**AGENDA**

**The 148th Annual Congregational Meeting**

**St. Paul’s Church**

**Milltown, New Jersey**

**SUNDAY, March 1, 2020**

1. **Call to Order**

**II. Opening Prayer**

1. **Adoption of Agenda**
2. **Report From Pastor**
3. **Financial Reports**
4. **Old Business**
5. **New Business**
   * 1. **New Consistory Members – Barbara Paley & Pam Sarch**
6. **Adjournment**

**MEMBERSHIP CHANGES 2019**

**MEMBERSHIP GAINS - 15**

By Affirmation – 3

Laura Carasso

JuliAnne Farella

Daniel Kindler

By Confirmation – 12

Owen Bernstein Rocco Ciccone

Alexia Hahn Jason Keiser

Gabriella Maynard Ginette Moore

Michelle Murphy Sean Park

Andrew Pearce Harrison Pearce

Christopher Rucinski Aralyn Torres-Perez

**MEMBERSHIP LOSSES - 12**

By Death – 8

Sharon Rahman

Helen Soulea

Vera Baier, Former member

MaryAnn Kotter

Gregory Reeves

Donald Petry

Elsbeth Rapolla

Marie Rittman

By Transfer - 5 MaryAnn Redler

Jeff & Tanya Roberts

Kathy Maiorano

William Puglisi

**BAPTISMS – 8** Cayden Joseph Gille

Jack Van Angstadt

Christian John Torres-Perez

Aralyn Candace Torres-Perez

Rhone Phillip Ruperto

Melinda Lea Garrison

Jack Elliott Garrison

Grayson James Kehoe

**WEDDINGS – 0**

**ACTIVE MEMBERS – 324 INACTIVE MEMBERS – 194**

**NON-MEMBERS – 9 CHILDREN - 106**

**FINANCE**

**COST OF MINISTRY**

Expenses – The cost of ministry carried out through worship, education, outreach, congregation care, etc. was $265,813.49.

Income – The amount of money we received in support of our ministry was $237,372.37

The result was a deficit for the year in the amount of ($28,441.12).

**BENEVOLENCE**

Our goal is to be a tithing church. What is a tithing church? The tithe was an obligatory offering from the law of Moses requiring 10 percent of an Israelite's first fruits. Our church tithe is to offer 10% of our parishioner’s giving to other charitable organizations and families in need.

In 2019 we gave 8 ½ %, including our communion offerings totaling $16,651.08 to a variety of organizations and groups.

We also provide office space to the Interfaith Network of Care, hosted FISH Hospitality, provided meeting space for the Boy Scouts of America, AA, NA, Al-non, Puppy Pal (organization training service dogs), and Milltown Education Foundation.

**WORLD VISION CHILD**

Our church sponsors two World Vision children: Nasim Shekh and Jhon Adn.

**CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT EXENSES**

2019 - Project 1 - Finish the restoration work of our resurrection window. Project 2 - Replace the side awning on parsonage torn off by a storm and repair the damage to the siding, storm door and side door. Project 3 – Complete repairs on organ.

**THANK YOU** to everyone who gave their God-given talents to renovate the parsonage.

**WILLS**

Is St. Paul’s in your will?

Would you consider remembering St. Paul’s in your will. By doing so you provide a lasting legacy and will ensure that St. Paul’s will continue to be used by God after you have returned home to the heavenly kingdom that awaits you.

**myEoffering**

myEoffering is electronic giving that enables you and every household to make your offering using electronic fund transfer or credit card. You may already be using online bill pay for your mortgage, car payment or insurance premium through an automatic withdrawal from your checking or saving account.

When traveling, illness or other circumstances prevent you from attending services, myEoffering will allow your weekly offering to continue uninterrupted, enabling us to fund our ministry of bringing God’s Love to the heart of the community.

MyEoffering.com

**FUND RAISING**

We had several very successful fund raisers in 2019 that raised $8,610. Our fund raisers included Applebee’s Flapjack Breakfast, Soup Swap, Golf Outing, Pallet Painting and Super Bowl Pool. THANK YOU to everyone who spear headed these events and to everyone who participated.

**SEARCH COMMITTEE & TRANSITION TEAM**

This year the Search Committee and Transition Team spent countless hours working finding a new full-time Pastor for St. Paul’s. The team put together a profile of St. Paul’s for prospective pastoral candidates and had the job posted on a wide variety of websites. The Search Committee reviewed many resumes and conducted interviews of candidates. Ultimately, they invited five candidates to deliver a sermon to the church. At the end of the process the Search Committee was happy to recommend Rev. Dr. Matt Murphy to be called as the next pastor of St. Paul’s. The consistory agreed and the congregation voted to call Pastor Matt in December. He will officially start on January 1, 2020. Thanks to all who volunteered their time and talents to assist with the transition and complete the search!

**CHURCH FAMILY**

Throughout 2019 the Church & Family ministry team was active organizing activities that served to enhance the fellowship of church family.

Our activities included:

* Lent dinners and worship
* 4th of July float & festivities
* Annual outdoor worship and a picnic
* Advent potluck dinner and Christmas fun
* Advent Bible Study & daily devotional
* Christmas caroling to our homebound
* Fellowship hour after Sunday worship service
* Senior Citizens Luncheons
* Sending cards and care packages to college students

**EDUCATION MINISTRY**

**SUNDAY SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS**

We continued running our weekly classes for youth during our church service. Students participated in engaging lessons that bring the stories of the Bible to life. They learned the Bible stories, memorized scripture, and created projects centered on the stories learned. Towards the end of the year, a new approach began to incorporate more volunteers into the classrooms to ease the burden of our volunteer teachers. Thank you so much to all the teachers that volunteered many hours and many years of service for our youth!

**CONFIRMATION CLASS**

On June 12 youth confirmed their faith in God, as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The youth were: Owen Bernstein, Rocco Ciccone, Alexia Hahn, Jason Keiser, Gabriella Maynard, Ginette Moore, Michelle Murphy, Sean Park, Andrew Pearce, Harrison Pearce, Christopher Rucinski, Aralyn Torres-Perez

**ADULT BIBLE STUDY**

Adult bible studies were offered on Wednesday afternoons throughout the year at 1 PM.

**RIGHT NOW MEDIA**

RightNow Media gives every family instant access to thousands of Bible study videos, and kid's episodes. Powerful Biblical video content anywhere, anytime for you and your family! There are videos for men, women, youth, and young adults. The topics are: parenting, marriage, finances, Christian living, and health as well as popular Children’s videos. To access it go to <https://www.rightnow.org/account/invite/StPaulsUCC>.

**MUSIC MINISTRY**

A gift and highlight of 2019 was the many, many lay leaders who volunteered their time and leadership. Many did so through music!

One highlight of 2019 was the special music for **Pastor Rich’s retirement**. Members past and present formed a pickup orchestra and joined the choirs and band to give thanks for his ministry at St. Paul’s. It was truly lovely to see our children, seniors, and everyone in between sharing their talents in worship.

In the spring of 2019, **Children’s choir** created its own songbook of favorites. Topping the charts: “Joy to the World,” which we sang at Pastor Rich’s retirement. In the fall, we presented anthems and prepared for our Christmas pageant, directed ably by Elana Kircher! We begin 2020 with quite a few new members.

Our **Adult choir** continues to present an anthem almost every Sunday with great dedication and thoughtfulness. We began our year by singing love songs at Preferred Care for Valentine’s Day weekend. We sang at the Milltown United Methodist Church for both Ash Wed. and a community Thanksgiving service. We added extra members for Holy Week and for a service of Lessons and Carols in Dec. The latter service featured many readers and worship leaders who helped keep the service running smoothly.

Our **Praise band** members continue to give generously of their time. We led outdoor worship for the National Day of Prayer, and took on extra music for youth Sundays. The band played on a float in Milltown’s 4th of July parade. During our Sept. picnic, the service and lunch were followed by spontaneous karaoke!

In 2019, we were finally able to complete repairs on our **Moller pipe organ** that had been sidelined by various delays, especially window repairs. We will celebrate with a concert and reception on March 15, 2020. Other highlights of our music ministry included a comical “Risus Pachalis” service. Caitlin Nichols brightened our Easter morning worship with her trumpeting. Soloists contributed throughout the year, and donors supported our Organ and Music funds.

For the latter half of 2019, **our Music Ministry functioned more generally as a worship ministry**. Lay leaders preached, prayed, read, presided at the communion table, and guided us through worship in a host of ways. Over forty people shared their gifts in leading worship! What a marvelous image of the body of Christ!

As we begin 2020, please hold our musicians in your prayers. Pray that they find the offering of their gifts to be a joy and not a stress, and that we find creative ways to bring our best to worship at St. Paul’s.

Christ’s peace,

Emily Sensenbach-Gopal

**PROPERTY AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE**

**LAWN CARE**

The mowing of our lawns is a weekly activity as anyone with a lawn knows. We are very fortunate that Ken Skalla donates his time to keep our lawns well-groomed throughout the spring, summer and fall.

**LEAF REMOVAL**

The Autumn leaves look beautiful but eventual they all fall off the trees. John Garback and his landscaping crew cleared our property of our leaves.

**SNOW REMOVAL**

We have hired JP services for all our snow removal needs.

**SENIOR YOUTH GROUP**

*“Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.”* 1 Timothy 4:12

2019 was another year when our Senior Youth Group endeavored to live out 1 Timothy 4:12. While some people may use their youth as an excuse, our youth used it to serve and glorify God.

**WINTER RETREAT**

The 2019 theme was “*Jesus Changes Everything”.* Teenagers often feel trapped. They’re stuck in the same habits, depression sets in, and they wonder about their purpose. Life might seem pointless or hopeless at best. The lie that says nothing will ever change pulls teenagers deeper into the rut. But Jesus offers a way out. He reaches down to give life – a new path to follow. He has the power to free us from habits, redeem our relationships, and give us a new identity. It all begins by deciding to follow Him, because a life surrendered to Jesus is a life transformed.

**MISSION TRIP**

29 youth and 6 adults spent the week in the Savannah, Georgia serving God by serving the homeless, the elderly and the underprivileged children. We served meals, we repaired homes, we ran a kids camp, and we cared for senior citizens. This year the theme was “Storyline” and the youth explored all the ways that God can help to write our own personal stories. The scripture was from **Psalm 23:6A “Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me all the days of my life.”**

**FUND RAISING – THANK YOU**

We want to say thank you to everyone who participated in the many fund raisers we ran to cover the mission trip expenses. Without your willingness to share time, money and talent our mission trips would not be possible.

Our fundraisers were: 50/50; July 4th Duck Race, Script Orders, Applebee’s

**SUNDAY NIGHT MEETINGS**

Throughout the school year we met, usually on the first and third Sunday nights to share faith, fellowship and fun.

**SERVICE TO ST. PAUL’S**

This year we worked on multiple one time and ongoing projects for St. Paul’s. These included updating the sign in front of the church, decorating and undecorating the church for Christmas, and other smaller projects throughout the year.

**JOIN US!**

All youth in grades 7th-12th are invited to join us. Church membership is not required.

**SPIRITUAL LIFE**

**WORSHIP**

***Romans 10:24-25 “And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another.”***

We meet together every Sunday for worship at 10:00 a.m. Our Sunday worship service includes time for people to greet each other, scripture readings, prayer, an offering, the Lord's Prayer, a children's message, the sermon, special music and hymns. As we said goodbye to Pastor Rich this year, many congregation members stepped in to lead worship throughout the second half of the year.

Our morning service is a blend of time honored hymns and contemporary worship songs. We have special music from our adult choir, praise band, children's choir or individuals. We seek to have Christ centered services focused on prayer and Bible based messages.

Communion is served the first Sunday of every month. All are invited to celebrate communion, but you can choose whether or not you wish to participate.

Worship attendance for the year was 4,824 people. This is a weekly average of 92 worshippers.

**DRAMA MINISTRY**

The drama team brought the Word of God alive several times throughout the year. The addition of drama to our worship experience provided another way for you to see and hear the relevance of God’s Word for today.

**LIVE STREAMING SUNDAY’S WORSHIP**

We continue to live stream our Sunday morning worship through our Facebook page. To view our Sunday morning worship service go to our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/stpauls.milltown.nj/>

We appreciate your feedbacks and likes. We will be looking at ways to improve the audio and video in 2020.

**PRAYER CONCERNS**

***James 5:16 …pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.***

Each week the prayer concerns that are shared in worship along with others requests were emailed through mail chimp so that we can be prayer warriors for each other.