -- many of whom are essential workers -- to have the time to put in their sweat equity.

By the time those concerns eased, it was early 2021. And that's when the cost of construction materials soared. Habitat Director Beth Lechner

remembers a panel of structural wood called OSB that had cost \$4.50 shot up to \$53.

"But the pandemic didn't stop us. The money didn't stop us," she said as she guided a tour of one of the homes. "These families work so hard."

And that brings us to Heritage House.

"It really spearheaded the resurgence," said Lechner.

Here's why.

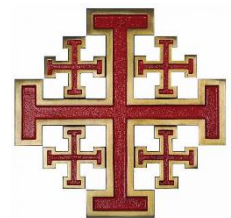
When the apartment building sold in 2019 for about \$1.5 million, the eight churches that had overseen the building for more than 50 years divided the proceeds. Three -- St. Paul's, Christ Presbyterian and St. Stephen's Lutheran -- decided to pool their shares totaling about \$600,000 with the Stark County Community Foundation. Each year, about \$32,000 could be disbursed from that to help reduce homelessness and meet other community needs.

A few months ago, the first distribution was OK's for three programs: Legal Aid eviction relief, Hammer and Nails rehabs and Habitat.

The money helped ease the unexpected crises. And the mission of Heritage House -- an interfaith effort to provide housing and hope -- lives on.

From the Desk of Fr. Phil+

Church budgets include fixed costs, like salaries and building maintenance, and variable costs, like outreach and children's programs. Fixed costs are viewed as sacrosanct,



while outreach and children's programs get cut when money is tight.

What if we ALL understood the church's budget, as a MISSIONAL commitment, which reflects the parish's vision, goals, and identity in the HERE AND NOW (vs. what we used to be!!). Complicating our thought process is the fact that once this pandemic is over, we falsely understand that things will return to "normal" or the way it used to be! That is NOT going to happen. ALL churches are grappling with this. What the church will be like post-pandemic is not altogether known. Therefore, we cannot afford to remain STUCK in the past. The consequences are in fact the closure of many churches. In fact, parishes that were at risk (as defined as average worship 50 or below) prior to the pandemic, are now barely hanging on and in fact will in a brief period of time close.

The pandemic forced the church to really "think outside the box." It has been exhausting on many levels for all in leadership. The variable dynamics that will play out in post-pandemic ... whenever that will happen ... is yet to be realized. However, there are early indicators that have risen to the forefront. One of many is that there are people who have left and have become disconnected. They will not return. They have gotten "out of the habit" of coming to church. Some will maintain the connection virtually, others will not.

I have said this for decades ... "if you build it, they will come." If that were true, then why haven't our pews been filled with people? They are not! Well, "if we call a young priest with a family, who will attract other young families with children," it will help us grow. This too has been an historical delusional MYTH!!

Studies over the decades have been consistent in indicating that people who are PERSONALLY invited by members of a parish are more likely

to attend. Then when they do come through our doors, we must see them as human beings. We must listen carefully and then try to introduce them to members who might have common interests.

There are generations that want to be a part of a group that is making a difference in OTHER PEOPLES LIVES!

We cannot have a narrow focus on our identity as the people of God. What is the CURRENT identity of St. Paul's?? Not for the past 150+ years, but NOW and in the future. The process of re-evaluation of identity will be instructive for the current and future ministries of St. Paul's, in addition to the adjustments that will be necessary for the parish to make when you do have a priest.

Your next priest should not be put into the position as a "miracle worker." We must always remember the Great Commission given by Jesus himself. "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." We are to make DISCIPLES, not members. We are not to get more members so we can meet our MISSION budget! We are not to make any priest a "fundraiser" for their own position! We must view our MISSION BUDGET as what our identity is, in relation to who we are and what we are ALL about.

Love God. Love Neighbor. (All people, without exception), and change the world!

Here are the services for which we'll be using incense in the November, December and January:

All Saints Sunday Nov 7th, The Feast of the Holy Nativity of Our Lord, and the Feast of the Epiphany of Our Lord.

St. Paul's Episcopal Church

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St. Paul's Episcopal Church

The Rev. Philip F. Kunder, Long-term Supply
Priest

Staff: Peggy Neidig, office manager; Paul
Schmucker, sexton; Craig May,
communications

Newsletter: M.L. Schultze and Rick Senften

David Lewis, Senior Warden

Carol Sutek, Junior Warden

Douglas Colmery, Treasurer

Pete Taflan, Financial Adviser Emeritus

M.L. Schultze, Clerk

Other vestry members: Karen Merrin Swope,
Dr. Richard Oloya, Stephen Johnson, Valerie
Frear, Cara Warren

Parish Musician Emeritus: William Kendrick