

St Paul's Episcopal Church Concord, NH



189th Annual Meeting

Sunday

January 28, 2024

Includes Reports for 2023

**St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Concord, NH
189th Annual Meeting
Sunday, January 28, 2024**

AGENDA

Call to Order – The Rev. Jean C. Beniste, Rector

Approval of Agenda

Approval of January 22, 2023, 188th Annual Meeting Minutes

Report of the Nominating Committee – Tamar Roberts

Election and Installation of Officers, Vestry Members & Convention Delegate

Rector's Message – The Rev. Jean C. Beniste

Warden's Report – Tamar Roberts

2023 Financial Report and 2024 Budget – David Cawley, Treasurer

Other Business

Adjournment

Brunch in Ordway Hall

2024 SLATE of CANDIDATES

St. Paul's Episcopal Church

189th Annual Meeting – January 28, 2024

Officers

Junior Warden (3-year term)
Kristin Dunklee

Assistant Treasurer
Cassandra Bush

Vestry

Vestry members (3-year term)
Jim Barker
Allwynne Fine
Judith Goodnow

Vestry member (1-year unexpired term)
Joanne Gutt

Alternate Vestry member
Lorraine Washburn

Delegate to Diocesan Convention

Bob Samson 2024-2026

St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Concord, New Hampshire
188th Annual Meeting
January 22, 2023

Minutes

The 2023 Annual Meeting of St. Paul's Church was held during the 9:00 service on January 22, and was opened at 9:06 AM with a prayer by Rev. Denis Brunelle, Interim Rector.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the agenda. The motion carried.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes of the last annual meeting. The motion carried.

Senior Warden Jan Greer-Carney read the slate of vestry members and church officers. New vestry members will be Linda Douglas, Leslie Farmer, Rita Morrison, and Bob Samson. New officers will be Tamar Roberts – Senior Warden, Russ Ingraham – Junior Warden, and Cindy White – Clerk.

A vote was taken to accept the slate. The slate was accepted.

A motion was made and seconded to have the Clerk cast one vote for the slate of vestry and officers. The motion carried.

Rev. Denis installed the new vestry members and church officers.

Rev. Denis thanked Jan for her service as Senior Warden and thanked Inge Eddy for her service on the vestry. He presented both with orchids.

Rev. Denis presented a gift to Brother Charles, who is retiring, to thank him for his service as Deacon.

Jan Greer-Carney gave the outgoing Senior Warden's report.

Dave Cawley, Treasurer, gave and discussed the Treasurer's report.

Tamar Roberts, incoming Senior Warden, proposed that the meeting be closed. The motion carried.

Cindy White, incoming Clerk

Friends, Come, See, and Belong

Greetings to you all! I warmly welcome this year's Annual Meeting, which will take place on this Sunday's liturgy. While I have only recently joined this Church community, I am glad to be your new rector and delighted to extend this invitation to you: "Come, see, and belong." I like the annual meeting; this occasion offers us a chance to reflect on the past year, celebrate the diverse ministries that have taken place here, and look forward to the future. As a time of ministry celebration, I would like to invite you all to Come, See, and Belong. To become the Church we truly desire, we need your presence. I urge you to join us in our mission by investing your support in sustaining and enhancing formation programs for all age groups. By doing so, we can inspire ourselves, our children, and our youth to become passionate disciples of Christ.

I want to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to all of you for being exemplary stewards of this Church community. I would also like to thank the staff, including Chris Rawson, Kelly Kennerson, Andy Brundrett, John Spring, the front desk, outreach, pastoral care team, Hospitality, and volunteers. I will not forget my predecessors, Rev. Kate Atkinson and Father Denis Brunelle, and all the other colleagues, clergy, and people who ministered here. Today, their ministry, vision, and legacy have enabled us to receive the invitation to continue this beautiful work here at Saint Paul's Church. I am pleased to say that Saint Paul's future looks bright and promising. I am excited to be a part of this journey with all of you and look forward to collaborating to achieve our goals.

As your Rector, I believe effective leadership requires active and empathetic engagement with our community. I am committed to immersing myself in every aspect of our community and eager to build meaningful relationships and be pastorally present with each of you. I aim to understand the ministries, people, and traditions that make up our church and discover what brings people together in our community. By gaining a deeper understanding of our members and community, I will be better equipped to chart a course for the future that will enable us to thrive and grow together. I am excited to get to know each of you and to learn more about what makes Saint Paul's Church such a unique and special place. Together, we can work towards building a stronger and more connected community.

As I embark on this journey with you, I want you to join me in reiterating our love for Saint Paul's, the Diocese of New Hampshire, and the Concord community. During these few days I have here, our time together in worship and fellowship, I discovered that Saint Paul's church is full of faithful and passionate parishioners, staff, and volunteers. Worship is at the heart of what we do; we follow and praise Jesus. Our rector is not a chief but a shepherd and leader who inspires and welcomes others to minister alongside us.

I also believe it is my responsibility to create a positive atmosphere within the community. I aim to foster relationships, promote inclusivity and diversity, and remind everyone of our purpose. Together with you, I aim to establish a warm and welcoming environment where everyone feels accepted and valued for who they are. In the years to come, let us plan to

cultivate a joyful and inviting community where people are committed to growing their relationship with Jesus and one another, even when disagreements arise.

Let's imagine a community where people are devoted to serving Jesus and those who require assistance in the church and the community. A place where generosity is a significant value, and people treat each other with love and respect. I am thrilled to begin this journey with everyone, and I believe that by working together, we can establish a space that embodies these values and Gospel principles.

During my brief time here, I have observed a few things about the unique atmosphere of this exceptional place that I would like to share, along with a few hopes. Firstly, Saint Paul's Church serves as a place where individuals can encounter Jesus. Located in the city's heart, Saint Paul's Church acts as a mirror where passersby can see Jesus' reflection in the faces of those who enter through its doors. Through various means such as liturgy, music, prayer, formation programs, pastoral care, sacred space, holy grounds, service to others, hospitality, fellowship, and outreach, the presence of Jesus is experienced in numerous ways.

Let's take this opportunity to deepen our faith and broaden our understanding of Christ. We can serve Christ, be Christ's disciples in new and creative ways, and embrace the values found in the Gospel. Our message of love for God and love for our neighbor is essential in this time and especially in the ministry life presence of Saint Paul's Church in and for this community.

To be the church for the community and in the community, we must continue balancing activities within the church and those beyond it. Creatively, let's continue sustaining programs and opportunities to help us grow in our faith, with worship being an essential part. We must also strive to maintain our church buildings and grounds, treating them as sacred spaces that inspire and comfort those who come to this place.

Moreover, as a faith community, let's continue to take our ministries out into the world by reaching out to others through outreach programs. We should invite people including our children to experience how we met Jesus at Saint Paul's Church and how they can also become Jesus' disciples. By upholding Saint Paul's message of love, inclusion, and grace, we can become a beacon of hope for our community. We can significantly impact our community, the wider church, and the nation by spreading God's love beyond the church walls through technology. Let's work together to make this happen.

The first disciples of Jesus are exceptional models for us, just as they were for the early Christian community. Following Jesus's Resurrection and the Spirit's descent at Pentecost, they traveled throughout the Mediterranean, boldly proclaiming the Good News that Jesus is still alive and that he no longer dies. Together with other believers, they established the first Churches that the apostle Paul mentions in his letters, such as the Church of Corinth, Ephesus, Thessalonica, and Rome.

Today, we are their heirs in faith, entrusted with the same Good News of the Gospel. Like the

first disciples, we are called to follow Jesus and walk in his footsteps. However, our following is not a physical one along a geographical path but rather an imitation of Jesus' ways on new paths.

The paths we follow in our imitation of Jesus are diverse and unique, just like the people and groups who choose to follow Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Nevertheless, they all converge in the singular commandment of the New Covenant: "Love one another and care for each other."

People of Saint Paul's Church in 2024, we are privileged to be part of a lineage of people who have witnessed the Good News over the centuries. Today, we are called to do the same in our own time. While our society may answer some human desires, it fails to address them. Therefore, we are encouraged to look beyond the limitations of our culture and share our love for the One we have chosen to follow and imitate, just like the fishermen of Galilee. Through simple acts of kindness within our reach, the light that dwells within us will shine forth, revealing the Good News of God's free love for every person, regardless of their worth, in the eyes of the world.

"Friends, Come, See, and Belong." Saint Paul's Church is truly special, all thanks to the amazing individuals who make up this community. Monica, Annelise, Solange, and I feel privileged to be a part of this journey of life and faith alongside all of you. I am thrilled to see what the future has in store for us, and the wonderful things God has planned for our little corner of the world. Let's unite and work towards making Saint Paul's Church a welcoming place for everyone. Your kindness, Hospitality, and dedication are invaluable in making a difference.

Father Jean

Senior Warden's Report – Tamar Roberts

To say that this has been a very busy year at St. Paul's for the Wardens and Vestry would, I think, be a great understatement, and I do believe that it is a good thing that I "retired" from fulltime employment at the end of 2022 which gave me more time to devote to St. Paul's. To recap the year, I first want to thank Jan Greer-Carney who preceded me as Senior Warden and whose leadership and example were valuable to my ministry. If any of you remember the message that I gave at the 2022 Annual Meeting that was held on Zoom due to the pandemic, you may remember that I spoke about change and how it is something that is inevitable and many times, our only choices are how we accept or deal with it. Although that message was given in response to the pandemic and my medical issues, change became even more of an issue at St. Paul's after that.

Last year's Annual Meeting was in a different format from what we had become accustomed to, as it was held during a church service rather than as a separate event. As it seemed to draw

lots of parishioners and I have heard mostly positive comments about it, we are doing the same thing this year. Having attended countless business meetings throughout my career, I found that conducting it during the service, kept us all mindful of who we are and why we are meeting, and helped to keep our focus on God as it should be.

We (the Wardens and Vestry) then spent much of the first part of the year dealing with all of the logistics and formalities of the retirement in March of the Rector due to very difficult circumstances, and we certainly wish Kate a future of better health and God's peace! We were able to have a celebration of Kate's ministry to St. Paul's in April before she began the next part of her treatments.

We also finished up the discussing and reporting on the results of the Listening Sessions that were part of the Mutual Ministry Review, and I want to thank all the parishioners who took the time to let us hear their comments and concerns on where we were, and where we should be headed!

We had a one-day onsite Vestry Retreat in March where we were privileged to have Canon Tina Pickering and our Interim Rector, Denis Brunelle, facilitate our discussions on how to proceed with the Rector Search. We started April with Holy Week where we had several changes from what had become our typical services, and these changes were very well received. Denis was able to help us experience new things, just as an Interim should!

We held the Parish Summit in early May to hear the hopes and concerns of the parish as we moved more deeply into the Rector Search. The Vestry received the names and related information from those wanting to serve on the Search Committee, and with much deliberation and prayerful discernment, the Committee of Deb Baker, Jim Barker, Cassandra Bush, Kate Ess, and Bob Samson was selected. This extremely dedicated committee then spent numerous hours over the next months, reviewing submissions, interviewing perspective candidates, and finally passing on the names of the three best candidates to the Vestry in August. I want to thank Deb, Jim, Cassandra, Kate, and Bob for all of their hard work over the past summer!

At that point, I contacted those candidates, and we scheduled visits to St. Paul's with each of them. These visits had them in Concord for two nights each where they were able to, among other things, meet with the Vestry in various capacities, have a tour of Concord, visit Diocesan House, facilitate a Vestry meeting, officiate and preach at a Eucharist for the Vestry, and be interviewed by the full Vestry. Each candidate also met with Bishop Rob on Zoom due to scheduling conflicts. The Vestry met again immediately following each visit to debrief on the strengths and challenges of each candidate, and after all of that was completed, Denis led us in a Eucharist and then left us to take the time to deliberate and pray about the decision to be made. You all know what that decision was, as Father Jean joined us to start his ministry on January 1, 2024.

The call was not the end of our work though as helping Father Jean and his family with their

relocation to Concord, and hammering out the agreement and related issues all still had to be done. Monica and Solange made a visit to Concord in October to look at area schools and get a chance to spend some time with the Vestry. The whole family arrived in town on December 26, and we are most happy to have them here!

During the year, we also said good-bye to other clergy, Curate Peggy Schnack; Priest Associate, Cheryl Moore; and Deacon, Mike Andres. I sincerely thank them for their services to St. Paul's and we wish them all well in their future endeavors! We also had to say farewell to Heather and Larry, who had provided our music for several years, and we hope that Larry's health continues to improve and that they have a brighter future! Thank you, Heather and Larry!

With less clergy, the last several months had Denis doing most every service, but he certainly was up to the challenge and provided us all with wonderful services, preaching, and pastoral care, and God was certainly looking out for us to have Denis ready and willing to come out of retirement just when we needed him! I thank God for that, and I thank Denis for everything that he gave to us! I also thank Cheryl Moore, Nancy Baillie Strong and Mary Beale when needed!

I want to especially thank my partner in crime, Junior Warden, Russ Ingraham! I will miss you as you relocate to Burlington, but that isn't all that far away so check out the best breakfast places, and I will be up! I also want to thank our Treasurer, Dave Cawley, who has done a humungous amount of work with the finances as well as helped me with lots of other executive issues! And I want to thank our Clerk, Cindy White, and the rest of the Vestry that have done so much work this year for all of our benefits: Jim Barker, Linda Douglas, Kate Ess, Leslie Farmer, Allwynne Fine, Rita Morrison, David Preece, Bob Samson, and Kathy Whitehead! To Kathy and David, I will miss you both as you move on to other endeavors! Remember that you can always seek another term after taking a year off. To the rest of you, I look forward to continuing to work with you in the next year!

In closing, I want to tell you all that I feel that part of my responsibility of being Senior Warden is listening to all of you; to your comments (good or bad), your questions (if I don't know the answer, I will find it), and your concerns. I try as much as possible to be around during every coffee hour, and I would love to talk to all of you, whether you are someone that I have known for 67+ years, or have never had the opportunity to meet, so please come and speak to me whenever you have a chance. I thank you all for giving me the honor of being your Senior Warden!

Jr. Warden's Report on Building & Grounds – Russ Ingraham

Big picture, we had much more work to be done than we had funding for! In maintaining a church, the size of and the age of St. Paul's, unplanned major expenses will occur, usually at

the most unfortunate times. And our financial ability to respond to these “must do” situations can be challenging.

In 2023, we completed the following repairs and maintenance:

Fire sprinkler inspection.

Replace back flow valve.

Fire alarm replacement.

Emergency lighting in Tel-com.

Emergency lighting in boiler room.

Fire department radio call box.

Clean rector’s office rug.

Paint rector’s office.

Snow plowing.

Concrete repair in East and North outside entrances.

Replace some outdated fire extinguishers.

Repaired bells

Other typical items.

We also have been awarded a FEMA grant to replace the Park Street doors which will be done in 2024.

The following are the items of repairs and maintenance that we still have left to do:

Complete repair of smoke beam.

Parking lot needs (repaving).

Memorial garden cleanup.

Mulch for garden.

Fix the Park St doors w/grant money.

Fix hole near Park Street side.

Investigate and fix bell tower.

Downspout and roof scupper near the chiller.

Replace garden lights.

Exterior light by Food Pantry Door.

Light for brick courtyard.

Add/replace sensors for exterior light.

East entrance exterior lights.

Two can lights in church (rear).

Park street fence repairs (4 tops).

East side fence.

Other ongoing regular maintenance items.

Christian Formation – Mary Farrell and Gail Schilling

This year our faith formation at St. Paul’s offered seven programs to appeal to a range of interests and demographics. Once again, single day events alternated with four- and six-week

series of discussion groups and Bible study. These included two “Ask the Rector” Q&A sessions; three Bible studies on “Women in the Bible,” “The Book of Revelation,” and “One Love Letter and Three Postcards: First, Second, and Third John and the Epistle of Jude;” and an end-of-life preparation series, “Returning Home: Practical and Spiritual Preparation for Returning to God.” During the Advent season, both clergy and parishioners contributed 24 written reflections, which were posted for the benefit of the Community. Formation topics anticipated for 2024 include a Lenten series; an EfM follow-up, “How Are You Using Your EfM Training?”; and book discussion groups.

Emergency Preparedness Committee

The Emergency Preparedness Committee has been working under the direction of Scott MacDonald in getting ready to complete the FEMA grant that we have received to make safety improvements and establish an emergency operations plan which is in the final stages of completion now. In addition, we have received approval for a new grant to replace the Park Street doors, which we anticipate doing in 2024. There will be more information coming soon on providing safety-related training on the operations plan. We thank Scott for all of his hard work in helping us with both of these grants. If you would like to become involved with this committee, please contact Chris Rawson, Parish Administrator.

Respectfully submitted,
Tamar Roberts

Safe Church – Kelly Kennerson

Diocesan Safe Church requirements (<https://www.nhepiscopal.org/safe-church>) have increased over the past two years. In addition to the online modules (seven for new certification and four for renewal), parishioners are required to attend one live online training via Zoom. In addition, parishioners are required to complete various background check forms depending on their ministry.

As always, your St. Paul's Safe Church minister is happy to review with you which requirements apply to you and when you are due to complete them.

Money Counters

We thank our Monday morning counters Dave Immen, Phil Denoncourt II and Ray Fournier faithfully led by Kristin Dunklee. They count the money received during the Sunday services and any other income that comes in that week. The counters record all donations to parishioners' accounts and then produce reports for deposit. We require at least two counters to be in the room at all times, and all deposits are verified by at least two counters.

Parish Calendar

The calendar can now be accessed on our website. It is also posted on the bulletin board in

the office area.

Front Desk Receptionists

St. Paul's has a wonderful group of lay ministers at the front desk. Five mornings a week they answer the phone, assist visitors and parishioners, and complete projects when requested by the staff. Many thanks to Ginnie Schartner, Anne Huff, Timmy Miller and Cherie Foote.

Parish Finances

St. Paul's Finances are overseen by a Finance Committee of Cassandra Bush, Dave Cawley, Ray Fournier, Judy Goodnow, Jim Milliken, David Preece, Chris Rawson and Tamar Roberts—a group to whom we owe our appreciation.

2023 Results

The 2023 budget approved by the Vestry in January of 23 expected that the parish would have \$4,000 more expenses than income. The good news is that 2023 ended with over \$18,000 more income than expenses.

The surplus was the result of generally strong pledge fulfillment; close to \$10,000 more total income than budgeted and approximately \$13,000 less expense than anticipated.

Given that the 2023 budget was constructed when the costs of the transition of Rectors was unclear and the expenses associated with calling a new Rector unknown, ending 2023 with a surplus is a very positive development.

Our “cash-on-hand” on December 31, 2023, was \$60,000, approximately \$10,000 stronger than December 31, 2022.

Investments and Bequests

St. Paul's has funds invested through the Diocese in a number of special and general-purpose sub-funds.

On December 31, 2022, the Endowment, Operating Reserve and Dr. Shields Funds totaled \$1,389,000 and on December 31, 2023, they totaled \$1,531,210. Quarterly reports on these funds are available for review in the parish office. These three funds contributed \$80,000 toward our operating income.

The E. Sawyer Cummings Trust, managed by the McLane law firm with St. Paul's and

Concord Hospital the beneficiaries, contributed \$69,000 income in 2023. A loan to the NH Community Loan Fund contributed \$2,000 last year as well.

During 2023 the parish was the recipient of three significant bequests. One from Alan Gordon Sr, of Manchester for \$47,000 was received in the early summer and combined with the last contribution to the Capital Campaign allowed us to create a Capital Improvement and Replacement sub-fund that had almost \$82,000 on 12/31/23.

On the last business day of 2023, the parish received a check for over \$217,000 from the combined trusts of two long standing parishioners--Alan Gordon Jr and Joan Hertz. The Finance Committee and the Vestry are in the final stages of deciding how and where these much-appreciated funds will be invested for the long-term mission of the parish.

These bequests clearly illustrate the generosity of these three individuals and their efforts to ensure that the various missions of the parish continue to serve greater Concord.

2024 Budget

The Vestry has approved a 2024 budget with a \$44,000 shortfall.

This deficit is the result of a series of factors, the two most significant being a projected reduction in pledge income of \$35,000 and an increase in expenses—mostly compensation—of approximately \$24,000.

Our annual budget is approved in early January, but final pledges aren't counted until the end of March. At the beginning of January, we had received pledges from ten families or individuals who did not pledge in 2023 but 30 pledges from 2023 still were not renewed for 2024. The Vestry is reviewing these two developments but a very significant portion of the “non-renewals” have been caused by changes in people re-locating or their life situation changing in significant ways.

We should also point out, however, that most parishioners who did renew their pledge for 2024 did so with tangible increases.

The change in expense between 2023 and 2024 is driven by increasing costs to maintain our facility, modest inflation and a reality that because Fr. Denis was “part time” and that the salary we paid him for almost his entire time at St. Paul's was restricted by the terms of the pension he was receiving from the Episcopal Church Pension Fund.

The Vestry is actively looking at ways to reduce the projected deficit.

The following is a somewhat “simplified” summary of the 2023 financial results and the approved 2024 budget.

If you have any questions, please be in touch with me.

Thanks

Dave Cawley
Treasurer

	2023 Actual	2024 Budget
INCOME		
PLEDGES	417,000	401,000
OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS	36,000	33,500
FUNDRAISING	9,000	10,000
ENDOWMENTS/MEMORIALS	151,000	150,000
ADMINISTRATIVE INCOME	48,000	37,000
TOTAL	661,000	631,500
EXPENSE		
FAIR SHARE	100,000	100,000
PROGRAMS	13,800	15,300
STREAMING UPGRADE	0	10,000
ADMIN COSTS	72,000	39,000
COMPENSATION	358,000	411,000
FACILITY COSTS	99,000	100,000
TOTAL	642,800	675,300
	18,200	-43,800

Fellowship and Fun

Hospitality - Kathy Gray (fka Bush)

St. Paul's Hospitality Team provided many opportunities for food and fellowship this year:

Parish-wide Celebrations included:

- 1/22/23 Brunch in Ordway Hall after our 9am Annual Meeting Service
- 4/16/23 Celebration of Rev. Kate Atkinson's Ministry as Rector at St. Paul's
- 5/7/23 Coffee Hour in Ordway Hall following our Parish Summit
- 6/25/23 Celebration of Rev. Peggy Schnack's Ministry as Curate at St. Paul's
- 10/27/23 Bobby Jo Valentine Concert followed by Coffeehouse in Upper Parish Hall
- 11/26/23 Celebration of Mike Andres' Ministry as Deacon at St. Paul's
- 12/31/23 Celebration of Father Denis Brunelle's Ministry as Interim Rector

The SPC Hospitality Team was honored to provide the following Celebrations of Life:

- 4/10/23 Gerry Butterfield
- 5/20/23 Alice Daugherty (Memorial Garden)
- 6/3/23 Peter Warburton
- 6/3/23 Mike Pride
- 8/6/23 Richard Anderson (Memorial Garden)
- 9/9/23 Susan Milliken
- 10/6/23 Pat McPhee
- 10/14/23 Linda Rosano

The ministry of hospitality has many faces, which are constantly changing with each event. Please share the love by joining us in the kitchen or providing donations. Thank you! Please email, text or call Kathy Gray (see above).

Coffee Hour

Coffee and goodies are provided after both the 8 a.m. and the 10 a.m. worship services on Sundays. If you would like to help with coffee hour, please sign up on the sheet in the Upper Parish Hall kitchen.

St. Paul's Black Flies – Tamar Roberts

The 2023 season was quite truncated due to the rainy summer. Once again, we did not win any games, but we saw a lot of improvement, and only lost the last two games by one run, one of those after going into extra innings. Regardless of what the score might indicate though, we had a lot of fun and fellowship. We play in the Church Softball League on most Monday nights during the summer. Our players range in age from teenagers to 70+, and if you are looking for a fun activity, do consider joining us next summer! The only

requirements to play are that you be at least 15 years old and can hopefully play without hurting yourself. We emphasize fun over winning (obviously) and welcome all who want to participate. Church membership is not required although we certainly recommend it. Although I was still not running, I continued to coach and did bat in a couple of games, using a pinch runner. Next summer, I am planning to run for myself, God willing! I want to thank all the team members and the few parishioners that came to games and led our cheering section! Hope to see you all on the fields next summer!

Liturgy and Worship

Music Ministry – John Spring

What a difference a year has made for me at St. Paul's. A year ago, I was planning on helping the music program by subbing for Heather while she was out for surgery. My last week was supposed to be the week after Easter. Due to the sad situation of Larry getting sick, I have found myself in a job I really craved 22 years ago, after about 7 years of my retirement. Both the staff and the congregation were wonderful in their embrace of my return. Having said that, it has been very much a learning experience for me.

When I was the interim here all those years ago, the church had a contemporary choir for the 9 am service and a classical choir for the 11 am service. I think both choirs had about 20 members and section leaders helped both choirs. The biggest challenge for me has been the ability to get two anthems ready each week. I realize that rehearsals are both a necessity, and a burden with the busy lives we live today with our families. Because of COVID, I have lightened up the requirements to attend rehearsals during the week to try and build up the choir numbers, and I have resorted to doing easier music for Communion. It has also been a blessing to have my daughter Jillian here almost every week providing solos as needed, especially during Communion. One way to offset lack of rehearsal times for all is provided by a YouTube page I have set up for the choir. I have done recordings of every anthem the choir has sung since September and will continue to do so for every anthem that we sing. I have set up the YouTube page so that every piece has 5 files available. One has all the parts, and the other four have the accompaniment for the piece with individual choir parts included. In a nutshell, this allows choir members to practice their parts away from rehearsals. I find it to be a great learning tool and I will leave them behind for future choirs here, whether I retire in 2 or 20 years.

The choir YouTube page for those interested. I always try to have at least two weeks of upcoming music.

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLFiFDOjQ1FOvJ7Z0MWx3Pe0bUN5hoiP6r>

This dovetails nicely into my next plea. I doubt you will ever find a church music minister that is happy with the number of singers in their choirs. We strive to provide the best product

to aid in the worship for the congregation, but we also push joining because singing, using the voice God gave you, will also make your worship more meaningful. I think we have made some great strides getting us back to the numbers from the old days. I think I had about a dozen members my first week, but we are now having up to 18 possible singers in any given week. That would make any choir director happy, and I am, except for one issue.....Where are the men??? For some reason, we are sadly lacking men members of the congregation joining as the women members have. We currently have two men and me doing yeoman's work to be heard. In my case, I'm normally having to sing quite loud just so my voice can be heard bouncing off the back wall. If we could pick up a few more men, our choir would be perfectly balanced. For as long as I have been conducting (about 25 years, now!), I have tried to convince everybody that they can, in fact, sing. This week, I thought of it in a different way, using the mantra that we can all live by as Episcopalians..."A place to belong, whoever you are, just as you are". Just as we are all at different levels of our spiritual journey, it shouldn't be any different for joining the choir.

With our new rector, this is a wonderful time to have our own revival in reversing what COVID has done to church attendance. I know that there are programs under way to attract youth back to church and I will help in whatever way possible. Our sexton Andy and I spent a couple weeks fixing the bells so that we could have the bells ringing after the Christmas services. That has now turned into a weekly ringing after the 10 am service. So far, Jillian has taken the lead in this, and Solange Beniste has already been helping out. Many years ago, bellringing was a great way to get the youth involved in worship. I hope that will be a thing again. I know it worked for my children and many more that were congregants back in the early 2000's.

I am also promoting concerts and other musical festivities here and will continue to do so. We had a concert by Bobby Jo Valentine at the end of October that was wonderfully received by everyone that attended. Unfortunately, I think attendance suffered a little bit as it was the same evening as the Downtown Concord Halloween celebrations on Main St. We will probably hire him again, and hopefully, just from word of mouth from the people that attended will convince more of the congregation to attend his concert next time. I have also been in contact bringing the Concord Chorale to St. Paul's for their spring concert. As well as being a source of revenue to have them perform here, it is also a great way for people that are not familiar with St. Paul's to see and hear what a wonderful space we get to worship in each week. We will also be offering a pancake supper on Shrove (Fat) Tuesday at 6 pm leading us into the Lenten season, and my jazz quintet will offer music afterwards in our best Mardi Gras imitation.

In closing, I want to thank everyone involved with putting their trust in me to provide all of you with the ministry of music and in my ongoing quest to involve as many of you as possible in the ministry. I will always welcome singers and instrumentalists alike to further your worship experience here, whether playing along with the hymns, or realizing that singing is a gift that we have all been endowed with. Most of you that swear you can't sing don't realize that you can, you just need a little practice. Some of us have been practicing singing our

whole lives without ever even knowing it, either singing along to the radio in the car, or singing along in the shower. I will always welcome you giving it a try. You have another chance coming up soon as I will be offering the Festival Choir again for Easter. This is open to all of you because, just like other aspects of our Episcopal life you are welcome because the choir, just like the church as a whole is “A place to belong, whoever you are, just as you are”

Altar Guild – Ginnie Schartner and Signa Watts

This year the Altar Guild has welcomed several new members. Unfortunately we lost a long time and devoted member, Linda Rosano. We have prepared the sanctuary for Christmas and Easter, funerals and baptisms and for chapel services and Eucharists. We have had a scratched chalice repaired, ordered wine, wafers, oil, candles, wicks, purificators, palls and corporals. We prepare traveling communion sets and take flowers to the sick and to those who cannot come out to church. We thank our generous anonymous donors for their help in procuring a new red chasuble.

Eucharist Ministers and Lectors

These are actually two separate ministries, but since they are somewhat related and many people serve in both, we are combining them here. Eucharistic ministers are the folks who serve at the altar, administering the chalice at the Eucharist. They are approved by the Vestry and licensed by the Diocese of New Hampshire. Lectors are the people that do the scripture readings, and lead psalms and the prayers of the people. One does not require licensing to be a lector, the only requirement is being able to read well in a group (sometimes large) setting. Many of our Eucharistic ministers also serve as lectors. This year, like many previously, we have been blessed with many Eucharistic ministers and lectors, many who have been serving for decades. If either or both of these ministries appeal to you, please let Tamar Roberts know and watch for an upcoming training session.

Acolytes

We have several dedicated parishioners who have served as acolytes in 2023. These are the red robed individuals who light and snuff the candles, carry the cross in procession and recession, and assist at the altar. This year saw the graduation from high school of one of our regulars, Nicholas Hewey, whom we now see less of as he is away at college. We also on the last day of the year, got a new acolyte, Solange Beniste, who is a great addition to this ministry. We are planning to get more young people involved in 2024. If you would like to join this ministry, please speak to any of the current acolytes and watch the bulletin for upcoming training sessions.

Ushers

Ushers are the people that greet you on Sunday mornings as you enter the worship space, passing out bulletins, and also take up the collections, and direct traffic flow during the administration of communion. This is a wonderful ministry as the ushers often provide the first friendly face to people coming into our church for the first time. The schedule is such that the ushers serve on a rotating basis and the commitment is only for half an hour before the assigned service to about 15-20 minutes afterward. We are always happy to find new ushers so if this ministry appeals to you, please watch for an upcoming training, or speak to Jerry Tepe or Tamar Roberts.

Ministry of Presence – Kim Wheeler

Ministry of Presence (MoP), rooted in Pastoral care, is a small group of Eucharistic visitors and lay people who offer compassionate support to those parishioners who are in need of spiritual companionship and encouragement, especially to those who are unable to attend in-house worship services. We meet once a month, after the 8 am service. Our mission is to provide Eucharistic visits to homes, hospitals and long-term care facilities, visit with the sick and homebound, write thoughtful notes/cards and organize rides to church. Recently, we united with the Prayer Group Ministry to unify our Pastoral care and prayer needs here at St. Paul's. If you would like to become a part of these two uplifting ministries, please contact the parish office.

Prayer Group – Cherie Foote

In 2023 the Prayer Group held one meeting in the spring to decide where our group was heading and to have a read through of the March service of healing. Later in the spring it was the chairperson's idea to join our small group to the larger and more active Ministry of Presence, which was done. I believe that it made sense to partner with this group in order to better serve the congregation.

Education for Ministry (EfM) – Tamar Roberts

EfM is a 4-year program of the University of the South that brings autonomous groups of 6-12 people together on a weekly basis for approximately 2 hours over 36 weeks per year to worship, study, reflect, and learn together in discerning and expanding their ministries. This is not a program for ordained clergy or those seeking to become ordained clergy, but rather for all the rest of us that all are ministers of God. Members register for one year at a time for the groups that begin each fall. Mentors for each group are trained and certified by the University of the South trainers. For the fourteenth year, St. Paul's is hosting this program. We began 2023 with two groups that have combined this fall into one. If you are interested in finding out more about EfM, talk with Deb Baker or Tamar Roberts.

MEVO Operators – Tamar Roberts

For those of you who are unfamiliar with the term, MEVO is the software that we use for live streaming and recording our services on Sunday mornings, and a few other special services during the year. If you attend services and see someone sitting in the back pew, appearing to play with their cell phone, these are actually the MEVO operators managing the live stream. We currently have four operators who know the system reasonably well and take turns doing each service. If you are interested in joining in this ministry, please see Tamar Roberts who will see that you get the needed training and will then add you to the schedule.

In addition, we are hoping to update the system at some point soon, but this will be fairly costly so if you would like to make a contribution for this purpose, please do so. The services are viewed by people who are away from Concord, are shut-in, or for other reasons are unable to be here in person.

Outreach and Mission – Linda Douglas

Food Pantry – Randy Whitehead

The Food Pantry has slowly gained momentum since it's reopening in June of 2021. It is open 8 hours per week. Enough cannot be said about the dedication of the volunteers that work the window, stocking the pantry, do scheduling and report the logistics. These volunteers are selfless and extremely dedicated to say the least. I would like to especially thank Cindy White (Window Volunteer Scheduling), Kristin Dunklee (Stocking schedule and logistic reporting) and Dan Dunklee (Food Pick-Up at Capitol Region Food Program) for their efforts that keep the pantry running smoothly. The pantry received numerous food donations from the area to include Concordia Lutheran Church, Rundlett Middle School, Concord Dance Academy, Market Basket and the Christa McAullife Elementary School and Scouting for Food which resulted in thousands of pounds of food. Hannaford donates meat products weekly through the Fresh Rescue Program overseen by the NH Food Bank. These donations are great, but the pantry would not be possible if it wasn't for the generosity of the parishioners and members of the community.

The pantry was able to accommodate clients for Thanksgiving providing 38 turkeys and 6 large chickens. Several turkeys were also donated by parishioners. St. Paul's supplemented the Thanksgiving Meal by providing clients with \$2785 in gift cards for the Thanksgiving Meal sides such as stuffing, cranberry sauce and gravy. Again, Mary Waples coordinated that effort and did an outstanding job as usual.

I am providing the following information regarding pantry activity for 2023:

Food Sources: Private Donations, Capitol Region Program USDA, Hannaford,

Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, NH Food Bank, Crust and Crumb Bakery, Shaw's Markets, Market Basket and Apple Hill Orchard.

Note: The only agency that charges for food is the NH Food Bank but that is only for a few specific items. A few local purchases were made at Hannaford during the year if the NH Food Bank was not available. This is done through the use of RaiseRight cards.

Client Information: Clients Served 2184; Client/Family Members Provided for 5014; Lbs. of Food Procured 83,519; Total Servings to Clients 152,198.

The pantry is very aware of costs and has tried to keep those costs down by taking advantage of as many opportunities as possible to provide "no cost foods" procurements when available. The cost for food in 2023 was \$7279.43. Donations and credits to the pantry were \$12,585.

Lastly, and without saying, none of this would be possible without the support of the church staff: Chris Rawson, Andy Brundrett and Kelly Kennerson. Their tireless support has been remarkable. We are very thankful to have them. I also would like to say thank you for the support of the parishioners throughout the years past and present.

Chapter 2 – Donna Cassidy

In the past year, we have had more good quality donations than ever before both from parishioners and the public. This is much appreciated. We also have a great team of volunteers who give generously of their time and talents to help us achieve our primary goal of providing clothing and household goods to people in need at no cost, and to provide low-cost items to our value-conscious shoppers.

With the income generated from sales, we donate to our various church ministries and to community agencies and groups who also provide services to those in need. This year Chapter 2 donated money to the following ministries:

In March 2023:

1. Memorial Garden: \$2,000.00 for maintenance and supplies
2. Rector's Discretionary Fund: \$1,000.00
3. Altar Guild: \$1,000.00
4. Friendly Kitchen: \$500.00
5. Hospitality Committee: \$250.00
6. Easter Flowers and Music: \$200.00

In August 2023:

1. Jamaica Mission (for November 2023): \$2,000.00
2. Giving Tree Mission: \$500.00
3. Thanksgiving Baskets: \$500.00
4. Homeless Shelter and Resource Center: \$900.00
5. Church Building needs and improvements to be decided by Building and Grounds committee: \$500.00

Family Promise – Theresa Neves and Jo Gutt

Four times a year, St. Paul's (as one of the 13 local churches supporting Family Promise of Greater Concord) opens the parish building doors and our hearts to 1 to 3 homeless families. Staffing with 42 of our parish volunteers, we shelter, feed and offer these families a safe, warm and welcoming place in the evening and overnight. Our next host week starts 3/3/24. Watch for the Sign-Up Genius and help out!

Family Promise of Greater Concord brings people in need together with people who want to help. They provide the framework that turns compassion into action to help the homeless and low-income families in our area achieve sustainable independence. For more information about Family Promise of Greater Concord, please [visit their website](#). Every family is thoroughly vetted by the Family Promise program. No one is accepted to the program with drug or alcohol issues and each family must have their own vehicle.

Parishioners taking part in this ministry can sign up to provide a dinner, host overnight or support the program with food items or gift cards. We encourage you to consider doing both the dinner and the overnight as you get to know the families and provide them with the continuity of the same people for dinner and overnight. We also need help setting up the basement rooms and breaking them down after our host week.

New Americans – Linda Douglas

Since April of 2023, Terry Irwin started recruiting St. Paul's parishioners to be volunteers for Overcomers Refugee Services. There are currently eight people from St. Paul's who tutor in English and/or provide transportation for New Americans in the Concord area. St. Paul's also provides space for tutors and has allowed the group to use the upper Parish Hall for quarterly volunteer meeting.

Care Ministry in Outreach Center

This past year, a parishioner, Priscila Bureau, asked if she could be a welcoming and prayerful presence in the Outreach Center. With a history in social work and a knowledge of area resources, along with a calming presence, Priscilla spends a couple of days a week talking to people in the Outreach Center while they wait to go into the Food Pantry or before and after they have been in Chapter Two. She answers questions, listens to people's concerns, and offers prayers, if requested.

Friendly Kitchen – Katy Clough

St. Paul's Church is going on its 44th year of volunteer service helping feed the hungry at the Friendly Kitchen in Concord. We plan and prepare a dinner every third week of each month. This past year we had 32 volunteers who helped with this work.

The Friendly Kitchen is located at 2 South Commercial Street in Concord and is open 365

days a year, serving dinner 7 days a week, lunch 5 days a week, breakfast on weekends (breakfast served daily during the winter months).

This year 6000 more meals were served as part of the Family Friendly Meals (FFM) program. This program started in April of 2021 with the Merrimack Valley Day Care Program making 2 prepared meals per week for 16 Families identified by Child Care Agencies as families in need. This program has expanded to include the Boys and Girls Club of Concord (July of 2021) and The Children's Place (February of 2022). Currently 104 meals per week are provided for 52 families.

The Friendly Kitchen is also partnered with Food Pantry at the Jennings Drive location providing 21 low-income families food to supplement individual grocery needs. Additional food items are provided to the Merrimack Valley Food Pantry.

The Friendly Kitchen is a member of the Capital Area Food Access Coalition and the NH Food Access Coalition. This year's efforts of the Coalitions is to destigmatize food insecurity in our schools and support food pantries in the schools.

In the Fall of 2023 construction began at the Friendly Kitchen site to create additional space to accommodate the anticipated growth. The completion date for this addition is expected to be the end of February 2024. A larger parking lot is also in the works with completion expected in the Spring of 2024.

CROP Walk – Kate Ess & Michael Sauve

Although the Captain was Kate Ess, the Co-Captain, Michael Sauve was instrumental in making this year's walk a success. Walkers included Michael Sauve and Cassandra Bush and family.

Thanks to the support and contributions of the parishioners and friends of St. Paul's, we raised a total of \$1675.00 with online and in person donations. Michael collected donations after both Sunday services leading up to the walk, making St. Paul's the second highest donor. It was a nice day to walk and was enjoyed by all who attended.

A special thank you to all who continue to support this important mission each year and we look forward to the 2024 CROP Walk again this fall!

Jamaica Committee Report 2023 – Mark D Carney, MD

The Chantilly Early Childhood Institution (Basic School)
The school is a preschool program that educates children ages 3 to 5 years from the Chantilly community and surrounding villages. The school is open for 10 months and also provides the children 2 meals a day. The preschool teachers are certified by the Jamaican

government. There are 4 teachers and one cook. The school has 35 students attending the program.

The congregation of St Paul's Church supports the school. Eight thousand dollars was sent to the school in the mid spring of 2023. The money helps to support the staff's salaries, as well as, help to pay for the children's meals and school supplies. The Christmas poinsettia plant sale raised \$1,370. Members of the parish donated money for the students' tuition.

Jamaica Medical Mission Trip 2023

A group of medical professionals and support staff were able to make a trip to Chantilly in early November. Secondary to the COVID Pandemic, no trips were made for 3 years.

The group consisted of Linda Parnass (pharmacist), Kate Ess (support person), Jennifer Ess (support person), Jan Greer-Carney (Dietitian), Erin Pike (Nurse), Jeannine Johnson (OB/GYN) and Mark Carney (pediatrician).

The group provided medical services, medications, reading glasses, toothbrushes, toothpaste and dental varnishes. Over 300 patients were seen in 4 and a half days.

Daphne and Rue Gordon (local Jamaican hosts) were happy to see the group again. Rue will turn 100 years old in May 2024.

The parish of St Paul's Church and South Congregational Church raised money to pay for the medical supplies and medication. Over \$9,000 was raised for the trip.

RaiseRight and Hannaford Cards – Theresa Neves and Kathy Whitehead

Every card purchased through our program earns a rebate for St. Paul's. There are over 750 participating businesses, and our profit margins on the cards range from 1.5% to 20%. Since we joined the program, the cards have brought in over \$18,000 dollars to St. Paul's. Let's all get involved and we can bring in even more!

The Hannaford cards return 5% to us. With RaiseRight and Hannaford, whatever the face value of the card, you get to spend it all. It doesn't cost a penny extra, but your purchase contributes a little to St. Paul's bottom line. And it all adds up! Our thanks to the parish members for their continued support in purchasing cards through RaiseRight and Hannaford.

There is also an app, called RaiseRight, that you can download to your phone and order cards. You just present the phone screen at local stores for your purchases. Trust Theresa - It works! She's been using it for several years now. Go to [RaiseRight.com](https://www.raise-right.com) for more info. St. Paul's enrollment code is 89A9E257331L3.