



St. Paul's Episcopal Church
The Rev. Carolyn H. Eklund
Rector

5 November 2018

Dear St. Paul's Friend,

Two of the most important words from the life of Jesus as we read the Gospels are, "Follow me!" With these simple words Jesus called to himself all people including the notorious, the doubting, the common and the sick. He called Matthew the tax collector who dropped all the coins he had extorted from innocent people, turned and followed Jesus. He was rich and had lots of friends he partied with. But he was hated, and. Jesus called to him with love.

Andrew and Peter, fishing in the Sea of Galilee turned and followed Jesus. Men making a living as fishermen, they dropped their nets and followed Jesus. What was it that made them decide to leave everything to follow Jesus? What would make me do such a thing? Great love? Great Hope? Great healing?

Over the years as we seek to follow Jesus faithfully, we hope to be healed. We hope to help a broken world. Sometimes his call is clear. But sometimes it is murky and even silent. The truth is that he always desires to call to us and invite us to follow him as he shows us the way of love. He calls us to his mission of love and we follow him to help heal a broken and hurting world.

The St. Paul's Stewardship Program for 2019 is designed around the theme of following Jesus. "Jesus calls. We follow." My five years as the rector of St. Paul's has revealed to me how clearly this parish hears Jesus' call to mission and follows him. He has led us into the neighborhood and into the town of Brunswick. He has led us to be better individual followers of Jesus. He has led us to be a better parish and to work for a better world.

Recently, our mission at St. Paul's has been to strengthen the spirituality of all our families, especially those with small children and youth. The Vestry has spent this year examining our goals for the future, and in January, we engaged deeply in conversation to consider calling a full-time staff person to minister to our families with small children and to



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strengthen the spirituality of all members. That's why we called the Rev. Peggy Schnack to be our full time assistant priest. Funding her salary will be a financial stretch for us, and we thank the Diocese of Maine for assisting us with a grant. Our mission is future-oriented as we seek to invest in the formation of our children, youth, their parents and care for parishioners of all ages.

Another stretch the Vestry considered making this year is to initiate a capital improvement program called the Seasons of Renewal. The Vestry realized that now was the time to invest in improvements for the sake of our building and all who gather here. Energy efficiency and care of the exterior and the nave are important improvements that many generous parishioners have given or pledged to. Thank you.

Now, the Stewardship Team is asking us all to listen to the voice of Jesus calling. Thank you Stewardship Team: Caroline Russell, Chair, Charla Spann, Phil Studwell, Patsy Oehl, Macauley Lord, Paul Womer. Thank you, for your faithful, generous and hopeful spirit.

Each person on the Stewardship Team has responded to Jesus' call by raising their pledge from last year by at least 5%. That's the financial "stretch" I'm asking each of us to prayerfully consider. I expect that our budget will be a bit more challenging in 2019 as we invest ahead of our future. But I also expect that our parish will accept the invitation of Jesus's call to give.

My hope is that you will respond to my invitation to pledge to God's mission at St. Paul's. I couldn't be happier to be sharing Jesus' call with you as we nurture our faith and work together to love and serve a hurting and broken world.

Yours in the spirit of following Jesus,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Carolyn H. Eklund" followed by a small cross symbol.

The Rev. Carolyn H. Eklund