

ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

PARISH PROFILE 2020

Open Doors, Open Hearts, Open Hands





An Open Letter

TO POTENTIAL APPLICANTS FOR RECTOR

We welcome your interest in St. Paul's Episcopal Church and invite you to learn about us: who we are now and what we envision ourselves to become with the leadership of our new rector.

If you ask parishioners what qualities define our church community, they are likely to mention its friendliness and welcoming spirit, its encouragement of personal and spiritual growth, its support of members during difficult times, its commitment to community ministries, and its rich worship experience that includes thought-provoking preaching, inspiring music and beautiful liturgy.

We are a historical church in a diverse neighborhood on the outskirts of Wilmington's downtown business district. In its first several decades of existence, St. Paul's was home to both Black and White parishioners. We still strive to be an inclusive congregation.

Our new Strategic Plan defines our mission as "Open doors, open hearts, open hands." It describes our vision as "To welcome all to live God's mission, teach Christ's love, and transform our community by the power of the Holy Spirit."

A recent survey of parishioners, followed by a series of focus groups, gave church members the opportunity to identify what they see as St. Paul's strengths and challenges.

STRENGTHS

Parishioners cite the beauty of our church interior and the inspiring worship they experience in that space. Good preaching is enhanced by our regionally recognized music program and our liturgy.

Another strength is the laity's leadership in initiating and conducting an array of ministries, both within our church community and outside it. This consistent, cohesive direction has helped make our clergy transition period a smooth one, with little discernible dip in attendance or activity levels.

We find strength in our high degree of service to the larger community, with many parishioners giving hours of volunteer time to help the less fortunate. This kind of dedication is enhanced by a growing membership. Many new members are retirees who have recently moved to the area and have time, talent and treasure to invest in making the world a better place.

CHALLENGES

While St. Paul's is fortunate in having many skilled and energetic retirees in its parish, we would like to attract more young families, especially families with children. Some parishioners voice a desire for more diversity – of age, ethnicity, and race – among our members.

An area of concern is the condition of our facilities, especially with regard to access. For example, people with mobility problems have trouble getting to many parts of the building, and the children's wing is distant from our worship space and accessible only by a flight of stairs.

We also have requests from parishioners for more community ministry efforts and more opportunities for spiritual development. In 2018, the church stepped out in faith and hired an assistant rector, who has expanded our vision and our capacity for new perspectives and new works.

St. Paul's has been blessed in many ways: with exceptional clergy and lay leadership, with a rich worship experience, with a large and architecturally distinguished building, and with steady growth. All of these attributes, however, are at risk without adequate financial resources to allow them to flourish and better serve our parish and the greater community.

An overarching concern among the majority of our members is the need for a more effective stewardship initiative that is realistic but bold and that is clearly communicated throughout the parish. Many respondents to our survey and participants in our focus groups emphasized the need for definite goal-setting and better communication of the church's needs to increase giving to the level required if we are to become the Christ-centered community we aspire to be.





OUR VISION FOR ST. PAUL'S

We want our worship experience to continue to deepen our faith, broaden our understanding and inspire us to follow Christ;

We seek to serve God and follow Christ through active ministries in our community;

We also seek a deeper relationship with God and value having an array of spiritual development opportunities for parishioners;

We are a welcoming community and seek to grow and become more diverse in terms of age, background, ethnicity and race;

We want to be good stewards of our facilities, our resources and our ministries and understand that we must strengthen our financial giving to do so;

We are known for our excellent music program and for our friendliness and hospitality, and want to ensure we maintain those qualities.



Wilmington

OUR HOME COMMUNITY

From the downtown Riverwalk that skirts the Cape Fear River to the modern architecture that is remaking the riverfront's skyline, Wilmington, North Carolina has become a Southern destination. Rivaling Charleston and Savannah in its charm and voted America's Best Riverfront, Wilmington serves as a place where history and "present day" coexist and bring out the best in one another.



As part of the 17-campus University of North Carolina system, UNC Wilmington offers a range of baccalaureate and graduate-level programs as well as several doctoral degrees. It also houses the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) for retirees to continue their education for pleasure. At Cape Fear Community College, students can train for a new career in one of its technical programs or earn a two-year college transfer degree to continue their education at a four-year institution. CFCC also offers a wide variety of adult education and continuing education classes.



Moss-draped live oaks line the brick streets of the 230-block National Register Historic District, one of the largest in the U.S. Whether you're touring the house Cornwallis occupied during the Revolutionary War or going to a concert at the new Live Nation music venue, Wilmington has much to offer. We delight in a foodie scene with local chefs, microbreweries, boutiques, small live music venues, nightlife and a vibrant arts scene with galleries and wonderful theater options. Thalian Hall is a world-class historic theater that offers live productions, art films and is the hub of the thriving arts community. The Wilson Center is a new 1,200-seat theater that brings nationally touring concerts and Broadway to our city. Wilmington recently earned designation as a World War II Heritage City based on its contributions to the war effort and its historic preservation. The Battleship North Carolina is proudly docked in the Cape Fear River as a highlight for any tour of the city. Wilmington is also a place of higher learning.

When you place all of these attributes in a coastal setting, the area becomes irresistible! Wrightsville Beach is a barrier island and an exciting part of the local community. Boating, a day on the beach, fresh seafood, kayaking, paddle boarding or simply enjoying a glass of wine while breathing in the salt air give Wilmington an atmosphere of charm that is second to none.



COMMUNITIES OF FAITH

Wilmington offers a thriving spiritual community with many houses of worship, both historic and contemporary. There are eight Wilmington-based Episcopal parishes in the Lower Cape Fear Deanery, each with a distinctive worship style. The churches participate in community events and collaborate in outreach efforts such as Sacred Ground, Vacation Bible School, Habitat for Humanity projects, Rise Against Hunger efforts, and events featuring combined choirs.

Beyond an array of Christian denominations – including Southern Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox, and a variety of nondenominational churches – Wilmington is home to several Jewish houses of worship, a Buddhist center and several Islamic centers.



DEMOGRAPHICS, ECONOMY, SCHOOLS, HEALTH CARE

The area's economy is built largely on tourism, health care and health care research, and technology (especially financial technology). Small businesses dominate the local economy, with only three large manufacturers: GE Aviation, GE Hitachi Nuclear Energy, and Corning Optical Fiber Plant.

New Hanover County's primary economic drivers are New Hanover Regional Medical Center (NHRMC), University of North Carolina Wilmington (UNCW), Cape Fear Community College, Wilmington International Airport (ILM), and the Port of Wilmington.

The county's largest employers are NHRMC, New Hanover County Schools, Wal-Mart Stores, GE Hitachi and GE Aviation, UNCW, New Hanover County, and PPD, a clinical research corporation. Many people from neighboring Brunswick and Pender counties work in New Hanover County.



Our Setting

THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF EAST CAROLINA

Headquartered in Kinston, the Diocese of East Carolina consists of 67 parishes and three college campus ministries and covers the area from I-95 eastward to the North Carolina coast. This diocese serves several military bases, a large Latino community, and parishes of all sizes.

Eastern North Carolina is largely rural, its economy based on agriculture, tourism and some manufacturing. Wilmington is the largest municipality in this part of the state, and it has the region's most robust economy.

The Rt. Rev. Robert Skirving is Bishop of East Carolina.



ST. PAUL'S AT A GLANCE

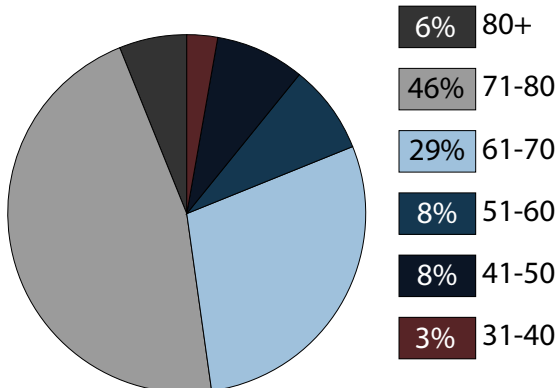
As of mid-2020, St. Paul's has 130 pledging units. Another 47 individuals have made gifts to the church. An average of 173 people attend either our 8:30 or our 10:30 a.m. service on Sunday.



DEMOGRAPHICS

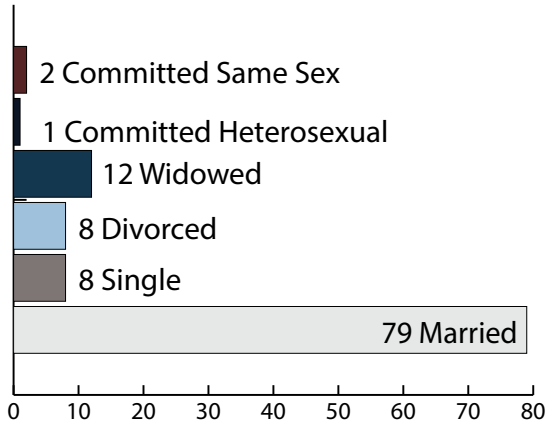
The Search Committee conducted a survey of church members this past August. It was completed by more than 50 percent of members and gave us a snapshot of current demographics. The following data represents only the survey respondents. Among the highlights:

AGE OF PARTICIPANTS



Most respondents are over the age of 40, with the majority between 60 and 80 years of age.

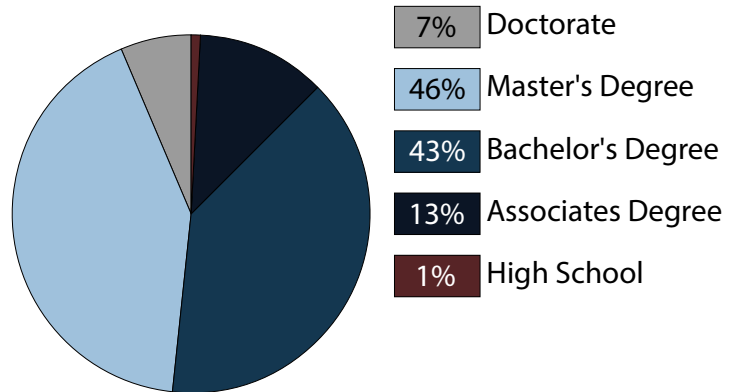
RELATIONSHIP STATUS



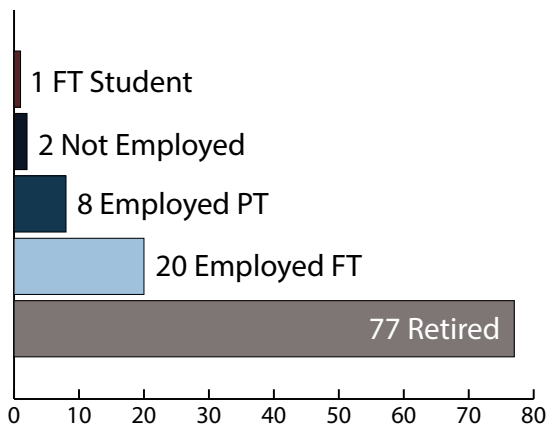
The majority are married or in a committed relationship.

EDUCATION

With few exceptions, they have had some post-secondary education, with about 45% holding an advanced degree (master's or doctorate).



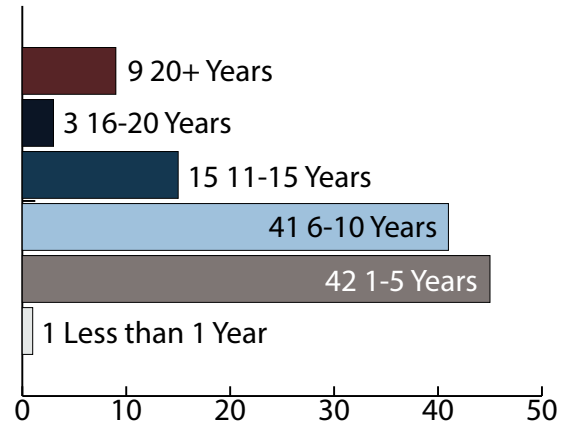
EMPLOYMENT STATUS



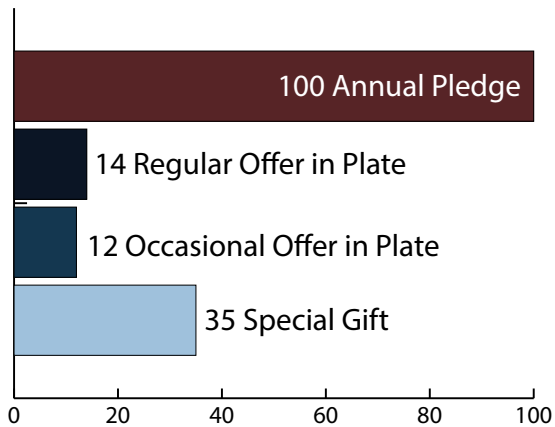
Approximately 75% of the survey respondents are retired.

LENGTH OF ATTENDANCE

Only about 27% have been part of St. Paul's more than 11 years. Another 35% have attended for 6-10 years, and just over 36% have been with us for 1-5 years.



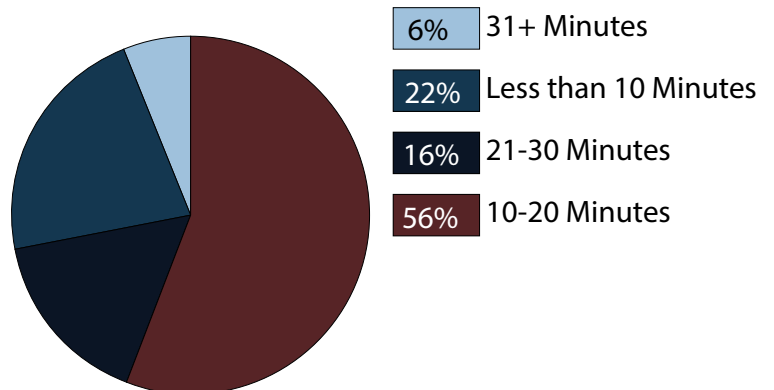
MONETARY CONTRIBUTIONS



89% of survey respondents make an annual pledge to the church.

80% of them drive 20 minutes or less to St. Paul's. 6% drive more than 30 minutes.

TRAVEL TIME





Budget

St. Paul's operating fund budget for 2020 is \$619,310.

The church also has an endowment, managed by a five-member Endowment Board. The fund is divided into two accounts: the investment account, whose balance is currently about \$860,000, and the disbursement account, with a current balance of about \$180,000.

Details about the church's finances and endowment are available upon request.

CLERGY

The Rev. Ray Hanna has been the interim rector of St. Paul's since March 1, 2020. The Rev. Adam Pierce, our assistant rector, came to us straight out of seminary two years ago and was ordained to the priesthood in December 2018. The Rev. Richard Banks, a retired priest who does supply work at St. Paul's and elsewhere in the Deanery, is our priest associate.



MUSIC

Music is an integral part of worship at St. Paul's. Directing this important area are Ronnie Wise, our organist and director of music; and Richard Rhoads, our assistant director of music.

St. Paul's has a vibrant music program. We have an adult choir that sings regular Sunday morning services, as well as occasional Evensong services, an annual Messiah concert and other choral concerts throughout the season. The choir spent a week in residence at Chichester Cathedral in the U.K. in 2017, as well as a Sunday at St. Thomas, Fifth Avenue, New York City. It is scheduled to return to England for a week long residency at Lichfield Cathedral next summer - provided travel is permitted - and at Wells Cathedral in the summer of 2023.

St. Paul's revived the Wilmington Boys' Choir and started a chorister program for young singers. We have a free organ recital series that features some of the best organists from across the country.



SMALL GROUPS

St. Paul's believes in the importance of small groups to help connect parishioners and provide a welcoming landing place for newcomers. These groups, led by lay people as well as clergy, change over time but include Bible-study, book-study and mini-retreat offerings. Two groups have recently formed to participate in the Sacred Ground curriculum on racial justice and reconciliation.

ADMINISTRATION

St. Paul's paid staff consists of a parish administrator and a finance assistant. We also have dedicated volunteers who work in finance, technology and communications, children's ministry and archiving.

WORSHIP

Central to our life as a parish and community are our worship services.

St. Paul's offers a spoken Rite II Communion service at 8:00 a.m. and our "main" service is at 10:30 a.m. and is a Rite II Choral Eucharist. Other services include a Wednesday noon Eucharist and monthly Taizé services. The choir offers a Choral Evensong on a periodic basis. We regularly have a Lessons and Carols service during Advent and hold an Easter Vigil service with music.

The use of ritual and symbolism enhance our feeling of connection to our Lord and the participation enhances our connection to each other as community.

The following are some of the characteristics of our Choral Eucharist:

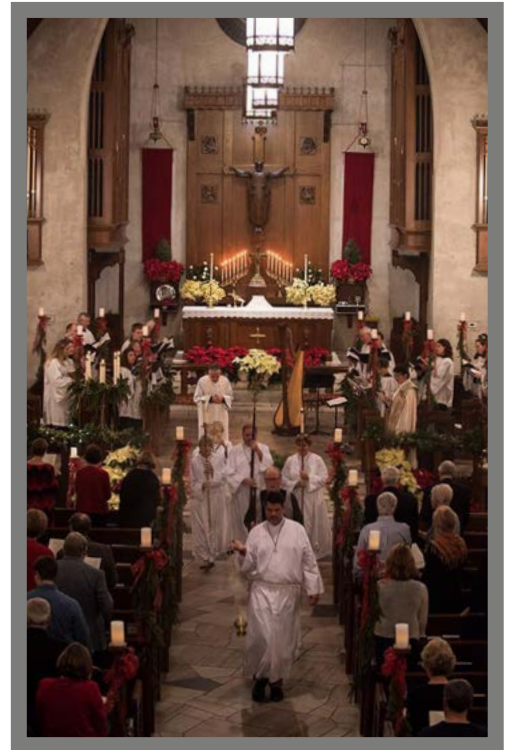
St. Paul's is blessed to have two magnificent organs and excellent acoustics, which accompany a richly voiced choir. Our music director and assistant (who is our primary organist) provide a wide-ranging repertoire and there have been times when the congregation has broken out with spontaneous applause at the end of an offertory. Not uncommon is the addition of instruments besides the organ. It is also the choice of the Celebrant to speak or chant the opening of the service.

St. Paul's utilizes vergers who function as masters of ceremonies and ensure the service runs smoothly. The verger (along with a chalice) also offers the bread to those who choose to not climb the chancel stairs to the altar. The senior verger teaches lectors and Eucharistic ministers; another verger prepares younger people for service.

Another who assists the officiant to enhance the worship is the thurifer, who offers incense on high holy days, including during the Palm Sunday procession around two city blocks with the choir and congregation.

At the bottom of the chancel stairs awaits an intercessor who will pray with any parishioner who feels the need for private prayer after receiving communion.

On the whole, the worship services are best characterized as dignified and traditional, using ceremonies to enhance our dedication to our Lord.



ADULT CHRISTIAN FORMATION

St. Paul's is fortunate in having a dedicated group of parishioners who plan and lead adult Christian formation programs for the church.

Sunday morning for adults

The Christian Formation Committee offers a 50-minute adult Sunday program between our two Sunday morning services every week except on major feast days. The presenters are usually parishioners. Topics can consist of a study of the day's scripture readings, exploration of the history of Christianity and the Anglican Church, church liturgy, personal and spiritual growth or a study of a particular theologian's writings. Occasionally the program focuses on some aspect of St. Paul's outreach, with a guest presenter.

Mid-week evening programs

St. Paul's has had moderate success with several series of Wednesday evening programs that combine a simple supper with a seasonal or topical program. We have also offered Movie Nights in the summer, where a film is screened and discussed.



CHRISTIAN FORMATION FOR CHILDREN

St. Paul's Children and Youth Ministry begins with the belief that children are innately spiritual and have the desire to develop their relationship with God. We celebrate the mystery of the Trinity by encouraging children to wonder about the meaning of God's message through the Bible, and how He works through us as we move through the world.

We have a children's wing with a nursery for our youngest parishioners, and two classrooms for Christian education prior to the worship service. For younger children, wonder starts with Bible stories told in the Godly Play method and time to explore through hands-on activity dispersed throughout the classroom.

For older children, wonder is based in the Episcopal Church's "Lesson Plans That Work," exploring how God's word is brought to life in relationships, community and care for creation. Both classrooms take part in EXPLORE lessons that teach our children about different aspects of worship and ministry. Children take part in worship, with a special place to sit on the "wobble rug", and opportunities to serve as torch bearers and assistant ushers. They also bring gifts of non-perishable food items to the front of the church in a red wagon as part of our offering to a local food pantry. St. Paul's Children and Youth Ministry serves approximately six-to-eight active families and welcomes families who join occasionally throughout the year.



HISTORY OF ST. PAUL'S

St. Paul's historical legacy stems from a unique inception, born out of a vision of radical hospitality conceived by a 19th-century Southern bishop. The Rt. Rev. Thomas Atkinson, third bishop in North Carolina, addressed his brethren clergy in 1855 with a charge to address four "hinderances": to reach the working classes, poor and enslaved; to expand the ministry beyond the educated elite; to provide free pews; and to respond to, and endow with charity, the needs and education of the destitute. His organization of St. Paul's Episcopal Church exemplified his vision for the Church. For over 160 years, our parish has shown resilience, the ability to re-envision itself, and a charitable and revitalizing spirit.

For a detailed timeline of St. Paul's 175-year history, please see History Appendix.

FACILITIES

St. Paul's has an architecturally distinguished building with a worship space that parishioners and visitors alike find beautiful and inspiring, well suited to our worship style, according to many of our parishioners. The multi-level Parish House includes a basement-level gym used by community youth basketball teams, as well as offices and meeting rooms, Sunday School rooms and a small downstairs chapel.

Along one side of our church building is the Clayton Giles Bellamy Memorial Garden, created in 1970. It is the resting place for the ashes of numerous parishioners.

The Ormond Center is housed in a former dental office building adjacent to St. Paul's property. Recently renovated by our Gentlemen of Noble Poverty and renamed to honor a former rector of St. Paul's, the building provides office space for several nonprofit community groups.



PARISH LIFE

A Parish Life team provides opportunities for our St. Paul's family to connect through fellowship, food and fun. Our church family has opportunities to gather throughout a typical year at receptions, meals, and other special events, like our Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, Parish Retreat and annual Parish Picnic. We value the relationships strengthened through our Fun and Fellowship small groups and Young Adult gatherings. This year we beat the winter blues with a potluck supper and BINGO (with lots of prizes). Despite the restrictions of social gatherings with COVID-19, the team initiated a Virtual Recipe Swap and managed a successful Share the Love Project of placing heart lawn stakes, along with a St. Paul's sign, at more than 130 homes of parishioners.



PASTORAL CARE

The care we extend to others is a direct extension of the relationship we have with God. Through the ministry of Jesus, God showed His love for us. We, in turn, show our love for those in need by helping, nourishing and sustaining them. We do that by visiting, calling, writing personal notes and cards, preparing and storing frozen meals, delivering prepared foods during times of need, administering Communion to shut-ins and, during the period of COVID restrictions, to small groups in homes. We keep those in need in our prayers, console families at times of loss and assist with memorial services. In summary, St. Paul's responds with open hands and open hearts to those in our parish family.



OUTREACH

During the 1918 Spanish Flu pandemic, St. Paul's, the little brick church at the corner of 16th and Market streets, was the last trolley stop on the Market Street route out of downtown Wilmington.

One pandemic later, St Paul's is considered an urban church. We are surrounded by houses and small businesses in a mixed neighborhood. To that end, St Paul's has striven to be a good neighbor, not just the big Episcopal church on the corner.

The word "outreach" has intentionally been changed to "Community Ministries" in an effort to reflect our location in the community and our outreach emphasis. While we donate to national causes such as Rise Against Hunger and the Navaho Nation, our emphasis is local, including monetary gifts such as one we made to To Share, a furniture distribution charity.

All of the ministries listed below are supported by personal involvement and financial assistance, as we are able.

1. Episcopal Farm Workers Ministry - dedicated to immigrant farm workers especially in eastern North Carolina and especially in our Diocese of East Carolina.

2. Snipes Academy – We support this elementary school several blocks from our church by reading to, tutoring, and mentoring students and by buying books for non-compulsory reading. Through the organization Nourish NC we have become Backpack Buddies for 25 children at Snipes who are at risk for hunger, supporting the purchase and distribution of food those children take home on weekends and during vacations.

3. At Christmas St. Paul's provides gifts for the elderly and for Snipes students through our annual Angel Tree. Our St. Agnes Guild also collects and distributes clothing for the students.

4. Mother Hubbard's Cupboard - We work two afternoons per month at this Wilmington food pantry and about 10 - 20 parishioners participate.

5. Family Promise - Our volunteer efforts with this organization for families made homeless include feeding, driving and overnighting at a local Methodist church at which these families stay at night.

6. Help Hub at The Harrelson Center – We support this downtown Wilmington resource formed when several local churches combined programs and discretionary funds each had run individually. The Harrelson Center's Help Hub can provide emergency financial assistance for individuals' rent, utilities payments, etc.

7. The Good Shepherd Center – Some of our parishioners volunteer at this very successful operation that provides food, shelter (overnight and semi-permanent) and counseling to vets and other homeless people.

8. Basketball Program - A weekend and after-school basketball program for at-risk youth, run by a retired coach, was based in our lower-level gym until the facility was flooded by Hurricane Florence in 2018. Final repairs have been authorized, and Coach Thomas has said his program will return as soon as these are complete.



GROUPS THAT OPERATE IN ST. PAUL'S:

Gentlemen of Noble Poverty – GNP: After the conclusion of WWI, around 1920, Great Britain experienced massive policy changes in land use laws as well as property tax revisions. The hardest hit by these reforms were the nobility, who in many cases had inherited large estates over many generations, but who were now land-rich and income-poor. Many of these families were forced to sell these properties to stay solvent, or deed them to the government in lieu of unpayable taxes.

Some of the worst cases, the Noble Gentlemen, were relegated to beg at the mercy of the Church, and many found housing accommodations especially prepared in the transepts of some of the many cathedrals. One of the most notable was located at Winchester. In order to reciprocate the Church's good will, many noblemen took upon themselves the care and maintenance of these beautiful structures, under the supervision of the clergy and sexton. They became known as "The Gentlemen of Noble Poverty."

Here at St Paul's, much of the repair and maintenance of the grounds and infrastructure are managed by a group of mostly retired gentlemen, who are neither noble nor in poverty. They chose the organizational title of GNP out of respect and honor to those from history who bore that name, and as a group of dedicated and skilled craftsmen, who only seek an occasional thank you as a means of payment and recognition!

Episcopal Church Women/St. Agnes Guild: St. Agnes Guild has been a longstanding St. Paul's women's organization and the parish's branch of the Episcopal Church Women (ECW). The Guild's common goal has been to support St. Paul's mission and ministries. Leadership is provided by coordinators for spiritual growth, fellowship, fundraising and outreach as well as a communicator, treasurer, and general coordinator. Meetings have been monthly, September to May. All women are welcome to share fellowship, work together, and personally grow spiritually and in faith. The women of St. Agnes Guild demonstrate the love of Christ with grace and a commitment to serve to the best of their ability.

Daughters of the King/Mary Veronica Chapter: St. Paul's organization currently has 17 members, who meet monthly. Their primary mission is to pray for those on their confidential prayer list and those on the church's list, and to assist with services and events as needed.

Specifically, members of the Mary Veronica DOK chapter maintain and monitor a prayer space just off the nave, conduct a monthly Taizé service, send get-well, thinking of you and sympathy cards to parishioners, and assist with special services and any meals that accompany them.

The Source: Thanks to the women of St. Paul's Church, The Source gift shop has a long and rich history of raising funds for community ministries as well as purchasing goods and services for our church.

The Source has religious books and items for prayerful guidance. The shop also stocks moderately priced festive seasonal gifts, décor for the home, jewelry and special items (St. Paul's-themed gift cards, Christmas cards, masks) made by some of our parishioners.

Our gift shop is open each Sunday.

STRATEGIC PLAN

A task force met over the course of several months in 2019 to develop a Strategic Plan to address St. Paul's most critical needs. The group determined that the three areas most essential to the health and growth of the church are facilities, financial stewardship and human resources. This plan will underlie the parish's major decisions and activities over the next several years.

STEWARDSHIP

Over the past 30 years, membership and average Sunday attendance (ASA) at St. Paul's have fluctuated widely. As a result, the ability of St. Paul's to finance its mission, and at times its very existence, has shown similar fluctuations. Gradually a culture of relying on unrestricted gifts to bridge gaps developed. In 2008, an Endowment Board was created with the aim of re-envisioning that culture by laying out restrictions on how those gifts could be used. That process has worked well since then.

Within the past five years, membership and ASA have increased substantially, but so have the costs of funding our mission. In 2018, after discussions with the Bishop, St. Paul's stepped forward in faith and called an assistant rector to join us. That call has been highly successful. In just two years it has allowed St. Paul's to expand and enrich its faith formation ministry and it has also given us the ability to seriously engage with our Northside neighborhood and the Wilmington community.

Financing that change has been a challenge. The initial support from the endowment for the creation of this new clergy position ended in 2020.

Going forward, St. Paul's will be funding its mission and ministries primarily through the faith-filled generosity of its members. With the inception of an organized Stewardship Team, we look forward, with God's help, to meeting the challenge.

TO APPLY

Please send a cover letter addressed to the St. Paul's Search Committee and OTM portfolio to: The Rev. Canon Mollie Roberts, P.O. Box 1336, Kinston, NC 28503 or to Hjarman@diocese-eastcarolina.org; Candidates will not be contacted by the Search Committee until after the closing date of the position announcement.



Our Search Collect

Heavenly Father, source of all knowledge, you know the needs of your church in every place. Look graciously upon the people of St. Paul's and grant our search committee and Vestry the wisdom and discernment to call, with open hearts and minds, a faithful pastor who will feed us – your flock – and equip us for our ministries.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord, AMEN.