



St. Paul's Journal

Halifax, Nova Scotia

Thanksgiving 2007

From the Rector

What is Parish Life?

If anyone looks back (as I have done) through old copies of *St. Paul's Church Parish Magazine* or *St. Paul's, Halifax Newsletter*, from the first half of the 1900s, he or she will be struck by the overwhelming number of active parish organizations and groups, and the many parish events and liturgies. So when we look at the smaller number of events, participants, and active groups today, it is easy to become discouraged. This is true of many Anglican parishes and, in fact, most North American and European churches of all kinds.

Many explanations are offered for this: the complexity of modern life (with Sunday and week-day obligations or choices involving neglected housework, domestic errands, or 'self-improvement'), long hours of work and two-career couple life-styles

(and so a longing for unstructured family time), the contemporary 'food-court' approach to Christian organizations (We like to tailor our multiple commitments to various spiritual causes around our particular Christian experience rather than our church or parish).

How should we think about these things as a parish community?

First, perhaps we should learn to be more thankful for the comparatively large number of current parish activities and initiatives in which a large percentage of our parishioners are involved. Many sacrifices are made by many parishioners and staff for the common good of the parish, its worship, its ministries, its facilities and its heritage.

Second, perhaps we need to learn to give thanks for the glories of the past without feeling 'frozen' when it comes to what form of parish life is actually possible for us today. St. Paul's Church and, indeed, the whole

Christian church over many ages and many stages in many places, have gone through periods of more or less community 'energy' without giving up the vision of some form of healthy parish life.

Third, perhaps (especially now with the circulation of the most recent edition of the *Parish Plan*) we should begin asking the God we worship what is next in store for us. How ought we to live out the worship we offer on Sundays? Do we want to be a parish whose main objective is to encourage its congregation to invest most of its spiritual energy in individual careers and/or in civic commitments and Christian ministries elsewhere?

Or do we want to become



a parish that is tighter-knit and builds its social life and ministry commitments around those who worship

together week by week? Do we want a parish life that is uniquely St. Paul's, or do we want to borrow 'components' of other programmes, or adopt an 'off the shelf' parish life plan that has worked elsewhere? We may already have perspectives on these questions (I do!) but the more we can answer these questions together as a community, and the more we can answer them within the *Parish Plan* process, the better.

Finally you should know that, as your pastor, I have spiritual commitments even more basic than the answers to the particular questions above, i.e. that our worship will centre on the God whom we confess; that our parish life will be an outgrowth of our worship; and that the love of God might enlarge our spiritual hearts toward those who don't yet worship with us, enlarge our Christian charity toward those who are different from us, and increase the numbers of our worshipping congregation.

We worship the Holy Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We worship the Creator of the universe, the Redeemer of the world, and the Spirit who carried God's fullness into the heart of the Church! Our parish life can't go wrong if we begin with this confession, and always return to this commitment. I truly look forward to being an integral part of the life of this parish as it unfolds in the coming months and years.

Advent Issue: The Rector's Column will offer thoughts about 'Worship in Words and Actions'



A Warden's Reflection on Thanksgiving

At Thanksgiving, it is often customary to pause and reflect on the many things for which we each have to be thankful. The list is long and humbling for many of us in the Western world.

We have the considerable societal blessings of peaceful communities (at least generally and relative to other countries). We have the advantages of education, jobs, healthcare systems, and social and relational support when we need it. For many of us, there are the added blessings of family, independence of means, leisure and recreational activity that would have been unimaginable to many of those living in the early Christian centuries. And, for those of us who worship together regularly,

there are the considerable advantages of a diverse and active community of faith, with many possibilities for growth, fellowship and enjoyment that this diversity and activity provide. There is one more considerable blessing that we have as Anglicans. We are connected to each other, and to Christ's church, through a heritage of worship, of faith expressed both in thought and in action. And, we have this heritage and history that welcome us each time we come through the door of a church. Not just our own Anglican church of St Paul. What is wonderful about the Anglican community is that there are so many different experiences of culture and community that allow us to reflect upon, and approach Christ.

Finally, we have the 'Word of God'—Jesus Christ. In fact, we might well be thankful that the 'Word' is more than the Scriptures, in which we might be limited to understanding God as an idea. The miracle is that God is not a remote God, but that he is with us through Jesus Christ – when and as we open our arms, our minds, and our hearts to him. There is, then, a deeper meaning within the seasons of the Church to this reality of Thanksgiving and thankfulness. As

Christians, we can rejoice in the faithfulness, richness and fullness of God's love and provision for us, especially through Christ.

In this journal there is an excerpt taken from an American congregation, and circulated on the *Anglican News Net* (an online service to all Anglican churches in our Diocese). The wardens have included this excerpt because it speaks to that deeper sense of thankfulness. We are thankful and so respond gratefully as Christians to family, friends and community, not as those 'paying back' or looking for a 'payback'. It's not that we expect something in return, but that we are changed by the realization and presence of God "among us". Being thus transformed, we then are able to give of our time, gifts and resources as symbols and as a fulfillment of our joy, the thankfulness that we feel.

The Executive has distributed a preliminary plan for the Parish. It is our hearty wish and prayer that you will find, in the many activities and possibilities of our parish, opportunities for your own personal expression of that thankfulness, of 'deep gratitude'. This can be expressed not only by

moving toward the heart of our worship, as noted in the plan, but by moving closer to others in sharing our gifts and resources with them. We wish you a joyous, deep and peaceful season of thanksgiving, and a life of thanksgiving that transforms you and others, now and always.

Patrick Hartling

Reflections on Stewardship

The church is empowered by faithfulness, not by money.

Faith, of course, has a financial component. This is expressed in the challenge of the tithe. When faithful people give 10% of their income to support their parish, they are practicing a spiritual discipline that breaks the power of money dependency in their lives. It shifts their trust from their wallet to the grace of God. They no longer live in fear of scarcity, but realize that God's abundant blessing far transcends what money can ever provide.

The challenge of faith is to tithe. The church acts with greater power as faith increases people's ability to give in a spirit of

gratitude and of partnership with God.

Our church strives to do as much ministry as we can with as much money as faith releases to our common life.

Our church is grateful for each and every person who gives to support our shared ministry. Those who tithe or who are working toward a tithe provide the fundamental strength of the parish. Their tithe is followed up with commitment to prayer and leadership that empowers ministry.

Faithful stewardship is not transactional, but transformational. The Kingdom of God advances through a faithful response to Jesus' call to follow Him.

The challenge for many parishes is to open a dialogue about money and its relationship to personal faith so all can experience a transformation from scarcity to abundance.

From Saint Timothy's Episcopal Church, California

Chicken Hearts and Parish Life

What in the world do chicken hearts have to do with parish life? Standing in

line at the grocery store checkout, behind a large man with a package of chicken hearts in his cart, I may have found one answer. A woman behind me, peering over my shoulder murmured, 'Delicious, so delicious!' 'You mean the chicken hearts?' I asked. She did. Curiosity aroused, I asked how she cooks them. As we talked about her cooking methods, the man turned around and said, 'They're for my dog!' We all laughed.

She had been unable to find 'the English word' for barbecue, so I asked her what country she was from. 'Iran,' she replied with a look that spoke volumes; it was the day after the Iranian president had visited Columbia University. We agreed that he'd experienced a lot of unpleasantness and wished that the world's leaders would try to understand one another. And we agreed that ordinary citizens like ourselves have little or no say in their decisions. 'But we can pray,' I said, and again she agreed, sharing that she prays every day for peace, good health, homes and food. I mentioned children, 'Oh!' she said, 'they suffer so!' Then she added 'and the creatures.' I had not thought before about the

many creatures that would be suffering too.

Before we parted company we wished each other a heartfelt 'God Bless' – and I realized that in no more than two or three minutes this Iranian woman and I, strangers to one another, had in a very real sense shared our prayers with each other and with God, who is always with us. This was how I took an important part of my parish life – my faith, prayers and interest in other people - into the everyday setting of a grocery store. I gave amazed thanks to our God as I left; and it was all because of chicken hearts!

Gretchen Gillis

Parish Life in Action: Excerpts from a Recent Letter to the Rector

Though you were not present at this church at the time this story takes place, I would like to send my ongoing gratitude and love for your congregation.

Some time ago, in the fall of 1996, my wife Judy and I, who were living in Halifax while I attended the Outpost Nursing Program at Dalhousie University, attended St.

Paul's Church. We started attending the church only at the end of September 1996 and were there until January 1997 when we left Halifax.

Judy was pregnant at that time and, unfortunately, had several complications during the pregnancy. My course was scheduled to end in Halifax at the end of December and continue in Sioux Lookout, Ontario in January, but Judy had a lot of complications with the pregnancy, which resulted in her being unable to travel. However, the lease of the apartment we were renting was due to expire at the end of December, leaving us homeless with a child near birth and no family or close friends in town. A dire predicament to be sure, at least so it seemed to us.

However, despite our being brand new to the parish, and really not knowing any members of the congregation, our predicament was somehow discovered, and the church graciously offered us accommodations in a house that had recently been inherited by the church. We stayed there for 20 days, rent free, (at least I did-Judy was in hospital for a good portion of this time, and I stayed with her as often as I

could), which was a real blessing for poor students like we were at the time.

Our son Matthew was born on January 10, 1997, and because of some problems after birth remained in the Grace Memorial Hospital for the first 10 days of his life, as did my wife Judy. The kindness shown to us was beyond words. Members of the Bible study group I attended came and brought presents for our newborn and prayed with us, the pastor at the time visited regularly, other members of the congregation sent food and kind words of support although they hardly knew us, and generally made us feel welcome as part of the community and gave us a great deal of support.

I cannot express how much this support meant to us. We were a young, married couple of limited means, far away from family and friends, in town for only a few months, who faced severe medical problems. Matthew, our son, ended up in Intensive Care for several days, and Judy, my wife, suffered severe complications from the delivery that resulted in her needing to take antibiotics for six months and requiring surgery almost a year after the birth of our son.

The day Judy and Matthew got out of hospital, we left Halifax and headed up to Sioux Lookout, Ontario for my internship. But we will never ever forget the kindness and charity that the congregation of St. Paul's showed to us at the time of our need. I cannot thank you all enough.

Since then, Matthew has grown into a healthy 10-year-old boy, currently attending a summer camp, and we have been blessed with a second child, an 8-year-old girl, Carol. Judy and I are doing very well.

After I completed the Outpost and Community Health Nursing Program, I worked in First Nations communities in Northern Ontario for a few years, followed by a period of teaching at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, and employment in Thunder Bay Regional Hospital Emergency Department. We then felt that we should move to New Hampshire, where I took up employment as a nurse practitioner in Dover, and Judy has become a Teacher's Aide (paraprofessional) in the local school system. Both of our children are doing well, and Matthew made the honour role last year! Judy and I have been married now for 12 years,

a strong, godly marriage, despite our hardships (and, like any couple, we have suffered hardships) and we look forward to a long future together.

Please send our greetings to any of the congregation who may remember us, and our deepest thanks, love and respect to all of you. It is churches like St. Paul's that help restore our faith in our fallen world and God's answer to prayer. God bless you all, and please feel free to share this letter as you see fit.

*Sincerely,
Robin Schumaker and Judy
McLeod (and Matthew and
Carol)*

Summer Mission: An Adventure in Trust

This summer we had the privilege of traveling to Tanzania as a family, where Tony and I worked as physicians in a rural Lutheran Mission hospital. In July 2005, Tony and I traveled to Malawi and Zambia with World Vision as observers of their work, in my capacity as a board member. While there, we saw the great need for health care workers and

thought quietly that some day we would return to work there. That idea sat on my heart but it did not seem possible at this point in our family and work life. Then I read two books - Stephen Lewis' *Race Against Time* and Ortberg's *If You Want to Walk on Water You Have to Get Out of the Boat*. I felt a deep conviction that we were being called to go and work in Africa for a short-term medical placement – but how? What followed was a long lesson in faith and trust.

First, Tony, Nathan (9) and Meredith (7) had to be enthusiastic about this idea. This required prayer and openness to each other's doubts and worries. We needed and received the support of our colleagues and department chair. We sought advice and were provided with a connection to Selian Lutheran Hospital in Arusha, Tanzania. We sent initial inquiries in September 2006, but had long pauses in getting answers back. This caused us many times to doubt that we were on the right track, but finally in early May we received a response with a date that fit our family's needs and schedule. After that, things more or less fell into place. Even after we arrived, we had still not

found a caregiver for the children, but felt an assurance that this would be looked after. God really had a lesson in trust in mind because we did not work out this detail until we were in church in Arusha the day before we were to start work. There we met Fidela, a bright young student, who became our nanny for the summer.

Selian Hospital serves a mainly Maasai population in the hills outside Arusha. As a result, we were not faced with the long line-ups and multiple patients to a bed that are characteristic of some African hospitals. This was a blessing considering our need to work through three languages for most of our patients – English to Swahili, Swahili to Maasai and back. We saw many infants with pneumonia and diarrhea, some malnourished, some affected by HIV. Some children were so ill by the time they came to hospital that they did not survive. We saw more death in our five weeks at the hospital than we do in two years in Canada. Optimal medication and IV solutions for children were not available. We learned to go back to basics and rely on our skills of listening to the story and to physical examination.

Some patients, with more complicated problems, we sent home with diagnoses we could not be sure of due to lack of available tests and specialists, with medications they could barely afford. In other cases, all we could offer was a consult to the visiting hospice service and our prayers. Often, we were asked to stretch far beyond our comfort zone – with many prayers for guidance - to manage adult patients, most of whom were experiencing complications of AIDS.

This was "medical culture shock". In addition to the issues above, we saw how African health care is challenged by a lack of staff – one nurse for 20-25 patients. Families must step up and give a lot of care, including providing blankets, doing laundry and bringing food (and fuel to cook it), if it was not cooked at home. Then there was the cost of the hospital stay (about \$2.50/day), tests and medications, a great burden to families who have very little. All of this made us appreciate in a new way the life we have in Canada. This really struck a chord in a conversation with a safari guide who was well off by local standards. He said, "If you don't have to pay for your children's school

or your health care, what is there to spend your money on?"

Although we had difficult days there was also much reason for hope. The availability of treatment for HIV was much improved from what we saw in 2005. In Tanzania, all health care for HIV/AIDS patients is now free. We saw God working. One morning we assessed a 6-month old who had been admitted overnight with a minor respiratory infection. She had been born with spina bifida, a malformation of the spinal cord, causing a large growth on her back, hydrocephalus and inability to move her legs. This had never before been assessed. She needed neurosurgery. We left the ward after seeing her and immediately ran into the Selian coordinator of rehabilitation and orthopedic services who told us a neurosurgeon would be arriving in the country the next day (none reside in Tanzania). There was a flying doctor flight available the following day to take her to see him. This was arranged and her surgery was done a week later!

It is hard to know even now what purpose God

had for us in this journey. Did we touch a certain life for whom He has a special plan? Was it in relationships we made outside of our patients? Was it to teach us a lesson in listening to and trusting Him? Was it that in traveling together and finding our way in a new place and culture, we grew as individuals and grew closer as a family? Perhaps it was all of these or something else entirely. Our lives have definitely been enriched by the experience. I have pondered this question at many stages of the journey and return without a definite answer, but I have a feeling of peace and a new depth of trust in God who does know the answer.

Beth Cummings



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Submissions to *St. Paul's Journal* are
always welcome.

**Why not submit a spiritual
reflection, a poem, or a book
review?** The deadline for the next
issue is **November 16.**

Friends of St. Paul's

A Happy Thanksgiving to all! It is a wonderful time of the year to get in touch and give thanks for the harvest.

St. Paul's again had a festival showing of fruits and vegetables centred around the pulpit. The various coloured apples, greens and gourds remind us of the harvest hymn,

"And now, on this our festival day
Thy bounteous hand confessing
Upon the altar, Lord we lay
The first-fruits of Thy blessing."

It is so nice to hear from friends and to see those who are able to visit. You are in our thoughts and in our prayers.

Dot Kelly

Open Your Eyes to Heaven

Open, Open, Open your eyes to
Heaven
Glorious place in Heaven

Open, Open

We've got love and greatness in our hearts

Open your hearts to heaven

Open, Open

God is with you

Be disciples

Tell all about God

For you've got to

Open your eyes to Heaven

The glorious place

Open your eyes to heaven!!

An anonymous child of the parish



St. Paul's Church Archives Goes Global!

Well ... so to speak!

For those of you who have been in the church this summer, and wondered where the voices from on high have come from, or have been accosted from the gallery by the owner of one of the voices, you will know that the Archives Committee has been working in the archives all summer long. We were most fortunate to

receive financial support from the Government of Canada through Library and Archives Canada, and were able to employ a Project Archivist, Ann Foster, to come in and organize our records. Ann has done an excellent job of both sorting out the records of our holdings and teaching us how they should be properly arranged.

This has been a huge step forward for us, because although we had taken courses in Archival Management, we still lacked the ability – and confidence – to put what

we learned to work in our own collection. But suddenly, with her help, lights were turned on in our heads, and it all made sense! The arrangement and descriptions that Ann has created have now been posted on Archway, which is the website of the provincial Council of Nova Scotia Archives, and from there it is posted on the Library and Archives Canada (national and international) website.

There you have it – St. Paul's Church Archives Goes Global.

This was the whole purpose of the financial support program this year, as the federal government, and Library and Archives Canada, are trying to help archives across the country make available more of the nation's history and records to researchers, and to the general public, online.

We are really feeling excited about what we have all accomplished this summer, as it is really what the archives committee has been working towards for the past ten years. We started out just collecting together the archival records from wherever they had been 'temporarily' located since the Parish Hall was demolished (and that was all over the place), including some very bad locations where they got damp and mouldy. The next job was to try and conserve the most badly damaged records, and find a place to keep them all together in one spot. Then the long task began of listing and describing what we had. We had come a long way towards achieving some form of listing, but not until this summer with Ann as Project Archivist have we felt that we could actually do it properly. There is still a great deal to be

done, but it is only now, because Ann has taught us so much (and we actually understand what we are doing), that we can move ahead with confidence and our volunteers can now bring the entire archives collection up to date. I think our excitement is quite understandable and justified.

We thoroughly enjoy being your archives committee so, if you are interested in the history of our church and its' people, and the fascinating insight the records bring to the life of our city, then give thought to joining us and having your interest piqued by the small and large details of over 250 years of faithfully kept parish records.

Fiona Day

Summer Mission: Reflections by a St. Paul's Chorister

This year, I spent almost three months of my summer in Palestine, as the region was marking the fortieth year of the illegal occupation of the West Bank and Gaza by the State of Israel. I spent half of my visit teaching music at the *Edward Said*

National Music Conservatory, in their Ramallah and Jerusalem branches, and the other half of my stay working for *Sabeel*, an NGO (non-governmental organization).

I was living with old family friends in an area called Al-Ram, formerly a suburb of Jerusalem. Ram is now cut off from the Holy City by Israel's illegally constructed wall—also known as the security barrier, the Apartheid Wall, al-Jidar, etc. This enormous concrete barrier has been built through the centre of the main street in Ram, alienating most of its inhabitants from Jerusalem, the centre of their social and economical life. I made the commute through the Wall daily—although for some weeks the Wall was sealed near my home and I was forced to take an alternate, longer, route—to get to the *Sabeel Centre* in Jerusalem.

Sabeel is an ecumenical liberation theology centre that ministers primarily to Christian Palestinians and nurtures advocacy with Christians around the World. My role at *Sabeel* this summer was to assist in organizing their annual international youth conference as well as to participate in their youth

retreats for Palestinian Christian youth from both Israel and the West Bank. Two of these youth retreats took place in Jericho, the only city in all of Israel and Palestine where Palestinians with West Bank IDs, Jerusalem IDs, and Israeli citizenship can come together without hindrance from the Israeli military. The theme of the first retreat was to explore the meaning of what it means to be a Palestinian Christian living in the State of Israel and living in occupied Palestine. The youth spoke of their daily struggles to maintain a sense of themselves as Christian Arabs as they quickly become a minority. My friend observed during a group discussion, 'We are becoming like a drop of water in the ocean.'

The second retreat focused on non-violent resistance to the Occupation. Several of the youth that attended this retreat had spent years in Israeli jails. A friend I met there, Rami, had been accused of killing an Israeli soldier during the second Intifada. He was arrested without trial or lawyer and put in jail for four years. At this retreat we heard speakers from several NGOs including the *Christian Peacemaker Team* from Hebron and the *Ecumenical Accompaniers*

Programme in Israel and Palestine (EAPPI).

The international youth conference took place at the end of July. Twenty-three youth from all over Europe and North America arrived for the two and a half week long conference. We traveled throughout the West Bank and to Galilee in Israel, showing the participants the devastation created by the Wall, by checkpoints, and by illegal (under international and Israeli law) Jewish settlements in the West Bank. The participants, the majority of whom had never been to the Middle East before, were deeply moved by their experience. In one of our final debriefing sessions, participants were asked to articulate the most shocking moments for them during the conference. Their two most disturbing experiences were the day spent in Hebron and the first view of the Wall snaking in between a Palestinian refugee camp, Anata, and an illegal Jewish settlement, Pisgat Ze'ev. In Hebron, *Christian Peacemaker Teams* (CPT) gave us a tour of the Old City, where the Jewish settlements are built on top of Palestinian shops and homes. At one point, we were followed and harassed by a Jewish woman settler. Moments

later a military jeep approached our group and, without warning or reason, pulled from the group a young doctor from Bethlehem, put him into the back of their jeep and sped away. He was released a couple of hours later, after CPT negotiated with the army. The soldiers could not provide a reason for the arrest, only that the woman settler had asked them to do it.

The ramifications and injustices of the Occupation were blatantly apparent in all dimensions of my experience this summer. As someone who has grown up in the West, you stand baffled while in Palestine, unable to figure out how a situation like this can exist, how this kind of persecution is allowed to take form and grow. Where is the justice? You ask yourself these simple questions over and over. These are questions our conference participants struggled with deeply before returning to their homes in Europe and North America. In Palestine and Israel, one cannot escape the situation, there is no reprieve. As my friend's father said to me one evening over coffee, 'politics are in the air, they're what we breathe;' yet millions of people

continue to muster enough hope to live out their lives. The international conference participants, along with the local participants, realized that, as Christians, they have a responsibility to stand in solidarity with each other through the suffering. They must work together in community to bring justice, peace, and reconciliation to Palestine.

Kristi Assaly

The Story of the 'Sweet Cakes'

When I was growing up, every Sunday after church, my Mum would get out the griddle and make pancakes for lunch. This was the only time we had pancakes for a meal and it was a very satisfying tradition. As my own family grew up, we would have pancakes from time to time, very often for Sunday lunches. And then, Lisa and David Turner came into our lives via our daughter Kate. Lisa and David (brother and sister) were sharing an apartment while they were studying at Dalhousie, and had grown up in a family that always had pancakes for Sunday lunch. They invited Kate

and other university students to share pancakes with them at their apartment, and when the number of guests became greater than their cutlery supply, I invited the whole group to our little house on Yukon Street.

And so, sometime in 1999, our home became the gathering spot for hungry students and my own young family. It wasn't long before we added waffles to the menu, after Kate received a waffle iron for her birthday. The menu quickly stabilized into fresh coffee, juice, fruit salad, whipped cream, waffles, maple syrup and of course, mounds of pancakes. At this point in the story, I must confess that while I enjoy entertaining, I dread planning menus and setting dates. So, to have a steady menu and a steady guest list took all the worries out of it and I was set. Each week upon entering the house, guests would take up a job and the chatter and fun was wonderful to behold. From chopping to mixing to cooking, each regular had a specialty and many discovered unknown talents.

Over the years, the members of the group have changed, from university students, to

musicians, to teenagers, to families. Some have joined us from church, others from outside the church. Some were teen billets staying with us, shaken to life on Sunday morning by groups of strangers pouring into their room (which doubled as our family room)! When all the work was done, after a chorus of the Johnny Apple-seed grace, we would settle down to a feast, Bible study, chat by the fire or...

Then, one special Sunday in September 2006, Oriana and I found ourselves alone on Sunday, and we prepared a smaller version of the meal and hit the road. With packages of food, cutlery and dishes, we made our way to the IWK, up to the room where Kate and Sean Therien, Stella and Bill Lord, and brand new Luc were getting to know each other. We opened the picnic and while they ate, Ori and I had a chance to hold Luc. It was at that occasion that the pancakes became named "sweet cakes" by Sean!

This year, we have more or less fallen out of the practice of hosting pancakes, not by design, but because I am feeling a bit at a crossroads. With our children leaving home all too quickly, I find

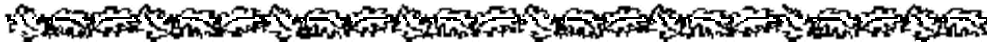
myself wondering what is next. I appreciate the opportunities for developing a Christian community by eating together, and love the ease of a regular plan like "pancakes". I was interested to hear a friend talk of a plan at her church where each week several parishioners identify themselves as hosts that day, and others choose which house they would like to go to for a simple meal and fellowship. While entertaining can be

daunting (with so many possibilities for complex planning), simply sharing a space and food with spiritual friends can be both rewarding and relaxing. Anyone who has been to my house will know that there is often laundry in progress, or dust balls around the floor, but we try to make sure that there is also plenty of laughter in the air and ears ready to listen.

We know that our Lord always made time to share

a meal with his followers. In fact, breaking bread together was so central to his ministry that it is the one act he asked us to always do in his name. And so, as I leave the warmth of coffee time at St. Paul's these Sundays, I wonder, what does God have in store for us now?

Maggie Duinker



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