



Saint Paul's Episcopal Church
Main & Iron Streets Bloomsburg, PA 17815
570-784-3316 <https://saintpaulsbloomsburg.org>



About Saint Paul's

St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania, is one of the oldest Episcopal congregations in central PA. In 1790 a small group of private homes was formally admitted to the future Diocese of Harrisburg as St. Paul's Church of Fishing Creek Township. The town was founded in 1802, and St. Paul's was one of its first four existing buildings. Seventy years later our present Victorian Gothic Revival edifice (4th structure) was completed.

Bloomsburg evolved as a mill town and flourished as such for over a century. A booming iron industry also developed. In the past century, these sources of employment ended. A state normal school was established and as Commonwealth University is now the premier employer.

Our congregation has grown over the years to its maximum size in the middle of the last century. As with many other American churches, our membership has been slowly declining. At the present time we have 44 pledging units, most from older members. We have watched our children move away and their parents age. It is indeed a miracle that we had 10 baptisms in 2025! In addition, in the last several years we have had a reborn Kids Sunday School. For this we are indebted to our last priest, Mother Allison Carnahan. Now there is new life in an existing congregation.



Location! Location! Location!

Living in Bloomsburg, one can enjoy life in a small town or the countryside which surrounds it – and still have access to the rest of the world. Most people think of Bloomsburg as the home of a mid-size university and the largest state fair in Pennsylvania, as well as the proximity to a health provider with a national reputation.

Columbia County, of which Bloomsburg is the county seat, affords all the recreational opportunities you would expect in rural Pennsylvania – hiking, biking, hunting, fishing, covered bridge picnics and many others centered around the Town Park on the Susquehanna River which was created in 1927. Bloomsburg is the rare small town where one can go out for dinner and then enjoy a show by a professional acting company presenting live theater several times a year. One can multiply Bloomsburg’s educational and cultural assets by the large number of regional colleges and universities – all within an easy drive.

Only a few miles put you on the national interstate highway system via Route 80 which runs east and west through Pennsylvania. One can readily experience educational, cultural and economic opportunities in larger communities (Williamsport and Wilkes-Barre/Scranton to the north, Allentown-Bethlehem to the east, Harrisburg to the south and State College to the west) by travelling four-lane highways or by taking “short cuts” through beautiful countryside – depending on your time and mood. (All those cities have airports.) One can also enjoy day trips or weekend get-aways to experience New York City and Philadelphia, plus more regional attractions than can be mentioned here.

Like much of rural Pennsylvania, Bloomsburg’s population is primarily Caucasian. However, residents have countless opportunities to interact with people from other cultures who are part of the university or medical center families. These people make Bloomsburg a better place to live. *(Bloomsburg occupies 4.7 square miles and is home to about 12,000 people. For additional information: <https://www.bloomsburgpa.org>)*



Our Mission Statement: St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Bloomsburg, PA is a prayer-centered congregation that proclaims the good news of the risen Savior Jesus Christ. Our mission is to tell of his life and love for ALL mankind and his creation. Our parish is rooted in liturgy, sacraments and the Word of God. We are called to nurture all seekers of Christ into a life of faith through baptism and lifelong learning as we share our journeys side by side by welcoming ALL within the Church and the community. We believe that the Church is the body of our parishioners, not just a building; we are a church body reaching out to meet people where they are with loving service.



St. Paul's Ministry Statement:

We believe that ministry is the whole people of God. In communion with Jesus Christ, we commit to being a community that listens before it speaks, serves and loves without exception. We cultivate a culture of loving hospitality where all are welcomed as Christ has taught us to do. We are rooted in the Episcopal tradition as part of the worldwide Anglican communion and are open to the movement of the Holy Spirit. Our ministry is a tangible expression of our faith. We seek to be the hands and feet of Christ in our neighborhood by empowering our members to share their unique gifts, creating safe spaces for honest questions and spiritual growth. We advocate for the vulnerable and the integrity of our environment. We treasure God's people and God's planet.



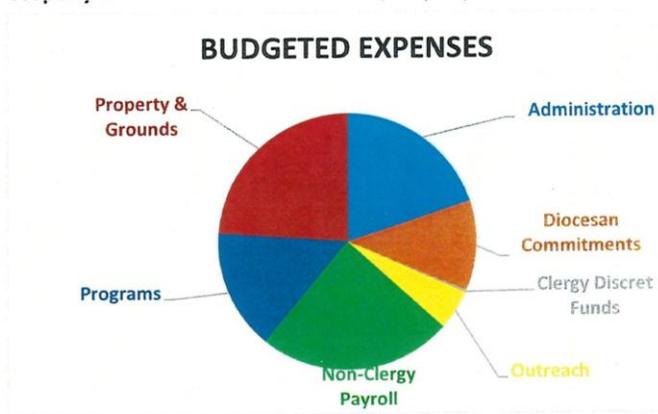
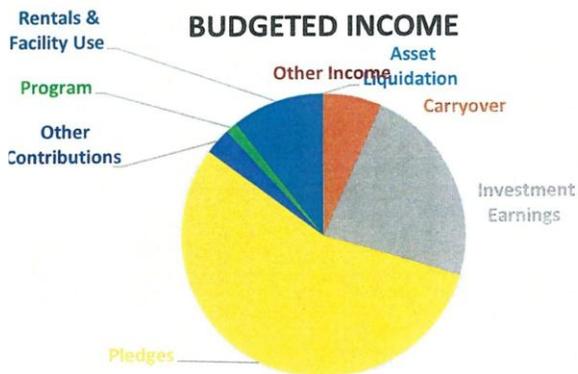
Finances

Wise money management and innovation at St. Paul's have allowed the parish to remain stable through good financial years and challenging financial years. The leadership of the church and its dedicated parishioners have always strived to carefully monitor expenses and contribute both financially and with gifts of time and talent to provide identified needs within the church.

As the financial information below reflects, the congregation's process of creating and balancing the budget presents a picture of the church's challenges and its need to strengthen its base of membership and giving. Yet the stronger statement is the remarkably steady pattern of giving, the generosity of parishioners, and the outstanding commitment by leadership to maintain solvency. The old adage "Where there's a will, there's a way!" has proven true at St. Paul's. Parishioners often express wonder and gratitude for the blessings that are bestowed during difficult financial times.

- The **Treasurer** chairs the **Finance Committee**, provides full monthly financial reports for Vestry and Finance Committee meetings, updates committee chairs on available funds, and participates in budgeting. The breadth of this communication provides financial transparency. The Finance Committee helps prepare the budget and reviews monthly financial statements prior to presentation to the Vestry.
- The **Trustees** oversee the congregation's investments and endowment funds, committing to strategies that increase income for the operating budget, while preserving the funds' principal. Our combined trusts are valued at \$1,219,737.48.
- The **Stewardship Committee** organizes an annual campaign to encourage financial commitment to the church through pledges. Concerned about sustaining St. Paul's vitality, this committee recommends maintaining a focus on stewardship throughout the year. This underscores the importance of financial support while also honoring stewardship expressed through giving of time, labor, funding of specific activities, and wise management of resources.

- The **Outreach Committee** disburses 12% of our budget in several ways, including support through the Bloomsburg Food Cupboard and Agape, a local needs based giving center.



Gifts and Ministry of the Congregation

The Altar Guild cares for and prepares the altar for Sunday worship and special services. **Lay Eucharistic Ministers, Readers and Ushers** contribute to worship at both the 8:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. services. These key people also serve at other liturgical celebrations, such as Christmas Eve services, Ash Wednesday, and Holy Week services, including Easter Vigil.

The Music Ministry at St. Paul's evokes a long tradition valued by both the parishioners and the community. The 8:00 a.m. service (Rite I) offers worship without music. The 10:30 a.m. service (Rite II) historically has incorporated organ, piano, and choir. **The Director of Music/Organist** chooses and directs music and works in collaboration with the priest to contribute to worship services. Over the years, St. Paul's has been blessed with talented, dedicated organists and directors. St. Paul's choir welcomes anyone who wishes to sing.

Christian Education includes Kids' Sunday School for school-age children as well as Adult Education and Men's Bible Study.

Outreach at St. Paul's is the hub for doing good in our communities. With input from the congregation, the Outreach committee organizes opportunities for parishioners to give time, talents, material goods, and financial support to a wide range of individuals and organizations in need. Within the church, we operate in an open system with other Vestry committees, most frequently Parish Life and Fundraising, by providing mutual support for each other's projects, goals, and missions. St. Paul's also contributes to outreach programs at other local churches and as part of *Columbia County Christian Fair Ministry (CCCFM)*, a consortium of 15+ churches and faith-based organizations that provide for itinerant workers at the annual Bloomsburg Fair. With this mix of on-going, annual, and occasional commitments, we have at least 2 outreach projects each month. Our largest Outreach missions have both on-going and annual events:

- *Our Orangeville Manor (OOM)*, a personal care home for formerly homeless veterans, where we have twice-monthly dessert delivery and we hold an annual Christmas Social (including gifts) for the residents.
- *Bloomsburg Food Cupboard (BFC)* where we hold monthly food collections, plus start each year with the annual January Panther Packs Challenge to provide extra funds and kid-friendly food for Panther Packs, a program for reducing food insecurity among local school children. Volunteers from St. Paul's also help pack the 300+ the bags of food for weekly distribution to children in the local schools.
- As part of *Columbia County Christian Fair Ministry* St. Paul's teams with 1st Presbyterian church to manage clothing acquisition by collecting gently used shoes/clothing and using monetary donations to purchase new items. Prior to opening day, CCCFM sets up a

distribution site on the fairgrounds with stations for food, clothing, bibles, blankets/sleeping bags, pillows, and health kits for the workers. Pastoral and medical care are also available. In conjunction with fair ministry, St. Paul's has built a network of dependable contacts from Bloomsburg University including the BU Women's Basketball Team, Pre-Med/Allied Health Clubs, and Lambda Chi Alpha fraternity. These students help with every aspect of distribution day. St. Paul's can also count on them to help with projects around the church.

In addition to "hands-on" projects, we use funds from the Outreach budget and special collections to support local, national, and international programs including:

1st Presbyterian Disaster Relief Assistance (fpcbloom.org), New Possibilities Resource and Recovery (Trinity Reformed United Church of Christ: cmcompanionsofhope.org), Getting Ahead/Connections (Christ Memorial Episcopal/Good Samaritan Mission), AGAPE (agapelovefromabove.org), Bloomsburg Food Cupboard/Panther Packs (bloomsburgfoodcupboard.org), The Women's Center (thewomenscenter.org), Area Agency on Aging, and Child Fund International.

St. Paul's is blessed to have a **Deacon** to serve its congregation. Deacon Jim has been instrumental in maintaining liturgical continuity in some extraordinary circumstances.



Staff

St. Paul's **Secretary** works twelve hours per week. Her tasks include preparing drafts of bulletins, scheduling of worship leaders and activities, and managing other standard office operations. The secretary records pledges and prepares quarterly pledge statements, manages St. Paul's rental property, and communicates with service contractors.

The **Bookkeeper** maintains financial records, pays bills in a timely manner, reconciles accounts, manages payroll, and fulfills all necessary tax requirements.

The **Sexton** provides 60 hours per month of cleaning services for the church and Parish Halls.

Vestry

The current Vestry consists of six members serving three-year staggered terms. This group assumes responsibility for discerning the vision of the congregation and for communicating and implementing that vision. Officers of the vestry include Senior Warden, Junior Warden, and Secretary. The rector appoints the Senior Warden. The Vestry elects the Junior Warden and Secretary from its membership. The Vestry elects the Treasurer, who must participate in Vestry, but may be a non-voting member.



Expectations for the Next Priest

St. Paul's looks forward to the opportunity to welcome a new priest to our family and to embrace the potential for re-energizing our congregation. An approachable priest with strong communication skills, who welcomes and encourages feedback, will be essential to lead St. Paul's into the future.

Also important is calling a priest skilled at preaching scriptural sermons and relating scripture to today's issues. The church expects its new priest to nurture parishioners of all ages.

Important Clergy Tasks

- **Preaching:** ability to preach with clarity and to make the Gospel relevant to people's lives
- **Church Growth/Development:** ability to reshape and ignite spirit among the existing congregation, including a committed effort to invite neighbors to join us
- **Teaching:** ability to help persons of all ages to understand and live the Christian faith
- **Youth Work:** ability to inspire youth and incorporate them into the full life and ministry of the Church
- **Spiritual Guidance:** ability to lead and train others in the formation and development of a deeper spiritual life
- **Pastoral Care:** ability to care for people so that they are nurtured and challenged to grow within the community of faith
- **Coordination** of ministries, liturgical scheduling and community involvement

