

**St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Wilmington, NC
Vestry Meeting Minutes
February 12, 2024**

Present: The Rev. Caleb Lee (Rector), Bill Anlyan (Rector's Warden), Barbara Ellington Banks, Steve Bucci, Tori Cannon (Vestry Clerk), Ashley Eason (via Zoom), Carol Field, Steve Haughey, Anne O'Dell (People's Warden), Lisa Sanders-Park (via Zoom), Scott Sheble, Denise Sheehan, David Tousignant, Phillip Weiss (via Zoom), Judy Wilson (Treasurer)

Absent: All members are present.

Fr. Lee called the meeting to order at 6:07pm and opened the meeting with a prayer for new ministries. Fr. Lee welcomed the new Vestry members and asked everyone to introduce themselves and identify their reasons for joining the Vestry. Subsequently, the group was asked to sign Conflict of Interest forms and disclaimers.

Approval of the January Meeting Minutes

Bill Anlyan made a motion to accept the January minutes, seconded by Anne O'Dell and the minutes were unanimously approved.

Election of Wardens, Clerk and Treasurer

Fr. Lee nominated Bill Anlyan to continue serving as the Rector's Warden and was seconded by Anne O'Dell.

Anne O'Dell was nominated by David Tousignant to continue serving as the People's Warden and was seconded by Denise Sheehan.

Tori Cannon was nominated by Steve Haughey to continue serving as the Clerk and was seconded by Anne O'Dell.

Judy Wilson was nominated by Bill Anlyan to continue serving as the Treasurer and was seconded by Denise Sheehan.

Rector's Report

It is good to be with you in this new beginning as we transition once again to a new vestry. We have a lot to do tonight so I hope to be a bit briefer than usual. Worship has been consistent with the time of year. Our choir is doing a great job. I am very pleased with Brendan Conner's direction and leadership. I thought the Annual Meeting went quite well and the pre-planning with the choir worked well so that they could attend. We honored several folks with Agnus Dei Awards and I will just add that this is a representation and celebration of a larger group of people who make this place what it is.

I have been having a creative and fun time leading Adult Formation using memes as a springboard for conversation.

Lenten Offerings - Formation, DOK extra day to pray, Laurencian Singers, Stations of the Cross Art Project, no Good Friday Concert this year but a shift to making the Liturgy of Good Friday more robust, if we do concerts in the future they will be on Palm Sunday evening.

Many of us just got back from Diocesan Convention. It was an informative time as we heard from other churches in the diocese about various initiatives and programs that are working for them. Michael Singer was elected to the Standing Committee and will serve as the President of The Standing Committee. One thing that I walked away from convention with was inspiration to empower the laity more. That is, empower you all to do ministry in the ways you are called. There are many opportunities for ministry at St. Paul's and they need leadership. And that means that I/we need to ask for help. I am not good at asking for help. I have learned that about myself.

I see the following areas as opportunities for more initiatives and leadership:

Membership

Community Outreach

Volunteer Coordination - how we empower folks in our parish to do the work of the church

Just an update about what I spoke about last time in regards to SafeChurch conversations I said I would be having with a few folks. Those conversations have occurred and have been recorded between the wardens and myself.

I will be away on the Second Sunday in Lent. Allen and I will be taking our children to NYC for the first time.

The Rector then called for the Vestry to move into Executive Session.

After the vestry moved out of Executive Session the meeting proceeded to the People's Warden Report.

People's Warden Report—Anne O'Dell

Parish Events

On Sunday, January 21, the Children, Youth and Families Ministry enjoyed an afternoon at Polar Ice Wilmington skating with the Rector. We had about 30 people lace up their skates and take to the ice. Happily, we can report that no one was injured.

Grant Team

During the past month, the grant team, along with leadership, thoroughly investigated the possibility of submitting a grant application to the National Fund for Sacred Places (NFSP). NFSP is a collaboration between Partners for Sacred Places and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and it provides matching grants of \$50K to \$500K to healthy congregations undertaking significant capital projects at historic houses of worship.

While we believe we could make a good case for St. Paul's capital project, we made the decision to table the application for the current year and possibly revisit it in the future. The primary reason for this decision was that our application, whether or not it was successful, would have significantly disrupted the momentum we have built thus far in our capital campaign:

1. The National Fund for Sacred Places is a highly competitive program with over 400 applicants and only 12-15 grant recipients; that's a little over a 3% success rate.
2. The preliminary application deadline is February 29, but final awards are not announced until mid-October. Any funds solicited, pledged, or raised before acceptance into the program (October) are ineligible for the match.

There are other elements of the program that gave us pause, but we collectively deemed it unwise to put our fundraising campaign on hold until October on the outside chance that we might be accepted into this program. There will likely be other chances in the future to apply for these funds.

Building and Grounds

As reported last month, efforts are underway to update and refine the planning and budgeting process for Building & Grounds. David Tousignant, Steve Haughey, and Anne O'Dell met in late January with Fr. Caleb to review the extensive list of proposed projects in an attempt to identify and prioritize what needs to be done in 2024. We hope to complete a working draft of the 2024 project priorities within the next couple weeks, knowing full well that the building repair and maintenance is a moving target. As in the past, David will manage activities in the church and parish hall, and Steve will manage activities at the Ormond Center.

This same group of people, along with Bob Belaustegui, has been working with our administrator Bella Dolande to bring her up to speed on 'all things' Buildings & Grounds. The plan is to return to the model where all standard maintenance and routine service requests flow through Bella. Diane Matz Kane has also been involved in this process as some of the routine service contracts fell to her when the administrative position was in flux.

Southeastern Heating and Air Conditioning was in the building a couple of weeks ago to complete their work standardizing several of the openings for the air returns, thereby making it easier to change filters.

Special thanks to Bob Belaustegui, Don Bobo and Gary Dillon who assisted with the set up and take down of the annual DAR silent auction that occurred this past Friday.

Fr. Lee announced that a Sexton has been hired. His name is Christian Bridges and he is Mary Bridges' son. Currently, his duties are limited to Sundays only but it will eliminate utilizing a VPOD (Vestry Person of the Day) from having to stay later.

Bill Anlyan will be distributing Vestry members' contact information, VPOD rotation, future meeting dates and closing prayer lists.

Treasurer's Report—Judy Wilson

As of 2/12/2024:

Total income is \$103,591.16 which is 11.4% of the approved 1/15/24 budget.

Total expenses are \$68,901.93 which is 7.6% of the approved 1/15/24 budget.

This leaves a net income of \$34,689.23.

The Endowment Fund Total reflects \$946,187.68 and the balance of the Reserve Savings Account is \$708,446.02.

Steve Haughey made a motion to accept the 2/12/24 Operating Fund Treasurer's Report, seconded by Denise Sheehan.

Ormond Center—Steve Haughey

Working on quotes for new signage at the OC. Cost will include removal of tenant plaques and new signage reflecting the Administration move. This cost will be included in the revised budget for the relocation of Admin functions and staff to the OC.

Canady Exterminators found signs of rodents at the rear crawl space opening while conducting their quarterly inspection and treatment on January 10. Meeting with technician at the next inspection on Monday February 5 for a better understanding of what he found.

Based on the latest inspection report from CANADY, will schedule a meeting with an arborist to look at the cost of trimming back the two large trees on the OC property as well as the trees in the island of the SPEC parking lot.

Met with SALTROCK Builders and Bob Crafts on January 18 to map out plan/schedule for interior renovations and technology upgrades.

Participated in the 2024 review of projects for the SPEC Campus (3 buildings) on January 25. Projects are being prioritized for current year, future year(s), and potential Capital Campaign.

Stewardship Report—Denise Sheehan

As of Monday, January 29, we have 137 pledges for \$581,862. Through January, we are \$21,000. ahead of last year's final dollars but need to anticipate some retractions—and some new pledges!

Membership/Human Resources—Lisa Sanders-Park

No further updates at this time.

Building & Grounds—David Tousignant

Focusing on 3rd party use of space within the church; specifically, how to maintain control and how to manage reimbursement.

Other updates for B&G are included in the People's Warden report.

Capital Campaign—Fr. Lee

The Vestry discussed this evening's presentation by Jeff Hensley, consultant on the feasibility campaign to "Build Our Future" through major improvements to St. Paul's. A summary of Vestry members' comments follows:

- Do this project now. Several people felt that postponing the campaign to next year would lose all momentum
- Consensus for continuing to work with Jeff. He is currently paid through February, will continue to pay monthly utilizing the anonymous gift
- Consideration to split off the Parish Hall work to save costs but recognized strong emotional attachment to the hospitality feature of St. Paul's, as mentioned in interviews that Jeff conducted with church members.
- Rename "south wing" to alleviate reported confusion of its location

A motion was made by Ashley Eason to move forward with the \$3.5M campaign with the goal of completion by Pentecost and was seconded by Steve Bucci.

New Business

A copy of the 2023 Parochial Report was provided for review. The Total Operating Revenue reflected is \$704,133. It is anticipated that St. Paul's financial position will make it possible to contribute 10% of that amount. Steve Haughey moved to approve the Parochial Report and was seconded by Denise Sheehan.

Feasibility Study Presentation

Jeff Hensley provided a slideshow that illustrated potential improvements to the building, results of interviews with parish members and suggested recommendations for the next steps.

“How do we make our historical building more accessible and welcoming?”

- Stairless Access (ramps) 600K
- South Wing 1.8M
- Parish Hall 700K
- Other Costs 400K

Nineteen individuals/couples of diverse ages and varied experiences were interviewed. Most interviews were done in person. The findings-including impressions of the church-are as follows:

- Deep love for St. Paul's
- Distinct identity among the many Episcopal Churches in Wilmington
- Friendly & Welcoming
- Liturgy & Music are strengths
- Recognized for Parish Hall Hospitality Receptions
- Outreach Programs-noted to be driven by individuals vs. the Church
- High confidence in SPEC Leadership & Direction
- Optimism about future; specifically, new families, young families, new retirees
- Love of the Church's look & appearance

Biggest worries for the future?

- Aging out of past leadership within the parish
- Not a “big money” church-Can we raise enough money?
- Aging facilities
- Can Wilmington sustain so many Episcopal churches?
- Larger denominational/American Christianity issues
- Stairless access unanimously embraced but concern with the aesthetics
- South wing renovations were confusing due to ambiguity of location but made sense when clarified
- Is elevator necessary?
- Parish Hall is seen by many as a “nice to have but not need to have” project. Advantages to renovating this space include various receptions, revenue source, improvement to overall appearance.
- Price of project seemed reasonable to most people
- Concern with Rector's office & support staff moving to Ormond Center
- More vetting of design details-especially South Wing renovations-should be done to accommodate storage & ceiling line concerns.

Giving Potential:

- Seventeen interviewees gave a suggested amount. Total ranged from \$485K-\$700K
- Potential of the parish for this campaign is between 1.763M - 2.545M
- Including the anonymous gift of \$500K and \$85K working groups could increase potential to \$2.348M - 3.13M

Recommendations:

- \$2.5M raised—Pursue campaign to do stairless access & south wing without elevator
- Parish Hall project if there are key funders
- \$3M-\$3.5M is within reach but a stretch without key 6-figure gifts
- “Close, Move or Grow?” Over a decade ago, St. Paul’s chose boldly to grow. This campaign could be the fulfillment of that decision. Many see this campaign as the down payment on potential future growth
- Clarify this isn’t the original \$10M+ project

Next Steps:

- Assume you are moving forward, improve case for support & messaging to clarify projects
- Determine scope & revised costs
- Outline strategy & recruit volunteers
- Develop timeline:
 - Follow up with interviewees
 - Member canvass i.e. small groups
 - Announce campaign to parish
 - Launch in Easter with completion by Pentecost

Follow up discussion:

- Naming rights? It does enhance generosity
- Would people who love the Parish Hall be willing to donate to it?
- Spring campaign is preferable because a fall campaign runs into Stewardship
- If this campaign is not undertaken this spring, recommendation to punt into next spring
- If we are close to our goal, we could use financing for construction loan due to tremendous collateral
- Prediction that there will be a high rate of pledge fulfillment for these projects
- Important to show gratitude
- Ask for specific amounts in donations
- Be Bold
- Concern with Ormond Center—need for mitigating allergens or, at least, do study
- “What is the feeling among the congregation-is there an appetite for this?” “Very favorable” according to some Vestry members

Old Business

Fr. Lee announced that Vestry members will soon be receiving the Safeguarding Training online.

The meeting was unanimously adjourned.

In closing, Anne O’Dell offered the Prayer of St. Brendan.

Respectfully submitted,

Tori Cannon
Vestry Clerk