



# Tower Talk

St. Paul's Episcopal Church

*The Church with Heart, in the Heart of the City*

November 15, 2021

## Thanksgiving and You

Thanksgiving is one of two secular holidays in our liturgical year. Like almost any civil holy day, there is some controversy around it due to the difference between history and tradition. History tells us, as close as possible, what really happened that winter near a big rock, and tradition tells us the story we heard in elementary school about the good Europeans and the Indians. A discussion about Truth, History, and Tradition might be a wonderful topic for a Rector's forum someday.

Thanksgiving is more than its history or its traditions. The day is more than gluttony and football or even family and tryptophan induced naps. Thanksgiving reminds us of how blessed we are, individually and as families, communities and as a nation. Of course there are many areas that need work. We all need forgiveness and reconciliation for the many things we have not done and the things we have done that were not all that great.

Allow me, with your indulgence, to share my personal thanksgivings as we approach this day of corporate gratitude:

I am thankful for my life and I owe a good deal of that to Drs. Habib and Rivera and a wonderful bunch of nurses and technicians at McLaren hospital. Thank you for taking care of me.

I am thankful for my cousins, Ed, Becky, Mark, Samantha, Susan and Helen. With their families, these folks are every relative on earth.

I am thankful for Tim, Liz, Rich, Eric, Evelyn, Nancy, Linda and Doug while not my blood brothers and sisters they have been and continue to be my brothers and sisters in every way.

I am thankful for clergy colleagues that keep me grounded in our common faith.

I am truly thankful for our three four-legged members of our family.

I am thankful for my new friends at St. Paul's and the honor of serving them.

I am extremely thankful for Marcie with whom I share life and love. This is a wonderful and holy Thanksgiving! Don+

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### [The Rev. Don Davidson](#)

priest-in-charge

### [Barbara Mannor](#)

senior warden

### [Becky Bennett](#)

junior warden

### [Maggie Hart](#)

treasurer

### [George Gibson](#)

Director of Finance

### [Holly Richardson](#)

Director of Music

### **Terrance Whitehead**

Sexton

**We are looking for a part-time  
Administrative Assistant.**

This person will assist the Rector, Staff, and people of St. Paul's in many ways including the creation and publication of our Sunday bulletins and our newsletter. This position is between 15-18 hours per week. Although applications will be received, due to issues relating to conflict-of-interest, members of St. Paul's are not encouraged to apply. If you would like to nominate someone, please let them know and ask them to contact Fr. Don or George Gibson at 810-234-8637 or [rector@stpaulschurchflint.com](mailto:rector@stpaulschurchflint.com).

**Do we have your email address?**

This week we hope to send out a new brief publication about what is going on at St. Paul's. At the moment we are calling it "Tower Talk", but a better name would be appreciated in case you have any ideas. The weekly news will be sent via email. If we do not have your email address, please send it to [rector@stpaulschurchflint.com](mailto:rector@stpaulschurchflint.com), or call us and leave it on Fr. Don's voicemail.

**The Master Calendar**

of all events, services and meetings at St. Paul's is now available on our website.

[www.stpaulschurchflint.com](http://www.stpaulschurchflint.com).

**Angel Tree**

Christmas is approaching quickly and our Angel Tree outreach to children in need is ready-to-go. Our Crossover partners provided us with the names, ages, and gift suggestions for 20 children. Each child will receive two gifts, one of clothing and one of a toy, game or gift-card. Monetary guideline is approximately \$50.00 per gift. Our "Angel Tree" will be set up in the church parlor beginning Sunday, November 14, where you can select a child's name on a special ornament.

Monetary donations are also very welcome. Please send your donations to the church to the attention of George Gibson. Be sure to note "Angel Tree" on your check.

If you have any questions, please contact the Angel Tree chairperson Carole Davis, phone/text 810-410-7789, email: [mauderose@comcast.net](mailto:mauderose@comcast.net). ALL GIFTS MUST BE RETURNED TO ST. PAUL'S BY SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12. Crossover will begin distributing gifts to families on December 13.

Our St. Paul's Community have always been generous supporters of the Angel Tree, and the need of these children and their families is greater than ever. Let's all make this the best year ever!

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**New Wi-Fi in the building**

Our New Wi-Fi provides a faster and more consistent connection to the Internet in the building. There is a new password *L0v31an0ther* (note the letter o are zeroes). The SSID (network name) starts with StP with the exception of the second floor.

**Year C (Happy New Year)**

The First Sunday of Advent is November 28, 2021. With the beginning of the new Church Liturgical Year we have new Calendars, and we begin year C of our three-year Revised Common Lectionary.

If you, or someone you love would like to receive Holy Communion at home, please contact Fr. Don. Home visitations have not been possible during the pandemic, but with the advent of vaccinations, this can be done. Please call the office, Fr. Don or send an email to make an appointment.

# SUNDAY MORNING: REFLECTIONS ON GEORGE HERBERT'S "AARON"

The Reverend Kelly Demo



Photo from Unsplash.

"Death used to be an executioner, but the gospel has made him just a gardner [sic]." It's little gems like this that make me such a fan of George Herbert. Writing in the early 1600's, he was an Anglican priest to a small rural parish outside Salisbury, England. What I love about his writing is that even though he lived over 400 years ago, his experience of ministry, of the love of God, and of his parishioners feels very familiar to my 21st century ears. The poem "Aaron" is an example of the timelessness of his writing and of our shared reality as clergy.

*Holiness on the head, <sup>SEP</sup>Light and perfection on the breast, <sup>SEP</sup>Harmonious bells below, raising the dead <sup>SEP</sup>To lead them unto life and rest. <sup>SEP</sup>Thus are true Aarons dressed.*

On any given Sunday, during that liminal time while the congregation is still singing the opening hymn and before I begin the opening prayer, I take a moment to pray in front of the altar to ready myself to celebrate the liturgy. I ask God for guidance to lead the people gathered in a meaningful time of praise. I get excited wondering what the Holy Spirit has in store for the morning. Sometimes, when there are several verses left in the hymn and my mind can wander, I think about Aaron, Moses' older brother and God's first priest. I think about the long lineage of priests who came before me. It gives me strength. It also makes me smile because as I picture the long line of clergy throughout history they are all men—men who would probably not be happy I am standing there, dressed like them but with earrings and pink manicured fingernails. And I think, "Hello, boys! Here we go!" *Thus are true Aarons dressed.*

There are so many wonder filled moments in the liturgy. Brief moments of tension wondering if the lector showed up to read the lessons and relief when they stand and make their way to the lectern. Saying the beautiful and ancient words of the Creed and praying for the vastness of humanity in the Prayers of the People. The kids in children's church come running back into the nave to find their parents, waving whatever craft they made that

connects their story with Jesus' story.

I cherish saying the Eucharist. As Episcopalians our heritage is Elizabethan with its soaring language. Even with a 1979 version, often the words we use are unlike words we use in our everyday conversation: "joining our voices with angels and archangels," "sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving", "the innumerable benefits procured unto us by the same". Delectable. The words feel good in my mouth.

I let the music, beauty, warmth, and comfort of the liturgy surround me like my favorite old flannel shirt. *Thus are true Aarons dressed.*

*Profaneness in my head, <sup>SEP</sup>Defects and darkness in my breast, <sup>SEP</sup>A noise of passions ringing me for dead <sup>SEP</sup>Unto a place where is no rest. <sup>SEP</sup>Poor priest, thus am I dressed.*

There is one moment in the Eucharist, however, that I dread. It is a weird, quirky thing and I don't know if any other priests feel this way. I have always hated the moment during the Eucharist when I lift the chalice and say, "This is my blood of the New Covenant..." It isn't that I don't like the words or question the power of what is happening in that moment.

When I lift a silver chalice I can see a distorted, freakish, fun-house-mirror version of my face.

It is disconcerting, and somehow terribly vulnerable. In that moment when I see my warped face, I feel like the whole congregation can see the Truth about me; grotesque, corrupt, base. It was Aaron, after all, who made the golden calf at Mount Sinai. Faithless. With this aberrant reflection in the polished silver I see all of my flaws on display like a carnival side show. *Poor priest, thus am I dressed.*

*Only another head <sup>SEP</sup> have, another heart and breast...*

Yet then, in the very next moment, the real joy of my job comes. I have the hallowed privilege of distributing the body and blood of Christ to the true priests of the church. I get to see up close the beautiful faces and hands of Christ in the world. What is so thrilling for me is how different Christ's hands can look—all of them finding their own way in the world, serving God as best they can.

Hands cupped together reaching out to receive the outward and visible sign: wrinkled and shaky, tiny and new, tan and calloused, missing a finger, boney, fat, colored with markers from Sunday school or a stamp from a bar they were in the night before. Scarred from self-inflicted pain, wedding ring, sticky with jelly, tattoos, painted fingernails and fingernails with dirt and grease caked under them. Hands that are so new to the world they stay in a tight fist, ready to take on the world; hands steady and strong and steeped in life, and hands that are almost done with their work in this world, thin, ghostly, fragile.

As I place the bread in their hands I try to lock eyes with them, just for a moment.

Continued next page.





### **Your Vestry:**

Barbara Mannor, Senior Warden ([seniorwarden@stpaulschurchflint.com](mailto:seniorwarden@stpaulschurchflint.com))

Becky Bennett, Junior Warden ([juniorwarden@stpaulschurchflint.com](mailto:juniorwarden@stpaulschurchflint.com))

Maggie Hart, Treasurer ([treasurer@stpaulschurchflint.com](mailto:treasurer@stpaulschurchflint.com))

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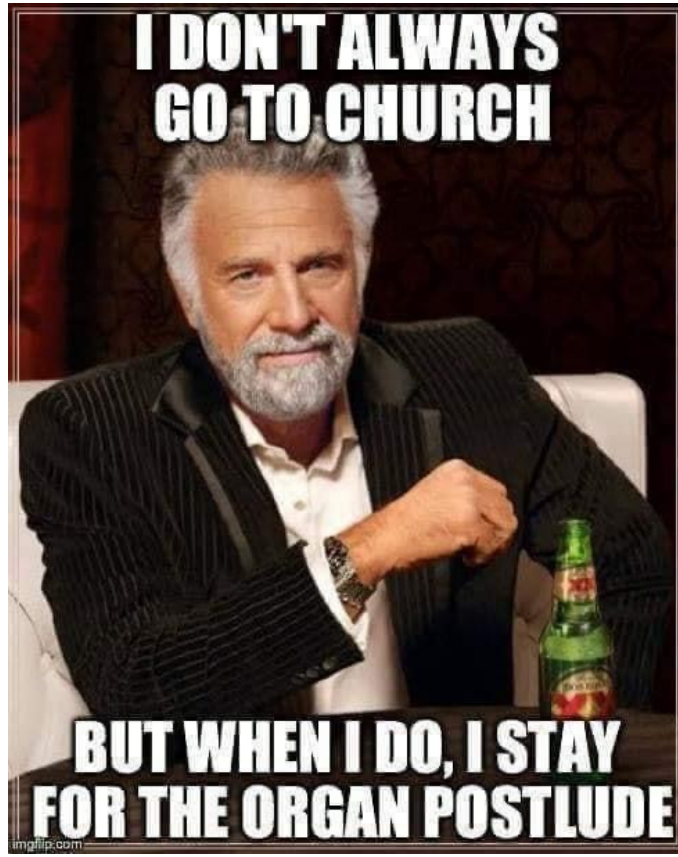
## **Advent Traditions**

Did you know your Advent Colors?

Advent the season of preparation as we wait for the arrival of the Christ Child is filled with many wonderful Church traditions including the Advent Wreath, The Jesse Tree, Greenery and rich colors including Green, Blue and Purple.

Purple was and is used in many churches as a symbol of the royalty of Jesus who came to us as a child of immigrant and homeless parents and yet was the King of all. We may be poor in resources or of spirit, but we are always rich in our relationship with Jesus who loves us and knows us each by name.

Blue or Sarum Blue is related to the love and sacrifice of a young woman named Mary. When Mary was asked to serve she gave of herself in a truly marvelous way by being the earthly mother of Jesus. The risk for her was great as she was not married during a time when such distinction meant societal pain. Yet, she put aside her own wishes and said "YES" and changed the world. Blue symbolizes her love.



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