

Saint Paul's Episcopal Church 2021 Annual Meeting



January 24, 2021

Agenda
Annual Meeting
St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Wilkesboro

Call to order and opening prayer	Mother Stephanie
Welcome and Vestry Recognitions	Mother Stephanie
New Vestry members	Mark Williams
Rector's Report	Mother Stephanie
Senior Warden's Report	Mark Williams
Crisis Assistance Report	Carol Minton Canter
Areas of Ministry Reports (included in packet)	See Reports in Booklet
Treasurer's Report (2020 Summary)	John Harwell
Review of 2021 Approved Budget*	John Harwell
Prayer and Adjournment	Mother Stephanie

Vestry Nominations

Carol Minton Canter

I am very humble and grateful for being asked to serve on the Vestry. By accepting I am making a commitment to serve, listen and care for all at St. Paul's.

My husband (Kenneth) and I have been members of St Paul's 45 plus years. We have 2 sons and 9 grandchildren. The 9 grandchildren are the light of our hearts. We have been so very blessed.

I have served on the Vestry several time and during the 45 plus years I have seen many changes at St Paul's, but I have continued to feel God's presence here. In my 45 years plus, I have served on almost all of our committees; the one that has remained so dear to my heart is our Crisis Assistance Ministry. I have witnessed this ministry grow from helping a few of our neighbors to helping over 600 a year. Thanks to our dedicated volunteers and our dedicated members who have made this possible through their generous donations. For me this is what God has asked us to do, help those less fortunate.

Thank you for asking me to serve on the Vestry and I will try with God's help to uphold my duties as a Vestry member if I am elected. From Mother Stephanie communicated in the weekly E- news message, this is a new direction that leads us straight toward the heart of God.

Thanks be to God.

Carol M. Canter

Joe Fesperman

My name is Joe Fesperman. I feel privileged to be nominated to serve on the Vestry again, having last served 2 years ago. Two of those three years came with the role of Jr Warden.

My family and I have attended St. Paul's since 1981. Five years ago, I retired from my family physician practice. I have served in various capacities and on discernment committees, most recently on the Outreach committee.

If selected to serve, I look forward to working with Mother Stephanie and the rest of the Vestry as we study to discern what lies ahead for St. Paul's in a less restricted world. My pledge is to work for transparency and to be open to your input and concerns. I hope you will join me in this work.

Joe Fesperman

Gwen Temple

I am Gwen Temple and am very honored to have been asked to serve on the Vestry! I have been a member of St Paul's for over 40 years. Currently I serve as a chaliceist, lector and a member of the choir. I am on the Christian Education and Outreach Committees and volunteer with the Crisis Assistance Ministry. I am married to my husband David of 47 years and we have 2 children and 3 grandchildren. I am retired from 20 years of service in the Wilkes County School

System as a Science Teacher. The Covid Pandemic has left St Paul's with many challenges as well as things that have occurred in the past. I hope to be a part of the rebuilding process to help make St Paul's the best that it can be. To be known as the church on the hill that reaches out to help those in need and lives up to its Baptismal Covenant. Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

Gwen Temple

Rector's Report

January 24, 2021

"If you're going through hell, keep going."
~Winston Churchill

It is actually with a smile on my face that I begin my Annual Report with this particular quote from Winston Churchill. In a year unlike any other it is important to remember the resiliency of the human spirit. Both our parish and world have faced difficult crises before and I am certain that we will come out this time of COVID-19 changed, but strong. And that very strength will be a great resource as we undertake, in earnest, the necessary journey of reconciliation and reckoning that is our sacred task during this interim time.

What I love about Churchill's quote is its no-nonsense, practical approach to persevering. We may not know the answer to what "Church" will look like post Covid, but whatever it is we will face it and we will face it together. It is also my hope that the wounds that were opened here just before the Covid crisis hit and took away our ability to gather in person, have in some ways, begun to heal. Others will need deeper tending and will receive that in time. And until then, I invite all of us to lean heavily upon the grace of God and ask that the healing power of the Holy Spirit be received by all whose hearts were broken.

I know I have only been here a short while yet, but I am already certain of the faith and strength of the people of this parish. I am so thankful for the welcoming and generous spirit that the people of St. Paul's continue to extend to me on a daily basis.

I would especially like to extend my deep thanksgivings to Mark Williams and the Vestry for their willingness to think in new ways and for their fearlessness in beginning the work of reconciliation and healing even as the parish was without clergy leadership and Covid changed everything.

In every decision brought before them they exercised sound and thoughtful management of our resources with a deep understanding that we are first and foremost a people called to exercise our common life within God's economy. It has been my deep pleasure and privilege to share in ministry with them. I am very sorry to say goodbye to Ruth Harris, Dave Barton, and Tana Myers, but I know they will still exercise their leadership gifts among us even as they leave Vestry service.

Entering a parish in the midst of Covid, as you can imagine, has some steep challenges. To the best of my ability my goal in these days has been to build relationships with the people of this parish. As Covid allows I try to spend meaningful time getting to know you both as individuals and to discover who you are as a community of faith. I want to continue to learn your traditions, your passions, your strengths and weaknesses. I will not get to know you fully until we can truly gather in person again, but in a limited capacity I feel that I am gaining a deeper understanding of all of you and how we might travel together into the future.

As I laid out in an e-news shortly after my arrival, there are some specified goals for this interim period that we are doing together. Some of this work we have already begun, but there are some aspects that will require that we are able to be in person. Doing the meaningful, intentional work of coming to terms with relationships with past clergy and dealing with the conflicts and helping to heal the division within the congregation will require deep courage and vulnerability from all of us. That *cannot* be risked by conducting this work on Zoom!

What I *am* doing in this time to prepare us for that work is helping us to build the vocabulary of forgiveness. My hope is that through sermons, e-news messages, and Adult Formation classes, you are leaning further into understanding what it takes and what is at stake. We cannot just move on and expect anything to change.

There are some wonderful, beautiful Holy Spirit-filled aspects to St. Paul's common life, and it is those very qualities that will help us build commitment to all that is crying out to be healed, especially the way we deal with conflict. The passion and commitment that creates our conflict is actually a wonderful thing, but we have to learn new ways to travel through conflict so that it teaches us and allows us to grow better and stronger. I know we can do this, and I believe we are on our way to being an ever-increasing vital and transformative community of faith.

And I have so many thanksgivings for all of you who have helped makes things "go" in the face of very steep challenges. Mark, our unstoppable Senior Warden, has listed most of them in his report so I will defer to his remarks.

I will finish by saying that our journey has just barely begun. In the year ahead we will continue to define and claim our ongoing mission as God's people. I believe our most vibrant future lies in reconciling within so that we can be true reconcilers in the world; a world that needs God's Love and Peace now more than ever.

It is my exuberant hope that through beautiful worship, strong fellowship, inspired teaching, and continued compassionate care for our neighbors through Crisis and Outreach we will strengthen our bonds of affection. This will insure that when new people come to us, they will discover a true place of belonging, spiritual growth and transformation and most importantly perhaps, a place where people are certain to meet the love of God in the flesh!

Grace and Peace,

Stephanie+

Senior Warden's Report

Seasons of Love – Johnathan Larson

Five hundred twenty-five thousand six hundred minutes
Five hundred twenty-five thousand moments so dear
Five hundred twenty-five thousand six hundred minutes
How do you measure? Measure a year?

In daylights,
In sunsets,
In midnights,
In cups of coffee,
In inches, in miles, in laughter, in strife

In five hundred twenty-five thousand six hundred minutes
How do you measure a year in a life?

How about love?
How about love?
How about love?
Measure in love...
Seasons of love...
Seasons of love...

Five hundred twenty-five thousand six hundred minutes
Five hundred twenty-five thousand journeys to plan
Five hundred twenty-five thousand six hundred minutes
How do you measure a life of a woman or a man?

In truths that she learned
Or in times that she cried
In bridges he burned
Or the way that she died

Its time now to sing out though
The story never ends
Let's celebrate remember a year in a life
Of friends

Remember the love...
(Oh you gotta remember the love)
Remember the love...
(Oh yeah, it's a gift from up above)
Remember the love...
(Sing out, give out, measure your life
In looooooove...!)
Seasons of love...

Seasons of love...

These are the lyrics to *Seasons of Love* written by Johnathan Larson for the musical Rent.

As I reflect on the past year this song keeps repeating in my mind.

It captures so many of my thoughts. First it breaks down time into something which passes so quickly – minutes. As a parent I am always saying things like: Bedtime is in 10 minutes. Can you give me a minute? or you need to brush your teeth for two minutes.

It also breaks out our passage of time in other ways, in days, nights, sunsets and drinks whether they be coffee as the song states or even something stronger that may be used to celebrate special events or take the edge off of our stress levels. When the song gets to the line about inches, I don't think that it specifically references adding inches around the waist but for many of us, including me, this still applies. And as for miles, I think in 2020 we all traveled less miles than we do in an average year.

Then the songwriter goes on to write about discovering truths and how we deal with our emotions through laughter or tears. And reminds us that we can either burn bridges or remain friends through the gift of Love.

If we think about where we were in January of 2020 during our last St Paul's annual meeting, I know none of us could have even imagined the events that the year would bring us through.

When we met for the last annual meeting, our Parish was in our own version of strife. We were divided and confused. We were trying to figure out how to recognize ourselves in midst of conflict. But there was always an underlying love that was binding us together.

For a moment let's reflect on how our St Paul's life unraveled in 2020. In mid-February, Rev Kedron Nicholson resigned as our Priest in charge. This put us into an immediate search for a pathway forward and hopes of reconciliation and unity. The very next week was Shrove Tuesday and on Ash Wednesday, we were introduced to Father Steve Sedgwick. Father Steve said he would support St. Paul's through Easter. Little did we know that in a mere three weeks the world would go into lockdown for Covid-19. At the recommendation of the governor and Bishop Jose, we discontinued all in person meetings. Thanks to the talents of our tech team of Bill Hurd, Rachel Minnick, Wes Martin, St. Paul's worship services were able to transition first to live stream and then to recorded videos which were available on YouTube and Facebook. We worked with our Parish Administrator to close the office to all visitors. Vanessa held our office together during these days and with the assistance of Father Steve and John Harwell the office work kept going. Sadly, with the halt of all in person meetings this meant our Thursday Crisis program had to also discontinue all regular activities. This did not mean they stopped supporting our neighbors and thanks to everyone who supports Crisis, they found alternative ways to provide assistance. In early Summer, Justin Smith our choir director said goodbye and moved out of state to accept a new job. Thinking outside of the box became the normal way to solve problems and that is just what we did. Bible School in a box was created and distributed to the children of the church and each night Rachel led our children in studies and arts and crafts. Under the leadership of Father Steve and Deacon Susan we began to hold outside services in the Coventry Chapel and our tech team rose to the challenge. However, since Father

Steve had already extended his support past Easter and well into the summer it was time to make plans for our next chapter. Canon Augusta Anderson and Bishop José played match maker and introduced the Vestry and St Paul's to Rev. Stephanie Parker who joined us in August. As Mother Stephanie was settling in as our interim rector, Vanessa Greer announced she was leaving her role as Parish Administrator to explore another opportunity. Mother Stephanie, John Harwell and I began our search for a new PA. After a week full of interviews, we settled on hiring Linda Black. Unfortunately, as lovely as Linda is to work with and be around, the job requirements and Linda's experience were not a good match and we are once again looking to fill the role of a new Parish Administrator. With colder weather we discontinued our outdoor services and resumed online worship. The holidays quickly passed by and at the end of December we said goodbye to our organist, Fern Brinkley. We will be looking to combine the roles of musician and choir director sometime in 2021 but in the interim Ramona Curtis is graciously filling in with her time and talents. We are very grateful for her. Along the way of the year, we have all found ways to refocus. We took time to focus on ourselves, our jobs, our children and our others in our families and also took some time to renew our relationships with God and hopefully with our St. Paul's family. There are several from our parish who experienced losses during 2020 and we have said goodbye to loved ones and friends. For those who died, we are thankful for the time they were with us and for those who continue to grieve we offer our support and love. Thank you to all who pulled together for the good of our parish and community in 2020!

Going back to the song *Seasons of Love*, it brings us back full circle and for those of us lucky enough to continue to receive the gift of life from up above – we get the privilege of repeating the cycle with another Five hundred twenty-five thousand six hundred minutes and the choice of what we will do to plan our next journey into the next year. So, let's sing out and remember to measure your life in LOVE.

Respectfully,

Mark Williams

Junior Warden's Report

As I'm sitting here writing the Jr. Warden report and I think back on the past twelve months, I cannot help but think how much a blur it has been, and that might be a slight understatement. A departure of a priest is hard enough on its own during normal times, but as we have found out, these are not normal times. Then who would have ever imagined a pandemic like COVID-19, needless to say that has made the past year quite interesting on so many levels.

The role of a Jr Warden traditionally is to oversee the building and grounds of the church. Traditionally there would be countless committees, volunteers and other parishioners to help make sure the Jr. Warden does not run out of things to work on.

I say this jokingly somewhat. Enter the COVID-19 pandemic and all plans are somewhat thrown out the window. Not knowing what we could do safely was slightly unnerving, and still is to some extent. Not being able to meet each Sunday in person as each of you reading this is a tough thing. Not having the social interaction we were all used to weekly was and still is very real. Vestry meetings were the only real interaction and those went from in-person like “normal” to meeting in the Parish Hall and socially distancing utilizing the whole upstairs area to meeting on Zoom. By the way, Zoom is the “new normal” I believe. It is really hard to get a good sense of who you are meeting with on a Zoom call in my opinion. Call me old fashioned.

From a building and grounds perspective, this past year has been like no other. Making plans for having Parish workdays were virtually impossible for obvious safety reasons. Not seeing each other on a weekly basis also made it hard to know what and when to do things, and also made it tough to stay on top of daily and monthly tasks around the church campus. Lots of spring and summer rains made it difficult to maintain basic campus landscaping maintenance at times, add COVID-19 issues with workers, and to say the least, we probably did not have the campus looking like we wanted it to at times, but we have gotten through it.

So, some positive things that have come from this one could say is that our utilities expenses have been under budget. This comes at a price though, not being able to meet and attend church regularly is not the way I would have liked to achieve this.

Another positive is that I am quite sure that a “large” to-do list of projects has been complied, hopefully for working on next year when we are able to get back to some normalcy.

I would like to thank everyone who offered help, brought ideas and suggestions over the past year. I want to say thank you to the Vestry current and outgoing. It has not been easy, but we are still here and hopefully for the better. I would like to encourage everyone to embrace the idea of love and service going forward. Having the mindset to love and serve each other as human beings each day, even if we don't agree on everything, is a hard but crucial path we should try to walk each and every day.

Respectfully,

Richard Searcy

Altar Guild Report

The Altar Guild began 2020 operating as they had for years; preparing the communion elements for each service, changing the hangings when the seasons turned, updating the hymn boards, setting up the worship books, cleaning up after each service, etc. That all changed in March. The Church went to a recorded format. There was little need for any of these activities.

When we resumed live services in August, the activities changed. We began meeting in Coventry Chapel. There were fewer hangings to set up. No hymn boards. Fewer candles to maintain. The books had to be set up. We prepared the communion elements, but for fewer people. We went from real bread to wafers. Wine was pre-poured into small thimbles. It was different. The biggest difference was that everything involved had to be carried down to Coventry Chapel. It was much further from the Sacristy than it was going simply into the Church. The process was actually more complicated by the distance.

During that time, the Altar Guild was restructured. Sharon Greene resigned as Chairperson after many years of service. She remains active as a regular member. Pam and Drew Mayberry agreed to serve as Co-Chairpersons. We restructured the Guild into two person teams. We found a cart in the basement of the Church to facilitate the movement of materials. We obtained new metal furniture for Coventry that matched well with the existing Altar. This eliminated the need to haul so many items down for each service and enhanced the look of the worship space. Using Coventry Chapel enabled us to gather and worship safely as well as enabling us to utilize a beautiful space on our campus.

We drafted several men to serve on the Altar Guild. This was not a first. Jim Gray had served years before. Nevertheless, we are a more gender diverse group. It should be noted that all men serving are in subordinate roles. They do what they are told to do by the women (as it should be).

Thanks to Sharon Greene for her years of quiet, but effective, service prior. Thanks to all who are currently serving. As circumstances begin to return towards normal in the future, there will be a need for more Altar Guild participants. All are welcome.

Respectfully,

Pam & Drew Mayberry, Co-Chairpersons

Outreach Report

Like so many things in 2020, COVID-19 affected the ability of the Outreach Committee to gather in person. Despite that, St. Paul's continued to work to meet the needs of our community neighbors in many ways.

At our virtual meeting in October, the \$5500 allocated to our committee was dispersed as follows:

- 1) CareNet Counseling \$1000
- 2) Catherine H Barber Memorial Homeless Shelter \$150 for personal care necessities
- 3) HOPE Ministries of Wilkes food pantry \$500 & Toy Store \$600
- 4) Wilkes Prison Ministry \$300 for a Christmas meal and gifts
- 5) Wilkes Recovery Revolution \$400
- 6) Additional funds were used to provide a meal for Circles of Care and purchase materials for the Dishcloth project. Any "leftover" funds are given to our Assistance ministries.

In reaching out to Wilkes prison, Bob Arthur expanded the project. He collected books for the prison library and games for residents to enjoy. The construction of 2 corn hole games remains a need just waiting for the right person or people to step forward to become a reality.

Ruth Harris has provided this note on the Bag Lunch Ministry:

On behalf of St. Paul's, we have been distributing weekly bag lunches for adults and children to Hope Ministry and North Wilkesboro Housing Authority. At the NWHHA, we are serving a population that does not have transportation to Hope Ministry. Our lunches are non-perishable and contain a protein, fruit, drink, granola bar and a sweet treat. Our Christmas deliveries were a joy to deliver. Because of the generosity of our church family, we were able to help with food insecurities for adults and put a smile on a child's face with a special Christmas bag. It is a blessing to be able to continue to serve our neighbors and deliver lunches.

Assistance Ministry programs are detailed in a separate report.

Rachel Minick, in her role as the School Counselor at North Wilkesboro Elementary School, has just initiated a "student choice food pantry" for children and families who have qualified for Samaritan Kitchen's backpack program. She is serving almost 100 children weekly. Initial monies to expand this project were provided by supplemental Outreach funds from the Strickland Foundation. Donations can be made through the church office to provide ongoing support.

Thanks to everyone for their involvement and support.

Respectfully submitted,

Joe Fesperman

Crisis Ministry Report

Even though 2020 has kept us from meeting and serving our neighbors at our Parish House, we still have been taking applications and assisting our neighbors with power bill, rent, fuel oil, gas and other needs. This year we have helped 267 of our neighbors. Because we could not meet and serve lunch, we have been doing bag lunches and have been taking them to HOPE Ministry, Finley Village, Homeless Shelter, and North Wilkesboro Housing Authority. I am not sure how many hundreds of lunch bags we have distributed in 2020. Food instead of Flowers for the Christmas Ministry, we were able to put together 25 grocery bags and deliver them to the North Wilkesboro Housing Authority to be handed out. With such generosity from our members, we will be able to do many more bags of groceries.

At Thanksgiving, the Cook family donation and St Paul's was able to help His Light Ministries feed 250 people a delicious Thanksgiving dinner.

Heart & Soul at Christmas painted Christmas items and delivered them to Accordius Nursing Home in Wilkesboro for the residents to put in their rooms.

As you see, we have been busy and working around COVID to continue our ministry. A personal Thank You to our volunteers and to all who have made these ministries at St Paul's possible.

God's blessing and peace for 2021,

Carol M Canter

Step Ahead Report

Step Ahead is a goal-based grant program developed by the Crisis Assistance Ministry of St. Paul's Episcopal Church. It is designed to provide grants to support clients who want to make major life changes so that they will become more self-sufficient.

To prepare for these changes, Step Ahead clients are required to complete several lessons on computers at NCWorks. These lessons refresh their reading, math and employment skills. They must pass a four-hour test on these skills to earn a Career Readiness Certificate from the State of North Carolina. Applicants also must complete eight hours of community service. Clients have used their grant for various necessary expenses, including vehicle repair, tuition, and housing.

At the completion of the program, clients and volunteers consult on how to best use the grant that the clients have earned. St. Paul's sends checks to the third-party providers.

Respectfully,

Mary Ann Caplinger

Sunday Servants Report

We began 2020 with the usual schedule of Sunday Servants: 2 services, Ushers, Altar Guild, Chalice Bearers, Lectors, Prayers of the People, Bread Bakers, Greeters, Acolytes and Nursery Volunteers. The list of people to whom reminders had to be sent to each week was 23 deep. Then COVID-19 came to visit in March and nearly everything changed. Father Steve held two regular services in March before we went virtual.

The virtual approach did not require as many Sunday Servants. Bill Hurd anchored the electronic component supported by Rachel Minick and Wes Martin. The servants we continued to call upon were the Lectors/Readers. From March until the first weekend in August, the Readers came to the church on Wednesdays or Thursdays and recorded their parts. Father Steve recorded his portion of the service, many weeks from his home Chapel in Asheville. Bill spliced it all together and Rachel magically made it available on YouTube. Many of us adjusted to worshiping in our dens or living rooms wearing our pajamas.

The first weekend in August, we ventured outside and began worshiping together again. We held two services each Sunday morning and Bill & Co. recorded the second one each Sunday. This doubled the number of Readers that we needed each week. The set up for each service was more involved, so we reactivated our Altar Guild. From the first of August through November, we had 18 Sundays. We only missed holding services one Sunday during that stretch due to weather. Also, during that stretch, Mother Stephanie joined us. She engaged the process that had evolved enthusiastically and led us in our beautiful Coventry Chapel until winter set in.

In December, we moved back inside. We held virtual services in both the Chapel and the Church including a Christmas Eve service that was fairly similar to our traditional Christmas Eve event.

Church continued in both an abbreviated and an electronic form at St. Paul's throughout 2020. It could not have happened without a willingness to adjust and improvise from our Clergy as well as those Sunday Servants who continued to serve as Lectors and as Altar Guild. Thanks to everyone who supported and participated in these efforts.

Respectfully,

Drew Mayberry
Scheduling Grunt

St Paul's Episcopal Church 2021 Budget Report

John Harwell, Treasurer

	2019 Actual	2020 Actual	2020 Budget	2021 Budget
Revenue				
General Offerings				
Pledges	293,686	245,102	261,000	309,000
Regular Givers	39,784	32,686	39,000	44,000
Plate	5,014	713	5,000	5,000
Memorials	3,785	3,485	2,000	1,000
Miscellaneous	53,432	70	3,000	500
Total Revenue	395,701	282,056	310,000	359,500
Expenses				
Outreach	48,139	53,051	54,652	49,300
Staff	286,661	248,722	243,320	230,884
Property Expense	45,984	39,607	51,800	75,800
Office Expense	19,970	18,502	20,800	22,200
Program Expense	8,027	6,302	7,400	7,850
Total Expense	408,781	366,184	377,972	386,034
Operating Revenue>Expenses	-13,080	-84,128	-67,972	-26,534
Non-Operating				
Investment Income	17,003	22,680	21,500	20,000
Kulynych Grant	7,248	9,851	9,670	7,250
Gain/loss on investments	22,814	76,693	0	0
Non-operating Income	104,288	53,158	80,000	70,000
	-104,26			
Crisis Assistance	3	-47,511	-80,000	-70,000
Donation Funded Outreach	-280	-1,147	-200	-400
Total Non-Operating	46,810	113,724	30,970	26,850
Revenue>Expenses	33,730	29,596	-37,002	316