There was a Vestry of Saint Paul’s Episcopal Church, Chestnut Hill, conference call on the above date at 11 a.m.

There were present Ruth Desiderio, Rector’s Warden, presiding; also Interim Rector Albert J. Ogle, Assistant Rector Daniel J. Kline, and Vestry members Lisa Budd, Chip Butler, Cheyenne DeMulder, Mark Duckett, John Kimberly, George McNeely, Tabitha Oman, Steve Pearson, Kristen Poole, Louise Thompson, and Hugh Williamson. St. Paul’s consultant Barbara Abbott and staff members Virginia Emlen, Jim Everts, and Andy Kotylo were also on the call. Tim Albert and Steve Camp-Landis were absent.

The call began at 11:05 a.m.

I. Interim Rector Albert Ogle opened the meeting with a prayer.

II. The group was assembled to discuss what to do about upcoming services and other events held at the church while the country is facing the health pandemic caused by the COVID-19 virus.

Many churches have already cancelled or modified services for this coming Sunday. The diocese has offered some helpful suggestions but is leaving the final decision about what to do to the individual parishes.

Many options were considered during the lengthy discussion. Among the concerns was the availability of the parish for the three Alcoholics Anonymous meetings scheduled for tonight and tomorrow. These will be allowed to go on but Virginia Emlen will be in contact with AA to talk about the future.

Several ideas about Sunday, ranging from going on as planned to cancelling everything, were also discussed. Possible use of Facebook or other social media and/or our website were also talked about as potential sources for our presence in our parishioners’ lives.

The Vestry agreed that from Sunday, March 15 through March 31 the St. Paul’s campus will be closed to outside groups, parish group functions, and public worship. The main church will remain open for prayer and meditation. The clergy will be available for pastoral care.
These points were also made:

• Albert and Ruth will notify the congregation about these plans as soon as possible. They will note that this is a Lenten journey in a different context.

• The outside groups who use the parish will be notified. Rent for the Music Academy will be waived.

• Dan will be at the church this coming Sunday to direct people who don’t get the message and arrive at church for a service.

• Dan Kline, Andy Kotylo, and Sunday’s preacher Carroll Sheppard will figure out what they want to do this Sunday that is consistent with the new protocol.

• The staff may work remotely.

Albert said that we’re not cancelling church, we’re just doing it in a different way.

III. This Monday evening’s Vestry meeting that was originally cancelled has been reinstated at 7 p.m. as Zoom meeting. Ruth will apprise the Vestry about how to access the meeting, which will be recorded.

The call concluded at 12:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Clark Groome
Secretary