



# **Annual Meeting of the Congregation**

## **Part II**

**February 25, 2024**

**ST. PAUL'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH  
TORRINGTON, CONNECTICUT  
ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION – PART II  
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2024**

**Call to order**

**Devotions**

**Approval of the Agenda**

**Approval of the Minutes of December 10, 2023, Annual Meeting of the Congregation, Part I.**

**Presentations and Review of Reports**

Altar Guild  
Christian Education  
Congregational Care  
Fall Fair– St. Paul's Women of the ELCA  
Fellowship  
Finance  
Garden of Memories  
Hilltop Advisory Board  
Information Technology  
Pastor's Report  
Property  
Scholarship  
Social Concerns  
Soup Kitchen

**Adjournment**

**Benediction**

**St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
Congregational Meeting Part I  
December 10, 2023**

President Mark Rose called the meeting to order at 10:50 on Sunday, December 10, 2023. There were 52 members present at the start of the meeting. About 15 left during the meeting.

**M/S/P** Pamela Little, Elizabeth Falls to accept the minutes of the last Congregational meeting.

Thank you to members of Council who are leaving, Elizabeth Falls, Christine Dickinson, Beth Brower.

Election of Council members.

Running for 1 year seat, Kathy Olkowski, running for 3-year seat, Mark Rose, Dana O'Brien, William Skibesky, Karen Trippodi.

There were no nominations from the floor.

**M/S/P** Mae Friday, Pam Ewing to close nominations.

**M/S/P** Fred Rakyta, Cynthia Rose to have secretary to cast one vote for Council members.

Discussion of the proposed budget.

**M/S/P** Pamela Little, Judy Ludwig to accept the regular budget for 2024. Motion amended to discuss both budgets regular and bare bones, side by side.

Capital campaign to raise \$200,000.00 to offset the budget deficit. Questions on how we plan to raise this money.

Regardless of which budget is voted on, regular or bare bones, there will be a deficit.

**M/S** Ramona Weingart, Cynthia Rose to add back snowplowing to the bare bones budget., Motion withdrawn.

Budget will be discussed, line by line to compare both. Church Treasurer went over the budget.

**M/S/P** Karen Ness, John Ianelli to add Capital Campaign of \$200,000.00 to the bare bones budget.

**M/S** Paula Rosenbeck, Judy Ludwig to add Fund Raising to the bare bones budget. Motion was withdrawn.

**M/S/P** Judy Ludwig, Pamela Little to only discuss the regular budget.

The budget was then discussed line by line.

**M/S/P** John Iannelli, Judy Ludwig to temporarily suspend the 10% that we give to the Synod for one year to help offset our budget. Motion amended to give 5% of our income to Synod for one year.

**M/S** Fred Rakyta, John Iannelli to increase the Farmer's market donation to a fee structure to \$5,000.00 annually. Motion removed.

Members agree the fee should be increased, but that it should not be put into the budget, it should go into Facilities Use schedule, and the Farmers Market be notified soon, and not wait until April.

**M/** Ramona Weingart to remove conference fees from the budget, no second, motion dies.

**M/S/P** Dixie Travis, Karen Ness to add a line item for the Sharing Garden to the Property budget to help offset what needs to be done. No dollar amount, just a place to donate.

**M/S/P** Diane Boscarino, David Little to adjourn at 12:15 pm

Judy Ludwig

Council Secretary

## **No Reports**

Eucharistic Ministry, Evangelism, Family & Youth Ministry, Staff Support, Stewardship, Worship and Music Ministry. **Not active** Puppettude, Safety Committee and the Sharing Garden.

## **ALTAR GUILD**

Altar Guild members have the honor of serving our Lord by preparing the Altar for worship each week by changing the paraments if needed, setting up communion, watering the plants on the altar, dusting the floor and filling the oil candles on the altar and at the baptismal fount. We also adorn the altar with an arrangement of beautiful spring flowers for Easter, geraniums for Pentecost, and poinsettias for Christmas. The spring flowers and geraniums are mostly planted in our Memorial Garden outside the church by Lisa Bodnar, the Easter Lilies and Poinsettias are delivered to shut-ins by members of our congregation. The flower chart is in the Narthex if anyone is interested in remembering a loved one or for a special occasion. Check the chart for the available dates and complete a card; the cost is \$60.00 for two bouquets. Memorial flowers not taken by donors are delivered to our shut-ins, hospitalized, or elder members celebrating a birthday. The flowers on the are purchased from Lily and Vine Florist in Torrington.

I would like to thank all the Altar Guild members for their dedication to seeing that our altar is set up for communion every week.

Currently our Altar Guild Members are: Sandy Heintz, Karen Trippodi, Renate Higgins, Lisa Bodnar, Dana O'Brien, Angela DiSefano, Bonnie Schaff, Liz Falls, Linda Magyar and Jeanette Richard (chair).

Anyone interested in joining the Altar Guild, please contact me at 860-489-7140.

God Bless  
Jeanette Richard

## **ANGEL PROJECT**

The 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Angel Project was another success and the generosity of members of St. Paul's never fails to amaze me! For the first time in several years, we were able to take a couple of families off the Angel Project since they are experiencing better financial times and we added one family. For that I am particularly thankful. During the year we had a couple of fundraisers earmarked for the Angel Project so that we were able to purchase gifts that were left at the end. We made 40 fruit baskets for members who had lost a member of their family during the year. Our list was complete with several families of small children as well as individuals. There are always a fair number of gift cards also since parents are given grocery, gasoline, and department store cards. Special thanks to Pamela Little, Pam Ewing, and Karen Ness for their help in processing gifts in December.

While still in early stages, I hope to plan a couple of fund raisers during the year to offset the cost of the Angel Project. I anticipate again selling chocolate lollipops leading up to Easter. Folks seem to enjoy the white and milk chocolate crosses and lambs. Please watch for details in the February newsletter.

Together in Christ,  
Paula Rosenbeck

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Last winter the Christian Education committee planned Vacation Bible School. We had a successful “Break Out from the Ordinary to the Extraordinary” with 18 children attending. VBS was directed by Pamela Little and Casaundra Abeling with the help of many other volunteers that included several extended family members of the Little Family. At this writing we have chosen the theme of “God’s New Creation,” a publication by ELCA World Hunger, and it will take place on August 5-10, 2024. Mark your calendar and save the dates. Children who are 4 years old by the end of December 2024 through grade 5 are invited to attend.

Earlier in the calendar year we had a fairly routine winter. We had four confirmands who celebrated their Confirmation in the late spring. The last day of Sunday School was celebrated just before Memorial Day and the church picnic was held that same day. As it turned out, we began the current year with a picnic on Rally Day, which was much better attended by congregation members.

The 2023-2024 Sunday School year began with Rally Day on September 17th. The theme was “Welcome” and children decorated Welcome Mats. We gained a few new students in the current year and attendance has been consistent. We did change to a new curriculum for our 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders, again, published by Media 1517, the ELCA’s publishing house, and the three boys seem to be pleased with the change. The teachers like it too! The new Whirl series and Spark series are lectionary based, meaning the children learn in Sunday School from the same stories they just heard in worship. Our faithful staff includes Michelle Skibesky, Cathy & Hannah Winzler, Casaundra & Gabrielle Abeling, Lena Warner, Pastor Cady, Pamela & David Little, Karen Trippodi, and me.

We didn’t have a First Communion class this past year but one is being planned this Spring. Children who are in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade are invited to enroll. First Communion will be celebrated on Easter Sunday and the Saturday morning class for students and their parent(s) will be on Saturday, March 16<sup>th</sup>.

We finished the calendar year with our annual Youth pageant on the third Sunday in Advent with almost 100% participation by Sunday School children. Ethan Schaller served as narrator of “Love Came Down” and Sunday School children served as the nativity characters.

Falling under the umbrella of Christian Education falls Adult Bible Study. Currently there are two Bibles studies each week; an in-person group of mostly women who meet on Wednesday mornings at 10am and the Tuesday night group continues to meet via Zoom, which allows those who no longer live locally to participate. Both groups are led by Pastor Cady.

Until this current year Family Ministry also fell under the Christian Education umbrella but for the first time we passed the torch to a new Family Ministry committee. The group held a couple of small events in the summertime but the biggest and most successful by far was the Trunk or Treat that was moved inside due to a very wet day! The rain turned out to be a blessing and we had about 25 people set up their trunk display in the fellowship hall. We had a steady crowd of children in costume and their parents/guardians coming for treats. Friendly Hands even set up a display and gave out fresh apples and full sized candy bars – a true partnership we enjoy supporting.

One of the goals of the coming year is to increase opportunities for children and their parents to gather at the church not only for education but also for fun activities. These extra experiences provide chances for families to forge lasting friendships. Another goal is to increase attendance and participation of involved families and to invite more

families to our midst. A big project last summer was to go through roles, and to invite any children who have been baptized here at St. Paul's and are eligible to attend. We didn't gain very many but I am happy to be the reminder to folks that Jesus loves them and we are thinking of them.

It is a privilege to share the Word of God and His Love to all of our children and adults. The members of our committee include: Casaundra Abeling, Pastor Cady, Emily Decker, May Friday, Pamela Little, Paula Rosenbeck, Michelle Skibesky, and Hannah & Cathy Winzler.

Submitted in Christian Love,  
Paula Rosenbeck, Chairperson

### **CONGREGATIONAL CARE COMMITTEE**

Last year was a quiet one for the CCC with only one family requesting meals or transportation. Seven meals were provided. Even though the committee hasn't had a lot to do, we are always looking for new volunteers. If you don't like to cook, you can provide a gift card to restaurant that delivers, so please consider joining us in service to our fellow members

### **FALL FAIR**

St. Paul's Women held a very successful seventeenth Fall Fair on Saturday, November 4th. A small group of women gathered on Wednesday afternoons to work on crafts for the Fair. We were thrilled to welcome a couple of new members to our midst. The group shares a true sisterhood through our interactions as well as our shared faith.

Lisa Bodnar and June Seiser handled the vendors last year and will do so again this year. Each space was filled by area crafters and artisans to sell their talents. This year we had several members who had displays. Application forms for Fall Fair 2024 were released on the day of the Fair and we already have several spaces reserved.

We thank God for the congregation and individuals who participate in some way by either baking, contributing to theme baskets, or simply by attending and sharing word of the Fall Fair. We had twenty-seven vendors at the Fair. Please save the date of Saturday, November 2, 2024 for our 18th fair.

Submitted in His Name,  
ST. PAUL'S WOMEN

## FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE

2023 began with our efforts being on the “Soup“er Bowl of Caring Grinder/Chef Salad/Chili sale on the day before the Super Bowl. Simultaneously we had a successful food drive to benefit Friendly Hands Food Bank. The combined efforts were very well received. I am pleased to report that we will do the same activity, this year on Saturday, February 10<sup>th</sup> with pre-ordered grinders, chef salads, and chili being offered. Pick up will be from 12-2pm that day.

In April we did a Chicken Lombardy dinner. The meal is always a popular one and we were happy to be gathering in person to be able to put the emphasis on good fellowship.

Our always popular Roast Pork Dinner was held with a great group of participants. The fellowship committee is an aging group of men and women and we would welcome the help of some younger folks but we will welcome anyone who might like to give it a whirl! Members of the fellowship committee include head cook June Seiser, Wendy Iannelli, Linda and Gary Rosa, Pam Ewing, Susan Racloz, and Karen Ness. are thrilled to have Pam Ewing and Jim Clavette join us. We always welcome more “worker bees” to help make the dinners succeed.

June Seiser, at the request of our Torrington Area Health District, spent her own time and money to take a course to be a certified food manager for our kitchen. It took several hours off course work, studying, and then a trip to West Hartford to take the proctored exam. She passed with flying colors and learned many things, some she has already used and others she will probably never use! But she did it and she is certified for the next five years.

The goal for the Fellowship Committee for the coming year is to recruit some younger and able-bodied folks who might be willing to allow members to mentor them as to what we do and how we do it to comply with the Torrington Area Health District. The reality is such that members and workers on the committee are all well into their 60's and 70's. Please speak to any member of the committee if you think you might be interested in helping.

Our first event of this current year will have already taken place on February 10<sup>th</sup>. However, we will soon be in the planning stages of our Spring Fellowship Dinner set for Saturday, April 27<sup>th</sup>. Please mark your calendar and plan to attend. As I reminded everyone at the Annual Meeting, Part 1 in December, the Fellowship Committee works very hard to host events that everyone can enjoy while at the same time benefitting the church financially. Please consider attending and supporting our efforts.

Many Blessings,  
Paula Rosenbeck



## REPORT FROM FINANCE - RECAP OF 2023

### Report from Finance - Recap of 2023

Finance committee would like to thank all the committees on doing an outstanding job holding their spending to within their budget. Below are financial highlights from the year:

2023 income was up \$19,000 or 4.9% from 2022

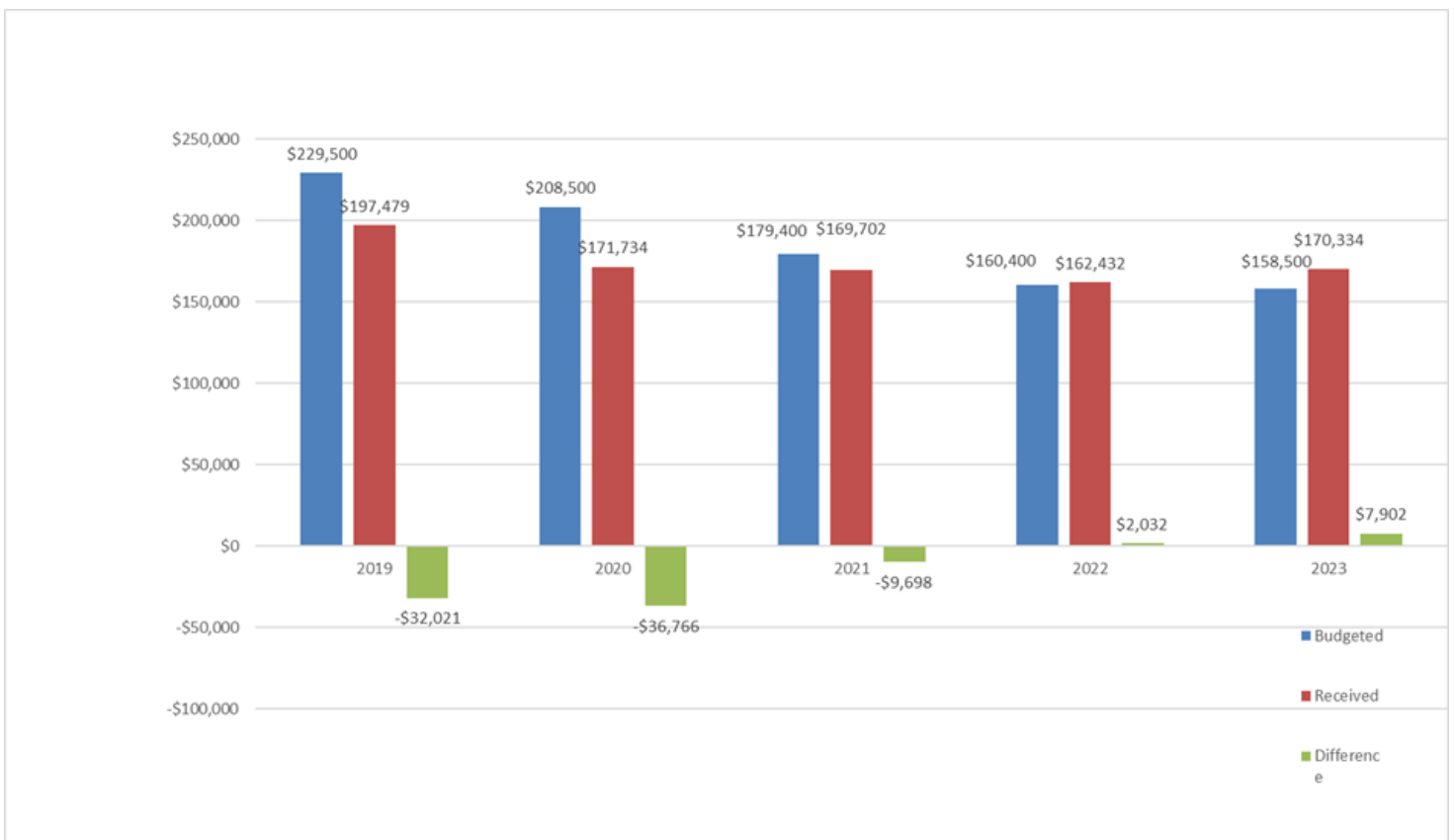
2023 expenses were down \$14,000 or 3.3% from 2022

Of the \$101,989 that was budgeted to be transferred from investments to cover the anticipated income shortfall, only \$57,287 was needed. This was primarily due to donations from Fellowship, WELCA, Puppitude, Korean Church, Farmers Market and various fund raisers such as the Beer & Wine, Car Show, Tag sale, Hilltop Spice sale, Bean Auction, Quilt Sale, and Grinder sale. We also received two generous donations from a couple of members. These amounted to an additional \$31,873 in income. The Finance committee thanks these committees and members for their generosity.

Sunday offerings and festive giving were up over budget by 7.3% and 5% from 2022

Investments are down \$19,236 (this includes the money withdrawn) from 2022

Below is graph showing our giving over the past 5 yrs.



The positive for 2023 is that we did not have to take the full budgeted amount from investments, and we exceeded our budgeted amount for giving.

Finance is committed to limiting the amount of money we need to withdrawal from Investments. This can be accomplished with our members increasing their giving by as little as \$5.00 a week, major fundraising events and a capital campaign. To be successful, we need the support of the congregation.

I want to thank the Finance Committee: Fred Rakyta, Beth Brower, Pam Ewing, Diane Boscarino and Mark Rose, along with our wonderful, dedicated and hardworking bookkeeper, Jean Schlapfer, for all their hard work, commitment, and dedication to the church and their faith in God's plan.

It is an honor and pleasure to serve as your treasurer, and I look forward to another year.

I pray you have a very blessed 2024.

God Bless,

Your sister in Christ,

Pamela Little, Treasurer

### **GARDEN OF MEMORIES**

Tai Chi loves the garden! When the weather is nice, they practice out there in all of its serenity.

The landscapers did the final fall clean-up and we purchased chair covers this year instead of moving the chairs inside. This way, weather permitting, people can sit out there and mediate or relax and re-cover the chair when leaving.

Lisa Bodnar and her crew will continue to maintain the garden and will reach out to Mike from MpM Landscapes, LLC. to do the clean ups and any bigger upkeep that is needed. On our radar for 2024: last year bumble bees decided to take up residence in the doorway under the cement. We need to get that sealed off before they come back this year.

Submitted by Lisa Bodnar

## HILLTOP ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Hilltop Advisory Committee oversees Hilltop with Pamela Little as chair, along with members Jane Yurgalevicz, Casaundra Abeling, Gabrielle Dziedzic, Ron Travis, and Michelle Skibesky. We meet the second Thursday of each month with the Hilltop Director/Head Teacher, with the exception of July and December. We have been meeting via Zoom since April of 2020.

**Hilltop Staff** – Currently we have a staff of 10. This is broken down to 5 teachers and 2 assistant teachers, 1 student teacher, 1 custodian, and a Director/Head Teacher.

**Classes** – We have two divisions in our class structure. We have a School Readiness class which is primarily State funded. The School Readiness class is for 3 and 4 year olds and has no religious orientation. School Readiness has its own set of teacher and class requirements. The Early Learning Program has a 2 year old, 3 year old/4 year old class, and a 5 day Preschool program. It is funded by student tuition. Hilltop has been fortunate enough to be able to make use of outdoor space for most of the school year, with the outdoor classroom.

**Enrollment** – Registration for the new school year begins in December. It is always a juggling act. Class sizes and staffing are dependent on enrollment.

**Continuing Education** – Throughout the school year, teachers have many opportunities for Continuing Education, both in house and out. The staff was able to participate in professional development program at KidsPlay.

**Fund Raising** – Hilltop was able to hold their annual spice sale, Bingo with a Kick, and annual art show. These funds are used for Enrichment and tuition assistance for families in need. We have been able to apply for grants to help with some of our projects. Hilltop was awarded a reimbursement for security window film from Homeland Security. We were also awarded some money to help pay for a new camera security system that is tied in with Torrington Police Department. Our director has been working tirelessly to find ways of bringing in grant monies.

Michelle Skibesky, Secretary

## IT ANNUAL REPORT

The IT committee had a busy year for 2023. We weekly live streamer our regular services online to an average of 8 devices per week. We have been informed that some of these devices watch have been coming from people in nursing homes who cannot make it to in person services. Along with the weekly streams we post the recording of the stream to our YouTube channel where we get an additional 6+ views on that video. In total we end up having over 15+ hours of watch time a week to the videos we produce. Along with providing streaming on Sunday's we support the audio system for the church. We added on this year the instrumentalist group once a month and support there needs to be able to be heard in the stream and in person.

Along with our Sunday duties we also worked on updates to the churches website. we ended up updating the churches website to better look like what people now for modern websites along with adding features and links that were missing from our old site.

In the upcoming year we plan to continue providing our services to stream on Sunday's along with helping with the church's audio needs. We are also investigating and are planning to see if it is worthwhile for us to create podcast's every week for people to be able to listen as well to the service.

We look forward to helping the church with there technology needs in the upcoming year, and welcome anyone with interest to join our committee.

Thanks,

Phillip Weingart

IT Chair

## **PASTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT**

During 2023 I did: 1 wedding; 4 baptisms; 4 confirmations, and 17 funerals. We received 2 new members.

I continue as Dean of the Naugatuck Valley Conference. At this time the only regular duty is to lead a weekly zoom text study with the clergy of the conference. We do have 2 congregations in transition, Brookfield and Oxford. As I am writing this, I just had word that Prince of Peace in Brookfield has had a positive call vote. Their new pastor will be coming sometime soon after Easter. At some point after that, I'll go down to install him.

Our ecumenical partnerships continue. We offered a Blessing of the Animals on the weekend of Earth Day. Averill Blackburn of Center UCC joined us for that event. I took part in the town Juneteenth parade attended also by 3 other clergy – Kevin Johnson of Workman AME Zion, Carrie Combs of Trinity Episcopal and Fr. Fady Kawand of St. Maron's. This year the Tuesday before Thanksgiving was hosted by Center UCC. I was one of the four worship leaders, and our choir offered an anthem. I attended the Ascension Mass at St. Maron's. I helped lead the Blue Christmas/Longest Night service hosted by the Goshen UCC. I have begun attending the monthly luncheon in Goshen of the local UCC clergy. They are a good network of colleagues.

Our two Bible studies, Tuesdays on zoom and Wednesdays in person, continue with good attendance.

I have resigned from the rotation of volunteer chaplains at Charlotte Hungerford, finding some of the late night calls to be burdensome.

Overall, I feel the ministry here is going well, and I am pleased to be part of it. I know we have some gaps in some committees, and some financial challenges, but I'm hearing mostly helpful and positive comments about both. We've received some new members, and some of those have begun to sign on to some of our efforts. There is a very good lack of any real divisive energy, with most of our members interacting in a caring and positive way with me and one another.

Let's make 2024 a banner year! Yours in Christ, Pr. Scott Cady

## PROPERTY CONGREGATIONAL REPORT

### 2023 Annual Property Committee Report

The property committee members were responsible for maintaining the church buildings and grounds. To reduce costs, we relied significantly on volunteers. Thank you to our many volunteers and the committee members, Jim Clavette, Gary Rosa, Diane Boscarino, Mark Rose, Phillip Weingart and Greg Weingart, Chair. We contracted for snow removal and lawn care. Thank you to Mountainview Landscaping for once again taking care of our property at a discounted price.

As our church ages we continue to identify the need for significant repairs. Most notably we've experienced various leaks. The skylights in the sanctuary began leaking in May. Since they were repaired many years ago, Greg Weingart climbed the roof to meet with a contractor to repair them again. Unfortunately, they determined the skylights need to be replaced and they completed a temporary repair that is already leaking again. Another trip up the roof for a second temporary leak repair is planned as soon as weather permits and the cell tower can be turned off. The skylight replacement is a significant cost that will need to be covered by the capital campaign.

Additional roof leaks over the office and conference room caused significant damage to the carpets. Thank you to Lisa Bodner for drying things out. The cost of the roof repair was covered by a warrantee and has been completed. The damaged flooring was not covered by the insurance and is also part of the 2024 capital projects campaign.

Not only are the skylights and roof leaking but also our plumbing. All the bathrooms are in need of some repair. Unfortunately, finding parts for some of the older fixtures has been a challenge and caused delays. Thank you to Jim Clavette for being on call to repair our leaking bathroom fixtures.

Sanctuary LED bulbs are burning out again. Due to the height of our sanctuary, replacing the bulbs is an expensive project that requires a lift. We have been waiting until most bulbs have burned out. They will need to be replaced this year.

Maintenance and repair items completed during 2023 included:

- Cleaning and recharging the Fellowship Hall air conditioning system
- Maintaining Office air conditioning
- Replacing the sanctuary cove lighting driver
- Adding outlets around the church
- Maintaining sticking door locks
- Cleaning roof drains

- Fall yard and parking lot clean up
- Repainting parking lot lines and adding handicapped parking (Thank you, Boscarinos)
- Trimming dead tree branches
- Repainting office door (Thank you, June Seiser)

Many hands make light work. Please join us in maintaining our church. We welcome new committee members and project volunteers. If you see a project you would like to complete or needs to be addressed, please send an email to [torringtonstpaulsproperty@gmail.com](mailto:torringtonstpaulsproperty@gmail.com) or [secretary@stpaulstorrington.com](mailto:secretary@stpaulstorrington.com).

Greg Weingart, Chair

### **SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE**

Thanks to gracious gifts over the years from members and families of St. Paul's, we were able to award 12 scholarships to members in 2023. The 2024 applications will be available in March.

### **SOCIAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE**

#### **Social Concerns Mission**

Our mission is to respond faithfully to the needs of individuals within our church and within our community.

#### **Service Projects**

We haven't met formally in over a year. We were able to assist in the delivery of meals for Thanksgiving 2023 with The Knights of Columbus in Torrington leading this project.

With our efforts, we will commit our service to our own congregation as well as the needs of the community. We are in need of more members to continue to serve as a committee.

Sincerely,  
Christine Dickinson

## SOUP KITCHEN COMMITTEE REPORT

The Soup Kitchen Committee consists of two teams:

Team #1	Team #2
Jeanette Richard	Valerie Vega
Laurie Szabo	Ignacio Vega
Leah Seleman	Pam Ewing
Tom Seleman	Bonnie Schagg
Jackie Wassik	

Subs:

Marciano, Kathy Depaoli

Karen

It is St. Paul's responsibility to serve at the Torrington Soup Kitchen, located in the basement of Trinity Church, the second Sunday of every month.

The teams arrive approximately at 10:30AM to start heating up the food, make a salad, cut up desserts, make punch and coffee. We serve between 12:00 noon and 1:00. The number of people coming in for a meal has gone up considerably over the past couple of years. I would say we serve approx. 50-60 people. After lunch we do the dishes, wipe down the tables and sweep the dining room floor and take out the garbage. We are usually out of there by 1:30.

I can't thank the members of the soup kitchen teams enough for their continued support of this much needed ministry. Unfortunately we lost a lot of members during Covid. If anyone is interested in joining us or being a substitute, please see me. The teams only serve 6 times a year for 3 hours.

Leah has brought one of our teens, Lena Warner the last couple of times we served and she really has enjoyed it. If you have a teen who would like to help, you can consider joining or subing with them.

Again, I will say we always leave there feeling so grateful for what we have in our own lives and being able to help less fortunate people in our town.

Respectfully submitted by Jeanette Richard