



2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Annual Meeting
for the 275th year of Saint Paul's Church
January 26, 2025

*Historic Saint Paul's Church is a welcoming Episcopal congregation
committed to living and sharing the Good News of God in Jesus Christ
through liturgy, music, and outreach.*



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RECTOR'S REPORT

For two hundred and seventy-five years, we have proclaimed the gospel and tried to follow Jesus together from downtown Augusta. Sometimes that has been relatively comfortable, and at other times it has been very difficult, indeed. At times we have done it with courage and elegance, and at times we have fallen short of our calling. This year we'll celebrate this long legacy of faithfulness with parties and special liturgies and concerts and classes. But a long tradition of faithfulness cannot be fully honored just by celebrating. The tradition that has brought us here is not just a static block of fact to be cheered or evaluated. We would do better to imagine it as a living, growing organism to be nurtured or an ongoing conversation to be engaged. This year, my hope is that we will engage and extend our strong tradition by continuing to grow in faith and to proclaim the love of God to a city and world that badly needs to hear and know it.

You won't need me to tell you that these are tumultuous times. We are beset with lies and also with temptations – especially the subtle, pervasive temptation of giving our hearts and entrusting our identities to lesser loyalties. These are times when the church is badly needed. We face some disadvantages, as the whole culture swims through waters of cynical propaganda. But we have known the truth that sets us free and sends us to join in God's work of setting others free, as well. And these are certainly not the first tumultuous times we have faced at Saint Paul's. Engaging with our long, strong tradition should give us a clearer perspective on this moment and strengthen us to resist the temptations of inordinate attachments to lesser loyalties. Resisting that temptation leaves us free to choose solidarity with the people of God wherever we find them (us). Engaging our history should strengthen our voices to proclaim the truth of the love of God, no matter how loud the surrounding world gets, or how insistent others are in recruiting us to adopt their hatreds. The still quiet ever-speaking voice of God has been inviting us to love here for centuries and will not stop making that invitation and offering the grace needed to accept it.

We have much to celebrate and much good work before us. I am so grateful that God has brought us together for these celebrations and this work.

Eric+

The Reverend Eric C. Bidy, Rector

ASSOCIATE RECTOR'S REPORT

There is an anonymous quote that says, “the only way to build a bridge is to start from both sides.” While that concept or perception might be true, what is most true is that someone must exercise courage to be the first to initiate. Bridge building is a dynamic way to connect with others to form new relationships that will strengthen our communities and expand our reach into the lives that are in need. As Associate Rector of Saint Paul’s Church, I have had the great privilege and opportunity to do just that—build bridges in the CSRA.

In a short 15-month time period, Saint Paul’s has been recognized in our community as a place of welcome. Our presence on social media, television, and radio continues to broaden our reach to the lives of the downtown and surrounding areas. Our quick response to become a “day shelter” during Hurricane Helene has left a positive impact on the hearts and minds of those in need. It has opened a new pathway for people to discover that our doors of welcome are physically open weekly for those needing a place of solace, rest, a place to pray and commune with God.

Over the past year, I have stepped out in faith through a spirit of effective invitation. My active memberships with The NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People), the Augusta Baptist Minister’s Conference, and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. have all led to a renewed and diverse friendly presence that has buried an inward facing historical past of Saint Paul’s. My board memberships with the Augusta Museum of History, the Byllesby Center, Women in Philanthropy, and BridgeBuilder Communities have afforded connections that will strengthen collaborative community efforts to reach and impact the lives of those who are like-minded to serve and walk alongside those who are marginalized. This is a new day and a new dawning of wholesome communication and intentional work that is outward facing and genuine.

In the order of Pastoral Care in the CSRA, Saint Paul’s Church recently completed building a ramp for a disabled neighbor in the Harrisburg community. Several of our parishioners, of varying ages, along with family members of the neighbor, spent an entire cold Saturday to build the ramp. The neighbor and family are eternally grateful. Also, Saint Paul’s Church has partnered with the Goodwill Industries in the Good Samaritan Mission Program to house duratainers that can be filled with household and clothing donations. Once the duratainers are filled, Saint Paul’s Church will be granted five, \$50 vouchers that can be dispersed to individuals and families in need of goods/clothing. Pastoral Care within the parish is an ongoing ministry that has improved communications and heightened a pastoral presence that is trusted and dependable.

A vision realized is the new women’s ministry with W.E.E.M. (Women’s Enrichment and Employment Ministry). This is an intergenerational ministry for women only and its mission is to inspire healthy, spiritual, and inclusive connections through prayer, fellowship, and education with women in our church and community. This ministry has been an unspoken need for women and has touched many lives in an affirming way.

What’s in the works are continued collaborations with First Presbyterian Church and establishing new parish relationships with Springfield Baptist Church to promote unifying outward facing ministries. Saint Paul’s presence on the diocesan level is also effective as it keeps us current and an active/willing participant for the good and evolving restructuring of the diocese. This relationship will strengthen the goals and vision of our diocese and our convocation.

I thank my God for all of the good work and spiritual growth Saint Paul’s Church has made in such a short time. My experience and vocation has been strengthened and supported. What I am most grateful for is that a mutual trust has been established and Saint Paul’s Church is a bonafide witness of what it means to “walk in love.” God is always up to something good for the body of Christ and the Kingdom of God. Let us continue following His lead.

The Reverend Kimberly E. Dunn, Associate Rector

WARDENS' REPORT

Perhaps you have heard the expression “to spark joy” in reference to deciding which of your personal belongings you want to keep and which you no longer need. “Sparkling joy” is apparently an effective criterion in such decision-making, but it also seems quite an apt couple of words for capturing the essence of Christian community—our common life at Saint Paul’s and in many, many other gatherings of God’s faithful people. If we look a little closer at Christian community, we find the ways we love God, care for God’s people, and steward God’s gifts, and the substance of each is unmistakably joy.

Looking back at 2024 touches off these joyful sparks in the mere process of reflecting on how Saint Paul’s continued to embrace its mission of “living and sharing the Good News of God in Jesus Christ.” The plentiful opportunities for fellowship, serving, being, and learning caused hearts to warm and eyes to sparkle. The growth of ministries, choirs, and formation classes were a testament to the joy of working together. The welcoming of newcomers passed along the kindling for new lights in our parish and in our neighborhood.

Can you feel the warmth of life at Saint Paul’s?

The real joy, however, is sparked when we actively participate in the life and work of this place...when we intentionally commit to being engaged with the Body of Christ. Start with Sunday worship—the practice of praying together as a community. Our worship, music, and liturgy are known to us and are comfortable; our presence with fellow worshippers, clergy, and choir can fill our souls with an indescribable gladness, simply by being open to the presence of God.

Joy is an essential part of the Christian life; where else can we find it? How can we not find it through fellowship? The dependably delicious Men’s Monthly Meal and our enriching and empowering women’s ministry spark joy every month. Serving the Outreach Committee’s new Snack Pack program sparks joy in volunteers and recipients alike. Formation for all ages sparks joy, especially, say the children, when food is involved. These are the children who serve as acolytes, sing in our choirs, attend formation, are enlisted as junior ushers, or are simply learning to worship with their parents. Their vibrancy kindles delight throughout Saint Paul’s and inspires us to live out our Baptismal Covenant.

And let us not forget the joy which is sparked as we faithfully steward God’s gifts to us. We return a portion of his abundance and dedicate this to the ministries and operation of Saint Paul’s. We then look ahead to the new year, eager for opportunities to express gratitude, be generous, grow in faithfulness, delight in fellowship, discover vocation, study scripture, and pray for the kingdom of God.

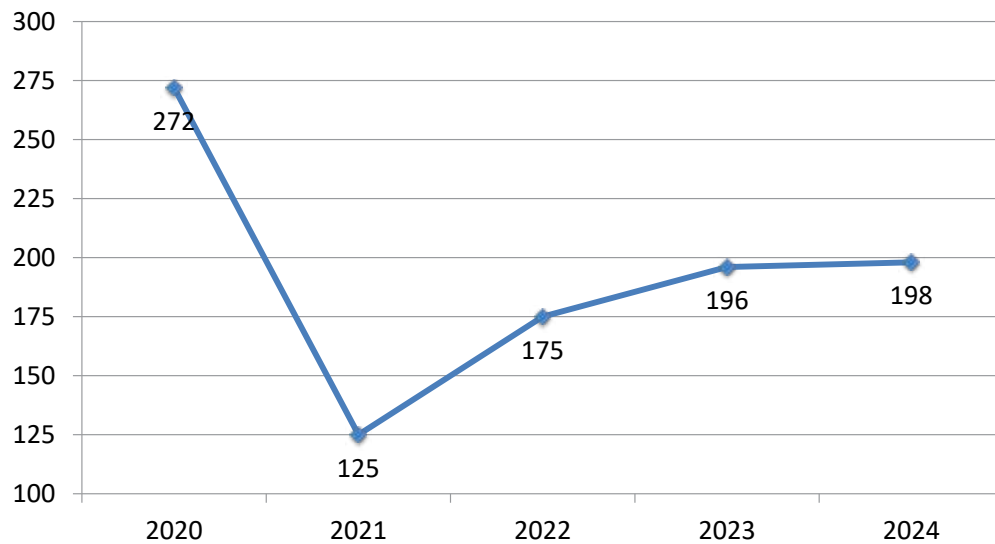
Our joy can then be multiplied within and beyond our sanctuary. Bring your embers, let them grow, share them with others, and let our joy fill hearts with God’s love.

Kitty Gordon, Senior Warden
Erick Montgomery, Junior Warden

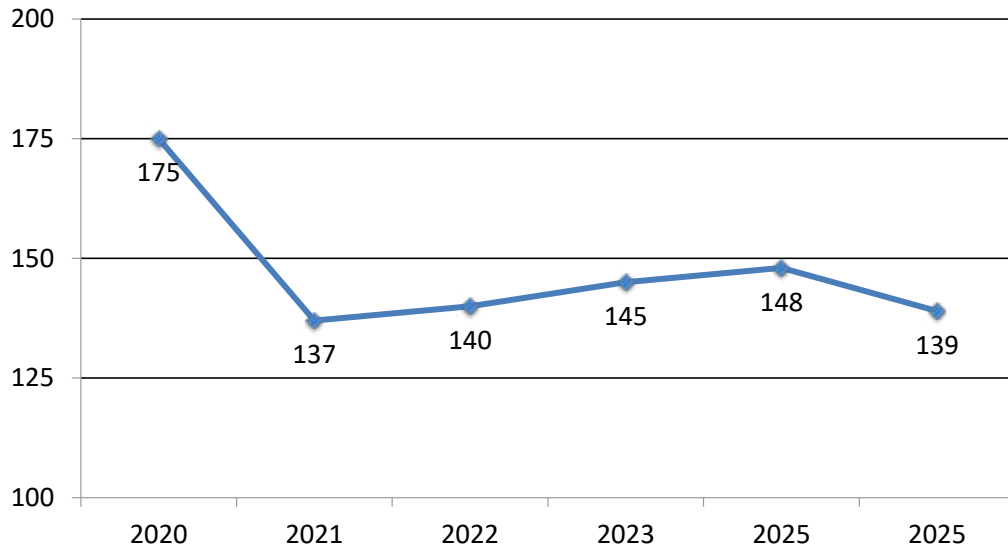
FIVE-YEAR STATISTICAL SUMMARY

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Average Sunday Attendance	272	125	175	196	198	n/a
Pledges	175	137	140	145	149	139 Totaling \$821,645
Pledge Income Received	\$725,771	\$617,174	\$646,266	\$722,057	757,551	n/a

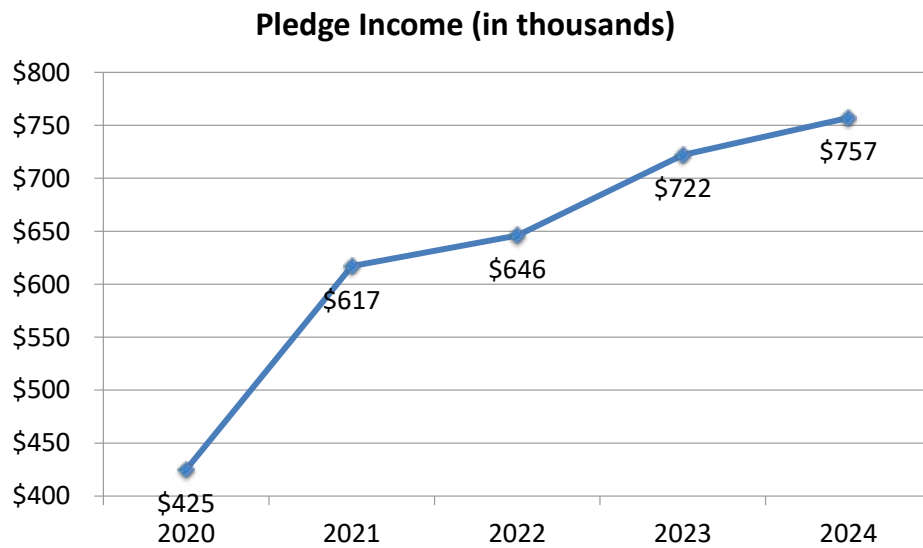
Average Sunday Attendance
2020 - 2024



Number of Pledges* 2020 – 2025



Annual Pledge Income Received 2020 – 2024



2023 MINISTRY REPORTS

ACOLYTE GUILD

The Acolyte Ministry held a training at the church in September to kick off the new year and prepare our new acolytes. We had four new acolytes join us this year, bringing our group's number to twenty. Our acolytes continue to serve important roles in our services by assisting the clergy, leading the procession, lighting and extinguishing our candles, and carrying the gospel. Serving as acolytes fosters commitment, devotion, responsibility and teamwork among our youth.

—Submitted by Meg Horton

ADULT CHRISTIAN FORMATION

We intentionally use the term “formation,” rather than “education” to reflect that our programming is meant to engage more than just our minds. We try to provide opportunities for our whole selves to grow closer to God, or to become more aware of the ways that God is always already close. In 2024, we continued and deepened several staples of our adult Christian formation programming, while also adding new opportunities to grow in faith.

At Lectio at Lunch, we gather every Thursday at noon for a wholesome meal and challenging Bible study. For most of 2024 we studied the gospel of Mark and in 2025 we are studying the gospel of Luke. At 9:30 on Sunday mornings, the Sunday Forum covers a broad range of topics, usually in series format: from intensive Bible study to tools for Christian living to issues in theology or church history that impact our lives today. Shorter series at different times meet specific needs or are scheduled around our Celtic service on Sunday evenings. In 2024, the adult Confirmation/Reception class met on early Sunday afternoons. Later on Sunday afternoons, we studied John Philip Newell's Sacred Earth, Sacred Soul and hosted a series on Interfaith Dialogue led by Sister Ellen Francis from the Order of St. Helena.

Our new program in the fall of 2024 was Called into Being, a crash course in discerning and beginning to exercise our vocations – what God calls us individually to be and to do. The program went well and we will do it again in 2025. If you are interested in learning more about this program, please don't hesitate to ask me or any of the members of our first two cohorts.

The variety of our formation programming means that there is something here for you! Please join us as we continue to learn and grow in faith.

—Submitted by The Reverend Eric Bidy

ALTAR GUILD AND LINEN GUILD

The Altar Guild had a good 2024 in our newly renovated Sacristy in the church sanctuary. We are grateful for this update as our purposeful things have a specific space. With the added responsibility of managing the Lay Eucharist Visitor kits and accompanying notebooks, this is very helpful. It is an honor to assist with this important ministry, allowing the opportunity for many homebound parishioners to participate in the Holy Eucharist.

We had a couple of added highlights to our usual schedule with the service honoring Absalom Jones in February and “Eat, Pray, Swim” at Lake Thurmond in June. We learned how to accommodate a well-attended, off-campus service using things we already have.

In 2024 we welcomed Naila Assad and Isaac Ball to our teams. They each serve as Altar Guild for the Celtic Service once a month. We look forward to another good year in 2025.

—Respectfully submitted, Catherine Stuckey

BROADCAST (AV) COMMITTEE

The Broadcast Committee is responsible for the production and distribution of the 11:00 a.m. Sunday morning worship services via video streaming on social media (i.e. Facebook and YouTube) and radio broadcasts via WGAC. In addition, the committee is responsible for ensuring “in-house” live audio during the services.

The Broadcast (A/V) committee is managed by part-time parish staff members Wright Montgomery and Mark Alberton, who are responsible for all regularly scheduled operations, with supplementary support periodically provided by Gabriel Hammond, Marty Duff, and Brandon Dawson.

Wright has served on the committee since it was first formed in 2013 and oversees operations – he can usually be found at the audioboard running sound. Mark, a renowned local photographer and film maker, joined us in July of 2024 and plays a pivotal role in weekly operations – he can usually be found at the video switchboard framing shots and switching between cameras. Gabriel, a long time AV committee member, currently lives and works in Atlanta, but continues to provide invaluable technical advice and operations support when he’s back home. We are also delighted to introduce our part-time workers, Marty Duff and Brandon Dawson, both of whom provide much needed interim support throughout the year. Marty has prior AV experience as a student and now works full time at the AU Library. Brandon has over a decade of experience as TV personality and reporter for WJBF - News Channel 6 and has a natural talent for picking up the technical side of things. We’re so grateful for their skills and commitment to this ministry.

2024 Accomplishments and Notable Initiatives

- Produced and provided over 6,000 minutes of live-streaming video content.
 - ◊ 11:00am worship services
 - ◊ Special events, such as weddings, funerals, concerts, etc.
- Refined and Optimized a number of system-wide improvements:
 - ◊ AV booth upgrades
 - ◊ Refined ‘OBS’ and ‘ReStream’ software for simultaneous YouTube & Facebook streaming
 - ◊ Implemented the Battery Recycling program
 - ◊ Fixed the RF humming from the 2 new prayer desk microphones/Front speakers built into the front prayer desks
 - ◊ Implemented the outdoor portable sound and video system during a number of outdoor events such as funerals, special events and services
- Collaborated with clergy, staff, and the Building and Grounds committee and Technology subcommittee, with continued support especially from Elisabeth Price, Keith Shafer, Hillary Bryant, Greg Maxie, Bill Ford, and our “behind-the-scenes” technical consultant, Bob Williams.

—Submitted by Wright Montgomery, Chair

BUILDING & GROUNDS COMMITTEE

The Buildings and Grounds Committee welcomed a new member in 2024, Virginia Marks. Having spent her childhood at Saint Paul’s coupled with her background in construction make her a welcome addition to our ranks. We also had a changing of the guard, as Cameron Nixon stepped down as chair, and the Vestry appointed volunteer John Robertson as Chair in November.

2024 was a challenging year, given the events of the year that impacted the physical structures of our church. Particularly, this committee has dealt with the aftermath of vandalism, a power surge, and hurricane Helene.

In addition to routine maintenance and small issues fixed, projects undertaken in 2024 include:

Replacing a maliciously broken window in the Children’s Ministry Center.

Pressure washing, scraping, recaulking, and repainting of the breezeway, exterior cornices on both sides and rear of the church, the exterior church windows, interior nave window stools, and walkway wrought iron.

A power surge zapped one of our three lighting control boards. These are no longer available, so a refurbished unit was sourced, and installed. While we have full lights in the church back, the ability to program different lighting “scenes” for certain services has been impacted. This committee sought the advice of expert lighting consultants and has identified a new system that could provide the features we require, but it will require the complete upgrading of the lighting control system. We are coordinating with the finance committee to find a way to do this work in the coming year(s). It was advised that we add a surge protection device to these circuits, and that work is scheduled for early 2025.

On recommendation of the Fire Marshal, we have added carbon monoxide monitors to Tyler Hall, Kitchen and River Room Kitchen. This will provide an alert should the air quality in these spaces somehow get compromised.

We worked nearly all year to get our fire sprinkler system “green tagged” due to some lingering maintenance/repair issues that required the coordination of multiple trades to accomplish.

In addition to routine maintenance to the chiller, boiler and the HVAC units across the church buildings, we have replaced a failing HVAC system that serves the clergy and staff offices, as well as chilled water control valves for the youth room air conditioning.

We continue our review of the west parking lot’s spaces, the loading lane and the handicap spaces to bring access up to date with the current usage of the Children’s Ministry Center and the River Room. Additionally, we are exploring the alteration to the sidewalk accessing the Colonial Gardens to provide ADA compliant access for this area.

The church buildings weathered Hurricane Helene fairly well, and we were able to host local folks for use of bathrooms, power, internet, and air conditioning during the immediate aftermath of the storm. We did not, however, come out unscathed. Several slate tiles were blown off the roof, two downspouts were blown off, a piece of the CMC soffit is missing and some flashing above the west portico door was pried up. We have filed a claim with our insurance company and will coordinate repairs in 2025. We are, however, secure and weather tight.

We are thankful for the support of the Church staff especially Elisabeth Price, Hillary Bryant and Keith Shafer and of faithful committee members: Tom Robertson, Cameron Nixon, Erick Montgomery, Wright Montgomery, Dennis Bell, Brad Sandbach, Jim Hilliard, Bobby Wright and Virginia Marks.

—Submitted by John Robertson, Chair

EUCCHARISTIC VISITORS' MINISTRY

Eucharistic Visitors take the Eucharist to those who are temporarily or permanently homebound and are unable to be in church with the gathered community. This ministry is mainly a sacramental one but at the same time a pastoral one. A pastoral visit after the Communion service keeps the recipients connected with the church members and ongoing activities.

Please share with others the value of this ministry. For more information or to request a Eucharistic visit, please contact Elisabeth Price in The Parish Office or Ellen Nesbitt at etmnesbitt@gmail.com.

—Respectfully submitted by Ellen Nesbitt, Chair

FLOWER GUILD

Mary Wright Baylor from the flower guild at the National Cathedral wrote an article last year about the spirituality of flowers and their importance to our worship services. She described our feelings perfectly and to quote her, *"we on the Flower Guild feel a great privilege and gratitude for the opportunity to enhance the beauty of our liturgy, music, and holy words."*

This year, Barbara Register and Laurie Montgomery took over as co-chairwomen of the Flower Guild. Pam Uros retired after doing this monumental job for at least eight years. She guided the new chairwomen through learning the ropes this year. Her leadership was evident in a solid plan for large events and laying out dates for crucial orders particularly for Easter and Christmas. We owe her many thanks as a parish for her talent for organization and creating lovely arrangements with her team.

The Flower Guild is divided into four teams that purchase the flowers and meet on Saturday mornings to arrange them for the altar, the narthex, the chapel and during special seasons, decorating the paschal candle and the Advent wreath. We are responsible for the greening of the church and chapel for Christmas Eve and the Christmas season and creating a profusion of beauty and rejoicing for Easter Day.

This year there were some lovely brass vases that were repaired and polished so that they can be used on the altar in the church and the chapel. We were also able to purchase some new oil candles for the Advent wreath to prevent wax dripping onto the floor and creating a safety hazard.

We were joined by many helpers this year to accomplish the enormous task of greening the church and chapel for Christmas along with our children's contributions to help decorate a tree for the Narthex. Their help was invaluable.

Members are; Brenda Mason, Jayne McElroy Scott, Sally Simkins, Magda Newland, Nancy Trefz, Pam Uros, Elizabeth Tudor, Ransom Schwerzler, Barbara Register, Catherine Stuckey, Louise Phinizy, Laura Phinizy, Anne Wilkin. Lynn Mays and Anne Claiborne Christian help with special events. Marion Clark who has been a member for many years retired this year. She will be greatly missed.

Our goal for the upcoming new year is to recruit some more members to help. It is not as overwhelming as many may assume. If you love to learn, we have some talented and fun people on board who are interested in sharing their skills. Please contact Barbara Register (barbararegister@gmail.com) or Laurie Montgomery (lauriefm628@gmail.com) if you are interested in joining our group. We would also love to create a cutting garden for greenery and always welcome suggestions and ideas.

May God grant that our hearts, our eyes, and hands may receive divine inspiration, enabling us to glorify the house of the Lord with the beauty of leaves and blossoms that God has created.

—Submitted by Laurie Montgomery, Co-Chair

FLOWER GUILD - DELIVERING FLOWERS TO PARISHIONERS

Barbara Register has headed up a wonderful ministry to use the flowers from the altar to rearrange and carry to parishioners who may be experiencing an illness, some type of grief or celebrating a special event. She is helped in this effort by Susan Yarborough and Margaret Penix. It has been a very special ministry as an extension of the Flower Guild and of the Pastoral Care Ministries and she would welcome anyone who may be interested in helping. You can email her at barbararegister@gmail.com.

—Submitted by Laurie Montgomery, Co-Chair

MUSIC

I began my 42nd year as Director of Music of Saint Paul's in 2024 and want to thank everyone who makes our parish's music program successful. Saint Paul's Church not only supports beautiful liturgical music but is also a major venue for concerts attended by thousands of music-lovers from both Georgia and South Carolina.

We began 2024 with 29 adults in the Saint Paul's Choir, which grew to 30 at year's end. The choir sang two Evensongs, the Independence Day celebration, the Easter Vigil, and Christmas Eve with two services: the 4:00 pm Christmas Eve service, followed by the 10:00 pm Christmas Eve service. Our children's choirs resumed their work in August with 12 children in the Canterbury Choir and 12 in the St. Nicholas Choir. Both choirs now rehearse on Sunday mornings.

Tuesday's Music Live resumed its programming with its 36th season of concerts. Attendance has now returned to pre-COVID levels. Tuesday's Music Live is a 501-c-3 non-profit arts organization with an independent board of directors. The series receives funding from corporate, foundation, and individual sources.

Plans for the 2025 celebration of the 275th anniversary of Saint Paul's Church began in 2024 and musical highlights occurring in 2025 include the Rose Sunday Concert premier of five pieces commissioned from the American composer, Michael Burkhardt, and the November 9th Evensong, featuring music commissioned by the British composer, Malcolm Archer, who will be present for the premier and will conduct the choir.

It continues to be an honor and privilege to be the Director of Music of this dynamic parish and I look forward to 2025.

—Submitted by Keith Shafer

NEEDLEPOINT GUILD - ALTAR KNEELERS PROJECT

Progress has continued this year on the needlework for new altar rail cushions. As of the end of 2024, we have seven tops of the cushions completed and eight boxing strips that will go around the sides of the cushions. We have twelve of the tops and the boxings to complete before we can begin to put the cushions together. We have twelve to finish. Several of the tops and boxings that are not finished are half or three quarters finished.

We have had numerous helpers who have contributed to getting this work done both within the parish and from other churches and denominations. Our Presbyterian friends have been very helpful with completing pieces and helping others finish. Linda Mote, our consultant, has been keeping us on track as well as Linda McCall who has been encouraging us all and reminding us of the timeline! She has completed many of the pieces.

We always welcome anyone to the group who would like to learn a new skill and help complete this large project. We also encourage anyone to bring other knitting or needlework projects to join us for

fellowship. Those who are able, meet once or twice a month to sew together and encourage one another.

Our overall goal for this project is to be finished with the needlework by November of 2025, which is the 275th anniversary year of Saint Paul's founding. We would like to establish it as a guild with other projects for the parish.

Those who have contributed so far are, Minta Nixon, Linda McCall, Laura Robertson, Kathleen Chandler, Nancy Carr, Tricia Nixon, Martha Nixon Sprinkle, Coleman Graham, Claiborne Porubsky, Catherine Stuckey, Cindy Shields, Linda Hardy, Martha Long, Suellen Mourfield, Lynn Mays, Becky Wright, Mary Porter Vann, Susan Barrett, Stacy Nuessle, Patsy Davis, Meg Horton, Belinda Peebles, Melissa Beaver and Naila Assad Anyone who is interested in helping and willing to make this commitment can contact Laurie Montgomery at lauriefm628@gmail.com or you can contact the church office for more information.

—Respectfully submitted, Laurie Montgomery

NEWCOMERS/INVITE, WELCOME, CONNECT MINISTRY

In 2024, the Invite Welcome Connect (IWC) Ministry at Saint Paul's continued to deepen its commitment to evangelism, hospitality, and connectedness. With a shared vision of inviting, welcoming, and connecting all who come through our doors, we endeavored to live as faithful members of Christ's body, reaching out in relational and intentional ways.

We are pleased to announce that Jackie Pingel has been appointed as co-chair of the IWC Ministry, with a second co-chair position to be filled in the coming weeks. Together, they will lead our efforts to grow the ministry and strengthen our church community.

One of the highlights of the year has been the expansion of our greeter team. New greeters are being added, and we are excited to introduce a new greeter orientation to ensure that everyone feels welcome when they arrive at Saint Paul's. This effort will help our church continue to be a place of warmth and hospitality, where everyone feels seen and valued.

The IWC Ministry is also actively working to equip Saint Paul's to practice evangelism, hospitality, and connectedness in tangible ways. We recognize the importance of nurturing relationships and creating an environment where newcomers feel invited and supported as they explore our community. We will continue to seek out new opportunities and strategies to connect people to the love and light of Christ in the year ahead.

In the coming year, we invite all to join us in this important work of extending the love and hospitality of Christ, as we continue to grow in faith and community.

—Submitted by Patsy Davis, Vestry Liaison

OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Outreach is a ministry not of a committee, but of the church. However, the Outreach Committee assists by organizing, recruiting volunteers, and raising funds to enable ministries the church might not otherwise provide. Committee activities in 2024 included:

Snack Pack Ministry: We began the year with our **Manna Pantry** distribution of boxes of canned goods and nonperishable food items. Since many people who are hungry don't have the ability to prepare a meal, Manna Pantry morphed into a snack pack ministry. Volunteers (including EYC members) met monthly to prepare bag lunches distributed through **DCCM** (Downtown Cooperative Church Ministry) as well as from Saint Paul's narthex.

Byllesby Center: Due to an abundance of volunteers at the **Master's Table Soup Kitchen** and our inability to recruit a Saint Paul's liaison for this activity, the committee instead chose to prepare and serve meals at the Byllesby Center (Christ Church) in the Harrisburg area. (The 2025 Outreach Committee budget includes funds to continue partnering with the center.)

Ramp Building: In December 2024, volunteers built a ramp for one of the area neighbors.

DCCM: Saint Paul's continued to provide a Board member and \$400 monthly in support of the CSRA's largest food pantry.

Ecuador Mission Trip: A team of ten worked with Cristo Liberador Church in various projects, including building construction, home visits, educational programs, and assisting in a health clinic. A Chili Cookoff sponsored by the Outreach Committee at Saint Paul's raised money to help support these activities and provided financial support to students through Education = Hope.

Our Little Roses: Although individuals in the church continue to support this orphanage in Honduras, the students formerly supported through the Outreach Committee budget are now grown, so this ministry was discontinued by the committee.

Veterans' Ice Cream Socials: Through quarterly ice cream socials at the Georgia War Veterans Nursing Home, volunteers provided ice cream, cookies, and much-appreciated conversation to veterans.

Hornsby Elementary School: Partnering with this downtown elementary school, Saint Paul's collected book bags, school supplies, clothing, and hygiene items in addition to hosting teacher support events. Volunteers also helped with a school field day and held a Trunk or Treat event for children near Halloween. An angel-tree ministry in December provided other needed items for students.

Ironman: The Ironman triathlon was cancelled due to Hurricane Helene, but one member of the Outreach Committee had already purchased cups, popsicles, treats, and other supplies for the event. These were reallocated to serve the community during the weeks following the storm.

—Submitted by Marilyn Grau, Chair

PARISH LIFE AND HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE

Parish Life and Hospitality enjoyed another year of participation and growth. Our generous budget of \$7230 was carefully used to accomplish the following:

- Men's Monthly Meals (MMM) each month. May of 2025 will be the beginning of the 4th year for MMM
- Weekly breakfasts between the 8 AM service and Christian Formation
- Receptions for Rose Sunday and Evensongs
- Pentecost picnic
- Eat Pray Swim, an inter-generational parish social event
- 4th of July picnic
- A low-country boil to celebrate the beginning of a new program year of Christian Formation
- Shrove Tuesday Pancake supper
- Annual fish fry during Lent

All of the above events will continue in 2025. Eat, Pray, Swim had such positive feed back, it will continue. In fact, it was so well received we are going to add a second event in the winter months called Eat, Pray, Chill. If there is a parish life event that you would like to suggest, please see Eric Friedman. New ideas and volunteers to help are always welcome.

—Submitted by Eric Friedman, Chair

PASTORAL CARE MINISTRY

Our Pastoral Care Ministry reaches out to our parishioners in need by phone calls, notes, cards, flowers, visits, and in other ways as needed. We provide the support of prayer, encouragement, caring, and a connection with others. Our ministry staff meets quarterly to review our activities, update our information, and go over our future plans.

We welcome those who wish to join in providing these needed services to our church family.

—Respectfully submitted by Ellen Nesbitt, Chair

USHER

Our small, dedicated and overworked team of ushers continue to make our 11:00 services go smoothly every week. We have had a couple of our regulars step away and we thank them for their long-standing service. Special thanks to Cindy Shields for all her support each week and her ability to enlist others to help each week.

To ensure that our 11:00 services continue to go smoothly we need your help. Serving as an usher is a fun easy way to support the church and make new congregation friends. There is no age limit, and no real training is needed to serve. Next time you arrive at the service just let one of the ushers know you would like to assist. Having a few more people to help, even if its only occasionally will help us work around absences or changes to the schedule, including funerals.

Regular members of our usher team are Cindy Shields, Charlie Tudor, Bob Pate, Ian McQueen, Melissa Friedman, John Luther, Steve Ruby, Art Bryan, and Rex Teeslink.

—Submitted by Nick Uros, Co-Chair

VERGER, EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS, AND LECTORS

Saint Paul's currently has 3 Vergers, 17 Eucharistic ministers and 18 Lectors who support our worship services in a number of ways.

Our Lectors include both adult and youth and they read the lessons at all the Sunday services as well as at special services.

Our Eucharistic Ministers serve the chalice at all services on Sunday, at our midweek chapel service, as well as at special services and occasionally at weddings or funerals.

Our Vergers serve primarily at the 11:00 service and at any other service at the request of the Rector. While the role of the verger is most visible leading the procession on Sunday morning, much of the vergers work is behind the scenes working with the Clergy, Altar Guild, Ushers and Music Director to make sure all is ready for each service.

—Submitted by Carolyn Dolen

W.E.E.M. (WOMEN'S ENRICHMENT AND EMPLOYMENT MINISTRY)

W.E.E.M. is still in its initial launch season but has impacted women's lives within Saint Paul's Church and the CSRA! The work of the Steering Committee has been more than a blessing to bring a vision to life that benefits and strengthens the delicate lives of women. Each month W.E.E.M. lives into its mission to inspire healthy, spiritual, and inclusive connections through prayer and fellowship and our vision helps to create a strong network of intergenerational women to enrich and empower their present and future through educational and life experiences. Our attendance numbers are a consistent 30 present with at least 2-5 newcomers each month. Our speakers have been extraordinary and the topics have equipped women for real world and home concerns. W.E.E.M. has given women permission to live into who God has created them to become. A ministry for Women by Women.

—Submitted by The Reverend Kimberly E. Dunn

WORSHIP

Worship is not one of our activities among many. It is the heart of all that we do and all that we are. The Lord's table animates our feeding ministries, the welcome people receive entering the church undergirds our hospitality, the confession, absolution, and offertory make sense of our ministries of mercy and justice, the proclamation of the word is the basis of formation. Worship makes us who we are and a lot of people do a lot of sometimes unseen work to make it possible for us to worship in beauty and good order. I am grateful to Keith Shafer, Victoria Hammond, Nikki Wickware, and the choirs; Catherine Stuckey and the altar and linen guilds; Barbara Register, Laurie Montgomery, and the flower guild; Wright Montgomery, Mark Albertin, and the audio visual team; Carolyn Dolen and Robin Merriman and the lectors, vergers, and Lay Eucharistic Ministers; Meg and Donald Horton and the acolytes; and Rex Teeslink and Nick Uros and the ushers. This year I especially want to acknowledge Carolyn Dolen, who has stepped back from scheduling our vergers, lectors, and Lay Eucharistic Ministers after many years of faithful service. Robin Merriman has stepped into this role and will continue Carolyn's legacy of able leadership.

All these folks worked very hard this year as we went through our familiar cycle of liturgical seasons and continued our traditional special services of Evensongs, the St. Francis pet blessing, baptisms, weddings, funerals, and Senior Sunday. They also worked through a number of special worship services this year, especially the inaugural convocation-wide celebration of the Feast of Absalom Jones and our first Eat, Pray, Swim, when we celebrated the Eucharist simultaneously at Saint Paul's and Elijah Clark state park. It has been a very good year of worship at Saint Paul's. And all of our worship ministries could use more members. Please help us keep worshipping in beauty and order by finding your place in our worship ministries.

—Submitted by The Reverend Eric Bidy

YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Saint Paul's Church is committed to growing and nurturing our children and youth ministry, recognizing the crucial role that children play in the future viability of our church and our world. This year, we have made significant strides in strengthening these ministries and fostering a sense of belonging among our children and families.

In 2024, we made a pivotal investment by hiring a part-time Youth and Children's Director. This role is essential for guiding our ministries and creating a sustainable program that supports the spiritual growth of our young parishioners.

To ensure our programs meet the needs of our families, we sought honest feedback from them

through a survey. The response highlighted several strengths, notably the formation efforts led by excellent volunteers and dedicated families. Our children's choir programs were particularly commended, as was the beautiful space where our activities take place. Feedback also identified areas for improvement, informing our programming plan for 2025. We are committed to addressing these areas to enhance the overall experience for our children and youth.

Our monthly Meet Saint Paul's program offers adults the opportunity to visit classrooms and share insights about their ministries. This initiative aims to ignite children's interest in ministry and encourages church members to engage with our young parishioners. Through this program, children are introduced to the leaders and various ministries of the church. They learn about church finances, pastoral care, worship, outreach, and more, fostering a sense of integration into the church's life and leadership.

In an effort to create a more welcoming worship environment for our youngest parishioners, we also have begun offering craft bags for families to use during service. The bags are full of crayons, art supplies, coloring books, word searches and more to help our families be present and worship.

We are dedicated to rebuilding and reinvesting in our youth ministries. As our youth transition from childhood to adulthood, we aim to build a supportive community that helps them grow in Christ. Our focus is on recognizing their gifts and ministries while assisting them in navigating these transformative years. Our Episcopal Youth Community (EYC) meetings included supper, fun and fellowship, which are essential for community building and continuity. By engaging with Saint Bartholomew's, we have been able to keep a consistent meeting time. Gatherings are vital for nurturing relationships and ensuring a strong sense of belonging among our youth.

Initiatives like Snack Pack Ministries and Walk for Water have increased community involvement and strengthened relationships across ministries and generations. Our goal is to make younger members feel welcome and integrated, expanding mentorship and engagement opportunities. A fall stewardship luncheon for young families allowed youth and children's groups to engage and fellowship, while parents connected with the church.

The advent season was full of wonderful intergenerational engagement. Many of our families participated in the advent making wreath activity. Our children were able to assist the flower guild by decorating ornaments used to green the church. Our youth and children and their families enjoyed caroling to homebound parishioners and residents of St. John Towers. Our advent pageant allowed our parishioners to experience the joy of our children's program and see the growth we've experienced firsthand.

Saint Paul's Church remains devoted to the spiritual and communal growth of our youngest parishioners. Through ongoing investments and responsive programming, we strive to create an inclusive, supportive environment for our youth and children, ensuring they feel valued and capable of contributing to the church's mission. We look forward to continuing this journey together in 2025 and beyond.

—Submitted by Aubrey Hinkson, Director of Children and Youth Ministries

2023 FINANCIAL REPORTS

ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE

The current Saint Paul's Endowment was created in 1997 with the establishment of the Saint Paul's Endowment Trust. It is qualified as a 501(c)(3) organization.

The purpose of the Endowment is to provide a flexible mechanism for the making of donations and bequests by parishioners of Saint Paul's Church and others, whereby the corpus, or the principal value at the time of the donation, shall be inviolate. Any disbursements from these funds are derived from the income generated by the investment of the funds and therefore represent a permanent legacy on behalf of donors.

Endowment funds are professionally managed under an agreement with the Community Foundation for the Central Savannah River Area and administered by the Saint Paul's Endowment Committee. Donations and bequests can be made to the Saint Paul's Endowment Fund c/o Saint Paul's Church.

A separate endowment fund has been established to support Saint Paul's outreach and service ministries. The Mary Kathleen Blanchard Outreach Endowment Fund was created by the estate of our beloved "MK" Blanchard to further the outreach activities of Saint Paul's Church. This fund is managed and administered as part of the Saint Paul's Endowment, but distributions will be restricted to outreach and service ministries. Gifts and bequests may be made to the Mary Kathleen Blanchard Outreach Endowment Fund c/o Saint Paul's Church.

During 2021, the Jane and Bleakley Chandler Endowment Fund was established within the Saint Paul's Endowment through a bequest from the Chandler family. The purpose of this fund is to further our church's ministries in the Augusta community. Under our Spending Rule, distributions from this new fund will begin in 2025. The estimated distribution of \$22,400 for 2025 is included in the 2025 budget.

—Submitted by Monty Osteen, Endowment Chair

ENDOWMENT FUND SUMMARY

Endowment Income accounted for 10.7% of total income in the 2024 budget. In the 2025 budget, Endowment Income is projected to be 12.4% of total income.

Our Endowment Funds totaled \$5.45 million at year end 2024 compared to \$4.86 million at year end 2023, an increase of 12.1%. The \$.59 million increase in value include \$156,979 in donations from parishioners, a \$120,000 transfer from the capital campaign (as provided for as part of the campaign), investment income of \$436,435, and a reduction of \$116,000 from distributions to the church. Based on our Spending Rule, the 2025 budget includes an estimated distribution of \$134,000 from the Endowment.

—Submitted by Monty Osteen, Endowment Chair

2024 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

This stewardship report is primarily a message of gratitude because gratitude and stewardship are essential to one another, and they are essential for us as a community of God's people, living and sharing the Good News.

In 2023 the vestry wrote a "Theology of Stewardship" statement which expresses our belief that gratitude is the natural response to God's abundance, and it leads us to be faithful stewards and loving neighbors.

Saint Paul's Vestry Theology of Stewardship

All that we are and all that we have come from God.

In gratitude we honor God by giving of ourselves and our gifts to care for the world.

The fall campaign, though disrupted by hurricane Helene, was fruitful on several levels. **139** pledges were made; the pledged total was **\$821,645**. We saw an increase in the dollars pledged over last year. **66** pledges were increased for 2025, and **17** new pledges were made. Great fellowship was enjoyed at the four stewardship gatherings held in November.

The stewardship committee is grateful for the generous giving which funds our ministries and the operations of the church. We now eagerly turn our attention to the ways we care for God's gifts throughout the year, placing intentional focus on integrating stewardship into our common lives at Saint Paul's.

We invite you to look forward, with us, to the opportunities we will share to teach and model and experience gratitude, and to live even more fully in God's love for all God's people.

—Respectfully submitted by Kitty Gordon and Erick Montgomery, Stewardship Co-Chairs

TREASURER'S REPORT: 2024 BUDGET

The 2025 budget projects total income of \$1,082,000. The main sources of income are pledge receipts, plate offerings, endowment income and rental income.

The projected expenses for this year are \$1,080,536. Primary areas of expenses are salaries and benefits, maintenance and utilities, Outreach (including the Diocesan pledge), ministry programs, and administrative expenses.

To build reserves for River Room maintenance, 20% of rental income will be set aside. Furthermore, we are supplementing clergy salaries with reserve funds raised for this purpose. This budget also funds a new, full-time administrative position, also which will be supplemented from a reserve fund established for this purpose.

—Submitted by Will Rice, Treasurer

TREASURER'S REPORT: 2024 FINANCIAL RESULTS

I am happy to report that from a financial perspective, St. Paul's had a solid year in 2024. As shown in this report, the church experienced an operating surplus for the year as operating revenues exceeded budget forecasts and operating expenses were slightly more than budgeted. The 2024 Budget called for revenues of \$1,046,510 and expenses of \$1,041,234.

Total income in 2024 of \$1,092,407 was stronger than expected. As usual, the bulk of the operating revenue consisted of contributions in the form of pledge payments (\$757, 551), plate offerings (\$97,537 -checks and \$15,539 -cash). The second-highest source of operating revenue was from the endowment (\$116,000). Our River Room event bookings remain solid. For the year, River Room income was \$114,926 of which twenty percent is set aside in a fund to support ongoing maintenance.

On the expense side, the biggest category was compensation and benefits (\$523,469). Other significant expense categories were property related expenses, utilities and outreach expenses, including the Diocesan pledge. Total expenses of \$1,063,875 for the year were slightly higher than planned.

2024 net income was \$28,532. The surplus is put into our Church Project Fund to help cover planned and unexpected expense not necessarily considered in the operating budget.

As we close the books on 2024, I would like to thank Monty Osteen for his many years of invaluable stewardship as Finance Chairman.

—Submitted by Will Rice, Treasurer

INCOME AND EXPENSE SUMMARY 2025 BUDGET VS. 2024 ACTUAL

	<u>2024 Actual</u>	<u>2025 Budget</u>
Income		
Offerings		
Pledges	\$757,551.00	\$791,500.00
Plate Offering - Checks	\$97,537.74	\$60,000.00
Plate Offering - Cash	\$15,538.78	\$10,000.00
275th Celebration		\$3,400.00
Total Offerings	\$870,627.52	\$864,900.00
Other Income		
Endowment Earnings	\$116,000.00	\$111,600.00
River Room Income	\$114,926.37	\$120,000.00
RR Maintenance Reserve	(\$21,460.00)	(\$24,000.00)
Outreach - General		\$9,500.00
Parish Meals, Misc Income	\$12,312.83	\$1,000.00
Total Other Income	\$221,779.20	\$217,100.00
Total Income	\$1,092,406.72	\$1,082,000.00
Expenses		
Building & Grounds		
Equipment Maintenance		\$18,600.00
Grounds Maintenance	\$16,655.75	\$17,000.00
Kitchen & Janitorial	\$15,013.41	\$15,000.00
Property & Liability Insurance	\$54,952.25	\$58,814.00
Property Taxes	\$170.00	\$170.00
Repair & Restoration	\$38,123.45	\$40,000.00
Security	\$4,280.00	\$4,280.00
Total Building & Grounds	\$129,194.86	\$153,864.00
Christian Education		
ACE	\$2,529.45	\$2,500.00
Children	\$1,166.83	\$3,700.00
EYC/Youth	\$1,792.00	\$3,150.00
Salaries - Nursery	\$2,120.00	\$7,200.00
Total Christian Education	\$7,608.28	\$16,550.00
Evangelism	\$23,228.91	\$26,000.00
Office	\$40,806.92	\$40,250.00
Outreach		
Diocesan Pledge	\$96,324.00	\$100,191.00
Outreach Assistance	\$5,054.64	\$5,000.00
Outreach - Diocese of Jerusalem	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
Outreach - General		\$9,500.00
Special Offerings - Diocese		\$500.00
Total Outreach	\$102,378.64	\$116,191.00
Parish Communications	\$4,404.72	\$7,000.00
Parish Life	\$21,428.45	\$17,755.00
Professional Expenses	\$3,521.00	\$9,000.00
Compensation		
Salaries, Housing & Other Costs	\$596,562.91	\$661,881.00
Salary Exp. offset from Reserves	(\$73,094.00)	(\$164,000.00)
Total Compensation	\$523,468.91	\$497,881.00
Utilities	\$102,321.82	\$107,780.00
Worship Commission	\$42,951.07	\$40,365.00
Acctng, Audit, 275th, Other	\$62,561.00	\$47,900.00
Total Expenses	\$1,063,874.58	\$1,080,536.00
 Net Total	 \$28,532.14	 \$1,464.00

**STATEMENT OF ASSETS, LIABILITIES, AND NET ASSETS - MODIFIED CASH BASIS
DECEMBER 31, 2023 AND 2022**

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 881,727	\$ 1,014,596
Investments held by the Community Foundation	4,855,212	3,743,820
Total Assets	<u>\$ 5,736,939</u>	<u>\$ 4,758,416</u>
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Liabilities:		
	\$ 12,086	\$ -
Security deposits	51,691	46,049
Debt	-	31,033
Total Liabilities	<u>63,777</u>	<u>77,082</u>
Net Assets:		
Without donor restrictions	5,349,426	4,128,306
With donor restrictions	323,736	553,028
Total Net Assets	<u>5,673,162</u>	<u>4,681,334</u>
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	<u>\$ 5,736,939</u>	<u>\$ 4,758,416</u>

A NOTE REGARDING THE REPORT ABOVE

The Church's financials are audited by Cleveland Group and for the years ended 12/31/22 and 12/31/23, the auditors issued an opinion that the financial statements "present fairly in all material respects, the assets, liabilities and net assets". The Statement of Assets, Liabilities, and Net Assets - Modified Cash Basis for December 31, 2023 and 2022 is provided above. The 2024 audit is expected in mid-2025.

VESTRY

Kitty Gordon, Sr. Warden
Bryan Hawkins, Chancellor

Erick Montgomery, Jr. Warden
Julie Badger, Clerk of the Vestry

Will Rice, Treasurer

Vestry Term Expires 2025

Bryan Hawkins
Ian McQueen
Rex Teeslink

Vestry Term Expires 2026

Stacy Nuessle
Charlie Tudor
Mary Porter Vann

Vestry Term Expires 2027

Kathleen Chandler
Patsy Davis
Melissa Friedman

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Altar Guild – Catherine Stuckey
Buildings and Grounds – John Robertson
Daughters of the King – Suzanne Pursley-Crotteau
Eucharistic Visitors – Ellen Nesbitt
Facebook – Stacy Nuessle & Aubrey Hinkson
Flower Delivery – Barbara Register & Margaret Scott Penix
Hospitality and Parish Life – Eric Friedman
Invite, Welcome, Connect – Patsy Davis
Linen Guild – Tricia Nixon
Nursery Grandmother’s Guild – Coleman Graham
Pastoral Care Ministry – Ellen Nesbitt
Ushers – Nick Uros & Rex Teeslink

Acolytes – Meg & Donald Horton
Creation Care – in transition
Endowment – Monty Osteen
Finance – Cameron Nixon
Flower Guild – Barbara Register & Laurie Montgomery
History – in transition
Interior Design – Julie Badger
Lectors & Eucharistic Ministers – Robin Merriman
Newcomers and Greeters – Summer Bell
Outreach – Marilyn Grau
Stewardship – Kitty Gordon

CLERGY AND STAFF

The Rev. Dr. Eric Biddy, Rector
The Rev. Kimberly E. Dunn, Asso. Rector
The Rev. Dr. Bill Dolen, Assisting Priest
The Rev. Erwin Veale, Assisting Priest
Aubrey Hinkson, Director of Children & Youth Ministries
Keith Shafer, Director of Music
Elisabeth Price, Parish Administrator
Norm Nieminen, Parish Accountant
Victoria Hammond and Nikki Wickware, St. Nicholas Choir
Sarah Pritchard, Music Associate Emerita
Hillary Bryant, Greg Maxie, TJ Wilson, James Wheeler, Sextons
Mark Albertin, Wright Montgomery, Audio Visual

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