

**St. Paul's Episcopal Church  
Wilmington, NC  
Vestry Meeting Minutes  
January 13, 2025**

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

**Absent:** Denise Sheehan, David Tousignant

**Fr. Lee called the meeting to order at 6:00pm and reminded us that it is "Epiphany Tide" where Jesus is being revealed to everyone in his baptism. Fr. Lee then opened with a prayer for the Vestry meeting.**

**Approval of the December Meeting Minutes**

Phillip Weiss made a motion to accept the December minutes, seconded by Carol Field and the minutes were unanimously approved.

**Rector's Report**

**Worship**

- ASA for 2024 was 210

**December Worship Report**

- We had a very spirit filled Advent and Christmas season.  
Too many highlights to name all of them but Christmas Lessons and Carols was perfection.  
Having Mayor Saffo with us was a real treat. On his way out he thanked me and said that our choir was by far the best in not only the town, but the region.
- Christmas Lessons and Carols 135
- **5:30** Christmas Eve was up, 193
- **8:30** Christmas Eve was down by 25, 229
- **10:00** Christmas Day was up 57

**Christmas Totals**

- Last year - 541
- This year - 614

**Administration**

- Diane Matz-Kane gave me her letter of resignation this morning, effective February 28.  
This was expected. We are grateful for her almost 10 years of service. She will be honored and thanked at the Annual Meeting.
- We are currently in day 2 of advertising for a larger position in Finance called Finance Manager.  
Our new budget will reflect the cost of this position.
- We are also currently seeking a new Church Administrator. We got through Advent and Christmas just fine. I am grateful to Isaac, Brendan, and a host of church volunteers who have worked so hard during a busy time of year to keep things going. But this current situation

cannot last forever. I fear things will begin to fall through the cracks, or, let's put it this way. More things will fall through the cracks.

The HR committee has been hard at work with preparing the way for these new positions.

### **The Annual Meeting**

- The Annual Meeting is set for January 26 at 9 AM. Please let me know if you will not be present. At this meeting we will elect by acclamation our incoming Vestry class. We will also thank our outgoing vestry class. This is the second to last time we will meet as the 2024 Vestry. We will need a special meeting of the vestry next week by Zoom to approve the Budget.
- We need to figure out how to choose delegates to the Convention. The Vestry decides that. It would be ideal to do this at our Annual Meeting because at this year's convention there will be a Bishop's election and I think it is best to make the process as democratic as possible. We also have time to make this decision at a later date because the convention is no longer in early February.
- It is my request that Steve Haughey continue on as People's Warden in 2025. That is your decision but I do want you to know my preference. I have asked Carol Field to be the Rector's Warden for 2025. My recommendation is that Scott continue as Treasurer and I am asking that Anne O'Dell be elected as the Clerk. Not only is she a great candidate but it will keep some institutional knowledge of the past 3 years in the room when we make decisions. As a past warden and member of the Capital Campaign Committee, as well as several other committees her knowledge and expertise will be invaluable.
- The Executive Committee has discussed a predicament that we sometimes get caught in. Sometimes we are without a warden from the Annual meeting to the first Vestry meeting after the Annual Meeting. I will not have a Rector's Warden for a couple of weeks. My request is at the end of the Annual Meeting the vestry meets publicly at the Annual Meeting to elect Wardens, Treasurer, and Clerk. It will take 5 minutes.

### **The Rector then updated the Vestry on some pastoral matters**

- The Rector acknowledged the hard work of Brendan Conner and Issac McDowell in their respective responsibilities.
- There will be a guest preacher on February 2 for all services. The Very Reverend J. Michael A. Wright from Grace Church Cathedral Charleston will be with us that day. The Rector encouraged attendance at the Special Evensong that will recognize the 2024 inductees to the 1858 Circle.

### **People's Warden Report—Steve Haughey Church and Parish Hall**

- Sikes Cleaning cleaned the NAVE and SACRISTY Floors on Tuesday December 17 prior to our Christmas services.
- Southeastern HVAC was scheduled to return on Tuesday December 10 to address condenser and conduct maintenance on the OC units. This work was moved to December 16. The Compressor Motor on Unit #2 is not working properly. Waiting for final report.
- We are reviewing a proposal that addresses the recurring leaking of the Parish Hall roof.

- SILKWOOD has been advised that the kitchen stair project has been put on hold for now.

#### **Ormond Center**

- Contacted Canady Exterminating regarding termite inspection.
- SENTINEL has imputed a select number of access codes for the OC. This first tranche will allow the cleaning service, and select personnel to the access they need. We will add additional codes over time.
- Reached out to Miracle Movers to confirm price for the move and required lead-time.
- TOSHIBA has been contacted to confirm they are still planning to move the copier when the relocation is closer to reality. They asked for a 2–3-week notice.
- Southern Sign submitted a mock-up of the new signage. First Pass is the correct font, but the size of lettering will need to be changed.
- Neither Thermostat was working correctly at the OC. SEHVAC was on-site Monday December 16 to investigate.
- Met with Bob Crafts on Friday December 20 to review the technology plan for the OC. Wiring and cabling will start after the New Year.

#### **Parish Activities**

- Advent Wreath Making on Sunday December 1.
- Advent “Lessons and Carols” on Sunday December 1.
- About 15-20 children attended the EYC “Parents Morning Out” on Saturday December 7.
- Hoggard High School Christmas Concert on Tuesday December 10.
- St. Nicholas Luncheon for our Blessing Box Angels and Neighborhood Guests on Wednesday December 11 following our 12:10 PM Service.
- Handel’s “Messiah” was performed by the Choir of St. Paul’s with the North Carolina Baroque Orchestra and Featured Soloists on Friday December 13 to a full church.
- EYC Christmas Caroling and Pizza on Sunday December 15.
- “Blue Christmas” Service on Wednesday December 18.
- Tallis Chamber Orchestra Baroque Concert on Friday December 20.
- Christmas “Lessons and Carols” with special guest, Mayor Bill Saffo as lesson reader, on Sunday December 22.

#### **Grant Update**

- Received notification from the Diocese that St. Paul’s will not be a recipient of a grant this year. We were encouraged to submit again in 2025.

#### **Looking Ahead**

- “Film and Falafel” on Saturday January 11. Food at 5:30 PM, Film at 6:30 PM.
- Parish Annual Meeting and Vestry Elections on Sunday January 26 at 9 AM.
- Youth Ice Skating at Polar Ice Wilmington on Sunday January 26.
- EYC Ski Trip January 30 to February 2.

#### **Treasurer’s Report—Scott Sheble**

The Treasurer’s Report is postponed due to illness. A special meeting will be called next week.

### **Membership–Lisa Sanders-Park**

No updates at this time.

### **Capital Campaign–Fr. Lee/ Scott Sheble**

Long Range Planning is a new report that has been added to the drive to provide updates on the Capital Campaign:

- Gray/staff have been working on updating the architectural drawings that are needed by the engineers. This work has been going on and these are the base plans that the engineers then work from/add to.
- The Mechanical Engineer still needs to visit and there will probably be 1 or 2 people who will come. He is working to get them scheduled to visit hopefully before the end of January or early February. They will need to meet with GNP people most familiar with the location of mechanical equipment. Date TBD but will notify as soon as possible.
- The Mechanical Engineers will then need to give their drawings to Gray to incorporate. Looking to have that step completed by mid- to late-February. These will be the DD drawings and when we would have a contractor review and give us a cost estimate.
- -The Long Range Plan Committee (LRPC) will meet with Gray at this time to review/finalize those drawings.
- Once we get the cost estimate with the DD drawings, we will be at a point to determine what we will move forward with doing. That would be happening in later spring. After that come the construction drawings which take a couple months (summer).
- Gray is also looking at the Historic Commission meetings to probably go to the March meeting. He had a good conversation with the staff member but will still need to go to the meeting. He has to provide a drawing ahead of the schedule. He will confirm.
- The LRPC should start working on deciding how and who to select the contractor to hire. Gray will be able to provide us with names but we can also determine who we might want to have Gray help us evaluate. We had previously decided that we are going to negotiate with a selected contractor rather than an invited bid process where we would send it out to multiple contractors. We also have to figure out how we negotiate the contract with the contractor and Gray will help us. This is something that we should be working on now.

### **Stewardship–Denise Sheehan**

- In December, the Stewardship Committee sent out letters to 22 households that had pledged in 2024 and to the Capital Campaign, but not Stewardship 2025. The response was good, and as of January 9, we had received \$578,228 from 144 households. Caleb updated the total pledge amount \$596,228.40 from 145 households. Twenty of these were new pledgers.
- At this point last year, we were at \$570,542 from 131 households. By the end of June 2024, we had a total of \$608,000 from 146 households.
- Vestry thank you notes continue to go out (thank you!), and there will be 11 more names handed out at this vestry meeting.

*\*New reports to be added going forward:*

**Community Ministries–Steve Bucci**

**Human Resources–Barbara Banks**

**New Business**

**Adopting changes to the Endowment Board Policies and Procedures–Anne O’Dell**

A motion was made by Steve Haughey to adopt the changes to the Endowment Board Policies and Procedures document, seconded by Steve Bucci and unanimously approved by the Vestry.

**Mutual Ministry Review**

Anne O’Dell provided an overview of 2024 as a means to review and begin the planning process for 2025:

- In January 2024, we started preparing for the capital campaign. Fundraising consultant Jeff Hensley conducted a feasibility study. In February, he presented his findings, and the vestry unanimously approved a 3-year, \$3.5 million campaign. We launched the campaign on Pentecost Sunday (May 19) and have raised over \$2.0 million in gifts and pledges so far.
- The Design Development Phase of the renovation project will start in early 2025. The work at Ormond Center is almost complete, with plans to move administrative offices by mid-spring.
- In the coming year, maintaining open communication will be crucial. Significant changes will cause anxiety and stress; strong leadership will help the congregation adapt.
- St. Paul’s saw steady growth in 2024, with visitors and members highlighting worship, music, and hospitality as key reasons for attendance. Every week, God is working in and through our clergy and musicians to feed and nourish us so that we can welcome others.
- At present, staffing levels and financial resources are inadequate to support the growth of the church.
- The Human Resources Committee has prioritized two job searches: one for a Finance Manager and one for a Parish Administrator. These roles are key to developing an organizational structure that supports our evolving church. We need a strong, talented team to manage church operations so that the Rector can focus on the spiritual needs of the congregation.
- Strong leadership from the vestry is also important.
- We need additional funds to support growth. Enlivening the annual stewardship campaign may be the obvious answer, but it is not the only answer. Explore other revenue streams. Review how we encourage and engage parishioners in ministries. When people feel engaged in the church, they tend to give more.

**HR Policy–Barbara Banks**

Vestry was asked to review a draft of the Revised Human Resource Policy located in the drive. We will be discussing the policy at the Special Meeting later this month.

**Cheryl Wagoner, Ordination to the Diaconate–Fr. Lee**

Cheryl Wagoner was approved for candidacy on January 9, 2025 and can now apply for ordination to the Diaconate. The Vestry supports the ordination of Cheryl Wagoner to the Diaconate as of January 13,

2025. Lisa Sanders-Park made the motion for approval, Phillip Weiss seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

**Old Business**

Nothing at this time.

**Lisa Sanders-Park moved to adjourn the meeting, Tori Cannon seconded and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:00pm.**

**Note: The annual Vestry Retreat is scheduled for Saturday, February 8th in place of the February meeting.**

**To close the meeting, Anne O'Dell recited St. Theresa's Prayer, which was the prayer she offered at her very first Vestry meeting.**

Respectfully submitted,

Tori Cannon

Vestry Clerk