

**St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Wilmington, NC
Vestry Meeting
September 12, 2022**

Present: The Rev. Caleb Lee (Rector), Bill Anlyan (Rector's Warden), Chip Carter (People's Warden), Ashley Eason, Steve Martin, Anne O'Dell, Sally Pope, Denise Sheehan (Vestry Clerk), Rhonda Stroud, Meaghan Thomas, Judy Wilson (Treasurer).

Absent: Layne Dupree, Matt Langley, Tom Sramek, Merry Ann Wright

Fr. Lee called the meeting to order at 6:04 pm and lead the vestry in prayer with the Collect for Holy Cross Day.

Approval of the August Meeting Minutes

Bill Anlyan made a motion to accept the minutes from the August meeting. The motion was seconded by Sally Pope. The minutes were approved unanimously as submitted.

Rector's Report

Fr. Lee spoke of the recent funeral of Richard Rhoads. The funeral was a great, yet mournful day for St. Paul's. The music was wonderful; chosen by Richard Rhoads himself. The presence of former clergy and friends, as well as the greater music community, added to the moving service. The service has been watched over 450 times on YouTube.

Unfortunately, the subsequent COVID outbreak infected several people, including Fr. Lee and Ronnie Wise. Fr. Lee spent a week away from the building and worked as he was able to from home. Some of this work entailed continuing to work ahead on liturgical matters.

Fr. Lee reported that the fall will be busy with several programs unfolding and a full music and worship schedule. He called the vestry's attention to the special services coming up.

On September 4th, he hosted a rector's forum on where St. Paul's is on various items. Also, St. Paul's welcomed a film crew in last week and were given \$5000 for use of the church. The experience was a positive one for St. Paul's – not burdensome, and the crew was diligent and respectful of the building.

Fr. Lee reported on the decline in health of one of the members of the vestry (name removed for privacy), who has been in the hospital and is now in a rehabilitation center. Last week this vestry member regretfully asked him to accept the resignation as a member of the vestry, saying they can no longer give the vestry their all, and that St. Paul's needs someone on the vestry who can. The resignation has been accepted.

This resignation requires the vestry to appoint a new person to fill the seat for another year and half. Therefore we need to come together as a vestry to elect a new vestry person.

According to the bylaws SECTION 5.4 “No election to fill a vacancy shall occur until reasonable notice has been given to the parish of the pending election and the opportunity provided for the members of the parish to suggest candidates in writing to the Clerk.”

Fr. Lee spoke with St. Paul’s Parliamentarian Herb Gant, and he gave a brief history of how this has occurred in the past.

“This provision replaced an older one that required a full nomination and election process to fill a vacancy. Very few people liked that. The new one here is a compromise between those members who wanted the full (and therefore protracted) protocol, and members who wanted only a brief one. All of us, however, wanted the process to be "open," that is, transparent.

So we chose for the Vestry to give notice to the parish that it intends to fill a vacancy and it invites *suggestions* (not nominations) to help the Vestry and to be sent to the Clerk within a specified period of time (10 days? whatever is "reasonable"). The names of suggested persons would be known only to the Vestry and would be considered along with persons suggested by Vestry members.”

Therefore, we must announce the vacancy to the parish and give a reasonable opportunity for members of the parish to make suggestions. The vestry will then decide at our next meeting who will be elected by the vestry to fill the vacancy. A notice will go out to the parish that suggestions be sent to the Vestry Clerk by September 30 at 5pm.

Ronnie Wise and Fr. Lee met with Bill Weisser to discuss his role as less of a temporary organist and more of a permanent fixture at St. Paul’s. He has been appointed Assistant Organist.

Regarding Sentinel (Code and alarm) contacts - The vestry needs to determine who goes on the call list for when the alarm goes off. The current list needs to be updated. It is currently Keith Calder, Don Brainard, Spencer Weig, and Don Bobo, Fr Lee asked for volunteers among the vestry. Chip Carter volunteered to compile a new list and offered to be on it. A discussion of duties, and the amount of fines paid for false alarms followed.

People’s Warden Report – Chip Carter

The last month has been busy, principally with Buildings and Grounds. While we were not able to get all things on our list accomplished, we did get quite a bit done.

Next time you are in the nave, look at the baptismal font. I think you will readily notice that it is much cleaner than it was a month ago. Bob Belaustegui and I tried several different cleaning products and methods. We even sent an email to the chief

preservationist at the NC Museum of Art. Unfortunately, he never answered. Bob discovered the perfect cleaner; a mixture of 1 part Windex to 2 parts water. The font was in the original church at 4th and Orange Streets in 1858, and possibly, before that date, in a Protestant Methodist Chapel that merged with St. Paul's under Bishop Atkinson's episcopacy. That makes it at least 164 years old.

Also look at the votive candle rack on the west transept wall. You may recall it fell several months ago. All credit for the beautifully repaired wall rack goes to Bob Belaustegui. He worked on a total reconstruction of the piece, as well as refinishing it and using a superior method of anchoring it to the wall.

This past Wednesday and Thursday we had a film crew in our church for an Amazon series, "The Summer I Turned Pretty". In addition to the cast of actors, we had tons of extras, film, lighting and sound crews, electricians, etc. I would estimate more than 250 people were involved. They were respectful and took care to not damage anything. There was some minor damage to two sprinkler heads, primarily due to the heavy wind and rain last Wednesday. Also, they needed to take out the last three rows of pews. In doing so they broke a hinge on one of the kneelers. They took it back to their own studio shop and repaired it.

The medic with the film crew is a former Wilmington Fire Department employee. He walked down to the fire station and returned with an old friend and colleague who is now a Captain in the department. While they were there, I took them down to the new fire door at the entrance to the north basement conference room and office. A few years ago, we were in violation because the original fire door had been sawed in half to make a "Dutch" door. The captain went back to the station and noted the file there were no violations now.

Because the door is made from birch, which has very tight grain and is very fibrous, we need to use a gel stain. This could not be found in the proper shade of chestnut to match what is there already. As soon as we can find the proper product, the door will be stained. In the meantime, the door is fully functional.

While we have, and continue to put, a lot of work, time and money into the long-range plan, we cannot neglect our existing buildings. The Parish house was constructed in 1922, and the church proper in 1958. There are several areas in need of repair:

- The west side of the church building has multiple cracks in the walls. These are letting water penetrate the core of the wall, creating cracks in the interior walls. The entire west side needs to be filled and waterproofed.
- Several windows in the church building need to be removed, pointed up and properly sealed.
- The east side has some of the same problems as the west, but not quite as severe.
- Much of the brickwork on the outside of the Parish House needs to be pointed up on both sides.

- Both buildings need some roof repairs where slates have fallen off or gutter/downspout/scupper work needs to be done.

David Tousignant, Bob Belaustegui, and I met with a new member, Rob Nipper, who heads up the Wilmington commercial division of Chambliss & Rabil, a general contractor with offices in Wilmington, Rocky Mount and Raleigh. In that position Rob has knowledge and experience with all the building trades.

Last Friday, Rob introduced us to one of those trade contractors, Jay McDaniel, whose company is known as Kool Green Restoration & Waterproofing, LLC. Jay walked the property with us, acknowledging situations we had seen and pointing out some we had not seen. Jay's firm has experience with many of the older downtown buildings and feels confident he can help us.

Jay has offered to have a proposal for us the end of the current week. We have asked that it be broken down into five (5) parts:

Church West Side

Parish House West Side

Church East Side

Parish House East Side

Roof

The three of us felt good about Jay, and Rob recommends him highly. We look forward to his proposal.

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

As of 8/31/22, total income, after transfers, was \$415, 107. This is 60% of the budget. Total expenses were \$406, 454.48, which is 58% of the budget. This leaves a net of \$8653.06. The Reserve Fund (now at First Carolina Bank) is \$94, 494.35. The Endowment Fund total is \$885,394.95.

Judy Wilson then presented the revised budget to the vestry. This budget is the result of the August meeting of the Finance Committee and reflects not only the ministry proposals, but the revised amounts in pledges and gifts. This will be the final budget for the year – there will be no more revisions.

The largest changes reflect fewer pledges and fewer gifts. However, there are increases in general offering (fees, memorials etc), restricted gifts and offerings to the music program. There is no change in transfer amounts. And this year, there is no PPP loan carryover.

Regarding total expenses: the amount budgeted for clergy salaries has decreased, reflecting part-time clergy working 10 hours, not 20 hours a week, and the vacancy in the positions of Youth Coordinator and Sexton.

However, there are increases in amounts budgeted for facilities (repairs and electricity), business operations (office supplies/copier) and the music program.

Chip Carter made a motion to approve the revised budget; it was seconded by Steve Martin and approved by the vestry.

Stewardship – Anne O’Dell

2022 Stewardship Campaign Update

Since the last vestry meeting, we have not received any new pledges for the current operating year. At present, the total dollars pledged stands at approximately \$507,000 and the total number of pledges is 144.

After the first 8 months (or 67%) of the year, we have collected 63% of the total dollars pledged. These payment patterns are consistent with historical trends.

The stewardship team is moving forward with preparations for the 2023 annual pledge drive; they meet again on Thursday (9/15) of this week. Everyone on the vestry will be called on at some point to help with the upcoming campaign. Help may be needed to prepare the mailings or make follow up phone calls. At the very least, everyone will be asked to share in the responsibility of writing thank you letters to those who make a pledge. The Stewardship Committee thanks all in advance for their assistance.

Human Resources/Membership – Meaghan Thomas

Meaghan Thomas reported that the Ministry Fair would be held this Sunday (9/18) after the 10:30 service. Set up will be on Saturday, September 17. She thanked the committee of Sally Pope, Teresa Singer and Matt Langley for their hard work in preparing for this event.

To promote the fair and inform the congregation about some of the ministries, 8 to 10 videos have been released on Facebook and E-News. Meaghan thanked Steve Martin for producing these very effective videos.

The Newcomers’ event will be held on October 6 at St. Paul’s from 5:30 – 7:30pm. It will be catered, and the vestry is invited to attend. Fifty invitations have already been sent out. The team of Karen Day, Meaghan Thomas and Matt Langley are in charge of this event.

As mentioned at the last vestry meeting, Small Group Dinners have been postponed until 2023.

Meaghan also reminded the vestry that Sunday School starts this Sunday (9/18),

Facilities

There is nothing new to report at this time.

New Business

Credit Card for Rector's Use

There was a motion (Bill Anlyan) and second (Chip Carter) for the vestry to approve a credit card for the rector's use. The motion was approved, and the application was signed by the Vestry Clerk (Denise Sheehan).

Colombarium

The vestry received copies of the draft application for internment in the columbarium. Don Bobo, Father Lee, the wardens and Judy Wilson met and reviewed the draft before presenting it to the vestry. Reservations will be on a first come, first serve basis, with full payment required to reserve space. If not used or engraved, 50% will be refunded. The space is the property of St. Paul's and cannot be sold. Father Lee stressed that the application is a "working document" and is not finalized.

If the vestry approves the document by October 2, the application will go out to the congregation, during the Aging Gracefully series and the season of All Soul's. Those interested in reserving a space in the columbarium will be able to schedule a meeting with the rector to discuss the details.

Last month, the vestry approved moving ahead with the project. Family Stone Works has submitted their estimate. The first payment would be \$8450 (currently covered by anonymous donors); second payment of \$8450 due in 90 days, followed by \$1000 when the foundation is poured. The balance will be due upon completion. The total cost will be \$29,400.

Discussion followed regarding requests for more than one niche, families requesting niches for their children, and refund policy.

Father Lee stressed that there was a lot of administrative work involved and every attempt will be made to make the process fair.

Rhonda Stroud asked if there was an anticipation of "selling out". This is unlikely, but there will be enough spaces reserved to pay for the project.

Sally Pope made a motion to approve the draft application. It was seconded by Anne O'Dell and approved by the vestry.

Capital Campaign and Building Project

Bill Anlyan asked the vestry to think about future space needs of St. Paul's after all phases of the building process are completed. He mentioned that the church is "land-locked" and will lose more parking as the building is expanded. He asked the vestry to think about moving the west exterior wall for more room. He realizes that this will be difficult with the requirements of the historic preservation committee, but is worth the fight.

Father Lee said the vestry would have to approve any new plans. It was noted that Gray Hudson had already approached the city about this plan, and it was emphatically rejected. This has to be a separate issue and cannot affect Phase I or the Long-Range Plan.

Bill Anlyan reiterated that St. Paul's needs to lobby the historic preservation committee for some allowance for future growth. He asked that the vestry not abandon this issue, and take it up at the appropriate time.

It was agreed to table this issue for later discussion.

Old Business

Model Policies

St. Paul's continues to move ahead with the diocesan recommendations.

A motion to adjourn was made by Chip Carter and seconded by Steve Martin. Sally Pope closed the vestry in prayer. The meeting was adjourned at 7:23pm.