St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Newburyport
2020 Annual Report
for the 2021 Annual Meeting
February 28, 2021
**St. Paul’s 2020 Vestry**
Bronson de Stadler – Senior Warden
Ed Winslow – Junior Warden
Stu Tuthill – Treasurer
Clare Keller – Clerk
Shepherds

**Class of 2023**
Kerry Lagueux
John Neale
Alison Novello

**Class of 2022**
Vanessa Ayersman
Jane Niebling
Sam Walker

**Class of 2021**
Jenn Mansfield
Michelle Rogers


**St. Paul’s 2021 Vestry and Nominations**
Ed Winslow – Senior Warden
Karen Spangler – Junior Warden
Nick Ives – Treasurer
Deirdre Budzyna – Clerk

Shepherds

**Class of 2024**
Lorrie Jones
Lisë Reid

**Class of 2023**
Kerry Lagueux
John Neale
Alison Novello

**Class of 2022**
Vanessa Ayersman
Jane Niebling
Sam Walker


**Diocesan Delegates/Deanery Representatives**
Alison Novello
Lainie Ives
At Meg’s request, with John Neale’s count of 57 present, Clare Keller declared a quorum.

Meg asked that Clare be appointed Clerk

Meg asked for a motion to accept the Minutes of the last all-Parish meeting of 23 June 2019. Bob Keller so moved, and Laurie Suda seconded, Minutes accepted.

Meg introduced current members of vestry and officers, and Diocesan Representatives.

**Vestry Members Present:** Joyce Cejka, Jay Gamble, Clare Keller, Jenn Mansfield, John Neale, Stu Tuthill, Ed Winslow; Absent were Sam Acquaviva, Bronson de Stadler, Pat Maslen, Michele Rogers.

**Meg nominated** the four officers: Bronson de Stadler, Senior Warden

Ed Winslow, Junior Warden
Stu Tuthill, Treasurer
Clare Keller, Clerk

and asked for a motion to elect the Executive Committee for a one-year term by acclamation: Bob Keller so moved, and Laurie Suda seconded. Vote carried.

Meg introduced the **three Three-year term Vestry:** Kerry Lagueux, Alison Novello, and John Neale. They were elected by acclamation, there being no nominations from the floor.

Meg introduced three **Two-Year Term Vestry:** Jane Niebling, Vanessa Ayersman, and Sam Walker. A call for nominees from the floor went unanswered, the members for two years were elected by acclamation as called by Meg, moved by Virginia and seconded by Alison.

Meg introduced Michele Rogers (in absentia) and asked that she be acclaimed as a candidate for **one additional year on the vestry.** Lisë so moved, Alison seconded.

Meg then introduced or named the four **Diocesan Representatives:** Lainie Ives, Alison Novello, Virginia Rogers, Dale Cavanaugh.

Lisë Reid, chair, and Rick Paddy, co-chair, rose to give the Report of the Search Committee. Lisë introduced each member by their position on the search committee and said they were “so thrilled” to announce that the Rev. Jarred Mercer was selected unanimously by the Search Committee and was presented to the Vestry who voted unanimously to call him as the next Rector of St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Newburyport. He has also been accepted by the Bishop.

Lisë gave a thorough description of Jarred and Chelsea’s life, and preparation for this next step. Rick Patty read the letter to St. Paul’s from Jarred Mercer. Accepting the call joyously. Rick described his colleagues as ‘a hardworking committee who found the new rector in 15.5 months.’ APPLAUSE

Meg announces that she will be here until March 15th. Jo Barrett, recently retired Rector of the church in Topsfield, will join us as Bridge Priest.

Meg leads a demonstration of how to use your phone to access lectionary, BCP, Bible and other church-related apps.

Stu Tuthill followed up with a report on Opportunities for e-giving, as a goal for getting young people involved and ‘others who use their phones for everything.’ This will be assisted by ACS, the company we use for following our pledges. Text number and message are: 73256 / saintpaulsnbpt; _ $amount. 2.65% fee and $3 processing fee. QR code created by Stu for a trial run at Easter services. Particularly targeted are visitors who may want to give but haven’t cash at hand to do so. Stu introduced ‘One more website:’ episcopalvoice.org - scroll down for future opportunities. For example, under featured opportunities/St Paul’s Music program is listed. The Episcopal Voice of the Lower Merrimack Valley is a collaboration to create community through shared events, actions, activities, worship, ministries, learning, connecting, relationships and communication. Church membership is not required. They are hoping to send bulletins on Friday on your phone.
Ed Winslow: Accessibility Discussion. See Report pp 12-13. Ed led everyone through accomplishments and planning ahead, especially in regard to finding the funding and making decisions in regard to wheelchair accessibility. After thoughtful comments and questions from the floor, Kathleen de Stadler commended Eddie and his group.

State of the Church p.11: Meg commended Jay Gamble for all he has done as Property Shepherd. Meg has been making a priority of youth. Meg talks of the difference in confirmation classes because of “the Well”. She commends Jenn Mansfield and her team downstairs who are evolving a new program to replace CGS. Meg referred all to pp 16-17 of the Annual Report and noted that “We’re at 84 /Sunday.”

Meg elicits goals for 2020: Responses from the parish members were:

- Welcoming;
- resurrect our global outreach;
- creativity in fall fair and fundraising.
- Continue work of accessibility.
- Bringing new young families to St. Paul’s and being systematic about that.
- What can we do that’s different to make young people want to be here?
- We need to be more forthcoming about asking others to be part of projects – how to get involved.
- Involvement with local clergy.
- Interfaith activities.
- Use the website to encourage involvement.
- Include a proper space for healing prayers to become part of the architectural planning.
- Pastoral attention to young people.
  - Meg adds a search for young adults to come alongside youth and mentor them.

Budget: Stu rises to let people know that the financial reports are available to pick up. He then goes to the Narrative Budget of 2020 and notes ‘Some changes since it was written’:

- getting a Bridge Priest will cost a little more but will be well worth it.
- the fact that the deficit is smaller than expected.
- Piano will be the best in town and expand the music program.
- there have been small surpluses in past years, but very close to breaking even.
- He thanks finance committee for all the work they do.
  - Issues invitation for anyone interested to attend their meetings.
- Tom Smith is retiring from being assistant treasurer.
- Mark Davis is taking over the investment trust.
  - $37,000+ this year’s income from investments.
  - Fidelity holds $139,000+ the housing fund: to help Fr. Jarred with down payment on a home, as a loan.
- 2020 budget is an optimistic revenue forecast. Hoping to get some other donations.
- Posting a wish-list for people to consider in addition to their pledges.

We’ll be watching our expenses very closely. We’ve been on autopilot, perhaps we need to be looking for alternatives.

- New budget will show a small deficit, we’ll try to make it up.

Meg distributed awards and mementoes of service and named the Extraordinary Person: Bev Brennan.

Motion for adjournment from Sharon Clark, seconded by Laurie Suda.
Staff Reports

From the Rector

Churches, particularly mainline churches like Episcopalians, are often allergic to change. They say they want growth and vitality but too often resist any catalyst or energy that might help that flourishing happen. But the openness of this community to adapt, change, and welcome new things this past year has been extraordinary. Moving to virtual services and auctions, new liturgical experiences in our worship, and new ways of pastoral care and connecting with one another in a time of pandemic is evidence to me of a people who have their priorities straight; who know that what really matters isn’t that everything looks and feels exactly like it always has or exactly like any particular individual prefers but that we are open to the movement of God’s love and willing to move with it, to be willing to go where we need to go and do what we need to do to follow in that love—living it and proclaiming it to others.

Nothing, absolutely nothing about this past year has been ideal, or exemplary, or anything like what any community would hope for. But, that being acknowledged, we baptized over twice as many people as in 2019 and already have had one baptism in 2021 with two more forthcoming, gained 17 new members (and potentially more as those who have joined us virtually during the pandemic may become more involved when we’re able to regather in person), 15 new pledge units, have connected with countless new people through our online ministry (including our first live-streamed wedding and concerts), and we have often twice as many people watching our services than attended on an average Sunday before the pandemic. Emily Travis & Johnny Mondestin and Susan Crawford & Marie Roy were married here in 2020, and we raised all the funds needed to install our new video and sound equipment, which are expanding the possibilities of what we can accomplish both as a congregation and in reaching out into the community. Among Friends has adapted and expanded in a remarkable way, new forms of devotional life during Advent and other times have engaged us in different ways of learning and prayer and will continue to do so moving forward in 2021. Our “Mass in the Grass” initiative offered a daily Eucharist throughout the week outside so that the Eucharist, the very lifeblood of our community, could be offered in a safe and secure way. Through those of you who have given to the Rector’s discretionary fund we’ve supported people who are hungry, in need of housing, seeking debt relief, and needing to make car insurance payments so that they can get to work and support their families. We raised $8,000 through our first online auction, plus around another $2,500 through virtual concerts, have sought to faithfully engage with the needs and concerns of our society through things like our anti-racist book group, found new ways of engaging children and families without being able to meet together thanks to Linda’s efforts and creativity, created new musical opportunities through video-streamed concerts with Mark and Sam and Charlie, two members of our youth group, and the list goes on and on.

The Church is the body of Christ and not an organization that can sit comfortably under the judgements and criteria of other organizations but, for lack of a better way to express it, 2020 was, despite all odds, an overwhelming “success” for St. Paul’s Church. This doesn’t mean it has been easy, this doesn’t mean we haven’t suffered great losses. It doesn’t remove our frustrations, isolation, fear, and loneliness. It doesn’t lessen any of these experiences that 2020 has brought our way. But it is a cause of rejoicing in the midst of all the hardships life has thrown at us. And St. Paul’s is a community that gives shape to that rejoicing, that enables us to find a home for both our sorrow and our joy together as one body.

Ultimately, wherever we find ourselves and whatever the course our lives have taken this past year, I hope that you can join me in offering up this community in thanksgiving to God and rejoicing in one another. That is, after all, what we’re here for.
As we take stock of the last year with all its ups and downs, and we look at 2021 with hope and expectation, take heart at what God has done and is doing among us, offer up the whole of yourself—grief and sorrow, joy and delight—and, “As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving” (Colossians 2:6–7).

We also give thanks for those members of our parish family that have died this past year and now rest in eternal peace: Dale Snowdon, Josiah Welch, Bob Walton, and Pat Wall. And we remember also before God’s loving mercy the numerous other family members and loved ones who died in 2020. +Rest eternal grant unto them, O Lord. And let light perpetual shine upon them.

With gratitude and love,
Fr Jarred

**From the Music Director**

Here are ten reasons (among many others) for me to give thanks to God for music/worship-related blessings at St. Paul’s during 2020:


2. Through the very generous and enthusiastic response from members and friends of St. Paul’s, we raised $30,000 and purchased a 6’11” Model B Steinway grand piano. It was delivered on January 22 and dedicated during the worship service on February 2.

3. The first concert, The Romantic Piano, was on February 9 in collaboration with the Ballets Russes Arts Initiative.

4. The Steinert piano which had served us well for many years in the sanctuary was moved to the Community Room downstairs. Once Covid restrictions are lifted, it can be used there by our Sunday school and youth group, as well as providing another rehearsal space for our choir and other musicians.
5. With the changeover to live-streamed services on March 29 and safety guidelines with limits on singing, five of our choir members continue to lead the singing of hymns, liturgy, psalm settings, and anthems: Richard Blumensheid, Elaine Bucher, Joyce Cejka, Virginia Meyer, and Jane Niebling.

6. In June, we welcomed Fr Jarred, who brings not only his leadership and pastoral skills but also his musical talent and liturgical expertise.

7. Two of our teenage musicians, Charlie Grossman and Sam Walker, also have offered their talents in worship services, in addition to a wonderful Christmas concert which they presented with Fr Jarred on December 20.

8. In several worship services Priscilla Bellairs has shared her skills on the cello with us. Lauren Olson-Sidford, Christina Bucher, and Rachel Bucher also helped lead the singing on Christmas Eve. And I hope that you heard Evan and Nathan Lagueux play some beautiful violin and saxophone music at the Christmas Eve family service.
9. On Pentecost (May 31) and All Saints’ Day (November 1) several singers took their hymnals and masks and visited some of our St. Paul’s members, offering favorite hymns in a safely distanced outdoor setting. Terry Anderson, Sue Blumenscheid, Bev Brennan, Joyce Cejka, Virginia Meyer, Karen Spangler, and I sang to some very appreciative friends.

10. On November 22, with Virginia Meyer at the lectern to provide background information, I presented an organ recital on St. Paul’s 1923 Austin pipe organ. This virtual event was viewed by many of our St. Paul’s family as well as by friends throughout the U.S. and even as far away as Germany and Japan. Through our generous audience and with a big shout-out to our amazing tech crew, the recital raised over $2,000 toward the Fall Fair income.

2020 was my fifteenth year as music director at St. Paul’s. Because of the changes in our worship life at St. Paul’s and the new challenges that the pandemic has brought to the area of church music, I welcome your feedback, questions, and ideas more than ever. I feel blessed that Fr Jarred is at St. Paul’s with his spiritual leadership and support, and thankful to Deb and Linda for being such hard-working and faithful co-workers.

Grace and peace, Mark Meyer
From the Children & Youth Program Coordinator
You can find Linda Siess’ report in the Formation section below.

From the Office Manager
Well, 2020 was one for the books. I know we are all happy to have bid farewell to 2020 and look forward to a better 2021. Daily office responsibilities have however, stayed the same. The one huge thing missing is the visits from parishioners – I miss you so much.

In July our bookkeeper of 20 years, Paula Cormier retired and Alison Novello has taken her position. It is a joy to work with Alison, a very capable bookkeeper indeed!

It’s an honor and one of the biggest blessings in my life to be able to work here. The compassion, love, helpfulness and support that I get from everyone here at St. Paul’s is amazing and I thank you from the bottom of my heart. It is a pleasure to work with Fr. Jarred, Mark, Linda, Alison and Bob every day.

With gratitude, Deb Hay

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORTS

Report from the Senior Warden

Dear Parishioners,

It has been my privilege to be a Warden at St. Paul’s for the past four years. During my time as an officer of the church, we have accomplished much including major property repairs and renovations to the steeple, multiple masonry repairs and a new slate roof on the church building (no small feat), major electrical upgrades, and countless encounters with water leaks, technology glitches, and things that don’t work when they are supposed to. Some of the high points for me in these four years have been our participation in a Smithsonian Institute exhibit on Early Church History in America in Washington DC, the launching of the St. Paul’s Music Series bringing classical and choral music to Newburyport to rival the caliber of music in any major city in America, the purchase of a concert-quality Steinway piano through the generosity of all of you, and a major technology upgrade which allows us, in the unfortunate time of the pandemic, to offer high-quality broadcasts of our Sunday services, concerts, and video experiences through our YouTube channel to all of you, our wider community, the nation and, frankly, the world. My head spins at the possibilities that lie before us as a Christian community for the future.

The major changes we have all experienced during these years have been the end of the rectorship of Rev. Martha Hubbard after twelve years to assume a new position in the Diocese, an active year spent with interim priest the Rev. Meg Ingalls, a short time with temporary priest the Rev. Johanna Barrett before our dedicated Search Committee recommended and the vestry accepted the calling of our new rector the Rev. Dr. Jarred Mercer who joined us in June of this year. We are very fortunate to have such a talented and knowledgeable priest who brings such a deeply rooted faith to our community.

I feel I have experienced so much with you in this community, so many joyous occasions at Easter, Christmas tide, and church events, the baptism of babies, the confirmation of youth and adults who have committed anew to their baptismal vows, marriages, celebrations of anniversaries and relationships of all colors of the rainbow. I am also acutely aware of the losses so many have suffered, the losses of adult children, parents, friends, and others. Each loss makes me aware of my own personal losses, the emptiness life can bring, and the need for our faith to give us hope and experience life anew.

As the Greek philosopher, Heraclitus said, “The only constant in life is change.” So it is time for a new Senior Warden to represent the laity. I truly feel my tenure was a calling to serve for this period of time, not at all a burden on my time. As we enter a new chapter in the long history of the church, it is a time for new ideas and
grasping new possibilities to spread the Word of God. I hope to continue to be an involved and faithful member of our parish. I look forward to seeing you all in person soon.

Faithfully,

Bronson de Stadler

From the Treasurer
NOTE: These reports are in separate attachments

PARISH MINISTRY

CHURCH COMMUNITY

Edie-Ellen Knitters
The Edie-Ellen Knitters Guild is a group of approximately eight women from St. Paul’s Church who meet on the second and fourth Monday of each month at 2:00 PM. In 2020 35 shawls have been distributed.

Our primary mission is to work together to knit the prayer shawls that are available to all members of the parish. They are blessed by Fr. Jarred and may be given to anyone who would benefit by the comfort they provide. We have given out over six hundred shawls since our inception and have received some very heart-felt notes from those who receive them. Another focus of our group is to support the many activities that help to make our Fall Fair successful. We stock the craft area with many of our creations as well as helping with several of the other areas that make up the fair. We always welcome new members to the guild. We would be glad to help you with your knitting skills if you are a beginner. Please contact the office if you’re interested.

COMMUNICATIONS

Communications Shepherds Report
St. Paul’s communications ability has been enormously enhanced by the Technology Initiative and Fundraising effort. It has resulted in a quantum leap in our ability to produce high-quality broadcasts of services through the internet and local television directly into parishioner’s homes. Necessitated by the pandemic and closing of in-person services for the safety of all, the broadcasting of services, concerts, and other events has evolved through the purchase of professional equipment. It has had the unintended consequence of reaching some people who would otherwise not be able to attend services. Although a virtual connection is certainly not the same, or as personal or rich as an in-person experience, it has allowed us to maintain a community, and sometimes a far-reaching community. We all owe a large debt of gratitude to the Technology Team for their work.

We continue to maintain a presence on Facebook. We currently have 371 followers with an average view of between 34 to 68 per post, and a high of 123. Each week our Sunday service, Weekly Newsletter, and Music Notes are posted. Special events such as the recent International Holocaust Memorial Day and Martin Luther King Day as saints’ days on the Church calendar are also celebrated through Facebook. This year we opened an account on Instagram where photos of various events such as Mass in the Grass are shared. We continue to maintain a weekly presence in the Newburyport Daily News to share service times and special events.

Bronson de Stadler
Development

Development Shepherds Report
This year’s Stewardship Program theme was Our Spiritual Home … Growing Together. Our Spiritual Home is of course St. Paul’s Church. Growing Together means all of us growing together spiritually as parishioners. A video was created with the help of Fr. Jarred that highlighted Stewardship committee members sharing their views about the significance the Parish is in their lives.

Parishioner speakers spoke about Stewardship at each of the first three October Sunday services. Karen Spangler spoke about giving back to God by supporting our ministries. The Walker Family – Juliet, Tyler, Sam, and Henry talked about their personal stories about “branching out” at St. Paul’s. Jeff Jones addressed the impact of affluence in increasing our spiritual potential.

The Rt. Rev. Gayle Harris, Bishop Suffragan of the Diocese, with Fr. Jarred conducted the InGathering Sunday service. This Sunday service began our Stewardship pledging effort. The results for the Stewardship Program compared at the dates of each year’s Annual Meeting shows a 8.8% overall increase in total pledged, resulting from the increased pledges per week.

Stewardship Program Statistics for 2020 (as of 2020 Annual Meeting)
Total Pledged $209,108
Pledging Units (households) 78
Average Pledge Per Week $51.55

Stewardship Program Statistics for the Coming Year 2021 (as of this Annual Meeting)
Total Pledged $227,528
Pledging Units (households) 78
Average $56.10

Supporting Statistics for the above 2021 pledging
35 Units increased pledges
15 New pledge units
21 Units pledges that stayed the same
7 Units decreased pledges
6 Pledging units lost

Stewardship Committee Objectives for 2021:
• Implement the Stewardship Program to emphasize growing spiritually, to engage the congregation’s participation and to highlight the ways St. Paul's ministries impact the lives of members and the community.
• Obtain Stewardship Program results that increase the number of pledging units and the total amount pledged, over the previous year.
• Hold a Time Talent Treasure event jointly with the Membership & Stewardship Committees. (Not held in 2020 due to virus.)

Thank you very much to those who pledged. For those of you who have not pledged, please consider pledging. Regular giving is one way we acknowledge our own growth in spirituality and faith. St. Paul’s uses the pledged funds to conduct our Sunday services, daily Masses in the Grass, external and internal Ministries, and other events in Our Spiritual Home. It involves day-to-day expenses and maintaining the church. We appreciate the Parish for its support of the Stewardship Program.

Stewardship Committee: John Neale, Tom Hussey, Carole Bishop, Bev Brennan, Karen Spangler, along with Fr Jarred, Stu Tuthill, Lise Reid, and Sue Blumenscheid.
**FUNDRAISING**

**St. Paul’s Virtual Fall Fair and Auction**
The 61st annual St. Paul’s Episcopal Church Fall Fair and Silent Auction was held virtually this year. Thanks to the hard work of many volunteers who donated both items and time, we were able to raise over $8,000 to help support many ministries of the church.

Special thanks goes to:
The Committee: Ed Winslow, Annie Winslow, Bronson de Stadler, Lorrie Jones, Ann Tuthill, Stu Tuthill, Jane Niebling and Joyce Cejka—we couldn’t have done it without you!
Deb Hay and Fr. Jarred Mercer for your willing support throughout the entire process.
Eldeen Suda and Joyce Orfant for donating beautiful hand knit items and raising money before, during and after the event!

We were able to offer items that parish and community members look forward to each year like Jane’s Homemade Jams and Jellies and beautiful art work as well as new experiences like Soul Fest, architectural tours and hand designed Chococoa Whoopie pies.

We are so thankful to be a part of the St. Paul’s community and look forward to next year’s fair!
Be well, *Deirdre and John Budzyna*

**Flatbread Pizza Fundraiser**
We raised around $700 in our October fundraiser with Flatbread Pizza in Amesbury. A big thanks to Annie Winslow for organizing this event.

**Virtual Concerts**
Between our two virtual concerts—Mark’s organ concert and Sam and Charlie’s Christmas concert—we received about $2,500 in donations. We’re so thankful to Mark, Virginia, Sam, and Charlie for their hard work and beautiful music.

**FORMATION**

**From the Children & Youth Program Coordinator**
2020! The new year began with inquisitive students and dedicated volunteer teachers. Thank you to lead teachers Juliet Walker, Jenn Mansfield, Jessica Angell, Lainie Ives, and Emily Russin – extra kudos to Emily for her Harry Potter-themed classes. Thank you to our paid Nursery Caregiver, Lydia Quinn, and volunteer helper, Mia Mansir, and to those who donated Nursery furniture and more. And warm thanks to all who support our youngest parishioners in their formation. St Paul's is a family!

Youth Sunday (our youth-led service) on January 12, 2020, was a vibrant celebration - with full participation from nursery tots through young adults serving as ushers, banner and flag bearers, crucifer, torch bearers, acolytes, and Noisy Offering bucket-bearers. Our grade schoolers, high schoolers and I spoke about “The Gifts We Bring”. Young musicians played instruments and sang! The children, youth, teachers, and I recessed, ringing bells joyously – moving directly to the high schoolers' brand new, dedicated room, “The Well” for its ribbon-cutting and blessing. And then the middle schoolers, Meg, and I trooped downtown to enjoy a pizza lunch and brainstorming session (Laser Quest! Rock climbing! Service projects!). When we finally said goodbye that afternoon, full of plans, we never anticipated how everything would change.
Our church closed its doors nine weeks later, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. No in-person anything, anymore. Five youth were prepared for their Confirmation, but the service was postponed twice, and eventually put on hold – for now. Two of our youth had been accepted into the Episcopal Youth Event in Washington, DC, and Linda was vetted as chaperone . . . that was cancelled. Retreats for high schoolers and middle schoolers, and summer camp, all at the Barbara C Harris Camp – were cancelled.

But here are some things we did accomplish, virtually, together!

Besides contributing to the weekly parish newsletter, I began writing and sending weekly Online Sunday School classes, twice-monthly Online Youth (and Up!) Classes, and seasonal extra emails.

Our parish welcomed the Mercer family to Newburyport with taped messages and our online list of Top Recommendations for recreation, dining, and more. See it here: https://conta.cc/3emHZGS. What favorites would you add?

Children, youth, and young adults added their voices and music to online worship. Fr Jarred and I offered a drive-by Back-to-School Blessing, with prayers and treats, including sweet Prayer Square Pillows knitted by Eldeen Suda and Anne Smith.

(A pandemic painting project of mine has been the freshening of the mural in our Nursery)
With the church still shut at Christmas, greeting cards were sent to children and youth. The Lagueux/Russin, Walker, Moore, and Mercer families helped stuff stockings for Among Friends guests. High-fives go to musicians Charlie Grossman and Sam Walker for their online Christmas Concert (with special guest Fr Jarred!): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1RzyY0_2BD0.

2020 was capped by our virtual Christmas Eve Family Service. Children contributed taped readings; Mark Meyer, Evan and Nathan Lagueux, and other musicians and singers gave us hymns and carols (and more!). St Paul's talented tech team and Fr Jarred created a beautiful service, archived on our YouTube channel at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fn_j5JB6hcU. Warm thanks to all!

For now, our classroom hallway has been stripped, and the classrooms, Nursery, and The Well are locked and silent. When we're given the okay, colorful bulletin boards, open doors, and the bright bustle of in-person learning, worship, fellowship, and service will return.

In the meantime, know that I am thinking of you each week as I write lessons, and you are in my prayers. I invite you to write to me at any time: stpauls.childrenyouthcoord@gmail.com. I miss you!

Overview Online in 2020:
41 Online Sunday School classes
19 Youth (and Up!) classes
5 special emails for Holy Week, Easter, Thanksgiving, Advent, and Christmas Day
12 monthly Christian Ed newsletters invitations, reminders, announcements, weekly newsletter continuing: St Paul's Anti-Racist book club Zoom/Google meetings

Linda Davis Siess
Children and Youth Program Coordinator (part-time, 9 hours/week)

Adult Formation
The Adult Forum was unable to meet, of course, for the majority of 2020. However, during the pandemic the parish has developed new ways of spiritual formation, from daily Eucharists through “Mass in the Grass,” to Zoom prayer meetings, to our all-age anti-racist book group, providing materials for prayer and worship at home, streaming our services, and Fr Jarred’s Advent Devotions. In 2021 we will continue to seek to nourish one another and encourage spiritual formation in these and a variety of other ways, including a Lent study and, hopefully, ways of gathering in person later in the year for small groups, Bible study, prayer, and conversations for and with believers, skeptics, doubters, and seekers.

Contemplative Prayer Group
'Nothing so much approximates the language of the Divine as does Silence. It’s a language we need to practice.'
The contemplative prayer circle is in its fifth year in this community and continues to include a brief reading (Lectio Divina), a response (authentic movement), and rest and receive (contemplation). The gathering has shifted to Zoom during the pandemic. The convener sends a thematic prayer sheet out to the participants in advance of our 7 pm gathering, the first Thursday of each month. The move to the zoom platform has enriched and expanded our circle. People from as far away as Bar Harbor, Maine are now able to join us. These new members learned about the gathering through the convener’s participation in the Northeast Guild for Spiritual Formation. The gathering continues to evolve and draw interest. We value God in the new and look forward to exploring all the ways technology and spirituality may allow us to expand Divine Presence together in Silence, Simplicity and Community.

~Victoria Lonergan
PROPERTY

St. Paul’s Property Committee is (right or wrong) a somewhat informal group, as we prefer to spend our time identifying and correcting property problems and issues, rather than sitting in meetings talking about them!

During the past year, despite the pandemic situation and limitations, several significant tasks have been completed or begun.

1) A Property Task List of over 70 property needs was created and prioritized. Some items were very simple and could be completed by volunteers. Other are far more complex, expensive, and necessarily suited for a forthcoming Capital Campaign.

2) Some of the more significant accomplishments included:
   a) Replacement of the porch Handicapped Lift, needed after about 35 years of service.
   b) Installation of an automatic door opener for the porch door.
   c) Necessary repair of the porch structure.
   d) Installation of motion sensors for the undercroft hallway lights to prevent them from being left on all night long.
   e) Upgraded power wiring to the organ, replacing old and out-of-code wiring.
   f) Wiring upgrades to many electrical outlets, switches, and light fixtures throughout the building, which were also out-of-code, and dangerous.
   g) Painting of the main entrance to the church and the two tower windows.
   h) Sanctuary work necessary for ongoing virtual services, including some structural changes to the balcony.

As we begin 2021, the following are in the initial phases of consideration, pricing, and/or accomplishment:
   a) Remediation to address water infiltration in four particular areas of the undercroft, particularly as it affects the space we presently lease to Community Service of Newburyport.
   b) Remaining repairs to the porch entrance.
   c) Phase 1 of necessary organ repairs.

A special thank goes to Jay Gamble who led the property committee as the Vestry shepherd for property for three years, and to Doug Peck currently leads the property committee.

Current members include:
Terry Anderson, Mark Davis, Bronson de Stadler, Bill Hobbie, Doug Peck, and Ed Winslow.

Accessibility Report

Three more of the accessibility task force recommendations were completed in 2020:

- Halley Elevator installed a new lift to the porch door.
- Artisan Electric installed a pushbutton to automatically open the parish hall door.
- Bill Hobbie finished and attached railings on either side of the steps leading up to the chancel rail.

These recommendations are still pending:
Issue: There is no seating in the nave for people in wheelchairs.
Recommendation: Contract Ayotte Solutions to prepare four spaces for wheelchair use.
Implementation Status: Pending funds becoming available.

Issue: The main church entrances are not accessible.
Recommendation: Contract Amramp to install a black, steel, ramp to the right-side narthex door.
Implementation Status: Pending funds becoming available.
Issue: The right-side narthex door is difficult to open.
Recommendation: Contract Artisan Electric to add a pushbutton to automatically open the door from inside or outside.
Implementation Status: Pending completion of ramp.

Issue: Stairs impede access to the chancel rail for communion.
Recommendation: Offer communion from altar, add railings on sides of steps, place black tape on steps. Railings added.
Implementation Status: Pending final decision on accessible space to receive communion.

Funding sources will continue to be researched in 2021 for these pending items.

Reredos during restoration
The onset of the Covid-19 pandemic nearly one year ago resulted in the shut down of in-person church services around the globe and here at home. Thanks to Bob Keller and Ed Winslow’s quick response to keep our congregation connected and maintain the mission of our church during these unprecedented times, St. Paul’s held its first Zoom broadcast immediately after the Covid-19 lock down in March 2020. Starting with Pastor Meg’s last service, we have produced each and every celebration of our worship since then, never missing a single Sunday.

“The fact that I am again able to attend church on Sunday morning is like a miracle and a definite blessing. God is saying to me; you are worthy you are not isolated, you belong. I feel a freedom; that isolation has disappeared as if a balloon poke with a pin. You and your team with this new technique are God's pin that has punctured my sense of isolation and given me new freedom. My life has changed for the better and for that I thank you and all involved.” —A St. Paul’s Parishioner
Initially we used laptops loaned by parishioners, their employers, and others and set up a broadcast ‘hub’ on tables in the center aisle in the front of the church.

Thanks to initial donations, we were able to purchase a more sophisticated and reliable system, SlingStudio, which allowed us to use multiple cameras to capture the breadth of the service, but it was still set up in the center aisle. This worked for the short term, but we knew we would be broadcasting for at least the unpredictable length of the pandemic and certainly beyond which meant creating an experience that could honor the space and worship experience without the interference of the equipment.

In September, we moved to the last pew in the church (the Tuthill pew), clearing the aisle and allowing us to broadcast a wedding to many family and friends of the newly married couple.

“It was a wonderful ceremony, wouldn't change a thing! It was so great to be able to have our family and friends join us online. Having this video will be a forever memory for us! We promise to watch it every year on 9/12!! Sincerely, Marie and Susan”

In response to our ability to produce quality video we also produced a concert of the Newburyport Chamber Music Festival in August, maintaining our connection to the creative community. And when Bishop Gayle E. Harris presided over our service in the fall, we were able to broadcast it for our parish and others to experience as well.

We strove to do better and designed a system based on our initial investment in SlingStudio that added three robotic cameras and an upgraded sound capability. Last summer you responded to our call to support this upgrade and donated over $20,500 in just a few short weeks. With the support of your overwhelming generosity and grants from the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts and the city of Newburyport, we purchased and installed the new equipment and are now relocated to our long-term home in the balcony. This allows for maximum attendance when we return to in-person services and enables us to continue to reach those who are not able to attend for whatever reason (e.g., illness, distance), extending our mission beyond the physical boundaries of the building.

With the new broadcast equipment, we have produced an organ concert featuring Mark Meyer and a Christmas concert featuring Charlie Grossman, Sam Walker, and Father Jarred. Father Jarred has also been using the equipment to produce video shorts as another means of connecting with us during the pandemic. Our Technology Team, which now includes Vanessa Ayersman, Charlie Grossman, Tom Hussey, Jeff Jones, Jenn Mansfield, Cathleen Williamson, and Ed Winslow, continues to be committed to implementing and learning the technology, mentoring each other as well as new team members, and helping all of us stay connected to the church. St. Paul’s service broadcasts are consistently and reliably reaching over 50 households in real-time over YouTube, with nearly 100 more watching the YouTube recording over the next few days, and others watching the service on the three local television stations.
From a single laptop and Zoom, to a multi-camera broadcast capability with high-fidelity sound broadcast in real-time over YouTube and over three television stations later in the week, it’s hard to believe how far we’ve come since last March at the onset of the pandemic. Most importantly, the technology is enabling us all to stay connected to God and our St. Paul’s community.

“The Forward Day by Day booklet spoke today of “regular folks who set seemingly impossible goals....and then set about working hand in hand with God to accomplish abundantly more than they can ask or imagine.” I was reminded of you and the unsung tech heroes of St. Paul’s, during this difficult time. Count me among far-flung parishioners eternally grateful for your amazing efforts to keep us connected. A shout-out to you all!” - A St. Paul’s Parishioner

SENDING & SERVING
LOCAL OUTREACH

Local Outreach Shepard Report
During this year of the pandemic, the Local Outreach committee has focused on the Among Friends Meal Program which is a ministry of St. Paul’s church. Among Friends has been serving nutritious free meals since 1983 and currently offers 3 meals per week. Early in the pandemic, the Director of Among Friends, Bonnie Schultz recognized the pandemic would hinder people’s ability to come to the parish hall to pick up their meals. Consequently, Bonnie identified the opportunity to deliver Among Friends meals to people in need and started to organize a delivery service. With an outpouring of support from current volunteers and St. Paul’s parishioners we have added in delivery for 3 days a week on top of in-person meal pickup.

With the addition of delivery and continued in-person meal pickup, Among Friends was able to give out over 10K meals during this pandemic year. The number of meals increased by 87% from 2019 and number of meals being served and delivered has not slowed down since April of last year. You can see the photo below in October when the team hit 6000 meals from April to October alone.

During the Christmas season, Among Friends usually has two big events. The first is our Christmas Family Dinner Project, where people pick up a full meal to prepare in their own home. Instead of having individuals pick up the full dinner from the church, we leveraged the success of our weekly delivery and delivered full meals which included a Pork Roast and all the fixings to each home. In the past years we have had almost 50 people sign
up for these dinners, however this year we were able to deliver 73 full meals to households ranging from 2 people to 11 people. This was a huge accomplishment and had many volunteers to make this event successful.

The second big event during this season is a Christmas dinner served to those in need which provides a place for people to have a meal together and celebrate. However, due to COVID restrictions we were unable to offer the normal Christmas Dinner. Even though we didn’t have our traditional Christmas dinner, we were still able to give out 80 stockings which are filled with warm socks, treats, and toiletries which were normally given out during the dinner but this year were handed out with the meals.

Prepping the Christmas dinner boxes and bags to be delivered this year.  
Getting stockings ready to delivery treats to those for Christmas.

In addition to the continuous and generous support of the Mosely Fund, Institution for Savings, Mutual Insurance Company, Among Friends received Grant Money from the Essex County Foundation for the additional work the team has done during the COVID-19 pandemic. This money has supported additional food costs due to the increase of meals given. Among Friends also successfully received a grant from the State of Massachusetts in collaboration with Our Neighbors Table and others to provide universal food access across our region. With this support, the team was able to replace the ailing stove, refrigerator, and a commercial food processor. Huge thank you to all the volunteers at Among Friends who made all the above possible and Stu Tuthill for all his help keeping the Among Friends finances in order. Additional thanks to the Greater Boston Foodbank who provides most of the food we serve and the team that helps with monthly pickup in Boston (Bill Hobbie and Kim Wright) and unpacking the trucks (many church members). A special thanks goes those who provide local donations including: Fantini Bakery, Rich and Esta Bernier who provide fresh local eggs, Fig Tree Bakery, Dianne’s Desserts, and Chococoa Bakery. I would also like to send out a special thanks to Bonnie Schultz, the Director of Among Friends who has tirelessly worked to support as many people as possible in the community. If you are interested in helping Among Friends in 2021, do not hesitate to reach out. There are always lots of ways to help, from Dessert Delivery, Food Delivery, Kitchen Support, supporting the food drop off day from Greater Boston Food Bank, and more. In 2021, we would also look to expanding St. Pauls’ reach in the local community, if you have ideas of new outreach opportunities locally please send me an email.

**Pettengill House Donations**
From January – mid-March a basket for food and other donated items was located below the altar for the Pettengill House in Salisbury, which provides food and services for over 600 local people experiencing homelessness, 1/3 of which are children. We also provided hats and mittens during the cold weather.
Pastoral Care
The ministry of Pastoral Care provides healing and comfort to members of St. Paul’s community. It takes numerous forms, including:

- Regular Eucharistic visitation
- Hospital and Nursing Home visitation
- Prayer shawl ministry providing a tangible symbol of hope and prayer
- Annual Christmas Caroling
- Baptismal preparation with families
- Delivery of altar flowers and Christmas and Easter plants to those who cannot get to church on a regular basis
- Healing ministry each Sunday during communion

These very important but often unseen facets of our shared life in Christ have been carried out by Fr. Jarred, members of the Hospital Visitors Team, Altar Guild, Healing Team, Edie Ellen Knitters Guild, and many other members of our parish.

When we are not in the midst of a pandemic, the pastoral care team meets regularly to share our experiences, address any questions, procedural issues, and consider how we can enrich pastoral care at St. Paul’s. However, this year has indeed been a different one for those of us involved in Pastoral Care. Being unable to meet regularly, visit our homebound parishioners, and attend in church services has been difficult for everyone. So, we developed a team of people to make regular phone visits to keep in touch with our parish members. To date, we have 6 people calling 14 parishioners on a regular basis. Many of the knitters continue to knit prayer shawls and drop them off at church to be blessed and ready for delivery to anyone who might need one. And the altar guild continues to bring flowers to those on our calling list. We all look forward to being able to meet and make visits in person in the future.

Respectfully submitted by
Nancy Jukins
Pastoral Care Ministry Chairperson

SOCIAL

Vestry Social Shepherd
Just as I started this role on the Vestry, our lives changed. We had started to make great plans to welcome the Mercers when they arrived from the UK, but by March or April it was clear that these welcoming events were not possible. Soon after Fr. Jarred and his family arrived, they hosted a zoom question and answer session in an effort to meet some parishioners. In June we started Zoom Coffee Hours following the Sunday Morning YouTube service. There are usually 3-6 parishioners attending and we chat for anywhere from 20 minutes to just under an hour. There is always room for more and we would love to see you there!

Alison Novello

Garden Committee
2020 was a big year for the gardens along the front and side of the church. In the spring, in anticipation of the Mercer family’s arrival, we did a big winter cleanup. That day a group of us did a lot pruning of the front and back gardens as well as clean-up of the sidewalk along Market St. We cut down and hauled out the overgrown spruce and hollies along the side of the church – to reveal the lovely architecture of the building and the full width of the brick path! In the summer plans were made to plant a low-maintenance garden along that side and in the fall, once the heat of the summer had abated, it was planted with giant blue hostas (to mimic those against the chapel), ferns, and geraniums. These will all fill in beautifully and make our space more welcoming. This planting was funded from the graveyard funds, with Vestry approval. The Garden Committee would welcome more members – many hands make light work!

Alison Novello
Worship Shepherds Report
2020 was a year of massive upheaval for our worshiping community, not only due to the cessation of public worship in the church but also moving from an interim rector, to a bridge priest for a few months, to a new rector in the midst of an already unprecedented time of change. The parish adapted brilliantly, developing a robust online ministry supporting our virtual services and never missing a Sunday. Mark and our choir continued to minister to us through music, along with Sam Walker, Charlie Grossman, and Priscilla Bellairs supporting as musicians at various times. Lay Eucharistic Ministers and Lectors have continuously helped to lead our worship through the proclamation of Scripture and guiding our prayers, and the Altar Guild has faithfully supported our worship. Mass in the Grass provided a way to gather for small eucharistic services outdoors, enabling us to fully embrace our life together through receiving communion, and at Christmas we maintained our full set of services on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, involving families and children along with special music. A massive thank you to everyone involved in keeping us connected as a parish through our worship.

Altar Guild
2020 was certainly a year of many, many unexpected changes in our life together at St. Paul’s. At the exact time our interim priest, Meg Ingalls and her husband, Brad, bid us farewell in March, 2020, the Coronavirus pandemic hit full force and directives from our Diocese required us to no longer attend church in person as of March 22, 2020 and our upcoming celebration of Palm Sunday, Holy Week and Easter were curtailed. Thankfully, our new Tech team quickly got our services online as Jo Barrett filled in as our supply priest until the arrival of our newly called priest, Father Jarred and his family on June 14, 2020.

Throughout this time, the Altar Guild members, wearing masks and gloves, carefully prepared for our weekly services

Our Altar Guild Team and our responsibilities
Currently, we have 11 members participating in this church ministry. We are responsible for the set-up and clean-up for our Sunday church services, as well as preparing for our High Holy Day services, baptisms, weddings and funerals that take place in our Church or in St. Anna’s Chapel.

We are also responsible for caring for our vessels, altar linens, vestments, and altar hangings. Our duties also include arranging our weekly Altar flowers, ordering flowers and decorating the church for our High Holy services. Unfortunately, our task for delivering altar flower bouquets to our shut-ins temporarily stopped as a precaution from the virus.

Please know we are in the need of new Altar Guild members and there are many ways that you can help! I’d love to talk to you and answer any questions you may have.

Events to note:
Mass in the Grass and Bishop Gale Harris’s Visitation
In late September, Fr. Jarred was able to implement our Mass in the Grass Eucharist services in our church backyard, so that we could gratefully receive communion. These services were offered Monday through Thursday, and again at 11:00 a.m. after our 9:00 a.m. Sunday service, weather permitting. The Altar Guild team assisted with the set up and clean up, whenever possible.

On Sunday, October 25th, we were pleased to welcome Bishop Gale Harris as she visited St. Paul’s and participated in both our regular 9:00 a.m. service as well as our Mass in the Grass service.
Additional services that occurred
A memorial service for Dale Snowdon was held in our chapel in January 19th and a private wedding was conducted on January 26th. Four new members were welcomed into our church family through the baptism of Logan Manuel Todd, Charlotte Mohler, and Madeline and Grace Rogers.

A Special Note of Appreciation to…

- I want to acknowledge the faithful services of Dawn Patten and Peggy Dunlap who retired from this ministry this year. Each of these women are commended for their dedication to Altar Guild and we are very grateful for their participation.
- We are incredibly indebted to Virginia Meyer for helping to repair several of our beautiful altar frontals.
- Anne Tuthill volunteered to serve as the Treasurer of our Restricted Flower Account.
- Pollyann Statom volunteered to re-start our lovely tradition of making banners for our baptized children.

I can’t say enough about this team’s commitment and to express my sincerest gratitude and appreciation to each Altar Guild member. Thank you!

In closing, our Altar Guild team look forward to working with Fr. Jarred as he provides valued instruction and support to this vital ministry.

Respectfully submitted,
Annie Winslow, Altar Guild Directress

Lector Ministry
The tradition of reading aloud at Service, Lectoring, is long and venerable. In the 4th century AD, St. Ambrose of Milan was seen reading to himself silently. This was a very suspicious act as before that time virtually all reading, whether or not to oneself, was done aloud. In the time of our Patron, St. Paul of Tarsus, one did not pick up at the Church door copies of his letters to Timothy, Corinth, etc. to be read later at one’s convenience. No, Paul’s letters were read aloud, and often, so that the largely illiterate audiences would have mostly memorized them.

Our Lector Ministry at St. Paul’s continues that tradition providing readers of Scripture not only at Sunday services of Holy Eucharist, but at other services such as those in Holy Week. During this time of pandemic, Lectors have at different times read lessons from home and in Church. At the time of writing there are 11 Lectors who are coming to the Church to read for our livestreamed services. Without exception, our Lectors read very well.

We would be delighted to have new readers at any service. It’s likely that you would be asked to read at Service a couple of times in each quarter, and you can specify any dates when you are not available. If you wish to join our Lector ministry, please let me or Fr. Jarred know, and we will bring you into the group.

We pray to Bede, the patron Saint of Lectors: Venerable Historian and Doctor of the Church, lover of God and of truth, thou art a natural model for all readers of God’s inspired Word. We beseech thee to move lectors to prepare for public reading by prayerfully pondering the sacred texts and invoking the Holy Ghost. Help us to read in such a way that those who hear may attain learning and edification. Amen.

Submitted by Lector Coordinator Bob Keller.
**Lay Eucharistic Ministers (LEMS)**

As explained on the national church website, LEMs are “lay persons licensed by the bishop to administer the consecrated elements of the Eucharist. Lay Eucharistic Ministers may be licensed to help administer the consecrated bread and wine at any celebration of the Eucharist. This ministry is understood to be an extraordinary ministry, and is not to take the place of the ministry of priests and deacons concerning the administration of the Eucharist.

Here at St Paul’s, we are presently a group of 12 parishioners who are licensed by the bishop to serve in this capacity. Normally, two of us would serve at each service leading certain parts of the service including the Psalm and the Prayers of the People, as well as serving the chalice or the Host during the Eucharist. One LEM would also assist the clergy in preparing the Altar table for the Eucharist.

Of course, things have been quite different for most of the past year, as six of us, one per week, have rotated through the weekly virtual services leading the Psalm and Prayers at each Sunday service. When we are once again able to gather together for worship, hopefully all 12 of us will still be serving as LEMs.

If you have any specific questions about what’s involved, or might consider joining us, you can ask any of the current LEMs:
Tom Hussey, Ann Aldrich, Susan Flint, Ros Smith, Bob Keller or myself (all at 8 AM);
Bev Brennan, Pam Jones, Bronson de Stadler, Carole Bishop, Dawn Patton, or Annie Winslow (all at 10:15 AM).

My thanks to all of the LEMs for their dedicated service to our liturgical life at St Paul’s, challenging as it has been!
Doug Peck, LEM Coordinator

**Music Programs and Concerts**

**Musical Programs and Concerts at St. Paul’s**

Our music series has grown tremendously over the past three years. In January 2020, we welcomed Cantemus Chamber Chorus back to St. Paul’s after an absence of several years. In February we hosted two well-attended concerts, a solo piano concert on our newly purchased Steinway “The Romantic Piano” with Lithuanian pianist Paulius Pancekaukas through our partnership with the Ballets Russes Arts Initiative and Grammy-nominated Skylark Vocal Ensemble’s “Once Upon a Time”, a one-of-a-kind ‘choral-theatrical’ experience. We were booked with 15-16 concerts for the year before the pandemic hit us.

Thanks to our enhanced technical ability, we were able to produce and broadcast a first Organ Recital concert with Mark Meyer, our Music Director and Organist, in November and “An Evening with Sam and Charlie: Songs for Christmas” in December (joined by our own Fr Jarred) in December.

We look forward to resuming our Music Series in the year to come as in-person gathering allows.

Bronson de Stadler
St. Paul’s is a Christian community where people are met and accepted without judgment for who they are and are adopted into a loving and caring family. Our faith provides a framework within which we explore, honor, and celebrate the presence of God in daily experiences, especially in the crises, conflicts, and transitions of life, and are thereby equipped to live fully in an increasingly complex and changing world.

We believe we are called to center our life in Jesus Christ through a regular discipline of Eucharistic worship, scripture study, and prayer. We believe our faith leads us to fulfill our mission, which is to share our selves and our resources with each other, our community, and our world. We believe we are called to discover and affirm our spiritual gifts and be responsible and committed ministers of these gifts in the name of Jesus Christ.