

Annual Parish Meeting St. Paul's Episcopal Church

**Stockbridge, MA
The Last Sunday after the Epiphany
February 11, 2024**



Our Mission

We believe in regular worship, the sacraments,
and teaching the Word of God
through scripture, preaching, education, and relationship.
We welcome all people into our Christian family.

A General Thanksgiving

Accept, O Lord, our thanks and praise for all that you have done for us. We thank you for the splendor of the whole creation, for the beauty of this world, for the wonder of life, and for the mystery of love.

We thank you for the blessing of family and friends, and for the loving care which surrounds us on every side.

We thank you for setting us at tasks which demand our best efforts, and for leading us to accomplishments which satisfy and delight us.

We thank you also for those disappointments and failures that lead us to acknowledge our dependence on you alone.

Above all, we thank you for your Son Jesus Christ; for the truth of his Word and the example of his life; for his steadfast obedience by which he overcame temptation; for his dying, through which he overcame death; and for his rising to life again, in which we are raised to the life of your kingdom.

Grant us the gift of your spirit, that we may know Christ and make him known; and through him, at all times and in all places, may give thanks to you in all things. *Amen.*

Prayer for a Church Meeting

Almighty and everliving God,
source of all wisdom and understanding,
be present with those who take counsel
for the renewal and mission of St. Paul's Church.
Teach us in all things to seek first your honor and glory.
Guide us to perceive what is right,
and grant us both the courage to pursue it
and the grace to accomplish it;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Annual Meeting Agenda

Call to Order

Opening Prayer

Appointment of Clerk

Signing of the Annual Meeting Book

Approval of 2023 Annual Meeting Minutes

Report from the Nominating Committee

Election of Vestry Members, Convention Delegates, Convention Alternate(s)

Wardens' Report

Treasurer's Report

Rector's Annual Address

Acceptance of Other Reports

Other Business

Closing Prayer

Motion to Adjourn

Table of Contents

Report	Page Numbers
Agenda for Today's Annual Meeting.....	2
Minutes of 2022 Annual Meeting.....	3-7
Nominations Report.....	8
Rector's and Interim Priest's Reports.....	9-10
Wardens' Report.....	11
Property Report.....	12
Worship Ministry.....	12-19
Priests & Worship Leaders	
Priest Associate's Report	
Ministry Intern's Report	
Verger's Report	
Wednesday Morning Prayer	
Sunday Worship	
Holy Week, Easter, Christmas	
"From the Parish Register"	
Lay Worship Ministry Groups	
Pastoral Care, Safe Church, & Welcoming.....	19-21
Outreach Ministry.....	22-29
St. Paul's Children's Center	
Lee Food Pantry and Gideon's Garden	
Appalachian Trail Mini-Mission Trips	
Outreach Ministry of the Week	
Student Care Packages	
Advent Outreach	
Riverbrook Residence	
Prayer Basket	
Rector's Discretionary Fund and Human to Human	
Migrant Ministry and Multicultural BRIDGE	
Other Outreach Ministry	
Community Involvement and Collaborative Ministry.....	29-33
Three Kings Celebration	
Stockbridge Memorial Day	
Blessing of the Animals	
Community Thanksgiving	
Laurel Hill Day	
Concerts and Seminars	
Ecumenical/Interfaith Collaborative Ministry	
Holy Week Services	
Deanery and Diocese	
Christian Formation/Education and Community Building.....	34-35
Search Process.....	36-37
Staff and Communications.....	38
Stewardship and Rectory Fundraising.....	39-40
Treasurer's Report (unnumbered at the end of the Annual Report Booklet)	

St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Minutes of the Annual Meeting
February 5, 2023

During the 10:00 a.m. worship service, Sebastian Bonner was appointed clerk for the Annual Meeting. Darryl Lafferty was presented a gift and a proclamation honoring his work as St. Paul's Verger, and the Rev. Libby Wade, Interim Priest, made an oral report as part of a sermon on the theme of "salt and light" from the Gospel of the day.

The business portion of the Annual Meeting took place after refreshments following the 10:00 Holy Eucharist Service. Libby opened the meeting at 11:15 am with a Prayer of Transition (*Please see the inside cover of the 2023 Annual Report Booklet*) and the Annual Meeting Book was circulated for congregants to sign.

Libby declared that there was a quorum for this meeting. Libby recognized Verger, Darryl Lafferty, and Priest Associate, the Reverend Jane Tillman for their service to St. Paul's.

Minutes of the Previous Annual Meeting (*Please see the 2023 Annual Report Booklet*)

Libby called for a motion to approve the minutes of the January 30, 2022 meeting. Martha Bodine so moved and Peter Dillon seconded. Motion carried.

Nominating Committee Report delivered by Martha Bodine

As Nominating Committee chair, Martha presented Diana French for election for her 2nd term, Darryl Lafferty for election for his first three-year term, and Robert Maloney for a one-year term to fulfill Duncan Pollock's term. She also presented the slate for Vestry Officers and Delegates to the Diocesan Convention.

The slate of Vestry Members is:

<i>Class of 2024</i>	<i>Class of 2025</i>	<i>Class of 2026</i>
Chris Johnson	Diane Dillon	Diana French
Robert Maloney	Carl Sprague	Darryl Lafferty

Jorja Marsden moved to accept the slate of Vestry Members. Martha Bodine seconded. Motion carried.

Vestry Officers:

Senior Warden: Jorja Marsden
Junior Warden: Martha Bodine

Treasurer: John Davies
Clerk: Sebastian Bonner

Delegates to the Diocesan Convention:

Diane Dillon, delegate
Martha Bodine, delegate
Diana French, alternate delegate

Interim Priest's Report

The Rev. Libby Wade delivered her report as part of the homily during the service. *(Please see page 8 of the 2023 Annual Report Booklet for a written report.)*

- ☐ Libby described the many transitions St. Paul's has dealt with during the year: the pandemic, staff changes, and the search process. She assumed the role of interim, a role she was familiar with having been the Interim during the search that led to the Reverend Sam Smith's arrival.
- ☐ Libby adumbrated her Interim work as including worship practices, staff replacements, duties both administrative and musical, support for vestry, the wardens, and the Profile Committee, and experimenting with new ways to engage people in the church's mission.
- ☐ Libby described the joy of working with wardens Jorja Marsden and Martha Bodine, with particular note of the major commitments of time and energy they have offered. And she relayed the growth in the breadth of outreach ministries and community involvement.
- ☐ She noted areas still to be met: the development of a youth ministry, more adult education and formation, and efforts to bring congregants back to in-church worship.
- ☐ She challenged all present to consider how we might be salt and light in and through this congregation.
- ☐ Libby ended her sermon/report with a blessing prayer from Episcopalians for Reconciliation.

Wardens' Report delivered by Martha Bodine *(Please see page 9 of the 2023 Annual Report Booklet.)*

- ☐ Martha thanked everyone here in the church and those watching online for the remarkable support they've contributed during this very busy year.
- ☐ She referred to the important task now underway of passing of the baton from the Profile Committee to the Search Committee toward seeking a new rector.
- ☐ And she detailed the Rectory Renovation Committee's work to complete improving the interior of the Rectory which has not been renovated since the early 1960s.

Property Report delivered by Jorja Marsden *(Please see page 11 of the 2023 Annual Report Booklet.)*

- ☐ Jorja detailed the extent of work needed to renovate the Rectory, specifically drawing attention to the old galvanized pipes that crumble over time. The water line from the street into our property will need to be replaced, as will all the pipes in both the Rectory and the Parish House.
- ☐ Needed in 2023 is work to update the kitchen, work on the pantry and two bathrooms, sanding the wooden floors, a new roof, inspection and repairs of the chimneys, and painting throughout the Rectory. Fundraising will be required.

Treasurer's Report delivered by Jorja Marsden *(Please see pages 33-36 of the 2023 Annual Report Booklet.)*

- ☐ Our Endowment, which is invested in 13 diversified funds – 47% of which are fossil free funds – through the Episcopal Church Foundation overseeing State Street Global Advisors, has begun to improve since last year's stock market downturn. The graph on page 34 shows that 2021 was a good year for our investments and 2022 a bad year, but now our fund is beginning to climb again. The loss over the last two years is about -9.4%, or -1.2% excluding distributions and fees.

- As for revenues, the pie charts on page 35 show that pledges made up about 50% of revenue in 2022 and are projected to contribute about 59% of revenue in 2023. The Endowment contributed 30% of revenue in 2022 and will contribute 35% in 2023. We received a bequest of \$25,000 in 2022. Other receipts and contributions only constitute 6% of total revenue projected for 2023.
- The pie charts and tables on page 36 identify 34% of the general operating fund as having been spent on property maintenance. These expenses included \$8,000 to remove 8 dead trees, and \$13,000 to resurface our driveway. An initial resurfacing effort didn't hold and last week more gravel was laid down. Property maintenance expenses also included \$3,300 for a new burner for the Rectory and \$6,600 for one-half of the playground privacy fence. We are expecting that these types of expenses will be less in 2023.
- One correction is needed. Outreach expense for 2022 was \$23,912.00 not \$20,883.60, and the total expenses for 2023 are budgeted as \$206,470.59, rather than \$204,258.69.
- Libby added that the vestry approves the parish budget and the report is delivered in the Annual Meeting. A budget in a year of unknowns requires the vestry to pay attention to costs and make adjustments as needed. The vestry sees much more detailed information and this is just a summary. Any member of the congregation is welcome to attend a vestry meeting or call a vestry member. Libby then welcomed questions from the congregation.
 - One congregant asked how many pledging units we have this year compared to other years. Jorja replied that we've had about 50% response to our call for pledges, probably 29-30 pledging units so far. She elaborated that many other parishioners don't make pledges even though their contributions are reliable. Libby added that we had 5 new pledges, but also some deaths which had made the number come out a wash. The total amount pledged is within \$1,000 of last year's pledges.
 - Another congregant pointed out that the driveway contractor last year guaranteed that the surface would remain hardened and asked if that contractor had contributed to the resurfacing cost recently incurred. He was assured that Matt Fillio is following up with the contractor.
 - Another congregant asked a question on behalf of the Altar Guild: would the pipe repairs replace water lines in the sacristy. The water there runs brown. It turns out that the problem of brown water was because of the hot water heater, which has been fixed. Now the water is clean and, in fact, suitable for drinking. There was some elaboration on that answer: the line that needs to be fixed runs from the town through the Rectory then under the driveway and ramp to the Parish House. That line is galvanized and has to be replaced with a brand new waterline and separate water lines for each building.

Profile Committee Report delivered by Patty Melville (*Please see pages 28-29 of the 2023 Annual Report Booklet.*)

- The Profile Committee is charged with creating an accurate description of the church and passing it along to the Search Committee that will be chaired by Anne Covell.
- The Profile Committee's work began in August with the mailing of the Holy Cow Survey and a half-day meeting in September with Canon Rich Simpson, the Reverend Mary Rosendale, the Vestry, and Interim Priest Libby Wade. The Profile Committee is made up of Patty, Darryl

Lafferty (chaplain), Mary Berle, Rob Maloney, Diane Dillon (liaison to the vestry), and Duncan Pollock. The committee regularly convened on Zoom.

- Duncan contributed monumentally at the outset by mapping out a process for moving forward. Duncan enumerated four important pillars of our church: our congregation, our place, our outreach, and our worship. Unfortunately, Duncan then had to withdraw due to poor health.
- Darryl interviewed relevant people in the community to find out what we represent to them. Further information was gleaned via a 13-question survey designed by the Office of Transitional Ministry. Rob edited all the input into a form for the vestry to review at its meeting on February 8. After the vestry reviews and approves this information, Canon Rich Simpson will also review and approve it, after which Rob will create an outline that can be put on our website.
- One focus of our work is to bring younger families and children into our congregation. We recognized that everyone has their own biases of what we're looking for and we started making sure that our biases don't find their way into the Profile Committee's report. Our report will not describe the church we want to be but the church that we are. Candidates should be measured not against a wish list but against the true profile of the parish.
- Patty concluded by thanking everyone on the committee to which the congregation added their applause.

Closing messages from Libby:

- For the first time in our almost 200-year history, the Diocese has asked St. Paul's to help in the training and formation of a deacon candidate. One interesting qualification of our diaconate candidate is her volunteer work at Cathedral of the Beloved, the outdoor ecumenical community in Pittsfield to which we contributed our Christmas loose plate donations.
- Our outreach in 2022 included helping fund scholarships for the Children's Center, donations that we receive earmarked for the Lee Food Pantry (totaling over \$2000 in the last 12 months), and several other smaller monetary donations above and beyond our General Operating Budget Outreach line item.
- Libby outlined our Ash Wednesday services and Holy Week services in coordination with Grace Church, Great Barrington, and Christ Trinity, Sheffield. This year, Maundy Thursday worship will be conducted here at St. Paul's.
- We are working to get the meditation prayer group up and running again.
- Fellowship apart from Sundays has fallen by the wayside with Covid, but we will make efforts for it now to resume more fully in 2023.
- Libby thanked Natalie Boyce for arranging the refreshments preceding this meeting. Natalie said it took her just a few telephone calls for volunteers to bring forth this wonderful selection of sweet and savory snacks.

Vaunie Gaulty moved to conclude the meeting at 11:50 am and Ginny Willcox seconded. Motion carried.

The Rev. Libby Wade dismissed the congregation after leading a recital of "A General Thanksgiving" (*Please see the cover of the 2023 Annual Report Booklet*).

**Respectfully submitted,
Sebastian Bonner, Clerk**

NOMINATIONS REPORT

Each year we elect officers and at least two members to the Vestry for three-year terms. Any vacancies are also filled. The Vestry shares in leadership of the parish and is the corporate body which holds title to our corporate property and makes our major decisions. According to the Diocesan canons, Vestry members are expected to be donors of record to the church and regular attendees at services, as well as active participants in church leadership.

We are pleased to present for three-year terms on the Vestry:

Chris Johnson	(2 nd three-year term)
Robert Maloney	(1 st three-year term)

We are pleased to present the following slate of officers:

Senior Warden	Jorja Marsden
Junior Warden	Martha Bodine
Treasurer	John Davies
Clerk	Sebastian Bonner

Vestry members continuing are Diane Dillon, Diana French, Darryl Lafferty, and Carl Sprague.

Nominees for Delegates to Diocesan Convention on Saturday, November 9, 2024

David Pearson	Delegate
Kim Savery	Delegate
Darryl Lafferty	Alternate Delegate

Vestry members agree to the following expectations:

- Attend vestry meetings
- Attend worship
- Serve as Vestry of the Day 6-8 Sundays a year
- Pray regularly for the congregation
- Make a financial commitment to the parish
- Be a legal representative of the parish regarding corporate property,
subject to Diocesan canons and MA laws
- Be responsible with the priests for promoting the spiritual welfare of the congregation
- Be a Council of Advice for the Rector
- Manage fiscal affairs of the parish wisely
- Set goals and future plans in relation to St. Paul's Mission Statement
- Stay up-to-date on events and activities at St. Paul's
- Take a leadership role in at least one project or area of the church's work
- Be an enthusiastic communicator

**Submitted by Darryl Lafferty and Jorja Marsden
Nominations Committee**

REPORT FROM THE RECTOR

Having begun my ministry as Rector on the first day of 2024, I have no report to give for the previous year! I will have some words to share in the Rector's Annual Address during the Annual Meeting, but for the purposes of this written report, let me express gratitude in two directions.



First, I am grateful to the Rev. Libby Wade, who so faithfully and ably served as Interim Rector of this parish for the second time, shepherding us through two Rector transitions in a row! Thank you, Libby, for your energy, steadfastness, and commitment to ensuring that the work and witness of Saint Paul's Church continued unabated in the absence of a full-time priest. From my first interactions with the Search Committee and Vestry in the fall, I sensed that the parish was in an overall healthy, forward-looking condition, due in large part, I am confident, to your leadership. Thank you also for the way you have

welcomed me to Stockbridge and to St. Paul's, passing along vital information and offering much appreciated support, not least the preparation of this Annual Report! May the record show how well the job was done.

And second, I am grateful to every member of this parish family for the trust you have placed in me with this call. To the Profile Committee, Search Committee, Vestry, to those who helped in all aspects of the Rectory renovation, to those who made January 14 a beautiful first Sunday together, and to each of you for your welcoming smiles, offers of support, and keen interest in beginning this new pastoral relationship, I am grateful. God is doing a good thing here at Saint Paul's, and I am so excited to discover it with all of you. God bless you.

Faithfully,
The Rev'd Samuel T. Vaught, Rector

REPORT FROM THE INTERIM PRIEST

What a year! St. Paul's moved forward by leaps and bounds in 2023. There's data to show some of this movement, but much of the growth is less tangible and perhaps still a bit fragile. My fervent hope is that the momentum present at the beginning of 2024 will continue to build with your new Rector. As your Interim Priest for the second time and as someone who's been part of this St. Paul's community off and on for almost 10 years, it gives me great joy to welcome the Rev. Samuel Vaught as St. Paul's Rector and offer thanks to all who had a role in the search process.



That, of course, is the major achievement of 2023, but I'd like to highlight a few others from my perspective as Interim Priest.

- ☐ Average Sunday in-person worship attendance in 2023 was 37 (28% higher than 2022)
- ☐ Attendance at the 2023 Annual Meeting was 40% higher than 2022.
- ☐ Christmas Eve/Christmas Day attendance was 215 in 2023, compared to 157 in 2022.
- ☐ More people are serving as worship leaders, enough that we split the roles of Reader and Intercessor, and we have 2 new acolytes.
- ☐ Our Diocese trusted St. Paul's to train Sharon Billetter as part of her Deacon Formation Ordination Process and she's served as Ministry Intern since the beginning of Lent 2023.
- ☐ Prayers and anointing for healing are again offered on Sundays during communion.
- ☐ Jane Tillman and I provided home communions far more often than the prior year.
- ☐ Our totally new website was an integral piece of the search process.
- ☐ We received a Diocesan Mission Grant to help with the Food Pantry Ministry.
- ☐ We celebrated the 50th Anniversary of St. Paul's Children's Center.
- ☐ We renovated the rectory interior from top to bottom (to be completed in 2024)
- ☐ The rectory renovation fundraising goal far exceeded expectations
- ☐ We shared more meals together and hosted many more concerts/seminars for the community. At least two concerts were "standing room only."
- ☐ We added new outreach ministries and expanded existing ones, responding quickly and generously to urgent need.
- ☐ 3 children were baptized, 1 adult received, and 1 adult is participating in Loving the Questions.

When I began as your Interim Priest in 2022, St. Paul's self-described on the CAT Survey as a place of low energy and low participation. Some of that was related to the Covid pandemic restrictions and fears, but there's more to it. Something shifted profoundly in 2023. Ideas began to bubble up from the congregation along with leadership to bring them to life. New leadership emerged on the Vestry and the Rectory Fundraising Committee. We began to eat together more often, to laugh, to get to know each other better. Our staff, which had been in flux all of 2022, stabilized in 2023. It has been such a pleasure to share administrative, musical, and worship ministry with Kyra Saltman, Jorja Marsden, Nancy King, David Smith, Doug Schmolze, Jane Tillman, Sharon Billetter, and Darryl Lafferty. They are all incredibly competent, multi-talented, and faithful. Jorja Marsden and Martha Bodine are exemplary church wardens, while John Davies and Sebastian Bonner lend their financial and clerical skills to the mix with good humor and skill. In true Pauline fashion, we are becoming the Body of Christ more fully by recognizing and calling forth gifts in each other.

"The best time for new beginnings is now" was the logo on the card accompanying your gift to me on December 31. This past year has been a truly amazing time of new beginnings for St. Paul's community. Energy is high and participation is steadily increasing. I believe 2024 will continue to bring new opportunities to grow as a community that reaches inward to nurture and care for each other and then reaches outward toward the wider community, generously sharing resources with love and respect. May you embrace the work and wonder of this time of new beginnings and go forward together in the power of God's love, in the assurance of Christ's companionship, and by the Holy Spirit's guidance.

**With love and gratitude,
The Rev. Libby Wade, Interim Priest, 2022-2023**

REPORT FROM THE WARDENS



2023 was a year that this congregation will remember! The Profile Committee completed the work they started in Fall 2022 and produced a document that stated who St. Paul's is today. The website was redone, updating our information and beautifully presenting the Profile. The Rectory was renovated, creating a welcoming environment for a new priest. The Search Committee did their work, and we called our new Rector in October.

This was no small task. Our congregation accomplished this together. Working on the Profile Committee, the Search Committee, taking photos for the Website, contributing to the renovation fund, raking leaves in the Fall so that the grounds would look nice, doing Altar Guild duties so that our church was beautiful and the proper colors hung, volunteering for refreshments after a service so that we could visit and encourage each other in our faith and vision, volunteering to help polish before Easter, initiating activities that brought us closer together and allowed us to consider why we come to church, assuring Jorja that all would be well even with our unexpected bumps in the road (furnace, a refrigerator that would not fit through a door, the sewer and water lines) – it took all of us. Both wardens are very grateful for the help and vitality of the congregation.

Other good news from this year was that our congregation grew! We also grew the number of musical presentations that we hosted. Such good music! It was heartening to see so many of our new members volunteering as hosts.

As tempting as it is to rest on our laurels, the momentum must continue. We look forward to working with Father Sam as we continue our ministries in the church and our outreach outside the church. We are excited to see what ideas he has as possibilities for us. We wonder if we might start Christian education for our children. Maybe family centered activities? We also wonder about a special occasion choir? We wonder what you wonder about.

And 2023 was a full year with Mother Libby. We appreciate her enthusiasm, ideas, organizational skills, and commitment to help us strengthen our faith and see ourselves as a living, growing community. She held a vision of what we could be. We took the challenge and ran with it.

Martha Bodine, Junior Warden
Jorja Marsden, Senior Warden

PROPERTY REPORT

2023 has been a busy year within our property at 29 Main Street, which is part of the Historic Main Street of Stockbridge.

Martha Bodine and Chris Johnson oversaw the work done by the contractor for the mowing and flower beds in front of the Church. With the help of so many of you, the rest of the flower beds and areas were maintained.

The Rectory interior saw the completion of a new kitchen, one full bathroom, painting and sanding of the floors, making this home ready to welcome our new rector. Thank you to all the contractors and parishioners who helped. Work on the front porch, screened porch, and a new roof will all be done in 2024.

New water lines from the street to the Rectory and the Parish House were completed. The water lines within the Parish House and Church were all replaced. A new sewer line from the street into the Rectory and Parish House will happen in the spring. We look forward to Spring 2024 after the sewer lines have been completed. The Rectory front yard can then be worked on and made beautiful.

The Vestry has contracted with Preservation Inc. to do a full assessment of the church and the stain glass windows in 2024. There has been water damage in the baptistry, sacristy, and other areas within the church and the St. Paul's window over the altar needs repair. As soon as the report is completed, we will share the findings with the parish. We intend to fund as much as possible of the work on the church with grants. Work has started on those applications.

Live streaming is back. New equipment has been installed which now allows us to reliably and consistently video our services.

As with our own personal properties, there is always something to do to maintain and improve these church buildings and grounds. Thank you to all for your help and guidance in maintaining our St. Paul's property.

Jorja Marsden, Senior Warden

WORSHIP MINISTRY

Priests & Worship Leaders Who Served at St. Paul's in 2023

Regular

The Rev. Elizabeth T. Wade (Libby) – Interim Priest

The Rev. Jane G. Tillman – Priest Associate

Mr. Darryl Lafferty, Jr. – Lay Worship Leader (Morning Prayer Officiant)

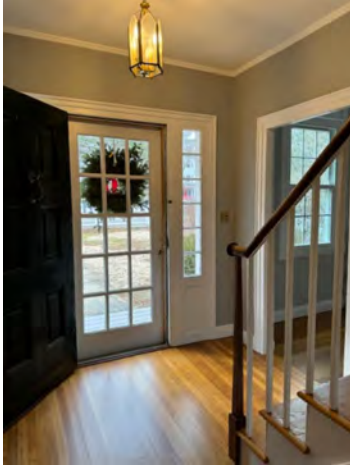
Ms. Sharon Billetter – Ministry Intern (began a one year ordination internship in February)

Occasional

The Rt. Rev. Douglas J. Fisher – Annual Visitation

The Rev. Janet Zimmerman – supply priest

The Rev. Theodore (Tad) Evans – assisted with a memorial service and spoke at Children's Center 50th Anniversary Sunday celebration



Report from the Priest Associate

In April 2016, the Rev. Samuel Smith, in consultation with the vestry, appointed me as a non-stipendiary (i.e., not salaried) Priest Associate at St. Paul's. Ordained in 2014, my primary call has been as a supply priest in Berkshire County, and becoming a priest associate at St. Paul's gave me a parish home. We negotiated an agreement in which I preside at the altar one Sunday a month, preach one Sunday a month, and occasionally provide pastoral care as needed. I also serve as a supply priest at other parishes when invited and at St. Paul's when the Rector or Interim Priest is away. As a bivocational priest, I have a fulltime (and then some) job that only permits limited engagement in the many facets of St. Paul's.

This past year I provided pastoral care to several parishioners, assisted at Sunday worship, preached, and presided on various Sundays at St. Paul's and served as a supply priest on a very limited basis. I participate in online Compline services M-W evenings and occasionally lead that diocesan-wide service. In the diocese, I serve on the Board of Examining Chaplains, reviewing the results of the General Ordination Exam for candidates for ordination as priests and meeting with candidates for ordination as vocational deacons.

Serving with the Rev. Elizabeth Wade, Interim Priest throughout 2023, was a particular joy as her faithful vision for St. Paul's, organizational talents, and pastoral care for the congregation enabled the people of St. Paul's to engage in a process of discernment, construct a parish profile, and engage in a prayerful process in calling our next Rector, the Rev. Samuel Vaught.

The Rev. Jane Tillman

Report from the Ministry Intern

I was assigned to St. Paul's for one year as Ministry Intern beginning February 26, 2023, from my home parish, St. Stephen's in Pittsfield. In the deacon formation process, when the student reaches their second year in the Province I Deacon's School, they are placed in another parish to become more knowledgeable about the role of a deacon.

My main duties at St. Paul's have been to set the table for communion and bid the dismissal. I have also served as Acolyte, Lay Eucharistic Minister, Intercessor, and have joined the Rev. Jane Tillman in offering prayers and anointing for healing during communion. I met almost every week with my internship supervisor, the Rev. Libby Wade, to explore the needs of the parish, discuss upcoming church events, and reflect on our experiences in ministry. In July and August, I gathered groups for the Appalachian Trail Angels Ministry and coordinated with Rev. Jill Graham, AT Trail Angels Coordinator. There was a great turnout from St. Paul's for this ministry of hospitality. Most recently, during Advent I led a weekly *lectio divina* prayer practice series and I occasionally led Wednesday Morning Prayer on Zoom. Throughout the internship, I have been given many opportunities to preach.

In the fall of 2023, I graduated from the Province I Deacon School and officially became a candidate for holy orders as a vocational deacon. At the end of January 2024, I will complete my fourth unit of CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education) at Albany Medical Center. The next step is to present my portfolio to the Board of Examining Chaplains in February 2024. The role of a deacon is to bring the needs of the world to the parish and to take the love of the parish to the world, hopefully taking

some parishioners along. My ministry internship has given me the tools to serve as a Vocational Deacon and I am very grateful.

**Gratefully,
Sharon Billetter**

Report from the Verger

The purpose of this verger's report is to provide an understanding of the verger's ministry over the course of the preceding year 2023 at St. Paul's Stockbridge. All vergers "serve at the pleasure of the rector, priest-in-charge, or interim priest." Pleased to be asked by Interim Priest Libby Wade to continue as verger throughout the transition period, I joyfully agreed to continue in this ministry.

While your verger could have been seen performing certain tasks on any given Sunday morning, those actions merely represented a few visible and mostly liturgical roles. Presiding Bishop Michael Curry summed up the verger's role best when he said, "hospitality is at the core of what vergers do – to be witnesses." In addition to providing hospitality to all who entered our church or attended Morning Prayer on-line, the verger ensured that "people and all things necessary for worship were present, properly prepared, and in the appropriate place at the right time." The priority was to ensure altar guild preparations were complete and readers were present. Whenever needed, the verger completed necessary arrangements and filled in roles such as acolyte, sound technician, etc.

Historical references claim that the verger's role was created to ensure safety after the murder of Thomas Becket at the altar in the year 1170. In this present day, your verger consistently maintained an awareness of surroundings with safety in mind during worship and is currently working with our Safe Church Minister, Martha Bodine, to establish a revised parish policy based on the diocesan policy and guidelines for parishes.

In addition to core verger responsibilities and in the spirit of service, I was elected in 2023 to a three-year term on the vestry, led weekly Morning Prayer, and agreed to be chaplain on both the Profile and Search Committees. In 2023, I was licensed by the Diocese of Western Massachusetts as a Eucharistic Minister and Lay Worship Leader.

**Respectfully Submitted,
Darryl Lafferty**

Wednesday Morning Prayer

St. Paul's online Wednesday Morning Prayer group continued in 2023 as a committed worshipping community. The group prayerfully cared for the needs of each other, our parish, the community, and the world.

Darryl Lafferty, a licensed Worship Leader in the Diocese of Western Massachusetts, continued leadership of Morning Prayer throughout 2023 with the assistance of Ministry Intern, Sharon Billitter in his absence. The format remained a full Morning Prayer service according to the *Book of Common Prayer*, Rite II, but was supplemented using Rite I, *Enriching our Worship*, and Creation Care liturgies when appropriate. Attendance remained steady with six to eight people as recorded in the Parish Register of Services. The Daily Office Lectionary (Satucket) was used for appointed scripture readings (NSRV) and was supplemented by commemorations found in *A Great*

Cloud of Witnesses. Homilies, when included, were taken directly from *A Great Cloud of Witnesses*, or from James Keifer.

Darryl will continue leading Wednesday Morning Prayer in 2024 at the pleasure of the new rector, the Rev. Samuel Vaught.

**Respectfully Submitted,
Darryl Lafferty**



Sunday Worship

Average In-Person Sunday Attendance 2023

37 in-person (a 28% increase from 2022)

(We don't have an accurate count for participation in live-streamed Sunday worship.)

Our Sunday worship services in 2023 were almost always Holy Eucharist Rite I at 8:00 a.m. (without music) and Rite II at 10:00 a.m. (with music) September through June. Occasionally the two congregations joined for a single worship service. In the course of the year, all the Eucharistic Prayers were used, as well as a variety of Prayers of the People from the BCP and other sources. We continued the practice begun before the Covid pandemic of worshipping with only one service at 9:00 a.m. on the church lawn for part of the summer, though rain and mosquitos forced us to move inside more often than in previous summers. For summer services, we used *Enriching Our Worship* (a BCP supplement). During Creation Season, prayers and readings suggested by our Diocesan Creation Care Commission were incorporated into our Sunday worship services. Morning Prayer led by Darryl Lafferty was held on two Sundays. Priests Jane Tillman and Libby Wade took communion to homebound parishioners 25 times in 2023, a significant increase from 2022, when 4 home communion visits were made.

Changes in 2023 included adding prayers and anointing for healing on most Sundays beginning in July, adding two acolytes, splitting the roles of reader and intercessor to involve more people, providing magnetic name tags for ushers/greeters, and beginning to print all leaflets in larger font. We attempted to live-stream one service each week (except in summer), but equipment and internet issues made that difficult. By the end of the year, improvements and adjustments to the system promise more consistent live-streaming in 2024.

Several Sundays included a special focus:

- ☐ Festival of Lessons and Carols for Holy Name Day, January 1
- ☐ Annual Parish Meeting during and after worship, February 5
- ☐ Rogation Procession on May 21 with Outdoor Workday and Lunch
- ☐ Honoring Graduates and Celebrating the St. Paul's Children's Center 50th Anniversary in June, followed by brunch in the Children's Center
- ☐ Creation Season in September and October
- ☐ Blessing of the Animals in October
- ☐ Baptisms in August and October
- ☐ Dedication of New Altar Linens
- ☐ Commissioning Search Committee and Vestry
- ☐ Bishop's Visitation on September 24
- ☐ All Saints Sunday – Honoring those in Memorial Garden & those who died since last All Saints' Sunday; guest jazz pianist Jacob Hiser led a rousing "When the Saints Go Marching In"
- ☐ Rectory Open House Brunch after worship on December 17
- ☐ Farewell Liturgy for Interim Priest Libby Wade on December 31
- ☐ Christmas Lessons and Carols on December 31

Weekday Worship

- ☐ Weekly lay-led Wednesday Morning Prayer on Zoom at 8:30 a.m. (see separate report)
- ☐ Ash Wednesday Liturgy with Imposition of Ashes
- ☐ Compline (Diocesan offering several days a week, several St. Paul's folks participated)
- ☐ Ascension Service with Outdoor Picnic Supper
- ☐ Community Thanksgiving Service on Thanksgiving Day at 1st Congregational Church
- ☐ One Wedding
- ☐ Two Committal/Memorial Services

Holy Week, Easter, and Christmas Worship

Holy Week & Easter Day

(When attendance is listed, it's only in-person as we don't have a good count of how many participated via live-stream)

- ☐ Palm Sunday at St. Paul's – 38 in 2023, 34 in 2022
- ☐ Morning Prayer Monday - Friday at 8:30 a.m. at St. Paul's and on Zoom
- ☐ Maundy Thursday at St. Paul's, Stockbridge
- ☐ Good Friday at Grace Church, Great Barrington
- ☐ Easter Vigil at Christ Trinity, Sheffield
- ☐ Easter Sunday at St. Paul's – 70 in 2023, 76 in 2022 (former Rector's next-to-last Sunday)

Christmas Eve & Christmas Day

Though still lower than pre-pandemic, attendance was much higher than in 2022:

215 in 2023, 157 in 2022

From the Parish Register

Baptism

Chloe Alexandra Mitchell (8/6/23)

Bennett Edward Alphonse Littlefield (10/15/23)

Lila Jean McCormick (10/15/23)

Reception/Confirmation

Bernadette Brusco (5/21/23 at Christ Church Cathedral)

Marriage

Linda Boborodea and Naren Dhamadharan

(6/16/23 at Baystate Hospital Chapel, Springfield, MA)

Transfer Out

Duncan Pollock



Burials

James William Harpst, 1952-2022

(former member)

St. Paul's Memorial Garden Interment

8/26/23

Elizabeth Ann (Bette) White, 1925-2023

Graveside service at Stockbridge Cemetery

12/16/23

LAY WORSHIP MINISTRY GROUPS

Many people are involved on a weekly basis in making worship run smoothly and meaningfully for all. Clergy have been listed in an earlier report, and reports have been included from our Priest Associate, Verger, and Ministry Intern. Here is a list of other groups involved.



Altar Guild

The Altar Guild is responsible for preparing the church for worship. This includes caring for the appointments, vessels, and vestments used in worship; keeping the sacristy organized and tidy; and maintaining adequate stock of required supplies. When requested, the Altar Guild also prepares the altar for baptisms, weddings, funerals, and memorial services. In 2023, a Holy Week “Polishing Party” with lunch was held; and new lavabo towels, lavabo bowl, and purificators were given and blessed in the summer. Thanks to the generous bequest of Cecilia Jones, new white hangings and vestments have been ordered. These should arrive in time to be blessed and dedicated in Cecilia’s memory in the Easter season 2024. Current members of the Altar Guild are Jennifer Carmichael, Tracy Johnson, Jorja Marsden, Natalie Boyce, Robin Race, and Ginny Willcox. Others,

including Verger Darryl Lafferty, help occasionally. Parishioners interested in serving on the Altar Guild are always welcome.

Contact: Tracy Johnson or Jennifer Carmichael

Readers/Intercessors

These folks act as scripture readers and lead the Prayers of the People. Those who enjoy reading in church and are able to project clearly using our sound system are welcome to join. In 2023, thanks to a large group of volunteers (too many to list here), we split the roles of Readers and Intercessors. In 2023, Matt Fillio and the Rev. Libby Wade scheduled these ministry tasks. In 2024, Verger Darryl Lafferty will schedule.

Contact: Darryl Lafferty

Acolytes

Acolytes carry the cross in procession and assist with preparing the altar for communion. In 2023, Rob Maloney and Kim Savery trained as acolytes and served when Darryl Lafferty or Sharon Billetter weren't available. New acolytes (child, teen, or adult) are always welcome.

Contact: Darryl Lafferty

Ushers/Greeters

Basic responsibilities include arriving a bit early for the 10 a.m. service, making sure everyone has a service leaflet, greeting people, and helping visitors feel comfortable. At the offertory, the day's usher taps another person to help collect the offering and present it at the altar. After the service, responsibilities include helping pick up leaflets left in pews, encouraging visitors to stay for fellowship time, and assisting in counting the day's offering. In 2023, we continued using the instruction sheet prepared the previous fall and added magnetic name tags to identify ushers and greeters.

Contact: Darryl Lafferty



Altar Flowers

Each week, except during Lent, there are two flower arrangements on the high altar. For outdoor worship, we use one arrangement or a living plant in front of the altar. Diana French and Carl Sprague often arrange altar flowers for special occasions such as Christmas or Easter and decorate the Advent Wreath and Paschal Candle Stand. Christmas poinsettias and colorful pots of flowers for Easter are purchased by the

Altar Guild with funds contributed in memory of or in thanksgiving for friends or family members. For most Sundays, we offer the opportunity for folks to provide flowers in memory of or in thanksgiving for someone. They can provide the flowers themselves or our parish administrator can order them from a florist (\$60, if the 2nd option is chosen). There are still open dates in 2024. **Contact:** Kyra Saltman, Parish Administrator

Fellowship

In 2023, we regularly offered fellowship time with special treats after the Sunday worship services. St. Paul's provides coffee plus utensils and paper products, so when you host, all you have to do is bring and set up finger food and help clean up. Thanks to all the Sunday refreshment hosts and to Natalie Boyce and Patty Melville, who coordinated brunch on several special Sunday occasions: St. Paul's Children's Center 50th Anniversary in May, Rogation Sunday/Yard Work Day, and Rectory Open House/Farewell to Libby in December. To volunteer, **Contact:** Martha Bodine

Musicians

We were blessed in 2023 with a cadre of excellent musicians. Regulars during this Interim Year included Nancy King (organ/piano), David Smith (organ/piano), and Doug Schmolze (classical guitar). Delana Thomsen was pianist for Easter Sunday and the early Christmas Eve Eucharist. Jacob Hiser (jazz pianist) was musician for All Saints' Sunday. Others who offered their musical talents occasionally included: Kyra Saltman (cello), Virgil Stucker (Native American flute), Ryleigh Fillio (vocal solo), Libby Wade (piano), Elizabeth Silver (violin), Jessica Belflower (violin), and Mark Thomsen (trumpet). If you'd like to sing or play a prelude or offertory sometime, **Contact: The Rev. Sam Vaught**



PASTORAL CARE, SAFE CHURCH, AND WELCOMING



Welcoming

St. Paul's prides itself on being an open and inviting congregation. Here are a few ways we welcome travelers, visitors, and those interested in becoming members:

- ☐ Benches, rainbow Adirondack chairs, United Way Little Book Box, well-manicured garden spaces, and signs inviting people to "Come sit awhile" or "Find peace here" all create a welcoming outdoor environment.
- ☐ Our outdoor summer Sunday worship service and events such as the Blessing of the Animals provide less-intimidating ways to join in worship and fellowship.
- ☐ In 2023, Jessica Maloney helped us add a Story Walk to our outdoor space—one in the summer and one in early fall. These children's stories also appealed to adults.
- ☐ A goal set for 2023 was to have a few cookouts on the lawn. We did that twice—Rogation Sunday and Ascension Day. Ascension Day flyers were put up around town, but did not attract anyone other than parishioners. Nevertheless, both these events helped us get to know one another better and were fun.

- The Wine Tasting in November, which took place in the Rectory and at the Red Lion Inn, included several people from the community in a welcoming and entertaining atmosphere. There were many requests to repeat this event in 2024.
- Our 24-hours-a-day open door policy for the Church encourages people to explore our indoor space. People visit from all over the world, as well as from Stockbridge. Many add a prayer to the Prayer Basket and/or sit in a pew for a time to soak in the solace, beauty, and blessing of this sacred space. Self-guided tour brochures are provided, and on the weekend of the Stockbridge Arts and Crafts Festival in August 2023, we provided tour guides.
- In 2023, we increased the number and diversity of concerts. Parish hosts helped concert-goers and performers feel welcome.
- We now have magnetic name tags for hosts and usher/greeters to wear for concerts and worship services.
- St. Paul's had one participant in the Diocesan Confirmation Class held virtually in the spring.
- Vestry members and others have become more intentional in identifying and welcoming newcomers this year and several people who had begun attending late in 2022 became regular participants in the life of the parish in 2023. This is still a growing edge for the congregation, however, and it's time for both a Newcomers' Gathering and an Inquirers'/Confirmation Class in 2024.

Pastoral Care

Pastoral Care often happens in a quiet, behind-the-scenes way with a parishioner making a phone call to check on a fellow parishioner, delivery of a casserole or plate of cookies to someone who is ill, or a simple encouraging word offered during fellowship time after a worship service. Natalie Boyce and Ginny Willcox have taken the lead in this area for several years. Sharon Billetter and Jorja Marsden have also been quite helpful in the past year. Perhaps it's time in 2024 to enlarge and re-form the lay Pastoral Care Team.

Of course, our Prayer Lists are a form of pastoral care, as are the Student Care Packages we mailed to students in the fall (see report in Outreach section of this booklet) and the Prayer Basket on our floor altar during the week.

Any time there is a funeral or baptism or wedding, numerous people step up to help ease sorrow or share joy. It was wonderful to have the Rev. Tad Evans assist with a burial in our Memorial Garden for a man who had been an active parishioner when Tad was the Rector.

Another example of pastoral care through the life cycle was the 2023 wedding of Linda Boborodea and Naren Dhamadharan. They aren't members of St. Paul's, but they often visit Stockbridge and pray in the church. When they asked to be married at St. Paul's, I agreed and met with them several times on Zoom and in-person to plan a service that would be Christian, but include some element of the Hindu culture that represented Naren's family background. Early on the week of their wedding, Linda had an allergic reaction to a chemo drug and was hospitalized in Springfield. The wedding needed to come to her! Thanks to the gracious assistance of Bay State Hospital chaplains, we were able to make that happen. Linda and Naren continue to visit St. Paul's during the week whenever possible and are grateful to the open hospitality of this congregation, even in a case where they may never meet most of the people who make up this worshipping community.

Yet another act of pastoral care is taking communion to the homebound. For the last several years, the Covid pandemic has kept us from that ministry, but this year the Rev. Jane Tillman and I

were able to take communion out to people 25 times. Perhaps 2024 will see a few lay people trained and licensed to assist with this ministry. In July, we were also able to return to the practice of offering prayers and anointing for healing on most Sundays. Thanks to Sharon Billetter and the Rev. Jane Tillman, who share this ministry.

Your clergy rely on parishioners to let them know when someone is ill, grieving, celebrating, or just needs to talk. **Please call or e-mail the Rev. Sam Vaught or the Rev. Jane Tillman if you or someone you know is in need of spiritual, physical, or emotional support.**

The Rev. Libby Wade
Interim Priest

Safe Church

Safe Church is about having safe places to worship and to educate the preschoolers of our Children's Center. Over the last several years, we have implemented security and procedures to help us in our goal. The Children's Center is locked. Staff and many of our volunteers have completed the Safe Church Training courses offered by the Diocese of Western Massachusetts. Our ushers wear "Host" nametags so visitors know who they can turn to, if needed. We make sure that fire extinguishers are up-to-date and recommendations of town inspectors are met. We have checklists for ushers on Sundays and for concert hosts so they know their responsibilities.

We are committed to keeping the church open all day every day. We know that the sacred space of our church is utilized regularly by parishioners and visitors alike. We invite our guests to pray and leave prayer requests.

This past year was busy for everyone. This year 2024 would be a good year to create a Safe Church Committee to focus on what we still need to do to make our church as safe as we can. If you are interested in serving or if you have special talents in this area, please let me know as we activate the committee and complete the work already begun. Thank you.

Martha Bodine
Safe Church Minister



OUTREACH MINISTRY

St. Paul's Children's Center January 2024

St. Paul's Children's Center is having another successful year. We have 25 students enrolled from all over Berkshire County and New York State. Of these students, 6 are children of former students of St. Paul's Children's Center. With financial help from St. Paul's Episcopal Church and St. Paul's Children's Center, 4 families are receiving scholarships. We already have full enrollment for the fall of 2024.



St Paul's Children's Center
29 Main Street
Stockbridge, MA 01262
413-298-4639

Cara Walker Scarpa (who was married in September) has been a Lead Teacher with us for the past 4 years. She recently has been certified as a Director. Kaden Kelly has been with us for 3 years and is continuing her education at Berkshire Community College. Both Cara and Kaden are former students of St. Paul's Children's Center. Josephine Monseraud, a volunteer from Riverbrook, started with us 20 years ago. We are hoping to have some type of recognition for Josephine in the spring.

In December the galvanized water pipes in the basement were replaced. It was estimated that the old pipes could be over 100 years old, so it was definitely time for replacement. Hopefully, this is the last large building project for a few years.

We have been lucky to offer enrichment programs to the children this year. Ms. Vicky Cooper, a retired children's librarian, comes each month for a literacy program. The children love this as they sing, read, say poetry, and do a project. Ms. Sharon MacDonald comes to do a ballet dance program. The children love it! There is lots of prancing, galloping, skipping, and dancing! We have been working with an instructor to start a "Music and Me" program in the spring. Another highlight of our week is our walk to the Stockbridge Library, where Ms. Rachel is always waiting for us with songs, stories, and some games.

Our license will be renewed in February 2024 following an inspection on January 18th that very well. We are thankful to St. Paul's Episcopal Church for the continued support we receive.

Sincerely,
Lisa Kane
Director of St. Paul's Children's Center



St. Paul's Children's Center – Celebrating 50 Years

Our St. Paul's Children's Center celebrated their 50th anniversary in 2023! In the early part of the 1970's several people of St. Paul's realized the real need for child care in our area and that is how our outreach ministry began. It was a bold move that resulted in generations of children who have been nurtured over the last 50 years.

Director Lisa Kane has been part of this treasure for 39 of the 50 years. Thanks to the joint church and school planning group, we celebrated with a wonderful party at the Stockbridge Golf Club in May. Many former students, parents of current and past students, parishioners, and community members attended. They enjoyed wonderful hors d'oeuvres and cash bar and took part in the terrific raffles and silent auction items. The money raised from this event will help the Children's Center keep the cost of tuition down, conduct routine building maintenance, purchase new supplies and equipment, and provide enrichment programs.

In June, we celebrated St. Paul's founding of the Children's Center within a Sunday worship service with parishioners, teachers, students, and parents in attendance. Lisa's daughter Carolyn spoke movingly about her mother, teacher and director of the Children's Center, and how she and her siblings along with her children attended the Children's Center. Lisa Kane spoke about the collaboration with each of the St. Paul's priests during the school's existence. Then the Rev. Tad Evans shared anecdotes from his perspective as Rector of St. Paul's in the school's first decade. After the worship service, we moved to the Children's Center in the Parish House for a sumptuous brunch and time for informal conversation.

As you can see from Lisa Kane's report above, St. Paul's Children's Center is off to a great start on their next 50 years!

Jorja Marsden, Senior Warden
The Rev. Libby Wade, Interim Priest

Celebrating in June



Celebrating in May



Lee Food Pantry



A dedicated group of volunteers from St. Paul's greets clients and distributes food at the Lee Food Pantry on the second Saturday of each month not only because of the need in the community, but also because of the blessings we receive. Jesus says in Matthew 25 that when you have fed my brethren, you have fed me. At the beginning of each of our team's Saturdays of service, we pray in thanksgiving for the food we are distributing and for those who gave it, as well as for our clients who will receive the food. We also pray that we may serve with joyful hearts. To those experiencing food insecurity, we freely offer fresh produce from Gideon's Garden during the growing season and bread from Big Y year-round, as well as donated food from St. Paul's, food purchased through donations, toiletries, diapers, and pet food. Once a month, the food gathered at St. Paul's is blessed at the offertory, and the Pantry is included in our Intercessory Prayers on that Sunday.

The Lee Food Pantry is a joint outreach program of St. Paul's (Stockbridge), Grace Church (Gt. Barrington), St. Mary's Roman Catholic (Lee), and Lee Congregational. Sue Gore, a member of Grace, is the Coordinator. Our St. Paul's group includes seventeen from St. Paul's and five who are not otherwise connected to St. Paul's. One is a junior at Lee High School who volunteers every week. One is a nurse at the hospital in Pittsfield. Another started volunteering after a conversation with one of our regular volunteers who was driving him home after a bike breakdown. We all have become a caring community. On our Saturday, we typically serve around fifty clients, who represent around 100 people.

Thanks to Martha Bodine's grant-writing, St. Paul's received a \$1,000 Diocesan Mission Grant to purchase two additional wagons and food more culturally appropriate for Hispanic clients. Donna Gray, former Spanish teacher, became a valuable regular team member making our Spanish-speaking clients more comfortable in expressing their needs. Martha Bodine and Gale Page also attended a series of sessions to improve their Spanish-speaking ability, a series supported by a Diocesan Grant to Grace Church.

A total of \$3,141 was given by St. Paul's to the Lee Food Pantry in 2023 from the loose plate Easter Offering, the Diocesan Mission Grant, and other donations. Though not included in this total, the Community Thanksgiving Service offering was divided among several local food pantries. One of our Advent disciplines was a Reverse Advent Calendar encouraging people to set aside a food item each day from December 1-24 for the Food Pantry. A great deal of food was donated during the year, as well.

You can join in this ministry by bringing non-perishable food to St. Paul's, donating money to buy food, or joining the face-to-face Second Saturday ministry team. Contact Jim Wade (270-519-7078) to volunteer.

Jim Wade
Team Coordinator

Gideon's Garden

Gideon's Garden is a vegetable garden on land generously provided by Taft Farms. The Garden is operated by Grace Church, Great Barrington under the leadership in 2023 of Joel Jorgensen and the Rev. Jimmy Pickett. A summer internship program provides education, connection with the earth, and a small stipend for young teens. Volunteers of all ages help plant, nurture, and harvest crops for distribution to regional food pantries, including Lee Food Pantry. St. Paul's members Gale Page and Jim Wade volunteered regularly in 2023. Jim Wade participated in the Garden Blessing at the beginning of the season. Gale Page recruited volunteers from friends at Berkshire Botanical Garden who worked all summer, while Kendra MacLeod invited members of the Lenox Garden Club to help. Gideon's Garden is one of the outreach ministries included monthly in our Sunday Intercessory Prayer. It would be great to have more St. Paul's folks volunteering in 2024. **Volunteer days and times are published in St. Paul's E-pistle during the growing season.**



Appalachian Trail Mini-Mission Trips

Begun in 2018 as a shared ministry of the Episcopal/Lutheran and Congregational Churches in Sheffield, "Trail Magic" invites teams from other churches and organizations to share God's love through welcoming Appalachian Trail hikers passing through the Sheffield site—over 600 this summer. We offer shade, comfy chairs, cell phone chargers, and abundant food. In 2022, the biggest hazard was lack of water due to drought. This year it was mosquitos due to excessive rain. Every hiker has an interesting story to tell and every hiker is extremely grateful for the gracious hospitality provided. Our teams sowed seeds of hospitality with the hikers and enjoyed conversation among themselves between visits by hikers.

This was the second summer that St. Paul's organized teams to work as Trail Angels, though a few individuals had volunteered prior to that. Ministry Intern Sharon Billetter was in charge of coordinating our service dates: Tuesday, July 18 and Saturday, August 12. About 15 people volunteered on our teams and a couple of others funded Big Y gift cards that help us "pay it forward" for the next team to serve. One of our days was also a Lee Food Pantry Day for St. Paul's, but we were able to provide ample volunteers for both outreach venues that day.

"Spreading love and kindness, what better way to spend a day," as one hiker put it.

Sharon Billetter
St. Paul's Team Coordinator

Outreach Ministry of the Week

On a rotating basis, our Prayers of the People include the following organizations or ministries: 1st Sunday – **Lee Food Pantry**; 2nd Sunday – **St. Paul's Children's Center**; 3rd Sunday – **Cathedral of the Beloved**; 4th Sunday – **Gideon's Garden**; 5th Sunday – **Berkshire Diaper Project**. St. Paul's currently does hands-on work or makes a substantial financial donation to each of these. Every week, our prayers include the **Austen Riggs** community and **Riverbrook** residents and staff, two organizations that are our near neighbors. It would be good to revisit this list in 2024 to see if adjustments are needed.

Student Care Packages



The St. Paul's Student Care Package project was a great success again this year. As our students settled into fall semester 2023, we sent them care packages to remind them that they are always in our thoughts and prayers and have continued support within their faith community. We know that the work, lack of sleep and the feelings of isolation from being far from home can often feel overwhelming and a little love from home goes a long way.

Members of our congregation contributed notecards, notebooks, candy, popcorn, pens, pencils, stickers and other much appreciated things. Students living away from home were sent generous packages filled with treats, items of use and some stuff just for fun.

We were guided by the ever generous in spirit and deed, Libby and Jim Wade. A big thank you to all of those who donated items and to Rob and Jess Maloney for finding the time on a Friday afternoon to work on getting the packages out.

I have heard from so many of the students how surprised and happy they were with the boxes. This is one more small way in which this congregation scatters seeds. May every student develop a thirst for learning, a respect for each other and a deep love of the truth. We pray that God's peace may replace fear, anxiety and frustration and bring provision for the needs of all involved. May they feel encouraged by the community gathered around them.

Lord our God, in your wisdom and love send your Spirit upon these students and fill them with your wisdom and blessings. Give them strength to hold their faith in you, and to keep alive their joy in your creation, and embrace their true potential in this period of development, discernment, transitions, and creativity; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

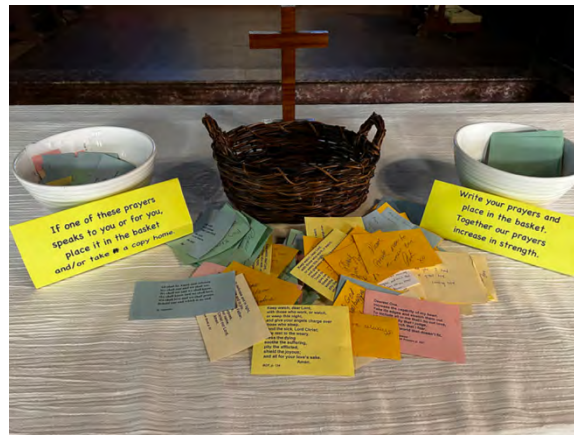
In peace,
Kim Savery

Advent Outreach

For the first time in several years, we did not provide gifts for a family in need during Advent 2023. However, we did offer several opportunities for people to help others through donations during Advent: “Reverse Advent Calendar” (collecting food to donate to the **Lee Food Pantry**), “Change a Diaper, Change a Life” (collecting diapers for the **Berkshire Diaper Project**), and donating proceeds from a concert and our Christmas offerings for **Multicultural BRIDGE**.

Riverbrook Residence

Riverbrook is a Stockbridge home for exceptional women. For many years, Riverbrook residents and their companions have been part of the St. Paul’s congregation. Though that had to stop during the Covid pandemic, in the summer of 2022 a couple of women began to attend again. However, in 2023 the Riverbrook Director decided that was no longer feasible. After much discussion, the alternative solution was for Interim Priest Libby Wade to begin taking communion to a Riverbrook resident (a faithful member of St. Paul’s for decades) as often as possible. The presence of Covid cases at Riverbrook often caused changes to the proposed schedule of visits, but the resident hopes to have these visits continue with St. Paul’s new Rector. Another Riverbrook resident enjoys working at St. Paul’s Children’s Center. Senior Warden Jorja Marsden became a Riverbrook Board member in the spring of 2023.



Prayer Basket

Since August 2022, we have kept a “prayer station” on our lower altar during the week for visitors to the church. They are invited to write a prayer and leave it in the basket or choose a printed prayer to take with them or leave in the basket. Throughout 2023, the Rev. Libby Wade sat with these prayers several times each week, and we lifted the basket of prayers as part of our offertory action each Sunday. The basket is often overflowing with poignant and powerful prayer requests. This is one way of reaching out to those we may never see, but who express their joys and sorrows in this holy space.

Rector's Discretionary Fund

This fund comes from a quarterly disbursement from an endowment set aside for this purpose, as well as occasional gifts from parishioners. In 2023, money was disbursed from the Discretionary Fund for such needs as gift cards for graduates of St. Paul's Children's Center, urgent need for help with recently-arrived migrants in the area, utility bills, the AT Angels ministry, and educational assistance.

Human to Human

Human to Human is part of the Diocese of Western Massachusetts and supports organizations doing "God's justice by sharing Jesus' mission of mercy, compassion and hope in the world." Supported groups include Building Bridges Veterans' Ministry, Episcopal Chaplaincy at Chicopee Women's Correction Center, Laundry Love, and Marie's Mission. In 2023, we made a gift to sponsor a hole at Human to Human's fundraising Golf Tournament in addition to making a donation in honor of Bishop Fisher's visit to St. Paul's. Our 2023 gift to Human to Human was \$400. The vestry also decided to change what has been called "A Drop in the Bucket for ERD" (at the west end of the church) to a Human-to-Human Bucket to receive loose change donations. Jorja Marsden provided a new bucket, but the change has never been publicized. Hopefully that will happen in 2024.

Migrant Ministry

While at Diocesan Convention in late October, St. Paul's clergy were approached by the Rev. Tina Rathbone, Grace Church Rector, with a request to help in an urgent situation. She had just received a request to provide clothes and toiletries for 13 newly-and-somewhat-unexpectedly-arrived migrant families from Haiti and Columbia. The Commonwealth was paying for housing in a Great Barrington hotel, but they had arrived with very few possessions and cold weather was fast approaching. We agreed that St. Paul's would help with about a third of the group.

The next day, an appeal was made to the St. Paul's congregation at both our worship services. Within 48 hours, parishioners had donated an abundance of new or gently-used adult winter clothes. Kyra Saltman then shopped for the children in our assigned group using funds donated on Sunday supplemented by funds from the Discretionary Fund. All items were delivered to Grace Church for distribution.

As other needs became apparent, we were able to help with donated items for babies/toddlers and funds through Tracy Johnson and Multicultural BRIDGE. Parishioners were also invited to help sort items at a resource center in Gt. Barrington. In January 2024, Grace Church began offering a Sunday afternoon worship service to support the spiritual needs of the families and is searching for a translator (English to Spanish or Creole). Other needs may become known in 2024, as this group of legal migrants searches for housing and jobs. **Contact: Tracy Johnson**



Multicultural BRIDGE, based in Lee, is a catalyst for justice, social change, and building community in the Berkshires. For 15 years, this organization has been building bridges of mutual understanding and respect among diverse groups in the Berkshires. They are one of the

primary coordinating agencies assisting with the group of Haitian and Columbian migrants who arrived in Great Barrington in late October 2023. The Vestry wholeheartedly designated BRIDGE as the recipient of our 2023 Christmas Open Plate Offering, as well as the proceeds from the Oakes and Smith Concert on December 9. On a Sunday morning in Advent, St. Paul's parishioner Tracy Johnson spoke about her experience as a long-time BRIDGE volunteer and introduced BRIDGE Executive Director Gwendolyn VanSant, who helped us understand more about the breadth of this organization's work. Thanks to the generosity of concert goers and Christmas worshippers, St. Paul's donated ~\$2,000 to this organization.

Contact: Tracy Johnson

Other Outreach Ministry

Parishioner Vaunie Gaulty engaged the congregation in supporting the **WMLA Winter Survival Campaign** through purchasing tamales on Super Bowl Sunday 2023. Western MA Labor Action's Winter Survival Campaign promoted advocacy around housing and heat, winter clothing, and emergency and supplemental food for low-income, unemployed, or disabled workers in Pittsfield.

Three people from St. Paul's participated in a fundraising event for **Cathedral of the Beloved** and Ministry Intern Sharon Billetter helped with their Sunday worship and meal almost every Sunday afternoon.

In times of international crises or natural disasters, information from **ERD (Episcopal Relief and Development)** was published to encourage parishioners to give.

We did not give to the **Mampong Babies Home** in 2023. (In previous years, there have been coins in the fountain that have gone to this ministry of the Diocese.)

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Many of our Outreach efforts described in an earlier section of this Annual Report Booklet might be included in the category of "Community Involvement." The following activities relate to community involvement that isn't rooted in social justice, but is nevertheless important.

Three Kings Celebration

After a hiatus of two years due to Covid restrictions, the Marian Fathers hosted the 48th Annual Three Kings Epiphany Celebration on Sunday, January 8, 2023 in collaboration with St. Paul's Church and the Red Lion Inn. The celebration began with Christmas caroling on the porch of the Red Lion. The Rev. Libby Wade provided the Invocation and Scripture reading. As the caroling reached its high point, the kings emerged from the side of the Red Lion and solemnly processed across Main Street to the star over the Tower Room door of St. Paul's. Refreshments followed at the Red Lion. This year's event was punctuated by a fire alarm and arrival of the Stockbridge Fire Truck, but all was well in the end! St. Paul's is the keeper of the costumes and the mystery of the kings' identity. While very few St. Paul's parishioners attended this year's event, it was a fun way to celebrate the end of Christmas and the beginning of Epiphany with neighbors. **Note:** The 2024 Three Kings Epiphany Celebration was cancelled due to problems coordinating with the Red Lion and major snowstorm. The Marian Fathers would like to work with St. Paul's leadership to re-design this event for 2025.

Memorial Day Stockbridge Celebration

Stockbridge observes Memorial Day with a Main Street Parade, visits to each of the cemeteries, and a program at the Old Town Hall with speeches, music, prayers, and a hot dog lunch. On May 29, 2023, the Rev. Libby Wade was honored to take part in the ceremonies by providing prayers at each of the burial sites and memorials, as well as offering the invocation and benediction at the program.

Note for 2024: St. Paul's Memorial Garden is not included as one of the burial places where prayers are said for those who died in our nation's service. If there are indeed people buried here who fit this category, this should be a prayer stop on the parade route.

Blessing of the Animals



On the Sunday closest to St. Francis Day in October, we again celebrated a Blessing of the Animals on the front lawn of the church. Attendance was small, but we did have a couple of walk-ins. We even blessed a pet shown in an I-phone photo and several parishioners who couldn't be there had requested prayers for their pets. After a short liturgy and stories about St. Francis' love for all creatures, clergy blessed each animal individually. Certificates and treats were offered by Diana French. It was a delightful afternoon.

Community Thanksgiving Service

First Congregational Church was once again the site of the November Community Thanksgiving Day Service. Clergy from St. Paul's Episcopal Church and St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church participated in planning worship. Worship leaders from St. Paul's were Darryl Lafferty, Genet Jeanjean, and the Rev. Libby Wade. Several others from St. Paul's attended. The offering for the service was divided equally among food distribution sites supported by our three congregations.

Laurel Hill Day

The Laurel Hill Association is the oldest community improvement association in the United States (171 years old) and has been instrumental in stewarding the natural wonders of this beautiful part of the Berkshires. A number of St. Paul's parishioners are part of this community organization and help with the August annual meeting at the rostrum on Laurel Hill. This year the Rev. Libby Wade was invited to give the benediction. Lila and Mary Berle were also on the stage to accept a proclamation from the Board acknowledging "The Berle Family (Peter, Lila, and Mary) for their decades of thoughtful preservation and enduring stewardship of properties in Stockbridge and the Berkshire County Region."



Concerts and Seminars

In 2023, with continuing help from parish host volunteers, St. Paul's hosted more than twice the number of concerts and special community events as the previous year. The content was more varied than last year, also. With vestry approval, a small group of staff (Kyra Saltman, Darryl Lafferty, and the Rev. Libby Wade) met to begin considering how this aspect of St. Paul's might best be managed in the future. We thought developing a simple building use agreement, requiring groups to show proof of insurance, and regularizing usage fee arrangements (with a variety of possible approaches) should be goals. Most groups do their own advertising, but we also noted it would be good for us to have an up-to-date list for those times when St. Paul's is responsible for some or all of the event advertising. Thanks to CITV's Director, David Smith, for sharing his advertising outlet list with us. Kyra and Libby worked on the concert/special events section of St. Paul's website to make sure it would be appealing to those considering holding a concert in our space and also those interested in attending an event. This committee asked the vestry to approve purchase of lights for the path from Church to Parish House and four good music stands. The music stands were approved, but the vestry wanted to further consider the pros and cons of various means of lighting the path. Groups who performed at St. Paul's in the fall expressed appreciation for the music stands, which we also used occasionally on Sundays. For concerts and worship after dark in December, we used luminarias with battery candles in paper bags – a lovely, but very temporary solution.



Concerts and Community Events at St. Paul's in 2023

March 25 – CITV (Concerts in the Village) "Singing with Strings," David Smith, Artistic Director

May 7 – Aurica Mundi Chorus & Orchestra – Mozart's "Requiem"

May 20 – St. Paul's Children's Center 50th Anniversary Fundraiser at Stockbridge Country Club

May 25 – "Long and Away – Songs of Time, 700 Years of Delights for the Muses,"

Anne Legene, Director

June 18 – St. Paul's Children's Center 50th Anniversary Celebration at St. Paul's

August 20 – "America's Great Art Contribution: Stained Glass of LaFarge and Tiffany"

Presented by The Mount with Richard Guy Wilson at Trinity Lenox and St. Paul's Stockbridge

October 15 – "The Kindness Bench" -- An outdoor experience with JoAnne Spies as part of "Arts Week Berkshires"

October 20 – "Call and Response – Co-Creating with the Divine," an interactive sound bath meditation concert with JoAnne Spies and Carol Emanuel as part of "Arts Week Berkshires" (Unfortunately this concert had to be cancelled because a performer had Covid.)

November 5 – Jazz Piano Duo, Jacob Hiser and Ananya Ganesh (Jacob was also our guest musician for the 10 a.m. All Saints' Sunday worship service that morning.)

November 12 – Wine Tasting Seminar at the Rectory and the Red Lion Inn planned by Genet and Philippe Jeanjean. (This was a fundraiser, open to the public, for the Rectory Renovation Project. Philippe is a licensed sommelier.)



December 3 – Music Groups from Monument Mountain Regional High School: Girls' Acappella Group, Orchestra Ensemble, and Jazz Band, Annual performance to a packed church on Sunday of the Stockbridge Christmas on Main Festival. Julie Bickford, contact

December 9 – "The Holy Moment – Holiday Candlelight Concert," Robert and Katherine Oakes. (This annual concert is funded by a gift from a parishioner. This year we asked concertgoers to contribute \$20 to Multicultural BRIDGE and raised over \$500.)

December 16 – "Carols for the Earth" – Crescendo Holiday Concert, Christine Gevert, Director

Part of St. Paul's appeal to concert producers was expressed by Mariken Palmbloom after Amphion Trio performed at St. Paul's in 2022: "St. Paul's has a very interesting acoustic. When one plays, one thinks it's clear, and not lush. But the thing is that the clarity is heard wherever you are in the church—in the front, in the back or in the middle. This is a nice feature....Thank you."



ECUMENICAL/INTERFAITH COLLABORATIVE MINISTRY

Several of our collaborations with other churches are described in other sections of this report:

- ☐ Stockbridge Community Thanksgiving w/1st Congregational & St. Joseph's RC
- ☐ Three Kings Epiphany Celebration w/Marian Fathers
- ☐ Gideon's Garden w/Grace Church, Great Barrington
- ☐ Lee Food Pantry w/Grace Church Great Barrington, St. Mary's RC Lee, & Lee Congregational
- ☐ Appalachian Trail Angels w/Christ Trinity Episcopal/Lutheran & Sheffield Congregational
- ☐ Migrant Ministry w/Grace Church Great Barrington & Hevreh Synagogue Great Barrington

For several years, the three Episcopal/Lutheran South County churches shared Collaborative Bible/Book Study for Adults ("Community of Faith"). We also shared administrative staff in various configurations. In 2023, we did not share Adult Classes or administrative staff, though two St. Paul's

parishioners participated in the Spanish Class offered by Grace in the fall of 2023. Perhaps more shared study courses might be resumed in the future.

Holy Week Services

In 2023, these services were shared with our Episcopal/Lutheran sister churches in South Berkshire.

Maundy Thursday at St. Paul's in Stockbridge

Good Friday at Grace in Great Barrington

Easter Vigil at Christ Trinity in Sheffield

This pattern worked quite well and will be repeated in 2024. For each of these services, clergy made an effort to include leaders from each of the congregations in each of the services. In addition to



Holy Week worship, we also listed each other's Ash Wednesday services and Grace's Blue Christmas Services in our newsletters, encouraging people to attend any of these.

Someone who attended the Maundy Thursday service at St. Paul's wrote this e-mail: "I have NEVER been to a more moving service. You wanted people to feel the story. I did. The humility and love and model of Jesus in tonight's story were incredible....The service, the music..., and the ending with everything being removed along with Psalm 22 just had me in complete awe....Many thanks."

Deanery and Diocese

- At the request of Archdeacon Jane Griesbach and Canon Rich Simpson, in February 2023 St. Paul's welcomed Sharon Billetter to our staff as a non-stipendiary Ministry Intern for one year as she moves (God-willing) through the process toward ordination as a Vocational Deacon.
- Clergy in the Berkshire Deanery gather regularly via Zoom or in-person for mutual support, sharing information, and looking for ways to collaborate. The Rev. Libby Wade participated in these sessions as often as possible.
- We often share info in the *E-pistle* about events sponsored by Grace Church and Christ Trinity and they likewise share info about our events when requested.
- The Rev. Jane Tillman serves on the Diocesan Board of Examining Chaplains and leads the Diocesan Compline service occasionally.
- The Rev. Libby Wade served on the Diocesan Nominating Committee and participated in occasional gatherings of Interim Priests serving in the Diocese of Western MA. At Diocesan Convention 2023, she was elected to a three-year term on the Cathedral Chapter representing the Berkshire Deanery.
- St. Paul's was represented at Diocesan Convention in November 2023 by the Rev. Libby Wade, the Rev. Jane Tillman, Diane Dillon, and Martha Bodine.
- Through our financial contribution to the Diocese, we share in a wide variety of ministries.

CHRISTIAN FORMATION and COMMUNITY BUILDING

Youth Formation

While we didn't have enough children in the congregation in 2023 to have a viable Sunday School, the congregation welcomed children in the worship service, even inviting a 3-year-old who visits occasionally to help with the offering from time-to-time. We provided a table of books and quiet activities for children near the west end of the church. Our Interim Priest kept it supplied with seasonal materials. Several teens regularly volunteered at the Lee Food Pantry, one teen participated on an AT Angels team, a young teen sang a solo at Lessons and Carols, and another teen helped as an usher a few times. In addition, we keep the Little Book Box Library near Main Street filled with children's books, and we added a Story Walk on our grounds this year. Baptisms were up in 2023 and several of the baptismal families indicated a desire to become more involved with St. Paul's, so perhaps there is hope for revitalized Christian Formation for children, though it may require thinking outside the old "Sunday School" box!



Story Walk

Jessica Maloney created two Story Walks on our lawn pathway between street, church, and parish house:

Summer: *There's Only One You*

Fall: *To Everything There's a Season*

These were well-received by all ages and added another dimension of learning, delight, and invitation to St. Paul's grounds.

Adult Formation

- ☐ "God Be in My Head – The Sarum Prayer" – Zoom Meditation/Prayer Group in March led by The Rev. Libby Wade
- ☐ "My Soul in Silence Waits" – Zoom Series on Praying with the Psalms in May led by The Rev. Libby Wade
- ☐ "Waiting in Prayer" – Lectio Divina Advent Series on Zoom led by Sharon Billetter
- ☐ The Vestry engaged in Bible study and prayer at the beginning of its monthly meetings
- ☐ Newsletter articles included teaching and spiritual reflections, as well as information
- ☐ One member of the congregation is in the 2023-24 cohort of the Diocesan Discernment Process called "Loving the Questions"
- ☐ "Walk in Love: Episcopal Beliefs and Practices" – This Inquirers' Class offered in the fall drew interest, but was cancelled when we a mutually agreeable time to meet couldn't be found. One person participated in the Diocesan Confirmation Class in the spring.
- ☐ "Forward Day by Day" Devotional Booklets are provided by St. Paul's.

- ❑ Patty Melville initiated a Lenten activity via mail and with a poster in the Tower Room asking “What brings you to St. Paul’s?” Answers included having a sense of community, feeling peace, sharing our gifts, being in sacred space, connecting with God.
- ❑ Early fall brought a Creation Season focus to our worship along with a Photo Challenge inviting people to respond to prompts related to creation with photography. Submitted photos were featured in our weekly *E-pistle* and in a “gallery” display in the church later in the fall.
- ❑ Sunday Forums were held after worship with good attendance:
 - “Ministry: Mine, Yours, Ours: Exploring Our Call” was presented in September by Sharon Billetter, Darryl Lafferty, and the Rev. Libby Wade. A survey at the end of the session asking people to identify their interests and commitments produced much valuable data for planning future programming and engaging people.
 - Mid-Fall Rectory Renovation Forum and Walk-through of the nearly completed work
- ❑ Diocesan Formation Webinars and Retreats were advertised.
- ❑ Several parish leaders completed Safe Church Training.
- ❑ Two parishioners took part in Spanish classes sponsored by Grace Church to enhance their work with the Lee Food Pantry.

Community Building Activities

After several years of Covid pandemic isolation and fear, it was apparent that people wanted and needed ways to be together informally and build or rebuild relationships within the parish community. We wanted to eat together and play together. To that end, we enjoyed things such as a Wine Tasting Seminar (also a fundraiser for the rectory renovation), dual celebrations of the 50th Anniversary of the Children’s Center, an Altar Guild “Polishing Party” with lunch during Holy Week, a picnic supper in the rectory garden after the Ascension Service, two garden work days with lunch at one, a Christmas Card Collage workshop, Vestry dinner at the Interim Priest’s house, brunch in the rectory to celebrate its completion and the ministry of our Interim Priest, and lots of fellowship time in the Tower Room or on the lawn after worship.



Enjoy a few photos...



SEARCH PROCESS FOR NEW RECTOR

Profile Committee

Our Profile team – appointed by the vestry - began work on August 27th, 2022, when members of the vestry, the Profile and Search Committees, and Interim Priest Libby Wade met with Canon Rich Simpson (Diocesan Transition Officer) and the Rev. Mary Rosendale. At that meeting, we were guided through the findings of the Holy Cow Congregational Assessment Tool recently completed by the congregation, giving us a data-based “snapshot” view of our parish. We also received guidance about the process of searching for a new rector, along with a link to the Diocesan Transition Manual.

From there, we created a timeline for meetings with agendas and goals to enable us to complete the Parish Profile by mid-February 2023. A new website would also need to be created to facilitate spreading the word about the church’s search for our next rector.

The Profile Committee included myself as Chair, Duncan Pollack (who dropped out due to health concerns but was pivotal in organizing our work), Rob Maloney, Mary Berle, Diane Dillon, and Daryl Lafferty. We initially met weekly and then as time permitted during the winter. We held several meetings with the congregation to share the process, gather input, and report our work. All our meetings required listening hard to the concerns of the congregation and being courageous in speaking individually about who we are.

The lead theme of “St. Paul’s 4 Pillars,” was a golden nugget that Duncan presented us with. Rather than re-write a lengthy history of who we have been and document who we are, we needed to pare down to something clear, concise, and short to tell our story compellingly. Hence: Our Worship, Our Place, Our Outreach, and Our Congregation.

By our February deadline, we handed over our work to the Vestry for approval and blessings. The new website, which took longer than expected, was completed in late summer thanks to Rich Bradway, website developer, and several others who provided the content. In July 2023, St. Paul’s Search Profile went live on the new website and it was time for the Search Committee to begin the next phase.

With Gratitude for your trust,
Patty Melville
Profile Committee Chair

Search Committee

The Search Committee began its work in late summer 2023 following completion of our Parish Profile and the new St Paul’s website. Renovation of the Rectory, another key factor in the timing of the search, was nearing completion at that point. The committee reviewed the Diocesan Transition Manual and the new church website. Our Office of Transition Ministry questionnaire was posted on the Episcopal Church’s transition ministry website. Both this site and the Diocesan Positions Open website linked prospective applicants to our St. Paul’s website. Our congregation was also invited to provide candidate recommendations.

Our committee, formed by the Vestry, represented a diverse mix of our congregation, and included Martha Bodine, Donna Gray, Matt Fillio, Darryl Lafferty, David Pearson, and Robin Race. All meetings were confidential and conducted by Zoom. We met in person and by Zoom with our Diocesan Transition Officer, Canon Rich Simpson, to gain a better understanding of the complex

process of searching for a new rector. Rich provided training, expertise, and guidance throughout the process.

At the Transition Ministry Conference in September 2023, our Rector Search Profile was shared, and interested priests submitted their profiles to the Diocese. In mid-September, Canon Simpson sent us portfolios submitted by vetted candidates. The Committee reviewed these documents and decided who to interview. Our role was to structure the one-hour interviews with specific questions to engage in conversation about their ministry style and how it related to their interest in being a parish priest at St Paul's. In turn, we answered their questions about our church and community. We conducted Zoom interviews in late September through early October.

Immediately thereafter, the Committee met and discussed the interviews – again, all by Zoom. We prepared summaries and submitted our recommendations to the Vestry at their October meeting. Following in-person visits to Stockbridge and worship services conducted by the candidates for the Vestry and Search Committee, the Vestry entered a time of discernment that resulted in the unanimous decision to call the Rev. Samuel T. Vaught. Our committee was delighted to learn of his acceptance of the call to be St. Paul's next Rector.

Father Sam's engaging personality and joyful focus on getting to know and work in a parish and community shone through in both his Zoom and in-person interviews. A fun surprise was his tall presence, something none of us could tell from a Zoom conversation. We were overjoyed to welcome him and Brett and his family at his first St. Paul's service on January 14, 2024.

Anne B. Covell
Search Committee Chair



STAFF AND COMMUNICATIONS

Staff

After a full year of staff transitions in 2022, we enjoyed a year of stability in 2023:

Clergy	The Rev. Elizabeth T. Wade (Libby), Interim Priest (3/4 Time) The Rev. Jane Tillman, Priest Associate (non-stipendiary)
Ministry Intern	Sharon Billetter (non-stipendiary)
Verger	Darryl Lafferty, Jr. (volunteer)
Accounting Clerk	Jorja Marsden (part-time)
Parish Administrator	Kyra Saltman (part-time)
Regular Musicians (all serving on an interim basis)	Doug Schmalze (summer) Nancy King (~2 Sundays a month) David Smith (~2 Sundays a month)

(Occasional Musicians are listed in another section of this booklet.)

Communications

Weekly E-newsletter

The *E-pistle* is e-mailed to a wide circulation of parishioners and friends of the parish on Thursday or Friday each week. Libby Wade wrote much of the content in 2023. Kyra Saltman edits and publishes. Sebastian Bonner is Kyra's back-up. If you aren't receiving the *E-pistle*, please let Kyra know.

Constant Contact is used for notices of regular events, such as Wednesday Morning Prayer and Sunday Worship. This may also be used for special or urgent announcements. Managed and scheduled by Parish Administrator Kyra Saltman.

Leaflet Insert is prepared for Sundays with information pertinent to that day's worship and other brief announcements. Produced jointly by Interim Priest and Parish Administrator.

Zoom platform is used for Wednesday Morning Prayer, several adult formation classes, and some meetings. Though used far less than during the pandemic years, it is still very useful for including people who don't live near Stockbridge. For instance, Zoom enables Treasurer John Davies to participate in vestry meetings from his winter home in Philadelphia.

Live-streaming proved difficult in 2023, but improvements to the system and strengthening of our internet connection bode well for consistent broadcasting of one Sunday worship service each week. Martha Bodine, Daryl Lafferty, and Matt Fillio have all been helpful with live-streaming, but it would be great to have others willing to operate the system on Sundays.

FaceBook – St. Paul's has a FaceBook page, from which one can view the archived Sunday worship livestream. However, this social media tool is underused.

Instagram – We don't have a church account. Do we need one?

NEW Website (www.stpaulsstockbridge.org) – As part of the Rector Search Process, in the fall of 2022 St. Paul's Vestry authorized creating a new website to replace the ~10-year-old website. Rich

Bradway was engaged as the website designer. Profile Committee members Patty Melville and Rob Maloney, along with Kyra Saltman, Cooper Maloney, the Rev. Libby Wade, and others contributed photos and content. Though the work was tedious and took far longer than expected, the new website replaced the old one in July 2023. We attempted to tell the story of a living community, not just historical buildings, and to provide relevant and useful information for members, seekers, prospective building users, and priests considering becoming a rector candidate. This last purpose was key as the website was the home of the Rector Search Parish Profile. All the rector candidates cited the website as a significant factor in their interest in St. Paul's. Rich Bradway graciously donated his services as web designer and trained Kyra Saltman, Parish Administrator, as website manager. Rob Maloney also expressed interest in being trained as a backup website manager. A grant from the Diocese helped with expenses related to setting up the website. The 2024 task is to regularly update and further improve the website. Rich Bradway remains available as a consultant.

STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCE



STEWARDSHIP

Stewardship occurs all year long at St. Paul's. This year, all aspects of stewardship – our time, our talent, and our monetary gifts – were wisely used by the vestry to accomplish a long list of items that would allow us to welcome our new rector. Your generosity was inspirational and the spirit in which we all contributed our gifts was awesome. During this year, we created momentum to do more and to bring joy and enthusiasm to our community.

As you read this Annual Report, take time to notice just how much of our talent and our time we have contributed this year. Nearly every aspect of our work is done by volunteers, and we are blessed to have a spectrum of talented people who bring their knowledge and creativity to what we do. Our ministries have grown, and our volunteer lists for established ministries are ample. Most remarkable to me is how we added to what we offer to parishioners and the wider community. Members would have an idea, get support, and follow through with new events.

You were asked to open your wallets several times this year. I am touched by your willingness to contribute and by your wisdom in knowing what was appropriate for you to give. We have all worked together to make this year work. Our stewardship pledge campaign achieved what we hope for. We are going into 2024 with a good budget and plans to build on the momentum we have created in 2023.

Martha Bodine
Stewardship Chair

RECTORY FUNDRAISING – BUILDING THE FUTURE

With Vestry approval, Virgil Stucker, Genet Jeanjean, Martha Bodine, and the Rev. Libby Wade began meeting in May 2023 as a fundraising committee for the purpose of raising \$100,000 in donations to renovate the interior of St. Paul's Rectory. The Vestry approved taking an additional \$100,000 from the Endowment Fund to support the ~\$200,000 cost of the renovation. Jorja Marsden managed the interior renovation work as the money was being raised.

100% of the Vestry and the Committee made their pledges first. Subsequently, either personally or via in-church announcements and the weekly E-pistle, all members of St. Paul's were given an opportunity to help. As of January 19, 2024, \$175,634 had been raised from 28 donors and 25 people who attended a Wine Tasting event organized by Genet and her husband Philippe, a sommelier. The donor list will be framed and hung in the Rectory. Only \$3250 in pledges are outstanding, and these are on a schedule to be paid.

Though the Committee has completed its assigned task, we are awaiting the results of a grant application and appreciate Jean Rousseau's assistance with that proposal. Our original goal was exceeded thanks to the following donors, whose generosity will help build the future of St. Paul's by creating a functional home for our new Rector and a welcoming environment for the community.

Donors: Lila Berle, Martha Bodine, Sebastian Bonner & Anne Auberjonois, Natalie & John Boyce, St. Paul's Children's Center, John & Helen Davies, Peter & Diane Dillon, Michael Flamini, Diana French, Vaunie Gaulty (in memory of Bill Gaulty) Donna & Jonathan Gray, Genet & Philippe Jeanjean, Chris & Tracy Johnson, John Muller & Cecilia Jones (bequest from Cecilia), Darryl Lafferty & Peter Wright, Rob & Jessica Maloney, Jorja Marsden, Gale Page & Frank Smith, Deb Pege, Michael & Ramelle Pulitzer, Jean & Georganne Rousseau, Helen Torelli & Robert M. Sedgwick, Carl Sprague, Virgil & Lis Stucker, Mary Taylor, Jane Tillman, Jim & Libby Wade, Alice Sedgwick Wohl (in memory of John Tarrant), an anonymous donor, and 25 donors to the Wine Tasting Event.

Virgil Stucker
Lead Fundraiser

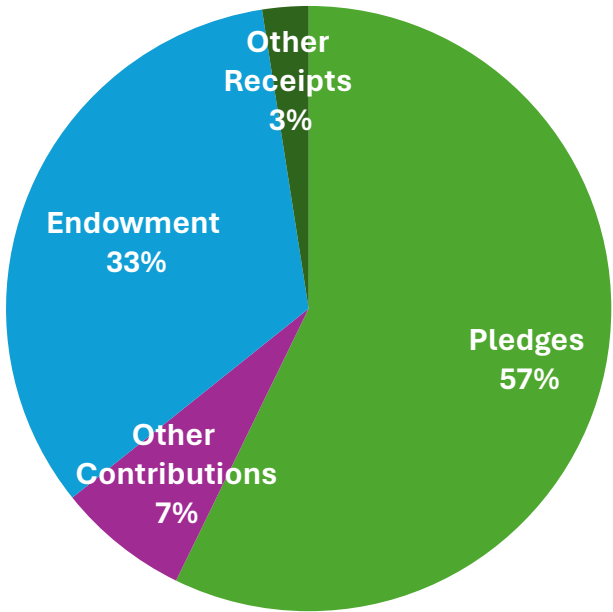


Treasurer's Report for 2023

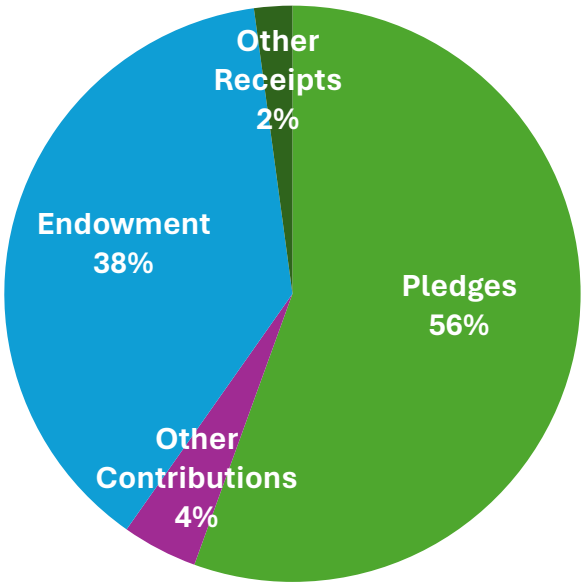
General Operating Fund Revenue and Expenses for 2022 and 2023 and Budget Adopted by the Vestry for 2024



2023 Actual Revenue



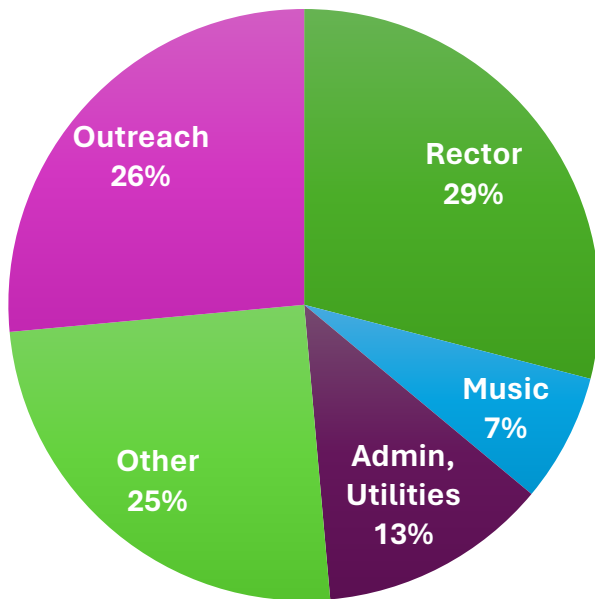
2024 Budget Revenue



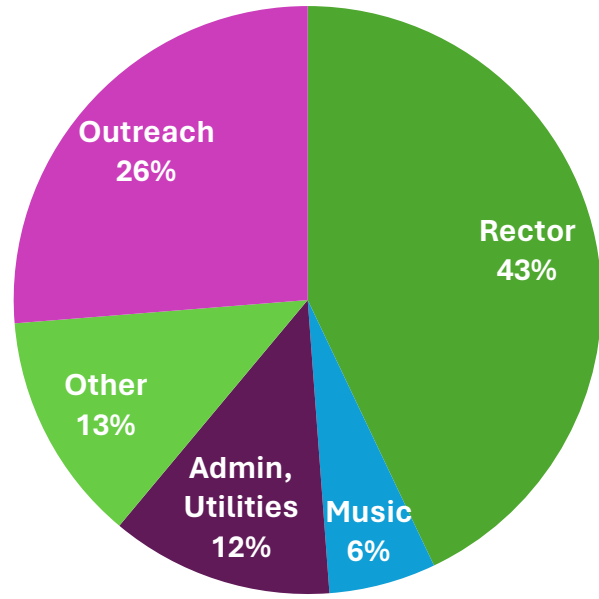
	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	2024 Budget
General Operating Fund Revenue			
Pledges (Current and Past Year)	103,815.00	120,247.00	123,300.00
Other Contributions	31,471.25	14,805.01	9,400.00
Transfers from Endowment	61,140.00	69,920.00	84,588.34
Other Receipts	9,843.40	5,181.00	4,750.00
Total Revenue	206,269.65	210,153.01	222,038.34

Treasurer's Report for 2023
General Operating Fund Revenue and Expenses for 2022 and 2023
and Budget Adopted by the Vestry for 2024

**2023 Actual
Expenditures**

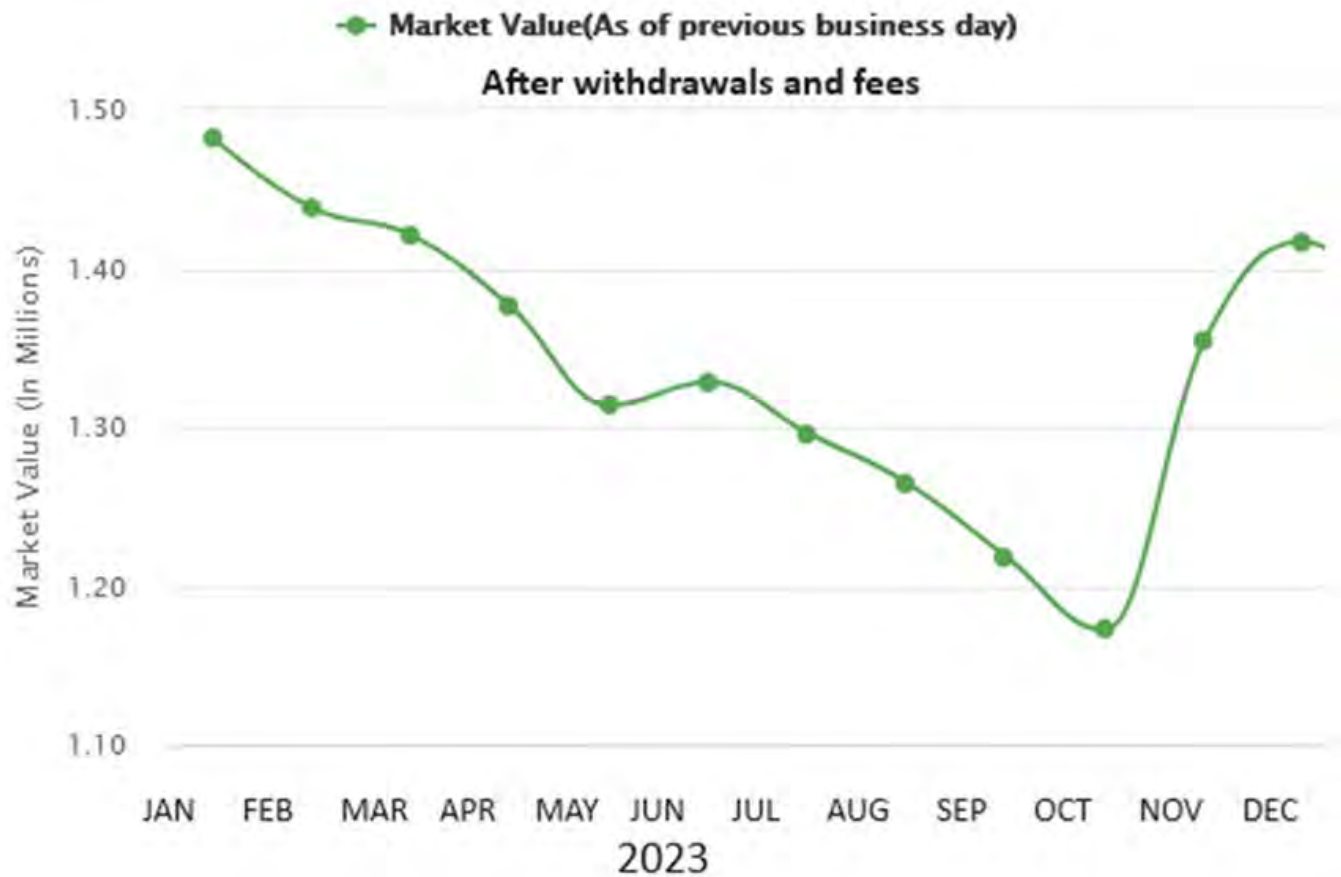


**2024 Budget
Expenditures**



	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	2024 Budget
General Operating Fund Expenses			
Rector	31,793.56	0.00	92,545.70
Interim Priest	26,711.03	57,757.20	2,188.34
Other Clergy Expenses	8,997.57	2,576.24	2,200.00
Music	13,801.40	13,964.40	13,000.00
Search for a New Rector	714.96	16,564.81	500.00
Other Worship	4,003.59	4,892.25	3,800.00
Outreach	20,883.60	24,962.96	27,029.00
Education and Fellowship	126.06	450.77	1,150.00
Other Expenses	600.00	625.00	1,050.00
Administration	36,991.61	38,305.01	38,672.71
Utilities	18,144.59	14,350.97	19,286.00
Other Property Expenses	48,751.31	41,083.42	19,750.00
Total Expenses	211,519.28	215,533.03	221,171.75
Net from Operations	(5,249.63)	(5,380.02)	866.59

Treasurer's Report for 2023
Endowment Fund Revenue and Expenses for 2022 and 2023



	2022 Actual	2023 Actual
Endowment Beginning Balance	1,732,921.43	1,417,890.88
Endowment Fund Contributions	291.00	99,593.06
Endowment Fund Earnings/Gains/Losses	(244,277.04)	187,961.90
Endowment Fund Expenses	(8,564.51)	(7,002.75)
Endowment Fund Routine Distributions	(62,480.00)	(71,440.00)
Endowment Fund Non-Routine Distributions	0.00	(210,000.00)
Endowment Ending Balance	1,417,890.88	1,417,003.09

Treasurer's Report for 2023
Rectory Renovation Fund Revenue and Expenses - 2021 - 2023



	2021-22 Actual	2023 Actual	TOTAL
Rectory Renov Fund Receipts			
Transfer from Operating Cash	42,215.00		42,215.00
Transfer from Linda Day Bequest	12,575.60		12,575.60
Non-Routine Transfer from Endowment	529.26	190,000.00	190,529.26
Repayment of Trans from Endowment		(99,593.06)	(99,593.06)
Donations for Rectory Renovation	68,077.30	149,247.16*	217,324.46
Rectory Rental Income	4,200.00		4,200.00
Proceeds of Arts Fair	190.00		190.00
Total Rectory Renovation Fund Receipts	127,787.16	239,654.10	367,441.26

The Rectory Renovation Fundraising Team – Virgil Stucker, Genet Jeanjean, Martha Bodine, and the Rev. Libby Wade – are pleased to announce that funds raised as of December 1, 2023 have far exceeded the \$100,000 goal set by the Vestry.

*Total Pledged as of December 1 is \$172,134!

Treasurer's Report for 2023
Rectory Renovation Fund Revenue and Expenses - 2021 - 2023



	2021-22 Actual	2023 Actual	TOTAL
Rectory Renovation Fund Expenditures			
Rectory Siding	66,904.00		66,904.00
Rectory Windows	36,132.00		36,132.00
Rectory Shades		4,764.70	4,764.70
Rectory Building Permit	385.00		385.00
Rectory Rot Remediation	8,402.25		8,402.25
Rectory Painting	5,170.00	17,891.23	23,061.23
Rectory Electrical	2,002.55		2,002.55
Rectory Plumbing		8,218.57	8,218.57
Rectory Kitchen Fixtures		13,219.35	13,219.35
Rectory Kitchen Appliances		1,828.94	1,828.94
Rectory Henry Kirchdorfer (general contractor)	295.00	135,776.58	136,071.58
Rectory Deep Clean		4,480.00	4,480.00
Rectory Chimneys		2,575.00	2,575.00
Rectory Fund Raising Expenses		62.42	62.42
Rectory Boiler		17,888.00	17,888.00
Total Rectory Renovation Fund Expenditures	119,290.80	206,704.79	325,995.59
Net Total (Rectory Renovation Fund Cash Balance)	8,496.36	32,949.31	41,445.67

Treasurer's Report for 2023
Consolidated Balance Sheet (All Funds)
as of December 2022 and 2023

Assets	2022 Actual	2023 Actual
Cash		
General Operating Fund	34,524.64	35,026.62
Organ Fund	(11,569.72)	2,136.22
Memorial Garden Fund	4,716.16	9,516.16
Alternative Evangelism Events	214.28	214.28
Rectory Renovation Fund	8,496.36	41,445.67
Other Restricted Funds	15,568.86	9,726.33
Rector's Discretionary Fund	1,849.48	1,458.83
Petty Cash	50.00	50.00
Total Cash	53,850.06	99,574.11
Prepaid Expenses	6,376.50	6,844.50
Endowment Investments		
Organ Fund	62,067.24	31,391.34
Memorial Garden Fund	17,930.44	20,413.97
Gardens, Trees Fund	0.00	17,440.57
Rector's Discretionary Fund	28,764.34	31,111.87
All Other Endowment Funds	1,309,128.86	1,316,645.34
Total Endowment	1,417,890.88	1,417,003.09
Accounts Receivable		
Receivable from Children's Center	506.80	506.80
Fixed Assets		
Church	4,596,637.72	4,596,637.72
Parish		
House	485,348.43	485,348.43
Rectory	478,998.23	478,998.23
Total Fixed Assets	5,560,984.38	5,560,984.38
Total Assets	7,039,608.62	7,084,912.88
Liabilities	3,650.00	10,000.00
Principal		
Restricted Funds	129,225.84	145,888.60
Unrestricted Funds		
General Operating Fund Beginning Balance	5,604,041.95	5,598,792.32
All Other Church Investments - Beg. Balance	1,618,581.01	1,303,550.46
Net Cash Received for Year	(315,890.18)	26,681.50
Ending Balance	7,035,958.62	7,074,912.88
Total Liabilities and Principal	7,039,608.62	7,084,912.88