

Mt. Lebanon church launches new worship experience

An inaugural celebration of Refuge @ St. Paul's, a dynamic, multi-sensory and interactive worship experience, will be held at 6 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 12 at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, located at the corner of Washington and Mayfair roads in Mt. Lebanon.

Targeting young adults and others who are seeking a more nontraditional worship experience, the service will feature a contemporary yet contemplative mix of live music, prayer stations, images, icons, incense and rich visuals aimed at stimulating the senses and reaching the "still, small voice" of the soul.

Bryan Sable, assistant music director at St. Paul's, will lead worship music for Refuge @ St. Paul's, along with guest musicians including contralto Kate Eaton of Denver. Eclectic musical influences are to be expected during Refuge @ St. Paul's services, from contemporary singer-songwriters like Ani DiFranco to country masters like Johnny Cash.

A cum laude graduate in music education from West Liberty State College, Sable joined the St. Paul's music staff this month. He holds a master's degree in education administration from California University of Pennsylvania, and is a baritone singer for the Mendelssohn Choir of Pittsburgh's professional core. Assistant director of the Junior Mendelssohn Choir, Sable is also on the music faculty at City Charter High School, a highly successful charter school in the Cultural District of downtown Pittsburgh. He has additional experience as a music educator and church musician in Wheeling, W.Va., and with Haven Heights United Methodist Church, Mount Washington.

The Rev. Kris Opat, who pioneered the effort to bring this unique style of worship to Pittsburgh, says, "I was profoundly affected by experiencing a similar service at St. John's Cathedral in Denver and I began to consider how St. Paul's could add something like this."

Refuge @ St. Paul's has received operational support from the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh to help St. Paul's grow and better serve the people of the South Hills.

"There is tremendous potential for this service, considering not only the region's strong faith traditions, but also the artistic communities and visions we support in Pittsburgh," explains the Rev. Lou Hays, St. Paul's rector (senior pastor). "Artists, musicians, students, young adults—there are so many people who will love exploring the arts to stimulate, enhance and experience their faith."

As are all of St. Paul's worship services, Refuge @ St. Paul's is free and open to the public. The church also offers a youth-oriented outdoor service at 6 p.m. Saturdays in St. Margaret's Garden, a family-friendly, contemporary service at 8:45 a.m. Sundays, and a more traditional, choral liturgy at 10:30 a.m. Sundays.

For more information, contact the Rev. Kris Opat at 412-531-7153 ext. 35 or at kris@stpaulspgh.org, or see Refuge @ St. Paul's on the church website: www.stpaulspgh.org