



The local inhabitants showed us extraordinary
kindness, for they built a fire and welcomed us all
because it had started to rain and was cold.

Acts 28:2

Dear Friends,
Good news of great joy. For God so loved the world...

On the day of Shimon Peres' funeral I walked to the top of the Mount of Olives, hoping that I might get better perspective from higher ground. It was an act of penance of sorts — a steep climb in the hot noon of the day. I expected to punish my feet. I ended up punishing my bald head and nose with sunburn that kept me company for weeks. What I didn't expect was that you can see Bethlehem from there. A Palestinian pointed it out — there towards the south, where the smoke rose. There was often smoke rising from that direction, he said. Through binoculars you can see the wall that separates Bethlehem from Jerusalem, and the checkpoint that has been the site of much protest and violence.

If you had been in Bethlehem at Christmas you would have found it to be the center of Christian attention, and if you go online and search for images of Bethlehem/Christmas/Israel (Palestine doesn't work quite as well) you will find lots to look at. Processions, and people in vestments, and candles and tear gas and smoke. If you keep your focus you will notice that there are re-enactors too, and that they are adults. No children's Christmas Pageant here. Joseph, Mary, the shepherds, the Magi on their camels with attendants are all adults, and, I guess, all Palestinians.

Here is the thing that astonishes me: the real center of Christianity in the Holy Land appears to be in Bethlehem. And it is Palestinian and Arab, not western, or Greek or anything that you or I might be more familiar with. Moreover, as they retell the story of very pregnant, very Jewish Mary (and Joseph) journeying over 70 difficult miles to comply with Roman oppression, they themselves are the subject of similar circumstances. Can you see the mental gymnastics it must require for an Arab these days to identify with a poor Jewish family and find that in them God's Light has come into the world?

What is it that they hear God saying that leads them to think that this is their story and brings hope, the absence of fear?

As we head into 2017, my prayer for myself, and for all of us, is that we might embrace some of that same conviction, and walk the walk Jesus walked, amongst the oppressed, in poverty, with fire in our hearts. Even if we choose to make only the smallest piece of that story ours, it will be something, a story for adults not prepared to accept the world as it is, but who love it with some of the fierceness that God does.
May God bless your new year.

Your friend in Christ,
Michael +

Revenue and Expense Statement

YEAR-END 2016

	Actual	Budget	\$ Change
OPERATING REVENUE			
Donations - Operating	135,840	124,164	11,676
Fundraising Revenue	3,174	2,920	254
Investment Revenue	14,702	7,888	6,814
SUBTOTAL OPERATING REVENUE	153,716	134,972	18,744
OPERATING EXPENSES	172,850	185,032	-12,182
NET OPERATING	-19,134	-50,060	30,926
Donations - Non-operating	6,501	3,000	3,501
Expenses - Non-operating	7,764	3,000	4,764
NET NON-OPERATING	-1,263	0	-1,263
NET ORDINARY INCOME	-20,397	-50,060	29,663
INVESTMENTS			
Scholarship (5,581 earned; 8,000 paid)	-2,419	0	-2,419
Pooled Investment Funds (PIF) *	2,764	-7,888	10,652
NET INCOME **	-20,052	-57,948	37,896

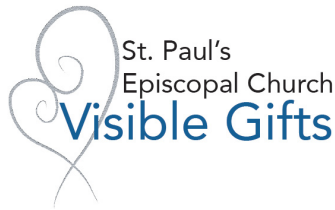
* PIF: 19314 earned, 14702 drawn, 1848 fees.

** The \$20K deficit is \$38K better than the projected deficiency of \$58K.

Statement of Assets

YEAR-END 2016

	Dec 31 2016	Dec 31 2015	\$ Change
UNRESERVED ASSETS			
Checking - Non-restricted	233	18,763	-18,530
Undeposited funds	0	2,815	-2,815
PIF Unreserved	18,317	17,040	1,277
Total Unreserved Assets	18,550	38,618	-20,068
RESERVED or RESTRICTED ASSETS			
Checking - Scholarship *	6,000	1,000	5,000
Checking - Other Restricted	11,255	13,154	-1,899
Pooled Investment Funds *	195,551	192,250	3,301
Scholarship Funds	122,283	129,702	-7,419
Total Reserved/Restricted Assets	335,089	336,106	-1,017
Current Liabilities	82	1,356	-1,274
Net Assets - Current Liabilities	353,557	373,368	-19,811
Women of St Paul's	3,726		
TOTAL	357,283		



Our second Visible Gifts eBay auction offered more than 50 items that were donated to St. Paul's by more than a dozen parishioners; it grossed \$3,030 in sales and donations.

The Anatolian prayer rug sold for \$1,125 to a rug collector in New York; the 14th century folio printed on one of the first printing presses sold for \$600 and will be donated to the manuscript museum at St. John's University; and the antique clock went to a California designer for \$360; but the real fun was with the rare Red Wing pottery 20-lb butter crock, which went to eBay's largest pottery seller from Ohio for \$530. Several dozen other items made interesting Christmas gifts for people throughout the United States!

The funds from PayPal will be credited to St. Paul's in January 2017, after the final eBay invoice is processed. After shipping costs (paid by buyer) and PayPal commission (\$68), St. Paul's nets \$2,886 for the Christmas auction. Together with the April auction of Teddy Bears and Costas' Candies, Visible Gifts made \$3,186 from 2016 sales, and will donate \$315 to Transitional Housing of Steele County, in keeping with our mission to make God's love visible in our dealings with each other and the world.

We are positioned now for future eBay auctions, so please be thinking of fun items to donate. A Valentine's Day fundraiser is one possibility, if enough gifts surface. Please encourage others to follow Visible Gifts at www.ebay.com/usr/visiblegifts and email the Visible Gifts team at Saintpaulsonline@yahoo.com if you have anything of interest for future auctions. Thanks to all who donated, to Kris for design and donor packet work, to Leanne for photography, to Sheryl for organizing everything and Steve for his help with shipping.

***Where your treasure is,
there your heart will be also.***

Matthew 6:21

Lay Schedule

Date	Lay Reader	Lector	Chalice	Ushers
Jan 22	Jackie	Maggie	Steve	Terri and Marty
Jan 29	Julianna	Mary	Mike	Julie and Gayle
Feb 5	Scott	Nan	Diane	Steve and Sheryl
Feb 12	Janet T	Gary	Janet D	Mike and Gary
Feb 19	Jackie	Leanne	Your	Name
Feb 26	Julianna	(or here)		Here
Mar 5	Scott	(or here)	(or here)	(or here)

Coffee Committees

January

Judie Buerman
 Amy Wobschall
 Gretchen Zinsli
 Kari Gigstead
 Robin McKey
 Angie Parsons
 Francy Hall
 Kelly Karsten

February

Myrtle Brittain
 Lisa Boutelle
 Judy Erk
 Ann Henjum
 Sue Mahlman
 Sharon Tamburro
 Bobbi Otteson
 Joanne Peterson

Altar

January

Robin McKey
 Lisa Boutelle

February

Diane Spitzack
 Gerri Schwenker

ANNUAL MEETING JANUARY 22

IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE SERVICE

LEAVEN is published monthly to keep the people of St. Paul's informed and united in thought.

This issue of LEAVEN is made possible by the efforts of:

Fr. Michael Tippett
Kristin Warehime

Got News?

**If you have an item for
The Leaven, please have it to
Kristin Warehime by the fifth
of each month.**

kristin.warehime@charter.net

For more information on events at St. Paul's, visit our website: <http://stpauls-owatonna.wikispaces.com>



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