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Pastor's Message

*Lift your eyes and look to the heavens:
Who created all these?
He who brings out the starry host one
by one, and calls them each by
name.*

*Because of his great power and mighty
strength, not one of them is missing.*

— Isaiah 40:26

Not long ago I walked outside at night and looked up into the sky to see what seemed like more stars than I had ever seen before. It was beautiful. I'll bet you have seen some beautiful sights as well. We first experience beauty in the things that surround us. Sometimes in simple things like a sunset; other times, it is a glance where we see so much in someone



else.

Whenever we encounter the beautiful, our hearts awaken because there is an extraordinary power in the least thing: a tiny plant,

a shade of the sky, a calm cold night brilliant with starshine — all things that touch the heart. That is a small taste of God's wonderful creation.

In my recent reading I came across a poem by Elizabeth Barrett Browning that speaks of this wonder:

*Earth's crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God;
But only he who sees takes off his shoes;
The rest sit round it and pluck blackberries.*

I hope as we move into the new year that you see the wonders of God's creation all around you. That you remember the blessings that God has sent your way.

Peace,

Jeff

Rev. Dr. Jeff McDonald, Senior Pastor



Celebrate the success of The Art Tent and re-orient for the year ahead. Previous and prospective facilitators are invited to review the purpose of The Art Tent and look to new movements. Operated in conjunction with the Emergency Aid Coalition, The Art Tent is a space to build community through art with people experiencing homelessness.

The re-orientation will be on Thursday, January 6, at 11 am in the Fellers Room (S-312). To learn more or RSVP, email prichards-kuan@stpaulshouston.org. The Art Tent's regular Wednesday schedule resumes January 12.



Sunday, January 9, at 12:15 pm in Fondren Hall. Groups of 6 to 10 people will be brought together through shared life experience and stage of life to develop significant relationships and spiritual accountability.

To learn more about small groups or let us know you would like to be a part of one, please go to www.stpaulshouston.org/small-groups or email faithformation@stpaulshouston.org or call 713-528-0527.

Teleclinic Ends First Semester with Large Grant

As the telehealth clinic in Abraham Station completed its first semester of of once-a-week, half-day services on Monday, December 27, the Bert and Mae Dean Wheeler Foundation has granted \$550,000 to the clinic. These funds will enable the clinic, operated by the University of Houston School of Nursing in conjunction with St. Paul's, to provide services for up to four days a week through 2024.

"We're deeply grateful for this gift," said Rev. Andrew Wolfe, Minister for Congregational Care, "and for the contributions from members of St. Paul's who've helped us share the healing ministry of Jesus.

"Houston is a tale of two cities," Wolfe explained. "It boasts the world's largest medical center, but 28 percent of Houstonians lack healthcare insurance, and 24 percent of Harris County residents are unable to afford seeing a doctor. Since opening, this teleclinic has fought to provide greater healthcare access for the under/uninsured in our community."

During its brief existence, the UH telehealth clinic has served more than 40 clients, 23 of whom were seen more than once for follow-up visits.

One of the most important lessons learned in this semester is how great the stigma against the homeless is within the medical community, said Rev. Wolfe. "This population is often weary of receiving care because of how the healthcare system treats them. One client shared with Dr. Simi Varghese, our nurse practitioner, that seeing the clinic sign at Abraham Station gives him hope."

"I may not always need to come in," he told her, "but seeing the sign and knowing you're here makes me happy."

Coffee with the Pastors Returns

Enjoy casual coffee and conversation with St. Paul's clergy and staff. Sunday, January 9, at 9:45 am in the Jones Building Lobby.



This is a time to get to know our pastors in one-to-one casual conversation over coffee. Ask questions about the life of the church, Methodism, Sunday school classes, membership, and anything else.

Also, tell us about yourself — how you came to St. Paul's and what interests you.

Pastors Bible Study

Season Four of this church-wide study led by St. Paul's pastors will begin the third week of January

Details and registration: www.stpaulshouston.org/study
Sessions will be hybrid in Fondren Hall and via Zoom.



Following the same form for more than 500 years, Evensong is a service of worship that includes prayers, scripture, psalms, canticles, and anthems. In many cathedrals and churches it is held every day. Much of the service is sung by the choir with congregants joining in prayer. Known for the timeless beauty of its choral music, the service of Evensong has inspired composers to write some of the very finest sacred music.

This is the first of the 2022 Evensongs at St. Paul's as the St. Paul's Choir prepares for its summer residency in England. Music by Herbert Howells and John Ireland.

St. Paul's Family



Joanna Blair

New Members.

Welcome these new members who joined St. Paul's Family on December 12, 2021: Joanna Blair, Pam and Mike Fennewald, Jenny Meyer, and Rebecca (Becky) Neudecker.

Birth.

Congratulations to Laura Carrizales-Flores on the birth of her grandson, Mali'Kai James Maxwell, who was born December 17, 2021.

Flowers, Geenery.

The flowers at the altar on December 5, 2021, were placed to the glory of God



Pam and Mike Fennewald,

in thanksgiving for St. Paul's hard-working Maintenance and Safety Staff.

The flowers at the altar on December 12, 2021, were placed to the glory of God in celebration of Beth Brown on her birthday by her family.

The flowers in the Narthex and at the Jones Plaza entrance on December 12, 2021, were placed to the glory of God in loving memory of Dorothy Stroud by her daughter, Leslie Woods.

The flowers at the altar on December 19, 2021, were



Jenny Meyer

placed to the glory of God by Mary Linda Portner and Paul Fisher in thanksgiving on the occasion of their 40th wedding anniversary.

The greenery throughout the Sanctuary for the Christmas Eve services was placed to the glory of God by St. Paul's Choir.

Deaths.

Deepest sympathy to Cathy Lamb, whose brother, Ben Callis, died on Tuesday, December 7.

Deepest sympathy to Cassie Pitman Gonzales and her family on the death of her uncle, Joe P.

(Puggy) Pitman, who died on December 13, 2021, in Cushing, TX.

Deepest sympathy to the friends of John A. Freeman, who died on December 14, 2021, in Fredericksburg, TX. He was the son of Carolyn and Rev. Dr. Al Freeman, who served at St. Paul's from 1957 to 1970 during which time the St. Paul's Methodist Foundation of Houston was chartered. The Carolyn and Alfred H. Freeman Scholarship within the Foundation is awarded to students preparing for the ordained ministry in the United Methodist Church.

Deepest sympathy to Jennifer and Shawn West, Ann Marie, Jon, Jake, and their family on the death of Janice (Jan) Rae West. The mother of Shawn and the grandmother of Ann Marie, Jon, and Jake, Jan died December 21, 2021.

Thanks for Leadership, Looking Ahead



Gwen Kunz, center, holds a framed memento of appreciation as she retires as head of the St. Paul's Primetimers Steering Committee, which she has led since 2015. Flanking her are Rev. Andrew Wolfe, Pastor for Congregational Care, and Nina Hall, Membership and Hospitality Director, both of whom are staff representatives to the steering committee.

Also retiring from the steering committee are Nancy Burch, above right, and Mary Dix, not present. The committee is now comprised of Janet Casstevens, Brad Harmes, Cordelia Price, and Larry Walters.

The Primetimers' 2022 schedule through summer:

February 10. Program: *Hermann Park Conservancy Update* by Doreen Stoller, president, Herman Park Conservancy.

February 17. Day Trip: Holocaust Museum Houston, 5401 Caroline.

March 10. Program: *Our Neighborhood Bats* by Diana Foss, Coordinator, Houston Area Bat Team, and Urban Wildlife Biologist, Wildlife Diversity Program of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

April 21. Day Trip: Houston Botanic Garden, One Botanic Lane 77017

May 12. Program: *Howard Hughes* by Michael Bludworth, volunteer historian with the 1940 Air Terminal Museum, Houston.

June 9. Program: *Saving History After Harvey: Creating the Houston Jewish History Archives* by Dr. Joshua Furman, Founder and Curator, Houston Jewish History Archive and Associate Director and Lecturer, Jewish Studies at Rice University.

August 11. Ice Cream Social and Movie.

St. Paul's Book Groups

In addition to periodic book studies, churchwide or smaller groups, such as St. Paul's Moms, St. Paul's is home base for two book groups that discuss a different book each month. These are the Ordinary Life Book Group and the Chapter One Book Group, and both groups are open to anyone.

Ordinary Life explores books on spirituality, religious literacy, and social justice. On January 17, they will discuss *Faith after Doubt: Why Your Beliefs Stopped Working and What to Do about It* by Brian D. McLaren. To connect with the group, which is currently meeting in person, email george.a.sroka@gmail.com.

Chapter One discusses a wide range of books, selected by group's nomination and voting, emphasizing literary fiction. To connect with the group, which is currently meeting via Zoom, email hblinda@hibit.com. The near future schedule is

January 18. *Normal People* by Sally Rooney

February 15. *The Old Man and the Sea* by Ernest Hemingway

March 15. *Hamnet* by Maggie O'Farrell

Chicken Day at Boynton UMC and More to Come



In December the Ordinary Life Women distributed chickens at the Boynton Chapel UMC plus other foods throughout the year and invite others to join them. To help with the next distribution — Saturday, January 8, from 8:30 to noon — email frieda319@gmail.com.

The group's February 3 meeting will be a conversation with Boynton Chapel's pastor, Rev. Linda Davis, about her personal story.

On January 13, the group will be led in an activity illustrating the wealth gap in our society.

Normally the Ordinary Life Women meet on the first Thursday of the month at noon, now in the Fellers Room. Although welcome to all, the group requests that anyone who attends be masked and fully vaccinated.

Lectionary Bible Studies

In addition to the Pastors Bible Study and other Bible studies conducted churchwide or by smaller groups, St. Paul's is home to three ongoing groups that discuss the texts in the Common Lectionary. One may meet with any of these groups, as designated, at any time.

- Open to All. Led by Rev. Paul Richards-Kuan. Tuesdays at noon. Currently hybrid in S-109 and via Zoom. To connect, email hlpearson@aol.com.

- Men's. Led by Rev. Dr. Jeff McDonald. Wednesdays at 7:30 am. Currently hybrid in the Fellers Room (S-312) and via Zoom. To connect, email bharmes@gmail.com.

- Women's. J-203. Led by Rev. Barbara Robberson. Thursdays at 8:30 am via Zoom. To connect, email bjmcmah@swbell.net.

The texts for each week are provided on the app, website, and in the church's information racks. These are illuminated by art curated by Norman Mahan.

On the website these are at www.stpaulshouston.org/upcoming-services, which also include the sermon titles and music to be sung.

Thank You!

Thank You for St. Paul's participation in Operation Turkey

Dear Reverend Jeff:

On behalf of Operation Turkey, Houston and the Rotary Club of the University Area, thank you for the assistance, support and participation in Operation Turkey - Houston 2021. Certainly 2021 has been a time of heightened need. The willingness of St. Paul's United Methodist Church to not just participate but lead in preparation and delivery of Thanksgiving meals was truly inspirational.

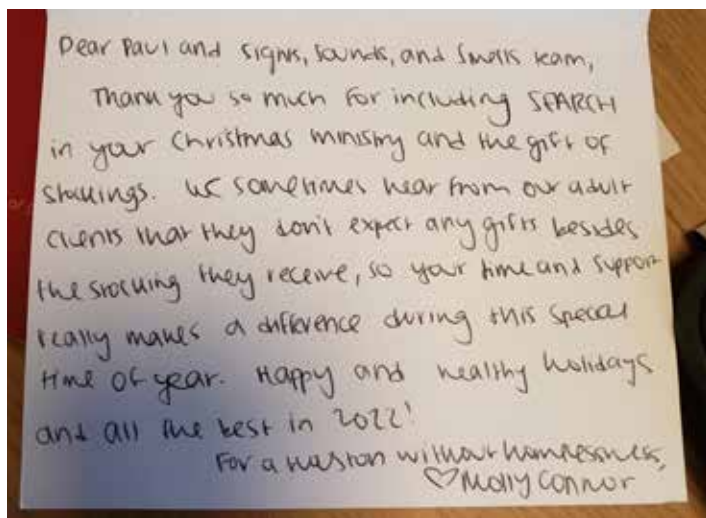
The work on both the Wednesday prior to Thanksgiving and Thanksgiving morning was a witness of a great team effort. On Wednesday the University Area Rotary Club arrived at 8:00 AM along with members of St. Paul's Unit-

ed Methodist Church and community volunteers. The church staff were fully involved and the facility was perfect as a staging place for creation of the Thanksgiving meals. Thursday morning was a miracle in community outpouring as over 300 Houstonians, men, women and children started arriving as early as 6:00 AM to assemble the meals. We had been tasked to prepare and deliver 1,875 meals but our list of persons in need grew. It became over 2,700 meals. And the great news is that all the requests for meals were fulfilled.

Please give my special thanks to Reverend Paul Richards-Kuan. He was a servant leader throughout the project and was on site directing and assisting in every way that was needed. Reverend Karyn Richards-Kuan was also there throughout our time at the church and worked in every phase of the operation. Also, your own involvement as well as the work of your wife, Lenee, were a witness to the community that St. Paul's United Methodist Church knows how to roll up its sleeves and serve the community. God bless all you and St. Paul's Methodist Church are doing in our community.

Sincerely,
Larry C. Blair
President, University Area Rotary Club, 2021-2022

From SEARCH Homeless Services for Giving Tree gifts:



Thanks to all who purchased the Christmas tamales and to those who pitched in to make the labor-intensive 1,500 tamales — 50 dozen pork, 40 dozen chicken, and 35 dozen vegetable. See pictures of hand-making Tamales Together below.



Pray for Children in Foster Care

Cover each child in the Foster Care System within the Greater Houston area in prayer. By praying for each child individually, identified by gender and age, we can pray for a distinct expression of their needs.

For more about this initiative, please go to www.cultivatingfamilies.org/prayer-initiative or email kflint@stpaulshouston.org.

Looking Back

A selection of pictures from the Cookies and Tea Parties in the Parlor decorated for Christmas; Sights, Sounds, and Smells of Christmas; and the Journey to the Manger: Children's Candlelight Service with Las Posadas Navideñas:



Rainbows Youth Group

Rainbows is a group for youth who are part of the LGBTQ+ community, questioning their identity/sexuality, or allies of the community.

“Our church and youth group community are very accepting as a whole, but we felt it was important to build a smaller community within the youth group to help youth navigate these challenging times in their lives,” said Julianna Reeves, Associate Youth Director and co-founder of Rainbows, who along with the other co-founder Meagan Sullivan, is a St. Paul’s Youth graduate currently attending the University of Houston.

The kickoff of Rainbows will be on Monday, January 10, from 6:30 to 7:30 pm in the Youth Center. If you have any questions about Rainbows or plan to attend the kick-off, please contact Julianna via jreeves@stpaulshouston.org.



Boys Invited to Build a Choir

Building toward a Tenor/Bass Choir, Associate Director of Music & Organist Joel Trekell is offering individual singing lessons to boys ages 11-17 with the goal of forming an ensemble.

Following the Royal School of Church Music Voice for Life curriculum, the boys will work on music suitable for changing voices.

One does not have to otherwise be affiliated with St. Paul’s to participate. All young male voices invited.

Questions? Joel Trekell via jtrekell@stpaulshouston.org.

YOUTH JANUARY SCHEDULE

(all in Youth Center)

Sundays

- *Sunday School for 6th-12th graders.* 9:45 am. Resumes January 2.
- *7th-12th-grade UMY and 6th-grade Confirmation.* 5-7 pm. Both resume January 2.
- **Mondays:** *Rainbows.* 6:30-7:30 pm. Begins January 10. (For Youth in the LGBTQ+ community, questioning their identity/sexuality, or allies of the community. See story at left.)
- **Tuesdays:** *Girls Gathering.* 6:30-8 pm. Resumes January 4.
- **Wednesdays:** *Mid-Week Get Together for all Youth.* 3-7 pm. Resumes January 5.
- **Thursdays:** *Guys Gathering.* 6:30-8pm. Resumes January 6.

Questions? email tiffin@stpaulshouston.org or jreeves@stpaulshouston.org

St. Paul’s Moms

In the new year, this group of mothers of all ages will continue to hold monthly social gatherings on dates yet to be determined.

To find out more, email Rev. Kate Flint via kflint@stpaulshouston.org

Kids Nights Out: Dates & Themes

January 14. *Let it Snow*

February 11. *Valentines*

March 11. *TBD*

April 22. *Earth Day*

May 13. *TBD*

For more about KNO, including times, prices, and to RSVP, please see www.stpaulshouston.org/kids-night-out

Choral Music for St. Paul’s Children and Youth

The Children’s Choirs (Wesley Singers and Choristers) are under the direction of Susie Vanlandingham. The Treble Choir is directed by Joel Trekell.

Children’s Choirs

The Children’s Choirs rehearse at these times on Sundays in person and through Zoom, resuming January 9: *Wesley Singers* (grades 1-2) from 10:45 to 11:20 am and *Choristers* (grades 3-8) 11:20 am to 12:05 pm.

Individual and small group singing lessons also are available throughout the week.

To register for either of the children’s choirs or for more infor-

mation about them, contact Susie Vanlandingham via susie@stpaulshouston.org or 713-528-0527.

The Joyful Noise music assembly on Sundays at 9:45 am for children from age 3 to 2nd grade is also under Vanlandingham’s directorship. This children’s worship time primarily focuses on learning and singing children’s worship songs, laying the foundation for singing in a choir.

Treble Choir

Rehearsals for this choir of treble voices are on Wednesdays, from 5:30 to 6:30 pm in the Sanctuary.

Questions? Joel Trekell via

Cornerstone Society News

As 2021 drew to a close, we were excited to welcome more new members to the 2022 Cornerstone Society and announce that the membership has reached a total of 209.

These new members are

Sharon Ainsworth
Linda and Dicky Hall
Sally Horrigan
Catherine Lappe and



Martin Stupel plus Grace Stupel
David Leeds
Beverly and Kimball McMahan
Melinda McMahan
Susie Vanlandingham and Josh Vanlandingham plus
Maddie, Emily, and Sarah
Margaret Elaine Watson
Robert Weylandt

The Cornerstone Society is an annual giving program that supports the primary purpose of the St. Paul's Foundation — providing for the care of the buildings and facilities of the church campus — while also offering members the opportunity to aid social service agencies.

Membership is open to individuals, couples, and families to join at any time. For more information, please contact Mary Linda Portner at mlportner@stpaulshouston.org.

2022-23 Scholarship Applications

February 15 is the deadline for completed applications for 2022-23 scholarships administered by St. Paul's Methodist Foundation of Houston. The applications are available at www.stpaulshouston.org/foundation-scholarships.

The Foundation currently administers 17 endowed scholarship funds that benefit high school seniors matriculating to institutions

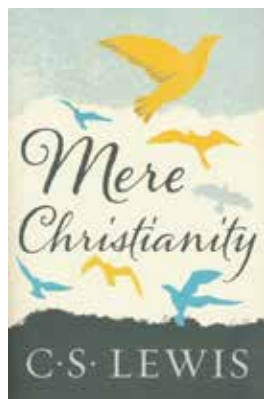
of higher education as well as college undergraduate students and seminarians.

Grant awards are based on the applicant's relationship to St. Paul's UMC, academics, extra-curricular activities, recommendations, and a personal essay. Eight of the funds are restricted to specific parameters established by the donors. Donations to any of the funds are always welcome.

Mere Christianity

The Revolving Sunday-School class will begin studying *Mere Christianity* by C.S. Lewis on Sunday, January 9, at 9:45 am.

This hybrid class meets in J-211 and via Zoom. To connect, email Mary Linda Portner via mlportner@stpaulshouston.org



Afghan Refugees:

Learn and Serve Gathering

On Sunday, January 23, at 12:15 pm in Fondren Hall, Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston (IMGH) will present information about Afghan refugees and empower St. Paul's to move toward a ministry of accompaniment.

Attendees will be invited into the work and conversation and share how they would like to show love and hospitality to those Afghan refugees who are now in Houston.

Lunch will be provided. RSVP to Rev. Paul Richards-Kuan via prichards-kuan@stpaulshouston.org

In partnership with the U.S. State Department and Episcopal Migration Ministries, IMGH has been welcoming refugees from around the globe for more than 30 years. "Welcoming the stranger" is a shared belief of all faith traditions and a shared human value.

Refugees are people fleeing their countries due to war, violence, or persecution. They have been granted "refugee" status by the United Nations. If they wish to resettle in the U.S., they must go through an extensive vetting process involving multiple federal agencies. Around 90 percent of the refugees served by IMGH are self-sufficient within six months of arrival to the United States.



Who to Contact for What

To reach any staff, call 713-528-0527 or email info@stpaulshouston.org, and your message will be forwarded.

For these specific situations, you may wish to contact these people through these means:

To

- update membership records
- notify the church of births, deaths, or hospitalizations

email Nina Hall via nina@stpaulshouston.org or call 713-528-0527

To schedule a funeral, email Rev. Andrew Wolfe via awolfe@stpaulshouston.org or call 713-528-0527 and see www.stpaulshouston.org/funeral

To schedule

- baptisms
- altar flowers

email Dawn Uebelhart via dawn@stpaulshouston.org or call 713-528-0527

To schedule a wedding at St. Paul's, email Betty Rennell via bettyrennell@gmail.com and see www.stpaulshouston.org/weddings

That's Amore!

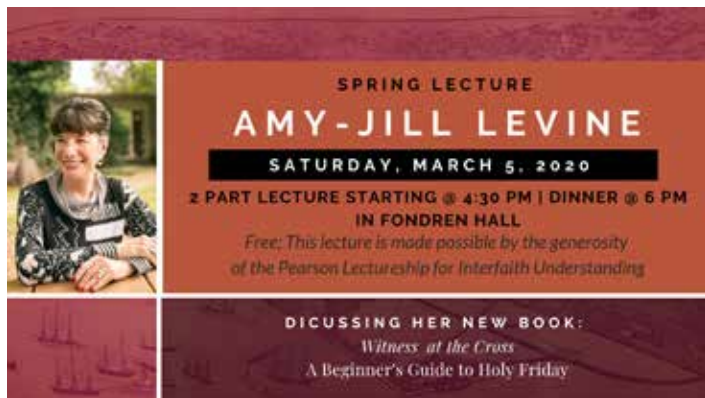
The St. Paul's Choir Fundraising Concert

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 20, AT 4 PM

The St. Paul's Choir's December Bake and Basket Sale was a huge success and will go toward making the choir's residencies in England this summer a huge success. Thanks to everyone who purchased baked goods or baskets at the sale. Special thanks to non-choir members who provided items for the sale.

On Sunday, February 20, the choir will sing a "Thank You/Fundraising" concert of songs based on the theme of "love." This hour of music for the weekend after Valentine's Day will feature sacred anthems, classical solos, and popular songs.

As announced in the October 2021 St. Paul's Monthly Newsletter, in the summer of 2022 St. Paul's Choir will spend a week as Choir-in-Residence at Truro Cathedral in Cornwall and sing an Evensong service at St. Paul's Cathedral in London.



SPRING LECTURE
AMY-JILL LEVINE
SATURDAY, MARCH 5, 2020
2 PART LECTURE STARTING @ 4:30 PM | DINNER @ 6 PM
IN FONDREN HALL
Free! This lecture is made possible by the generosity of the Pearson Lectureship for Interfaith Understanding
DISCUSSING HER NEW BOOK:
Witness at the Cross
A Beginner's Guide to Holy Friday

Dr. Amy-Jill Levine will present a two-part lecture on Saturday, March 5, based on her new book, *Witness at the Cross: A Beginner's Guide to Holy Friday*.

Familiar to those who have participated in a Disciple Bible Study, Levine is the University Professor of New Testament and Jewish Studies and the Mary Jane Werthan Professor of Jewish Studies at Vanderbilt Divinity School and Department of Jewish Studies.

This lecture is made possible by the generosity of the Pearson Lectureship for Interfaith Understanding within the St. Paul's Methodist Foundation of Houston.

For more about Levine and to register for this event, please go to www.stpaulshouston.org/events/levine-lecture or call 713-528-0527.

Youth to Lead Worship on February 20

After breaking due to COVID concerns, the long-held St. Paul's tradition of the Youth leading worship will return on Sunday, February 20. Mark your calendars to save this special day in the life of our church, especially for our Youth.

Lenten Spiritual Practices

A class on Lenten spiritual practices is planned for Sundays during Lent, starting March 3, from 9:45 to 10:45 am.

Following the Lenten theme for this year, this experiential class will guide participants to intentionally prepare a space for something new. Conducted in English and Spanish, each class will include meditations, awareness/mindfulness exercises, and hands-on activities.

As we approach Lent, details will be provided via the worship bulletin, the *Chimes* weekly e-letter, and the website, www.stpaulshouston.org. To learn more before then, email hspaw@stpaulshouston.org.



The Tallis Scholars
The world's premiere Renaissance vocal ensemble.
Peter Phillips, Director
FRIDAY, APRIL 22, 2022 | 7:30-9:30PM
PRESENTED FREE OF CHARGE BY ST. PAUL'S CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY

The Tallis Scholars are scheduled to sing at St. Paul's on Friday, April 22, at 7:30 pm. Through more than four decades of performance and award-winning recordings, Peter Phillips and The Tallis Scholars have done more than any other group to establish sacred vocal music of the Renaissance as a great repertoire of Western classical music.

Based in Cambridge, England, they have brought Renaissance works to a wider audience in churches, cathedrals, and venues on every continent on the planet except Antarctica. For more about The Tallis Scholars and to sample their music, please go to www.thetallissscholars.co.uk.

Ticketing information will be provided via worship bulletins, the *Chimes* weekly e-letter, and www.stpaulshouston.org/events/2022/4/22/the-tallis-scholars