

**St. Paul's Episcopal Church  
Wilmington, NC  
Vestry Meeting  
September 13, 2021**

**Present:** Teresa Singer (Sr. Warden), The Rev. Caleb Lee (Rector), Tom Sramek (Jr. Warden), Judy Wilson (Treasurer), Steve Martin, Merry Ann Wright, Ruth Gates, Sally Pope, Angela Green, Meaghan Thomas, Matthew Langley, Rhonda Stroud, Layne Dupree, Joan Rosko Miller, and Denise Sheehan (Vestry Clerk).

Father Lee led the vestry in a Prayer for Church Leaders from the Canterbury Book of New Parish Prayers. He then called the meeting to order at 6:03pm.

**Approval of the August 2021 Minutes:** After a motion by Sally Pope, and a second by Merry Ann Wright, the minutes were approved.

**Rector's Report:**

Fr. Lee continues to be impressed by the attendance on Sundays, especially in this post COVID world. The masks are working, and have allowed Hospitality to adjust to new realities. The seated breakfast buffet after the 8 am, and outdoor coffee hour after the 10:30 service were successful. More outdoor options will be explored as the weather holds up.

Fr. Lee's installation as rector will be held on October 28 at 6:00 pm. More details to follow at the next vestry meeting. The Bishop will be attending.

Fr. Lee announced the hiring of a new Parish Administrator, April Cook. He complimented the Human Resources Committee for their fine work, especially in drafting clear personnel policies and thorough job description..

Ms. Cook was previously employed with Century 21 as relocation director, as well as other administrative and leadership positions. Her hours will be 8am-2pm, Monday thru Thursdays, and 8am-1pm on Fridays, for a total of 29 hours a week.

The interim parish administrator, Louise Buck, will be honored for her service at a worship service TBD,

Fr. Lee then turned his attention to the Technology Report. This report details the ongoing work of the church, and what needs to happen to keep St. Paul's systems up to date. (Report attached)

There was a discussion about new policies for the Bellamy Memorial Garden. Don Bobo and Merry Ann Wright took this on as a “labor of love”. This updated version will address concerns about follow-up on payment, as well as changing the price to be more in line with other churches’ prices. This will also reflect the rising cost of continuing care of the garden, engraving, and the possibility of building an internment wall (columbarium) in the future. The proposal to build a columbarium space is waiting for input from the architect.

The motion to adopt the report was moved by Merry Ann Wright, and seconded by Teresa Singer. There were no questions or comments, and the report was adopted.

### **Senior Warden Report – Teresa Singer**

Teresa began by reporting a successful Meet & Greet Sunday School event on September 12.

She also announced that Vestry Person of the Day (VPOD) responsibilities will change now that Sunday School has begun. These changes are:

1. Go upstairs to adjust thermostat and turn on hall light (there is a sign at the thermostat to direct you as to the setting appropriate for the season)
2. Walk around a bit, at least until the head usher (Don Bobo) arrives. This is a security issue. Be visible, walk around.

She thanked Layne Dupree for taking the lead on coordinating the outdoor receptions until COVID ends. Until then, the hospitality teams may be using the door in the sexton’s closet for easier access to the Rectory Garden. She asked that the VPOD please make sure to check that door before leaving. There was also an issue with the kitchen door that was not locked.

Sunday school assistants are still needed. Meaghan Thomas currently is serving as a “floating assistant”, but it would be great to give her a break. She has given tirelessly to preparing every detail, not just in the nursery and general Sunday school areas, but in communications, signs, preparing notebooks for volunteers, etc. Meaghan responded by thanking Teresa for all her unsung help.

The annual Stewardship campaign will be kicking off next month. The names of everyone who pledges will be published on the website. Teresa asked the vestry to begin considering now how they will pledge for 2022. She is looking to the vestry to lead the way by example in pledging to St. Paul’s.

Teresa thanked the vestry for having hearts of servants in their unselfish and generous leadership.

Finally, Teresa reported that since the last vestry meeting, Fr. Lee has officially signed the last document required in reporting to FEMA for the money received to restore the

facilities to pre-Hurricane Florence state. The project has been satisfactorily completed and inspected. This was a major project, involving countless hours given tirelessly by Steve Haughey, Tom Trivett and the Gentlemen of Noble Poverty, for FEMA. Because FEMA considered this a small project, they have allowed St. Paul's to keep the balance of the unused funds totaling more than \$21,000. The only requirement is that the funds be used for infrastructure.

### **Junior Warden Report – Tom Sramek**

Tom Sramek reported that he is still learning Bob Beaustegui and David Tousignant. He is grateful for the book on the Junior Warden's duties given to him by Fr. Lee. A priority list of what needs to be done in the building and around the property is being created. Bob Belaustegui is working with contractors and Wilmington Fire Department.

Some of the projects that need to be completed are:

1. The door in the north stairwell is no longer a fire door because someone in the past had cut it in half.
2. The door to the Sunday school rooms needs a lock from the inside. Father Lee mentioned that Bob had already fixed this.
3. The watering system needs to be repaired. The well picks up silt and pumps it through the pipes. This clogs the filter and the sprinkler heads. This might be a project for the FEMA money. We may need to drill a new well and connect sprinklers to one system.
4. The big fan in the basketball court needs to be removed. And two ceiling fans with cages need to be installed.

Tom mentioned that he had gotten some comments about Saint Paul's not complying with the ADA, but he explained that taking into account the age of the building, we are in compliance.

### **Facilities Report – Teresa Singer**

Teresa reported that there is a meeting coming up with Gray Hudson, the architect. Safety and emergency plans have been developed and posted in the upstairs classrooms. Staff and children will be trained on these procedures, with plans to practice twice during the year. A lock at the top of the steps has been installed.

### **Stewardship - Steve Martin**

The committee met informally with Father Lee. It was a roundtable “wonderful, rich” discussion that covered the following: themes, resources, the previous input of Fr. Ray, mailings, personal phone calls and emails and the focus on the “why” of stewardship.

The annual campaign working group, co-chaired by Spencer Weig and Karen Day, and consisting of Judy Wilson, Teresa Singer, Julie Martin and Fr Lee has determined the following schedule:

Letter 1 - goes out 10/7

Letter 2 - 10/12

In gathering - 11/7

Rhonda Stroud gave an update on the strategic plan document. The scheduled August 15 meeting for the capital campaign/stewardship team did not happen. A new date will be determined.

Merry Ann Wright reported that the two grant proposals went out. The diocese has acknowledged receipt of the proposal and they have everything they need to make a decision.

### **Human Resources Report – Meaghan Thomas**

There are three areas under the committee's labor analysis that have been postponed.

1. Determine percentage of current budget for paid staff
2. Ratio of paid staff to membership
3. Ratio of volunteers to membership

The spiritual gifts assessments have reached a plateau as far as responses. The committee is in discussion on how best to jumpstart and encourage new members to volunteer. This is challenging during COVID and clergy transition. To find solutions, Human Resources will work together with Membership on a committee – Membership and Congregational Involvement. Some of the ideas being discussed are:

1. Ministry Fair
2. New members event (getting to know your vestry)
3. Second round of Spiritual Gifts Assessment

This group has a meeting scheduled for September 22.

### **Treasurer's Report – Judy Wilson**

Judy Wilson reported on the 2021 operating budget through August. Actual income \$392,524. Expenses \$356,627.07 leaving a surplus of \$35,903.16.

To create a revised budget for September – December 2021, the Finance Committee looked at every single line item. Total income is anticipated to be \$531,858, which reflects a decreasing amount of pledge revenue, but an expectation of more revenue in plate and non-pledges offerings. Also there will not be a PPE loan next year, but with a tighter budget we will be able to meet expenses with no difficulty.

Judy then went into detail on some of the items that will cause increased spending in the revised budget.

There will be increased spending in programs: more youth activities, a three-church project for Habitat for Humanity, and increased music program expenses that will more accurately reflect what it actually costs to run the music program.

There will be more programs in Parish Life, a necessity to hire professionals for technology assistance, and increased costs in worship and altar, including Fr. Lee's installation, and new vestments and frontal (that hopefully will be offset by donations).

Father Lee pointed out that the budget for salaries will be increased to reflect the hiring of the new parish administrator, a pastoral assistant priest, and a part-time communications assistant to handle the increased role of social media and YouTube in parish life. He noted that Saint Paul's is in transition from a pastoral size parish to a program style parish, with a hybrid volunteer and paid staff.

After review of the finance committee report, there was a motion to approve the revised budget by Teresa Singer, second by Sally Pope. The motion was approved.

There was a motion put forward by Sally Pope to adjourn. The motion was seconded and approved. Layne Dupree led the vestry in closing prayer.