



**St. Paul's**  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
221 UNION ST | CARY, NC, 27511

## **St. Paul's Ministry Portfolio Questions**

Each answer to be no more than 1200 characters

### **1. Describe a moment in your worshipping community's recent ministry which you recognize as one of success and fulfillment.**

Being in relationship with others is at the [heart of St. Paul's](#). Through collaboration and learning together, we build toward a beloved community where all are valued and can flourish. Two examples illustrate this.

Internally, we celebrated a marvelous Youth Sunday service in May, including powerful reflections by two of our young people (find them [here](#) and [here](#)), with other aspects of the liturgy led by our middle and high schoolers. We continually learn from the leadership of our young people through their ongoing ministries, and Youth Sunday was a reminder of the transformative role they play among us.

Externally, our collaboration with local churches and organizations through [ONE Wake](#) contributed significantly to our Town Council's approval in April of an affordable housing project to be built down the street from St. Paul's. This work was begun by a neighbor congregation years ago, energized by the formation of ONE Wake within the county, and provides a generative opportunity for our congregation to be informed advocates who show up at organizing events and Council meetings and now are much more thoroughly engaged in issues of income inequality and housing instability.

### **2. How are you preparing yourselves for the Church of the future?**

St. Paul's leans into the things we do well and remains open to opportunities for growth. We believe God has a plan for us, in our community and beyond, and we continually work toward it.

We created an online presence for liturgical offerings during COVID thanks to our clergy, staff and dedicated volunteers. Our laity also embraced technology, leading morning prayer online each weekday, and an online option is often available for committee meetings, book groups, etc.

The words “All Are Welcome” are written above the church’s entrance, and parishioners hold those words and that Christ-like spirit among the characteristics that matter most about St. Paul’s. We continually strive, with humility, to be intentionally hospitable.

Likewise, we continue to expand beyond traditional church offerings to actively engage in community events – those we host and that other congregations and organizations make available to us – with an open invitation for movies, music, art exhibits, learning opportunities, etc. No one is asked to check their beliefs at the door or to adopt ours, but we welcome questions and try to answer them in ways we hope reflect our belief in a better future built together.

**3. Please provide words describing the gifts and skills essential to the future leaders of your worshipping community. (not a narrative, please)**

This list is in no specific order:

- Approachable, welcoming and engaging
- Strong homilist who is a theologically sound storyteller
- Spiritually grounded
- Relatable and accessible
- Excellent communicator and truth teller
- Role model for inclusivity, who embraces our belief that all are welcome
- Strong organizationally, particularly as relates to staff and church management
- Spiritual mentor to clergy and ministry staff
- Respectful and humble leader of lay volunteers
- Visionary and strategic thinker
- Successful history of growing stewardship programs
- Collaborative, internally and externally
- Sense of humor
- Trustworthy model of integrity
- Gifted practitioner of pastoral care
- Passionate and compassionate
- Realistic optimist and optimistic realist
- Willing to take the time to get to know us

#### **4. Describe your liturgical style and practice for all types of worship services provided by your community**

We are a traditional congregation with a come-as-you-are ethos. We are not a High-Church parish. The Eucharist is open to all who are baptized at three Sunday services – one Rite I and two Rite II. We have a full choir for one Rite II service and a vocal ensemble for the second. [Our music](#) is traditional with organ, and we also enjoy adult and youth handbells as well as a brass ensemble for some services.

We offer morning prayer online five days each week and weekly evening prayer in-person for Advent and Lent. We also offer special prayer services during difficult times, such as elections. Invaluable lay leadership and engagement from ministries like Altar Guild, Lectors, Eucharistic Ministers, Acolytes and Ushers [support our liturgy](#). Children's Chapel is offered weekly.

At St. Paul's, we are open to theological questions that spark deeper reflection and to practices that may be new to us, such as our recent adoption of reading the lessons in different languages during Pentecost. Excellent homilies are important to us; we have become accustomed to preaching that provides historical context and a thoughtful hermeneutic that help make the Gospel message applicable to our lives.

#### **5. How do you practice incorporating others in ministry?**

We are an active faith community with 50+ engaged ministries, living out the biblical call to be doers of the Word and not hearers only. We have a Community Connector who not only shepherds new parishioners but helps existing members explore their call within St Paul's.

We host ministry fairs twice each year so that the [important work](#) going on in the parish is on full display for those discerning where they might engage, and ministries have the opportunity to host coffee hour each week from September through May to engage in deeper conversations about their work. Our Prayers of the People highlight a different ministry each week, blessing and further elevating their work in the parish and community.

There is active lay participation in the liturgy, and our Care & Share team plays a crucial role in offering pastoral care.

Most recently, we provided leadership training to two cohorts of parishioners to encourage their skill-building for work within our ministries but also within the wider Cary area, recognizing that providing people additional support within our walls and outside of them builds a stronger community for all.

## **6. As a worshipping community, how do you care for your spiritual, emotional and physical well-being?**

Beyond Sunday offerings and morning prayer, we have a vibrant formation program that serves [children, youth](#) and [adults](#). We offer online and in-person book groups on a variety of subjects.

Our lay-led Care & Share ministry provides transportation, meals and other support to parishioners in times of personal stress, and several parishioners are active in Cursillo. Our Rainbow Gathering ministry provides a supportive, inclusive community for our LGBTQIA+ siblings, families, friends and allies.

We most recently reengaged in the practice of hosting small groups. When our parishioners expressed a desire to know each other better – including people who found us during lockdown – we were able to launch our first seven groups of more than 80 people total who are spending this summer engaged in spiritual and relational work together.

Opportunities to connect also take place in larger settings, like our parish picnic and [Lobster Fest](#), which are all-hands-on-deck, intergenerational events which we have been blessed to resume post lockdown. And we also recognize that our service together through outreach ministries creates generative spaces for personal spiritual and emotional growth.

## **7. How do you engage in pastoral care for those beyond your worshipping community?**

Our faith community counts [outreach ministries](#) as central to our parish charism, the embodiment of our commitment to being Christ's hands and feet. Along with others already mentioned, our refugee ministry has been in place for 10 years, walking with families from Afghanistan, Somalia, El Salvador and other countries.

Each summer, youth and adult volunteers serve with [Appalachia Service Project](#), making homes warmer, safer and drier. St. Paul's plays a key role in [Dorcas](#)

[Ministries](#), a community services hub supporting the wider area. At Christmas, we partner with local organizations [to provide gifts](#) for children of families with limited financial means.

Through [Rise Against Hunger](#), we offer meal-packing events that are a hands-on intergenerational service project and an opportunity for learning about global food insufficiency. We have supported the [Episcopal Farmworker Ministry](#) in the Diocese of East Carolina for decades. Our youth also travel to Newton Grove to engage with the ministry and the children of families it serves. We have annually participated in Habitat for Humanity with other parishes from our diocese in the Episcopal Build.

#### **8. Describe your worshipping community's involvement in either the wider Church or geographical region.**

We've described our commitment to Cary and the wider community through Dorcas, ONE Wake and other partners, ways we are living out our recognition that faith without works is dead.

We also offer a robust Vacation Bible Camp each summer which, like [our preschool](#), is open to all.

In addition, our work with the Episcopal Farmworker Ministry, the Habitat Episcopal Build and Cursillo connect us with the diocese. Our youth participate in diocesan events, and we have parishioners who are active with diocesan-level committees and ministries and who participate in trainings and formation activities offered by the diocese and The Episcopal Church.

In the last five years, we have had four young people formed at St. Paul's take part in an Episcopal Service Corps year and one in a Young Adult Service Corps year, and we support the [Raleigh Episcopal Campus Ministry](#) in a variety of ways, including through board membership. We have also been supportive of the [Pauli Murray Center for History and Social Justice](#) and have enlisted their help with training and retreats.

**9. Tell about a ministry that your worshipping community has initiated in the past five years. Who can be contacted about this?**

The murder of George Floyd catalyzed a conversation about more fully engaging the parish in racial justice. A group of parishioners decided to offer an online book study of “Waking Up White” which we assumed would attract a dozen people or so. We ended up offering four online groups and having to turn some people away because of the level of interest. We had engaged around racial justice before, but it had been sporadic. From those initial book groups, the [Racial Justice Planning Group \(RJPG\)](#) took shape, and five years later has offered more than 20 book studies, an ongoing movie discussion group around justice themes, guest speakers, and trips to racial justice historical sites around the state.

In 2024, we hosted the iconographer [Kelly Latimore](#) for an exhibit, workshop, panel discussion and adult formation. All events were open to the public. St. Paul’s was the first and remains the only community host for [Racial Equity Institute](#) training in Cary, for which RJPG has received endowment support for scholarships to our parishioners and to members of area congregations as we work to deeply root anti-racism in our own church and in our wider community. Contact [tadrichard@gmail.com](mailto:tadrichard@gmail.com).

**10. What is your practice of stewardship and how does it shape the life of your worshipping community?**

We offer our gifts to God through time, talent and treasure, all of those being part of how we live into community and provide for our shared commitments and responsibilities.

Stewardship is very much a whole community effort. Our annual campaign usually takes place in the fall. No single family gives more than 3% of our operating budget; the average annual pledge is between \$3000 and \$4000.

Our parishioners respond generously when specific special needs arise. Our recent Hermano Day – which supports the Episcopal Farmworker Ministry – raised \$18,000 to help replace mattresses in farmworker camps this spring.

We have a relatively new [endowment](#) that contributes to small, non-operating expenses, like one-time events and programs, non-recurring outreach projects, improvements to the grounds, and enhancements to the nursery. Our most recent

capital campaign was completed in 2019 and provided for the renovation of our parish hall and kitchen, among other projects.

We recognize that we are blessed with incredible generosity, and that there is also room for growth. A larger budget would allow us to do more and deepen our ability to respond to internal and external needs.

**11. What is your worshipping community's experience of conflict? And how have you addressed it?**

Points of tension that have emerged at St. Paul's are sometimes related to money, including donors who have wanted to direct significant contributions to the church but wanted their gifts used in ways that did not align with the parish's planning or vision.

Every effort was made to work collaboratively so that the donor's wishes and the plans of the parish were met while engendering a deeper sense of stewardship beyond directing a gift.

Sometimes, this resulted in flexibility within the donor's generosity. In other cases, it required extending a stewardship or capital campaign when that gift was decreased or withdrawn. Regardless, efforts were always made to remain in relationship with the donor.

The ordination of Bishop Gene Robinson was also a moment of conflict that could have led to fracture but, in our parish, set the stage for our embrace of "All Are Welcome." Our clergy created a "big table" for conversation, where all could be heard in loving ways.

Although some parishioners departed, the vast majority stayed. We continue to live out the lessons from that season in the life of St. Paul's as we continually strive to see the face of God in everyone who walks through our doors.

**12. What is your experience leading/addressing change in the church? When has it gone well? When has it gone poorly? And what did you learn?**

COVID brought about substantial changes. We'd never had an online presence for services, but the response of clergy, staff and lay volunteers showed us that we

could pivot and innovate. Our offering of a streamed service continues and has expanded our vision for community.

Our decisions aligned with diocesan and scientific advice. A committee was formed within the parish to advise on the specific needs of St. Paul's. Good communication proved vital as the vestry reached out to every parishioner by phone, and meetings and gatherings shifted to Zoom. Staff made the necessary adjustments in areas from finance to music; all have since reported feeling united and supported in their work as they collaborated with clergy and laity.

Not everyone agreed with our response to lockdown, including when we returned in-person with a mask requirement and additional care around distribution of the Eucharist. Efforts were made by clergy and laity to maintain contact with individuals in ways that were caring but firm in respecting scientific guidance. Sadly, some parishioners left. Their departures were mourned alongside recognition of our responsibilities as part of a wider community.

**Additional Question (No character limit. Please answer in narrative form)**

**What are the desired qualities you are looking for in your new priest?**

In preparing this profile, the Search Committee spoke with more than 150 people – parishioners, staff, and leaders in the wider community. We held special sessions to hear from groups whose opinions are sometimes drowned out in larger settings – our youth and parishioners of color – and we offered an online, written option to provide greater accessibility. Our process was both broad and deep, reflecting our commitment to inclusivity. When we say “all are welcome” at St. Paul's, we mean it, and our next rector must be equally invested in that belief.

In addition, we seek a priest who is an excellent homilist, preaching sermons that are both theologically sound and accessible. Our parishioners like to learn from, laugh at and be deeply challenged by the sermons we hear. Our next rector's words need to speak to the moment, providing wise insight, historical grounding, and hope, but never cheap grace. Pop culture and sports references are also welcome with extra credit given for preaching that reflects an understanding of local college athletics.

We seek someone who will partner with clergy colleagues, staff and laity in ways that are respectful, empowering but also provide strategic vision – a servant



leader who encourages everyone to pursue their gifts and calling and who has the humility to value and respect the expertise of others.

In our conversations with congregational and organizational leaders in the community, we also recognize that they value St. Paul's leadership on crucial issues affecting our siblings beyond our church walls; we would expect our next rector to continue active engagement with the community, other congregations and organizations, and the diocese.

Our next rector should be unabashedly justice minded and excited to help us build on our commitment to welcoming all by growing an ever-more diverse congregation. Our ministries of outreach and inreach are core to our community, and our next rector should be excited about helping them continue and flourish. Our parishioners value pastoral care, and our next rector should be prepared to lead a team of laity and clergy who excel in that area.

We expect a commitment to our children, youth and young families as well as to members of long-standing who have sustained and grown St. Paul's from a mission church that got its start in the local high school band room. We also seek a rector who will help us demonstrate our commitment to providing a safe and engaging faith community for people in their 20s and 30s who are seeking spiritual rootedness but may not be actively churched.

We want a rector who is comfortable being their most authentic, joyful self among us. We seek a leader who understands genuine self-care and models it for our staff and congregation. We want them to be warm and approachable, have a marvelous sense of humor (our congregation likes to laugh together!), and a heartfelt excitement in building relationships. As a community, we have mourned the departure in less than a year of three beloved clergy. All have gone on to well-deserved, generative new seasons. We miss them while looking forward to what we will build with our next rector. We are proud of who we are at St. Paul's, and we want to continue that forward thinking mindset as we seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbors as ourselves.

We recognize the need and potential for growth in stewardship, and our next rector should have skills in educating and leading around how our parishioners engage with giving. Members of the staff and congregation have big dreams for

what we can accomplish together with an increased budget through a more expansive philosophy of fiscal engagement, and we want a rector who can lead us into this next phase of financial sustainability with an empowering sense of abundance.

We pray for someone who experiences God's call to be with us as strongly as we do to welcome them.