

**St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Wilmington, NC
Vestry Meeting Minutes
March 13, 2023**

Present: The Rev. Caleb Lee (Rector), Brian Buss, Tori Cannon (Vestry Clerk), Layne Dupree, Ashley Eason, Carol Field, Steve Haughey, Steve Martin, Anne O'Dell (People's Warden), Lisa Sanders-Park, Denise Sheehan, Tom Sramek, David Tousignant, Judy Wilson (Treasurer)

Absent: Bill Anlyan (Rector's Warden)

Fr. Lee called the meeting to order at 6pm and offered an opening prayer.

Approval of the February Meeting Minutes

David Tousignant made a motion to accept the February minutes and the motion was seconded by Steve Haughey. Anne O'Dell suggested a change in the wording of one sentence, the change was made and the minutes were unanimously approved.

Rector's Report

Worship is going strong at St. Paul's. Dr. Bill Weisser continues to bless us with energetic leadership in his music ministry. There are new people arriving every week and turning in membership forms. We have found recently that more and more people have been watching on YouTube and making the decision to join there and then they arrive to experience the liturgy and are ready to join.

Fr. Lee commented on the departure of Ronnie Wise and how the grief process for a congregation and individuals within it after someone leaves are to be acknowledged. Ronnie's departure has been felt. Nonetheless, Dr. Bill is doing a great job.

He encouraged the vestry's attendance at the various services of Holy Week, and indicated how important it is to speak with those who are visiting or newer to the life of St. Paul's at our Sunday receptions. This past Sunday was great. It seemed that every single one of our newer folks were engaged in conversation with someone. Keep up the good work.

Fr. Lee has asked Karen and Bill Smith to serve as Eucharistic Ministers.

Discerning a New Director of Music

Challenge creates an opportunity. There is always an opportunity in a crisis. We have a window of time to move forward into a place we have never been before as a congregation. Anne will speak more about this later but I will go back to the Transitional model. We have a pastoral model in how we fund our music program and we are living in a different reality. Father Lee has advertised the position as full-time. There are funds and there is just so much potential with this position to grow the music program and to bring new life into it.

Fr. Lee, with the help of the wardens, has been discerning responsibilities within the vestry. Each member of the vestry will be doing more than one's official area of responsibility. Fr. Lee then announced vestry responsibilities. Most are liaisons to ministries. Meaning that there is a committee or a ministry leader that runs the ministry and the liaisons are responsible for serving on the appropriate

committees related to that ministry and reporting to the vestry when it is important to do so.

Responsibilities Assigned

Bill Anlyan - Rector's Warden
Anne O'Dell - People's Warden
Brian Buss - Liaison for Diocesan Relations
Layne Dupree - Liaison for Hospitality
Ashley Eason - Liaison for Parish Life
Carol Field - Liaison for Finance
Steve Haughey - Liaison for The Ormond Center
Steve Martin - Liaison for Worship and Creative Arts
Lisa Sanders-Park - Liaison for Membership
Denise Sheehan - Liaison for Stewardship
Tom Sramek - Buildings and Grounds
David Tousignant - Buildings and Grounds

Ashley Eason related a request for a larger print service bulletin. This request will be placed under consideration.

People's Warden Report—Anne O'Dell

In preparation for today's meeting, everyone received a handout entitled OVERVIEW OF CHURCH SIZE THEORY: Size Types and Their Characteristics. Please pay special attention to the information about transitional size churches. As Fr. Caleb reported at our retreat, our ASA is averaging about 182, which puts us right in the middle of a transitional size church as defined by the Episcopal Church Foundation.

As we return to pre-pandemic worship levels and continue to grow our numbers, we are experiencing some challenges.

1. Our Pastor is stretched. We are in need of additional staff, but at present we don't have the resources to fund those additional needs.
2. Conflicts within the parish are over inclusion, information/communication, and attention or access to clergy.

There is some comfort in knowing that our growing pains are normal and universal, but as a vestry we understand that we have problems that need to be addressed with intention and purpose. We don't get to be part of the problem any longer; we are now officially part of the solution. We are charged with ***Building. The Way. Forward.***

As we consider our work as individuals and as a vestry over the next year, our goal is to build a better church. This is not about the long-range plan, it's about improving this organization in ways that will take some of the pressure off our rector and foster our continued growth. How will we do this? By keeping God in the center of all that we do and by moving forward with purpose and intention to reveal all that God has in store for St. Paul's.

It is hard work, but we wouldn't be here if we didn't care deeply about this church and its future. As an organization, we have been in this position before and if we don't move forward, the forces of gravity will pull us backward. I ask you, as you consider your assignments for this year, how are you building the way forward?

Highlights from the Past Month:

- The Parish Life Team, in conjunction with the GNP, once again served up a terrific evening of food, fun and fellowship at the annual **Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper**. Meaghan Thomas and the EYC parents and youth decorated the Parish Hall, Steve and Julie Martin ran the photo booth and Stephanie Smiles, the balloon artist, was a hit with the kids. Over 100 people attended and we collected over \$500. to benefit the EYC mission trip to Glory Ridge.
- The **Helping Hands Ministry** has been very busy as of late. This is the group that quietly and faithfully organizes and hosts the receptions following funerals. The gift that the Helping Hands Ministry provides families is equal parts pastoral care and hospitality.
- **Dinner groups** have resumed. Last night was the first gathering for the quarterly groups and initial reports are positive.

In case you missed the various announcements, the GNP, specifically Bob Belaustegui, David Tousignant, and Gary Dillon, worked diligently to replace all of the old fluorescent tubes in the Parish Hall light fixtures with brand new LED tubes. This upgrade will improve the quality of the light in the Parish Hall, avoid replacing \$250. worth of failed ballasts and generate savings to our electric bill of approximately \$350. a year.

During the past month, I also met with Bob Belaustegui, David Tousignant, and Steve Haughey in an effort to identify and prioritize building projects in and around our campus for the current year. The goal over the next month is to try to define, refine and focus the plan for this year and next so, funding sources (specifically grants) can be identified.

Treasurer's Report—Judy Wilson

Judy drew our attention to the NET: Income less Expense line on the Treasurer's report showing \$31,690.21 and added that more information will be forthcoming due to pledges being fulfilled. *Please find the attached Treasurer report.*

Anne O'Dell discussed the Endowment Challenge which challenges parishioners to match an anonymous donor's contribution of \$5000. by March 31st which would then be matched by another donation of \$5000. Fr. Lee indicated that he is very pleased with the progress.

Stewardship Report—Anne O'Dell

Anne is transitioning Stewardship to Denise Sheehan in April.

As of the end of February, we have received 142 pledges totaling \$571,438 for the 2023 annual stewardship campaign. We expect that we will have to make some adjustments to the accounting, due to several pledgers relocating, no longer attending, or pledging in error. Efforts to offset these adjustments are underway; the stewardship team has reached out to several new parishioners who began attending St. Paul's after the official campaign last fall.

The finance office continues to monitor the payment of 2022 pledges. As previously reported, we expect to receive the remainder of the outstanding unpaid pledge balances and increase the pledge fulfillment rate to 98%.

The Endowment Board has a March Matchness fundraising campaign underway. An anonymous parishioner stepped forward and offered to give \$5,000. If the parish is able to raise \$5,000 in matching funds, a second anonymous parishioner will add another \$5,000. As of today, we have raised \$6,490.08 from 25 donors, which translates as follows: \$6490.08 + \$5000 (1st match) + \$5000(2nd match) = \$16,490.08. The campaign continues through the end of March.

A comment was made regarding the offertory plate appearing empty due to pledges being received through automatic drafts, mail and annual payments, creating an adverse appearance. This may be an ongoing discussion looking at alternatives. It was also noted that the QR code appeals to younger people.

Membership/Human Resources—Lisa Sanders-Park

Meaghan Thomas offers the following update on Membership; she is transitioning her Membership role to Lisa Sanders-Park in April.

DINNER & FAITH QUARTERLY EVENT

- Our first Dinner and Faith event was held yesterday, March 12th.
- This quarterly fellowship opportunity will provide members a chance to get to know one another and be mixed in different groups once per quarter.
- We had 5 amazing hosts and a total of 51 people participating!
- The next event will be held late June 2023.

MONTHLY FUN & FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

- Groups have been established and shared.
- If groups have not had their first dinner/outing, they will soon.
- Altogether we have around 40 people participating!

SPRING NEWCOMERS' SOCIAL

- Date set for Spring Newcomers' Social: Thursday, May 4 to be held in the Rectory Garden ● All new members/newcomers from October - present will be invited
- Vestry and Clergy invited/encouraged to attend
- Invites will be coming; make sure to RSVP

Vestry Pins are being ordered.

Facilities—David Tousignant, Tom Sramek, Brian Buss, Steve Haughey

A Live Oak tree was recently removed from The Ormond Center.

The focus is on maintaining and repairing this campus.

Ongoing repairs/concerns mentioned included:

- Bids are being received for the floor damage to the Nave and Narthex.
- Replacing the east side door on Market.
- Repairing the Chapel entry.
- Outside the Vestibule are noticeable black stains caused by leaks in the copper roof
- Steeple lighting

Fr. Lee reports that the material needed for the Columbarium has arrived in Wilmington. It is expected to be installed by summer. The Memorial Plaque in the Bellamy Memorial Garden has been updated with the names of those who have died and been interred within the past 8 months.

New Business

In light of the recent resignation of an Endowment Board member, a process of discernment will be observed; therefore, no election will occur this evening.

A motion was made by David Tousignant to adjourn the meeting at 7:20pm and was seconded by Steve Haughey.

Steve Martin offered a closing reflection.