

**St. Paul's Episcopal Church  
Wilmington, NC  
Vestry Meeting  
October 11, 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 Leaders of the Church. He then called the meeting to order at 6:07 pm.

**Approval of the September 2021 Minutes:** After a motion by Merry Ann Wright, and a second by Teresa Singer, the minutes were approved.

**Rector's Report:**

Fr. Lee continues to be encouraged by the attendance figures for all the services. Attendance remains up, with the 8:00 am service averaging 20 people and the 10:30 am service averaging 130. As COVID infections decline, he anticipates that those numbers will grow.

Fr. Lee complimented Layne Dupree on her presentation during the first Sunday of the stewardship campaign. He also complimented the choir and music ministry for going above and beyond in their participation, not only during Sunday worship, but during Wednesday services, the Blessing of the Animals and Evensong.

April Cook, the new parish administrator, has been wonderful. She is a quick learner and very pleasant in person and on the phone. She is working on reformatting the bulletin to tabloid size. This new size will be introduced to the church after All Saints' Day, and will provide more space for information about giving, visitor cards etc.

Martha Whitesides, a new parishioner, has volunteered to head up the Children/Youth and Family Committee. She has a great deal of experience in this area, having served as Youth Minister at Christ Church, (Raleigh) and with Youth Minister Architects. Ms. Whitesides will assist St. Paul's in discerning what is needed in hiring a paid Youth Minister – possibly for the coming spring.

Fr; Lee's installation as rector will be on October 28. Vestry representation would be great, although only the Wardens are required to be present. The Dean and Subdean of Grace Church Cathedral, Charleston, SC will be present.

As far as COVID, St. Paul's is in a good place. The New Hanover mask mandate may be removed soon (maybe by the end of the month). The clergy will continue to wear masks until the mandate is lifted. Until then, St. Paul's will follow all protocols.

Steve Martin commented that it might be safer to wait until vaccines are available for children.

There followed a discussion on the distribution of wine during communion. Fr. Lee stated that St. Paul's will not rush into wine distribution that might compromise our comprehensive philosophy of Eucharist as the sharing of One Cup. The current measures being taken are temporary; he will not normalize the emergency measures taken during COVID. He assured the Vestry that whatever measures are taken, our traditions and beliefs will be honored and due diligence will be taken before we return to normal distribution.

Merry Ann Wright mentioned that at Kanuga, the host is dipped in wine and then handed to the recipient.

Fr. Lee is still in the process of discernment regarding clergy help. This will be a two-phased approach. By the end of the year, there may be a decision on part-time help. He will then look at the issue again in 2022. More help will be needed in pastoral care, children and youth, and 60+ parishioners.

The lease for the Ormond Center is up for renewal. Fr. Lee did not re-sign the yearly leases, letting them go to a month-to-month status, with all other terms still applying. The reason for this action is the potential need for administrative offices if St. Paul's is in the middle of remodeling and renovation.

Discussion by the vestry followed. Merry Ann Wright mentioned that she was Senior Warden during the original purchase of the Ormond Center. The intent was to use the Center for St. Paul's purposes, but then the mission changed. Rhonda Stroud said using the Center for administrative offices made perfect sense. Joan Miller commented that it was important for the Vestry to keep an open mind about re-purposing any space at St. Paul's, and to keep in mind the big picture.

Fr. Lee reminded the Vestry that transparency was very important in making these decisions.

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

Teresa reported that she was particularly grateful to the Holy Spirit, not only with Fr. Lee accepting the call to be rector, but also that April Cook was led to apply for the position of Parish Administrator and accepted that call as well. It is evident the blessing she is, and coupled with Fr. Lee, she is looking forward to the amazing possibilities of what their combined efforts will mean for the vision and mission of St. Paul's. She is loving the e-news format, loves that April sent out the vestry documents this week and can't

help but think that Julie Martin is loving that April has assumed the responsibility of scheduling ZOOM meetings from this point forward.

Please contact April Cook, Parish Administrator, to schedule all ZOOM meetings related to St. Paul's. Her email is [admin@spechurch.com](mailto:admin@spechurch.com)

Teresa announced that two nursery workers, Elise Mutter and Camryn Gibson, have been hired. Currently, St. Paul's has one attendant each Sunday from 10-12, since we have had no children yet. We do have another adult on hand each Sunday in case a child shows up, since we have to have two adults in the room with children. Encourage your neighbors, children, grandchildren to bring their little ones to St. Paul's.

Bill Farris, a St. Paul's member who lives near St. Paul's, constructed the Blessing Box out of a desire to provide a free food pantry, 24 hours a day, no questions asked to the neighborhood around St. Paul's. The idea was presented to the vestry as an outreach ministry to the community. This ministry, like Mother Hubbard's Cupboard is supported through donations of food and personal hygiene items, as well as monetary donations. Bob Swindell has graciously accepted the challenge of not only checking on the Blessing Box weekly, but also putting the Blessing Box in the forefront of people's hearts and minds. He is looking for some folks to help with restocking the box and food storage area. A donation container has been placed in the hallway near the ramp door entrance, as well as bringing some attention to this ministry through announcements in the bulletin and e-news as well as social media posts. The results have been positive.

Wednesday lunches have resumed following our midday Eucharist. At present, we have 9 willing volunteers, including Rhonda Stroud and Sally Pope, providing the lunches on a rotating schedule, Please let Teresa know if this is a ministry you would be willing to support with your time and talents.

Teresa thanked Sally Pope for giving so generously of her time and talents in meeting with both Cheryl Wagoner and her to prepare an order for new white vestments and altar hangings. Sally's experience in asking all the right questions when making calls to CM Almy, her precision in measuring, (all those math and quilting skills put to good work) and her ability to make us smile and laugh through it all has made her an especially bright light this month.

Many thanks to Meaghan Thomas for the beautiful invitation and Matt Langley for making arrangements with HiWire and Churassco Food Truck for the Newcomers' Event on Wednesday evening from 5:30-7:00. Invitations were sent to 32 new and prospective member households (totaling around 45 new members) as well as vestry and Membership Committee members. The purpose of the event was for newcomers to have an opportunity to make connections with our St. Paul's family. In order to prepare tickets for the food for the event, ( thanks again to Sally for getting that ball rolling) it would be helpful to have an accurate account of who will be attending, please RSVP as soon as possible. Thank you to those of you who have RSVPd already.

There will be a Parish Bar B Q at Long Leaf Park on Sunday, November 7 beginning around 3:30. We are going to fire up Fr. Lee's new grill- courtesy of Grace Cathedral in Charleston, to offer hamburgers and hotdogs. We will add some individually wrapped chips, cookies and drinks. You won't want to miss this opportunity for some outdoor fun and fellowship for everyone. The evening will end with Compline under the stars.

St. Paul's is getting ready for a pretty big celebration on Thursday, October 28<sup>th</sup>. Layne Dupree and Anne O'Dell have teamed up to plan what is sure to be a beautiful reception to honor and celebrate our new rector and our mutual ministry in this place we love. But we can't expect them to do all the work, so please contact Layne or Anne tonight to offer your help on one or more of these days and times:

**Wednesday, October 27**, beginning at 2 pm in the parish hall to put linens on the tables, wash glassware and set out coffee cups.

**Thursday, October 28**, beginning at 9:30 am, Layne and Anne, along with what Teresa prays will be a whole host of helpers, will be working in the parish hall until floral arrangements are put in place, punch and beverage tables set up and the basic punch recipe prepared. As you know, many hands make light work, so the more the merrier and the shorter everyone's time will be in the parish hall.

**On Thursday evening**, volunteers are needed to perform specific tasks such as lighting votives, greeters at the Guest book, coffee and punch servers, and to clear cups and glassware.

And, as you well know, no party is over until the last glass is put away, so on **the morning of Friday, October 29**, plan to help wind things up by meeting around 9:30 am in the parish hall.

Teresa concluded by saying this report spoke to the transforming power of God's amazing love and generosity. . . Thanks be to God.

.

### **Junior Warden Report – Tom Sramek (not present at the time)**

Fr. Lee reported on behalf of Tom Sramek. There will be a lamp installed by the back door. This will help illuminate the steps, resolving a safety issue.

The sump pump died late last week and will need to be replaced. Bob Belaustegui will handle this.

Steve Martin commented on how magnificent the gym looks now. Joan Miller hoped that more activities for parishioners could be scheduled there – for example, yoga.

### **Stewardship – Rhonda Stroud**

Rhonda thanked Layne Dupree for her talk on stewardship during Sunday worship. It was very moving, and tied in well with the readings. The second stewardship mailing will go out next week.

Father Lee has finalized his stewardship letter and will send it to the Stewardship Committee for editing and comments.

The stewardship plan has been amended to reflect a capital campaign date change. The date is now 8/15/22.

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

The committee had to postpone their August meeting, so the information regarding current budget for ratio of paid staff to membership and volunteers to active members is not available.

It looks like a Ministry Fair will not be planned at this time. Instead, there will be a one sheet handout for new members. There was discussion if this handout would be available in time for the Newcomers Social coming up. After concluding that the turn around time would be too short, it was decided that the information sheet would be included in the welcome bags.

### **Facilities Report – Angela Green**

Angela reported on the committee meeting with the architect, Gray Hudson, via Zoom on September 27. Gray presented a preliminary plan to the committee. This is just a place to start discussion and discernment.

The committee will take the appropriate time to peruse the document and formulate questions and comments to present to Gray. In order to give themselves time to absorb, discern and finalize plans, phases etc., the committee has changed the date for the long range plan from January 2022 to March 2022.

There was a discussion whether to apply for this year's (2021) DAR grant. The deadline is December 1. It was decided not to apply this year, and apply in the next grant cycle (2022) when we have more information about our architectural plans.

### **New Business - Teresa Singer**

Tom Brunton's second three-year term on the Endowment Board is ending. Spencer Weig will be appointed to the Board in 2022. He will be stepping down as co-chair of the Stewardship Committee at the end of 2021. In a response to a question by Joan Miller - this is an appointment, not an election, so there are no other candidates. The appointment was approved by the vestry.

Sally Pope moved and Teresa Singer seconded the motion that the date for the Parish Annual Meeting will be January 23, 2022, the fourth Sunday in January. The time will be 9am, after the 8am service, and followed by the 10:30 service. There was no discussion and the motion was approved.

## **Nominating Committee - Ruth Gates**

According to the bylaws, outgoing vestry members are members of the nominating committee. These would be Joan Rosko Miller, Ruth Gates, Angela Green and Teresa Singer. In the next few weeks, they will meet in person and agree on proposed candidates. Joan Miller will organize the meeting.

## **Vestry Two Year Term**

Matt Langley has agreed to fill Tom Gerow's two year term. The vestry thanked Matt for his sacrifice and willingness to serve.

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

Judy Wilson referred the vestry to the budget report, which shows that we are at 75% of intake, which is on target, and 68% of spent monies. We have a surplus of \$45,447.79.

She reported that the reserve savings account is at \$93,865.12. This account is currently at Wells Fargo, which pays a very low interest rate (.01%). Judy recommended transferring this account to Live Oak Bank, a local bank, which has a higher interest rate of .5%. It would also be a good idea to have a relationship with a local bank, familiar with and active in the community, as St. Paul's moves forward with renovation and construction.

It was reported that the Isabel Lehto Foundation has received Saint Paul's grant application, and that everything looks in order.

Saint Paul's has received \$12,078 from the Foundation to cover Lucy Baker's housing allowance at Curtis Institute of Music.

There were several questions from the vestry about particulars of the scholarships and who could submit applications. Teresa Singer read the requirements applicants must meet:

1. The applicant must be pursuing a four-year degree or a graduate degree
2. The applicant must demonstrate academic success
3. The applicant must be a member of Saint Paul's
4. The applicant must establish financial need

Finally, Father Lee noted the date change for the Veterans' Day Choral Evensong. It now will be held on November 10 at 5:30 pm.

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.