

## **Priest-in-Charge Report** **Submitted November 15, 2022**

**1. REALLY?** Time is rushing by as this Vestry meeting will be our last full Vestry meeting until February, and potentially I will have two vestry meetings left until my full retirement. WOW! I do not find myself looking forward to retirement as I have no real clue what I will be doing following a brief vacation following Easter. I do know that I will still be a priest, and still willing to be involved in church "stuff." "There are many things I'd like to tell you and many things I think you should know." We may sneak some of them in over the next 4 months, and some we will not. I pray that together we can have a good chance at starting off the year with good leadership and good intention.

The next time we will formally gather will be the all important MATM (pronounced May Tem) or Meeting After the Meeting. This is where the new six-member vestry will elect a Senior and Junior Warden, a Clerk (who must be elected vestry members) and a Treasurer who typically is not an elected vestry member. This is a very important election. If you wish to be a Warden, let your brother and sister vestry members know, no reason to keep everything secret. As you may be without a priest for a good long time, the selection of a Senior Warden is very important. Generally, the most important single quality for a Senior Warden is his/her ability to support the Rector. Sometimes Vestries elect a Senior Warden who cannot stand the Rector and this leads to horrible problems and very often parish stagnation. The Rector's first support must come from the SW. The Junior Warden need not fix things or know much about the HVAC system. The JW however, must be willing to make sure that decisions made are in the best interest of the parish and work closely with a group of advisors called the Building and Grounds Committee. The MATM is also the time when the vestry selects when it is going to be, who can sign checks, and it goes on and on. The meeting should not take longer than 30 minutes, as people are waiting and hungry.

**2. Expectations** New 2023 Expectations have been posted. They are totally worthless if not read.

**3. Convention** TaMara, Jelesia and Shane did a great job representing St. Paul's at convention. I was delighted to see Elizabeth attend, and she received a special award, along with Mike O. and the entire Kennedy family. Deacon Joe Kennedy has returned to Sewanee and will be taking GOE's in January. Please wish him well. I would love to send him a GOE survival box after Christmas.

**4. Phone/Security System** I could have done a better job in dealing with the phone and security system. While I can present information, push a little around the edges, or push a lot and answer questions if anyone asks. While I can make a recommendation, and support others. What I cannot do is force the Vestry or any other group to do something they do not want to do. The "action" belongs to the Vestry. The "ad hoc" group I appointed last meeting will meet Tuesday to see if there is anything we can do with the funds allotted by the Vestry. What I can tell you is that we cannot purchase both systems as that would cost us about \$15,000.00.

I originally presented this 7 months ago as a need. There was no functioning committee to refer it to, so I just annoyed you all and

for that I am sorry. Speaking now in my role as teacher: it is best in the relationship of rector and vestry to take action even if the action is to vote no. It is better to ask questions, that way you can determine if your rector knows what she/he is talking about. I am well acquainted with the bids and would have gladly answered any questions, that is why we have our online meeting place. I was frustrated in not finding the words to let you all know how important I felt this was. I failed in my efforts over the last months, and I am truly sorry. I also apologize to the ad hoc group as I was not clear in my expectations to them. I thought it was, after such a long time, a simple and quick decision to select either the phone or the security system. They did not know what I was thinking. Maybe at a social gathering someday, we could talk about how I could have done this differently, and maybe that advice could be shared with the next priest. I sure do not want this kind of thing to happen to them. Again, I am sorry. *(This item has been revised since first being posted on line)*

**5. Pastoral Care** Jo Miska has tendered her resignation as chairperson of the Pastoral Care Ministry. We will be looking for a new chairperson in the days ahead. *(This item has been revised since being posted on line).*

**6. Wellness Parking** As part of our PSP work, I am pleased to permit the use of 2-3 parking places for the use of Genesee Wellness. This use will be connected to the presence of wellness therapists and sessions inside our building. In addition I wish to commend the next chapter of the PSP work on strategic planning. As a Rector and a military leader I have conducted many classes or strategic planning, and have attempted to work on how churches can do it well. I think PSP has it figured out. Obviously, my presence will not be terribly helpful as I am pulling away soon. I want you all to know I appreciate the work and I think it will serve you all well.

**7. Off** Marcie and I will be going to Chicago the Monday-Thursday after Christmas. We will be back for the wedding and service on December 31. FYI, I will have taken 10 of 30 days of vacation during 2022. However, thanks to COVID, I took all 5 of my sick days.

**8. Annual Meeting Call** In accordance with the by-laws of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, and the Canons of the Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Michigan, I hereby call the Annual Meeting of St. Paul's Episcopal Church to be held on January 22, 2023, beginning with Holy Eucharist at 10:00 Sunday morning.

**9. Nominate** I hereby appoint Celeste Lord-Timlin to represent St. Paul's Episcopal Church and nominate her to a seat for that purpose on the board of Crossover Ministries Inc. This appointment needs the affirmation of the vestry and the election of the Board. Thanks, Celeste, for accepting this position.

**10. Appreciation** I extend my sincere appreciation to the Finance Committee and their excellent work on the three-year plan, the accountability for that plan, the 2023 budget and the resolution setting the financial package for your new rector. Well Done!

**11. Gossip is Evil** Recently there has been more instances of gossip. The result of gossip can be deep distrust, betrayal, lost friendships, and in one case in my priesthood...an ended marriage. I rarely use these words so I truly ask that you all take this seriously. **Gossip is evil.** Just as evil as any other form of assault to the dignity of our brothers and sisters in Christ. Simply put, if ever we share private information about someone in their absence or without their permission, we gossip.

If we talk about someone behind their back, that is gossip. Gossip labels us as untrustworthy and unable to keep a confidence even with people we love. Would you share with a person knowing the person would tell the world. While private medical information is protected by law, that law does not extend to people sharing what does not belong to them. I challenge all of us to do the best that we can to stop the flow of gossip by not listening to it (“No, that is gossip and I do not wish to be a part”) and if we hear it to allow it to die. Let’s remember our sacred vows of baptism to respect the dignity of every human being.

**12. Farewell**

I find it difficult to say goodbye to those who are leaving elected membership on the Vestry. I had a BnB all year with Wardens Becky and Barbara. Thank you for staying an additional year and working with us and leading us. Thanks Jan for your service on the Vestry for three years and your service as our clerk. Although we may not have agreed all the time, I am thankful for your presence and your understanding. My thanks to our amazing Treasurer Maggie who has done double duty serving two distinct positions as a member of the Vestry and as Treasurer, and finally I give a moment of respect to our departed vestry member Ed Henneke, may his service continue in the glorious jurisdiction of heaven.

**13. Proud**

I conclude with a note of pride. I was delighted to join TaMara in presenting Joe Kennedy, on behalf of St. Paul’s, to be ordained a Deacon in God’s one holy catholic and apostolic church. I was proud to see Dr. Jordan receive a well earned award for her valuable work, especially her work in General Convention and while we miss her this evening, I am proud that St. Paul’s has one of a very few people representing us on an Interim Body of the Episcopal Church. I was proud of Erryn Ford for serving as the lead acolyte for the Joint convention. WOW! I am proud of Walt Peake and his work with Glenwood Cemetery and a really amazing All Saints Day celebration including a service with the pastors of the Crossover churches. I am proud that this church was willing to give back to our community and celebrate with great dignity the death of Captain Birnie a year ago, and I am glad we were remembered in the memorial to him. I am proud that we welcome people into the church for Art Walk and Music at the Heart of the City, it is a joy to see folks feeling at home in this grand facility. I am very proud of St. Paul’s and while I may push you all sometimes and be grumpy, I love this place and I love all of you in Christ.

Respectfully,

Your quite human priest.