

**St. Paul's Episcopal Church
112th Annual Church Convention
Sunday January 16, 2022**



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St. Paul's Annual Meeting

January 16, 2022

Welcome and Opening Prayer: The Rev. Elizabeth Grohowski, Deacon

Approval of Previous Minutes: Annual Meeting January 31, 2021

Committee Reports: Deacon in Charge Report: Elizabeth Grohowski
Annual Report from the Senior Warden: Lynne Graham
Annual Report from the Junior Warden:
Altar Guild Report:
Coats for the Community: Dan Graham
Daughters of the King Report:
Live-streaming Report:
Montrose Mobile Pantry:
Organist and Choir Director: Cathy Hammons
Property Committee Report: Dan Graham
St. Matthew's Property Committee Report: Bob Kimmell
Sleeping Bag Ministry Report:
Stewardship Report: Tom Undercoffler
Stop the Stigma Report: Lynne Graham
Treasurer's Report: John Finlon

Election of New Vestry Members:

Election of Delegate to Diocesan Convention:

Closing Prayer and Adjournment

<u>Term over in Jan. 2022</u>	<u>Term over in Jan. 2023</u>	<u>Term over in Jan. 2024</u>
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Karen Blye-McAbee	Sandy Seeger	
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Stephanie Calby	Tom Undercoffler	
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	John Warriner	
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Deacon in Charge Report-Elizabeth Grohowski

I would like to express my gratitude for the opportunity to serve with you; a congregation of loving and giving people. You have demonstrated this in the welcome you have given me and in your ongoing outreach to the community. This is indeed a warm church family who cares for its members. And it is inspiring to witness your example of Christian love and service, living into your baptismal call to love and care for your fellows, expressing that concern for members of the parish as well as members of the area at large.

Even in the midst of the pandemic, the ministries of the church remain strong. Many among you have given time, talent, and treasure to the building up of God's people, through Coats for the Community, Stop the Stigma, Soup night, the sleeping bag ministry, volunteering with the Food Pantry, and making donations to the many local initiatives occurring throughout the year.

In addition to Sunday services, we have had four funerals and three baptisms in the church since my arrival. We welcomed new Christians as they begin their journey in Christ and honored those we love but see no longer. We celebrated lives changed, not ended as loved ones entered into sure and certain hope of resurrection in our Lord Jesus Christ.

I have made pastoral calls to several parishioners for prayers, communion, and conversation. Please know that I am available if you need a visit or a call, for prayers or even a chat. I welcome the opportunity to visit with you to discuss whatever may be on your heart.

I have interviewed several of you to learn more about the congregation, recent history, and your hopes for the future. I am looking forward to spending time with more of you as we continue in the New Year. As I said at coffee hour before Christmas, I would like to have coffee or a meal with you so that we can get to know one another better.

I have visited local businesses and service organizations and introduced myself to people, particularly the Sheriff, and Cindy at Interfaith. I appreciated the time they spent with me and learning more about their impact on the people of the Montrose area. I look forward to continuing to get to know members of the community this year. Please do not hesitate to mention other places or people that you think would be good additions for my "introduction tour." If I have not already visited with, and met them, I would like to do so.

We have reinstituted Bible Study twice a month on Thursday nights with thoughtful conversation about the Gospels using a simple method for contemplation of the scripture. The conversation is lively and inspired and everyone is encouraged to join us.

In addition, we had two events for the holiday season that were well attended and appreciated by all present, The Country Store in which we raised money for local charities, and the Memory luncheon where attendees remembered those lost to addiction.

I have participated in several Diocesan events, some with parishioners, including convocation, convention, clergy conference, and conversations about racial reconciliation. I welcome inquiries regarding these events.

After ten years of devoted service, our parish administrator Betty Depue is retiring. We are all grateful for Betty's diligence, friendliness, determination, and skill. She certainly leaves behind big shoes to fill. Many thanks to the search committee for the work done to find the new incumbent, Peggy Sheffler. No doubt, Peggy will step up to the challenge of the multi-faceted position.

Finally, I would like to take a moment to thank the staff and those who serve in various ministries for their hard work. Our parish life is enhanced by their efforts in bringing their best to what they do here at St. Paul's. And last, but certainly not least, I would like to thank Lynne Graham for all that she does. She has led this parish outstandingly in the absence of a clergyperson, and she has certainly been a wonderful support to me since I began serving at St. Paul's in August.

Senior Warden Report January 2022

As I review 2021 in my mind, we have struggled through a second year of the Covid pandemic. Yes, it has been another difficult year. We have lost loved members of our congregation and not seen others for months as they huddle inside to stay well. We, who are hand-shakers and huggers, have stand in the pews and wave to one another during the Peace. We are tired of the restrictions and we want it to be, again, how it's always been.

Sometimes it's very satisfying to wallow in our troubles. But it makes my heart glad that these difficulties have not defined us. We have risen above our circumstances and we continue to be the faithful community that we have always been. First and foremost, we gathered every Sunday for worship and livestreamed it to those who could not attend. A diligent crew of officiants took turns leading Morning Prayer and reading a homily until the Diocese assigned Deacon Liz Grohowski to us. Since August, Deacon Liz has led a Deacon's Mass every Sunday which allows us to receive Holy Communion again. Thank God for that. In her $\frac{3}{4}$ time work week, Liz has contacted and visited shut-ins, visited those ill and in the hospital, participated in our monthly ministry events, and, of course, written her sermons. Liz's professional singing voice has enlivened our worship and gifted us with

As easy as it would have been to circle the wagons and give up in fear or frustration, we did the exact opposite. Not only did we continue with all our previous ministries, but we added more. We provided Easter treats to all Meals on Wheels recipients and drivers in Susquehanna County. We hosted a Fourth of July Community Breakfast to benefit Stop the Stigma and send a child to camp. We followed through with our desire to offer a free Soup Night to the community each month. All of these events attracted volunteers from outside our walls and have been hugely successful.

St. Paul's mission statement is to proclaim God's love by word and example and to seek Christ in one another. I do believe that if we keep our eyes on God, with His help, we will continue to be his hands and feet in this world. May the light of Christ shine through all we do.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynne Graham

COATS FOR THE COMMUNITY



Coats for Our Community had a successful season this year giving out over 1,300 coats. This was our 15th year. We have a St. Paul's budget of about \$2,000.

We held coat drives, bought coats from the Salvation Army on half-price Wednesdays, and received donated coats from several locations. These coats, plus scarves, gloves, hats, snow pants and other warm articles of clothing were stored throughout the year in our basement. Throughout the fall, with our American Legion Post 154 partners, we distributed them to eight locations. Student volunteers from several local high schools assisted with setting up and distributing the coats at those sites and volunteers from St. Paul's helped us here. We kept our neighbors a little warmer this year.

Annual Music Report January 2022

What a topsy-turvy year it was! As a friend of mine began her Christmas 2020 letter, quoting Charles Dickens: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." Of course, that was true of the previous year, too. Maybe the merry-go-round ride will slow down in the coming year.

In January, 2021, I was able to resume organist duties after my 2020 illness, gradually at first, then increasing to full-time by March 2021. A true miracle, as I had doubted I'd be able to handle the foot (and brain) coordination necessary for pedaling again.

We continued to be blessed by Joyce Printz's and Mary Ann Dewitt's talents and willingness to step up to substitute during the transition, continuing to trade off to allow me one Sunday a month off.

We held virtual, live-streamed services until Palm Sunday, when we were finally able to open the church to worshippers on Sundays. Even then, we had to keep careful track of the number of Covid cases in Susquehanna or go back to virtual services again.

Things went along pretty smoothly after that. Although we still don't have a choir, and won't in the foreseeable future, we did gain a classically-trained, operatic contralto with a powerful voice in the person of Deacon Liz, who began gracing our pulpit in September, and leading us in singing the hymns. What a difference she has made! The singing of the whole congregation has taken on a new and wonderful life under her leadership.

In November illness struck me again in the form of several severe gallbladder attacks, followed by surgery. Joyce Printz stepped in again to ably fill the organ bench, taking us through November and into Advent.

Nancy Houck and her flute students graced our December 19 and especially our Christmas Eve services. They also played during the Stop-the-Stigma Luncheon on December 12, so they were a very active part of our Advent and Christmas celebrations. The flutes add such a beautiful dimension to the music of Advent and Christmas!

As we head into 2022, we pray for a lessening of the Covid epidemic that has sickened several of our members. We look forward to Deacon Liz's continued musical leadership (in addition to her leadership in her other roles, of course.) And we pray for God's continued blessing of our musical lives and of our lives as Christians.

Respectfully submitted,
Cathy Hammons
Organist

St. Paul's 2022 Property Committee Report

We are always aware that buildings are just buildings, a parking lot is just a parking lot, a kitchen just a kitchen. Our church structures, no matter how well maintained, do not constitute our church, and where we worship does not affect our prayers. It is the congregation of the parish that is St. Paul's Church.



In 2021, we completed a number of routine maintenance items such as replacing light bulbs, fixing toilets, fixing leaks, getting the heating system fixed and a couple improvement projects. We concentrated on upgrading the Celtic space. On any project we do, we try to upgrade the electrical wiring at the same time. Some of the projects were:



- The floor in the Parish Hall was refinished by Cole Flooring in Clark's Summit. It was sanded and given three coats of varnish. It really improved its look. Together with the new lighting we added last year the Hall looks considerably lighter.



- Our parking lot was re-leveled and given a topcoat of new stone. Greg Garnett did the work and will also be doing our plowing and shoveling this winter.

- The concrete cross above the Chestnut St. door was cracked in three places and was a safety hazard. Weather Master roofing from Binghamton removed it and the roof fixed where it sat. The cross could not be repaired. There is still a similar cross above the Church Street ramp that is in good shape.

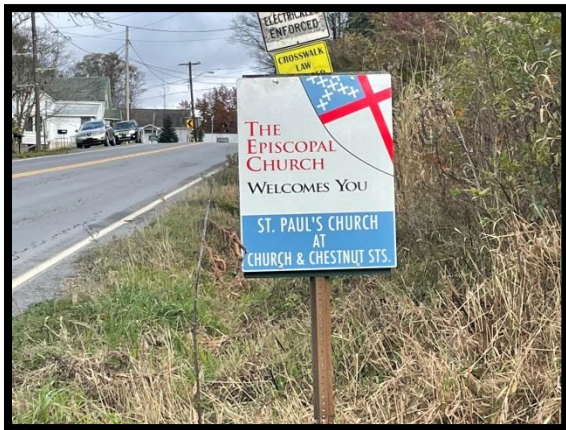
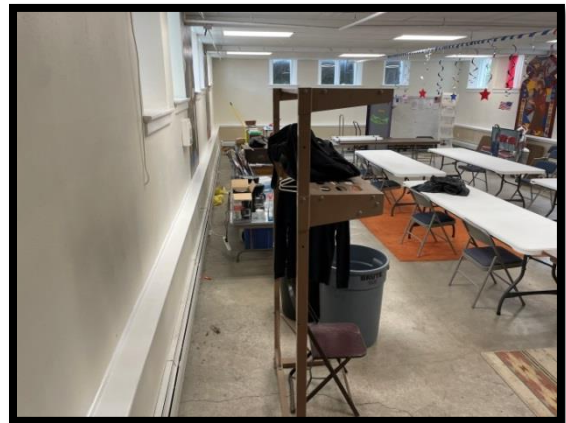


- A coffee station consisting of base and top cabinets was added to the Celtic room. Made of oak with a butcher block oak top, it includes a Bunn coffee maker that has a water line to it and is a duplicate of the one in the kitchen.

- In July, the rector's office on the second floor was repainted and made ready for its new occupant, Deacon Liz.



- The trim in the Celtic Room was sanded and repainted. The knots in the wood were bleached through. They were shellacked before painting. The stairs to the bathrooms were repainted.



- A new St. Paul's welcome sign replaced the existing one on Rt. 29 coming north into town. The old one was rusty and bent and this is a definite improvement.

- A new manger was built to replace the old one. The existing one was just too large for our volunteers to carry up and down the stairs.



- All of the windowsills in the Parish Hall were in pretty bad shape after 95 years of sun, windows being left open and leaking plant pots and were refinished. They were stripped, sanded, stained and varnished.





- New tables were purchase for the Celtic Room to replace the old metal dark wooden ones.
- All eleven existing ceiling lights in the Celtic room were replaced with new energy efficient LED ones.

2022 Property Submittal

While the physical plant is in relatively good shape, we will continue with routine maintenance and additional upgrading projects. Maintaining the church is not a static thing, it is continual process. Attached is what we will be submitting to Vestry for 2022. We have no capital projects planned but hope to accomplish the following additional items.

- Renovate and modernize entrance hall on Chestnut Street side.
- Replace the Chestnut Street door with a metal one to match our main door
- Replace roof over the fire escape stairs
- Add threshold to Bell Tower door
- Winterize Chestnut Street door
- Winterize leaded glass window on second floor Chestnut Street side
- Obtain two new rugs for Celtic Room
- Obtain screens for rear of Celtic Room
- New carpet for center of the aisle in the church
- Look into doing renovating to the Celtic Room in 2022
- Continue to upgrade electrical wiring

Respectfully Submitted

Dan Graham/John Finlon

2022 Property Committee Report
St. Matthew's Church, Stevensville, PA

St. Matthew's church is located in Stevens Township in Bradford County, Pennsylvania. St. Paul's Property Committee representative, responsible for St. Matthew's church, is Bob Kimmell. Bob is the Steward of St. Matthew's and his responsibilities are for the care and oversight of St. Matthew's. This includes the building and grounds.

St. Matthew's congregation formed in 1799 and construction on the current church commenced in 1814, completed in 1820 and was consecrated in 1824. St. Matthew's has not had a full time clergy and congregation since the year 1900, yet has had an active history of summer services. St. Paul's, Montrose was assigned responsibility for St. Matthew's, by the Diocese, around the year 1924.

Calendar years 2007 through 2015 generally experienced year-over-year increases in the number of services and congregants. Calendar years 2016 - 2021 had only one service during each of those years, due to the limited availability of clergy. A minimum of one service a year is required to meet our land grant requirement and retain ownership of the church. The summer 2021 service was conducted by Commander Bill Holiman.

Building issues to be addressed beginning in 2022 include:

1. Replacement of broken window panes and failed window glazing.
2. Repair of the sanctuary ceiling.

Additional items at St. Matthew's church being considered for attention include:

3. Removing failing trees on the church property.
4. Repairing structural issues in the roof bell tower section.
5. Improving drainage at the rear of the church.
6. Repairing rot in the sills and siding at the rear of the church.
7. Replacing the asphalt shingled roof with a metal roof.

The interior of the church is primitive, by design. Any historic restoration of the church's interior is not financially feasible in the foreseeable future.

St. Matthew's fixed expenses are insurance, electrical service and lawn care. St. Matthew's expenses are around \$1600 per year. Fundraising and gifts are continually solicited to address capital projects and the ongoing operation of St. Matthew's church.

Respectfully submitted for the Property Committee,

Bob Kimmell

Stewardship

Time, talent, treasure! We have it and we are giving all three. We St. Paulsers are making it all happen. 2022 is a new year for giving, caring, praying, and being there for each other. Stewardship is from the heart and is loaded with excitement. Let us share our blessings with each other and our local, national, and worldwide communities. The Lord be with you. Tom U.

Stop the Stigma Report

In 2018, several parishioners began attending Narcotics Anonymous meetings when it became quite obvious that Montrose had a community problem with addiction. We met young men and women who were trying to get their lives back together and realized how difficult that is when such a stigma is associated with their disease. Some had been to prison and, as a result, could not find employment. Others had ruined family relationships and had no one to turn to for support. We recognized that the community could not help until we were able to talk openly about the issue of substance use disorder.

We invited a group of interested community leaders and started a grassroots group with the purpose of supporting those touched by addiction. We felt our statement was broad enough to encompass support of those in recovery, families, and advocacy efforts.

Since the group's inception, although we have sponsored numerous events, I feel, most importantly, that the Montrose community has made great strides in our recognition of a huge problem and made varied efforts to address it. I believe that our small group spurred the community on to tackle the problem of addiction and to be able to converse about it in terms of a disease, not a shortcoming. Montrose now has a Community Resource Center (part of Trehab) with Certified Recovery Specialists and many support resources, and Drug Court which emphasizes treatment rather than punishment.

Stop the Stigma may not be a household name, but I think most people in the community recognize it as one of many tools to change the environment for those in recovery. We have sponsored annual International Overdose Awareness Day events, Memory Luncheons during Advent, and the July 4th Community Breakfast. This breakfast was a true community effort which allowed us to promote our mission, and the proceeds will send a child/children to a summer camp specifically for children in a family with addiction.

We have made much progress in a short time. Please know that St. Paul's support is crucial if we are to continue to advocate for some of the least of God's children.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynne Graham