

**January 28th, 2007**

### **The Annual Report of the Dean and Rector**

Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you. For you shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you, Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, says the LORD. Now I have put my words in your mouth. -- Jeremiah 1:4-10

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. -- 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

You, the people of St. Paul's Cathedral, Syracuse, are an amazing group of people. I am filled with humility, awe, and thanksgiving that I have the privilege of serving you as Dean and Rector. The lessons that we have heard today were the lessons on my first Sunday with you almost three years ago, February 1, 2004. On that day I asked why God, through the discernment of the Search Committee and Vestry, had chosen me to come here, and admitted that I was not really sure. I did say then that I believe the reason God has called all of us together is for love. I said we are here, "To love, to love God, and to love each other, to love the City of Syracuse and its metropolitan area, to love the whole world. We are called to love each other particularly in this household of St. Paul's, the Diocese of Central New York, the Episcopal Church, the Anglican Communion, the whole Christian Church, and to love those of other faiths and no faith." In the three years that have passed I have come to know your love for each other and for me and my family, and I am deeply grateful. In the three years passed I have also come to see more clearly God's love for us.

Think about this. When God called the prophet Jeremiah, God said, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you." Think about this. Before any of us were even born God knew us and

called us to be in the communion and fellowship known as St. Paul's Cathedral. I really do believe that. Oh, I know, we've all made various choices that have led us to be at St. Paul's. But I do believe that is exactly how God works with us and leads us, by giving us the choice to respond to God's call, and by being here today we have responded to the call God made to us before any of us were even formed in the womb. Some of us are from Syracuse and even grew up here in St. Paul's. Some of us are from the State of New York and have either always been near here or have returned having lived in other parts of the world. Many of us have come from other parts of the country and have made this our home. And a significant number of us are originally from foreign countries and continents as varied as Europe, Asia, and Africa.. Yet God has called us to be here now, and we are further called to see this unlikely occurrence as a gift from God to help God's world. I personally treasure knowing all of you to some degree or another. For a variety of reasons I feel I have come to know a number of you fairly well, and that there are others I want and need to get to know much better. But as much as I desire to know all of you, to hear your stories, and to grow in intimacy with you, I have an equal desire for you to get to know each other, to hear each other's stories, and to grow in intimacy with each other. During the meeting in the Hansen Dining Room there will be an opportunity for us to get to know each other a bit better.

While there have been many changes in the Staff at St. Paul's over the past three years, changes which when I think of all of them at once leave me both exhausted and amazed, the real story of St. Paul's has to do with how this community has changed, both in its makeup and its culture. In order for us to see what I'm talking about I would like for us to try a little exercise. If you came to St. Paul's between 2004 and today please stand. If you came between 1997 and 2003 please stand. If you came here between 10 and 20 years ago please stand. If you came here between 20 and 30 years ago please stand. If you came here between 30 and 40 years ago please stand. If you came here 40 and 50 years ago please stand. If you have been over 50 years please stand. Would all who have been members of St. Paul's all of their lives please raise your hands? Now give yourselves a hand for hearing and responding to God's leading you to St. Paul's! With the changes in Staff, and the new people

who have joined us, we have also changed as a community. There are some here who remember parishioners being dropped off by their chauffeurs and then being picked up after services to go to their private clubs. There are some here who remember that every meal that was served here was catered. There may be some here who remember when an all-male Vestry had its meetings off of the premises every month.

Today we have people who walk, take the bus, or drive themselves. And the only people who are driven are either too young or too elderly to drive themselves. Today we are having a meal that the Vestry prepared in their homes and there are now monthly meals made by parishioners in our kitchen. Today for the first time in St. Paul's history both of the Wardens are women, because you elected them last year. And today the Vestry meetings are here and open to the public. Some of these changes happened a number of years ago. Others have happened more recently.

During this past year we had Adult Forums in Lent that focused on various aspects of poverty and justice in our community, and this fall the Adult Forum began by learning about the Millennium Development Goals and has now morphed into a Committee. We had an amazing All Saints Fund Raising Dinner and Auction that was completely done by parishioners and which raised more funds than predicted. Liturgically, this past year has brought us the sounds of Sudanese singing and drums, a Jazz Easter Vigil, the rock band U2 and the continuing high quality of the offerings of the Cathedral Choir. And while I am mentioning liturgy, let me make a special plea for new members of the Altar Guild. This Guild prepares the vessels and the altar for our worship each week. Serving on the Altar Guild is a wonderful way to experience the "beauty of holiness" that is St. Paul's Cathedral, and a great way to prepare for worship. If you have any interest please speak to Nancy Lambright. This year we have resurrected the Foyers and will hopefully be expanding them as an excellent way for us to get to know each other better. We have totally revamped our Children's Christian Formation Program and added a new dimension with Kerri Aitken leading the St. Paul's Cathedral Youth Choir. And certainly we are grateful that we have the continuing presence of our Sudanese brothers and sisters in our midst. They are an unexpected and unplanned gift to us, which of course is always the best kind of gift to receive. As we consider how best to live into supporting the

Millennium Development Goals we may find that they lead us to possibilities we never would have imagined.

In our role as the Cathedral of the Diocese of Central York we have had several important events over the past year. We began the Cathedral Exchange program which has brought other clergy from the Diocese to St. Paul's and has allowed me to worship with other parishes and tell them about the life and ministry of St. Paul's Cathedral. This program, which has been well received by the Diocese and parishioners here will be continued and be expanded in 2007, following a period of dormancy this fall to settle in to the new Staff configuration that we have here. Last Spring we once again hosted The Bishop's Bash, an annual event that brings youth from all over the diocese to St. Paul's for a dance and worship in their Cathedral. We also continued the tradition of hosting a liturgy on Ascension Day which brings clergy, laity and parishioners from all over the Diocese to celebrate Confirmations, Receptions and the Eucharist with the Bishop in the Cathedral. This past fall we hosted the first Diocesan Acolyte Festival in many years, which again brought youth from the furthest reaches of the Diocese to St. Paul's for a day of training and a wonderful festive liturgy with many banners from all over Central New York. Also this fall we hosted the Ordinations of people to the Transitional Diaconate, a glorious liturgy that nearly filled St. Paul's Cathedral. In my role as Dean I attend monthly meetings with the regional Deans and the Bishop and I am very glad to say that this Diocese very much appreciates the hospitality of St. Paul's, as much as the people of St. Paul's exercise wonderful hospitality to our brothers and sisters on these occasions.

The Vestry this year has worked very hard to balance the program and physical needs of St. Paul's with the financial needs. With your support and help they have been successful and deserve your great thanks. Among this Vestry several people have completed terms and I would like to thank them: Jim Pecoy, Bill Pitcher, David Ridings, and Kim Vorchheimer. I would also like to thank Betsy Barker who has served as Chancellor but who is resigning to concentrate more fully on her work. And I would be remiss not to thank our Vestry Clerk, Wendy Jones, whose minutes are always succinct yet informative. In the coming year the Vestry will begin to revisit the Strategic Plan that we adopted almost two years ago, both for the purpose of evaluating

our progress, and also to revise it in accordance with our current realities of St. Paul's as they have changed over the past two years.

I would also like to thank the Staff; The Reverend Canon Deacon Jane Luck, Canon Musician Jim Potts, Organ Scholar Steven Seigart, Accounting Assistant Ellen Grapensteter, Assistant for Family Ministries Jeanne Avery, Sexton John Pizzi, Office Coordinator/Tenor Soloist/ and Janitorial Assistant Jonathan Howell, Soprano Soloist Nora Fleming, Alto Soloist Pam McLaughlin, and Bass Soloist Malcolm Merriweather. I am privileged to have a Staff of such committed and highly professional people who often work beyond the hours for which they are paid because they care so much about the well-being of St. Paul's. There of course many, many more people to be thanked. I cannot name them all here, but they and their offerings to St. Paul's are represented in the Annual Report. Please do read it and give thanks for all of the offerings of the people of St. Paul's.

And so it is with gratitude that I look forward to the year 2007 and the opportunities that await us. Together, let us go where God shall send us, and speak what God commands us. It is in this hope and promise that God will lead us that I remain,

Yours in Christ, Tom+

The Very Reverend G. Thomas Luck, Dean and Rector