

# The Gospel Truth

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From the Editors:

Our goal is to share parish news, introduce each other, and foster community. If you know of news, events, or information of interest to the St. Paul's community, please email us. Feel free to toot your own horn! We want to hear all the news that's fit to print. We welcome your ideas and suggestions and will try to incorporate as many of them as we can.

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## News You Can Use

### 2024 IMPORTANT DATES

January 7: Vestry Retreat

February 11: Super Bowl Party

February 13: Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

March 2: Chili Cookoff

May 11: Mother's Day Tea

May 26: Parish Potluck

August 11: Parish Potluck

November 10: Annual Meeting & Parish Potluck

[Sesquicentennial](#)

November 15 - hors d'oeuvre drop-in

November 16 - public open house

November 17 - Bishop's visit with light luncheon after combined service

November 22-23: Diocesan Convention



It's a party! Gates open at 5:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall on February 11. We'll get started on party foods (bring something to share) and gear up for the action at 6:30 p.m. as the San Francisco 49ers face off against the Kansas City Chiefs (last year's winners.) Enjoy good fellowship and the annual sporting (and advertising) extravaganza. Are there any Usher fans in the house? Well, if so, you're in luck.

### Our Social Media Pages

Are you following St. Paul's on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [YouTube](#)? We would love to have parishioners and friends of St. Paul's interact with us. Please share with potential visitors, too.

It may be hard to believe (wasn't it just Christmas?) but the Lenten season is fast approaching. In a rare conflation of notable days, Ash Wednesday this year falls on February 14, which is also the feast day of a certain minor saint who gets a lot of attention then. (Ash Wednesday and Valentine's Day last coincided in 1945.) No worries—go ahead and celebrate with your friends on Fat Tuesday, February 13 at our annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper. The good times will start rolling at 6:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall. Enjoy fats, carbs, and sweets before the season of fasting begins the next day.





## St. Paul's in Action



### No Snow in Sight!

Just a lot of magnolia leaves! This hearty yard crew (Manfred Johnson, Steve Clyburn, and Kevin Plue) spent December 23 (Christmas Eve Eve?) raking gifts from St. Paul's prolifically-producing magnolia trees.



### Deck the Halls

The transformation from Advent to Christmastide was accomplished in record time and with the help of many willing hands. Thanks to all who missed coffee hour to help.

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## A Report from the Treasurer

As this is the end of the budget year, I would like to share a few financial items with the parish.

Pledge payments ended the year short \$27,365. This is of course significant as we were already dealing with a severe reduction in pledged dollars over the past few years. If you did not finish your pledge, please consider finishing it even though we have moved into another budget year. You will be receiving a year-end statement soon and can see there if you met your pledge or not. Whether you are able to complete your 2023 pledge or not, we need all to keep up with and complete your 2024 pledge.

We received over \$30,000 in unpledged income in 2023. Unpledged income finished the year \$18,621.12 over what was budgeted. This is a very positive sign. It would be helpful to convert unpledged dollars to pledged for planning purposes. If you are currently giving to St. Paul's on a regular basis and haven't pledged, we would love to talk with you about pledging. Please see me and I will be happy to help.

Budgeted expenditures ran under budget by \$23,948. This is a strong sign of the fiscal responsibility of your Vestry and the staff at St. Paul's all are doing their part to save money at every turn.

As we have shared, the Vestry is currently using unpledged dollars to balance the budget. This past year, about \$55,000 from past giving was needed to meet the budget. While this is an appropriate short-term strategy and due to past generosity, we do have this money, it is not a strong long-term financial strategy. Please continue to give as generously as you can.

Respectfully submitted by Kevin Plue 1/16/24



## Capital Campaign Update

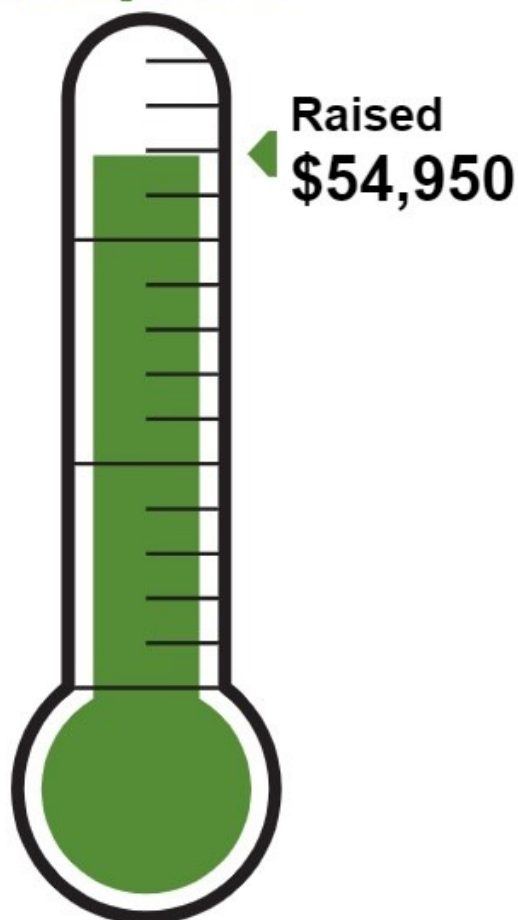
I want to thank everyone for their commitment to St. Paul's Capital Campaign. As you can see below, we are very close to meeting our goal. We are busy getting quotes from painting contractors to begin painting the outside of the church in the spring. We will soon look at flooring for the church. If you have committed to this campaign, please try and get your payments in by May. If you are still prayerfully thinking about giving to this campaign, we would graciously accept your donation.

Thank you for all you do for St. Paul's - it is very much appreciated.

Lisa

### Fundraising Goal

**\$65,000**





## MUSICAL NOTES

### A Woman Who Needs No Introduction



This month we spoke with a woman who needs no introduction to St. Paul's — Jo Singer, who was confirmed here in 1976 and has sat in the choir pews ever since! At various times, Jo has served as Eucharistic minister, lay reader, vestry member, junior warden, chair or member of various committees, head of the Sunday School, Vacation Bible School leader, and pillar of the soprano section. If you were ever new to the church, you remember that Jo was one of the first people to welcome you with a smile and a joyful spirit.

#### *Where did you grow up?*

My maiden name was "Secrest," which you may have noticed on a lot of road signs and buildings around Union County. I grew up in Monroe surrounded by family: aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents, great grandparents on both sides of my family - all within walking distance. Our social life consisted of family and church activities. We were happily Baptist, like most everyone else in the South!

I went to college at the University of North Carolina in Greensboro. When I married after my sophomore year and eventually moved back to Monroe, I went straight to the Episcopal church. Confirmation at St. Paul's followed in 1976.

#### *When did you first start singing?*

I can't remember a time when I didn't sing! A chorus was started in my elementary school when I was in sixth grade, and of course I joined, continuing to sing in school chorus throughout high school. I also sang in a choir at the University of North Carolina in Charlotte one year.

#### *How many years have you sung in church choirs?*

I sang in church choirs as far back as I can recall. When my daughter turned one year old, I joined the St. Paul's choir. Except for a short period after I married my second husband, I've been in choir ever since.

#### *How did you end up in the Episcopal church?*

When I was a sophomore at UNC-Greensboro, my best friend and roommate invited me to go to church with her at Holy Trinity. The church sent a bus to campus to collect us. I fell in love with the Episcopal church immediately, loving the quiet and reverence, as well as the active participation in the psalms and prayers. I decided this was for me!

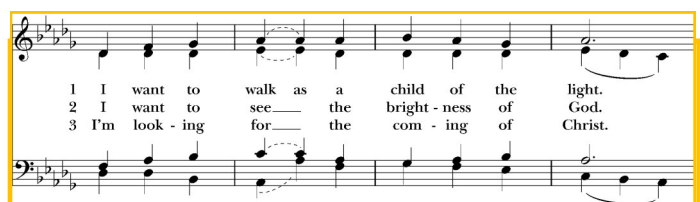
#### *Tell us about your family?*

I have two children. My son, Phillip, lives in Livermore, California, with his wife Dana. My daughter, Meredith, lives in Harrisburg, North Carolina, with her husband Jeremy and my three grandchildren: Mallory, Christian, and Eli.

#### *Favorite hymns?*

I love "All hail the power of Jesus' name," "I want to walk as a child of the light," "Fairest Lord Jesus," and "Joyful, joyful, we adore thee."

~Kathleen Prevost



A parish favorite, "I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light," was written by Kathleen Thomerson, a native of Tennessee who studied music at the University of Texas. She wrote the lyrics in 1966 after a visit to Church of the Redeemer in Houston, TX. She set the words to her own hymn tune, *Houston*. She has served in a variety of capacities as a gifted organist and musician, having studied with several noted organists of the 20th century. [Here is a little bit of history](#) about this lovely, simple hymn and the musician who composed it.



## VESTRY NOTES FROM DECEMBER 2023 AND JANUARY 2024

- Budget for 2024 approved
- Our investments continue to earn healthy returns
- So far, Servant Keeper is getting favorable reviews from Vestry members who have been using it for weekly counts
- If everyone gives what they have pledged, we predict a successful Capital Campaign
- Rev. Candis is going to provide an official portrait for our website
- A motion to purchase a new camcorder + tripod and charger was approved; we will drop the Spectrum account on the phone currently being used to record worship services
- Investigation of Red Cross providing AED training
- Lisa Hilbish provided a list of important dates for St. Paul's in 2024
- Discussion of Vestry retreat
- Bids for painting outside have come in
- Jo Singer (outgoing Junior Warden) will create a map of what devices are on what circuits/breakers of the church's electrical system
- Gay Clyburn (new Junior Warden) did a

walk-through of the building with Jo

- Gay will get another bid for painting
- Gay will meet with the locksmith to make some new keys
- Several members of St. Paul's went to the Martin Luther King, Jr. breakfast at Wingate University for MLK Day



Invite your friends and neighbors! We are looking forward to a wonderful new year. See "News You Can Use" for a list of upcoming events at St. Paul's, in addition to weekly Wednesday Bible Study (10:30 a.m. in the Guild Room) and our two Sunday services.

# Getting to Know You: The Del Pretes

## When Bob Met Maria



Del Prete Family photo (left to right): Youngest son Anthony; Maria; daughter Michelle; her husband Tim Zehnder; Bob; oldest son Lee.

Maria and Bob Del Prete's story might have made a great rom com: a feisty young woman from a well-heeled Cuban family passes a shy fella from Franklin Square, Long Island, New York, in the hall when she began working with the New York Stock Exchange. He takes one look and says to the guy next to him: "That's the girl I'm going to marry." A few minutes later he walks into a meeting and finds out she's a new hire. This match was meant to be . . . they've been married for almost 49 years.

Maria's family moved to New York City's Upper West Side when she was 3. In eastern Cuba, they had been neighbors of the Castros, moving in the same circles but not sharing the same political views. Her grandfather and the Castros owned adjoining sugar plantations, and it was the lucrative sugar business that got her family to the States. Maria's father took a job with Domino Sugar in the U.S. and her mother worked for Cody Cosmetics. The family settled into urban life. She attended Catholic schools (her graduation ceremony was in St. Patrick's Cathedral in NYC), and dreamed of being a flight attendant, but settled for a career that was more acceptable to her parents. When she started dating Bob, he introduced her to the Grateful Dead, ZZ Top, and the Blues, and she introduced him to Latin music and Cuban food (she still loves to cook). They married in 1975, left for Florida in 1981, and had three children – two boys and a girl. After retiring from Allstate Insurance Company in Coconut Creek, Florida, Maria volunteered in the hospital gift shop in Ocala and now in St. Paul's Loaves and Fishes, taking care of the needs of the less fortunate. She cooked, raised the family, and gardened. Maria loves to travel within the US and together they have been to many Latin American countries, including Cuba, and are going to Alaska in May 2024. Bob became an instructor and trainer for one of the US Postal Service's unions, and was heavily involved with educating workers across the country about diseases like anthrax and workplace safety. He later worked in the Risk Management Department for the Palm Beach School System teaching principals, assistant principals, teachers, culinary workers, maintenance employees, and high school kids about maintaining a safe environment. None of



those jobs were completely fulfilling for him, although he loved teaching and still does. Art and history were and are his true passions.

When he was in 8th grade he was encouraged by an art teacher to pursue his interest and gifts in art. Not surprisingly, his father discouraged him. Instead, he pursued academics and went to Pace University and majored in marketing, but filled his electives with art classes, and later earned a master's in education from Florida International University in Miami. Bob's heart condition and need for an AED/pacemaker brought the Del Pretes to Indian Trail and then to St. Paul's. Their son lived in the area, was in the medical field, and he persuaded Bob to go to a cardiologist in Charlotte his son knew and worked with, so they made the move. They loved the area with its energy of new people moving in and small communities developing into places with restaurants, theatre, and shopping, yet maintaining a friendly, easy-to-get-around, small-town feel. After visiting a few churches, they ended up at St. Paul's when Brad Smith was rector. Now that Bob's retired, he has indulged in his passions, caring for his '87 Mustang GT, taking more art classes, working as a docent at the Ocala Museum of Art and now as a docent for the Mint Museum of Art in Charlotte. He's also working on the history of both art and the people associated with it at St. Paul's, researching the stained-glass windows and the amazing art, like the Daingerfield in the Guild Room and the Eric Carle in the Youth Room. Carle was an illustrator, author, and designer of children's books who died in 2021. More than 145 copies of his books have been sold around the world. Next time you're in the Guild Room, read the history Bob has written on the Elliot Daingerfield mural for all to review. Daingerfield was an American artist who lived and worked in North Carolina and New York City and has works featured in the Smithsonian and other prominent galleries throughout the states.

And what a treasure trove of information Bob has accumulated about both the art and people who are memorialized in our stained glass windows! He's been on genealogy websites, conducted interviews, and spends a great deal of time at the Monroe Heritage Room under the guidance of Marian Morgan and her staff. Much of it will be included in his writing on the history of St. Paul's for the sesquicentennial in conjunction with the work Robert Heath is doing.

"It's just so interesting to learn about the people who were so involved with St. Paul's early on and how their contributions are still making it the wonderful place it is today," he said. Bob has previously volunteered as a Big Brother and a literacy advocate in Broward County, Florida; a mentor to an under-privileged, brilliant high school student in Ocala; a hospital volunteer in Ocala; and an AAA and AARP instructor. Maria is thrilled that he is following his passions but feels he may be getting "a bit carried away" with his research for the Church and the Mint Museum, as well as teaching his home-schooled 4 (of 5) grandkids art and drawing.

## From the Rector's Desk

I Invite you to a Holy Lent . . .

A graphic titled "Invitation to Lent" featuring a vertical list of six Lenten observances. Each entry consists of a date in a circle on the left and a description in a rounded rectangle on the right. The dates are FEB 14, MAR 24, MAR 28, MAR 29, MAR 30, and MAR 31. The observances are Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Vigil, and Easter Sunday. The background is a light gray with a subtle texture.

# Invitation to Lent

<b>FEB</b> <b>14</b>	<b>ASH WEDNESDAY</b> Imposition of Ashes Noon and 7:00 p.m.
<b>MAR</b> <b>24</b>	<b>PALM SUNDAY</b> Processional from the Columbarium 8:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.
<b>MAR</b> <b>28</b>	<b>MAUNDY THURSDAY</b> Stripping of the Altar 7:00 p.m.
<b>MAR</b> <b>29</b>	<b>GOOD FRIDAY</b> Noon Liturgy 7:00 p.m. Stations of the Cross
<b>MAR</b> <b>30</b>	<b>EASTER VIGIL</b> 7:00 p.m.
<b>MAR</b> <b>31</b>	<b>EASTER SUNDAY</b> 8:00 a.m. 10:30 a.m. Holy Baptism

Lent is a time to clean out the cobwebs of our lives to prepare for the coming of the Resurrection on Easter. A Spring Cleaning if you will, a kind of spiritual, psychological, and physical tidying up as the days grow longer and spring beckons. We prepare for the new life of the Resurrection during this journey through Lent toward Easter by abandoning old ways that no longer serve us to take on a healthier new life.

This practice or Lenten Discipline began in the early centuries of the young Church, when converts to the faith were prepared for Holy Baptism. It was also a time when those who had been separated from the Body of the Faithful were reconciled by penitence and forgiveness and restored to the fellowship of the Church.

Shrove Tuesday began as a day to finalize one's Lenten discipline, to confess one's sins and receive absolution, to burn the previous year's Palm Crosses to make ashes for Ash Wednesday, and a celebration of sorts as the cupboards were cleared of fats and sugars and other treats before Lent. (The word Mardi Gras means "Fat Tuesday" and refers to the practice of eating richer, fatty foods one would forsake for Lent.)

In the Episcopal Church we practice corporate confession each Sunday (except during the Great Fifty Days of Easter). We also practice Reconciliation of a Penitent, or individual confession, upon request (see page 446 and following in the Book of Common Prayer). Should you wish to make a private Confession, please speak to me to arrange a time to do so.

As you prepare for the Resurrection this year, consider taking on a spiritual discipline rather than or in addition to giving something up for Lent. Make it a point to attend Holy Week services. Read the Gospel of Mark, the Gospel we read from this Liturgical Year. It is short (16 chapters) and lends itself to being read aloud in the oral tradition of the Scriptures. Read a psalm every day, or Noonday Prayer as you sit down to lunch. Gather canned goods for Loaves and Fishes representing the money you have saved by foregoing rich indulgences during Lent. Have a meatless meal once a week (the practice of eating fish on Friday being an extravagance rather than a sacrifice in my home). Set aside time to volunteer, write letters to those you love, or read that book you have been meaning to get to. Keep your own prayer list and pray for those on your list every day. It has been said it takes 30 days to cement a habit — the 40 days of Lent should knit that new discipline into your life so that it will be something you are likely to continue after Easter.

Grace to you and peace,

Candis+





## Another Invitation . . .

### From our Bishops

Although this letter (below) was read during a service recently, we anticipate there will be ongoing, thoughtful conversations around this invitation from our bishops to engage as a parish in the work of racial reparations. To that end, various members of St. Paul's will be considering what we might do in our own community. Stay tuned for more information.

*On behalf of Bishop Sam and Bishop Jennifer, please find the attached Pastoral Letter in fulfillment of the invitation and expectation of engaging in the work of racial reparations and restitution announced at Annual Convention. The letter serves to inform and prepare you to begin the intentional process of truth-telling and reckoning within your parishes and worship communities.*



## THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF NORTH CAROLINA

4800 Six Forks Rd, Suite 300, Raleigh, North Carolina 27609 Telephone 919-834-7474 800-448-8775

December 19, 2023

Beloved in Christ:

At Convention in November, we announced an invitation and expectation for the congregations of the Diocese of North Carolina to engage in the work of racial reparations and restitution, beginning with an intentional process of truth-telling and reckoning. This engagement is an essential expression of our commitment to Christ and to his call for justice and love, and thus to the mission, health, and well-being of each congregation.

A committee of folks, from across our diocese and our governing bodies, has been studying and researching reparations and restitution for the past three years. We agree with the committee's conclusion, that to fruitfully engage this work, each congregation must have structured conversations about race that include hard questions and answers about both the past and present. Each must then decide how to respond to what they learn. Only then can we make wise decisions that will help bring about a brighter, better future.

To that end, Lindsey Ardrey and the Reparations and Restitution Committee have prepared a curriculum and accompanying resources to assist our congregations in this exploration and journey.

Because our congregations are in different places and stages in this ongoing effort, and one size will not fit all, the curriculum features three different starting points. One is for congregations just beginning this work, another for churches who have done some historic research and want to take the next step, and a third for congregations who have done the historical work, have wrestled with options in response, and are ready to take action.

The curriculum and resources can be found here: <https://www.episdionc.org/reparations-and-restitution/>

We ask you to read this pastoral letter to your congregation on a Sunday in January. We suggest Martin Luther King Sunday (Jan 14), but we trust you to choose the best Sunday for your people.

In this season of new beginnings, we invite your congregation to review the curriculum, to pray and discern, and then to commit and engage in this life-giving work. One of Jesus' gospel promises to his followers is that we will know the truth, and the truth will set us free.

A member of the Reparations and Restitution Committee will call you the second week of January to assist you as you prepare to share this letter

Walk with us; pray with us; listen and learn with us how God is calling each congregation of our Diocese to respond to its particular history and our commitment to justice, to truth-telling, to liberation and to life.

May the promise of hope and joy that came to us, in human form, in Jesus, be our guide, our light, our truth.

In God's grace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "The Rt. Rev. Samuel S. Rodman".

The Rt. Rev. Samuel S. Rodman  
Bishop

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "The Rt. Rev. Jennifer Brooke-Davidson".

The Rt. Rev. Jennifer Brooke-Davidson  
Assistant Bishop

## Membership Matters

Are you a Member of St. Paul's? There is membership in the institution of the church, and then there's membership in the Body of Christ. If you are older than 16 years of age and are baptized (and your baptism is recorded in the Parish Register) you are technically a member. If you take Communion "at least three times during the preceding year" you are a "communicant." But neither gets close to true, living membership in Christ's Body, the church. A "communicant in good standing" is someone who, "for the previous year, [has] been faithful in corporate worship, unless for a good cause prevented, and [has] been faithful in working, praying, and giving for the spread of the Kingdom of God." Regular, weekly attendance at worship on Sunday mornings in church is "faithful in corporate worship."



If you have been baptized or confirmed elsewhere and are not sure you are recorded in the Parish Register, please contact Nicci, our Parish Administrator ([office@spechurch.org](mailto:office@spechurch.org)).

From An Episcopal Dictionary of the Church (2000) by Armentrout and Slocum, editors:

*The Parish Register is the formal record of the various official acts in a parish church. Canon 15 of the Constitution and Canons of 1789 required every minister of the church to keep a register of baptisms, marriages, and funerals within his cure. The Canon Law of the Church of England also required that the clergy keep a register of baptisms, confirmations, marriages, and burials. These records from the colonial period are a primary source of historical and demographic data for the early days of this country. Other data to be kept in the parish register are a list of all baptized members, a list of all communicants, a list of all confirmands, a list of all persons who have died in the last year, and a list of those persons who have been received, and all who have been removed by letter of transfer. There should also be a list of those whose domicile is unknown and those who are inactive but whose domicile is known.*