

St. Paul's on the Green
2025 MINISTRY REPORTS
*presented at the
Annual Meeting*

FEBRUARY 1, 2026 - 12:30 PM



Episcopal Church annual meetings include reports from various committees, ministries, and organizations within the parish. These reports provide an overview of the church's ministries, finances, and activities over the past year. This report becomes part of St. Paul's permanent archive.

As you read through these reports, note that they also invite your participation; please consider the ways you would like to be involved in the ministries of this parish. Thank you for your participation and leadership!

Vestry and Parish Leadership Reports

THE RECTOR'S REPORT

As I reflect on the past year at St. Paul's, what stands out most clearly is not simply growth, but fresh vitality—signs of real, organic life taking root across our parish. This has been a year marked by deepening participation, courageous witness, and a sharpened sense of our role in the wider community at this moment in time.

One of the clearest expressions of that vitality has been the continued flourishing of our music ministry under Josh Ehlebracht's leadership. Josh has not merely "settled in"; he has taken real root at St. Paul's. Over the past year, he has expanded the scope of the program, strengthened the choir, and infused our worship with creativity and joy. I see choristers who, only a few years ago, were just learning to read music or daring to sing in public, now leading with confidence and enthusiasm. Music continues to be a vibrant and visible part of our common life—not as performance, but as prayer and proclamation. The choir's collaborations with other choirs and with the wider Norwalk community have extended our reach and deepened our sense of connection, as we quite literally find our voice together at a time when that feels especially urgent.

Equally striking this year has been the spontaneous emergence of several lay-led ministries—among the most hopeful signs of parish health I can name. A bereavement support group, men's ministry gatherings, a growing pet ministry, the Art-by-Heart group, and other circles of care and creativity have sprung up alongside the many small groups that already form the heartbeat of our parish life. Each of these ministries took shape because parishioners noticed a need, felt a call, and stepped forward to lead. They signal a church that understands ministry not as something done by staff on behalf of others, but as something that arises naturally when people feel trusted, empowered, and supported.

This past year also confronted us with a moment of profound disruption and moral clarity. The violent arrest and deportation of our brother, Leonel Chávez, shook this community deeply. What might otherwise have remained an abstract issue or distant headline became painfully immediate. It happened at our front door, to someone we know and love—a pillar of the local community. That event drew St. Paul's more fully into the work of immigration advocacy and accompaniment, not as a political posture, but as a faithful response grounded in the teachings of Jesus. In that painful moment, the church was called to move beyond words into visible solidarity. While the grief and anger of that experience remain close to the surface, so too does a clearer sense of our vocation: to stand with those who are vulnerable, to tell the truth about systems that may benefit us while harming others, and to let our faith take public shape when conscience demands it. In response, St. Paul's is now in the process of becoming a community hub for immigration action, recruiting volunteers for a variety of community organizations supporting immigrants in our area.

Another moment worth noting came at the beginning of this year, when I was invited to serve as Master of Ceremonies for the inauguration of Mayor Barbara Smyth. I certainly felt out of place on that stage alongside the full panel of state officials, but the invitation itself was not accidental. It was a visible acknowledgment of St. Paul's earned place within the civic life of the City of Norwalk—itself recognized as an area leader in diversity and inclusion. It affirmed something we have long understood: that this church has a role to play in the public square, offering moral imagination, spiritual grounding, and a relentless commitment to the common good.

Finally, because of the extraordinary generosity of the members and friends of St. Paul's—all of you—we ended the year having more than fully closed our 2025 budget shortfall of \$38,300, and the Vestry has now passed a 2026 budget with the smallest deficit in living memory. People give to missions that matter, and it is clear that St. Paul's matters deeply. Thank you.

St. Paul's is not standing still. We are growing in depth, courage, and connection—to one another and to the wider community we serve. I am deeply moved by the leadership and faithfulness of this parish, and I look ahead with hope and curiosity to where God is leading us on this continuing pilgrimage.

Grateful to be walking this Way of Love with you all,

– *The Rev. Daniel Simons, Rector*

THE WARDENS' REPORT

Since we began serving as Co-Wardens in 2023, St. Paul's has experienced a season of remarkable growth, renewal and hope. Together we have emerged fully from the challenges of Covid, restoring and revitalizing programming while exploring new initiatives and expanding scheduled activities that are now stronger and more vibrant than ever. While we said goodbye to some stalwart members for a variety of reasons, we have been deeply encouraged by the arrival of enthusiastic and engaged parishioners. Their energy, commitment and generosity - both financial and practical - have more than made up for what was lost and have helped shape a renewed sense of community.

Thanks in part to our stable and productive partnerships with Watch Me Grow Daycare and Rising Stars, we have steadily increased the income side of our annual budget while simultaneously reducing the Church's annual deficit. Through the tireless efforts of our Treasurer and the Chair of our Finance Committee and the decision to hire a supportive and professional accounting firm, St. Paul's is now on a much firmer financial footing than it has been in years, as our 2026 budget will attest.

We have also strengthened the life of the Parish through the establishment of several ongoing committees and ministries and the revamping of others. All meet regularly and plan well-attended church events. Our Stewardship Committee now works tirelessly throughout the year to help parishioners understand the importance of pledging generously to support this beloved church and its programs. We are delighted to have re-instituted the beloved annual parish retreat and to have established a Buildings and Grounds Committee that meets regularly to address both immediate maintenance needs and long-term planning on our campus.

Christian Education and outreach continued to be central to the life and mission of St. Paul's. Formation opportunities have expanded with seven Sacred Ground circles completed and a weekly children's program offered Sunday mornings. These efforts have deepened engagement within the parish while fostering thoughtful reflection on faith, justice and community.

At the same time, the Parish has strengthened its presence and impact beyond its walls. Through the pastoral outreach of Father Daniel and Father Paul and through the growing activism and community involvement of our congregation - particularly fostered by the activities of the Justice

Ministry and its expanding network of community partners - St Paul's has engaged more intentionally with issues such as housing insecurity, support for the unhoused and more recently immigration. Immigration has emerged as a new lens through which the Parish is exploring questions of justice and faithful response. The generosity and responsiveness of the St. Paul's community have been evident in strong participation in our hats, scarves and coats drive for the homeless or our support for the Christ Church pantry. Together, these efforts reflect a parish that is increasingly recognized as a hub for positive social change in the wider community.

And there is so much more. Membership and pledges are steadily rising and there is a buzz around what is happening at St. Paul's, spiritually, programmatically and in our outreach beyond these walls. We encourage every member of our parish to get involved in some aspect of our active parish life: join a ministry or committee, raise your hand when volunteers are needed, and continue to share your time, talent and treasure in support of St. Paul's on the Green. Parish leadership is a shared responsibility, and the continued vitality of St. Paul's depends on the committed involvement of each of its members.

As we leave our positions as Co-Wardens, we are both profoundly grateful for the opportunity to serve this beloved community of St. Paul's; it has been an honor and a privilege. We thank all of the current and past vestry members for their hard work, strong faith and enthusiasm for the mission of St Paul's, and we are confident that the nominated slate of candidates will continue this good work and will lead the Parish forward with energy and vision.

– *Gail Bindley-Taylor and Ginny Balser, Co-Wardens*

THE TREASURER'S REPORT

My goal as Treasurer is to make St. Paul's finances as transparent as possible by working closely with the clergy and staff, Vestry, CLA (our accounting firm) and our Finance, Stewardship, and Endowment Committees—and with the whole parish.

Thanks to the generosity of the congregation and facility-use donations, operating income exceeded projections in 2025. Although expenses were also over budget, we ended the year in the black. The 2026 budget projects a smaller deficit than 2025, and we are optimistic that 2026 will also close with a surplus. Details will be shared at the Annual Meeting.

2025 marked our first full year working with CLA. We've built a strong, collaborative partnership, and their guidance has been outstanding. Together, we follow a clear process for recording donations, paying bills and payroll, managing taxes, and producing monthly financial reports, which are reviewed by the Vestry.

With Finance Committee Chair Marva Cummings, I prepared the annual budget and facilitated an independent audit for 2023; we plan to have the audits for 2024 and 2025 completed by the independent auditor this year. I am deeply grateful to Marva and to our volunteer counters for their faithful and diligent service.

– *Paul Hunter, Treasurer*

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

During 2025, members of the Endowment Committee and the Chair of the Finance Committee attended quarterly earnings calls with the trustees of the Connecticut Diocesan Donations and Bequests and the fund manager.

In the coming year, the Finance and Endowment Committees will focus on outreach and marketing efforts to promote and grow legacy giving at St. Paul's. For more information, please contact Marva Cummings or email the parish office at info@stpaulsnorwalk.org.

– *Marva Cummings, Chair*

PROPERTY COMMITTEE REPORT

This past year the Building and Grounds committee has been busy working on various projects - all which have been organized so that we can better prioritize and record a history of work that has been completed.

One of the major projects, for us as a parish community, is the roof on the church building. The roof is over 100 years old and requires either major repair or replacement due to leakage. We have identified three roofing specialists that are accomplished in such projects. We are now in the process of contacting these firms to bid for either repair or replacement.

Other projects that are being addressed are the replacement of the wooden front doors to the church which are showing damage due to rot, the exterior lanterns being re-worked and re-furbished, various painting and repair projects, and addressing signage on the campus. Much of this work is being performed by members on the committee and parishioners. This is a large campus, and we are maintaining the property well.

We are seriously addressing handicap accessibility and have prioritized this project. A general plan has been suggested that does not interfere with the architecture of the church and the committee will be moving forward with determining costs.

Long term project of Property Development is in the primary investigation phase. We are looking to develop our property so that we can generate a very robust income stream that will ensure the financial future of St. Paul's for generations to come.

– *Henry Rapp III, Chair*

STEWARDSHIP REPORT

The task of the Stewardship Committee is to ensure that St. Paul's has the financial resources needed to fund its mission. We do this in two ways:

- Communication: We share information about the financial needs of the church and reinforce the idea that stewardship is an expression of faith.
- Campaign: We administer the annual pledge campaign, which is the single largest source of the church's income.

Highlights of 2025

- We made further progress on our goal of having stewardship be year-round thread rather than something we focus on for a few weeks in the fall. Toward that end, we (1) sent handwritten thank-you notes in the early spring to each person or family that made a pledge for 2025, and we (2) scheduled three of the stewardship testimonials to be given outside of the fall campaign.
- We completely updated our narrative budget with new text and new photos, and

we added information on parish giving to help people in their discernment process of how much to pledge.

- Our fall campaign had an ambitious goal of \$440,000, which was \$28,000 more than our pledge total for 2025. However, we exceeded this goal, with a pledge total of \$447,485.04 as of December 31.

The success of the fall campaign had much to do with the general spirit of love, goodwill, and generosity that is flowing through St. Paul's, but the hard work of the committee—Gail Bindley-Taylor, Ginny Balser, Lindsay Kennedy, Rick Muldowney, and Charlene Higbe—was essential. I was grateful all year for their partnership, and I know that the committee will be in good hands in 2026 as Lindsay and another co-chair (TBD) take over the leadership. If you have an interest in participating in the important work of stewardship at St. Paul's, please speak with Lindsay or contact the church office.

– *Don Parker-Burgard, Chair*

Ministry Area Reports

St. Paul's various ministries are divided among four general categories:

1. Sacramental Life, which includes Worship, Music, and Pastoral Care.
2. Education & Faith Formation; through reflection and teaching we shape our understanding of worship, and we prepare ourselves for service.
3. Service & Outreach, which includes our volunteering and financial support of neighborhood service organizations, and our interfaith partnerships.
4. Community Life, which covers all the many groups and activities that knit us together in a loving and supportive community.

SACRAMENTAL LIFE AND PASTORAL CARE

St. Paul's continued to grow in depth and numbers this year. We had 8 members join the church in 2025, with an additional 6 joining through baptism. We celebrated five weddings and eleven funerals.

We are blessed with a rich and textured liturgical tradition, and there are many teams that serve and support the central act of our community, which is Worship. In 2025 St. Paul's had over 65 active worship volunteers, supporting 185 individual services. With all the different assignments per service, this comes to over 3,070 occasions for service over the course of the year! Below are the descriptions of and reports from our various teams who lead worship.

Of special note this year - St. Paul's will welcome The Rev. Edrice Viechweg as Deacon. Deacon Edrice began her discernment process while she was a parishioner at St. Paul's. We are blessed to be able to welcome her "home" and look forward to her leadership and guidance in linking the church out to the community in service. We are also grateful for The Rev. Paul Carling, who continues to volunteer his time, love and care in extraordinary ways to this parish.

-- Fr. Daniel Simons

MUSIC MINISTRY

It has been continually a joy and a privilege to serve as Director of Music at St. Paul's. I can express nothing but gratitude for all our fabulous volunteer musicians for their dedication, positive attitudes, and exceptional musicianship that they bring to every rehearsal, service and concert. When I reflect on all the fabulous music making and experiences we've all shared, I find it hard to believe it has only been a year, as our Choirs have accomplished so much.

This past year, as always, was filled with excellent music making by all St. Paul's musicians. During Lent the choirs offered a beautiful performance of the Fauré Requiem featuring our very own Will Doreza as our baritone soloist. We had a stunning Holy Week, each service musically rich and led by our fearless volunteers, culminating in an Easter Vigil featuring Bainton's "And I Saw a New Heaven" and Stanford's "Ye Choirs of New Jerusalem." Both works are staples of the choral repertoire. In the fall Shari Lucas brilliantly accompanied the silent film "The Phantom of the Opera." We also had the privilege of being involved in a hymnody project funded by a grant given to St. Paul's by the Church Music Institute. The project culminated in a Collaborative Hymn Festival featuring a mass choir and congregation of many denominations and traditions all coming together to celebrate our shared tradition and love for hymnody. From there we quickly moved to All Saints and All Souls where the choirs demonstrated their mastery of Wesley's "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace" and once again the Fauré Requiem. Advent Lessons & Carols exceptionally well

attended and featured Gibbon's "This is the Record of John" and set the tone for a rich and contemplative season.

Our Messiah singalong is becoming a yearly tradition and is gaining popularity. This year we had more singers than last year with a choir of over 50 people. While we never got to experience our planned Christmas Lessons & Carols due to illness, we were able to use some of the music the choirs worked so hard rehearsing for our Christmas Eve services. This year we introduced a Candlelight Midnight Mass beginning at 11pm which took on a beautiful and calm tone to contrast our vibrant festival service with full choir at 6pm. This past January was full of cancellations due to weather, however the choirs helped create a robust MLK celebration with their heartfelt rendition of "God has work for us to do" by Mark Miller.

Our monthly organ recital series began in October and is continuing to steadily gain traction with our average attendance entering the realm of 20-30 people. This is incredibly inspiring to me as a young musician as these concerts seek to provide performance opportunities for other young organists and local musicians. Thank you to the volunteers who help fund and put together these recitals every year, please consider spreading the word and attending.

Looking forward, this spring will bring with it more music making at St. Paul's, including our rescheduled Evensong and Benediction in celebration of our Patronal Feast, the return of Cabaret, and a Choir Concert featuring Vierne's "Messe Solennelle" and Howell's "St. Paul's Service." I have so much gratitude for all of the dedicated volunteers that make this music program possible. A goal for the coming year is to continue growth of the Adult Choir and Chorister program. The Adult Choir needs tenors and basses, please spread the word and consider volunteering to sing, all voices are welcome. Most of our Choristers are teenagers now and aging out of the group and we will be working on a campaign to attract new and younger voices. Thank you all for your support and enthusiasm surrounding our beloved Music Ministry. I look forward to continuing to make music with you throughout 2026. **Contact me at music@stpaulsnorwalk.org.**

-- Josh Elhebract, Director of Music

ALTAR PARTY

The "altar party" is a team of volunteers who vest to lead the liturgies. We currently have 22 dedicated volunteers on this team; you can see the work they offer each Sunday, and much of happens behind the scenes as well. To do this work sustainably, we could have at least 30 volunteers to share the responsibilities of this central and prayerful work. If you are willing to serve, please **contact Fr. Daniel at simons@stpaulsnorwalk.org.**

-- Fr. Daniel Simons

SACRISTANS

The sacristans prepare the chancel and the church for the Eucharist at each service on Sunday as well as other seasonal and special services. These duties include preparing the chalices, setting the credence tables with communion items, preparing the oil stocks for healing, placing the elements on the table at the baptismal font inside the Narthex and placing the grape juice and wine cups on the side altars. Other duties include washing all items after the service and preparing them for the next service, laundering the linens and filling grape juice and wine cups among many others duties. There are currently 13 sacristans working diligently to provide this important "behind the scenes" ministry. Contact Diane Drozd at info@stpaulsnorwalk.org for more information.

-- Diane Drozd, Head Sacristan

HEALING MINISTRY

The Healing Ministry at St. Paul's offers Christ's healing presence through healing prayer and compassionate listening. We serve as vessels of grace, inviting the Spirit to bring peace, renewal, and restoration to all who seek it. One anointer and two prayer ministers join together to form a team of three lay ministers that are trained and commissioned to serve in the Episcopal tradition of healing prayer. The anointer offers intercessory prayers and administers holy oil to symbolize the healing grace of God, while the two prayer ministers provide gentle presence and pray silently with the anointer over the parishioner.

We currently have 35 active healing members for both the 9:00 am and 11:00 am service and would love to increase this ministry to at least 45 people. We welcome those who feel called to this quiet, powerful ministry. Training and discernment are available for those interested. Please reach out to Sandy Bria or the parish office at info@stpaulsnorwalk.org.

– *Sandy Bria, team leader*

USHERS

Known for its extraordinary welcome, St. Paul's ushers play a vital role in Sunday worship. They greet parishioners and visitors, assist with seating and accessibility needs, coordinate roles such as the healing teams, invite participation in the offertory, collect and present offerings, guide Communion, and help close the church after services.

With 19 ushers currently on the roster, we are seeking at least six additional volunteers—especially for the 9:00 am service—to make this a once-a-month commitment. For more information, contact Serafino Carri or email the church office at info@stpaulsnorwalk.org

– *Serafino Carri, Head Usher*

WELCOME MINISTRY

The welcome at St. Paul's is said to extend from “the steps to the Table,” and it begins with the Ministers of Welcome. Each Sunday, a team of two greets worshippers at the door with a smile and a nametag, offering a first connection that can shape a visitor's entire experience. After the service, they invite newcomers to coffee hour and help them make connections within the parish.

With 25 volunteers currently serving, there is always room for more—especially those newer to St. Paul's as it's a wonderful way to meet people and learn names. One goal for 2026 is to re-introduce a “Shepherd” program that would connect guests with a member of the parish as a personal guide to St. Paul's.

For more information, or to volunteer, please contact Marsha Dunn at admin@stpaulsnorwalk.org.

– *Marsha Dunn, Associate for New Member Incorporation*

LAY PASTORAL CARE

The Lay Pastoral Care ministry aims to bring St. Paul's to those who can't be with us in person. Since St. Paul's resurrected this ministry in the fall of 2023, more than 70 annual visits have been made to an average of six parishioners each month.

Ministry members go in pairs to a parishioner's home or assisted living residence or even a hospital. Each visit represents a chance to strengthen the bonds that make up our community and to build relationships with people that have been a part of St. Paul's for decades (including some who were once Eucharistic Visitors themselves). In Advent 2024, we began including a "sending forth" of visitors in the Sunday liturgy, making visible the truth that we go on behalf of the whole congregation – that "We, who are many, are one body, because we all share one bread, and one cup."

Visits are scheduled once a month and can be made at the discretion of the ministry team members through coordination with the parishioner. There are currently 8 members of this ministry, but we would love to add four more. Training is offered as new team members are paired with experienced members for each visit. For more information, please contact Sandy Bria or the parish office – info@stpaulsnorwalk.org

– *Sandy Bria, team leader*

EDUCATION & FAITH FORMATION

During 2025, the Formation and Christian Education Committee supported a wide range of ongoing and seasonal programs. Children's education lessons were offered weekly throughout the winter, spring, and fall, taught by a rotating group of teachers and, beginning in September, supported by a coordinated curriculum funded by the committee.

The committee also organized and supported several special events during the year, including a January pilgrimage to the Fletcher African American History Museum in Stratford; a Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner and Games Night; and the Lenten Soup and Program Tuesday series in March and April. In mid-May, more than 25 parishioners attended the committee-organized weekend retreat at Camp Washington.

In the fall, the committee sponsored the Ministry Fair and a three-part Bible study series led by parishioner Joe Shafranek. The year concluded with a Celtic Evening in December, featuring a shepherd's pie dinner and cookie exchange, and the first annual Day of Service over Martin Luther King Jr. weekend in support of the Person to Person program at two local sites.

Planning is underway for the coming months, including the Shrove Tuesday Dinner, a five-week Lenten series, and the annual Camp Washington retreat in May. The Formation Committee meets at 6:00 p.m. on the third Wednesday of each month and welcomes new members. For more information, please contact Ginny Balser or the parish office – info@stpaulsnorwalk.org

– *Ginny Balser, Chair*

CHILDREN’S MINISTRY

Each Sunday morning at the 9 am service, children ages 3-10 gather at the font to hear the Gospel and then leave to take part in a special activity during the sermon. Currently there are 3 dedicated volunteers who lead the activities. The St. Paul’s clergy have joined the rotation as well, and with at least 5 more volunteers to round out the roster so that the commitment would be once a month and Children’s Worship could be expanded to include the 11 am service! Training and materials are provided. For more information **contact** Kendra Brown, or the parish office at info@stpaulsnorwalk.org.

– *Kendra Brown, team leader*

SERVICE, OUTREACH, AND PARTNERSHIPS

St. Paul’s is blessed with parishioners who generously serve our community in many ways. As a parish, we continue to support trusted local partners right here in our neighborhood. Volunteers serve monthly with Laundry Love, Person to Person (P2P), and the Norwalk Schools tutoring program.

In 2025, a new partnership began with Christ Church, East Norwalk: the groceries collected each Sunday now help stock their Angel Food Pantry. These ministries offer a range of commitment levels and always welcome new volunteers. To learn how you can get involved, contact the parish office at info@stpaulsnorwalk.org.

This past year, St. Paul’s made a renewed commitment to move beyond our church walls and into the neighborhood—walking alongside our neighbors with real presence and real action. We look forward to welcoming Deacon Edrice into the Outreach Ministry and, with her guidance, deepening our focus and strengthening our partnerships in the community.

– *Fr. Daniel Simons*

COMMUNITY LIFE

COFFEE HOUR AND RECEPTIONS

St. Paul's on the Green embraces a mission of radical welcome to all who come through our doors, and the ministry of Hospitality is a vital part of that welcome. Each Sunday, parishioners are invited to enjoy Coffee Hour following both the 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. services. It's a relaxed time to catch up with friends, meet new people, and enjoy treats lovingly provided by the congregation on a rotating basis.

Each week, parishioners help by providing goodies and assisting with setup, serving, and cleanup. If you haven't yet been invited to participate and would like to be included, please contact Marsha Dunn in the parish office to be added to the rotation. As we like to say, the Sanctuary feeds our souls; the Undercroft feeds our tummies!

To make this ministry a lighter lift, we are introducing volunteer teams to host Coffee Hour. Teams of four or more—families or groups of friends—will help set up, host, and clean up Coffee Hour after both services. With eight teams, the commitment would be just once a month. Truly, the more the merrier!

If you're looking for an even smaller commitment, consider helping with one of our special receptions throughout the church year, such as the Easter Vigil or an Evensong reception.

For more information speak with Rosemary Dellinger, or email the parish office at info@stpaulsnorwalk.org

– *Rosemary Dellinger, team leader*

BEREAVEMENT GROUP

This year, a few parishioners came together to support each other during a time of loss. Realizing there was a need for support during a time of grief, the group grew and now meets regularly to support each other on their journeys.

– *Sandy Bria, facilitator*

MEN'S GROUP

St. Paul's Men's Group is a diverse collection of 18 men who meet the second Saturday of each month exploring life after retirement, stress and how to meet new friends. For more information email [**mens-group@stpaulsnorwalk.org**](mailto:mens-group@stpaulsnorwalk.org)

– *Alan Booth, coordinator*

PET MINISTRY

A group of animal lovers at St. Paul's have come together to offer a special ministry to pets and their people. The group helped organize the annual Blessing of the Animals at the feast of St. Francis and offers support to families during times of sickness or loss. For more information speak to Lindsay Kennedy or email [**info@stpaulsnorwalk.org**](mailto:info@stpaulsnorwalk.org)

– *Lindsay Kennedy, coordinator*

ART WITH HEART

This year, a group of parishioners began meeting on the first and third Saturdays of each month at 10:00 a.m. to explore spirituality through art. Open to preteens through adults, the group welcomes participants of all experience levels—no artistic background required. Supplies are provided, though participants are also welcome to bring their preferred medium. For more information, contact Fran O’Gorman or the parish office at info@stpaulsnorwalk.org

YOUNG ADULTS

The Young Adults at St. Paul’s have been meeting informally and more regularly this past year. New leadership is emerging and the plan is to formalize this already active group in 2026 to learn more, or join the mailing list, please speak to Lindsay Kennedy or contact the parish office at info@stpaulsnorwalk.org

YOGA AT ST. PAUL’S

To support mind and body healing, St. Paul’s offers two yoga programs. **Flexible Fridays**, led by Audrey Cozzarin, is a gentle class designed with beginners in mind, leaving participants refreshed and “put back together.” **Yoga Fusion**, led by Joyce Generoso, blends yoga and Pilates for a full-body rejuvenating experience. The suggested donation goes to support the mission of St. Paul’s. For more information **contact Audrey Or Joyce or email the parish office at** info@stpaulsnorwalk.org

– *Audrey Cozzarin & Joyce Generoso*

LIVING BUDDHA, LIVING CHRIST SANGHA

In 2025, a group of parishioners formed the Living Buddha, Living Christ Sangha with the goal of creating a welcoming, contemplative space to deepen understanding of both Christian and Buddhist traditions, while fostering compassion, wisdom, and love. The group is named after Thich Nhat Hanh’s book *Living Buddha, Living Christ*, which explores the shared spiritual principles embodied by both traditions.

The Sangha meets on the first Saturday of each month at 3:00 p.m. in the Guild Room. All are welcome—whether deeply rooted in Buddhism or Christianity, or simply curious about the intersection of these two spiritual paths. For more information, contact **the parish office at** info@stpaulsnorwalk.org

– *Audrey Cozzarin & Paul Whitman*

Special Focus Ministries

JUSTICE MINISTRY

The Justice Ministry at St. Paul's advances the parish's commitment to live out its baptismal covenant through education, worship, advocacy, and direct action addressing systemic injustice. Grounded in faith, the ministry focuses on issues including racial equity, poverty, housing insecurity, environmental stewardship, peacebuilding, immigration, and the dignity of all people.

In 2025, the ministry supported and organized parish observances for Martin Luther King Jr. Sunday, the diocesan commemoration of the Rev. Absalom Jones, Black History Month, Women's History Month, Juneteenth, Red Dress Day (which highlights Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls), and other justice-focused initiatives. Programs under the Justice umbrella include Sacred Ground and the St. Paul's History Project, which continued important work on parish archives, as well as close collaboration with the fledgling Care for Creation and the group under Father Daniel that explores Pilgrimages.

Black History Month featured multiple well-attended events, including presentations by Jeffrey Fletcher of the Ruby & Calvin Fletcher African American Museum, attorney and community leader Donald Smart on African Americans and Labor, and parishioner Nikkya Hargrove's book launch. The month of celebrations concluded with a community film discussion on "The Piano." Women's History Month included a screening of Six Triple Eight with guest speaker Dr. Sheila Kearney, who shared her advocacy for state recognition of Connecticut women who served in the 6888th Central Postal Directory during WWII.

A significant focus in 2025 was moving from learning to action. The ministry formed new partnerships with World BEYOND War and Veterans for Peace, culminating in the first public reading at St. Paul's of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Beyond Vietnam" speech on Memorial Day. Collaboration with Open Communities Alliance led to a parish information session on pending affordable housing legislation. Local outreach expanded through partnerships with Glory Bound and The Open Doors Shelter. Ministry members organized a "winter hats, scarves and gloves drive" and established three rotating teams that now prepare and distribute lunches for unhoused neighbors in Norwalk on a regular basis.

The ministry also strengthened ties with the Episcopal Church in Connecticut's Indigenous Peoples and Hispanic Ministry Networks, laying groundwork for future collaboration.

Looking Ahead:

In 2025, seven new members signed up to join the Justice Ministry through the Ministry Fair - bringing fresh energy, new perspectives, and the welcome involvement of youth. To better accommodate our growing membership, the ministry has moved its regular meeting time to the first Sunday of each month at 12:30 p.m., with additional meetings scheduled around major projects.

There is always meaningful work to be done—and room for more hands and hearts. We would warmly welcome four or five additional volunteers, whether for a single project, a season, or ongoing involvement. Won't you consider joining us?

Contact Gail Bindley-Taylor or the Parish Office info@stpaulsnorwalk.org for more information.

– Gail Bindley-Taylor, Chair

SACRED GROUND CIRCLES

Sacred Ground was created as part of the Episcopal Church's *Becoming Beloved Community* initiative which is the church's long-term commitment to racial healing, reconciliation, and justice. This is an 11-part series built around a powerful online curriculum of documentary films and readings that focus on Indigenous, Black, Latino, and Asian/Pacific American histories as they intersect with European American history.

Small circles of 6 to 10 people meet regularly after each on-line session to discuss the current learnings, share emotions/feelings that come up and work towards a more complete understanding of these different histories. These circles can take place either in-person or virtually on Zoom.

Since 2022, St. Paul's has completed 7 Sacred Ground circles and plans to add at least one more during 2026. Past participants have shared their experiences: "I have experienced a complete paradigm shift in my recognition of racism" and "I am much more aware of this diversity, and I live with much more intention."

Each circle requires two facilitators and we are always seeking people who would like to use their leadership skills to facilitate these small circle discussions. Facilitators will have training available along with detailed guidance for each session. Visit www.episcopalchurch.org/sacred-ground for a more detailed look at Sacred Ground. **For more information, please reach out to Sandy Bria or the parish office at info@stpaulsnorwalk.org.**

– *Sandy Bria, Co-Leader*

CARE OF CREATION MINISTRY

St. Paul's has begun a conversation about the impact humanity has had on the environment; discovering ways to make adjustments in our daily lives; and seeking wholeness as we protect and care for "our common home." Through liturgy and community events, we are striving for a closer connection with the land and its creatures. Once again, St. Paul's will be helping with the annual Earth Day Celebration on the Green and this year there will be a "Peace On Earth" Community Meditation at St. Paul's with meditation on the lawn and prayers in the church on Earth Day, April 22. For more information contact Audrey Cozzarin or the parish office at info@stpaulsnorwalk.org.

– *Audrey Cozzarin, Chair*

COMMUNICATION & TECHNOLOGY

Our first full year of being able to livestream worship services directly from the St. Paul's website, while still simultaneously streaming it on our Facebook and YouTube pages has been a welcomed improvement over Facebook Live. We even have our own TV channel for your streaming device! Currently there are 4 Videographers that run the livestream on Sunday morning and 2 for Compline. 4 More volunteers would make the roster complete. Training is provided, and it is not nearly as hard as you think!

St. Paul's continues to connect with the world on social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram. Each time you share an event on your own page, or tag St. Paul's in a post, you help further that connection.

And capturing photos of events on campus and around the community are a wonderful way to see where St. Paul's is "popping up"- got a great shot of something "Seen Around the Parish"? We would love to share it in the newsletter! Contact Marsha Dunn at admin@stpaulsnorwalk.org.

– *Marsha Dunn, Parish Administrator*

ST PAUL'S ON THE GREEN – 60 EAST AVE., NORWALK, CT 06851

Contact: 203-847-2806 info@stpaulsnorwalk.org

The Rev. Daniel Simons *Rector*

The Rev. Paul Carling *Priest Associate*

The Rev. Edrice Viechweg *Deacon*

Savannah Curro *Seminarian*

Joshua Ehlebracht *Director of Music*

Marsha Dunn *Parish Administrator*