



St. Paul's Epistle

NOVEMBER 2020

Dear Ones,

Stick Season is a way of seeing anew.

What has been hidden is now in plain sight. Whether it be trash or mountains or sun or morning light. There is a spaciousness, a quietness to this season, that invites us to witness to that which has been hiding in plain sight and deserves our attention.

Stick Season is one I welcome despite that which is lost. With a blanket of crunchy leaves on the ground, I think of my Grannie Fid. It was one of those perfect late October days: a distinct crispness to the air paired with a Vermont blue sky and golden sun-soaked afternoon. Except for the fact that I had just learned of her death. I was a senior in high school. All I could think of doing was to go outside in the sun and chill and rake crunchy leaves. I raked and raked and raked some more until the blisters on my hands were unbearable. My sorrow in plain sight.

Upon stopping, I looked through the boney bare branches of Sugar Maple... Mt. Mansfield was suddenly in plain sight. And beyond Mt. Mansfield, for a fleeting moment, a vision beyond opened up. Grannie Fid was there... Beyond the mountains yet at the same with me. I understood then how porous the veil is between this life and the next.

As I write this, we are on the cusp of the trinity of days of All Hallow's Eve, the Feast of All Saints and the Feast of All Faithful Departed. Indeed, a thin place in the turning of the year. As Jan Richardson writes in *Painted Prayerbook; 2013/10/29*, "These days...offer an occasion to remember, reflect, and to offer thanks for those who have shaped [our] path by the path that they walked. These days remind us that in the body of Christ, death does not release us from being in community with one another." Richardson goes on to offer these questions for reflection and blessing:

As you move through these days, who lingers close in your memory? Who walked with you in a way that inspired and made possible the path that you travel? Remembering that in these days, the veil thins not only toward the past but toward the future, how are you walking through this life in a way that will help make possible the paths of those who follow?

For Those Who Walked with Us

For those
who walked with us,
this is a prayer.

For those
who have gone ahead,
this is a blessing.

For those
who touched and tended us,
who lingered with us
while they lived,
this is a thanksgiving.

For those
who journey still with us
in the shadows of awareness,
in the crevices of memory,
in the landscape of our dreams,
this is a benediction.

A blessed Stick Season to you!

Sherry+

All Saints Day

God of all creation –
who cannot be contained
by our boundaries or our definitions –
light from beyond the galaxies,
sea without a farther shore;
you are present in every distinct place,
in every moment in history.
You are here and now.
Help us to understand
that those from whom we are separated in life
by distance, by sea and land;
those from whom we are separated
by difference, by prejudice,
by language, by lack of communication;
and that those from whom we are separated
in death,
by its long silence, its aching absence –
are each of them in your presence;
that beyond our horizons,
beyond our boundaries,
beyond our understanding,
they are in your embrace.

AMEN





Upcoming Stewardship Sundays: Faith-filled Generosity

We're halfway through our stewardship Sundays exploring *faith-filled generosity*. Thank you to Chris Hale and Sarah Cowan for your thoughtful reflections on the questions posed from the scripture readings. And thank you to all on Zoom who have been able to participate as we discuss the ways that faith-filled generosity affects our lives. We are especially grateful to The Episcopal Network for Stewardship (TENS) who provides us with the program to engage us in this Stewardship inquiry.

For those who were not able to participate in zoom, here are the questions that we've been discussing!

- *How does practicing your faith help you recognize all the gifts God has given you?*
- *How are you giving to God the things that are God's through your time, talent and your treasure?*
- *When you have a sense of living within Faith-Filled Generosity, what actions do you see emerging in your life?*
- *What helps you to live, and interferes with your living a more fruitful life?*

We have two more Sundays where we will be exploring some different questions. We'd love to see you on Zoom if you are able. November 1st, we hear from Bo Price and November 8th we hear from Bob Laidman.

And mark your calendars for the Ingathering on November 15th which will be a special outside service, weather-permitting. You should be receiving your Stewardship letter and pledge envelope end of October. If you plan on coming on November 15th, please bring your pledge card with you. We hope to bless our stewardship pledges for St. Paul's together!

Thank you.

The Stewardship Committee

Serendipity

A convergence of events: A 19th Century Black Sheriff, Voices in the Park, an article in the Addison Independent, an historic marker inquiry, and a community interest in the Rectory

We've all been through some challenging times in 2020, and we've all learned to cope with our varied situations in different ways. It's been wonderful to have the support and contact with the St. Paul's community as we all navigate Covid, isolation, shut-down, reopening, schools, and whatever else life has brought our way. I know that many people say how grateful they are to be living in Vermont and to be close to the wonderful outdoors that can bring so much refreshment to life. I am certainly thankful for living in Vermont and being part of the St. Paul's community. Amidst all of this year's craziness, I wanted to tell you about a series of events that involved St. Paul's in a positive and interesting way.

A 19th century Black Sheriff

Some of you may remember that Larry and Lynn Schuyler visited St. Paul's in the summer of 2019. Larry had contacted St. Paul's to see if he could learn anything about his grandmother and great-grandfather, Rose and Stephen Bates, who had been members of St. Paul's at the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Larry told me that his grandfather had been sheriff of Vergennes and that he died in 1907. Those were the facts I had at my disposal. I was able to find many instances in our church records of the Bates family, including Stephen's wife, Frances, and his children, Rose and Fred. Being a little curious about Stephen's sheriff status, I got online and started looking at old newspapers and found quite a bit of information on Stephen. His obituary stated that he had been elected sheriff/chief of police of Vergennes for 26 consecutive years, from 1879 to 1905, and then again in 1907, the year he died. I wrote about all of this in the fall of 2019 on our website in detail, and I know many of you have read about Stephen Bates and his family story already. But just to recap, here are a few interesting details. From his obituary, I learned that Stephen was born in Virginia of "free parents" and was connected with the Hill Carter family who owned the Shirley Plantation. I've learned since I wrote the blog article that Stephen and his family were actually enslaved at the Shirley Plantation. (Shirley Plantation records show that Stephen, his parents, and siblings as being enslaved there, which is not what the obituary says, so that discrepancy is probably worthy of more research). Stephen served with Union soldiers in the Civil War, and after the war came to Vermont with Frederick Woodbridge, a politician from Vergennes, whose family was closely connected to St. Paul's and its founding. Frederick Woodbridge was serving in Washington D.C. at the time he met Stephen, and Stephen became Woodbridge's coachman. In 1866, Stephen moved to Vergennes with Woodbridge, where Woodbridge had a home (what is now our Rectory). It's possible that Stephen lived in the Woodbridge home for a time, as census data from the period shows that Woodbridge had non-family members living with him. From the 1860 census, four servants lived in the Woodbridge home, two of whom were Black, one being a 100-year-old woman whose birthplace was listed as Africa. Eventually Stephen Bates had his own home on North St. where he lived with his family. The home later succumbed to fire. Stephen was elected for the first time as sheriff/chief of police in 1879, the same year that Woodbridge was elected mayor. Numerous articles of the time are written about Sheriff Bates and his involvement in the Vergennes community. By all accounts he was highly respected and obviously very popular. His friends called him "Steve."

Voices in the Park, Addison Independent, and Historic Marker inquiry

I attended a number of Voices in the Park events this summer in Vergennes after the murder of George Floyd. They were well attended, and I saw several St. Paul's members there as well, socially distanced of course! There was so much to digest and learn about systemic racism. Some who attended had heard of Stephen Bates through my blog article and introduced me to an Addison Independent reporter. Everyone felt, especially during the tumultuous time in Vergennes and in the nation, that this was an important story to be told. It was a positive story but also one that left unanswered the question—why had Sheriff Bates been forgotten? Vergennes had elected a Black sheriff/chief of police about 15 years after the end of the Civil War, 140 years ago. The question the Addison Independent Reporter kept asking, as did others, was why had no one heard of him? That summer, in Montpelier, Brian Peete, Vermont's "first" Black chief of police was being sworn in. Numerous stories appeared in the media, in print and even a story on VPR. It was a significant event and story for Vermont, particularly at this time in our history.

The Addison Independent reporter wrote an opinion piece in the September 3rd edition that included three Black voices and their individual perspectives on the Stephen Bates story. Larry Schuyler, Sheriff Bates' descendant, said he and his family had been so grateful to have had this part of their family history uncovered, and, as a result, felt a deep connection with his great-grandfather. Larry has been on Zoom with St. Paul's in recent months and feels a part of our St. Paul's family. Alicia Grangent, who I met at Voices in the Park, and who I continue to visit with on the green from time to time, has been extremely interested in this story. She is researching how to get a historic marker placed somewhere in Vergennes to acknowledge this history. And Brian Peete, the new chief of police in Montpelier also reflected positively on this story. Alicia told me that on social media, she'd seen the story shared over 400 times and many people were very interested and surprised. Recently I found an article from an old Vergennes newspaper called *The Enterprise and Vermonter* from 1939, written on the occasion of Vergennes' 150th anniversary. The author remembers and acknowledges a dozen or so figures from Vergennes history. One mentioned, near the very end of the article, is Sheriff Bates, who the author says, "gave the best of satisfaction to all concerned." And the author wonders—was there ever another Black sheriff in Vermont? Given our country's racial history, it is really a remarkable story, and one, I feel, that Vergennes should be proud of and know about.

Community Interest in the Rectory

Surprisingly, I made another connection with a community member at Voices in the Park this summer who expressed an interest in the Sheriff Bates story. He was interested in knowing what the status of the Rectory was as he knew it was not currently occupied. He mentioned that if the Rectory ever became available for non-clergy use, he would like to make the building into a Vergennes history museum, where he could showcase the Sheriff Bates story and other stories about Vergennes. He said he would personally fundraise for such a project. I explained that St. Paul's was in transition with clergy, and that we would be deciding as a parish as to the future use of our Rectory. I explained that it might always remain a source for clergy housing, but it could also potentially be used for something else. We had some ways to go before making any parish-wide decision on something so important. I was reminded, however, of all of the work we did during our SiSP (Strategic Investment in Sacred Places) when our buildings, including the Rectory, were thought about in terms of alternate use. This is not a new idea in any way, but it was just so remarkable to me that this was the kind of community project that those of us engaged in SiSP had been searching for in our quest to make our buildings part of community outreach. I ran into this community member later in the summer, and he is still very interested in pursuing a conversation, at least, and I've told him that we have many discussions to get to before we can even begin to consider any type of alternate-use, if we decide to do so at all. I again explained that the Rectory might always continue to be clergy housing or extra space for St. Paul's. By the way, this is not the first time someone has reached out to St. Paul's regarding the Rectory in the past year or two. Prior to this interest, a homeowner had expressed an interest in purchasing the Rectory! We may not realize it, but there seems to be a keen interest in our building in Vergennes.

Serendipity

I felt that I wanted to share these serendipitous events with the St. Paul's community. I feel like the Sheriff Bates story took on a life of its own. More people in the community have an interest in it from a community perspective than perhaps we do at St. Paul's, so I felt the need to get the information out there for those who

might be interested in exploring this with others in the community. It's possible that this story could engage the Vergennes community in some ways that have not been explored. It's possible that the Vergennes community might see it as a positive story in light of the various challenges they have been facing this year, and generally, as we all continue to make our own explorations into racial injustice and systemic racism.

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS



The Japanese people consider the chrysanthemum to be a symbol of the sun and represent perfection with its orderly unfolding of petals as it blooms. In honor of the chrysanthemum Japan has a national holiday called the Festival of Happiness and is one of five ancient festivals that are celebrated today. It is also said that placing a petal from the chrysanthemum in the bottom of a wine glass will also lead to a healthy and lengthy life. -Birthstone Zodiac

1st	Gene Gordon
3rd	Kate Langeway Collins
7th	Kylee Coffey
10th	Arianna Price
13th	Seth Laidman
13th	Tristan Earle
13th	Faith McAllister
16th	Lennon Guiggey
19th	John Stroup
21st	Rebecca Chauvin
21st	Madeleine Mae Stroup
21st	Ancel Coburn
23rd	Laurie Earle
23rd	Bob Macauley
24th	Madelaine Calise

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Jr. Warden: Chris Hale 877-1059

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