

A large, light gray, stylized graphic of a church steeple is centered in the background. It features a tall, thin spire at the top, a square tower with an arched window, a wider trapezoidal section with a smaller arched window, and a gabled roof with a semi-circular base.

ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

2018 ANNUAL REPORT

Meeting Date: January 27, 2019

100 Chapel St.
Portsmouth, NH 03801
603-436-8283
www.stjohnsnh.org

Meeting Date: January 27, 2019

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

- **Section One: CLERK’S REPORT: 2018 Annual Meeting Minutes**
- **Section Two: RECTOR’S REPORT**
- **Section Three: SENIOR WARDEN’S REPORT**
- **Section Four: TREASURER’S KEY MESSAGES**
- **Section Five: ASSOCIATE RECTOR’S REPORT**
- **Section Six: CURATE’S REPORT**
- **Section Seven: MUSIC AND LITURGY**
- **Section Eight: CHILDREN’S MUSIC AND MINISTRIES**
- **Section Nine: COMMITTEES AND MINISTRIES**

SECTION ONE: CLERK’S REPORT-2018 Annual Meeting Minutes
--

Minutes from Annual Meeting, January 21, 2018

John Tabor opened the meeting at 9am and asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the January, 2017 Annual Meeting.

Anna Kay Vorsteg moved to approve 2017 minutes. Peter Rice seconded. All voted to approve.

Ellie Sanderson, John Bolduc and Jeff Croteau are the three nominees for vestry to replace out-going members Suzi Raeside, Chris Sieve, and the position vacated by John Tabor when he became the senior warden. Margaret Sofio made a motion to approve the slate & Suzi Raeside seconded. All voted to approve the slate. Congratulations Ellie, John and Jeff and welcome to the vestry of St. John’s!

John raised a bottle of wine made this fall by Nathan, members of the youth group and volunteers at St. John’s - he feels it is a symbol of what can happen when we move beyond the walls of the church and do adventurous, new things. Wine making uses good ingredients, a blending process and an aging process to produce a successful product. Making the wine from our own grapes symbolizes how we use something we already have (grapes) to create something new (wine), a sustainable and organic process.

Senior Warden Numbers: John Tabor shared some significant numbers in the life of our community in 2017:

Plus One: We called our full-time curate Nathan Bourne, filling our gap in the youth programming, and enhancing all aspects of our parish life and ministry;

\$1.4 million: At the completion of a feasibility study for the Capital Campaign, we learned that \$1.4 million is an appropriate goal for us to target based on our parish survey;

Minus \$21K: Our 2018 budget is balanced based on our pledge predictions, which include an increase in pledge

participation; we are currently reaching out to 2017 pledgers, asking them to fulfill their pledges to close the \$21K gap in pledges; Last year at this time we reported a \$19K surplus

Plus \$37K: This figure reflects the increase in parking revenue received from our upper lot kiosk in 2017 thanks to the creativity of Gerry Simpkins, junior warden. Way to go Gerry!

We had a number of one time expenses this year that Kelly will explain in her treasurer report. We also will receive a full year of parking revenue thanks to the installation of the kiosk outlined above.

Treasurer Report: Kelly Boston:

2017 continued to be a good year for St. John's fiscal health. We officially changed our financial system to QuickBooks from an older antiquated system. The change in the system has had many benefits but specifically, quicker and efficient month end closes for Michelle, our Bookkeeper, and an ease of use/review for both me and our external auditors. During 2017, we had a successful external audit of the 2016 financials by our 3rd party auditor. Although we have had compilation engagements over the past few years, it has been many years since we had a full audit engagement.

2017 Operating Revenue & Expenses

We had unanticipated revenue, but higher unanticipated expenses resulting in an operating deficit this year of \$21.6K. If past patterns hold, we will recoup an additional \$5-10K this month after our annual notification of incomplete pledges. A detailed Profit & Loss Statement is on our St. John's website.

Revenue Summary:

2017 revenue totaled \$831K, about \$31K more than budget. About 70% of our income was from offerings: Pledge, Plate and other gifts. This is down from prior years. The pledge commitment was \$514K, of which, \$502K has been received prior to end of year, a shortfall of \$12K. It is not too late to get your 2017 pledges in as it will help decrease our deficit.

Metered parking for the Upper Lot is new in 2017 and has proven to be successful. We have been receiving income since April, this income accounts for 5.9% or \$48.9K of total operating income. This income has offsetting expenses such as income and property tax leaving a net impact of approximately \$35K. Thank you, Gerry, for all the great work as it relates to the Upper Lot!!

This year, we have also received contributions of \$13.4K for our Landscaping Project – this completely offsets the total costs of the Landscape project which has beautified our property.

A table detailing revenue is included in her report.

Expense Summary:

2017 expenses totaled \$853K, about \$53K more than budget. Our largest category of expense is people: Clergy and Lay staff. With our new “Seacoast Youth” curate, Nathan, we are finally fully staffed. Our curate position is partly funded by St. Andrews and the Diocese. I know personally as a mother of a young son, I am super excited that Nathan has joined our community. My son brings up Nathan in our conversations outside of church, so I know he already looks up to him.

This is the first time in several years we have been fully staffed to support our programs, care and outreach. The excitement and mission of this church shows not only within but “off the hill” as well.

A table detailing expenses is included in her report.

As mentioned in the revenue section, we have offsetting expenses for income and property taxes, approximately \$10K for the year. We are now responsible for property taxes for the upper lot and we have a provision for income tax expense as it related to the metered lot income.

Essentially we managed within our budget however there were unforeseen one-time expenses which are included in the summary above but explained a bit more below:

- Landscaping Project \$13K (this is offset in revenue)
- Additional \$5.6K of audit expenses (due to the original estimate/scope of audit)
- Outreach \$5K for our prior commitment to the Portsmouth African Burial Ground
- Additional maintenance & repairs of \$10K which include unplanned repairs for gas leaks, radiator, and masonry.
- IRS penalty of \$2.4K for the 2014 1099 late filing

2018 Operating Budget

The Vestry is pleased to announce that we have approved a balanced 2018 Operating Budget of \$877K. Our pledge goal of \$540K is our assumption for the budget. As of yesterday, we have made great progress with pledges from 246 families totaling \$502K. I am happy to share that the average pledge has increased from \$1,900 to \$2,100 this year, nearly 11%. We have 71 families who have answered our request to increase their pledge year over year and we have 28 new families who have pledged.

Thank you very much for your continued generosity!! Of course it is never too late to pledge for those who have not yet committed. Please help us in any way to meet or exceed our goal of \$540K.

Kelly communicated that a table detailing 2018 revenue is included in her report.

Notable budget assumptions for revenue include:

- Pledges of \$540K against a commitment of \$500K as of Jan 16, 2018.
- Funding from both St. Andrews (\$20K) and the Diocese (\$15K) partially offsetting the curate expense
- 4.5% endowment draw (of the rolling 3-year average balance) for operations per policy
- An increase for parking donations/passes of which may have been received already.

Kelly communicated that a table detailing 2018 expense is included in her report.

Notable budget assumptions for expenses include:

- Full staff to support programs, care and outreach, and a modest adjustment for clergy and staff to keep compensation competitive and recognize merit. Also includes an increase for health insurance.
- Full year impact of our Seacoast Curate (Nathan joined us in July 2017)
- Includes our contribution to the work of the Episcopal Church in NH
- Maintains funding, at 2017 budget rates, for our facility upkeep and repairs to address urgent needs.
- Income & Property taxes related to our newer revenue source “Metered Parking”

We budget to “breakeven” as a non-profit organization and manage our budget as close to that as possible. As a reminder, we have other important programs not part of the operating budget but the mission of St. John’s includes Common Table and Choir school. These programs are self funding.

In Summary, 2017 was another good year despite the shortfall in our pledges and our one-time unusual expenses. We have operated with prudence for the past several years and 2018 will be no different. I am extremely excited about this coming year as we have a reasonable budget and a full staff that supports our mission. I look forward to getting to know more of you personally as we come together in future cottage meetings, church dinners and family events.

Stewardship Report:

Carol Gruen spoke about gratitude & hospitality and listed a variety of activities that comprise stewardship that our community relies on parishioners to perform each day, week and month, including but not limited to coffee hour volunteers, people who take home linens from the church & Thaxter Hall that need to be washed, Common Table servers and many more

Meg Moran shared data related to financials:

246 pledgers as of today

\$502k pledged so far with the average pledge increased by 11%.

28 new pledging families with modest attrition, which we

experience every year due to people's changes in circumstance, moving away or passing on. We have work to do and hope to conclude 2017 pledge cleanup efforts soon and are reaching out to those who pledged in 2017 who have not yet pledged for 2018.

A thank you from the Stewardship team goes out to: Joanne Ferguson, John Tabor, Lee Baxter, Chris Sieve, Suzi Raeside & Randy Carey, who stepped up to canvass during the fall campaign.

Carol added at the end that in the spirit of gratitude and hospitality, a parish-wide dinner will be served in Thaxter Hall on on the Sunday before Ash Wednesday, which is February 11th, AKA "Shrove Sunday (instead of Tuesday!)" Bob and Sue Nalewjak will be our hosts again and ask you to **SAVE THE DATE!**

The Stewardship Team extends a hearty Thank you to all of you who have pledged, and thank in advance those who have not yet pledged! We need your participation at every level to keep St. John's vibrant.

Capital Campaign/Building Committee foreshadowing: Joe Weir said that the theme of our survey for the capital campaign was resoundingly: **Accessibility.** Safety/preservation issues - electric, fire protection/suppression, roof replacement are issues that need attention or will be required to be brought up to code when we begin to make improvements to the buildings. Creating vibrant, accessible space is the goal. It is hoped that upgrading wiring & lighting in Thaxter Hall and giving it a fresh, updated look will enable us to rent the space to outside organizations to use. As a space in the middle of downtown that has parking, it is a huge asset that could be a bigger revenue producer for the church.

The connector & elevator are the large items identified to achieve accessibility for the church. After preliminary ideas were shared about the design of a connecting space, many people expressed concern about the primary use of glass. The vestry discussed holding a charrette at a date to be determined in March. Stay tuned for an announcement. This would be an opportunity for members of the community to offer feedback to the building committee about what we would all envision as an appropriate design. Please stay tuned for more details about this.

Buildings & Grounds Report: Gerry Simpkins: An energy audit has determined that there are a number of things we can do to increase energy efficiency in our buildings. Insulation and an extended heating system in loft area would help keep temperatures more constant in the winter months. Programmable thermostats are not appropriate for the size of our space because too much energy is required to restore comfortable temperatures when the heat has been turned down at times of disuse. Gerry and others are obtaining bids to address these issues and will report out in more detail as numbers come in.

Capital Campaign Recap: John Tabor: In 2018 we want to get a design consensus & move forward w/ the capital campaign. We continue to

diversify revenue sources. Kiosks, metered parking, Thaxter Hall rental and a broader pledging base are strategies that we seek to realize. Dinners for parents of youth in the fall & parish-wide dinners have and can continue to help increase our connectedness as a community.

Questions from parishioners:

Anne Tarlton mentioned the need for a maintenance schedule for the exterior of the church - parking lot, plants, spring/fall cleanup, monthly weeding schedule etc. She emphasized the importance of maintaining the hardscape and landscape resources we have already invested in. The need for this was acknowledged and will be discussed as part of the bldgs/grnds process and committee work. A single person might be able to take charge of organizing a group of volunteers to do this work on a schedule.

Ed Lowry asked whether it is expected that the various building projects outlined will be done in phases, and what can be done to hasten the start time of capital projects. Also, can information about the cost of individual projects be published?

John affirmed that these projects will likely be completed over a 5-7 year period, including roof replacement, electrical renovation in the church and Thaxter Hall, plumbing upgrades and eventually the connector and other elements that will enhance accessibility. He also said that individual project costs are in the feasibility study, which can be sent out again.

Peter Tarlton asked about loan-based financing as a way to hasten the beginning of some of these projects, and John was clear that although this is possible and was done for the parking lot in part, that this is not our first choice.

Chris Kozak asked about the availability of grant funding. John made it clear that we seek opportunities for grant funding for the renovation and restoration of historic structures and if anyone in the parish knows of a person with grant writing experience, this would be helpful.

There was a plea to re-institute the use of name tags at coffee hour since we are a large and growing and changing community and it is difficult if you come from a distance or attend periodically to remember people's names.

There was also a request from Bertha Rocray to publish monthly summaries of the vestry minutes for the newsletter so that the parish can be apprised of things going on at church.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Sieve, vestry member, acting clerk in Marian Ellis's absence for the annual meeting St. John's Church

SECTION ONE: RECTOR'S REPORT

Dear St. John's,

This year has been one of incredible vitality and action. We have as a community lived the proverb that Anne Williamson has taught us, "When you Pray...Move your feet!" The activity is impressive at SJC with Thaxter Hall serving 1,000 people a week. Common Table continues its amazing ministry and our Choir School is thriving. We went on a Parish Wide retreat with over 80 people and it was such a success that we will do it again this coming year. Our budgets are balanced and we are coming down the home stretch of a capital campaign that will protect our beloved church building and provide access for all people to enter and participate. This is all incredibly good news!

The key ingredient in all this goodness is you...people! It is all about community and relationships and finding ways that we can simply be together to learn, to love and to serve God in and throughout the seacoast and beyond. We are far from perfect, but I have witnessed a Joy and a Trust that allows wonderful ministry to happen. We do not always agree with one another, but our mutual respect and affection for one another leads the way. This is the Gospel of Jesus Christ at work!

Please pray with me that we will not rest in our success. Pray with me with me that we will continue to seek out ministry to serve the least, the lost and the last. Pray with me that we will continue to strive to be a loving community that welcomes ALL no matter where one might be on their journey. Pray with me that will continue to Pray...AND Move our feet!

Faithfully, your rector,
The Rev. Robert E. Stevens, Jr.

SECTION THREE: SENIOR WARDEN'S REPORT

It has been a joy and privilege to serve St. John's for a third year as Senior Warden. Financially, we will finish the year in the best shape in my memory. Not only do we project an \$40,000 surplus. St. John's was buoyed by \$133,000 of parking revenue as well as record pledge income of \$540,000. It was only seven years ago that our pledge level was \$399,000 and our parking revenue around \$40,000. Your generosity has enabled us to do more outreach, operate for a second year fully staffed, increase our youth programs, music programs and more. You helped make St. John's more vital than ever. We officially began our Connected in Christ capital campaign to transform our buildings. We were overjoyed to finish the quiet phase of the campaign this summer at \$1.1mm or 61% of our goal of \$1.6mm, including one more major gift than we anticipated in our feasibility study. But on the flip side, we are only at 50% participation as a parish, and so our work continues. If we achieve the same participation in the capital campaign as our annual pledging, we will exceed our goal!

Our campaign will not only allow us to be good stewards of what we have, but renew and improve our "church on the hill" for exciting new programs of work. Our improvements consist of

- \$352,000 to **protect our historic sanctuary** by replacing our 38-year-old roof, updating electrical and plumbing and improving our heating plant.
- \$527,000 to **provide accessibility** using a connector between Thaxter Hall and the sanctuary. We now have specifications on an elevator from the ground level to the connector that can be included in this campaign, and enable people of all abilities to come to church together.

- \$325,000 to update **Thaxter Hall** with new lighting and ceiling, storage, stage repairs and new windows.

Thanks to all who participated in the discussions about our connector – thanks to your input, we have a design that blends old and new that we can all feel good about. In October, we launched the full campaign by linking hands in the space the connector will occupy in the future. If you were there, you know it was “electric!”

Our success so far is due to the work of our campaign chair Chris Sieve, Lizzie Bristow and the volunteers who have met with their fellow parishioners about the campaign. They are Andy Bangs, Lacey Bangs, Art Parrott, Barry Heckler, Bertha Rocray, Brad Lown, Chris Kozak, Dede Heckler, Elaine Wilson, Ellie Sanderson, Jimmy Dean, Joe Weir, John Bolduc, Kelly Boston, Chuck Silva, Meg Moran, Margaret Sofio, Meg Moran, Peter Rice, Peter Tarlton, Randy Carey, Rick Barnhardt, Neely Barnhardt, Rick Considine, Tom Baker, Shawn Bristow, Maggie Skafidas, and Tom Gruen. Suzi Raeside was a wonderful campaign coordinator staying in touch with our volunteers. Well done all!

This year, the Common Table team took initiative to improve our maintenance in Thaxter Hall. Barry Heckler, Reggie Baird and Neely Barnhardt worked with Gerry Simpkins to create a detailed maintenance program for the kitchen and parish hall documented complete with procedures and contacts. And best of all, they all pitched in to do the work! Please thank them for this contribution and our vestry continues to follow up on it.

Also this year we realized a dream of a parish-wide retreat. Nearly 100 of us gathered at Camp Merrowvista on a gorgeous September weekend. We hiked, kayaked, sang around a campfire, worshipped, reflected and deepened our ties to one another. We had newborns and eighty-year-olds. Meals were joyous. It was a wonderful time and if you missed it, sign up for this fall’s retreat!

I once again want to thank Gerry Simpkins. He is the exemplar of Benjamin Franklin’s maxim that “well done is better than well said.” He secured an additional parking arrangement for our lower lot and has delivered maintenance and improvements too numerous to count. He does so with good leadership and good humor. I also want to thank Kelly Boston our treasurer, who works smoothly with our parish bookkeeper Michelle Karcher and provides us “accurate and timely information with a smile” and insights into not just what the numbers say, but “what they really say.”

In 2019, we want to complete our fundraising for both annual pledges and capital campaign, and begin the permitting and design process for our buildings, and replace our roof. Our vestry will continue to support our clergy and staff, and continue to support all the ways we love and learn together at St. John’s.

John Tabor, Senior Warden

SECTION FOUR: TREASURER’S KEY MESSAGES

2018 was a great year for St. John’s fiscal health. Implementing QuickBooks during 2017 proved to be a great benefit to the business side of church. This year, we continue to close the books in a timely manner allowing me to present monthly financials to our Vestry. During 2018, we had a successful compilation of the 2017 financials by our auditors Plodzick & Sanderson Professional Association from Concord, NH. We will schedule a review of our 2018 financials and a full audit engagement will be scheduled for 2020 financials. We operate on a 3 year rotating cycle; compilation, review, full audit.

2018 Operating Revenue & Expenses

Our Profit and Loss statement is quite strong this year. We are projecting a \$40,000 surplus. A detailed “line” item report of 2018 revenue & expenses is posted on the St. John’s website, www.stjohnsnh.org, in the Archives section. Once financials are reviewed by our auditors the vestry will take a vote on the surplus and determine how best to use. We may pay down principal balance of our Parking Lot loan from the Diocese or simply return it to our Endowment.

Revenue Summary:

2018 operating revenue totaled \$926K, about \$113K more than budget. About 66% of our income was from offerings: Pledge, Plate and other gifts. The pledge budget was \$540K, of which, \$557K has been received prior to end of year which is great!

Metered parking continues to be successful and a strong revenue stream. I would suggest we have premium parking opportunity in the heart of downtown. This program started in April of 2017 and allows us to continue to fund and grow our mission. Metered Parking income accounts for 14.7% or \$136.3K of total operating income. This income has offsetting expenses such as income and property tax leaving a net impact of approximately \$108K.

Facility usage has nearly doubled this year bringing in revenue of \$12K. Imagine the revenue opportunities once Thaxter Hall is renovated.

In the table below, you will find the operating revenue, by category, for 2018 compared to our 2018 budget including a comment explaining the variance:

Revenue Category	Actual 2018	% of Total	Budget 2018	% of Total	Act vs Bud Variance		Comments on Variances
					\$	%	
Pledge Offerings	\$ 556,740	60.2%	\$ 540,000	66.5%	\$ 16,740	3.1%	Strong pledges, goal \$540K, initial commitment \$526.1K
Metered Parking	\$ 136,282	14.7%	\$ 65,000	8.0%	\$ 71,282	109.7%	Great parking revenue
Parking Donations / Passes	\$ 70,003	7.6%	\$ 64,919	8.0%	\$ 5,084	7.8%	
Plate Offerings	\$ 59,103	6.4%	\$ 57,000	7.0%	\$ 2,103	3.7%	Slightly stronger plate revenue
Grants	\$ 36,872	4.0%	\$ 35,000	4.3%	\$ 1,872	5.3%	DGF not budgeted but received annually
Program & Outreach Reimbursement	\$ 35,632	3.8%	\$ 33,767	4.2%	\$ 1,865	5.5%	
Facility Usage	\$ 12,124	1.3%	\$ 6,000	0.7%	\$ 6,124	102.1%	Greater usage than anticipated
Prior Year Pledges	\$ 7,300	0.8%	\$ -	0.0%	\$ 7,300		
Investment Income	\$ 3,968	0.4%	\$ 3,512	0.4%	\$ 456	13.0%	
Ground & Organ Fund	\$ 3,766	0.4%	\$ 3,000	0.4%	\$ 766	25.5%	
Economy Shop & Other	\$ 3,756	0.4%	\$ 4,238	0.5%	\$ (482)	-11.4%	Shop closed for a few months during 2018
Total Operating Revenue	\$ 925,546	100%	\$ 812,436	100.0%	\$ 113,110	13.9%	
Endowment Draw	\$ 55,000		\$ 65,000				
Total Op Revenue & Endowment Draw	\$ 980,546		\$ 877,436				

Expense Summary:

2018 expenses totaled \$885K, about \$8K more than budget. Our largest category of expense is people: Clergy and Lay staff. Although we had a few changes in lay staff, we continue to be fully staffed. This has allowed us to support our programs, care and outreach. The excitement and mission of this church shows not only within but “off the hill” as well. Our curate position is partly funded by both St. Andrews and the Diocese during 2018 and will only be partially funded by St. Andrews during 2019.

In the table below, you will find the operating expenses, by category, for 2018 compared to our 2018 budget including a comment explaining the variance:

Expense Category	Actual 2018	% of Total	Budget 2018	% of Total	Act vs Bud Variance		Comments on Variances
					\$	%	
Personnel	\$ 564,151	63.7%	\$ 557,309	63.5%	\$ (6,842)	-1.2%	
Building & Grounds	\$ 116,940	13.2%	\$ 90,428	10.3%	\$ (26,512)	-29.3%	Unfavorable expenses due to boiler repairs
Diocesan Pledge	\$ 94,721	10.7%	\$ 112,812	12.9%	\$ 18,091	16.0%	Credit in 2018 actuals related to prior year over payment
Administrative Offices	\$ 32,648	3.7%	\$ 36,391	4.1%	\$ 3,743	10.3%	2018 CPA Compilation less than budgeted
Income Taxes	\$ 20,488	2.3%	\$ 16,407	1.9%	\$ (4,081)	-24.9%	2018 actual reflection of higher parking revenue
Music	\$ 18,558	2.1%	\$ 23,161	2.6%	\$ 4,603	19.9%	Spent less than anticipated
Insurance	\$ 15,155	1.7%	\$ 16,023	1.8%	\$ 868	5.4%	
Adult/Children/Youth Programs	\$ 9,104	1.0%	\$ 8,300	0.9%	\$ (804)	-9.7%	Children's musical program expense higher than anticipated
Property Taxes	\$ 7,706	0.9%	\$ 7,594	0.9%	\$ (112)	-1.5%	
Outreach	\$ 5,023	0.6%	\$ 6,500	0.7%	\$ 1,477	22.7%	Spent less than anticipated
Worship	\$ 1,029	0.1%	\$ 2,511	0.3%	\$ 1,482	59.0%	
All Other	\$ 290	0.0%	\$ -	0.0%	\$ (290)	#DIV/0!	
Total Operating Expenses	\$ 885,813	100.0%	\$ 877,436	100%	\$ (8,377)	-1.0%	

As mentioned in the revenue section, we have offsetting expenses for income and property taxes, approximately \$28K for the year. We are responsible for property taxes for the upper lot and we have a provision for income tax expense as it related to the metered lot income.

Essentially we managed within our budget however there were unforeseen one-time expenses which are included in the summary above but explained a bit more below:

- Personnel includes relocation expense due to lay staff turnover.
- Additional maintenance & repairs of \$25K which include unplanned repairs to the boiler and the boiler room and a maintenance program for Thaxter Hall.

Offsetting these one-time expense are favorable variances related the lower expected expense for our audit compilation and we received a credit from the diocese for pledge due to an overpayment in a prior year.

Endowment (Long-Term Investment Funds)

Our endowment balance as of December 31st is \$1,338,626. We took one authorized withdrawal for operations during 2018 and held it in our savings for cash flow purposes. This year's withdrawal was for \$65,000 of which \$10,000 remains in our Capital One savings account. Below is a summary of our endowment over the past 5 years:

Endowment Values Last 5 Years					
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Starting Balance	\$1,623,651	\$ 1,576,149	\$1,387,368	\$1,439,025	\$1,493,929
Growth	\$78,888	(\$41,076)	\$105,657	\$120,404	(\$90,303)
Withdrawals: Operating	(\$62,390)	(\$60,000)	(\$64,000)	(\$68,000)	(\$65,000)
Withdrawals: Tebbetts	(\$65,000)	(\$121,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0
Gifts	\$1,000	\$20,000	\$10,000	\$2,500	\$0
Tebbetts Gift	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-
Ending Balance	\$1,576,149	\$1,387,368	\$1,439,025	\$1,493,929	\$1,338,626

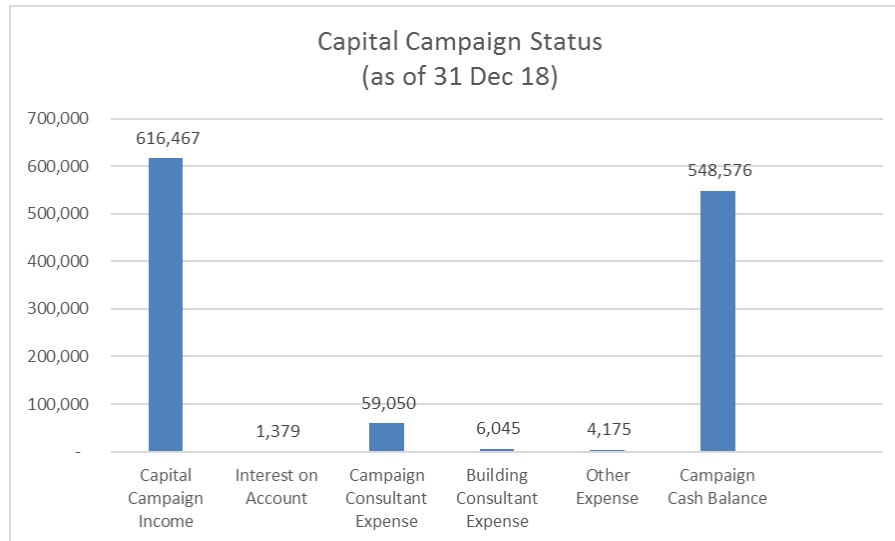
Our Investment Committee met on January 11, 2019 to review the portfolio, discuss the current investment environment and consider any potential changes to our current holdings and/or approach. It was agreed that the portfolio as currently constructed remains well diversified and we are satisfied with how it has performed over the past ten years.

We would like to recognize that the work of our Investment Committee: John Hebert, Sandra Pagel and Gerry Simpkins is highly valued and appreciated.

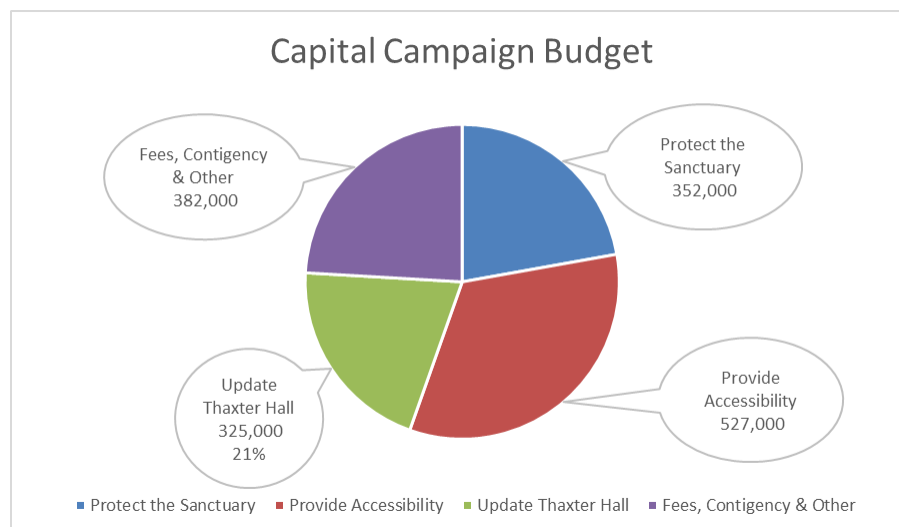
2018 Capital Campaign Revenue & Expenses

This is the first year for us to report on our Connected in Christ capital campaign. We are overjoyed to report that we have commitments of \$1.3 Mio from 113 individuals or families to be paid over the next three years of which \$616K was received in advance. We are approximately 81% of our goal of \$1.6 Mio.

In the following chart you will see the year end status of our capital campaign (receipts & spending):



In the following pie chart identifies the main categories of our budget:



Thank you very much for your continued generosity!!

2019 Operating Budget

The Vestry is pleased to announce that we have approved a balanced 2019 Operating Budget of \$881K.

Pledges offerings is approximately 60% of the operating income and our assumption for 2018 is \$540K (our campaign goal). We officially have pledge commitments from 114 families or individuals totaling \$253K. Your pledges and contributions are what sustains our liturgy, music, education, community outreach, and many other activities that happen at St. John's. **Thank you very much for your continued generosity!!** We are experiencing a slow return of pledge cards but history shows that we can support an operating budget of this magnitude, so please return your pledge cards as soon as possible. The capital campaign is running simultaneously with the annual campaign, please ensure you support our operating campaign before committing to our capital campaign.

In the table below, you will find the operating revenue, by category, for our 2019 Budget comparing to 2018 Actual including a comment to explain the variance:

Revenue Category	Actual 2018	% of Total	Budget 2019	% of Total	Act vs Bud Variance		Comments on Variances
					\$	%	
Pledge Offerings	\$ 556,740	60.2%	\$ 540,000	66.1%	\$ (16,740)	-3.1%	
Metered Parking	\$ 136,282	14.7%	\$ 99,000	12.1%	\$ (37,282)	-37.7%	conservative assumption for parking
Parking Donations / Passes	\$ 70,003	7.6%	\$ 67,719	8.3%	\$ (2,284)	-3.4%	
Plate Offerings	\$ 59,103	6.4%	\$ 55,900	6.8%	\$ (3,203)	-5.7%	
Grants	\$ 36,872	4.0%	\$ 11,872	1.5%	\$ (25,000)	-210.6%	includes 6 months from St. Andrews for Curate & Dorris Goodwin Fund
Program & Outreach Reimbursement	\$ 35,632	3.8%	\$ 24,312	3.0%	\$ (11,320)	-46.6%	less expenses associated with reimbursement
Facility Usage	\$ 12,124	1.3%	\$ 6,000	0.7%	\$ (6,124)	-102.1%	conservative assumption for 2019
Prior Year Pledges	\$ 7,300	0.8%	\$ -	0.0%	\$ (7,300)		
Investment Income	\$ 3,968	0.4%	\$ 3,726	0.5%	\$ (242)	-6.5%	
Ground & Organ Fund	\$ 3,766	0.4%	\$ 3,000	0.4%	\$ (766)	-25.5%	
Economy Shop & Other	\$ 3,756	0.4%	\$ 5,244	0.6%	\$ 1,488	28.4%	2018 included the temporary close of the Economy shop
Total Operating Revenue	\$ 925,546	100%	\$ 816,773	100%	\$ (108,773)	-13.3%	
Endowment Draw	\$ 55,000		\$ 64,074				4.5% of rolling 3 yr average / per CPA firm this is outside of our operating revenue
Total Op Revenue & Endowment Draw	\$ 980,546		\$ 880,847				

Notable budget assumptions for revenue include:

- Pledges of \$540K based on our 2019 Annual Campaign goal.
- Curate funding for 2019 is \$10K from St. Andrews (this being the remainder of 2 year commitment) and no funding from the Diocese (a decrease of \$15K).
- An increase for parking donations/passes.
- Conservative parking revenue assumptions (\$80K) compared to the strong revenue stream for 2018.
- 4.5% endowment draw (of the rolling 3-year average balance) for operations per policy

In the table below, you will find the operating expenses, by category, for our 2019 Budget comparing to 2018 Actual including a comment to explain the variance:

Expense Category	Actual 2018	% of Total	Budget 2019	% of Total	O/L vs Bud Variance		Comments on Variances
					\$	%	
Personnel	\$ 564,151	63.7%	\$ 556,616	63.2%	\$ (7,535)	-1.4%	includes health insurance increases and proposed increase of approx 3%
Diocesan Pledge	\$ 94,721	10.7%	\$ 112,266	12.7%	\$ 17,545	15.6%	includes credit in 2018 plus assumption for 2019 increase
Building & Grounds	\$ 116,940	13.2%	\$ 93,003	10.6%	\$ (23,937)	-25.7%	2018 includes ~\$25K for boiler repairs
Administrative/Offices	\$ 32,648	3.7%	\$ 33,401	3.8%	\$ 753	2.3%	2019 includes audit review, 2018 includes compilation only
Music	\$ 18,558	2.1%	\$ 26,150	3.0%	\$ 7,592	29.0%	2018 includes less spending than anticipated & 2019 includes increase for choral scholars
Insurance	\$ 15,155	1.7%	\$ 17,253	2.0%	\$ 2,098	12.2%	2018 includes prior year worker's comp credit
Income Taxes	\$ 20,488	2.3%	\$ 17,050	1.9%	\$ (3,438)	-20.2%	2018 based on great parking revenue; 2019 is aligned with conservative parking revenue
Adult/Children/Youth Programs	\$ 9,104	1.0%	\$ 8,588	1.0%	\$ (516)	-6.0%	
Property Taxes	\$ 7,706	0.9%	\$ 7,820	0.9%	\$ 114	1.5%	
Outreach	\$ 5,023	0.6%	\$ 7,000	0.8%	\$ 1,977	28.2%	Final 2018 spending less than expected
Worship	\$ 1,029	0.1%	\$ 1,700	0.2%	\$ 671	39.5%	2018 spending less than expected
All Other	\$ 290	0.0%	\$ -	0.0%	\$ (290)	#DIV/0!	
Total Operating Expenses	\$ 885,813	100.0%	\$ 880,847	100%	\$ (4,966)	-0.6%	

Notable budget assumptions for expenses include:

- Full staff to support programs, care and outreach. Includes a modest adjustment for clergy and staff to keep compensation competitive and recognize merit. Health insurance premiums increased this year (10%). 2019 lower than actual due to relocation and change in the compensation/tenure of the lay personnel.
- Includes our contribution to the work of the Episcopal Church in NH. 2018 lower due to prior year overpayment.
- Maintains funding for our facility upkeep and repairs to our needs. Budget assumptions agreed by a team of volunteers which include Gerry Simpkins, Joe Weir, Barry Heckler, Reggie Baird and Neely Barnhardt. 2018 includes extraordinary expenses related to repairs to our boiler.
- Income & Property taxes lower than previous year due to conservative assumption for “Metered Parking”

We budget to “breakeven” as a non-profit organization and manage our budget as close to that as possible. As a reminder, we have other important programs not part of the operating budget but the mission of St. John’s includes Common Table and Choir school. These programs are self-funding.

In Summary, 2018 was a great year due to strong parking revenue despite our one-time unusual expenses related to boiler repairs. In the past five years, we have been able to present you five balanced budgets, and achieved actual surpluses all but one of those years. I am extremely excited about this coming year as we have a reasonable budget, a full staff that supports our mission and we will start capital improvements to our ‘church on the hill’. Personally, I feel blessed to be an active part of this community. My son and I have connected with so many of you this year at church dinners, family nights, cottage meetings and the amazing parish retreat this past September. I look forward to personally getting to know those of you who I have not had the opportunity to connect with.

If you have any questions and/or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

As always, with gratitude for being part of the St. John’s Community,

Kelly Boston, Treasurer

SECTION FIVE: ASSOCIATE RECTOR'S REPORT

St. John's Pastoral Care

Pastoral Care is at the heart of a loving community, and there are many folks at St. John's who give sacrificially of their time to this ministry. A big thank you to Jane Holway, Linda McVay, Clark McCurdy, Aubrey Sanderson, Mary Turner and Conni White for their contributions as Eucharistic Visitors, and we welcome Sarah McEvoy as a new Eucharistic Visitor. I am grateful to all who have organized and provided support for both parishioners and members of the community in times of challenge and crisis.

The provision of Pastoral Care at St. John's continues to evolve. The Portsmouth Ministerium (the association of Seacoast faith leaders) continues to look at the provision of support to those seeking to 'age in place' on a community-wide basis. This autumn we welcomed Nancy Euchner, founder of AgeQuest and The Seacoast Village Project to discuss the challenges of aging in place and the ways in which St. John's might be able to partner with other initiatives, such as The Village Project, to support elders in our community.

Pastoral Care is relevant for all ages, both the giving of care and the receiving of care. Thank you to all who have provided lifts to and from church, doctors' appointments, physical therapy and the grocery store, helped with gardening and shoveling snow, visited the housebound, residents of nursing homes and patients in the hospital and rehab, and cooked and delivered meals to numerous parishioners and other members of our community this past year. Each such action is evidence of the love of Christ and I am so grateful for the generosity of spirit and the gift of time given to those in our community who have a temporary or long-term need of support.

Adult Formation

Adult formation at St. John's takes a number of forms. On Wednesday mornings 8-12 people meet for 'Reading between the Lines' followed by Noonday Prayer (Wednesday mornings from 10:30-12:00). RBTL is a lectionary-based, life-centered biblical resource and our discussions are lively and wide-ranging. The Adult Forum (Sunday mornings 9-9:45) meets periodically, and met monthly in the autumn for a series of conversations on 'Community and Connections'.

Many thanks to Nathan Bourne for organizing a wonderful Lent formation program, 'The Beauty of Holiness, Faith and the Arts', offered on Sunday evenings, with a meal and seguing into Compline with the Men's Compline Choir. The topics included Russian iconography: A Thousands Years of Tradition, offered by Marina Forbes, iconographer (co-sponsored by the New Hampshire Humanities Council); Stepping Toward the Light, a facilitated labyrinth walk (offered by Kim Salathe); The Art of St. John's (offered by Nathan Bourne and Meg Harper; Faith and the Creation of Music (offered by composer Nicholas White, St. Paul's School in Concord; Finding Faith in the Written Work, offered by local author Katherine Towler; and Women and the Arts, offered by Sandra Clark, founder of the Jukwaa Mazoa, a local theatre company. During Advent, Portsmouth Poet Laureate Maren Tirabassi lead a writing workshop on the first Sunday of Advent entitled 'Hopes and Fears of All the Years'. There was also a four week Advent group formed to read and discuss Rowan Williams' 'Becoming Christians': We met on Wednesday evenings and finished our time together with Night Prayer from the Northumbrian Community.

Enormous thanks to all who shared the leadership of Reading Between the Lines and other adult formation offerings, especially Nathan Bourne, Dick Seiner and Ann Tarlton. In addition to the regular offerings, there were a variety of other formation opportunities. We continued our series of Sunday lunchtime events 'Outside the Box' with a presentation in June about my sabbatical experiences with Spiritual Growth Ministries in New Zealand. Many thanks to Sandie Dika, Carol Gruen, Susan Lassen, and Sallie Mackie for the organization and lovely lunches. The Women's Book Groups and the Men's

Book Group report separately, but a big thank you to Ann & Peter Tarlton, Kathi Hardy and Conni White for their dedicated leadership of those groups.

Safe Church

The Diocese of New Hampshire introduced a new Safe Church policy and an updated Safe Church Training program in 2013. The training covers three years and the first wave of those trained under the new system have been re-certified. A copy of the policy, and Bishop Hirschfeld's accompanying letter, is posted on the bulletin board outside the church office and in the Narthex.

On the value of Safe Church training, Bishop Hirschfeld writes:

Safe Church Training, therefore, is not merely an exercise required by the institutional bureaucracy, mandated by our insurance providers. Much more than that, I urge you to enter into these sessions with a contemplative attitude of openness by which we learn again how to be holy in our interactions with each other and with those, both young and old, who come seeking and expecting holiness in our congregations.

In 2018, Ashley Doyle, parish administrator, took on the role of Safe Church Administrator at St. John's. Ashley is now the one organizing and monitoring training and background checks. Training and background checks are required for some: Wardens, Treasurer, Kids Church, Choir School and Youth Group Volunteers, Eucharistic Visitors and staff but is open to ALL. Currently there are two elements to the training, several online modules and one reflection webinar.

Progress has been made but there is more to do - as our Bishop has said, having a Safe Church is a benefit to all; St. John's as a Safe Church may be the only place someone, either an adult or a child, feels safe enough to tell someone else their story...that is why it is so important.

The Rev. Anne C. Williamson, Associate Rector

SECTION SIX: CURATE'S REPORT

2018 was a very full year—both at St. John's and in my personal life. It was my first full year in the parish, and my first year as an ordained priest. I've learned a lot, and have been incredibly grateful to this community for all the support that you've shown me. I'm excited to continue my work here and to grow in my ministry in new ways.

On a personal note, Nicole and I are so grateful for this community. Thank you for the love that you've shown both of us since day 1, and especially for all of your support for us around our wedding and at the beginning of our marriage. St. John's and our time here will always be an important part of our life together.

I would especially like to thank Denise Croteau, Neely and Rick Barnhardt, and Doug Greene for their work with the Middle School Youth Group; Lizzie Bristow and Leslie Lattimer for their work with the high schoolers and for organizing and leading Service Sundays; and Sharon Orr for helping to get acolytes trained and robed on Sunday mornings.

I'd like to highlight what the past year has held for the youth program:

YOUTH PROGRAM

Called to Serve

The youth of St. John's have a strong desire to serve the wider community. Once a month they've shown up on Sunday mornings to go out into the community, to learn more about challenges facing families and individuals in our area, and to give their time and talent to the service of others. We've played board games with seniors at the Wentworth Home, picked apples and baked them into pies for Cross Roads, sorted food and toys for Operation Blessing's Christmas and Thanksgiving drives, sorted food and cleaned out freezers for Gather, and put in a morning of yard work for a local person who uses a wheelchair and needed some help at the end of the summer. These opportunities have given the youth of St. John's opportunities to serve, and has also given them the opportunity to learn more about their community, to put themselves in the shoes of someone whose experience is very different than their own. They've been opportunities to follow Christ in our own community.

In April four of our teens braved the cold and freezing rain and prepared and distributed sandwiches to Common Cathedral, a worshipping community in Boston that meets on the Boston Common, bringing together housed and unhoused people for a meal, worship, and fellowship.

We have also been "Cooking for Crossroads" once a month. A group of youth give their Wednesday afternoon to help feed the residents of the Cross Roads shelter. Lizzie Bristow, Sandra Pagel, and Conni White have provided the vision and know-how to create delicious meals. At the end of our cooking we sit down and share a meal together, a chance for the young folks to enjoy the products of their labor.

Sunday mornings

Whenever there's not a service Sunday, Denise Croteau, Doug Greene, and Neely and Rick Barnhardt meet with the middle schoolers in the Philbrick Room. It's a time for community building, faith formation, and for young folks to come together and wrestle with important questions. "Our style is to tell, not read, the story" Rick says of their method, "and to ask the class how they feel about what is going on in the story. It's meant to be interactive." Sunday morning is a time to connect the stories at the heart of our faith to the lives of Middle Schoolers. More notable than the numbers who attend is their ability to consume 50 Dnkin' Donuts munchkins each week, whether there are five kids or fifteen.

Lizzie Bristow and Leslie Lattimer take the high schoolers out for coffee on Sunday mornings for their own "Liturgy of the Word". They spend intentional time together, discussing what the teens are experiencing in their lives and what it is that they're hungry for.

Last May we had seven teens go through Rite 13, a rite that marks their transition into adolescence. One of my great joys this past year was seeing how those teens grew closer together.

Liturgical Participation

Our staff and volunteers have worked to get our youth more involved in liturgy at St. John's. We've had young folks serve as lectors, and we've trained a few acolytes who are serving regularly on Sunday mornings. I hope that we will continue to find ways to get our young people involved in the service and to train more acolytes. I'm grateful to Sharon Orr for her help getting the acolyte program started back up.

It's been a great year with the youth program at St. John's. In 2019, I'm looking forward to a Mission Trip to Eastern N.C, a new set of Service Sundays, another trip to Common Cathedral, a new group of Rite 13 participants, and other opportunities to integrate our young people in the life of the church.

Respectfully Submitted,

The Rev. Nathaniel F. Bourne
Curate

SECTION SEVEN: MUSIC AND LITURGY

Sunday Morning Liturgy

St. John's is a community where diversity is embraced in many ways. One of these ways is in our weekly liturgy. The opportunity to experience a great variety of music is one of the wonderful aspects of life at St. John's. Both our musical ensembles and the congregation embrace this tradition with laudable enthusiasm.

Parish Choir

The members of the Parish Choir have shown tremendous love and service for our community during the past year. They are wonderful, hardworking, and dedicated individuals, using the beauty of music to spread love throughout our community. It is a true joy to work with this ensemble.

This ensemble has achieved tremendous musical feats in the past year. Their complete performance of Gabriel Fauré's *Requiem* for All Saints Day was an uplifting musical offering, part of an inspiring and contemplative Requiem Service. The Festival of Lessons and Carols in December was a wonderful success, with more than 250 in attendance. The Christmas Eve 8pm prelude and 8:30pm service was simply magical. These services are a gift not only to our immediate church family, but also to the larger community of Portsmouth and the Seacoast region.

This choir is a community filled with love and so much talent. I look forward to more music-making with this ensemble.

The Choir School at St. John's

2018-2019 is the fourth year of the Choir School at St. John's, an after-school tuition-free music program for kids in grades 3-8. We continue to work on our young program which has been well-supported by the parish. The volunteers are the life-blood of our program, making everything we do possible, from offering a robust snack program, tutoring, and transportation on the Choir School van. This year has been instrumental in building relationships outside the walls of St. John's, as we grow closer with school administration, other experts in the field, and the families served by this program. Additionally, we have celebrated the coming together of our own musical efforts within St. John's this program year when we combined the forces of Choir School, Parish Choir, and Junior & Cherub Choirs. We are proud to see the seeds of community starting to blossom through the beauty of music.

We had a special treat this fall with the Choir School students. The Temple Church Choir from London, England, visited us for an afternoon and spent time with our students. Their director, Roger Sayer, was so encouraging with the kids and taught them one of the Temple Church Choristers' favorite pieces. The choristers from both groups were then able to interact at a delicious Thanksgiving

themed dinner provided by Bob and Sue Nalewajk in Thaxter Hall. It was a wonderfully positive experience for all involved.

We have seen great progress in our students. We are at maximum capacity with 15 students – 10 of these students are brand new to our community! Each child has shown progress socially and musically, and it is such a joy to watch our students, volunteers, and teachers interact with each other. Ashley Wade and I, along with the CSSJ Board, are discussing how we responsibly expand our program. We continue to strive to foster a safe and supportive environment for all our students. We are excited to see the ways the choir school is changing lives in our city!

The Young Organist Collaborative

The Young Organist Collaborative is still moving ahead full-throttle. The program has 11 students enrolled, from first year through 4th year of study. In April, Wesley Hall and Peter Sykes gave masterclasses for current students at Christ Church, Exeter. In a July competition, one of our advanced students was awarded a large scholarship for lessons in the 2018-2019 program year. In November, we took the students on a field trip to see several organs around Boston, Massachusetts.

YOC's alumni continue to achieve great things. One of our alumni has recently released her second cd with the Pro Organo label. Another is currently pursuing a degree in organ performance at Oberlin Conservatory. As an alumna myself, I feel truly grateful to have been mentored through this program. This program is a gift to churches across the entire country that will one day benefit from musicians who received their initial training right here in Portsmouth, NH.

I look forward to 2019 and all the adventures it will bring. St. John's is brimming with musical energy and ideas. I am excited for the possibilities that await our community.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer

Jennifer McPherson
Director of Music and Liturgy

SECTION EIGHT: CHILDREN'S MUSIC AND MINISTRIES

As we hope the members of our parish body have personally witnessed, 2018 was a fantastic and very full year in the life of the children's & youth programs at St. John's. Here's a glimpse at the year by the numbers:

- 150 youth and their families were enrolled in our various programs
- 10 dedicated volunteers run the Church School and Youth Group programs
- 31 children & youth were involved in our annual Christmas Pageant
- 25 young actors, singers, and stage technicians were a part of Alice in Wonderland, our annual musical
- Cherub choir grew from 4 to 16 children strong!!!
- 7 young women went through the Rite 13 ceremony in the spring

- A group of 11 young families have been gathering for easy fellowship at each other's homes monthly
- 43 people follow our family blog <http://sjcfamily.blog>

SUNDAY CHURCH SCHOOL & NURSERY

In 2018, the Sunday morning Church School and Nursery programs hummed along due to the love and attention of our nursery attendants and classroom volunteers. Sundays at St. John's can sometimes be bursting at the seams and other times pretty quiet. This is a symptom of serving families and kids who are busy and active. I am grateful for the flexibility and easy communication demonstrated by our leaders on the first floor of Thaxter week after week.

JUNIORS AND CHERUBS - MUSIC AND THEATER

The Cherub Choir blossomed from 4 to 16 young students this year when we moved rehearsal time to Sunday morning. Wow - what a difference that makes! The Cherubs continue to be co-led by youth leaders from the Junior-level group. Their love for the older kids is palpable and remains a point of light for me each week.

In 2018, we performed Alice in Wonderland with the help of Kendall Mood, Olin Johannessen, Chris Kozak, and Michelle Tyminski. Additionally, our own student Alice Weir was a phenomenal choreographer and leader.

The Christmas Pageant was a triumph - every year is my favorite year - but this year was really the best ever! (I'll never stop declaring my love for the pageant every year.) New students & families we welcomed into the fold and the joyful noise was heard loud and clear.

BUILDING COMMUNITY

As we look to the future, we hope to create and continue opportunities for children and youth to deepen their connection with the St. John's community. One way we are doing this is simply spending more time together. Family Nights began in the Fall of 2017 and have proven to be a wonderful time for families to get to know each other a little better over shared food & beverage, laughter, and friendship. As a staff, we are committed to working together to recognize opportunities like this and to adapt our programs so they will better reflect the character and strengths of our children, youth, and families.

Respectfully submitted,

Ashley Wade

Director of Children's Music and Ministries

SECTION NINE: COMMITTEES AND MINISTRIES
--

ALTAR GUILD

The Altar Guild works in teams of 4-6 for one month at a time, preparing the altar for all services. Also included are weddings, funerals or any other special services. Our wedding consultant helps with

the many details as wedding parties prepare for their wedding day. The funeral coordinator assists families of the deceased prior to the service and is as welcoming presence to all. A committee also opens the Philbrick Room prior to funeral services, providing a place for families to gather.

A flower chart is also maintained in the narthex where anyone is welcome to donate altar flowers in memory of a loved one, in thanksgiving or for a joyous event.

If you would like to serve St. John's but have limited time, the Altar Guild would be happy to accept your time you have, Simply speak to any guild member or contact Bertha Rocray.

Bertha H. Rocray, Altar Guild Directress

Drocra1@maine.rr.com

Virginia Edwards, Treasurer

CENTERING PRAYER

When we were children we learned that prayer is talking to God. Prayer is also listening to God; not listening for messages, but simply being in God's presence. It is deeper than talking to God. It is being present to the presence of God. This simple wordless, trusting, opening of self to divine presence is Centering Prayer. It is the simplest form of prayer yet it can be life changing.

Thomas Keating in his book, "Intimacy with God, an Introduction to Centering Prayer" offers these guidelines for the practice of this form of prayer:

1. Choose a sacred word as the symbol of your intention to consent to God's presence and action within.
2. Sitting comfortably and with eyes closed, settle briefly and silently introduce the sacred word as the symbol of your consent to God's presence and action within.
3. When you become aware of thought, return ever so gently to the sacred word.
4. At the end of prayer period, remain in silence with eyes closed for a couple of minutes.

A much more complete understanding of this prayer can be found in Keating's book.

Centering Prayer has a long history. It can be traced back to Jesus saying in Matthew 6:5, "When you pray...go to your room, close the door and pray to your Father who is unseen." It was a practice of the Desert Fathers and Mothers in the third through sixth centuries and was found in the Benedictine tradition of praying the scriptures. The Christian mystics used this form of prayer. Thomas Keating reintroduced Centering Prayer to the Christian Church in the 1960's.

St. John's has a Centering Prayer Group which meets every Thursday from 10:30 – 11:30am following the 9:30am Eucharist. It is open to anyone interested in this prayer form. We invite you to join us as you continue to seek growth in your spiritual journey through this earthly life. All are welcome.

COMMON TABLE

New guests come to Common Table; older ones depart and we rarely know where. New volunteers come as others move away. What remains, always, is the spirit of Common Table: a place where all are welcome and treated with respect as we serve hot, nutritious meals. We hear many stories: how to live in a truck and shower at the Rt. 33 struck stop; broken water pips and lack of heat; surviving, barely, with sleeping bags and tents and an occasional hot meal, such as ours on Thursday.

We have expanded our reach by preparing extra meals for distribution through Gather, the Portsmouth Food Pantry on West Road. We also helped with the start-up of another free lunch on Wednesday at the Middle Street Baptist Church and have printed cards that list the area lunches and dinners available at no charge. The idea is that the cards can be handed out to any people in need so they can find free meals.

Our volunteer base continues to be strong. We have welcomed a number of new volunteers and another new chef, Bob Nalewajk. Bob and his wife, Sue, not only cook for Common Table, they have been a great resource for ideas based on their experience in serving a larger community in New York City.

Our average monthly expense to provide lunch at St. John's and meals for Gather is slightly under \$1,000. Grants and generous donations continue to sustain us. We encourage you to consider a memorial gift donation or to honor someone you care about. One item we could use is a wheelchair for at least one guest who has trouble walking from her car to Thaxter Hall. It would also be useful for others, including parishioners, who are having trouble navigating on their own. If you have a wheelchair you could donate, please call one of us listed below, or the office.

Common Table could not exist without the help and encouragement of the St. John's community. We thank you.

Submitted by Margaret Sofio on behalf of our team Leaders, Judy Roberts, Suzanne Raeside and the more than fifty volunteer who keep Common Table going week after week.

COOKING FOR CROSSROADS HOUSE

See Youth Program for information.

THE COMMON CENTS ECONOMY SHOP

Thanks to the inspiration and diligence of a few dedicated parishioners, the Economy Shop underwent an amazing transformation for the first time in 40 years. The shop was closed from June through September, but since opening in October, it has received rave reviews from our customers. They have been surprised to find that prices in the shop have not increased following the renovations.

It is truly an example of how much can be accomplished by just a few who take the initiative to make change happen. Many thanks to Gerry Simpkins and the Bocce Boys.

The Economy Shop is open Wednesday 9-1pm and Thursday 10:30-11:30am during the school year, and Thursdays only during the summer. The Economy Shop staff would like to thank everyone for their generous donations which may be placed in the red box at the bottom of the stairs in Thaxter Hall. We continue to fill requests for clothing and other items for those in need.

Respectfully submitted,
Brenda Johnson, Sharon Musselman,

Al Edwards, Lew Rehner, Judy Roberts, Myrt Moore, Ahdrah Moore, Jude Conway,
Pat Dorow, Jan Sabean, Barbara Tarbell, Mary Murphy, Alice McDaniel

OFFICE VOLUNTEERS

Our Group had the opportunity to be involved with a number of mailings, including some for the Capital Campaign. With the usual assemblage of willing hands (and paws) the work went smoothly and efficiently. We are happy to welcome Ashley to the office, and offer her our combined support and experience as she settles into her new role.

Lacey Bangs for the Office Volunteers

RECEPTIONS COMMITTEE

When our committee reports low numbers, that is a good thing. In 2018, we provided funeral receptions for only 5 of our congregation. We prepared for as many as 300 and for as few as 30. However, each was a gift of love and support for grieving families.

We were blessed to have been called on to provide a festive reception to say good bye to our beloved parish administrator, Joanne Ferguson, as she retired.

Respectfully submitted,
Suzi Reside and Gladys Butterworth
Co-Chairs

SALVATION ARMY

St. John's volunteers serve every second Friday of each month at the Portsmouth Salvation Army Soup Kitchen. Nancy Fessenden arrives before 3:30pm to deliver the \$125 food donation purchased through St. John's outreach. Our volunteers prepare, service and clean up the dining room and kitchen from 3:30 to 6:30pm. Our diners number from 30 to 60 for dinner that consists of mashed potatoes, meat, vegetables, fruit, bread and butter, dessert and drinks.

Submitted by: Nancy Fessenden, Chair

PRAYER CHAIN

This year will be the 20th anniversary of the St. John's Prayer Chain. It began with a coffee hour conversation one Sunday in 1999. One person asked the others to pray for her. The request was unusual at the time, and it turned out to be a wake-up call.

The little group from coffee hour called each other in the days following, struck by the need of our church family for prayer. Praying was something we all knew how to do. We agreed to meet the next Sunday and announce in the bulletin our willingness to offer daily prayers for anyone who asked.

We made a rule of confidentiality, so that people would feel safe in asking for prayer for anything troubling them--from physical or mental illness or financial stress to family discord or anxiety about spouses, children, or grandchildren.

The Prayer Chain has been there for all of them over these 20 years. Hundreds have sent in requests, and we've never turned anyone down.

Sometimes people tell us they want to be on our prayer list, but they don't want to be a burden. In fact, though, we ourselves are blessed--not burdened--by our prayers for our brothers and sisters in need.

Others say they wish they could believe in prayer because they need help, but they don't ask because they think that seeming answers to prayer are "just coincidences." Years ago, one of our members responded to this view from a suffering friend, saying simply, "You should ask anyway, because when we pray, coincidences happen."

If you, or someone you love, needs a "prayer coincidence," contact Susan Mennel at 603-430-2830 or susanmennel@gmail.com to add a name to our daily prayer list. Thank you to Prayer Chain members Barbara Widen, Helen Gettelman, Judy Roberts, Karen Parrott, Kathi Hardy, Myrtle Moore, and Sarah Todd—

And a warm welcome to new members Margaret Sofio and Linda Cheatham.
Respectfully Submitted,
Susan Mennel

POLAR PACKS FOR THE HOMELESS

"On Christmas Day of 2017, an extended sub-zero freeze threatened the lives of people trying to survive outdoors. Parishioners of St. John's generously responded, immediately with \$3,000 and steadily thereafter with an additional \$4,000 in donations. Last year, we were able to provide 16 sets of sleeping bags, socks, hats, and gloves. This October, we purchased 20 more "Polar Packs", plus seven tents. We distributed these supplies through homeless shelters as well as from our church. Kittery Trading Post has been a fabulous partner in both 2017 and 2018.

Our remaining funds are now \$58.80. In order to continue the tradition of helping our neighbors in need, we we would appreciate contributions to St. John's Episcopal Church, designated for Homeless Polar Pack Fund (on the memo line). These monies will help gather supplies for the remainder of 2018 and allow us to make early preparations for the fall/winter of 2019. Thank you to all for a job well done, helping those most in need during our cold winter months!"

-a letter from Peter & Ann Tarlton