



ST. PAUL'S

EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Befriend, Believe, Be.Loved.

ANNUAL REPORT ON 2023



Rector's Report A Year in Review

Serving as Rector at St. Paul's has never been boring. Sometimes I moan about that, but most of the time, I love it. 2023 was no exception, but it was tougher than I expected; especially after we had already experienced two and a half years of pandemic.

In **January**, we launched La Misa, an initiative funded by the Diocese and Try Tank/Virginia Theological Seminary to incorporate people of Latin American descent in Episcopal Churches.

Our team of leaders guided by **Derek O'Chiu**, met twice monthly and organized worship and meals for every second Sunday from January through October. In January, we also become the contextual education placement for **Mark Waight**, who was discerning holy orders. At the annual meeting we began earnest conversation about the church's need for expanded parking and what it might look like to tear down Hiegham House.

In **February**, **Pastor Rebecca** mediated between a graduate class from Eden Theological Seminary and the clergy group in Carondelet. The students ultimately presented a power-point on Asset Based Community Development in Carondelet with a focus on resources for youth. For the first time since the pandemic, we enjoyed Shrove Tuesday pancakes together, thanks to **Richard Byrne** and his mighty team!

In **March**, we began to consistently host Neighborhood Meetings facilitated by Metropolitan Congregations United. We had four such meetings at the church in 2023. We continued our participation in all day quarterly retreats with the Diocesan program, Requiem or Renaissance. The members of that team were **Deacon Barbi**, **Pastor Rebecca**, **Karen Watts**, **James Ammon**, **Kim Boelling**, and supporters, **John** and **Belinda Birdsong** and **Angela Breeher**.

By **April**, the conversation and consternation about expanded parking led us to host a World Cafe conversation. The Saturday morning event enabled us to really sit down and listen to one

another about our perceived needs, hopes and goals surrounding Heigham House.

We ended Lent with a Good Friday Blues service, and a glorious Easter.

Soon after, we hosted Glorious, **Sue Steptoe's** Art Show in our Parish Hall. At the opening, there was a shooting in the intersection adjacent to our campus. Two of our members witnessed it.

In **May**, **Bishop Deon Johnson** visited. **Randy Wicks**, and **John** and **Belinda Birdsong** were received! Also in May, we launched our summer barbecues. Thanks to the faithful leadership of **Justin Vitale** and **Melissa Ketcherside**, and the team, over forty people a month enjoyed a delicious summer meal.

In **June**, we hired **DJ Superstar**. She also runs a barber college and brought along students to give free haircuts at the Barbecues and Thursday meals. During the barbecue, another shooting happened at the corner of Mott and Michigan. Many people were still gathered on our lawn. Fortunately, the teenager who was shot was not killed. But it was awful, nevertheless. Sadly, also in June, long-time member, **Maureen Harris** died. The month also saw the end to the discussion of demolishing the Heigham House as we learned that, even had we decided to proceed, the board overseeing permitting would not allow us to demolish the house.

In **July**, the team attended the final Requiem or Renaissance Retreat. Soon after, **Deacon Barbi** left her ministry among us. The Heigham House team recommended and the Vestry approved a decision to prepare the house for occupancy by an immigrant family. Through a generous donation, work began on plaster repair and painting.

In **August**, the repairs in Heigham House continued. A new back deck, demolition of the bathroom and kitchen and replacement of the floor in the kitchen were completed. Also in August, the Vestry agreed to the Rector's proposal to reduce her hours and hire an Executive Director to oversee campus operations, facilities use and broaden our imprint in the community. A search for the perfect person began!

September closed out our barbecues and a fantastic team hosted a birthday party for kids in detention. It also seemed like a season to mark our losses. The departures of **Deacon Barbi Click** and **Debbie Wheeler**, **John** and **Belinda Birdsong**, **Kathy Watts**, **Karin Moore**, and **Sue Steptoe** were among them. Our diaspora now spreads from Texas to Maryland!

October brought the hire of **Darian Wigfall** as our new Executive Director. We resumed our traditional Pumpkin Carving for the first time since the pandemic and continued the repairs on the Heigham House.

In **November**, thanks to the vision of **Laura Shields**, we began Winter Warming on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. This ministry quickly blossomed into a free clothing and breakfast ministry and continues to grow rapidly. In addition, we continued our First and Third Thursdays and shared brunch with twenty neighbors on Thanksgiving morning.

December brought our best attended and super delicious Cookie Swap as well as many other festivities. We ended the year with several new members, a lovely Christmas morning brunch, 'Star Words' for the New Year and a heart of thanksgiving for all God had brought us so faithfully through!

So, another 'never boring' year at St. Paul's! The trauma of the shootings, the fatigue of administration, and the loss of beloved members took a toll on me -- and on us. But in the midst of all of it, **the faithfulness of God, the joy of our community, and the possibilities for the future were constants.**

Some guru somewhere said that the lifecycle of a group is this: forming, storming, norming, and performing. If I were going to categorize 2023, I would definitely say **it was a storming season. We had storms around us, we stormed amongst ourselves, and a kind of awful lightning struck on our street (twice). Nevertheless, we endured and continue to grow.**

I pray that as we walk by faith in 2024, we'll witness the emergence of new norms; patterns of faithful discipleship that root us together more deeply and enable us to adapt to a changing world and embody love in a world that desperately needs it. It is a joy and privilege to serve as your Rector!

Executive Director

I want to thank you to St. Paul's for having the courage to make a move such as hiring an executive director for your church. It is a bold move and one that I think many other churches may try in the future.

Because of this move, we've been able to maintain our outreach programs while simultaneously allowing our Rector the ability to focus on faith related business, family and a little fun.

We have continued the biweekly dinners and are looking to expand that this year. We've added a **Winter Warm Up ministry** where people from any walk of life can come in, get warm for a bit, charge their phone and grab a snack. **Laura Shields** and **Deb Myles** have been great hosts for this and we plan to continue through the winter.

At Heigham House, we've been able to repair the kitchen floor and get some major demolition work done on the way to obtaining occupancy for a family in need.

I look forward to the year ahead of working with the Rector, The Vestry and the congregation to incorporate the bold vision laid out in the newsletter in December.

With gratitude,

-Darian Wigfall

Sr. Warden

It has been my privilege to serve as your Senior Warden in 2023. I really had no idea what I was getting into and as it turns out I am still discovering I have no good grasp. With all the concern over Heigham House, that was the reason I agreed to serve. I am thrilled to report that very soon a family in need of shelter will be housed there. With the dedication of the Heigham House Committee, we secured additional parking at the Family Care Health Center.

Our First and Third meal outreach has been very well attended. Earlier in the year, thanks to **Matt Shields**, **Chef Jack MacMurray** of Old Hickory Golf Club provided gourmet meals. Even KDSK channel 5 News visited our campus to do a feature.

Unfortunately, we lost some of our faithful due to relocations and personal situations. On an uplifting note, we have welcomed many visitors. Several of our members attended Birthday Parties at the Juvenile Detention Center and we had a giving-wreath to provide Christmas gifts.

We continue to benefit from the solar panels installed over the common area of our building. We are helping our community stay warm with all the coats and winter apparel donations we have received – the project is successful thanks to **Sybil Fisher**, **Laura Shields** and all that have donated.

Our Little Pantry is still extremely popular. A tremendous success of your Vestry was hiring **Darian Wigfall** as our Executive Director; this has given **Pastor Rebecca** a well-deserved break from administrative duties. In closing, 2024 I think, will be an exciting year for St. Paul's – Stay Turned and Enjoy the Fun!

-Karen Watts



Junior Warden

Our Executive Director hire **Darian** is making a huge impact in his position in numerous ways.

He has already basically taken over the management of the Heigham House renovations. His being onsite and working with contractors directly in addition to his other duties really helps to make the Jr. Warden's work much lighter.

Repairs to the Heigham house

The walls were repaired and painted with help from Emmanuel Youth and **Scott Ragland**.

Kitchen and bathroom floors and cabinets replaced/refurbishment in progress. We Developed a lease and use agreement for the house and church properties. We hope to have all the work completed and ready for city occupancy inspection by March.

Use of our grounds

This has been a challenging year for the safety of the grounds and facilities. We have been working with local law enforcement and community groups to help stabilize the community. Our participation in the local community with hosting the free meals and town halls have also helped to educate us as we

serve our neighbors.



Communications Specialist

It's been a pleasure serving as St. Paul's Communications Specialist. While writing content is not my favorite, I've loved widening our outreach through posts on Meta, creating new media, working with Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and being on their podcast/Vlog, and doing everything I can to promote La Misa and other church events. Since I began, we have seen significant interaction with our Google Business, Facebook and Instagram sites. These interactions are also reflected in the number of visitors that pass through our doors. Experts say that 4% annual growth on a social media platform will ultimately give significant returns on in-person attendance within 5 years (ProChurchTools.com) We are on our way to achieving that goal. Special thanks to Larry Throgmorton for his continued service as Editor in Chief of the Weekly Newsletter and Emily O'Chiu for her continued service making our St. Paul's Annual and donating volunteer hours to maintain and improve our website.

- Metal Priestess



Exterior Lighting

After a successful Giving Day campaign, we were able to drastically improve the exterior lighting with floods along the walkway and along the west end of the nave. Improving the lighting not only helps our visibility, it helps our safety as well. Thanks to everyone who was a part of the campaign.

Plaster repairs in the Sanctuary

There were also repairs made to the plaster in the Sanctuary that restored the walls by the main Sanctuary entrance into the Sacristy. We also believe we know the source of the moisture that has been affecting the walls and plaster in the church.



Treasurer's Report

I am completing my first year as the treasurer for the church. I am grateful for the time my predecessor, **Kim Boelling**, spent showing me the ropes. Looking back on the year, I realize that I have learned a lot, and still have a lot to learn.

I would like to thank **Terry Glanz** for her work as Assistant Treasurer; Terry makes our weekly bank deposit and prepares checks to pay our bills.

I would also like to thank **Pastor Rebecca** and the vestry for their guidance and support.

A detailed financial report will be presented at the annual meeting; here is a snapshot of the Revenue and Expense you will receive:

In 2023 we received 95% of the pledges made. Non-pledged gift and Plate offerings were all well over budget.

Our operating deficit for 2023 was \$26,909. Our budget anticipated a deficit of over \$43,154.

This lower deficit happened because we received \$10,130 more than we expected and incurred \$6,115 fewer expenses.

The 2024 budget will include a deficit of around \$48,000. The actual proposed budget will be submitted for approval at the annual meeting.

Tom Schroeder



Music Director

The music program at St. Paul's included many faces in 2023. Most months saw at least two Sundays led by **John Birdsong** or **Stacey Smith** on organ with support in the choir from **Richard Byrne, Cindy Combs, AnDrea** and **Eric Loomis**, and **Larry Throgmorton. Alex Reyes, Ryan Marquez, and Cindy Combs** led music during our once-a-month La Misa service.

Joey Ferber also led music on guitar a few Sundays and our Christmas Eve service. Any remaining Sundays featured recorded music by various artists selected by **Scott and Rebecca Ragland**.

Sadly, St. Paul's did not have our annual benefit concert this year. Also, John and Belinda Birdsong left our congregation in late summer. Thanks to everyone that helped lead music this year. We look forward to working with you next year!

- Stacey Smith



Summer Barbecues

St. Paul's hosted a series of five Friday evening BBQ's in May through September. Tasty hotdogs and hamburgers were grilled outside and served with various side dishes and desserts. On average 50 people from the community and church attended each night and got to enjoy good food and good fellowship.

Thanks to all our volunteers: grill man **Richard Byrne**, shopper **Melissa Ketcherside**, coordinator **Justin Vitale**, volunteers: **Pastor Rebecca & Scott Ragland, Angela & Gary Breeher, Dawn McMurtry, Laura Shields, Jim**

Altar Guild

The altar guild consists of volunteers to prepare the altar as necessary to celebrate the Eucharist. This may include changing the paraments according to the liturgical calendar, setting up the Eucharistic vessels in time for Sunday mass (chalice, water and wine and bread) , setting up altar book and marking the Gospel. After the service, the Eucharistic vessels are cleaned, the books are collected and candles are snuffed.

Other duties include ordering and collecting flowers and greenery for Christmas and Easter, laundering and ironing fair linen, cleaning the pews of trash and replacing any missing song or Books of Common Prayer. Thanks to those who supported this ministry, **Cindy Combs** and **Sarah Ammon**, and most especially, **Peggy Schroeder**.



La Misa

After spending a majority of 2022 in the planning stages. La Misa finally kicked off in January 2023. The outreach, engagement, and excitement of the team reached record high levels. The team participated in podcasts, meeting with the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, posted flyers, engaged in a social media campaign, employed word of mouth, and used community outreach at Carondelet Park to increase visibility. La Misa was successful in its outreach, bringing in new visitors for each service. Most importantly, La Misa gave

Harris, Randy Wicks, Derek & Emily O'Chiu, DJ Superstar and anyone else who contributed to the success of these BBQ's.

Highlights were getting to feed and connect with members of our St Paul's community. We look forward to BBQ season starting up again this summer.

-Justin Vitale



Children's Ministries

I have served as a children's ministry coordinator for two years at St. Paul's Episcopal church. **Leanne Rahe** and I served as teachers on alternate Sundays. **Melissa Ketcherside** assisted with crafts in 2021-22. Leanne and I prepared a story and an activity which we presented to children during the first part of the church worship hour on the first and third Sundays. Due to having very few children in the congregation and sporadic attendance we do not prepare lessons at this time. In January 2023 the La Misa team launched their first La Misa event in January. Children's activities included decorating a shoebox,

Adding hay for the Wise Men's camels to the box and leaving it in the sanctuary. The children noted a bucket of water left for the camels.

After the meal the children returned to their boxes to find gifts, candy, and fruit that were left by the Wisemen. The camels had also drunk the water and eaten the hay!

At other La Misa Events, coloring pages and a simple craft were provided for the children. There are always toys and books available at the back of the sanctuary and community space for the children.

At times, the neighborhood children attend barbecues, and church meals. Attempts are made to interact with the children positively and show them that our church cares and values children.

-Sybil Fisher

members of Saint Paul's an opportunity to meet, socialize, and share in a delicious meal while simultaneously helping to build a sense of community within the church.

Members included **Deacon Barbi, Mark Waight, Kathy Watts, Cindy Combs, Sybil Fisher, Jim Harris, AnDrea & Eric Loomis, Derek O'Chiu, Metal Priestess, Pastor Rebecca, Kathy Watts, and Randy Wicks**, with guidance from **Brother Luis Hernandez Rivas** of Try Tank.

-Derek O'Chiu



Sandwich Ministry

I am sure you all know the red boxes in front of the church is for food and books. What some of you may not know, is that members of the congregation make sandwiches on a weekly basis. In the summer, these are PBJ with the cooler weather allowing lunch meat with cheese.

Tom and I have been making 12 sandwiches every Wednesday for about two and a half years. We have figured that comes to 600/ year. Many times, the "guys" are waiting for us. For some of these, mostly men, this may be their only meal. It is an easy ministry and we invite others to join us; if not weekly, every other or monthly. It makes a difference. Other sandwich ministry participants are **Pastor Rebecca, Laura Shields, and James and Sarah Ammon**. All told, I'm sure we have put over a thousand sandwiches in that box! And countless books and magazines have rolled through as well!

-Peggy Schroeder



FIRST AND THIRD MEALS

Sometime last fall, I agreed to oversee the Thursday night dinners. The numbers vary. Sometimes it's upwards of 30 people. The food is always delicious and the fellowship with neighbors is always pleasant.

We need more people to sign up to prepare and bring dinner. Please sign up for a spot on the rotation! Thank you!

Meal Makers in 2023

Julia Dapron

Sybil Fisher

Randy Wicks and Jim Harris

Sarah and James Ammon

Gary and Angela Breeher

Carol and Charles Brazeale

Mark and Audrey Waight

me

among others...

Laura Shields



DETENTION CENTER BIRTHDAY

I am so grateful for St. Paul's joining in ministry with Episcopal City Mission which provides chaplains and programs to bring hope and healing to youth in the Juvenile justice system.

St. Paul's hosted the September birthday celebration for the youth in the St. Louis County Juvenile Detention Center. We provided a meal of pizza, soda, and Ted Drewes frozen custard for all the youth in the Center. There were four youth whose birthdays were in September, so we provided gifts for each birthday youth to show our care for them.

Our volunteer team was **Laura Shields, Peggy Schroeder, Angela Breeher, and Leanne Rahe**. We joined Chaplain Deborah Burris of ECM to deliver the meal to each unit in the center and then brought presents to those celebrating birthdays in September. Being present with the youth was just as much a gift as the package they received. Chaplain Burris thanked us for the joy and enthusiasm we brought to our celebration activities.

Please consider joining us next September as we are the hosts again for this ministry. It makes a difference!

Respectfully submitted,
Leanne Rahe

Tuesday-Thursday Warming Center

Thank you, St. Paul's for allowing us to do what's right. We committed to December and January and would like to continue. When we started this, the idea was to offer a place to charge a Phone, get out of the elements, and drink a beverage. It's become much more. We offer more than a snack or a cookie. We offer a welcome and a smile and thanks to **Sybil Fisher, Julia Dapron**, House of Goods and others, we have been able to collect and



distribute blankets, sleeping bags, shoes, etc.

One man who visited us had been wearing the same clothes for at least a week and they were very soiled. **Deb Myles** assisted him and offered privacy for him to get top to bottom fresh clean clothes.

Thank you. **Deborah Myles** is an everytime partner.

We welcome anyone else who would be willing to help by being a presence, sorting or bringing food. Our menu is anything from peanut butter and jelly and snacks to pasta or chili dogs. We have between zero and six visitors whenever we open. We are open 10 AM to Noon Tuesdays and Thursdays. As you all know, we are only doing what is expected as Harry Epstein said, "Stay human."

Laura Shields

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