

STORIES OF PARISONHERS
CONNECTION TO ST. PAUL'S



BY
PARISHONERS
OF ST. PAUL'S

COMMON CONNECTIONS

All stories were voluntarily shared by parishioners who wanted to express their connection to Saint Paul's church and the significance it has had in their lives.

The purpose of this project is to aid in the success of our Capital Campaign. Not that anyone needs to be convinced of the importance of St. Paul's, nor is it necessary to convince anyone of the need to repair the roof. This project is to serve as a testimony of the impact of St. Paul's in people's lives, and to the working of the Holy Spirit in our church. The main goal of these stories is to help us all grow closer to one another as a parish community but also to our beloved church. Helping to recognize it as a spiritual home to others as well as ourselves in our pilgrimage home to Heaven. God uses St. Paul's as a stepping stone on our path to eternal life.

Please submit any submission, questions, comments, or concerns to the email below:

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**All the best
and God Bless,**

CHRIS KELLY

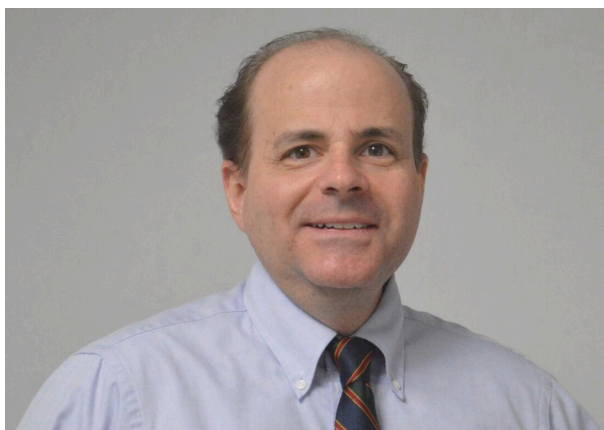
I used to view faith as antithetical to reason. Like most atheists, I defined faith as belief in the absence of proof, or assent to the truth of a proposition without good reasons. On this framing, I saw faith as an abdication of my responsibility to engage in the honest pursuit of truth. And reverence for truth, I would tell myself, is the best religion (spoiler: I still believe that part).

Moreover, if the existence of God were to be proved, there would no longer be any need for faith, I thought. For if we know something to be true, then we aren't believing it in the absence of good reasons. To this way of thinking, reason and faith are two combatants fighting over the same turf. And one side can only achieve victory at the expense of the other. The two cannot live together in harmony. There was something wrong with my conception of faith, however. But there was also something wrong, I would discover, with my belief that God's existence could not be proved. This latter topic is too large to be discussed here, but suffice it to say that a short book by St. Thomas Aquinas, called *De Ente et Essentia* (On Being and Essence), is what convinced me that God exists. Fast forward a bit. Having been convinced of the existence of God now, what was wrong with my idea of faith? I had thought that proof, or reason in general, was the death of faith. If I know that God exists, then I cannot have, nor do I need to have, faith that He exists. Thus, faith is exiled into its own kind of Babylonian Captivity and is displaced by its antithesis: reason.

But I found that my idea of faith was all wrong. I stopped thinking of faith as unjustified belief and I learned to conceive of it in terms of the trust we might have in a person (or three persons, in the case of God). But I was only able to do this after becoming convinced that God exists in the first place. How could I trust in someone (or some-three) until I know that he exists? In this way, reason – far from being antithetical to faith – opened the door to faith for me. A door which had been closed to me my entire life. By the time I came around to this view, I had been living in Edgewood for a couple of years. I had become used to driving south on Broad Street and being captivated by the striking figure of a certain Neo-Gothic church, which seemed to be drawing me toward it by the force of its own kind of gravitational pull. I felt as though, if I were to cut the engine, my car and I would continue forward, until we reached the church steps. One day, this pull became too powerful for me to resist. I knocked on the Rectory door and was met by Julie Bradley. I inquired about RCIA. I undertook my initiation over the next several months and was received into the Church, and into a wonderful parish community, on the Easter Vigil of A.D. 2024.

I still believe that reverence for truth is the best religion. To my surprise, I found such religion in the Catholic Church.

CHRIS WOODHOUSE



I have been a parishioner at St. Paul's for a little over 20 years. Within that time, I've been an Extraordinary Minister of the Host-distributing Communion at Mass and to the residents at the Scandinavian Home; attended numerous programming events, education programs, and missions; served as an altar server for funeral Masses; and become involved with OCIA, Legion of Mary, and the Parish Artists Group.

Some of the memories I'll always cherish are going to the 4:30 Vigil Mass with my Mom, attending the Christmas Eve Mass with my family and hearing my nieces sing carols, seeing my brother pray his Mass of Thanksgiving after his priestly ordination, attending my niece's wedding with our family and friends, and celebrating the life of my Mom with family, friends, and fellow parishioners at her memorial Mass.

St. Paul's has been, and will continue to be, an important part of my spiritual journey. Through all the wonderful priests, Deacon Paul, and the parish staff, I've acquired a deeper understanding and appreciation of Holy Mass, Adoration, and individual prayer life.

May God Bless St. Paul's towards a successful Capital Campaign that will allow the parish to continue to provide a community of faith for generations to come.

SARAH POTTER

I am fairly new to St. Paul's Church compared to many of the parishioners I have met. When I retired, I started attending daily Mass. At my parish, Mass was at 7 am and I started looking for a later time. I found the 12:05 Mass at St. Paul's seven years ago. I quickly came to know several of the other parishioners attending the daily Mass and started going to Sunday Masses. Everyone was so friendly and welcoming, I knew I wanted to be part of this parish and this spiritual community. Participating in the Mass, GIFT, Adoration and other spiritual opportunities has strengthened my faith. Getting to know Father Gadoury and Father Olmos prior to their ordination was very inspiring. I enjoy being a lector at the 9:30 am Mass on Sundays and at Friday daily Masses. I am on the Outreach Committee, participate in OCIA, and I'm a member of The Legion of Mary. Recently I have been volunteering at the Hospitality Table and enjoy the opportunity to meet other parishioners.

SIR KNIGHT WILLIAM JOSEPH FERNANDES II

Saint Paul's Church has inspired me to lead a faithful Catholic life guided by the Holy Spirit. Our parish is filled with people who live out the gospel values of holy mother church in service to others, and there is always someone to talk to. The building's Neo-Gothic architecture is breathtaking to all who enter, with its vaulted ceiling, pointed arches, stone columns, marble communion rail, and expertly designed high reredos altar, gold tabernacle, and copper baldacchino, it is a gem. Therefore, our parish serves as a place of recollection and peace, lifting our minds and hearts to God. Truly, Saint Paul's is Domus Dei, meaning House of God in Latin. All of the above things are why this parish community is dear to my heart.

I came to Saint Paul's four years ago looking for a parish community to complete my sacraments in and participate in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA). God led me to choose this vibrant parish as an answer to my prayers for a community with opportunities to get involved in Catholic Associations, Organizations, and Ministries that suited me. My membership in the Legion of Mary, the Knights of Columbus, and Men of Saint Joseph International have been a joy because it provided me with ways to have fellowship with other Catholics and share the word of God wherever I go. The involvement in these organizations helped me deepen my Catholic faith.

JOYCE NELSON

My name is Joyce Nelson and I have lived in Warwick for 43 years after being born and raised in Cranston. Although my home Parish is St. Peter I feel St. Paul's is a big part of my spiritual life. I attended Mass here at first because to be perfectly honest, the 4:30 Mass and the 11:30 Mass fit my schedule better. But soon I learned of the many programs offered here and the diversity of families attending. I stepped out of my comfort zone and signed up for the Alpha Program. After meeting so many kind and thoughtful people I started to expand my prayer journey and my relationship with Jesus. Another door was opened when I started to attend Adoration. I have St. PAUL'S CHURCH PARISHIONERS to thank for opening up my world. This community needs this Church and this Church needs YOU to keep it a safe, strong and structurally sound place to worship and find your inner peace. Please support the Capital Campaign so that others too will have this special place to grow closer to God.

JULIE BRADLEY

My favorite statue in our church is the one to the right of St. Joseph in the front of the church. Known as *Audi Filia* or *Listen Daughter*, it's the Blessed Virgin Mary as a little girl, looking up at her mom, St. Ann. St. Ann lovingly guides Mary with one hand and in the other she holds a scroll, which indicates that she is teaching her the scriptures and how to pray. When I look at this statue I often feel overwhelmed with gratitude for my parents and grandparents, who first taught me my prayers and showed me what holiness looks like in everyday life. I think of my own children and ask St. Ann and Mary to intercede for them, that the seeds of faith my husband and I planted in them will bloom and be fruitful. Gazing upon St. Ann, a woman of great faith who was also a wife and mother, makes me thankful that I had the opportunity to help pass the faith on to others here, during my years on the parish staff. And I think, too, of our beautiful church, and I pray that all who came before me and will come after, are filled with love for God.

The greatest beauty of our church, though, is not in the statues or even in the amazing windows. It is the people who really shine. Over the past 20 years my family has been immensely blessed by many wonderful souls we first came to know in the pews. The time and experiences we've shared with our clergy and fellow parishioners have profoundly impacted our lives here on earth, and have certainly shaped our eternity. This community is an extension of our family, and we couldn't be more grateful to be rooted here. It is our hope and prayer that St. Paul's will be an amazing, thriving parish where our kids can grow in faith in the years to come, and where they will pass the faith on to their children.



ADAM HABERSHAW



My connection to St. Paul's Parish started at birth. This is the parish that my mother grew up in, and it has been a joy to grow up in the parish as well. On January 28, 1996, I was Baptized into the faith in the Sanctuary of our parish. Since that point I have received all of my other Sacraments in the parish. I feel like I have always been a part of something going on at the parish. Whether that has been Altar Serving, Sacristan, Lector, Youth group, Vacation Bible Camp, and even during the COVID-19 lockdown I was working in the parish offices.

There have been so many memories for me in this parish. It is so hard to pick some but here would be a few of them: walking through Pawtuxet Village with the youth group on a Good Friday scavenger hunt, serving for Bishop Francis Roque (may he rest in peace) on Saturday mornings for Masses for Life, going on pilgrimage to the Holy Land, serving Mass at Our Lady's side Altar with Fr. Young during the COVID-19 pandemic, candlelight Adoration on New Years Eve with Benediction at midnight while the bells tolled, and the baptism of my Godson.

I absolutely love the artwork in our Church. I do have two favorite pieces of stained glass, but both are hard to find so you really have to look. One is right above the handicap door, and it is Our Lady lifting St. Paul's Church up to our Lord. The second one is in the Sanctuary, it is right above where the servers sit for Mass. It is an image of Our Lady with a shepherd's staff. I like to call it "Mary had a little Lamb window".

My favorite memory of St. Paul's Parish has yet to come though, and God willing it will. That would be being able to celebrate a Mass of Thanksgiving the day after priestly ordination. God willing that will come to fruition.

May our Lord always bless us, Our Lady guide us, and St. Paul always intercede for us.



SHEILAGH HERRERA

I was away from the Church for most of my adult life until I had my first child. I wanted to raise her within the faith because I thought it would give her a good foundation for life. It was probably the beauty of St. Paul's Gothic architecture that first attracted me, but what really drew me and my husband in was the warmth and friendliness of the community. As we came back to the Church and began regularly attending Mass at St. Paul's, I started learning more about the Catholic faith and began to discover its depth and beauty. Somewhat to my own surprise, I came to actually believe in the whole truth of the faith and commit myself to true practice beyond the lukewarm variety I thought was normal in my youth!

I sang with St. Paul's choir until the birth of my second daughter, at which point I returned to the pews so my husband wouldn't be left to wrangle a toddler and a baby on his own. We've been involved in St. Paul's new Families Group and look forward to raising our children in this warm and faithful community.

ST. PAULS PARISHIONER

St. Paul's Church has meant so much to my family over the generations. I vividly recall my beautiful Irish mother telling us: St. Paul's and all churches are a hospital for sinners and Jesus came to redeem us. She used to tell us that there should be a sign above the entrance way into St. Paul's that reads, "Welcome, St. Paul's Is A Hospital For Sinners! Enter To Be Healed!" I used to think that was kind of funny but now I fully understand her perspective. Through the Sacraments of Holy Mother Church, we are refreshed, renewed, and replenished as Catholic Christians. St. Paul's has done that for so many of us and I pray that "We, The People of God" continue to receive the spiritual sustenance our forebears received at our beloved St. Paul's. I also recall the wonderful Catholic women who have given so much to St. Paul's and how my mother and thousands of women have made St. Paul's a thriving Catholic church. My father and so many men contributed so much to St. Paul's too, but as my father knew, his Irish wife was the "woman of the house," and they were also the "women of St. Paul's!" God bless all who came before us. Amen.

P.S. I also want to thank all of my CCD teachers over the years at St. Paul's. I can recall all of their names and vividly recall three things about each of them: 1. Their great knowledge of our faith. 2. Their great love for our Lord and our Lady. 3. The joy on their faces as they taught us with passion and skill. They were masterful. I was talking to a friend about our CCD experience at St. Paul's and she told me that thousands of us went through CCD at St. Paul's and the laity blessed us by joyfully teaching us about our great Catholic faith. She also reminded me that CCD gave us the habit of going for religious instruction every week and we were learning with our peers who became our friends for a lifetime. I told her I loved going every week and confessed I even had a crush on her. We both laughed and embraced, and we both said, "Thank God for St. Paul's and our CCD teachers!"

FATHER WOODHOUSE

My connection to St. Paul's church and our wonderful parish family was through my family.

My sister and her family moved to Edgewood in 1993 and from that point on, when I visited her I would go to Mass at St. Paul's. My mother moved to Edgewood in 2002 and by now I was discerning, (or more accurately – resisting), God's calling me to the priesthood, and I attended daily Mass at St. Paul's with my mom when I was in Rhode Island. It was at one of these daily Masses, in 2008, that the pastor here, asked me if I ever thought of becoming a priest. This got my attention because he had no idea that I had been discerning the call for over 5 years. He introduced me to the transitional deacon who was assigned to St. Paul's at the time and who was studying at Pope St. John XXIII National Seminary, a seminary for older, (more mature 😊) men. After having a conversation with him I started to become more excited about the prospect of becoming a priest and within a year I entered the seminary. Four years later I celebrated my Mass of Thanksgiving at St. Paul's on the Solemnity of Corpus Christi, the day after I was ordained.

While I was discerning the call to the priesthood, I prayed that God would give me a "St. Paul moment", recollecting how St. Paul was struck to the ground, blinded and heard the voice of Jesus, so I could be sure that God wanted me to be one of His priests. I am convinced that my "St. Paul moment" prayers were answered, although not as dramatically, (thanks be to God), because it was here at St. Paul's that I received the affirmation I needed to take the next step and begin my application to the seminary.

FRAN & PHILIP ROWELL

I read once that there is no lonelier feeling in the world than being a junior high school student walking into a cafeteria with your tray in your hand and not having anyone to sit next to. While I do not know whether this may or may not be true, what I do know is that in the over 30 years I've been coming to St. Paul's, I have never experienced that sensation. Whether it be attending Mass or a parish function, I have always felt welcome. At first, it may have just been a friendly wave at Mass (or back then, a handshake). As time passed, it may have been comments on my son, James, growing or altar serving or going off to college...these wonderful people who surrounded me, may not have even known by name, but they showed that they cared. By the time Social Sunday rolled around, I had become more and more involved in parish life and was privileged to know a number of these parishioners by name. These same people, whose faces now had names, did not reserve chairs for those they knew at their tables, but instead would pull out a chair and welcome others, especially those who they did not recognize to their table. In time, that would include my own husband, Phil, who after years of being asked, would feel the call to conversion. After all, shouldn't that be what parish life is all about? Welcoming all to our community and, in turn, inviting those into a relationship with Jesus?



EMALEE ALEXANDER

I've been coming to St. Paul's Church for about 4 years, in 2022 I made my Confirmation and have gotten involved with lots of stuff such as Lectoring, Saint Formation which is the young adult group, Vocation Adoration, Eucharistic Ministers to the sick and homebound, Sister Esmeralda's Bible class, and helping out wherever needed. What I love about St. Paul's is the parishioners and the caring community we have. I must give credit however to the church building itself, because I would not be who I am today without it.

My connection to St. Paul's started before I was coming to church, before I was anything but a practicing Catholic. It was in 2019 when I was scammed out of \$3,000 which left me with only \$400 left in my bank account. I was a sophomore at JWU living with a roommate on Norwood Ave right down the street from St. Paul's. I was headed back to my apartment from Target in Seekonk which I drove to in order to buy gift cards to "wire" the money to the scammer on the phone. After I realized it was a scam I broke down and began to have an anxiety attack. I could not breathe, I was shaking and crying. I couldn't make it home so I pulled over in the CVS parking lot, got out of the car to catch my breath. Pacing back and forth, I didn't know what to do, I was scared to call my dad because he would be disappointed in me, I knew the police wouldn't be of much help, I was upset and angry at the man who had lied to me, but mostly I was so angry with myself for being that stupid and gullible. As I got back into my car with this anger and defeat there was St. Paul's, big and so obnoxiously obvious that it was a church. It was at that moment that I pinned all of my anger, fear, and hopelessness on God. I blamed him for everything that was wrong with me and my life, and questioned why he allowed life to be so horrible when no one asks to be born. It was also here that I begged God in all honesty that he would take back my life, "I don't want it." I didn't want a life that I would keep messing up, I hated myself and who I was, I was already in a deep place of unhappiness which I tried to run from through drugs, alcohol, stealing, and other coping mechanisms. I had come to terms with this self-hatred and pity that all I could ever do with my life is mess it up. I was a failure and no longer wanted the life God had given to me. Going home defeated and angry I was washing my face with water in the bathroom when I told God quite rudely that I wanted to know the truth, why did he make the world the way that it is, why was life so HARD! I didn't get my answer right away. I held this bitter anger towards God for months, hypothesizing that God hated us, we had crucified his Son, we don't follow any of his rules, he hates us and has left us to fend for ourselves and that is why life is full of suffering. With this in mind I made it my point to find something in the Bible to discredit Christians and their message of the "loving God". So I bought a Bible from Walmart and began to read it. I was gonna read it cover to cover, to find all the contradictions and falsehoods in it... Obviously that didn't work. God's word is sharper than any double-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit. God saved me despite all of my poor life choices. God had allowed me to back myself into a corner, stuck between a rock and a hard place. He allowed me to realize my helplessness and hopelessness without him. If God had not "backed me into" the CVS parking lot that day and **if St. Paul's Church had not been where it is, I would not be where I am in my life today or who I am in Christ.**

ETHELYN TINGLEY

Mrs. Ethelyn was “interviewed” by Emalee Alexander, this is the information she wanted to share for her connection story.

Mrs. Ethelyn was brought up in an Irish Catholic family and attended Catholic school for all 12 years of education. She attended and graduated college, got married to her husband John 60 years ago and had 5 children (Michael the oldest, John, Chris, Kevin, and Kerry.) Despite her husband John never being religious or converting to the Catholic faith he never prevented the children from making their sacraments, going to church, or even attending St. Paul's school. At the time when the children were attending St. Paul's school they were being taught by the religious sister of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Mrs. Ethelyn loved the sisters and had only good things to say about the education her children received from them at the school. She especially noted about the help she received from them when she had taken in a neighbor boy named Tommy. He was friends with her sons, (1 year older than her 3rd son Christopher). When he was 9 years old his mother went into the hospital so he went to stay with Mrs. Ethelyn. Unfortunately Tommy's mom died in the hospital leaving him with no one. None of his immediate relatives wanted to take him in so Mrs. Ethelyn took him in as a “foster child” ; he lived there from the age of 9 to 18. At this time Mrs. Ethelyn recalls that John was out of work and it was already hard enough to feed, clothe, and support the children she already had but God always provides. The sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary allowed Tommy to attend St. Paul's school for free and even donated a bed and mattress for him since Mrs. Ethelyn did not have one. “The nuns were a blessing” she recalled to me as she explained that they would bundle up newspapers and allow her children to take them and turn them in for change. Out of the 6 children 5 of them made their communion at St. Paul's, all of them made their confirmations at St. Paul's, 3 of them have been married at St. Paul's, and 1 unfortunately has had the Mass of Christian burial at the church, Michael her oldest passed away November 7th 2010.) This was not the first time Mrs. Ethelyn had suffered the pain of losing a child, when her second son John was only 2 he needed to have surgery to remove his adenoids that were preventing him from breathing properly. During the surgery John hemorrhaged to death on the operating table. This left Mrs. Ethelyn, heart sick and unable to function for years, she recalls that a “nun” had asked her if she felt that God had taken her son away to make room for Tommy who would have been left with no one to care for him? This she said changed her outlook on everything.

On top of all of this emotional suffering Mrs. Ethelyn has had more than her fair share of physical sufferings, she was diagnosed with melanoma cancer in 2001 which started in the lymph nodes of her legs and spread throughout her whole body (pancreas, spine, etc.) all the way to her lungs. In 2004 after receiving treatments for 3 years the doctors and herself thought she was going to die, but the cancer had stopped spreading and when they did a pet scan it revealed the the tumors around her body had shrunken slightly. In November 2005 Mrs. Ethelyn was found to be cancer free! All the tumors were gone! While at the doctor's office she recalls that she was astounded and the first thing she did when she got out of her appointment was

heard straight to St. Paul's. She did not make it in time for the 12:05 mass but she knew that on Mondays St. Paul's had just started having Eucharistic Adoration. She went into the church and knelt down in front of the altar in the middle of the aisle by the rails. She asked Jesus, "What can I do for you?" No answer came, until a couple of weeks later when she was vacuuming her house, she distinctly heard the words "You can suffer for me."

Suffer she did, the melanoma came back in her leg and spread to her arm but it was able to be treated because it was caught early on. The greatest and most painful sufferings however were the 3 back surgeries she needed in order to fix the vertebrae in her back because of the severe arthritis that set in due to the radiation she had received the first time she had cancer. It was one suffering after another and most recently she was hospitalized from February till July with a severe bacterial infection in her kidney which spread into her bloodstream. During this time of pain and suffering, crying and screaming she explained to me how God always provided someone of faith to share in her sufferings. Sister Esmeralda followed her no matter where she was transferred to and Father Woodhouse came to visit her and administer to her the last rite and anointing of the sick.

God's providence and the importance of the Eucharist are the 2 main takeaways from my discussion with Mrs. Ethelyn. She explained that it's hard to be married to someone who has no faith because you do not have someone to share those "God moments" (as she calls them) with. However, God always provided faithful people for her to share those moments with especially the people of St. Pauls. She says she has many warm and happy memories of the church and that she missed all of the parishioners and friends such as Mrs. Rose Flynn and Kathleen Magnan, her good friends, Sister Esmeralda, and Deacon Paul who used to visit her every week. She is most grateful for God's providence in the form of those friendships and faithful witnesses who she could share her God moments with and for all the Priests who the Lord has put in her life at times of sorrows and suffering, as well as joy.

Something that is both a cause for consolation and desolation in her life is the Holy Eucharist, Mrs. Ethelyn stressed how hard it is for her not to be able to attend mass anymore but how unbelievably grateful she is to be able to receive the Eucharist at home through the Eucharist ministry to the sick and homebound. She who used to be a devout attendee of the Monday Eucharist Adoration and even before then would go and adore at Our Lady of the Rosary Church, emphasized, that we who have the ability to go to Eucharist Adoration and mass should "be happy you have the chance to go and be with the Lord who made you and gives you many blessings a day."

If I can leave you with anything from my discussion with Mrs. Ethelyn is this: always trust in God's providence and care for you, he always provides all that you need even in your worst pain and hardship whether physical, emotional, and spiritual. God provides, his grace is sufficient enough for us. And something that Mrs. Ethelyn said that there is only no other holy sacrifice than that which is found in every Catholic church and that is the blessed sacrament of the altar, The Holy Eucharist. "That is the only reason to go to Church, yes it is great to chat with friends after mass, but the only purpose for being there is to receive Jesus.

PHILLIP SHUTEN



I've been a parishioner here at St. Paul's for only 2 years so far, however this church and community has made a very significant impact on my life. Having converted to Catholicism two years ago, this parish has really helped to shape my faith and understanding, from the loving community, to all the options to get involved, and the guidance from those who have been doing this much longer.

I had a normal loving childhood and highschool life, I graduated Highschool and decided to attend JWU for culinary arts. After I graduated college, I moved out of my moms house to live in RI. Living on your own seems really cool at first, and I had a good time the first couple months. After a while I started to wonder about life's meaning as I felt stuck just working, paying bills and trying to be distracted from the hardships of life. After a while I decided to research God and religion to see who I thought was right and to discover my meaning.

I grew up non religious, having never studied the Bible, I wasn't very competent in my understanding of it, and thus wasn't very confident in the accuracy of it at the time. While doing research I made a friend from work who attends St. Paul's, we would discuss what I was reading and I would ask questions, till one day I decided to ask her to take me to a mass so I can see for myself what it's all about. While at my first mass I felt bored, the music was nice but I didn't think I would be coming back. I tried participating by reading along but didn't understand the point of any of it. However when father presented the Holy Eucharist, something clicked in my brain and I knew this was it. I still had no idea what the Eucharist was at the time but I was convinced right then and there that this is where I need to be.

I decided to continue attending mass, I took the RCIA classes and received my Sacraments, and I now participate in whatever I can and continue my research and help further my understanding and convince others of the beauty in faith. St. Paul's is where my journey began, it's where I've grown into who I am now and it's where I intend to continue growing in my faith. The loving community of the parish and my connection to this parish as the beginning of my journey are the things that make me feel most connected to St. Paul's in particular. Without this Parish and the loving people who are a part of it I wouldn't be the person I am today.

ELENA & MARK HABERSHAW

My family has been a part of the St. Paul community since the corner stone was laid. My grandparents, parents, aunts and uncles, siblings and now my own family have been blessed to receive all of our sacraments in this wonderful and loving parish community. I have many favorite memories throughout my life, of times spent here at St. Paul church. We used to have community talent shows in the 1970s. My sister Debi and I were always part of this show. I remember singing "All I want for Christmas is my 2 front teeth" I was the "Free Throw Champion" for girls even though I didn't score a single basket because I was the only girl to play in the event.

My husband and I were married here at St. Paul's church on June 17, 1989. This began our journey as a family. Our sons have received all of their sacraments here at St. Paul's. They have both served as altar servers throughout their school age days. Our son Derek attended St. Paul school for 2 years. Adam has been involved in many ministries here at the church. My husband and I also serve as lectors. Mark is on many committees serving our church community.

St. Paul community has been here for us in celebration, mourning and difficult times. The priests and Deacon Paul have been an integral part of our lives. We have made so many wonderful friends throughout the years. We are blessed to be a part of such a special community of believers.

We hope that we can raise the funds to repair and restore our beautiful church. Our son Adam, God willing will be ordained a priest in June, 2028 and will celebrate his mass of thanksgiving here.

GINNY MORSE



Although my parents were Catholic, my siblings and I grew up in a non-practicing family. My journey and path to God came to me in my early 30's. I was recently divorced. At that time, I thought I had just gone through hell. Little did I know that what was about to happen to me was going to have a profound effect on my life, shake my total belief system, ultimately bringing me to a new hell, a depth that would have an impact on me for the rest of my life.

On May 11, 2000, I discovered/found my father dead in our family home. He had committed suicide. He had hung himself in the basement of our family home. He had taken his own life. When I found him, I was hopeful that I might still be able to save him, but upon touching him, I knew he was long gone. This horrific event led me to seek and search for answers to questions I had: namely, what is my purpose on earth? What does God want from me? Is God punishing me? In my quest for answers to these questions, I was adamant that no matter what, I did not want my life to end up like my father's. My father's death was a wake-up call, and even in this darkness I knew that God was calling me to seek HIM. I loved my dad. He had a family that loved him, he was not in any financial troubles, he was a hard worker, he had a strong value and ethical system. He was smart. He could fix anything mechanical, was a good carpenter. My dad did not "look" or "act" like someone who was suffering from mental illness or insanity. I went through great lengths and deep, deep thought and reflection. The only conclusion I have ever come up with is one and only one conclusion. He had no God in his life. I truly believe in God. I started attending Church on a regular basis. I started taking bible classes at the Cathedral of Sts. Peter & Paul. I began a habit of attending daily morning Masses at Holy Name of Jesus in Providence.

My association with St. Paul's began with my relocation from Providence to Edgewood and my impending marriage to my wonderful husband, Andrew Morse. We took our vows of matrimony in 2019. Father Adam Young officiated at our wedding. Andrew and I were blessed to have many parishioners of St. Paul's attend our wedding. Today, I have been a parishioner of St. Paul's for approximately ten years. Currently, I am blessed to lead St. Paul's Women's Bible Study and am also a proud Lector of St. Paul's Parish. I have found St. Paul's to be a vibrant community of parishioners seeking the word and practices of God. I am truly grateful to be a part of St. Paul's community

DAVE RUSH

My parents have lived nearby since 1970. When I was in Rhode Island I attended St Paul's but was never active in the church. After my parents passed I began to go to Mass on a regular basis. Although I had been confirmed in the church as a child i had never really belonged to this or any parish. I attended some of the Alpha events put on by Julie Bradley and got to know some of the people here. This led to me volunteering at the Food pantry, doing home communions and other activities, including the Knights of Columbus. For the last 3 years I have been the church Sexton (maintenance guy). I feel that keeping the church clean and sanitary is important to making people feel comfortable here. Overall St Paul's s a great place to come and worship.

STEPHANIE NUNEZ

My parents and I began attending mass at St. Paul's in 2017, but it wasn't until around 2019-2020 that we started attending regularly. Before then, we were frequent church hoppers. Growing up, I would go to bilingual mass or mass in Spanish in Providence. All it took was one summer day when I was curious about St. Paul's and wanted to go in since I lived in Edgewood my entire life.

St. Paul's has played a profound role, functioning as the catalyst in my spiritual journey, one filled with a greater longing for God, summed up by St. Augustine's quote, "...our hearts are restless until they rest in You" and growth in faith. It's also been a place of refuge, where within its layers of walls and meticulously designed stained glass windows, I am home, away from the exterior noise of the day-to-day, in the stillness and quiet where I can pray.

From enrolling in Bible class with Sr. Esmeralda to lectoring, volunteering for events, and attending young adult group meetings, my involvement has strengthened my faith and communion with Jesus and allowed me to meet and grow closer with the wonderful community. I thank God for guiding me to St. Paul's.

SISTER ESMERELDA HMSP

I've been at Saint Paul's for three years. For me Saint Paul's has been like a second home where I have felt welcome and loved. For me Saint Paul's is a special place because it's where I've seen the miracle of conversion in different people, I always think that Saint Paul's is very attracting to many people specially to those who have no idea who God is.

Our church is a great blessing to all of us and many other people. When I hear those new born babies cry or try to talk I think this are our generation that will be at Saint Paul's for years and it will be their turn to once again repair, restore, and rejoice for others. We all build our church in different ways, some of us bring in the members of the body of the church and others the physical building, both are necessary. I'm happy to be part of Saint Paul's church. God bless you all. Let's continue praying for our Saint Paul's church.

A St. Paul's Parishioner

St. Paul's has played a critical role in my spiritual life! I have lived in the edgewood neighborhood now for around 5 years and have been attending mass at St, Paul's and enjoying many of the activities that go on in the Parish. My favorite part about the church however is not something that is seen but heard, the bells.

The bells are important not just because they signify 5 minutes till mass starts but, it is something special that we have the bells go off at 12:00pm (noon) and again at 6:00pm to signal the praying of the Angelus or the Regina Coeli during lent.

This is not something typical at least not at any of the churches I've grown up in, usually if they have the bells going off at times other than for mass, they ring on the top of the hour every hour.

The unique timing of St. Paul's bells are a great reminder for the neighborhood to pray, and they serve as an alarm for us catholics who live within ear shot of the bells that it's time to pray! Living near St. Paul's is a blessing for many reasons such as the church being open every weekday till 5pm, not having to find a parking space on a busy Sunday morning, but most importantly because the bells have helped me work prayer into my daily life. When i'm at home about to eat dinner, or watching some tv, doing the dishes, etc. As soon as the bells begin to ring I am reminded that God is and has been present with me the whole time. Sometimes we get wrapped up in the mundane business of our day to day routine, and we forget to communicate to God as we go about our business. The bells act as a wake up call to our hearts, to stop what we are doing and to give a couple of minuets to God, to reorient our minds and souls towards him. Working prayer into our daily lives is crucial because it allows us to remain in God and thus he is able to work through us, For our sanctification and others.

“Your ordinary contact with God takes place where your fellow men, your yearnings, your work and your affections are. There you have your daily encounter with Christ. It is in the midst of the most material things of the earth that we must sanctify ourselves, serving God and all mankind.”

~Saint Josemaria Escriva~