

St. Paul's News

475 State Street Albany, New York 12203

Christmas in the Rear-view mirror

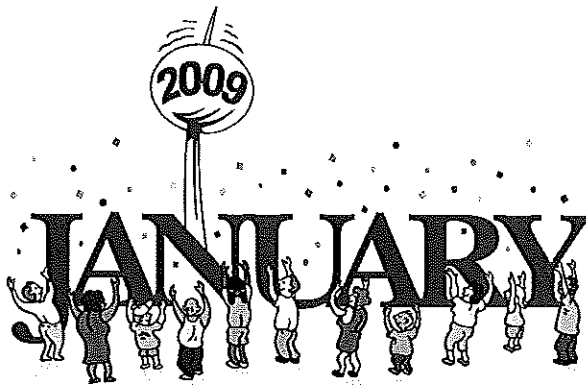
There is a pretty good piece of Christmas evening dialogue in Little, Big, in which the members of the Drinkwater family are ice skating at Edgewood:

'Christmas,' said Doctor Drinkwater as his red-cheeked face sped smoothly toward Smoky's, 'is a kind of day, like no other in the year, that doesn't seem to succeed the days it follows, if you see what I mean.' . . .

'I mean,' Doctor Drinkwater said, reappearing, 'that every Christmas seems to follow immediately after the last one; all the months that came between don't figure in. Christmases succeed each other.'

Christmases do follow very quickly where they once never seemed to come. My grandfather would declare the time shift a function of age. Somehow, Christmas seems more appealing in the rear-view mirror than it does coming full-bore, head on at you. That idea others in my family will reject as being age related and lay completely at the feet of a certifiable curmudgeon

Whether you like your Christmas coming or going – or whether Christmas leaves you not knowing if you're coming or going – Christmas means a lot of extra work for a lot of people – lots of people doing the old "locate and lug" routine.



It starts with Mr. Earl MacIntosh and the beautiful Christmas tree he donated from his Weathered Willow farm in Schenectady. Andy VanAcker and his truck made the trip to the farm to lug the tree on a cold morning after the ice storm. The Poinsettias had to be ordered and banked on the altar under Fran's guiding eye and then there was a whole "heavenly host" of folks young and old who helped decorate the tree and all the other decorations – wreaths – candelabra etc., etc.

The next day the Sunday School children (and camel!) retold the Christmas story –

Teachers and parents and director Dawn all had great supporting roles in yet another of the best ever pageants.

Extra services and special music invite kudos for organist/choir director - choir members and the Kahler contingent concert. Of course, the added services mean the office elf produce extra bulletins for the elders/altar guild/ushers/cadre. We really appreciate all those who read for our Service of Nine Lessons and Carols. Of course, if I got any of this wrong and/or omitted someone, you know that I have an absolute defense - - it was all a mirror image - backward and seen going away.

Before it all recedes any further we need to send out a BIG THANK YOU – to all who contributed to making our Christmas celebration very memorable – a sign of God's love Incarnate.

Pastor



Highlights from the December Council Meeting:

Board Reports:

Christian Education – Rehearsals for the children’s Christmas pageant planned for Sunday, December 21st have started. Elder, Zwe Ushe will replace Rick Beatty as the confirmation class leader.

Outreach – Throughout December and January will gather email addresses of St. Paul’s families & friends. Please send addresses to church office or place in offering plate. The addresses will be used for various St. Paul’s informational and event notifications. They WILL NOT be given to any other solicitors.

Finance – Final distribution received from the Healy estate. The committee plans to meet with NY Life representative next month for bi-annual check-up. Also plan to promote Simply Giving, the automated withdrawal/deposit program sponsored by Thrivent, in upcoming newsletters. Several members report that they find it a convenient way to regularly contribute their weekly/monthly offering contribution.

From Pastor’s Report

- Christmas 2008 Worship schedule:

Children’s Program	Sunday, 12/21	10:00 AM
Christmas Eve, Candlelight Service	Wednesday, 12/24	4:30 PM
Christmas Day, Festival Service	Thursday, 12/25	10:00 AM
Lessons & Carols	Sunday, 12/28	10:00 AM

- St. Paul’s participated at the district-sponsored “Congregational Check-up”, Nov. 15, 2008 at Bethlehem Lutheran; it was a worthwhile program discussing various financial strategies.
- Christmas-at-Sea boxes are being solicited and many individuals and groups have already responded. It has become a noted tradition at the Albany port to handout to seafarers who will be at sea for Christmas.
- Adopt-a-Family – List of requested gifts posted in bulletin, will be distributed to family just before Christmas.
- Transforming Congregations. Pastor David Born will meet with congregation leadership - Monday, January 5, 2009. Council, elders, all interested members invited to attend.
- Request to use Luther Hall for private fundraiser at St. Paul’s. Pastor will forward Luther Hall usage form to be completed. Pastor will be out-of-town, Sunday, February 15, 2009.

Old & New Business:

Financial Brainstorming Committee – The committee continues to research the re-establishment of a daycare at St. Paul’s.

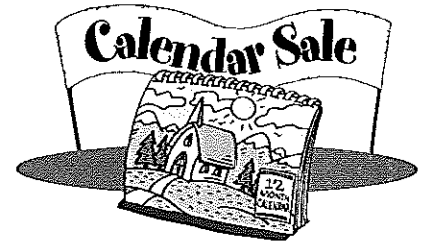
Projector – Council approved the purchase of a new projector (to be used with a laptop), for worship and congregational meeting presentations.

2009 Voter Meeting dates – Mark your calendars, the council approved these Sunday dates for 2009 Voter meetings: Feb 22 (budget vote), Jun 7 & Nov 8, 2009.

Thank-you from St. Paul’s Women’s Group

Many thanks to all who baked cookies and/or delivered them, along with poinsettia plants and

good wishes for a blessed Christmas, to our shut-ins. Thank you to Joan Aldi, Sheryl Baum, Mary Boshea, Alida Earl, Tina and Chamberlain Harris, Marty Hempel, Erica Kahler and Francis Van Acker. A special thank-you to Anne Ragoni for the beautiful handmade Christmas cards signed by all their friends from St. Paul’s, that accompanied each bag of goodies.



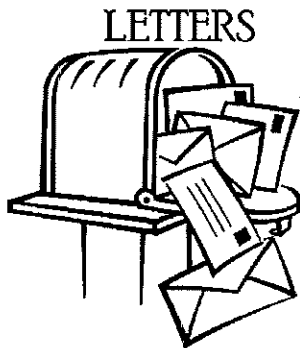
2009 Calendars Still Available

A few 2009 “God’s Creation” Appointment Calendars are still available for \$10.00. This is a beautiful scenic calendar, with a different inspiration message for each month. See Mary Boshea to purchase a calendar.



The Sunday School children presented their Christmas pageant on Sunday, December 21, 2008. Despite bad weather, the children (and parents!) made it to rehearsal and the program on Sunday. Everyone worked hard to make this a memorable event. If you didn’t already know, Arnold Seim wrote the program. The verses sung by the choir were Arnold’s original compositions. It was an honor to use Arnold’s

creation to tell the story of our Lord's birth. I want to thank the children, the parents, the choir and Arnold for their hard work in bringing the story to the members and visitors at St. Paul's. (J.A.)



Dear Dr. Hempel:
The enclosed is my offering to help you radio ministry. His continuing love and mercy allows me to help you. Most Sundays, I wake up to your blessed common sense on a local radio station, and we know that common sense is so very uncommon.

Sincerely yours,
Don Greenblatt

From Bailey and Alex:

Our Dearest Friends,
We are very sorry for not writing to you earlier than this. You know, it was not as easy as we thought to settle down. I think India has got so much rules (we may call it red tape) than any other country. Anyway, by the grace of God things are settling down slowly. Our things we shipped had arrived safely. The agent gave us some problem but amazingly the Customs Officers all were very nice to Bailey who went to clear the customs. We paid \$5 as customs duty. House needed some minor repairs and paintings – which is all done.

We have found a church 3-4 miles away from our house. If we are a little late we won't get any seats to sit. We are getting used to people around the house in our compound. The houses are being finished fast – we only have one neighbor, so far; a young couple in their forties with 2 young children. So far we did not have to use the AC. We have had some heavy rain and firework type of lightening and thunder for a month. Now the climate is not bad. Nights are cooler.

Alex is settling down slowly. We have got a smart 21 year old girl who cooks our meals, washes clothes, etc. The lawn and garden look good after the rains and we started a vegetable garden with the seeds from Hewitt's and Price Chopper. It is growing fast.

There is an English service at the Cathedral, nearest town Kot-tayam, only once a month. We are planning to attend that once a month.

Now, how is everything with you all – WE MISS YOU ALL VERY MUCH

Thank you very much for all the love and affection you gave to us. If everything goes well and we could save some money, we may visit you all in 2009 end. We are not sure yet. Things are very costly here – we are being very careful with money.

Alex is going to write a letter, he says. Our prayers are with each and every one of you. We mean it. Pray for us, too.

Love to you all!

Alex and Bailey

P.S. Alex has not started asking anybody for any donations – kidding! No Men's Club or Darts.

So he keeps asking me what I am doing with the money.

(From Alex)

I met a pastor of Anne David's church where her father was buried. The church is very poor and needs lots of repairs. It is an orthodox church. I saw the need when he approached me. I saw our fund could be put to good use. I gave 40,000 rupees (850 dollars) from the money you gave and I put in 10,000 which made it 50,000 for the carpet where the people can sit. No chairs in the church – mostly they stand for the service. If you would like more information, please ask Annie David.

We miss you all.

Convey our love to all.

Alex

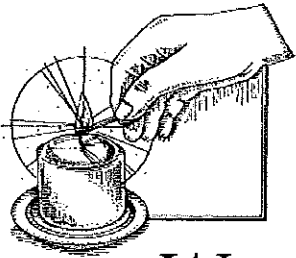


The Clowns are coming on February 22, 2009. The Kings Clown Troupe has been here before and always led the congregation in a very meaningful, yet different, worship service.

They come to us from the youth group of the Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Clifton Park. If you would like to sponsor this group, please see Anna Welter. Thank You.

★ Thank You! ★
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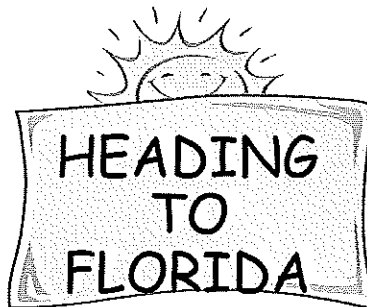
Thank You to all who prepared Christmas boxes for the seafarers. They are so appreciated!!



ELDER
ALAN ALEXANDER

Worship Helpers

DATE	FLOWERS	SERVICE STEWARD	COMMUNION ASSISTANT	COFFEE HOUR
Jan 4		Tom Ragoni	Joan Aldi	Frances VanAcker
Jan 11		Dennis Wheeler	Anne Ragoni	Nurjan Ahmedova
Jan 18	The Kahler Family in honor of Erika's birthday	Dennis Wheeler	Anne Ragoni	The Ushes
Jan 25		Marty Kahler	George David	Will and Martha Kratz



- JANUARY**
- 5. ZWELONKE USHE
 - 7. ALIDA EARL
 - 10. TADSSSES GEBREYES
 - 12. TRACEY BEATTY
 - 17. MRS. ERIKA KAHLER
PETER VAN ACKER
 - 20. BAILEY ALEXANDER
NATALIE JOHNSON
 - 21. MARLENE SHILLING
 - 24. TRACY DEVAPRASAD
 - 28. Ray Dow

Wilma and Arnold Seim will be heading to Florida for a few months. They will be leaving on January 15th and will be back for Easter.

We wish them a safe trip and a restful, warm few months.

In Arnold's absence, Olga Martinez, our assistant organist, will be leading us in our music at worship.

January 2009

St. Paul's Monthly Planner

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																													
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