

St. Paul's

EPISCOPAL  CHURCH

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



116 NORTH ACADEMY STREET MURFREESBORO, TENNESSEE 37130
PH 615.893.3780 | FX 615.893.2892 | STPAULSMURFREESBORO.ORG

We are forming people into the body of Christ

“All of you together are Christ’s body,
and each of you is part of it.”

1 CORINTHIANS 12.27

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—RECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT—

At the heart of our life together is relationships—our relationships with each other, with those in our community, and most of all, with God.

In the following pages you will read how God is blessing St. Paul's as we seek to grow *broad* and *deep* in these relationships. You'll see numbers that tell a story of growth: 5% growth in Sunday worshippers over last year, 45-50 people enjoying spaghetti dinner weekly during the spring and fall semesters, over \$350,000 paid towards retiring our church mortgage debt and more than \$40,000 given through the CONNECT Ministry providing financial assistance to our community in need.



The real story under these numbers is the *impact* of our relationships. Lonely hearts are gladdened as we build deep friendships by sharing meals, studying, praying, and serving together. St. Paul's is a servant-leader in our city as our members lead non-profit organizations and we invite sister churches to join us in serving. Hope is built through our life and worship together. This hope in Jesus Christ is Good News for us and for our city, too.

In the coming year, we will continue building relationships, both *broad* and *deep*. We seek to grow *broad*, sharing our life together at St. Paul's with more people. Our goal is to have 350 people worshipping at St. Paul's weekly. We seek also to grow *deep*, bringing people deeper into the transformative love of Christ. Our goal is to have 100% of our Average Weekly Attendance belong to a Group where they are known, loved, and grow in their relationship with Jesus.

It is a tremendous privilege to journey along with you in our life at St. Paul's. Day by day, we are being formed into the body of Christ. All of us together are Christ's body, and each of us is part of it.

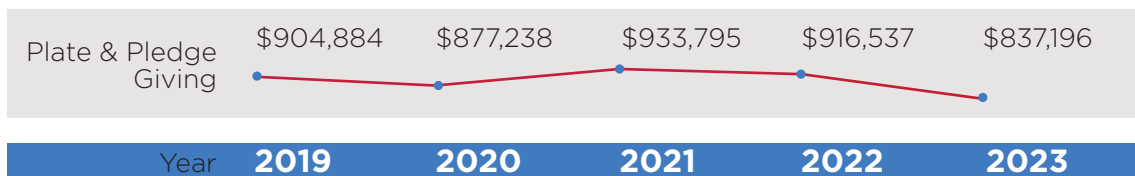
Kristine +

The Rev. Dr. Kristine Blaess



WORSHIP & MUSIC

Gather and form people through sacramental worship



222
AVERAGE IN-PERSON
SUNDAY ATTENDANCE

75% increase
Weekday Worship participation has increased from 2022 to 2023

35 Lay Eucharistic Visits
with eucharists **138**

9 Children's Church average attendance

Life Events

- 1.....Committals
- 14.....Baptisms
- 16...Confirmations
- 1.....Received
- 2.....Weddings
- 4...Burial Services

POWER OF PRAYER

Daily Offices

- 9:50am online 256 days with an average of 5 people
- 10:00am staff prayers: 52 weeks of praying 3 days a wk-156 total prayers
- Compline: 14 with 211 participants
- Evening Prayer: 30 with 457 participating
- Morning Prayer: 29 with 190 participating

DOK daily prayers: 25 women praying daily

Prayer in worship: 194 worship services with prayer

MUSIC

St. Paul's welcomed **Dr. Susan Kelly** as the **Choir Director**.

Lessons & Carols has been celebrated for **over 20 years** at St. Paul's. This year the annual evening of worship and music boasted a full Nave and a lively reception.

In partnership with MTSU and our community, our Nave hosted **16 recitals, 5 recording sessions, and 9 rehearsals in 2023**, with musicians shepherded by **George Carlson**.

.....
Geoffrey Ward, Organist/Choirmaster at All Saints' Chapel in Sewanee, and a faculty member in the Department of Music, performed an organ recital on June 11.

.....
Chase Benefiel led a Hymn Sing in late October with 25 in attendance.

NUMBER OF	Acolytes 19 youth, 3 adults	Altar Guild 16 JR altar guild 2	Lectors & Intercessors 50	Intercessory Prayer teams 12
	CHOIR Adult Choir 35-40 Choral Scholars 4 Choristers 14	Flower Guild 11 JR Flower Guild 8	Eucharistic Ministers 28	
		Ushers 45	Tech Team 8	



CREATING AN ACADEMY OF MINISTERS

*Invest in people of all ages to help them grow into the full stature of Christ
and be mobilized into their Christian vocation*

ADULT DISCIPLINE

Forming people into the body of Christ includes Christian education opportunities that are life-long, life-wide, and life-deep. Our goal is to have 100% of our Average Weekly Attendance belong to a Group where they are known, loved, and grow in their relationship with Jesus.

ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION on Sunday mornings.

- Sunday Morning Rector's Forum
 - Spring 2023: Leadership and Ephesians 4; Local Outreach leaders; Dr. Lauren Gamble on the history of the Rood.
 - Fall 2023: It's the End of the World. Revelation and biblical interpretation. Clergy and guest speakers (including David Rowe and Canon Natalie.)
- Sunday Morning Parents' Group
 - Spring 2023: Bad Parenting of the Bible. Led by Michael+.
- Advent and the Arts series led by Angela Tipps and Lauren Gamble.
- Guest speakers and special programs included:
 - Amber Noel, director of The Living Church Institute and associate director of The Living Church magazine.
 - MAJ Steve Estes spoke about how leadership builds culture, especially the culture of the church.
 - Canon Natalie Simon-Arendse from Cape Town, South Africa taught on Revelation and Justice in the context of Apartheid.
 - Vestry information session held in the winter and fall to create an open forum with parishioners and vestry leaders.
 - Member engagement visioning session.

MEAT AND POTATOES:

Sixteen participants joined Fr. Michael for a year of prayer, study, and theological reflection. This year, the group read about major figures in Church History. Developed specifically for St. Paul's, Meat and Potatoes is a 3-year cycle of study of Church History, Anglican Liturgy and Theology, and Holy Scripture.

PILGRIMAGE:

As a faith exploration program for adults, Pilgrimage continues to engage new parishioners with eight participants in the Spring and ten participants in the fall. In Spring 2023, seven participants were confirmed and one was received. Led by Joyce Adkins and David Rowe.

ONGOING OPPORTUNITIES:

- 9:50 a.m. (Monday-Friday): Daily “bite-sized” Bible Study and Prayer had an average of 5 people daily in attendance.
- Weekday clergy and staff bible study at 10:00 a.m. averaged five daily attendees
- Discipleship/Bible Study groups: four groups meet weekly.
- Wednesday Lectionary Bible Study had an average of 15 attendees, with 25 on the roster. Led by Jerry Reddit.
- Lectio Divina 10:00 a.m. each Thursday in St. Andrew’s Chapel had an average of six attendees.
- Contemplative Prayer, 4:00 p.m. Sunday afternoons averaged five a week

ANTI-RACISM TASK FORCE:

12 parishioners meet regularly with friends from other churches to pray and study. They continued The American Lament Project and read Jemar Tisby’s *How to Fight Racism*. The group went on pilgrimage to Montgomery and took multiple day trips around Rutherford County to historically significant sites.

BOOK STUDIES:

- Summer Book study. David Rowe led a discussion of *The Liturgy of the Ordinary* by Tish Harrison Warren for five participants.
- The CONNECT team is reading *Toxic Charity* by Robert Lupton.

SPECIAL PROGRAMMING:

- Lenten Soup Supper adult programming led by clergy was Praying the Psalms of our Lenten Lectionary.
- Paths to Creativity and Spiritual Growth was a five-part series exploring how the arts can positively enhance spiritual growth. Four individuals participated in this program led by Cindy Phiffer.
- Parenting in Chaotic Times: an Insight program on how we can pray and work to raise our children while remaining calm, strong, and joyful! This event had eight in attendance with plans to host again in 2024. Coordinated by Susanne Hebden, Cindy Guèvert, and Rhonda Pendergrass.

YOUTH MINISTRY

St. Paul’s is blessed to have Chase Benefiel coordinating our youth ministry. Chase works closely with youth, communications, and member engagement.

Youth Sunday School

Youth Sunday School has focused on the sermon passages, asking questions about the plain sense meaning of the text, what it tells us about God, and how it informs our lives. Sunday formation has been led by Kim Baumann, Lynn Miller, Elizabeth Myers (in the spring), and Nancy Loucky.

Sunday Night Live (SNL)

SNL on Sunday evenings from 5:00 – 7:00 p.m., has focused on what it means to have a life of prayer as an Episcopalian. Youth pray either Evening Prayer or Compline every week and focus on one of the daily office passages, and enjoy games and meals provided by parents of youth! SNL has been led by Jennifer Groth and Chase Benefiel.

Tuesday Morning Bible Study

High Schoolers met with Chase at 6:30 a.m. in the fall on Tuesday mornings to discuss and pray the Psalms (and eat a few bagels). Volunteer leaders with Chase are Joyce Adkins and Richard Detmer.

Youth Retreats

In the Spring, our youth confirmands gathered for a retreat as they prepared for their Confirmations. In the Fall, the Youth Retreat and the Parish Camp Out happened concurrently. The youth compared the rubrics for the Prayers of the People in the Book of Common Prayer with Jesus's lesson on prayer in Matthew 6. We also hiked, ate many (many) Un crustables, and led the Prayers of the People for the campout Eucharist.

CHILDREN'S & FAMILY MINISTRIES

This year Cindy Guèvert, who has been with St. Paul's since 2016, moved into an expanded role as the Director of Children's and Family Ministries. Cindy continued to lead Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, Vacation Bible School, Club 3-4-5, various seasonal events, and worked with leaders of the Nursery and Children's Church. She took on additional responsibilities which are very much in her gift-set: Growing our community of families as they form their children into the body of Christ.

Also, our children's ministry leadership at St. Paul's hosted a children's minister gathering with representation from 10 churches in the diocese that encouraged friendship-building and professional development.

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS)

Our Christian Education program for children aged 3 to 5th grade. CGS employs a Montessori approach to spiritual formation and recognizes that children have a strong religious life, that God is present to them, and that they can develop a conscious and intimate relationship with God. Ashley Heren is serving as the lead teacher for level I. Cindy Guevert is leads level II, and Sudi Lubonecki is the guide for level III. Cindy is thankful for those who volunteer to assist in each atrium, though there is still a need for more teachers and parental support. If interested, contact Cindy Guevert, Children's and Family Ministries Coordinator, at cindy.guevert@stpaulsmurfreesboro.org.

Vacation Bible School

The Vacation Bible School theme was Stellar, and invited kids to come shine a light on Jesus' love! The program was held the second week of June and had 36 kids in attendance and 38 volunteers. We were so thankful for our participants and volunteers!

Club 3-4-5

Club 3-4-5 is a social group for our children in 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades. The children went bowling, skating this fall, and did ornament painting. There are approximately 12 children in Club 3-4-5.

Christmas Pageant

This was the second year presenting the children's Christmas pageant at the 4:00 p.m. Christmas Eve service. 30 children participated in the pageant, with 5 youth volunteers.



GROWING IN MUTUAL LOVE

Gathering, Celebrating, Caring for and Connecting Our Members

LITURGICAL SEASON GATHERINGS

- Epiphany Breakfast Reception
- Mardi Gras Party
- Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner
- Lenten Soup Suppers brought together a potluck of warm and comforting soups as the parish gathered to learn how to Pray the Psalms.
- Easter Vigil Reception
- Easter Egg Hunt
- Pentecost BBQ
- Gifts of the Spirit presentation during Pentecost Service
- Blessing of the Animals
- Advent Wreath Making Party
- Lessons & Carols Reception

CELEBRATING ONE ANOTHER

- Over 70 Birthday Celebration returned this year. Melissa Warren coordinated a team to organize quarterly celebratory luncheons with home cooked meals. Each event featured a fun theme, prizes, and spirited fellowship.

“The Senior Birthday Luncheon is what having a church family is all about. We come together to celebrate the gift of another year of life with friends, both old and new, who have enriched our lives through St. Paul’s. It’s a great way to share God’s love and to remind us that here at St. Paul’s, God gives us a family.” — Stan & Laney Golden

- Gratitude BBQ celebrated the generosity of St. Paul’s parishioners.
- Annual Thanksgiving lunch celebrated with parishioner families.
- Two newcomer brunches were held.
- DOK Diocesan Fall Assembly: The Julian of Norwich Chapter of the Daughters of the King, led by Sandy Gleaves, hosted the annual Diocesan DOK Fall Assembly in September with 68 women from around the Diocese.
- Graduating Senior yard signs were delivered.
- Celebration of Youth in Worship with the sermon presented by 2023 senior, Sally Gaither.



CARING FOR ONE ANOTHER

- 20 Meals delivered to parishioners in need.
- St. Paul's 101 served as a formal introduction of St. Paul's for our newcomers.
- Daughters of the King (DOK) with 25 parishioner members met monthly for fellowship & prayer
- Monthly Parents' Night Out programs supported families by providing childcare for parents to enjoy an evening-out together. Each month averaged 15 children in the program.
- Cancer Support Group monthly meetings
- Grief & Bereavement Ministries:
 - Cup of Christmas Tea
 - The Longest Night worship service
 - Grief support group met over 8-weeks and used a holistic approach (emotional, physical, social, and spiritual), resources and discussion emphasized a grounding in the spiritual and Biblical context of grief and gratitude as they shared their journey through the wilderness of grief.
 - Three funeral receptions were hosted for grieving families after funeral services.

CONNECTION POINTS

- Wednesday Night Dinners: Weekly multi-generational spaghetti dinners averaged of 45-50 parishioners and raised \$1,132 for CONNECT Ministry.

"I love to eat and play with my friends. I wish it was more than once a week. Rev. Michael makes the best spaghetti! I like talking to the adults and my friends."

—David & Joseph Perry (9)

"As a parent of small kids: The nights have been a consistent way to decompress and build relationships apart from the busyness of Sundays or the intensity of Meat and Potatoes. I appreciate how free the kids are to be themselves and enjoy their church family." — Ashley Heren

- Fall Kickoff BBQ
- Parish Wide Campout: The inaugural Parish-Wide Campout was a wonderful time of fellowship and worship at Henry Horton State Park. There was singing, s'mores, praying, square dancing, hiking, and eating. The 47 parishioners who attended either stayed overnight in the lodge or camped out in tents and RVs, in addition to several who drove in for the activities. The committee, led by Anna Stewart, is already planning for next year's campout. Save the date for October 18 -20, 2024.

"The camping trip was really fun. Not only was it a beautiful weekend with great food and square dancing, but it was an opportunity for us to mingle cross-generationally. At church, we tend to hang out with our own age groups, but camping was a time to mingle with everyone, no matter their age." —Kris McCusker

- Senior Fellowship Lunches
- Just Social Dinner Club assigned over 40 attendees to parishioner host homes for dinner and fellowship.
- Ladies Night Out & Men's Club fellowship program occurred monthly.
- Parents' Group came together during Parents' Nights Out for fellowship parties for St. Patrick's Day, Halloween and Christmas.
- Ministry Fair was held with over 20 ministries represented.



Practicing Hospitality

Investing in the thriving of our neighbors


The Outreach Committee nurtures ministries that empower parishioners to share the love of Christ with the wider world.

CONNECT Ministry

 **145 families** 
assisted in 2023

 **\$40,914** 
in assistance

Starting in the fall of 2023, St. Paul's CONNECT Ministry partnered with Launch Point, a United Way initiative designed to improve the financial stability of families residing in Rutherford and Cannon Counties. From a variety of local organizations, including CONNECT, the United Way now has 12 women in its program.

21  **Salvation Army Red Kettle Challenge**— St. Paul's parishioners volunteered to "Ring the Bell" for this major Salvation Army fundraiser that benefits many in our community.

Undie Sunday

Thanks to your generosity, the Lectionary Bible Study Group collected 570 items for The Journey Home and raised an additional \$445 which will be used to purchase winter underwear for The Journey Home's clients. Dry socks and fresh underwear help every person feel more dignity.

 + **\$445**
570

St. Paul's Habitat for Humanity

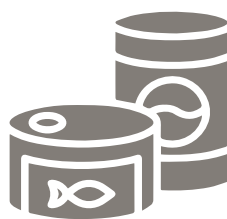


St. Paul's helped coordinate volunteers to work at various building sites in the spring of 2023, and in late November had **14 parishioners** volunteer for a Habitat house panel build.

Beekeeper's Association



The Saint Paul's Beekeeping Association continues to flourish, with Nick and Stacy Clark joining the Louckys and Owens this year. The group provides beekeeping advice and support. Some of the honey and wax products are donated to the annual craft and bake sale to support the Connect Ministry. This group is happy to help new members get started and become sustaining beekeepers.



Food Drive

This year, St. Paul's gave over 3,901 items of nonperishable food and \$3,458 to Nourish Food Bank.

over 3,901 & \$3,458 Monetary donations are used to purchase essentials like milk, eggs, and butter at discounted prices, as well as items for babies, including formula and diapers.

Craft & Bake

This annual event held each November features baked goods, a silent auction and arts & crafts for sale. Monies generated through the event are split between the CONNECT Ministry and the Rector/Associate Rector's Discretionary Funds.

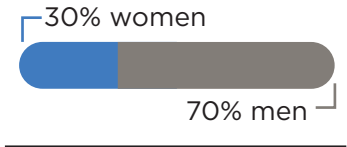
This year **\$2194** was raised.

Coldest Nights

Coldest Nights is an emergency cold weather shelter for unhoused people in our community. The Journey Home organizes the ministry in cooperation with St. Paul's, First Baptist, Murfreesboro Rescue Mission, Murfreesboro Cold Patrol, and volunteers from other churches.

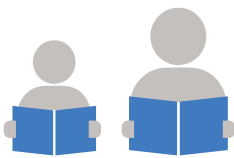


40 nights averaging
40 people per night



25% of all people were
over the age of 55

Information presented is from the 2022/2023 season, as the 2023/2024 season just started and will be presented in next year's report.



450 hours

Tutoring at The Boys and Girls Club

This year at The Boys and Girls Club of Rutherford County two of St. Paul's parishioners, Marta Van Hoose and Nancy Loucky, volunteered approximately **450 hours** tutoring students.

110 children



Angel Tree

Local children had a merrier Christmas because of your generosity! All Angels were participants in the programs of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Rutherford County.

American Red Cross Blood Drive

19 donors
=
42 lives

The blood drive held at St. Paul's had **19 donors**, two of whom were first-time donors. The combined donations will be able to help save **42 lives!** As Jesus taught us, loving our neighbors as ourselves is one of the greatest commandments; sharing blood is one valuable way to serve our brothers and sisters.



Little Free Pantry

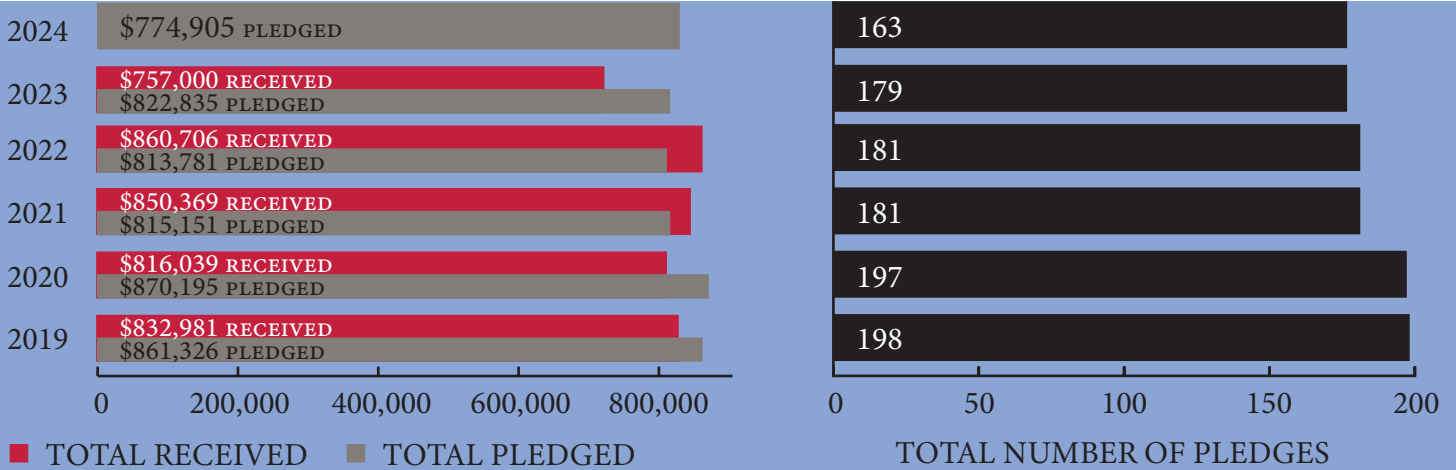
A picture is worth 1000 words. It's difficult to know exactly how much food is distributed to our neighbors in need through the Little Free Pantry located by St. Margaret's Hall. Parishioners and community members—including neighbors, BSA Troop 1108, and members of the Facebook group the Blessing Boxes of Rutherford County—fill the box regularly. Everyone is welcome to place nonperishable food items in the box at any time.



STEWARDSHIP

*Strengthen excellence in administrative practice,
fiscal soundness, and facilities maintenance*

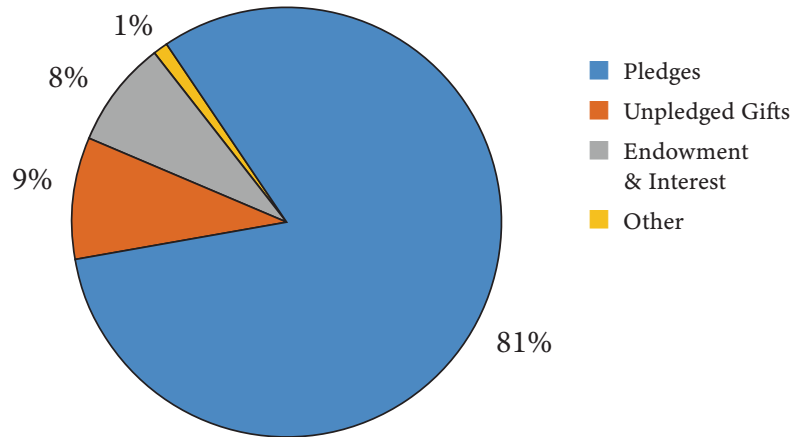
2023 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW



OPERATING FUND OVERVIEW

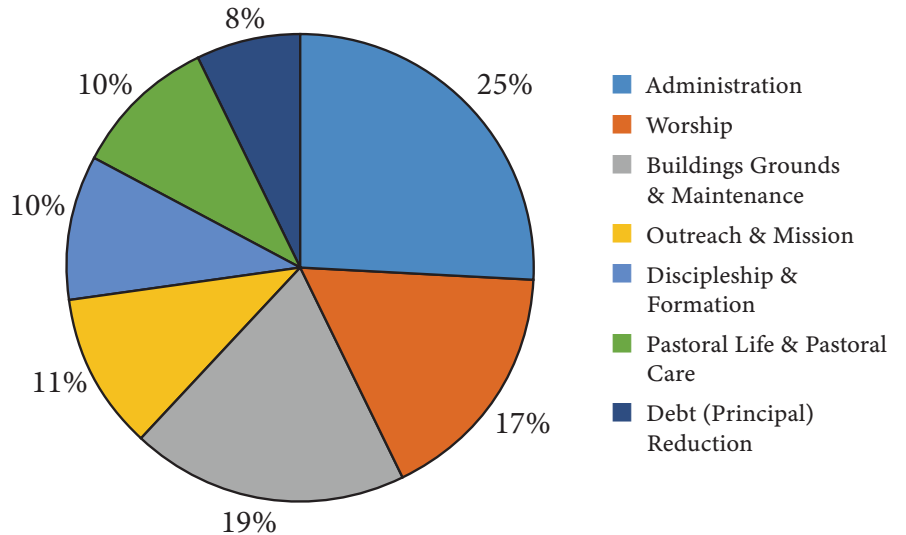
Operating Fund Revenues

Pledges	81%	\$757,000
Unpledged Gifts	9%	80,196
Endowment & Interest	8%	78,750
Other	1%	13,239
	<u>100%</u>	<u>\$929,186</u>



Operating Fund Expenses

Administration	25%	\$264,101
Worship	17%	174,873
Buildings Grounds & Maintenance	19%	193,238
Outreach & Mission	11%	117,390
Discipleship & Formation	10%	103,589
Pastoral Life & Pastoral Care	10%	102,656
Debt (Principal) Reduction	8%	84,202
	<u>100%</u>	<u>\$ 1,040,050</u>

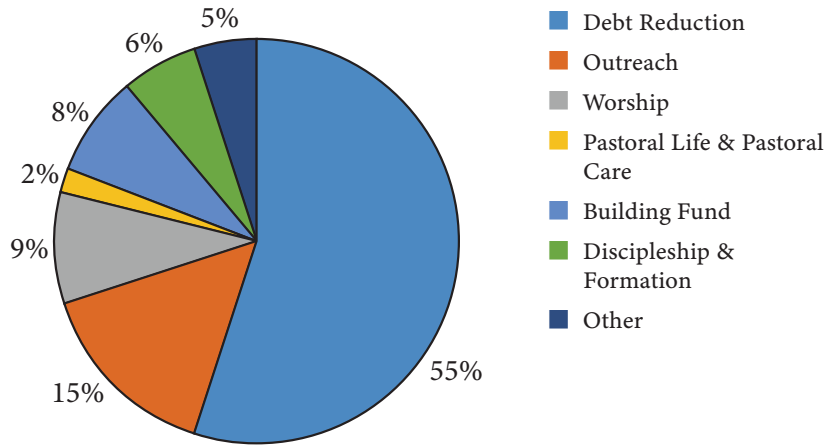


Total Revenues	\$ 929,186
Total Expenses	<u>1,040,050</u>
Net Cash Flow	<u>\$(110,864)</u>

RESTRICTED FUNDS OVERVIEW

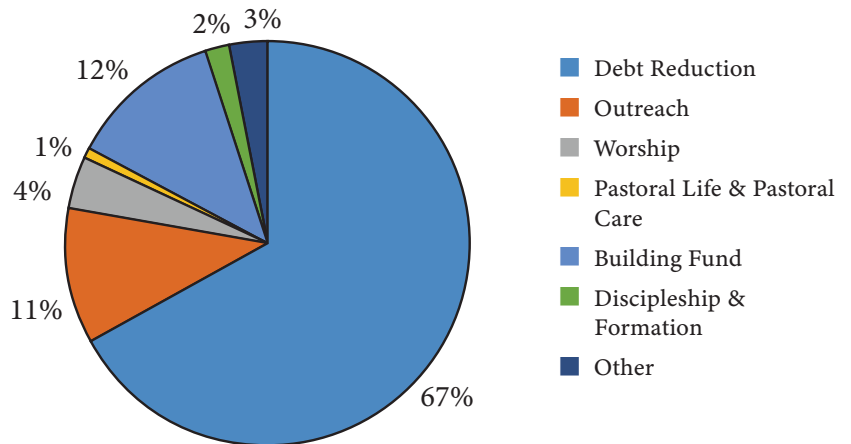
Restricted Gifts

Debt Reduction	55%	\$212,276
Outreach	15%	57,126
Worship	9%	36,000
Pastoral Life & Pastoral Care	2%	7,216
Building Fund	8%	32,058
Discipleship & Formation	6%	21,476
Other	5%	19,436
	<u>100%</u>	<u>\$385,588</u>



Restricted Expenditures

Debt Reduction	67%	\$291,571
Outreach	11%	50,344
Worship	4%	18,148
Pastoral Life & Pastoral Care	1%	3,732
Building Fund	12%	53,150
Discipleship & Formation	2%	9,267
Other	3%	12,160
	<u>100%</u>	<u>\$438,372</u>

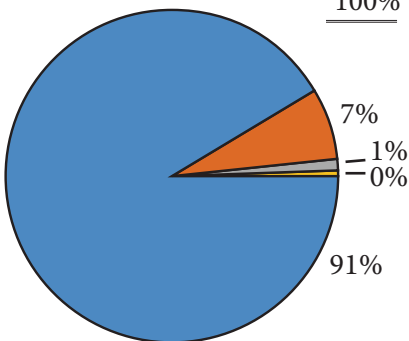


Restricted Fund Balances \$268,412

323 EAST MAIN ST OVERVIEW

323 East Main Revenues

Rental Income-Base	91%	\$93,106
Rental Income-Taxes	7%	7,149
Rental Income-Insurance	1%	1,337
Other Income	0%	449
	<u>100%</u>	<u>\$102,041</u>

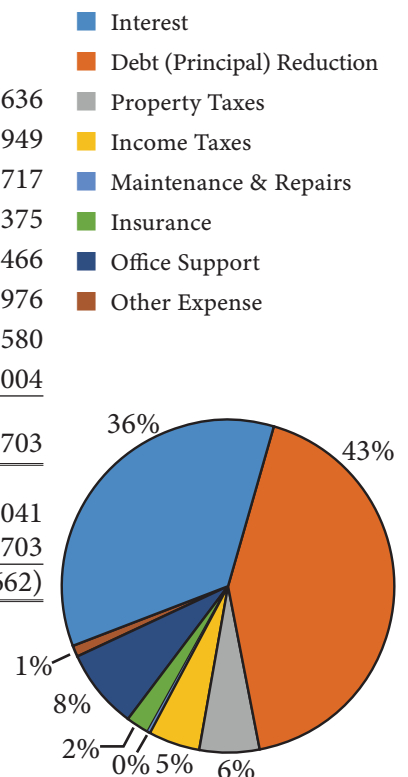


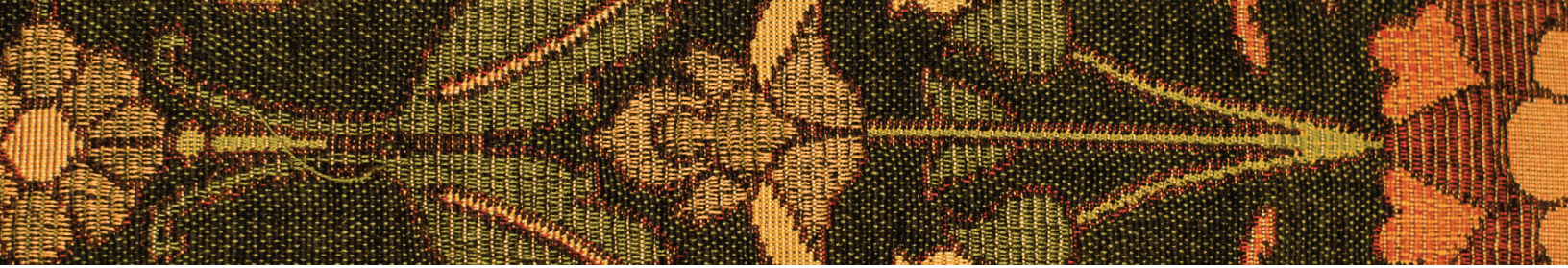
- Rental Income-Base
- Rental Income-Taxes
- Rental Income-Insurance
- Other Income

323 East Main Expenses

Interest	36%	\$40,636
Debt (Principal) Reduction	43%	48,949
Property Taxes	6%	6,717
Income Taxes	5%	5,375
Maintenance & Repairs	0%	466
Insurance	2%	1,976
Office Support	8%	8,580
Other Expense	1%	1,004
	<u>100%</u>	<u>\$113,703</u>

Total Revenues \$102,041
 Total Expenses 113,703
 Net Cash Flow \$(11,662)





CAMPUS IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS & GIFTS

DESIGNATED GIFTS (Fully funded by specified gracious parishioner donations, not paid through pledges/operating budget)

- Altar renovations
 - The floor behind the altar chairs was expanded to accommodate three chairs on each side for the altar party.
 - A portion of the left-side altar rail was removed to provide easier access for the choir and pianists.

- The Great Rood

In the fall of 2022, St. Paul's commissioned Davis d'Ambly, one of our nation's most accomplished liturgical artists, to create a Great Rood funded fully from gracious donations made over time to St. Paul's gifts and memorial fund in honor of loved ones. d'Ambly's work graces such churches as the Bruton Parish Church (Williamsburg, VA) and St. Thomas, 5th Ave. (New York City). The commission was the product of two years of study, research, consultation, prayer, and reflection by the St. Paul's Art & Design Committee and its chair, Lauren Gamble, PhD (Yale, Art History).

A Rood is a traditional Anglican church cross installed where the nave and chancel meet. Our Great Rood will be in the form of a *Stabat Mater* (Latin for "mother was standing"), with Christ crucified flanked by Mary and the Apostle John, as related in the 19th chapter of the Gospel of John. The completed Rood will be suspended from the chancel arch and will provide a beautiful visual focus for our worship. The figures are carved from wood and will be stained to preserve the wood's natural color.

d'Ambly and his carvers are hard at work. They expect to complete the Great Rood in the late fall of 2024. We are delighted to have pictures of the work in progress. Figure 1 shows the rough carving of Mary. Figure 2 shows the progress on the statue of the Apostle John. All will come together with Christ on the Cross as shown in the original plan, in figure 3.

We all look forward to this artwork's completion. We are grateful for the hard work and inspired vision of Lauren Gamble and the Arts & Design Committee, and for the gifts of the artist and carvers. The Great Rood will add a sense of the beauty and mystery of God's grace to our worship at St. Paul's.



Figure 1



Figure 2

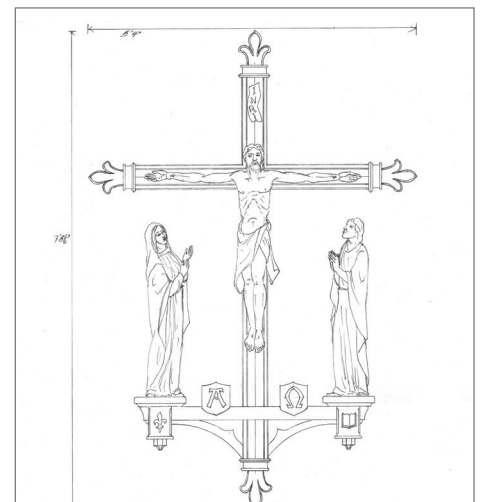
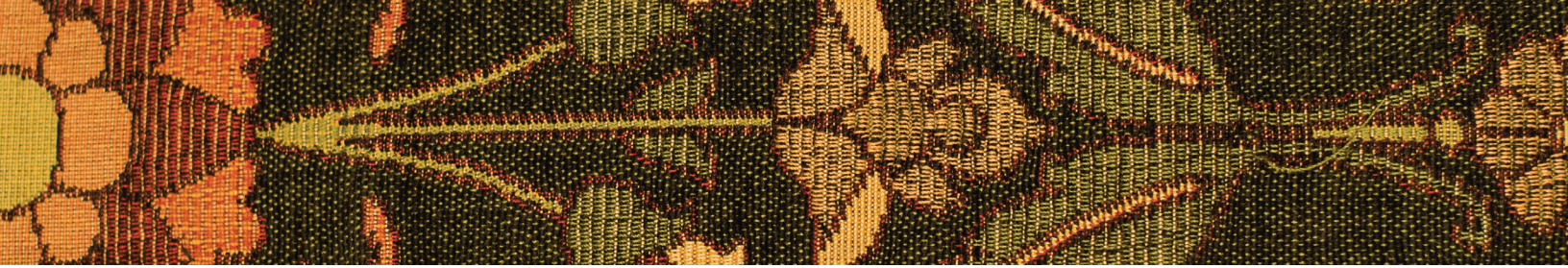


Figure 3



CAMPUS IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS & GIFTS *continued*

GENERAL MAINTENANCE PROJECTS (FUNDED BY OUR OPERATING BUDGET)

- Landscaping
 - A landscape committee was brought together to work on a plan to recover the grounds from damage from the prior harsh winter and develop a plan for new plantings, improve campus lighting and irrigation.
 - Jim Dillon, expert gardener and parishioner, volunteered his time to help prune bushes and clean up front and side lawns.
 - The youth confirmands spent the morning of their retreat mulching the side lawn on N. Academy and the Courtyard flower beds.
- HVAC/Plumbing
 - New 20-ton HVAC unit for the Nave.
 - Repairs completed for the boiler loop to heat the Chancel.
 - New HVAC unit for the Youth Room.
 - New thermostats for the Wall Building and Nave.
 - New heat exchanger installed in a HVAC unit on the Parish Hall second floor.
 - New water heater installed in the Sacristy.
- Wall Building
 - Mold remediation and painting for the Associate Rector and Parish Administrator offices.
 - New air receiver installed to improve air circulation and mitigate risk for future mold growth.
 - New storefront door installed for the parish office (photos below).
- Blinds were ordered for installation in the Children's Church room.
- Storage was improved by cleaning out the attic and adding shelving units to two closets located on the Parish Hall second floor.



Before




During



After



St. Paul's
EPISCOPAL  CHURCH

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