



THE EPISCOPAL MESSENGER

NOVEMBER 2025

SAINT PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

In last month's newsletter article, I shared that Russell and I met with Bishop Audrey, and I submitted my resignation to the Vestry. As you have seen me physically struggle over these past months, that is now taking a backseat to how I am going to live out the rest of my life with Russell and our family.

Please remember, you will always be my parish! You are the ones who saw my gifts and took a chance on a gray-haired lady just completing ten years of study. You not only called me in 2021, but also in January 2024 when you installed me as your priest-in-charge.

Not long after beginning my ministry with all of you, I shared a bit of my story. At that time, I explained that from 2005-2008 I was very ill. In 2007 I was told I was going to die. What I realized then as I do now, God is always with us, and he will make his presence known to us.

When you go through rough times, I pray that you can feel God's loving arms surrounding and upholding you. Back in the early 2000s, I kept having a recurring dream in which I saw these large, loving hands holding a little bird. As I continued to see that vision, I realized they were God's hands, and I was that little bird.

Over these recent months, I have often considered if yielding to my illness was

failing or simply a different, unknown path? If we love God and trust him, then when he answers our prayers, especially if our prayers are answered in an unexpected way, we must continue to live in the knowledge of his will in our lives. It is up to us to get out of God's way! The hardest thing of all is to "let it be." With practice, this will become easier, and I highly recommend it!

May God bless and keep you and make his face shine upon you. May you live in peace all of your days. Amen.

With love and gratitude,

Mother Allison+

*The Parish Family is invited
To the 10:30 service
And Reception
(No 8 o'clock service)
On November 16th
To express our **gratitude**
And **love** to
Mother Allison and Russell*



Rt. Rev. Kevin Nichols, Rt. Rev. Audrey Scanlan, Venerable Jane Miron (Archdeacon) and Rev. Dr Stuart Scarborough at convention

Highlights from the Diocesan Convention, reunifying the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania with the Diocese of Bethlehem, effective January 2026, into the **Episcopal Diocese of the Susquehanna**

From the Bishop's Addresses: Top benefits of reunification

- Two current Dioceses will become "Legacy" Dioceses.
- Bishop Audrey will become Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of the Susquehanna for two years beginning January 2026, followed by Bishop Nichols for a year while we seek a permanent Bishop during 2027 to be called for 2028.
- Energy/synergy
- Future vitality -- "We can do so much more together."
- Framework of new staff brings two staffs together and involves some work sharing

From the Panels:

Youth and Young Adult Panel: Our youth are not only the future -- but they are also the present of the church.

Granting Working Group: "faithful work of the Church"-resource the projects that invite others into our space. Shaped By Faith builds relationships across congregations and community partners.

Campus Ministry: Students are looking for a welcoming and affirming community.

Beloved Community Commission -- social, environmental and racial justice. Stand up for justice, walk in love, dismantle racism, repair and heal past injustices to see the likeness of God in all people.



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A newsletter for the parish family of

St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Bloomsburg

Please send articles and other correspondence to

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A Squirrely Situation in the Organ Loft

Every Sunday morning begins the same: a peaceful church, a quiet sanctuary, and the first notes of the prelude filling the space. At least, that was the plan. One Sunday morning in early October, I sat down at the organ, ready to begin the service, and everything seemed fine - until it wasn't.

As I transitioned from the prelude into the opening hymn, something sounded... off. Very off. Notes in the upper range were wildly out of tune, almost painfully so. At first, I thought perhaps I had pulled the wrong combination of stops or accidentally coupled something incorrectly. But no, the issue was persistent and oddly selective. Only certain notes and only on specific stops seemed to be affected. Throughout the service I did my best to adapt mid-song, avoiding the "sour" notes as best as I could, although I'm not sure I was too successful.

The next Sunday? Same problem. Still off, still weird, and still no clear cause. I was determined to diagnose it myself before calling in the organ tuners. So, the next Thursday evening before choir rehearsal, I sat down at the organ bench with determination, then climbed the ladder to assess the organ pipes. The issue? Several individual pipes had been knocked significantly out of tune. This was far beyond the usual drift caused by seasonal temperature changes. Still, it had to be addressed. Thanks to Scott's generous help, we tested each note one

by one and carefully retuned nearly a dozen pipes across three stops.

After we finished, several choir members came into the sanctuary, and we pieced together a timeline of a seemingly unrelated event: a squirrel had gotten loose in the church about two weeks prior. We now believe that our furry, uninvited guest made its way into the organ chambers and shall we say explored a little too enthusiastically. One curious leap, or perhaps a swift flick of the tail, and the squirrel had managed to jostle just enough pipes to wreak tonal havoc.



Thankfully, with a little patience and pitch correction, we were able to get things back in order. The organ is singing sweetly once again, and the squirrel, we assume, has taken its musical career elsewhere. All in all, a reminder that even in

worship, surprises (and laughter) are part of the journey and that music ministry includes both harmony and the occasional shenanigans from the most unexpected creatures.

On a slightly more serious note ...

As we prepare to say farewell to Mother Allison on her final Sunday with us, the choir will offer "*You'll Never Walk Alone*," a piece she personally requested for this combined service. Its message of strength, hope, and abiding presence

speaks beautifully to the spirit of transition and trust.

*“When you walk through a storm, hold your head up high,
And don’t be afraid of the dark...”*

Though parting is never easy, this song reminds us that even in uncertain moments, we are called to move forward with courage and grace. Just as the lyrics encourage us to walk through the wind and rain with heads held high, so too do we send Mother Allison into her next chapter with hope and deep gratitude.

*“Walk on, walk on with hope in your heart,
And you’ll never walk alone...”*

Mother Allison, may you carry this melody in your heart as a reminder that you are not walking away, but walking forward - surrounded by the love, prayers, and blessings of all of us here at St. Paul’s. You will never walk alone.

– Dr. Alan Hack, Music Director

November Baptismal Birthdays
Fred Morris * Rachel Bitler * Patty Creasy
*** Karen Roszel * Tiffanie Creasy * Jake**
Mohr * Ryan Fritz * Michael Rupert *
Rebecca Lowe * Graham Tevis * Henry
Phillip Brandau * Allison Carnahan



Supporting the University Women’s Basketball Team

November home game schedule:

Wednesday, Nov. 19th at 5:30 p.m.

(Georgian Court University)

Tuesday, Nov. 25th at 5:30 p.m.

(Lincoln University)

Saturday Dec. 6th at 1 p.m.

(California University of PA)

Home games are played in the Nelson Field House on the upper campus. From the traffic light on Lightstreet Road, the stadium is a left (heading east) or right (heading west) turn onto Country Club Road and straight up the hill.

Outreach Report

Final UTO Ingathering

Sunday, November 2nd is the final day for UTO boxes. Filled boxes may be placed in the offertory or the basket in the back of the church.

Operation Christmas Child

St. Paul's will be participating in Operation Christmas Child again this year. Summer and back-to-school sales provide excellent opportunities to find treasures. We will be able to send many of the same types of items we sent last year, with one additional exception: no soap. Boxes are on the Outreach table in the foyer. Reminder: Donating \$10 to cover the cost of shipping is optional. If you choose to make a donation, please put it in the supplied envelope and either place it in the offering or put it on top of the treasures inside the box when you turn it in. Final collection day will be Sunday, November 16th. Checks should be written to: **Samaritan's Purse**. Thank you!

OOM Dessert Mission

November 2 – Patty Creasy

November 16 – Katherine Staller

Sign-up sheets for desserts for the Christmas social, to be held on December 14th, will be on the Giving Table by Nov. 2nd. To sign up, or if you have questions, contact Elaine Pongratz @ mdmep@ptd.net

A Good News Report

On October 19th three students from the Allied Health and Pre-Med Sciences clubs at Commonwealth University took desserts to OOM, then they stayed to meet the residents and socialize with them! Our first link to the clubs came about when Cody Mead was involved in the leadership of the Pre-Med Science Club. For the past three years new club leaders have reached out to volunteer at St. Paul's, most recently with CCCFM, and each semester they also take a turn with dessert mission.

OOM Christmas Social

The Christmas Social for Our Orangeville Manor will be held on Sunday, December 14th after the 10:30 service.

Christmas cards for the individual residents will be available by Nov. 2nd. We had signed up to give gift cards and snacks again this year, but Theresa (President of OOM) asked if we would mind giving each resident a Walmart gift card this year (no snacks). There are probably a number of reasons she requested this. We are generous snack-givers, so storage and over-consumption may have been issues. However, the most important reason is it gives the residents the best gift of all, the gift of making their own choices. The OOM van goes to Walmart weekly, and the residents look forward to the trip, browsing, and choosing for themselves. Even when the rules are in place for the care and safety of the consumers, institutional living is scheduled and restrictive – a little freedom goes long way.

Continuing Class:

‘Work of the Holy Spirit’

We’re continuing our study, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, through the month of November, with the final session on **November 23/24**. Everyone is welcome to join at any time!

Class Details:

- Sundays at 6:00 p.m. on Zoom
- Mondays at 10:30 a.m. at St. Paul’s *and* on Zoom

Bring your Bible, some paper, and a pen or pencil.

Zoom Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85116265345>

Advent Adult Education:

‘A Child is Born’

by Amy-Jill Levine

This Advent, our Adult Education class will explore *A Child is Born* by Amy-Jill Levine, focusing on miraculous births in the Old Testament. Dr. Levine, a Jewish scholar of the New Testament, brings unique insight into Jesus’ roots in Judaism and the meaning of his birth narrative.

Each session includes a brief 10-minute video and discussion of related Scripture passages. There’s no book to purchase and no class preparation required.

The 4-week series begins **December 7/8**, continues for three weeks, and then concludes **January 4/5**.

Class Details:

- Sundays at 6:00 p.m. on Zoom

- Mondays at 10:30 a.m. at St. Paul’s *and* on Zoom

Zoom Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85116265345>

Kids’ Sunday School

During the Thanksgiving and Christmas seasons in Kids’ Sunday School we be more activity-focused, for instance making some ornaments as gifts for our Orangeville Manor friends, among other recipients. Our time will also include writing letters or drawing pictures for our ChildFund-sponsored child in Kenya, Brandon,

Our class for school-aged children meets on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of every month during the 10:30 a.m. service. We gather in the downstairs open area, always with two adults present.

Altar Flowers

If you would like to provide altar flowers for a special occasion, please send your request to Patty Creasy at the Church Office (Post Office Box 764). Flowers for one Sunday cost \$45, plus \$6 for delivery, but you are welcome to contribute whatever you can.

Please make checks payable to St. Paul’s Episcopal Church and mail to P.O. Box 764, Bloomsburg, PA 17815. Please include a note with the following info:

- The Sunday you would like to provide flowers.
- Notation: The Altar Flowers are given by _____ in loving memory of _____, or in thanksgiving for _____.
- Your name and contact information (phone number, email address, etc.)

September Vestry Notes

Priest's Report

- October 2 Meeting in preparation for Diocesan Convention
- October 4 Blessing the animals, 10 a.m. in the churchyard
- October 5 Commissioning Sunday School teachers and teaching assistants
- October 14 Bishop's visit; meeting with Vestry 6:30 p.m.
- February 26 Confirmation service; currently one candidate. Follow-up required.

Deacon's Report

Jim will be officially nominated as Diocesan treasurer at Convention. Duties begin on January 1, 2026.

Senior Warden

No report

Junior Warden

No report

Treasurer's Report

Dennis MacMahon:

Provided an overview of current financial status; overall we are in good shape.

Based on quarterly report from Janney Financial services, Dennis asked if we should invest in corporate bonds (greater returns) as opposed to municipal bonds? Agreed to have regularly scheduled meetings with Journey Bank and Janney advisors.

Mother Allison: Transferred the monthly allocation to her discretionary fund to Deacon Jim

Bruce: The preliminary budget presented in September provides an "aspirational

budget". Preliminary budget provides the framework that Stewardship uses to articulate the financial goals of the Vestry. The foundation for the preliminary budget is a massive spreadsheet incorporating data from the previous 2 years. Motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

Choir robes: Ian reported that 12 robes have been ordered.

Name tags: Ian sent information about magnetic name tags for Vestry to consider. The tags are similar to the ones used at CMEC; Ian will meet CMEC Senior Warden to gather additional information.

New Business

Sound system need: An additional amplifier because the sound to the altar area and choir is insufficient. Gelnett has an estimate for \$1,925. This quote is to add an amplifier to separate the choir and organ monitor speakers from the main system to allow better control of the volume level. We will install the amplifier, and separate volume controls for those two speakers. Adjustments will be made to the mix of the speakers to allow more volume, and clarity.

Additions: Proceeds from the sale of the parking lot have been allocated for the sound system. Dennis noted that sound quality on Zoom needs improvement, at the 10:30 service it affected both the service and the choir.

Plant sale: We will have a Goodwill Offering plant sale on October 11th from 9-1 on the lawn on Main Street. Vicki is thinning out all the irises around the

church. Donations will be appreciated but not required.

Vestry nominations: Two nominees needed. Katherine will be staying on as Senior Warden. Mother Allison will form a nominating committee.

Diocesan Convention: Victoria and Katherine will be attending as voting delegates.

Upcoming Concerts: October 26 afternoon concert featuring all BU choirs. Nov. 16 tentative: Brass Menagerie.

Committee Reports

- **Christian Education:** Five Sunday School teachers/teaching assistants will be commissioned on Oct. 5th.
- **Parish Life:** Coffee hours every Sunday; supporting concerts with receptions
- **Property:** Rachel provided an additional handout outlining the information from local contractors regarding changing out light bulbs in the arch. The conclusion is that we may want to wait until more of the lights burn out. This was based on replacement cost, not carbon footprint.
Repaired: gas leak in the steam table, outdoor sign; backflow valve.
Upcoming: small amount of rust in the elevator, checking church's slate roof, leak in the rectory, painting south-facing window frames in parish hall. Linda: if summer heat is an issue, air-condition the parish hall and use that for services when the weather is hot.
- **Stewardship:** Linda talked about how we nourish our community (St.

Paul's congregation). Do parishioners feel nourished at St. Paul's? How does St. Paul's nourish its community? Do parishioners feel Vestry listens to them? Do Vestry members feel that they listen to parishioners?

Linda will be distributing a survey on Tuesday (2-week return)

- **Worship:** Jim has a commitment from a supply priest to serve once a month with the possibility of a second supply priest to serve the 1st Sunday of each month. The 10:30 service will switch to Eucharistic prayer B for Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany. In Lent we will switch to Prayer C. Likely that Eucharist prayer will change by season. We have finished Tract 1, when we get into Advent we will return to standard readings. – *Elaine Pongratz for Victoria Wilcox*

October Vestry Report

Priest's Report

Mother Allison is resigning for health reasons effective November 16th. Vestry met with Allison and Russ, and Bishop Scanlan and Canon Veronica Chappell to discuss the resignation process and steps moving forward.

Deacon's Report

- During the interim period, Deacon Jim is taking responsibility for liturgical considerations, supply priests and pastoral care. Christmas services are covered. When no coverage, there will be robust morning prayer.

- Deacon's Discretionary Fund: because the Rector's Discretionary fund will not be used until a new priest has been hired, the money needs to go into or be transferred to the Deacon's Discretionary fund to be utilized for Parish needs. Vicki made a motion to give the Treasurer authority to transfer money from the Rector's Discretionary Fund to Deacon's Discretionary fund as needed beginning December 1st, seconded by Rachel. Motion carried.

Senior Warden

No report

Junior Warden

Val said if you have anything you want in the paper, please contact her. The phone number is incorrect in new directory.

Treasurer's Report

Balance of \$13,119.70 represents only 54% of expenses expected for October, and we may need to take money from the parking lot.

We will be including envelopes in bulletins to ask for donations for Christmas Garland in November. We currently have \$549 in savings for garlands, and we will need \$1,100.

Income/expense

Unpledged contributions: We have received three times what was budgeted, which reflects new members. Year to date we are \$17,805.75 ahead of what we had budgeted.

Trusts and Investments

Investments have grown despite our need to draw on them. Parking Lot Proceeds are close to \$400,000, the balance we want to keep.

Good Samaritan Trust can be used as benevolence for church members.

Budget

Discussed shortfall in proposed budget (\$19, 531.95) and that the pledge income line assumes 5% increase in pledges. Budget will be revised as numbers come in over the next two months.

Assistant Treasurer

We need a new Assistant Treasurer as of January because Candlishes are moving to Pittsburgh. This person will be backup for Dennis MacMahon when he is travelling, and will need to be familiar with current finance practices. Robin is doing very well as bookkeeper, and Katherine can sign checks if needed. We will need to ask the congregation for help and suggestions.

Old Business

- Sound system amplifier is needed because choir can't hear service. Linda made a motion to authorize money to get amplifier for choir for \$1,925 per Gelnett estimate, seconded by Val. Motion carried.
- Upcoming Concerts: October 26 afternoon concert featuring all BU choirs. Nov. 16 tentative: Brass Menagerie as part of the Concert Series.
- Assign Safe Church Audit: Vicki volunteered to do it and get help as needed.
- Choir robes: new robes will come out of the Music budget line.

- Nominating Committee: Elaine and Alton will be the Nominating Committee for Vestry nominations.

New Business

- Cell Tower Project—AT&T is asking to upgrade cell tower equipment, which may change the profile on the bell tower. This is in process, needs HARB approval. Vicki is working with AT&T to accomplish this.
- Potential use of the rectory by supply priests—discussed it will be much less expensive to put them up in a hotel instead of heating the Rectory over the winter.
- Discussed winterization and deep cleaning of the rectory, purging water lines and keeping heat at 55 degrees so the plaster doesn't crack. Rachel will arrange for her house cleaner to check out the rectory to provide a cleaning estimate. Rachel will ask for ideas about what needs to be cleaned immediately, and what will be done later when we have a new priest in residence.

Committee Reports

- **Property:** roof repairs are complete
- **Stewardship:** Linda told Vestry about stewardship talks after the homily at services for the next three weeks. Vestry is asked to check their email for updates.

– Victoria Wilcox, Vestry Secretary

November Lectionary

11/2 – 21st Sunday after Pentecost

And All Saints

Habakkuk 1:1-4; 2:1-4

Psalm 119:137-144

2 Thessalonians 1:1-4, 11-12

Luke 19:1-10

11/9 – 22nd Sunday after Pentecost

Haggai 1:15b-2:9

Psalm 145:1-5, 18-22 or

Psalm 98

2 Thessalonians 2:1-5, 13-17

Luke 20:27-38

11/16 – 23rd Sunday after Pentecost

Isaiah 65:17-25

Canticle 9

2 Thessalonians 3:6-13

Luke 21:5-19

11/23 – Last Sunday after Pentecost

Jeremiah 23:1-6

Canticle 16

Colossians 1:11-20

Luke 23:33-43

11/30 -- First Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 2:1-5

Romans 13:11-14

Matthew 24:36-44

Psalm 122

‘Noisy’ Collections

In November, the Noisy Collection will go to AGAPE'S NETWORKS heating fund. If you do not have the opportunity to place your coins in the collection plate during Sunday services at the church, you may send a check and write "AGAPE" on the memo line.

Parish Leadership

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The beauty of Autumn