There was a regular meeting of the vestry of Saint Paul’s Episcopal Church, Chestnut Hill, on the above date at 7 p.m. in Dixon House.

There were present The Rev. Cliff Cutler, rector, presiding; also Anibal Aponte, Charlotte Biddle, Lisa Budd, Cheyenne DeMulder, Ruth Desiderio, Clark Groome, John Kimberly, Chesley Lightsey, Chuck Lower, Tabitha Oman, Steve Pearson, Amanda Scates-Preisinger, and Stephen Stone.

Tim Albert and Kristin Poole were absent.

The meeting was called to order at 7:06 p.m.

1. The meeting began with a short form of evening prayer.

II. The Listening Hearts Guidelines were read.

III. Cliff announced that Madeline Schroth had resigned as rector’s warden and as a member of the vestry effective immediately. He thanked her for her faithful service and noted that she would be missed on the vestry.

IV. Cliff appointed Ruth Desiderio to be the rector’s warden.

V. Cliff reported that Valerie Chikwendu had resigned from the vestry and thanked her for her service. Cliff asked the vestry to decide whether or not it wanted to fill the vacancy Valerie’s departure creates through May 2019.

VI. Cliff proposed, and the vestry unanimously approved, the election of Clark Groome to fill Madeline’s term that runs through May 2020.

VII. Cliff then nominated Clark (it’s a bit tough writing about myself here!) to be the vestry secretary. The nomination was approved without dissent.

VIII. Clark thanked Cliff and the vestry for their support. He said he would be recording the vestry meetings and that he hoped to have the minutes distributed in a week or less.
IX. The parish will be informed about the vestry changes coupled with thanks for the service of our two departing members in the upcoming Happenings and in the announcements at church this coming Sunday.

X. Cliff reminded the vestry members to be sure to be aware of new faces at church and to make them feel welcome.

XI. The minutes of the December 17 vestry meeting were approved unanimously.

XII. Cliff said that one of the things we need to do is learn how to deal with our anxiety as the transition proceeds. We need to help each other with that. The rector also quoted the U2 song “Grace,” noting that we need to deal with each other with grace even when there are disagreements.

XIII. There was a lengthy discussion of how best to communicate with the parish about the transition. It was decided that the transition vestry meeting previously scheduled for Sunday, February 3, would be postponed.

Ruth noted that team building in the vestry is critical going forward. She said we need to focus more on the “why” of what we’re doing than on the “what” or “how.”

The following decisions were reached:

• Between now and the February 25 vestry meeting there will be listening sessions to allow our parishioners to express their concerns, fears, ideas, and ask any questions they might have about the transition.

• Beginning Sunday, February 10, teams of three vestry members will be available in the church after each of the services to listen to fellow Saint Paulites. It was clear that we’re too early in the process to have a lot of answers about specifics going forward but it was agreed that “we don’t know yet” is a perfectly acceptable answer to questions for which we have no answer.

• The teams of three should each include vestry members representing different areas of parish life and, as an added benefit, should include
members who may not know each other terribly well, a positive step toward vestry team building. Ruth and Chesley will coordinate.

• The February 25 vestry meeting might begin earlier than usual and focus on what we’ve learned from these get togethers. The longer meeting would also help the vestry’s team building.

• Parishioners will be encouraged to contact members of the vestry electronically with questions and/or concerns. The vestry contact information is available on the parish website.

XIV. The following items were reported briefly:

• Our new music director, Andy Kotylo, joins the staff February 12. His first Sunday will be February 17. The 10:30 a.m. service that day will be followed by a welcoming coffee hour for Andy and his family.

• The choir is holding a farewell luncheon for departing interim choral director Steven Gearhart and organist James Batt at noon on Sunday, February 10.

• The recent evensong was streamed live on Facebook Live and is still available for viewing there. This is the second time a Saint Paul’s service has been streamed, the first being the December Lessons and Carols.

• George Reath has stepped down after many years as head of the offering counters. Cliff said that leaves us with only four current counters – Steve Clowerly, Charlie Head, Chuck Lower, Dudley Warwick – and that the ideal number would be 12 – six pairs working two non-consecutive months each.

• Children, Youth, and Family met on Sunday with Joseph Wolyniak and Virginia Emlen.

• A question was raised about confirmation. The bishop, who does all the confirmations, was here last December. He will next visit, Cliff believes, in 2020.

• The Rev. Betsy Ivey, the diocesan canon for growth and support, will be preaching at the services on February 10.
• Joseph has developed a small communications committee consisting of Ruth Desiderio, Stephanie Marudas, and Charlotte Sutton.

• Cliff said it was time to reconstitute the pastoral care committee “with the charge to provide a ‘supportive’ network for the parish and also to ‘connect’ parishioners (especially those who are relatively new) to ministry opportunities within the parish, to hold ‘Saint Paul’s 101’ information gatherings and to collaborate with the hospitality committee to hold ‘networking’ events for parishioners to connect with one another.”

Some components of this group might be the healing ministers, the Monday flowers distribution group, and, perhaps, the communion visitors.

• A celebratory capital campaign event is scheduled for Saturday, February 9 from 3 to 5 p.m. Former development director Helen Kim will be invited to join us.

• Steve Stone mentioned that several people had mentioned to him that parts of the parish were occasionally lacking heat. Cliff said that whenever that issue arose Virginia Emlen should be informed as soon as possible.

XV. The stewardship numbers to date are

• For the annual campaign - $597,296 (of a $600,000 goal) from 167 pledges so far.

• The Capital Campaign has raised $1,911,546 (exceeding its $1.5 million goal) from 152 donors. About $975,000 of that is already in hand. On a motion duly seconded and passed unanimously, the finance committee is authorized to move that cash into a money market or other interest-bearing fund.

• Cliff reported that almost all – close to 97% or 98% - of the money pledged in both campaigns is likely to be received.

• The next step in the capital campaign, Cliff reported, is to engage an owner’s representative who can move us through the property issues, put things in the right order, and assure us that the money is being spent
appropriately. When that has happened, the projects will move on to the
design and construction phases.

It was hoped that some of the contractors or suppliers would either
donate to or at least give the church a break on costs. This is often done
by organizations that deal with non-profit clients.

• The lawyer for the sewer project hopes to have the easement
agreement signed next week after which the next steps toward
completion of this project could begin.

XVI. Accounting Warden Anibal Aponte reported that all is basically in good
shape financially. There have been some unexpected maintenance expenses but
that is typical, he said, and Cliff affirmed, of what happens in older buildings.

Cliff said that he hoped that the revenue from the use of our facilities might
eventually offset the parish’s maintenance budget.

XVII. Charlotte Biddle reported that the next group of IHN visitors would be
coming to Saint Paul’s from October 27 to November 11.

XVIII. The next regularly scheduled meeting of the vestry will be Monday,
February 25 at a time still to be determined.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned after a closing prayer at
8:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Clark Groome
Secretary