

**St. Paul's Episcopal Church  
Wilmington, NC  
Vestry Meeting  
January 10, 2022**

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

**Absent:** Matthew Langley and Meaghan Thomas

Father Lee led the vestry in a prayer for the church to be strengthened in service and work of the gospel. He then called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm.

**Approval of the December 2021 Minutes**

Before the approval of the December minutes at the January 2022 meeting, the vestry voted to ratify the December 2021 minutes to include the designation of the rector's housing allowance.

*Whereas The Reverend Caleb J. Lee is compensated by St. Paul's exclusively for services as a minister of the gospel; and whereas St. Paul's does not provide Fr. Lee with a rectory, therefore, it is hereby Resolved, that the \$37,000 out Fr. Lee's total compensation is hereby designated to be a housing allowance; and it is further resolved, that the designation of \$37,000 as a housing allowance shall apply to calendar year 2022 and all future years unless otherwise provided.*

After a motion by Tom Sramek, and a second by Ruth Gates, the minutes were approved.

**Rector's Report**

Attendance over the Advent/Christmas/Epiphany seasons was good, although Christmas Eve attendance was down a bit. Factoring in the rise in COVID cases, and caution about attending indoor worship, attendance was about 400-425 people. There were many visitors, as well as families who had attended previous St. Paul's events (Blessing of the Animals). Father Lee was especially complimentary of the office staff and Parish Administrator for creating five bulletins in one week.

Father Lee reported that he is fully recovered from his surgery, and that Rev. Powell is also doing well. She is expected to be back by January 23.

Father Lee is anticipating many changes after the Annual Meeting on January 24. There will be a time of transition, as four vestry members will be leaving – Ruth Gates, Angela

Green, Joan Rosko Miller and Teresa Singer. He is still in discernment about the new Senior Warden.

Denise Sheehan has agreed to remain as Vestry Clerk, with requested time off during the months of June, July and August.

As St. Paul's prepares for 2022, there will be a new, realistic growth-oriented budget and new staff additions.

Father Lee then spoke about his vision for 2022 – **Building**.

### **Building up the people of God on a solid foundation and on a better campus.**

Membership is growing. There will be more staff, and more programming. Fr. Lee is working on creative approaches for finding clergy and staff. These include and part-time Pastoral Associate, clergy or lay support for pastoral needs, good liturgy, prayer lists, flower guild etc.

St. Paul's needs a strategic plan for attracting and keeping growing families. Martha Whitesides has developed job description for a part-time Children, Youth and Family coordinator.

He is working on a plan to meet the challenges of communications, technology and campus upkeep. Some of this will include paid staff to help in the growing importance of live stream worship.

St. Paul's will hire a part-time (15 hours/week), paid sexton to relieve those volunteers and Vestry Persons of the Day of weekly and Sunday duties. This will enable those volunteers to focus on their own ministry responsibilities.

St. Paul's will **build** on our already strong foundation of **worship, music and hospitality**. All of these ministries are rooted on the worship of God, and the new budget will reflect these priorities.

St. Paul's will **build a better campus**. Our strategic plan committees will continue, re-focus, and re-group to accomplish the long-range plan and other goals.

During his discernment, Fr. Lee was called to St. Paul's to be a builder. He prays that the congregation will get on board with this new vision.

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

The St. Paul's family was certainly illuminating our part of the world with God's gifts of *love, joy, peace* and *hope* during the season of Advent. Christmas was made a little bit brighter for twenty-two children at Snipes Academy thanks to St. Paul's angels providing gifts of *joy*.

The liturgies were planned with *love* and great care, with every detail being attended to by a whole host of *loving* hearts and willing hands ministering as Altar and Flower Guilds, ushers and greeters, lectors, intercessors and servers, Gentle folk of Noble Poverty, vergers, choir, Ronnie and Richard, guest musicians, Tech team, Communications Committee, April, Weezie of Sikes Cleaning, Diane, and nameless others, all orchestrated by Fr. Lee.

On Christmas Eve, Teresa was overwhelmed by the time, talents, and treasures given so freely as labors of pure *love* in preparing the church for the celebration of the birth of Christ.

The strings and the harp elevated the carols and the choir's musical offering with glad tidings of *peace* and *joy*. The children's presentation of the nativity was simply beautiful. Fr. Lee's sermons at both services were divinely inspired. She had heard the story of the candy cane more than once, even used it in a few Sunday school lessons, but never thought to put the two canes together to make a heart. When Fr. Lee did that, she thought, "just when I thought he couldn't get any better, he does a heart thing".

*Love, Joy, Peace* and now *Hope* in this meeting, following the recommendation of the Facilities Team, in collaboration with Grason Hudson, principal architect with WKWW Architects, for a long range plan for the facilities. This phased plan, if approved, will address safety and accessibility issues, functionality and flow of space for ministry needs, while maintaining the historical integrity of our current building. She is *hopeful* that St. Paul's is ready to grow into the vision God has for us by building on our past and believing in our future.

Teresa submitted her last Senior Warden's report to the vestry with a humble heart. She expressed gratitude for each member and for the time they have given so freely on behalf of St. Paul's, the expertise and thoughtful consideration of all matters, and hearts of love and service. To borrow a phrase from one of her favorite musicals- "Because I knew you, I have been changed for good." She thanked the vestry for being bright lights of Christ's love in her part of the world; and prayed that the vestry continue to let the light of Christ shine in them, so that others will see Christ.

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

There have been no major projects since the last report in December. The fire escape door now has adequate lighting, which will illuminate the door and the bottom step. Other projects include unclogging the drain, and working on fixing the faucet in the kitchen.

Future projects include a discussion of the placement and angle of the lights in the parking lot, so that neighbors are not disturbed by lights. Also, Duke Energy needs to be

notified about power lines getting entangled in the trees. The problems with the sprinkler system and silt from the well are ongoing and solutions are still being explored.

The Gentefolk of Noble Poverty (GNP) assisted the flower guild in decorating the church for the Christmas season.

Tom reported that the Habitat project is going well. Also, Bob Belaustegui worked with Judy Wilson to develop a 2022 budget.

### **Stewardship – Rhonda Stroud**

The strategic plan report for stewardship has not changed since the last meeting. Judy Wilson reported on the status of the pledge drive. For 2022, St. Paul's has received 132 pledges for a total of \$485,000, which is \$60,000 more than last year. More pledges are trickling in, and each new member will receive a pledge card with their new member letter and information packet.

### **Human Resources – Joan Rosko Miller**

In 2022, the Human Resources Committee will undertake a labor analysis to determine the percentage of budget needed for paid staff.

The monthly Member Spotlight has been very well received. Karen Day, Rhonda Stroud and Meaghan Thomas will be the next three members to be highlighted.

A coordinator (TBD) will confer with Membership and Karen Day to make sure that Spiritual Gift Assessments go out to new members, and that there is follow-up to all who respond.

### **Old Business**

#### ***Model Policies***

This issue was tabled and will be revisited when the new vestry is on board. There will be more information at the Diocesan Annual Convention.

### **New Business**

#### ***Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper – Sally Pope***

The Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper will be free again this year. Hopefully, it will be able to be held in person. Sally Pope made a motion that donations from the supper will benefit the Glory Ridge Mission Trip.

The motion was seconded by Teresa Singer, and approved by the vestry.

### ***Facilities Team Recommendation to Vestry***

A motion to approve the long- range plan for renovations was put forward by Merry Ann Wright and seconded by Joan Rosko Miller.

Vestry discussion followed.

Steve Martin asked if St. Paul's would hire a professional fundraiser to advise on when and how to raise funds for the renovations. Would fundraising in phases or for entire project be more successful? Merry Ann Wright pointed out that there are several former professional fundraisers in the congregation that we could go to for advice.

Fr. Lee pointed out that this approval is just for the material and information before the vestry tonight.

Several vestry members said they were very impressed by the presentation on January 6. Sally Pope and Steve Martin thought the presentation was logical and reasonable, and the process thoughtful and professional. Layne Dupree commented on the excitement and energy in the room, and hoped that could be communicated to the congregation. Joan Rosko Miller was glad that the phases were logical, and that ADA compliance and safety issues were well-covered. All complimented the Facilities Team on a great job.

Fr. Lee said the first phase of the process can be done quickly and now. Merry Ann Wright pointed out that if people see success in the first phase, they will be on board for the next phases.

Teresa Singer asked for a vestry vote on the recommendation. It was unanimously approved.

### **Treasurer's Report – Judy Wilson (see attached report)**

To date (12/31/21), the numbers are good, and a positive way to end the year. There is a surplus of \$27,850. The numbers reflect a year when the PPP loan was granted and then forgiven, and no full-time assistant clergy expenses. The reserve account and the endowment fund are in good shape.

Judy Wilson then presented the 2022 budget. There is an increase of \$99,000 in the new budget:

- \$76,000 in personnel (clergy, music and other staff, including sexton, children and youth staff and administrative staff)
- \$5000 to the diocese, reflecting a 2% increase in our pledge, from 7% to 9%
- \$7500 for facilities
- \$1500 in ministry expenses

Judy reported that the pledge payments for 2022 are budgeted at \$515,000, an increase over 2021's pledges of \$420,000. Right now, pledges are at \$485,000, so we need only to raise \$30,000 more to meet that goal. This included non-pledge gifts and special offerings.

In 2021, gifts and grants to St Paul's totaled \$13,500. In 2022, gift and grants are budgeted at \$24,000. The organ requires additional repairs, which will be paid for by the Lehto Organ Grant. New choir robes, and covering of the cost of professional singers, will be paid for through the Hazel Savage Endowment Fund. There are no plans to touch the reserve funds this year.

A motion to approve the 2022 budget was made by Teresa Singer and seconded by Joan Rosko Miller. The vestry approved the budget.

After the budget was approved, there was discussion about supplying more robes for volunteer altar servers. Father Lee said that was under consideration. He also thanked Judy, Diane and the Finance Committee for their hard work all year, and particularly on the budget.

Before the meeting was adjourned, Father Lee offered special thanks to Teresa Singer, Senior Warden, for all her hard work over the past year; handling the clergy search and transition, pandemic, business loans (and the forgiveness of said loans), as well as many other challenges the year brought.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Angela Green, seconded by Teresa Singer, and approved. Merry Ann Wright led the vestry in a closing devotion and prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Sheehan  
Vestry Clerk