

St. Paul's Episcopal Church 2017 Narrative Budget

A budget, it's been said, is a moral document. It is not just a detailing the income and expenses of the church, but a document that communicates the church leadership's plan of mission and ministry. Instead of simply handing you a line-item budget this year we are presenting the budget to you in the form of a narrative. We hope this will help you better understand how the money you share with us is spent in terms of our ministry, and how the leadership understands these areas of ministry. *A copy of the line-item budget is available in the church office for any who wish to review it.*

This St. Paul's Narrative Budget is built around six areas of mission and ministry: worship, education, outreach, pastoral care, fellowship, and stewardship.

Our Plan of Ministry for 2017

Worship

Purpose: To provide meaningful, beautiful, and Christ-centered worship through which "we unite ourselves with others to acknowledge the holiness of God, to hear God's Word, to offer prayer, and to celebrate the sacraments" (BCP 857).

The St. Paul's Rule of Life says we are a people who are "growing in Christ." This happens in a transformative way through sacramental worship. In 2016 we held over 100 Sunday worship services with an average Sunday attendance of 175 people. In 2016 we baptized 10 persons into Christ's Body, the Church, and confirmed or received 11 people during the Bishop's Annual Visitation. Since 2012 we have seen a nearly 25% increase in Sunday worship attendance. We hope to see a similar increase over the next three years. In terms of church-size dynamics, St. Paul's is a transitional-sized parish. The transition we're making is between a pastoral-sized parish (which is very clergy-focused in its organization) to a program-sized parish (which requires a greater degree of lay leadership and program offerings). As we've seen our parish grow in the past four years, the Vestry has decided to invest in that growth to sustain our momentum by hiring a second full-time staff clergy person to replace Bishop Gray when he leaves us in April. Having a full-time clergy person will help us continue to enrich and enhance our worship and many other offerings.

Music continues to be a highlight of our worship experience. With Liliia Oliinyk as our highly talented organist-choirmaster, and Andy Williams as our children's choir director, we look forward to another year of beautiful, meaningful music. In 2017 we plan to purchase more copies of *Wonder, Love, & Praise* and *Lift Every Voice and Sing* supplemental hymnals to add to

our repertoire for Sunday singing. Lilia also has plans to revive our concert series, opening our space to choirs and ensembles to share God's gift of music with the wider community.

Our Sunday worship experience also includes Children's Chapel. The attendance at Children's Chapel has increased dramatically in the last two years, sometimes seeing as many as 25-30 children ages 4-11. We have recently revamped Children's Chapel with a new format that is helping to root our children's worship in prayer, learning, and respect for one another and their teachers.

Budget Total—\$140,143

(This total includes a percentage of the rector's and associate's compensation packages; organist-choirmaster compensation and total music ministries; childcare; staff support services; and a percentage of insurance, maintenance and supplies, and plant utilities.)

Education

Purpose: To provide Christian Education that teaches people about the Christian faith, while also challenging them to live that faith out in an often complicated world.

St. Paul's is one of the only churches in the Diocese of Louisiana consistently offering Sunday morning Christian education for all ages. Education is another important way of living into our Rule of Life of "growing in Christ." One of our Vestry's guiding principles says that we "believe in and value Christian education in the Episcopal tradition." While intended to apply to our school, the statement applies to education within the church as well. Our Sunday morning education is meant to teach people about the Christian faith with a focus on the Bible. Our Sunday adult program is aligned along two tracks: one for newer members centered around catechesis and understanding the life of the Church; and another for those seeking to grow more deeply in their faith through intensive Bible study and ongoing training in Christian practices.

Our educational programs include Christian education for children of all ages using the "Weaving God's Promises" curriculum. Since our population of young students continues to grow we will be adding more volunteer teachers this year so that we can further separate these young people into more appropriate age groupings. Our youth group (grades 6-12) is now meeting regularly every other Sunday evening for learning and fellowship. We've also begun offering the opportunity for youth formation on Wednesday evenings.

Our Wednesday night program (part of "Service, Supper, & Substance") is meant to provide a somewhat different setting. It is intended to be more challenging and provocative. Our purpose

during this time is to focus on more challenging issues in the modern world and to provide a respectful environment in which to have those discussions.

We also began offering some “hybrid-formation” opportunities in 2016 that combine traditional learning with the use of technology. Fr. Rob periodically leads a book study through a private Facebook group for men at St. Paul’s. Bishop Gray has led two Bible studies through a weekly email reflection. We also subscribe to an online school called “ChurchNext.” We have used this resource on Wednesday evenings and Sunday mornings on some occasions. It is primarily being used to prepare parents and godparents of infants and young children for baptism. Technology is ubiquitous today, and we use it to facilitate many things in our life—why not use it to facilitate our relationship with God.

In 2017 we look to continue developing quality educational opportunities, and look forward to ways in which our new staff clergy person can help us continue to accomplish this goal.

Budget Total—\$70,707

(This total includes a percentage of the rector’s and associate’s compensation packages; compensation for our director of youth and children’s formation; expenses for adult, youth, and other educational materials; childcare; staff support services; and a percentage of insurance, maintenance and supplies, and plant utilities.)

Outreach

Purpose: To be a people who “pay it forward” and who live into our baptismal promises to “proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ”; to “seek and serve Christ in all persons, living our neighbors as ourselves”; and to “strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being.”

The St. Paul’s Rule of Life says that we are a people “growing in service.” After our St. Paul’s Homecoming and Senior Center ministry came to a conclusion last year we began working to develop partnerships with ministries in our community, and have been encouraging the people of St. Paul’s to “pay it forward” by serving. One of our Partners in Mission continues to be Lantern Light, located at St. Joseph’s Catholic Church, which serves the homeless in our city. In addition we have developed a partnership this year with Covenant House which serves homeless and at-risk youth. Both of these programs give people at St. Paul’s a chance to minister to the homeless by preparing food, serving, and getting to know them. Our youth have also begun helping us to serve the homeless through the “Stockings with Care” program they helped us carry out during Christmas.

This year we are also entering into a partnership with Habitat for Humanity by participating in a “Unity Build” near the end of 2017. We will be working with other churches from around the city to fund and build a new home for a Habitat for Humanity client. This is an exciting ecumenical as well as community service opportunity, and we hope you will participate as more information becomes available.

In addition to funding the Habitat “Unity Build,” the Vestry has directed funds to two other organizations this year. Through our Christmas offering we were able to send monetary assistance to the American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem’s health and educational ministries for children in the Holy Land, as well as to Covenant House locally.

Our first and best outreach to the surrounding community is our school. Many of our students and their families come to the school with no religious affiliation. The time our clergy spend assisting with school chapels and generally being present with students and their families is a powerful form of evangelism. As a result, the school reports that over 20% of school families are also members of the church. This is a high percentage for an Episcopal parish day school like ours. It’s a testament to the welcoming attitude of our members, and to the transformative power of our church’s ministries that draw people to the love of God in Christ Jesus.

Another powerful form of evangelism for St. Paul’s is our online presence. Most people today learn about churches through the Internet. Our website, our mobile app, and our interaction with social media platforms are forms of electronic evangelism, and thus part of our outreach. We will continue to work on improving the ways we use these technology platforms to share the Good News of God in Christ in 2017.

Outreach also happens through gifts given to the Rector’s Discretionary Fund. The second Sunday of every month has been designated by the Vestry as Outreach Sunday. All of the loose cash in the offering plate goes to the Rector’s Discretionary Fund. Clergy discretionary funds are designated by the Church for pious and charitable use. Fr. Rob uses his fund for things like supporting people from our congregation and beyond who are in need of financial assistance (rent, utilities, etc.), for donations to various charitable organizations, for scholarships to religious camps or retreats, etc. This account is audited each year per the canons of the Church to ensure the funds are appropriately utilized.

Finally, our budget helps us to serve and empower our sister and brother Episcopalians throughout the Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana for mission. One of our Vestry’s guiding principles reminds us that “we are a Parish of the Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana committed to living as, and encouraging others to live as, disciples guided by the historic faith and teachings of the Anglican tradition.” In our tradition, we are not a congregational church that is an entity unto ourselves, but an Episcopal church under the oversight of our Bishop. We are connected

with churches all around our diocese, the country, and the world. The assessment we pay to the diocese each year is part of our outreach which supports our Episcopal college chaplaincies and mission stations; helps to provide congregational development resources for ourselves and sister churches, as well as clergy deployment, placement, and transition ministries for parishes; enables ministry to youth and young adults; provides support for theological and ongoing education for seminarians, clergy, and laity; and makes possible the wider spread of the Good News of God in Christ through The Episcopal Church. To be an Episcopalian is to be a member not just of a single church, but a member of a missionary society both foreign and domestic.

In 2017 we look forward to expanding upon these ministries, and encouraging all of our members to get out in the community and serve. The Body of Christ, when mobilized for mission, can be a powerful force for transformation in the New Orleans community and the world. Be a part of that transformative power and join us along with our Partners in Mission and the wider Episcopal Church as we grow in service together.

Budget Total—\$142,626

(This total includes a percentage of the rector's and associate's compensation packages; diocesan assessment; Vestry directed outreach to our Partners in Mission; staff support services; and a percentage of insurance, maintenance and supplies, and plant utilities.)

Pastoral Care

Purpose: To create an environment where people know and experience the love of God by being part of a caring, supportive community.

The St. Paul's Rule of Life says that we are "growing in relationships." One way this happens is in pastoral care. The clergy are the frontline support in our ministry of pastoral care to our members. They walk with people who are experiencing both sadness and joy. Whether working with a young couple preparing for marriage, mourning with someone who has lost a spouse, or making a hospital visit to someone who is sick or experiencing the wonder of a new birth, our clergy are at the forefront of pastoral ministry.

Pastoral care is also, however, the job of every Christian who is part of the Body, and called to minister to our neighbors near and far. Our trained Eucharistic Visitors bring communion to the sick and homebound each week, and others bring hot meals to people following a birth or a surgery. There are many ways that lay people minister to the friends around them who are in need. This is an important part of letting people know they are loved by Christ and His Church.

In 2017 we are looking to put better systems in place and expand how we reach out to people

experiencing milestones in life, be it a marriage, a birth, an illness, a death, or any major life change. One of the primary focuses of our new staff clergy person will be to help further develop these systems.

One of our Vestry's guiding principles for the life of St. Paul's is that "we provide a framework for people in faith and help them develop for ministry." Helping people to grow into the people God calls us to be is also an important component of pastoral care. Part of our new staff clergy person's job will also be the further development of systems for better accomplishing this goal as well.

The St. Paul's Center for Counseling & Education is an important part of our pastoral care ministry, and also functions as a kind of outreach to the school. Dr. Jeanne Robertson, Director of the Center, sees members of the St. Paul's community free of charge to help counsel them on any number of sensitive issues. She also does a large bulk of the premarital counseling work for each of the couples preparing for Holy Matrimony at St. Paul's.

Budget Total—\$54,537

(This total includes a percentage of the rector's and associate's compensation packages; the Center for Counseling & Education; staff support services; and a percentage of insurance, maintenance and supplies, and plant utilities.)

Fellowship

Purpose: To create an environment where all people are welcomed, and are brought to a sense of belonging in a place where "everyone knows your name."

Healthy relationships, if they are going to grow, require ongoing and intentional nurturing. They also require celebration. Our monthly potlucks have become one way we've worked on "growing in relationships" in 2016. Our Hospitality Team has done a wonderful job of making our potlucks fun and engaging with the monthly themes. Celebration with one another is a kind of spiritual discipline that helps us to grow closer to those we sit next to in the pew. In 2017 we are excited to fund our Hospitality Team's ongoing efforts. It's important to grow in relationship so we can better love one another as Christ commanded us to do.

Before we can begin feeling like we truly belong, it's important that we feel we've been invited and welcomed into the fold. Ministry to newcomers is crucial to our growth as a church. In 2017 we want to further develop our systems for inviting, welcoming, and connecting people into the life of the St. Paul's community. Our new staff clergy person will work with Fr. Rob and other lay leadership to help articulate and mature the ways in which we do this important work. This

evangelistic ministry is at the heart of what the Church is about as a people commanded by Jesus to “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” (Matt. 28:19,20). This all leads straight back to our ministry of education so that we can also help people grow in their relationship with Christ.

Fellowship is not just having fun together, but is integral to our mission.

Budget Total—\$44,527

(This total includes a percentage of the rector’s and associate’s compensation packages; staff support services; catering, reception supplies, and refreshments; newcomer events and materials; and a percentage of insurance, maintenance and supplies, and plant utilities.)

Stewardship

Purpose: To care for all the gifts God has given us, and use them to further God’s kingdom.

On one level, stewardship is about generosity and giving. We are proud of the work of the St. Paul’s Stewardship Team who helps make our annual pledge campaign happen. In 2016 our Stewardship Team, led by Jason Akers, did a phenomenal job in helping us grow our pledges by 10%.

In 2017 our theme for the year is “Living Generously.” Our Stewardship Team hopes to encourage us all year to explore the ways we are living as generous people in our lives. You will notice the “Living Generously” cards in the pew racks. Each week you’re encouraged to fill out a card to tell us about the large and small ways you are being a steward of the gifts God has given you by being generous to others. The Stewardship Team will offer a couple of important educational opportunities in the coming months. First, they will join with people from around our diocese in offering up a study during Lent of the book *The Soul of Money* by Lynne Twist. In the summer, they will offer Dave Ramsey’s “Financial Peace University” to help people at St. Paul’s and from the surrounding community learn how better to budget their money, and get out of debt. They also hope to develop a Planned Giving program to encourage people to include St. Paul’s in their estate planning.

Stewardship, however, is far from being the annual pledge campaign or simply about giving our money. Stewardship is about *caring for all that God has given us and using those gifts for spiritual purposes*. Everything comes from God, including the gifts God has inspired people to give to St. Paul’s. This includes our financial resources as well as our wonderful buildings and grounds. These gifts all require careful and responsible management.

Administration may not be a glamorous word, but it is an important part of responsible stewardship of our gifts. *Ad-*ministration means “before ministry.” Everything that happens administratively happens to enable the more “glamorous” parts of church ministry like worship, education, pastoral care, outreach, and fellowship. We are blessed to have an outstanding parish administrator in Lori Lavelle who does so much in her administrative ministry to enable the ministry that happens in this place. Administration is also a substantive part of the rector’s duties in his work with the staff and Vestry of the St. Paul’s. Administration is ministry, and it is a large component of what stewardship is all about: caring for the gifts given to the Body of Christ, and using them to spread the Kingdom.

Budget Total—\$126,877

(This total includes a percentage of the rector’s and associate’s compensation packages, as well as the parish administrator; stewardship team materials; Vestry expenses; and a percentage of insurance, maintenance and supplies, and plant utilities.)

Conclusion

At St. Paul’s Episcopal Church our Rule of Life is “growing in relationships, growing in service, and growing in Christ.” We live into this rule through worship, education, outreach, pastoral care, fellowship, and stewardship. When you generously share what God has given you with St. Paul’s you are helping us to live out our rule, and making a real difference in people’s lives. **Thank you** for all you do for St. Paul’s and for the mission of the Church “to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ” (BCP 855). May God continue to bless us and help us live into our vision of being “a Spirit-filled people renewing, empowering, and transforming lives within and beyond our community.”

A copy of the line-item budget is available in the church office for any who wish to review it.