

# THE ST PETER'S POST

January, 2024

St Peter's Episcopal Church, Port Royal, VA

The Rev. Catherine D. Hicks, Rector

## Worship & Parish Life during The Season after the Epiphany

- Every Sunday, In person worship at St Peter's and online on YouTube, 11am. <https://www.youtube.com/@st.petersepiscopalchurchpo677/streams>
- Every Wednesday, 10AM until Noon Bible Study in the Parish House—Study the upcoming Sunday's lectionary.
- Sun., Jan. 7, 12PM –Coffee Hour in the Parish House after the 11 AM Worship service
- Thurs., Jan. 11, 2pm – Vestry
- Wed., Jan. 17 Village Harvest, 3PM-5PM – If you'd like to help, please contact Andrea Pogue, 540-847-9002.
- Thurs., Jan 18 Sacred Ground meeting on Zoom 7-8PM <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89268863201?pwd=emFleUlBY3ZreEdWbDdFdVpKazNldz09>. Meeting ID: 892 6886 3201 Passcode: 138914
- Sun., Jan. 21 – Congregational Meeting during the 11AM Worship service.
- Tues, Jan. 23, 4PM OR 7PM –“A Case for Love” movie at the Paragon Theatre, Fredericksburg

## Server Schedule, Jan, 2024

**Sun., Jan. 7, 2024 The First Sunday after the Epiphany, Baptism of Jesus 11AM, Holy Eucharist**

Lector: Elizabeth Heimbach  
Chalice Bearer: Elizabeth Heimbach  
Altar Cleanup: Andrea Pogue

**Sun., Jan. 14, 2024 The Second Sunday after the Epiphany, Holy Eucharist, 11AM, Holy Eucharist**

Lector: Ben Hicks  
Chalice Bearer: Alice Hughes  
Altar Cleanup: Jan Saylor

**Sun., Jan. 21, 2024 The Third Sunday after the Epiphany, Holy Eucharist, Congregational Meeting, 11AM**

Lector: Alice Hughes  
Chalice Bearer: Andrea Pogue  
Altar Cleanup: BJ Anderson

**Sun., Jan. 28, 2024 The Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany, Morning Prayer, 11AM**

Lector: Linda Kramer  
Altar Cleanup: Elizabeth Heimbach

## Change is Essential to Growth

Greetings, all.

We Christians are not tied to the past.

The flow of the church year reminds us of the importance of being open to what is new. The birth of Jesus brought joy and new hope to those who had been waiting for a Messiah, but others greeted this birth with fear, for they were not open to change. Epiphany, which is on January 6<sup>th</sup>, and the season following, gives us to time to understand more deeply who Jesus is—not just someone stuffed into the dusty pages of a book, but a life giving, changing presence in each of our lives. Jesus calls us to follow, and following Jesus inevitably involves change.

Richard Rohr, the Catholic theologian points out in his New Year's Day meditation that St. John Henry Newman (1801–1890) said, “Here below to live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often.” [2] That's a very different philosophy than most of us have. Our natural approach is to keep in cruise control. The way we do it is the way we do it, and any change is considered dangerous, heretical, and new.” He goes on to say that in the “Gospel we were given a program of change and growth from the beginning.”

So as this new year begins, consider how you want to change and grow, and how you'd like

to see St Peter's change and grow. Jesus is leading us, so that we can trust with assurance that he will go before us on the paths that we will walk in love this year.

Peace  
Catherine

### Walk in Love—The Theme for This Church Year at St Peter's

Last year the Vestry decided to follow at theme for the new church year. The theme, **Walk in Love**, contains within it the following themes. **"Walk to the Manger"** defined the seasons of Advent and Christmas. We gave the community an opportunity to Walk to the Manger during the outdoor Christmas Pageant and to celebrate afterward in the Parish House at a bountiful party organized by Cookie Davis. Thank you, one and all, for making this gift to our community possible. Special thanks to Chris Limox, who brought his goats to hang out with the shepherds during the pageant and to charm everyone who came to greet them.



In addition to the many St Peter's people who participated, two angels from the community

flew in for the pageant, Loretta Jones and Mary Motley. Everyone at St Peter's pitched in to make the pageant meaningful and beautiful. Johnathan Davis created a new star for this year's pageant. And the newly lit evergreen tree in front of the church added to the beauty of this season.



"Epiphany" comes from the Greek word "epiphaneia", which means "appearing" or "revealing," an appropriate title for the season in which the appointed scriptures are devoted to the revealing of Jesus as the Son of God and our Lord and Savior. The length of the season varies each year and is determined by the date of Easter. **This year, The Feast of the Epiphany occurs on Saturday, Jan 6 and the Epiphany season ends on Tuesday, Feb 13<sup>th</sup>, lasting through six of a possible nine Sundays.** Ash Wednesday this year falls on Feb. 14, 2024.

For The Season after the Epiphany, the St Peter's theme is **"Walk in the Light."** As the John's prologue (first chapter of the Gospel according to John) says, "The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." And in John, Chapter 8, Jesus

says to the people, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life." During this season, consider what it means to you to walk in the light.

During Lent and Holy Week, we will "**Walk to the Cross**" as we dare to go with Jesus to Jerusalem and follow him to all the way to Golgotha.

The Season of Easter is the time to "**Walk in New Life**" as we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. And then, for Pentecost and the Season after Pentecost, the longest season of the church year, we will follow Jesus and "Walk in the Way" as we learn from all he taught us, through the power of the Holy Spirit. Let's look forward to walking in love together this year.

### Saying goodbye to 2023

St Peter's made a positive difference to many during 2023. Once more, people from St Peter's, led by Andrea Pogue, traveled to **Jamaica** to provide needed school supplies, new technology, and educational funds for the students of the Victoria School, whose principal, Annette Steel, visited St Peter's during the summer. **Shred-It** gave people in the community an opportunity to get rid of old documents. **The Village Harvest** began its 10<sup>th</sup> year. The number of clients was the highest since 2019. An art auction featuring Mary Peterman's art and the generosity of parishioners for **ECM work** contributed to increased funds for the ECM to use to help area people during Thanksgiving and Christmas through the Caroline County Department of Social Services. funds (\$1545: \$500 for Thanksgiving, and \$800 for Christmas, and some money used to buy a kerosene heater for a family in Port Royal). The **ECW** made yearly donations to internal ministries and outside donations including CERVE and social services and held a tea to welcome Jean Devitt to the congregation. During the summer the ECW welcomed a group of youth and children from Port Royal

for lunch and games. The ECW took dinner in December to **The House** at UMW, a joint Episcopal and Lutheran ministry for young adults, supported by the Fredericksburg Region.

With the help of the Germanna Foundation, the **Sacred Ground Scholarship** will be presented to people who need financial help for trade school. Along with other Episcopal churches in the Region, St Peter's is bringing a **weekly Eucharist to Episcopalians at Chancellor's Village**.

**Christian Education** included a **class on the Book of Psalms** for adults during Lent, in addition to an outdoor **Stations of the Cross**, for meditative Lenten walks. The day of Pentecost featured a **Bluegrass band** who played during coffee hour. **A new class for 5-9 year olds, God's Garden** began in the fall. This year, people had the opportunity to participate in a Sunday afternoon **Advent Workshop**, and to make Advent wreaths and other crafts. Wednesday Bible study continued throughout the year.

**Financial stewardship increased this year**, thanks to the generosity of St Peter's parishioners. **The Stewardship Tree** provided a visual update of the number of people pledging to this annual campaign. During 2023, **Breezeline came to the area and St Peter's now has the internet, so worship services are streamed on YouTube each Sunday**.

**Worship in 2023** could not take place without the work of everyone present. The Rev Tom Hughes continues to serve alongside Catherine. Faithful lectors bring life to the readings each week. Brad and the choir help to lead worship through their amazing musical contributions of anthems, instrumental pieces, duets, solos and excellent musicianship. Cookie Davis continues to beautify worship with her weekly flower arrangements. Alice Hughes led a workshop during Advent in which several people, new to the task, learned how to arrange greens into beautiful window centerpieces. Elizabeth Heimbach prepares the



altar for worship each Sunday and a team of people help to clean up after worship. BJ Anderson continues to make communion bread for us each week. Johnny and Cookie Davis keep the buildings and grounds in shape. Jim Anderson pitched in this year to work on the old church doors and the pew box doors.

**Our old buildings and grounds presented some major challenges in 2023.** A brief storm in July severely damaged the sycamore, which had to be severely pruned. The pear tree behind the Parish House had to be cut down due to its deteriorating condition. The furnace in the Parish House had to be replaced. The church sustained termite damage, resulting in some major repairs. The Parish House had to be patched up in various areas and received its next coat of paint.

Read more about 2023 at this link to the St Peter's website.  
<https://news.churchsp.org/2023highlights/>

## December Village Harvest



Photos from the Village Harvest include Jamie Buck, long time Village Harvest volunteer, with a thank you gift of Christmas flowers. Emma and Owen Saylor, grandchildren of Brad and Jan, helped to take food to the clients. They also went caroling around Port Royal and Portobago Bay afterward. The sky and the river shone on this early winter day.

Report by Ben Hicks

We had 112 people to receive food, the largest monthly number in almost two years (since

Jan. 2022 with 115). We distributed 1,343 pounds which was just under the largest delivery of the year (April, 2023, 1,365 pounds)

For the year, we recovered from a slow first quarter, 2023 and ended the year serving 1,063 people compared to 1,051 in 2022. It was the best yearly total since 2019.

Pounds of food increased from 2021 to 2022 (14,303 to 15,302 pounds) but dipped to 13,859 pounds in 2023. In the first quarter we distributed 2,913 pounds compared to over 4,000 for 2022 and 2021.

As a result, pounds provided per individual dropped from 14.56 in 2022 to 13.04. In 2021, it was in the same range at 14.32. Still, pounds per individual are substantially higher since 2019 than in earlier periods.

## Sacred Ground update



The Sacred Ground group voted unanimously by email in early December to fund the recommendation for scholarships forwarded by Jessica Thompson at

Germanna for scholarships for students entering the trades. Each student is "in financial need and from underserved populations." The \$2,700 would be split equally to pay for their training. Each student owes approximately \$1,500 for the classes to complete the training. Additional expenses for each student may be covered through additional scholarship funds. We will meet these students at a scholarship reception in the spring. The following three students are receiving Sacred Ground scholarships.

### Devonte B.

Devonte possesses hands-on experience in equipment operation, construction, and culinary skills. His career objective is to secure

a full-time position as a hydro excavator operator, complemented by acquiring proficiency in driving a lowboy for heavy equipment transport. This certification pursuit aims to enhance his employability, providing increased stability for his family, thereby positively impacting the well-being of his two children.

### **Nicole B.**

Nicole has a diverse employment history since the age of 17, including a significant role in caring for her terminally ill grandmother throughout 2022. Her ambition is to establish herself as an owner/operator in the trucking industry.

### **Diamond C.**

Diamond recently transitioned from three jobs to two, prioritizing a more balanced work schedule while maintaining her strong work ethic. Despite her love for work, she recognizes the importance of a manageable workload. With a proactive mindset, she is committed to achieving success in CDL training, ensuring she acquires the necessary knowledge for future endeavors.

The Sacred Ground group will meet on Thursday, January 18 at 7PM on Zoom. All are welcome. **Thurs., Jan 18**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89268863201?pwd=emFlUjBYMzZreEdWbDdFdVpKazNldz09>. Meeting ID: 892 6886 3201 Passcode: 138914

## **The Baptism of our Lord, Jan. 7**

On the first Sunday after the Epiphany the church celebrates the Baptism of Jesus Christ. All four gospels contain an account of Jesus being baptized by John in the River Jordan.

This is the Sunday that we renew our baptismal vows, remembering that at our baptisms we are sealed with the Holy Spirit and marked as Christ's own forever, and that we become part of a community of committed Christians who have vowed to follow Jesus.



### **The Baptismal covenant**

1 Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

2 Do you believe in God the Holy

Spirit?

3 Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?

4 Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?

5 Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?

6 Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?

7 Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?

The prayers for those who are to be baptized remind us of the gifts that come with our own baptisms—deliverance from sin and death, hearts open to God's grace and truth, life full of the Holy Spirit, being in the faith and communion of the Church, loving others in the power of the Spirit, going into the world in witness to God's love, and to at last come into the fullness of God's peace and glory. To receive these gifts fully, we pray for inquiring and discerning hearts, the courage to will and to persevere, a spirit to know and to love God, and the gift of joy and wonder in all of God's works.

**St Peter's baptism page -**

<https://news.churchsp.org/the-baptism-page>

## **Bible Study, Wed mornings 10AM until noon in the Parish House**

This group is open to **ALL** who would like to connect with others at St Peter's midweek and to spend some time praying for those in need and studying the scriptures coming up for

Sunday. For those who attend, invite someone else to join in. **For those who haven't yet tried out this study, consider joining in for a time of prayer plus study.** If you'd like to know more, give Catherine a call. 540-809-7489.



### Congregational Meeting, Sunday, January 21



The annual Congregational Meeting, required by the Canons of the Episcopal Church, gives everyone at St Peter's a chance to review the year just past and to give thanks for its blessings, to look ahead to various challenges that the new year holds, and to ask questions and to elect new Vestry members.

**The Vestry is a group of people made up of lay leaders who, along with the Rector, direct the ministries of St Peter's, based on input from the congregation.**

The current vestry includes Senior Warden Elizabeth Heimbach (2025), Junior Warden, Cookie Davis (2024), Helmut Linne von Berg (2025), Larry Saylor (2024, finishing Robert Bryan's term), and Linda Upshaw (2026). Cookie has completed a three year term and will be rotating off the vestry. Larry has completed the last year of Robert Bryan's three year term. Helmut Linne von Berg is resigning from the Vestry due to his caregiving responsibilities for Susan. His unfinished term creates a one year vacancy to be filled, along with the two three year terms that will need to be filled.

Johnny Davis and Andrea Pogue have agreed to run to fill the two three year terms, and Larry Saylor will run for the one year term.

Each of these people fulfills the qualifications for a Vestry member, including attending worship on a regular basis, a financial contributor, and a registered member of the congregation.

Their duties will include being people of prayer, attending worship services, and to be involved in church activities, to attend monthly meetings of the Vestry and to be active as a team player in the group, and to bring concerns of the congregation to the attention of the Vestry.

If you feel called to serve God and the Church in this capacity, or if you'd like to nominate someone (with that person's permission) please contact Catherine or a current Vestry member. Nominations can be made from the floor, but only if the person nominated has agreed ahead of time to be nominated and is willing to serve.

### "A Case for Love", a movie for our time, Tuesday, January 23





On January 23, 2024 there will be a one night showing of a new movie entitled "A Case for Love". The movie originated in 2019, prior to the pandemic by a team led by Brian Ide, a film director in California.

**<https://www.gracebasedfilms.org/a-case-for-love> Film website.**

This a great movie for the Season after Epiphany and our theme of "Walk in the Light." Light has been viewed as a metaphor for righteousness and goodness. As Bishop Curry writes in his book **Love is the Way**, "Love as an action is the only thing that has ever changed the world for the better....Love is a commitment to seek the good and to work for the good and welfare of others."

Ide writes about how the movie idea came to him "Recently, I had grown more and more troubled by the increasing divisive state of our culture, and found myself contemplating, "what can I do to help?" ...

"I went about the task of making this documentary —to give voice to my own thoughts as well as many others around the country...

"As Bishop Curry wrote in his latest book, 'When love is the way, the earth will be a sanctuary. When love is the way, we will lay our swords and shields down by the riverside to study war no more. When love is the way, there's plenty of room for all of God's children. When love is the way, we actually treat each other, well, like we are actually family.'

"In the documentary, our film team travels the U.S. searching for people living their lives selflessly and interviews them about how that way of living affects others and themselves. We also interview random people on the street, discussing where they've witnessed unselfish love and where they've seen its absence. We also learn what well-known figures, including Pete Buttigieg, Al Roker, Sam Waterston, John Danforth, Becca Stevens, Jon Meacham, Russell Moore, Kelly Brown Douglas, and Jim Clyburn, have to say about the topic. Finally, Bishop Michael Curry places all we've seen into context.

"Subjects explored: Racial Justice, Sexual Identity, Military Service, Foster Care, Politics, Sexual Trafficking, Disability, Loss of Loved Ones, Refugees, Volunteering, Food Justice and more.

"What's the verdict on "A Case for Love"? Is unselfish love the antidote to what ails us? Join us January 23, 2024 and decide for yourself!

"The film will be shown on one night in about 1,000 locations. **The closest location to us is Paragon movie theatre in Fredericksburg. There are two times - 4pm, 7pm. The film is about 2 hours. The admission is \$12.75 adult and seniors \$9.50." You can purchase tickets ahead at the film website link on this page.**

**Survey. Please complete the online form here to indicate your interest in the movie.**

**<https://news.churchsp.org/a-case-for-love-questions/>**

**1. Are you interested in seeing this movie ?** If so would you like to go with a group to the movie in Fredericksburg .

**2 Would you be willing to participate in a later discussion (Zoom) at a convenient and time ?** We would reflect on what we saw and discuss possible next steps we may pursue , particularly in the context of "Walk in Love"

## Prayer Corner

Please pray for Tiffany Feliciano, who is having surgery this first week of the new year. Also, please continue to pray for the Linne von Bergs, the Faibisys, for those in long term care centers, including Thom Guthrie, for Lois Christie, for the Wisdoms and for all on our prayer list, which appears in each week's bulletin.

## The Gospel in January

**Sunday, Jan. 7 Mark 1:4-11**

Wilderness themes, water-passage themes, temptation themes, prophetic themes—all

themes from the Old Testament history of redemption occur in these opening lines from the gospel according to Mark. The passage begins with the ministry of John the Baptist, the voice coming out of the wilderness, as God's voice hovers over the face of the deep. God calls forth light, and therefore life; John the Baptist calls forth repentance and forgiveness, and through baptism, a new life is born. Jesus comes to John to be baptized in the River Jordan. As John baptizes Jesus, the heavens split apart and the Spirit descends, affirming Jesus as both messianic King and Spirit filled servant. Although the event is a means of public disclosure in both Matthew and John, only Jesus knows that he has been claimed by God in Mark's version of the story.

As Jesus rises out of the water, breaking through into our world, God breaks through from heaven as well. Baptism is the re-entry of God into our lives, and the re-entry of ourselves into God's intended goal for creation: goodness and life. Repentance and forgiveness is our way of turning back, of re-entering into the reign of God on earth.

### **Sunday, Jan. 14 - John 1:43-51**

John 1:43-51, much like the entire first chapter of John, seeks to establish the identity of Jesus as the Son of God.

First, Jesus calls Andrew, a disciple of John the Baptist. Andrew goes and finds his brother, Philip. Philip brings Nathanael along. Nathanael was a "thinker". He wouldn't accept anything at face value, but he would question and contemplate everything until he was sure of its truthfulness. After speaking with Jesus, Nathanael is convinced that Jesus is the "Son of God and the King of Israel," the Messiah who had been prophesied in the Old Testament.

### **Sunday, Jan. 21 -Mark 1:14-20**

The Gospel reading describes Jesus' inaugural message. Mark separates the ministry of Jesus from that of John the Baptist, so only after the arrest of John does Jesus begin his ministry in earnest. At the end of John's ministry comes

the end of one stage of history. Now, Jesus and his gospel come to center stage. The arrest of John and the beginning of Jesus' ministry are intentionally correlated to show that the gospel is proclaimed and known in adversity and suffering.

**The Kingdom of God is near- Repent and Believe!** Jesus both inaugurates the kingdom in the present moment, and will realize it at his second coming. Mark portrays Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom coming not only as a gift ("good news"), but also with a demand- repent and give up all to follow.

The call goes out this week to Simon and Andrew as well as James and John. Simon and Andrew, perhaps weary from a night of fishing, are still plying their nets when a stranger approaches them on the shore in the person of Jesus.

Later we are told that Andrew and Simon have their own house (1:29). The last verse mentions that James and John have hired hands (1:20). These people were not poor, destitute fishermen, but were prosperous at their trade. They gave up security and family ("left their father", v. 20) to devote themselves to Christ's mission.

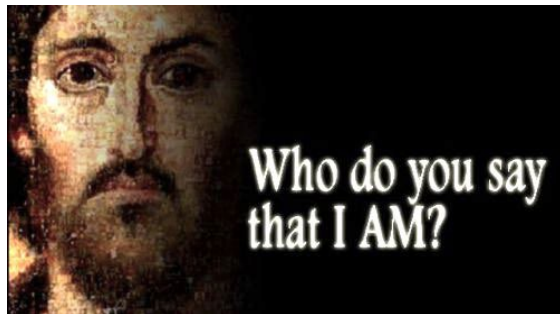
### **Sunday, Jan. 31 - Mark 1:21-28**

Jesus demonstrates divine authority by healing a man with unclean spirit. Jesus preaches the Good news even when it leads to conflict.

Bruce Epperly, who wrote about this passage, says that Jesus walked the talk, and spoke words that transformed people's lives and reflected God's vision for humankind. In today's reading, Jesus' sermon leads to action. He confronts a man, possessed by a destructive spirit. While we don't know the nature of this spirit, it destroyed his personality, rendering him an outcast, unclean, and unable to live with his family. Jesus confronts this unclean spirit with the simple words: "Be still. Come out from him."



## The Confession of St Peter, Jan 18



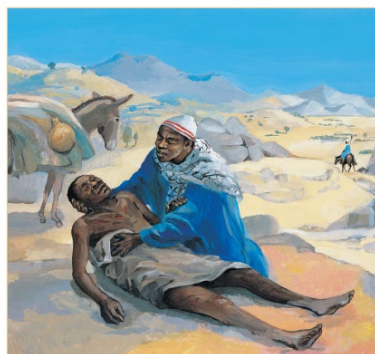
In an event recorded in Matthew 16:13-20, Mark 8:27-30 and Luke 9:18-20, Jesus went to the predominately pagan region of Caesarea Philippi to question and deepen his disciples' understanding of his role and theirs. "Who do you say that I am?" And they answered him, "John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets." He asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah." This statement on Peter's part is known as The Confession of St Peter.

## Jan. 18-25 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Traditionally the week of prayer is celebrated between 18-25 January, between the feasts of St Peter and St Paul. Check out the website:

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2024

**Go and do likewise**



<https://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/events/week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity> The chosen theme is **'You shall love the Lord your God... and your neighbor as yourself'** (Luke 10:27). Go and do likewise!

The materials for 2024 were prepared by an ecumenical team from Burkina Faso, which is located in West Africa in the Sahel region, which includes the neighboring countries of Mali and Niger with It has 21 million inhabitants. 64% of the population is Muslim, 9% adheres to traditional African religions and 26% is Christian (20% Catholic, 6% Protestant).

The materials state that "Burkina Faso is currently experiencing a serious security crisis, which affects all the communities of faith. After a major jihadist attack was mounted from outside the country in 2016, the security situation in Burkina Faso, and consequently its social cohesion, deteriorated dramatically. The country has endured a proliferation of terrorist attacks, lawlessness and human trafficking. This has left over three thousand dead and almost two million internally displaced persons in the country. Thousands of schools, health centers and town halls have been closed, and much of the socio-economic and transport infrastructure has been destroyed...

"Christian churches have been expressly targeted by armed attacks. Priests, pastors and catechists have been killed during worship and the fate of others who were kidnapped remains unknown. At the time of writing, more than 22% of the national territory is outside the control of the state. Christians can no longer openly practice their faith in these areas. Because of terrorism, the majority of Christian churches in the north, east and north-west of the country have been closed. There is no longer any public Christian worship in many of these areas. Where worship is still possible, with police protection, usually in large cities, it has been necessary to shorten services owing to security concerns.

"Nevertheless, a degree of solidarity is emerging between the Christian, Muslim and traditional religions. Their leaders are working to find lasting solutions for peace, social cohesion and reconciliation. ..."

"Following the government's calls for prayers for peace, social cohesion and reconciliation,

individual churches continue to organize daily prayers and fasting. Action by the various Catholic and Protestant churches has intensified to assist displaced persons. Reflection and awareness-raising meetings have been organized to promote better understanding of the situation and of the value of fraternity, and to develop strategies for a return to lasting peace.

"The invitation to work together on the texts for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2024 challenges the different churches in Burkina Faso to walk, pray and work together in mutual love during this difficult period for their country. The love of Christ that unites all Christians is stronger than their divisions and the Christians of Burkina Faso commit themselves to walking the path of love of God and love of neighbor. They are confident that God's love will overcome the violence that currently afflicts their country."

### Conversion of St. Paul, Jan 25

On January 25, the Church remembers how Saul (or Paul) of Tarsus, formerly a persecutor of the early Christian Church, was led by God's grace to become one of its chief spokesmen.

According Acts 9:1ff), Saul, armed with arrest warrants for those of the Christian Way, departed from Jerusalem in route to ancient Damascus, some 140 miles to the north. As he drew near that city, a light brighter than the noonday sun suddenly engulfed him. A voice inquired: "Saul, Saul, why do you continue to persecute me?" The double use of his name suggests a reproof (cf. Matthew 23:37; Luke 10:41; 22:31). Saul responded: "Who are you, Lord?" The title "Lord" was employed at this point as a mere term of respect, for he knew not who had addressed him.

"The voice was identified as Jesus of Nazareth! The stunned persecutor was instructed to enter Damascus where he would be informed as to what he "must do." Blinded as a consequence of this miraculous vision in which Christ actually appeared to him (9:17; 1 Corinthians 15:8), Saul was led into the city.

"For three agonizing days he fasted and prayed. Finally, Ananias, a messenger selected by God, arrived. He restored Saul's sight and commanded him to "arise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on his name" (Acts 22:16). After certain days passed, the former persecutor began to proclaim among his fellow Jews that Jesus "is the Son of God" (see Acts 9:19-22)."

### Karl Barth's New Year Prayer

O Lord, our Father!

We have gathered here at the turn of the year because we do not want to be alone but want to be with each other, and together be united with you.

Our hearts are filled with somber thoughts as we reflect on our misdeeds of the past year. And our ears are deafened by the voices of the radio and in the newspapers, with their numerous predictions for the coming year.

Instead we want to hear your word, your voice, your assurance, your guidance. We know that you are in our midst, and are eager to give us all that we need, whether we ask or not.

On this night we ask for one thing only: that you collect our scattered thoughts, getting rid of the confused and defiant thoughts that may distract us, and thus enable us to concentrate on your limitless generosity to us.

You were abundantly generous to us last year, and will be no less generous to us next year, and in every year to come.

Fill us with gratitude to you.

*Karl Barth (1886-1968)*

**January , 2024**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3 Bible Study 10am	4	5	6
7 First Sunday after the Epiphany, Baptism of our Lord Eucharist 11am Coffee Hour 12pm	8	9 HBD Betty Kunstmann	10 Bible Study 10am	11 HBD Marilyn Newman Vestry, 2pm	12 HBD Terri Harrison	13
14 HBD Chris Fisher Eucharist 11am	15 HBD Cookie Davis	16 HBD Tom Hughes	17 Bible Study 10am Village Harvest 3:00pm – 5pm	18 Sacred Ground meeting on Zoom, 7PM  Week of Prayer for Christian Unity  Confession of St. Peter	19	20
21 HBD Anna Haug Eucharist 11am <b>Congregational meeting</b>	22	23 “A Case for Love” movie , Paragon theater, Fredericks burg. 4pm or 7pm	24 Bible Study 10am	25 Conversion of St. Paul	26 HBD Tyler Collins	27
28 Morning Prayer 11am	29	30	31 Bible Study 10am			