

ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

Meeting Date: January 31, 2021

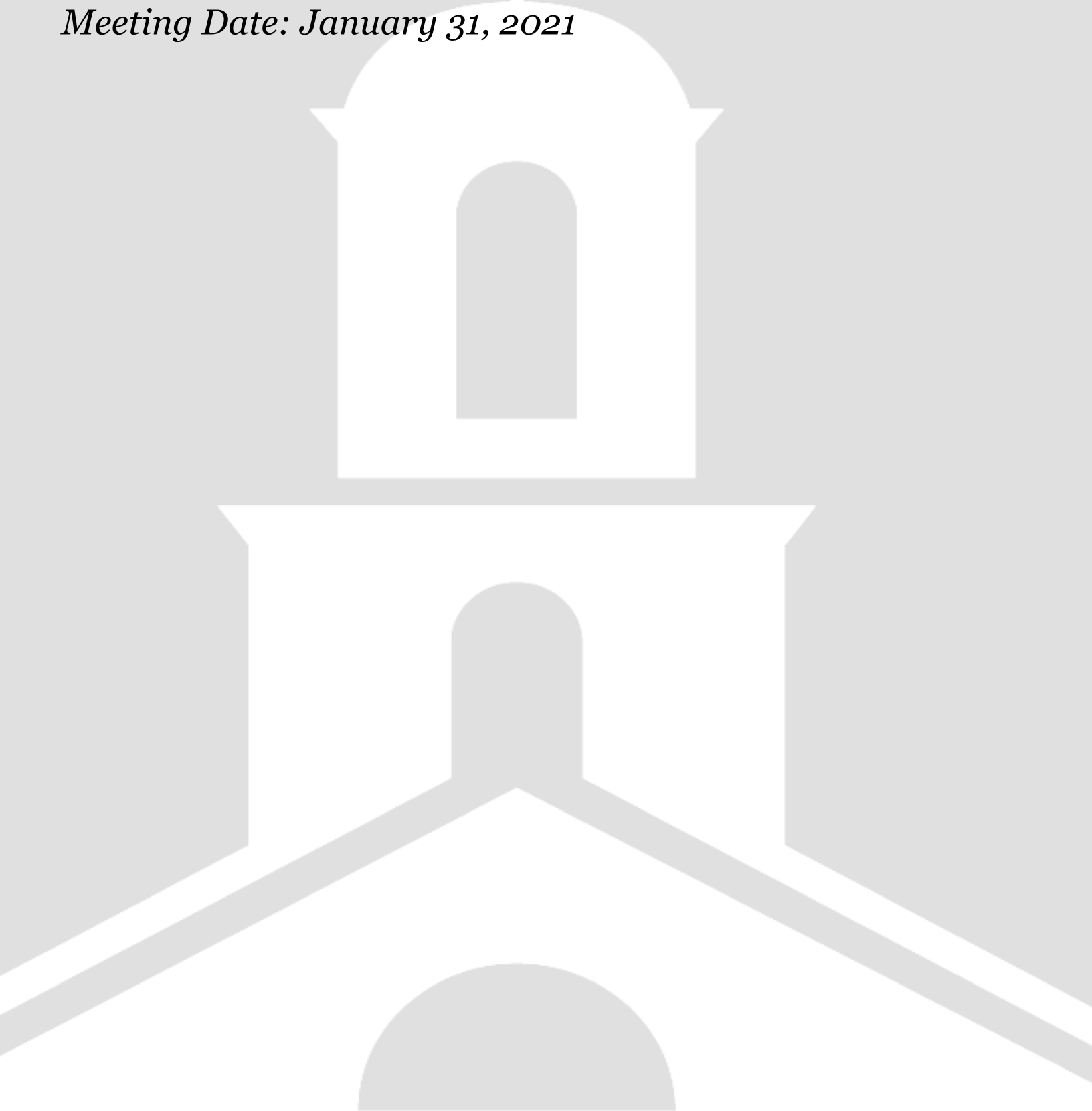


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SECTION ONE: CLERK'S REPORT: 2020 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

At 9:00AM, the Annual Meeting was called to order by John Tabor.

Senior Warden's Report: John Tabor reported that in 2019 we made great strides towards our capital campaign target of \$1.58mm. The vestry had undertaken the campaign to accomplish three goals: caring for our buildings, strengthening our community, and putting the church on a stronger financial footing.

- **Buildings:** A group of Common Table volunteers worked with Gerry Simpkins to develop a maintenance plan to do repairs on Thaxter. They got rid of weeds choking our gardens and cemetery, cleaned closets and attics, and restored the headstones in our cemetery. Reggie Baird noticed the frequent boiler repairs, found that our boiler's health was declining rapidly, and coordinated its replacement. Our building team of Barry Heckler, Reggie Baird, Bob Nalewajk, and Joe Weir won HDC approval for our replacement roof, submitted the 129-page LCHIP grant, instituted bidding and contract policies for maintenance, and hired Michael Campbell, an architect specializing in churches, to be our "clerk of the works" for the capital building program.
- **Community:** We hosted our second annual parish-wide retreat for all ages in September 2019 at Camp Merrow Vista in Tuftonboro. It was again a wonderful chance to engage with each other "outside the pews" hiking, canoeing, singing by the fire, and sharing meals.
- **Financial:** 2019 Revenue was \$906k vs. last year's \$884k. Pledge and plate income were \$608k this year vs. \$583k last year, boosted by higher attendance. Income from building and grounds, most notably parking, was \$249k vs. \$218k last year.

Treasurer's Report: Kelly Boston reported that 2019 continued to be another great year for St. John's fiscal health. During the year, we had a successful review of the 2018 financials by our auditors Plodzick & Sanderson Professional Association, from Concord, NH. Kelly also reported that Our Profit and Loss (P&L) statement is quite strong this year. At the time of the meeting, she was reporting on *preliminary* actuals for 2019 and that Final P&L would be completed as part of the Summer 2020 Full Audit. We are projecting a \$62K surplus, which was used to purchase a new boiler. A detailed "line" item report of 2019 revenue and expenses is posted on the St. John's website, www.stjohnsnh.org, in the Annual Reports section.

Jr. Warden's Report: Gerry Simpkins provided an overview of projects accomplished in 2019 and extended thanks to Reggie Baird & Barry Heckler.

- **Improved Safety** measures were put in place after the sanctuary break-in. We replaced the sanctuary door, installed three safes, and upgraded lighting.
- **The Building Committee** worked hard in 2019 to make the restoration/rehabilitation of the Sanctuary and the restoration/reconstruction of Thaxter Hall a reality.

Vestry Nominations: John thanked outgoing Vestry members and presented the slate of new members: Randy Philbrook, Chris Nettleton, Veronique Doherty, and Karen Thurston Barsanti as Clerk. *A motion to approve was made by Chris Sieve and seconded by Suzy Raeside. Vote: All in Favor.*

Associate Rector's Report: The Rev. Nathaniel Bourne had submitted a recap in the annual report that recapped the Youth Program, Sunday Mornings, Liturgical Participation, and the

Mission Trip. Nathan announced our that Rebecca Hennessy had become our new Parish Administrator and that Ashley Wade had taken on the additional role of Director of Communications.

- Youth Program: One Sunday per month, ~30 middle and high schoolers gave their time to the service of others including sorting food for a Thanksgiving Drive, decorating Operation Blessing for Christmas, picking apples and baking pies for Cross Roads, and spending time with seniors at the Wentworth Home.
- Sunday Mornings: Whenever there was not a service Sunday, Denise Croteau and Derek Birch met with the middle schoolers and Leslie Lattimer and Ally & Chuck Dudas took the high schoolers out for coffee for their own "Liturgy of the Word."
- Liturgical Participation: Our staff and volunteers worked to get our youth more involved in liturgy at St. John's. Young folks serve as lectors and we trained a few acolytes who are regularly serving on Sunday mornings.
- Mission Trip: In 2019, Nathan went with 13 teens and two adults on a mission trip to North Carolina to work with the Episcopal Farmworker Ministry. They spent a week focused on the justice issues and challenges that the community of farmworkers—both documented and undocumented—face in their daily lives. They heard people's immigration stories, visited farmworker camps, shared meals, worked on a sustainable farm, sorted clothing donations, and repaired & painted benches for the ministry. It was a challenging and educational experience, and through it, the participants grew closer together.

Associate Rector's Report: The Rev. Anne Williamson had submitted a recap in the annual report that described the contributions of Pastoral Care, Safe Church, and Adult Formation.

- Pastoral Care: Anne expressed thanks to all who have provided support including visiting the housebound, delivering flowers, providing lifts, gardening & shoveling snow, and cooking & delivering meals.
- Safe Church: In 2019, the Diocese of New Hampshire updated our Safe Church policy and the Safe Church Training program. The purpose of the training program is to 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. Training is open to all and Anne invited parishioners to contact her to sign up for training.
- Adult Formation: In 2019, Adult Formation took a number of forms including weekly and seasonal programs. In addition to the regular offerings, we continued our series of special events including April's "Raising My Voice" and November's visit from the Rev. Jason Wells on the opioid challenge in New Hampshire.

Music Ministry Report: Jennifer McPherson had submitted to the annual report a review of the Sunday Morning Liturgy, Parish Choir, The Choir School, Concerts on the Hill, and The Young Organist Collaborative.

- Parish Choir: This ensemble achieved tremendous musical feats in 2019, including a performance of Kevin Siegfried's *Songs for the Journey* for All Saints Day.
- Choir School at St. John's: In 2019, the program entered its fifth year by offering an after-school tuition-free music program for kids in grades 3-8 with a robust snack program, tutoring, and transportation via the Choir School van.
- Concerts on the Hill: In 2019, we had concerts in March, September, and October. We are hoping to expand the range over the next few years.

- The Young Organist Collaborative: In 2019, The program had 11 students enrolled, from the first year through 4th year of study. In April, Louise Mundinger and Dianne Meredith Belcher gave masterclasses for students at Christ Church, Exeter.

Children's Music and Ministries Report: Ashley Wade had submitted to the annual report a review of Sunday School and Nursery, Music & Theatre, and Building Community.

- Sunday School & Nursery: In 2019, the Sunday School and Nursery programs hummed along due to the love and attention of our nursery attendants and classroom volunteers.
- Music & Theatre: In 2019, the Cherub Choir served 20 young students! The Cherubs continued to be co-led by youth leaders from the Junior-level group. In February 2019, they performed Willie Wonka, Jr. under the artistic guidance of Kendall Mood and including 36 students from the Cherub, Junior, and Choir School music programs. The 2019 Christmas Pageant was a triumph and new families were welcomed into the fold with joyful noise heard loud and clear.
- Building Community: In 2019, we created new opportunities for children and youth to deepen their connection within the St. John's community. Through family nights, parish dinner parties, community events, and the Parish Retreat, children and their families continued to build close bonds over good food & drink, laughter, songs, conversations, and simply being present to one another.

Communications Report: Ashley Wade had submitted to the annual report an update on her new role to help build community through communication.

- Social Media: In 2019, Ashley started to use social media channels to share photos, programming updates, calendar reminders, and prayers throughout the week.
- Website: The website is already beginning to take shape with new photography, weekly sermon recordings, events on the homepage, and a new blog.
- Visual: There are new bulletin boards in Thaxter Hall that showcase our programs and we are creating new posters for important events to be displayed in various Portsmouth locations.

Committee Reports: 2019 was a busy year for all our special ministries and each committee representative had submitted reports via the annual report:

- **The Altar Guild** is responsible for preparing and caring for the altar for all services including Sunday services, weddings, funerals, and more.
- **Centering Prayer** is a group that meets every Thursday to share, contemplate, and discuss a reflective reading to become present to the presence of God.
- **Common Table** celebrated 19 years of welcoming all to a nutritious meal served in a joyful environment. Leftover food provided meals for Gather, Salvation Army, and Cross Roads House, so nothing was wasted.
- **The Economy Shop** continued to network with area non-profits, providing non-monetary donations to Cross Roads House, Salvation Army, Goodwill, New Generation, Seacoast Mental Health, Fabulous Find, and the United Way.
- **Office Volunteers** helped bridge the transition in our office administration by counting the offerings, conducting mailings, answering the phones, and more.
- **Polar Packs** were purchased and positioned at Cross Roads, Salvation Army, and St. John's Church. Half of the sets included a tent to protect the individuals against harsh weather.
- **Prayer Chain** is reachable every day of the year and its faithful members welcome your requests for prayers for healing, guidance, strength, and protection.

- **Receptions Committee** provided nine receptions in 2019 for saying goodbye to many of our beloved parishioners.
- **Salvation Army Soup Kitchen:** St. John's volunteers serve every second Friday to prepare, service, and clean up. New volunteers are much needed.

Questions and Answers: Marian Ellis captured the following Q&A and comments:

Question: Is the day of the sexton over in churches? Understands benefits of outsourcing but wonders if having a sexton might alleviate some of the issues that still exist around parking. Add signs to double spaces to encourage full use.

Reggie Baird takes care of a lot of the work that needs to be done

Cleaning crew

Mona – events coordinator

Looking at renegotiating the Cambridge lease to M-F 8-4 to help with parking for weekend funerals and events

Question: Is the lower lot metered? Needs clarification.

No. We do struggle to enforce parking there because it's porous. We're trying to figure out a solution. That is our lot and you can park there with a sticker. Go get one in the office if you don't have one.

Working on this with partners. Monitor with computer system. If you do get a ticket, it can be taken care of in the office. Also working on entering license plates into computer system and then we won't need stickers.

Working on communication with hotels. This should improve now that we have a full-time administrator.

Comment: Shout out about the social media posts (Ashley Wade & Jocelyn Philbrook)

Comment: People enjoy getting the canvas bags as thank you for the pledges

Question: Wondering about outreach to new families and increasing membership

Ongoing conversation for staff

Huge part of Ashley's work in the communication position

Anne working on this, as well

Volunteer support helps with this – if you're interested in being part of a team that address this question, please reach out to Anne or Ashley.

Tim Platt spoke about being a returning attendee and how some of the services like Vespers and Evensong can be a great way to invite people in.

The 2020 Annual Meeting concluded at 10:10 AM with a closing prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,

Karen Thurston Barsanti

Clerk

January 24, 2021

SECTION TWO: RECTOR'S REPORT

At the end of 2020 and the beginning of 2021, I am filled with gratitude. This past year was definitely the most challenging of my ministry, yet this community cared for each other and adapted in ways that were unimaginable just one year ago. I look forward with hope that we will regather this year to worship, serve and play together. With that in mind I would like to say thank you to all of you.

To our community, this year tested us in ways we couldn't fathom. Yet, you adapted with us. You joined us online and we forged a new way of connecting. It was "perfectly imperfect", and your encouraging words urged us onward. We learned that this online experience casted a wide net and more people than ever joined us for Sunday worship. We also ended 2020 whole financially. That is a tribute to your generosity. Thank you.

To Common Table and Gather, in a time when food insecurity was more prevalent than ever you answered the call. Over 1,000 meals per week were prepared either in our kitchen or the kitchen of our parishioners and we distributed to those who were hungry. This is the Church at her best. Thank you.

To our vestry, Zoom vestry meetings were never a part of the plan, yet they persevered and did what was needed. Managing the finances, making important decisions about regathering (or not), stewarding the building project with the able help of the Building Committee, all the while holding our beloved St. John's in prayer and enabling the important ministry to continue, albeit in new and different forms. Thank you.

To our Senior Warden, John Tabor, for 5 plus years of service as Senior Warden and many more as vestry member and stewardship chair, we thank you! His tireless, non-anxious, no-drama, steady leadership was crucial during this strangest of years. We will miss him in the vestry room for sure and yet are comforted that he will never be too far away. Thank you.

To our building team, especially Gerry Simpkins, Reggie Baird and Barry Heckler, your team accomplished more than we could have ever hoped for during the pandemic. On time and under budget has been the motto. By caring for our buildings, we can look forward to filling them with ministry and love. Thank you.

To our staff, while I was away on sabbatical the world as we knew it changed and with the vestry the staff led this community and made adaptations that were crucial to us remaining connected while also keeping our community safe. I cannot express my gratitude for them adequately.

Rebecca Hennessy—our Parish Administrator began her work with us in December 2019. She wins the perseverance award. Learning this job is difficult in the best of times. Doing it well during a pandemic is something special. Thank you.

Michelle Karcher—our Bookkeeper extraordinaire. In a year when the details mattered more than ever her keen eye for them and teamwork with our Treasurer Kelly Boston allowed us to not only survive but thrive. Michelle is to be credited with securing the PPP loan/grant from the Federal Government that was a clear factor in our financial health this year. Thank you.

Jen McPherson—our Director of Music and Liturgy & Co-Director of the Choir School worked in ways I'm sure she never imagined. Video editing, copy editor, and film crew were just a few of her many new duties. Yet, our music ministry thrived. We were not only able to serve our parish but parishes around the diocese and even the world with the music she produced with her able team. Thank you.

Ashley Wade—our Director of Children's Music & Ministry, Co-Director of the Choir School, and 10 hour per week Communications Director had her job shift just a bit...her 10 hour per week Communications became full-time plus! Ashley has been our director during these strange times. Learning new ways of filming, editing and communicating on nearly a daily basis and teaching new tricks to the clergy that never thought they'd be preaching to a camera. Her flexibility and drive were inspirational. Thank you.

Nathan Bourne—our Associate Rector came up with perhaps the ultimate silver lining of the pandemic. With Anne he initiated our Daily Reflections in late March. They have continued 6 days a week since then and will for the foreseeable future. They have connected us in ways that we only hoped for. His steady leadership during my sabbatical and calming influence were a gift to us all. Thank you.

Anne Williamson—our Senior Associate Rector excelled in her gift and great skill of holding us all in prayer and encouraging us to do the same. She reminded us again and again to lean into God with prayer. Her care for our community through simple calls and emails made sure that no one was left behind. This quiet, sometimes invisible, ministry is the glue that holds us together. Thank you.

And to you reading this...thank you. We are weary from the toils of this year and we WILL emerge from this time a stronger and more flexible community that is ready to serve God. I really can't wait to be back together. What a joyous reunion it will be! Thank you.

Peace,



The Rev. Robert E. Stevens, Jr.

SECTION THREE: SENIOR WARDEN

Another quiet year at St. John's – NOT! Our spiritual home was challenged by just about everything this earthly world could throw at us.

Let's tell the story in four Ps – pandemic, parking revenue, PPP loans, and, remarkably, progress on our buildings.

We ended our in-person worship in March as lockdown occurred. Strong guidance from the Diocese made it clear we needed to take the utmost precautions. Covid-19's cruel irony was to make our attendance at church a vector for a deadly disease.

As Rob and his team shifted to online worship, setting higher and higher production standards and keeping us all connected, the vestry had several challenges. What were criteria for a safe return to worshipping together and how would we measure those? And how would we stay fiscally strong through the deepest plunge in the economy in 90 years?

Jeff Croteau of our vestry led a task force to study how and when we could safely go back to church. He and Gerry used a photograph of the sanctuary to plot out "socially distanced church." In truth, singing and praying together were just too dangerous. Even if we limited attendance, some would be included and some excluded. That didn't feel right. It was clear we could not reconvene until community transmission was beaten.

Our second challenge was a huge drop in our parking receipts. These had grown to be more than \$232,000 of our \$950,000 annual budget, or \$20,000 a month. We will end the year with \$184,000 of parking revenue, but in March and April we saw 60% declines. We also faced a slowdown in pledge income.

Fortunately, Michelle Karcher of our staff along with Rob and treasurer Kelly Boston got us enrolled in the federal Payment Protection Program (PPP), and these revenues offset our large parking loss. It also enabled us to protect our talented staff from layoffs. We will end the year with a balanced budget, thanks to much work by everyone, especially our Rector!

Against the backdrop of these challenges, our capital building program continued. Our Connected in Christ campaign of 2018-2019 raised \$1.46mm, earmarked for these major upgrades.

- \$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 that will 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.

The building team of Barry Heckler, Gerry Simpkins, Reggie Baird, Joe Weir and Bob Nalewajk chose a project manager, architect Michael Campbell. This team has excelled. The pandemic-emptied buildings enabled them to move quickly. They replaced the roof in April and May,

including fixing rotted trim and broken parts of the cupola. They redid the ceiling, stage and kitchen in Thaxter. They installed a new commercial stove and stainless-steel countertops and renovated the stage. The work is magnificent – but so few of you have had a chance to see it! Ask for a tour.

In the sanctuary, we have all new wiring, new LED lighting, Wi-Fi (essential for online church), bathroom repairs and heating and plumbing upgrades.

Finally, the team and Campbell won approvals for the connector from all city boards, who hailed the architecturally sensitive design. That program of work is set to start this spring.

Special recognition, too, for the tireless Barry Heckler, who not only was the sparkplug of our building team, but also coordinated and fundraised for the cleanup of our cemetery in the heat of the summer, and the “buy a brick” campaign in the fall. Barry will make sure we “keep moving!”

Your vestry, working in partnership with Rob and the staff, have kept their enthusiasm and spirit through a year of crisis management. Thanks to all of them: Junior Warden Gerry Simpkins, Treasurer Kelly Boston, Secretary Karen Barsanti, Jeff Croteau, Lizzie Bristow, Ellie Sanderson, Veronique Doherty, Ally Dudas, Barry Heckler, John Bolduc, Chris Nettleton, and Randy Philbrook.

Senior Wardens have expiration dates, and mine has arrived after five years. I am stepping down to put more time into serving my city. Chuck Silva’s infectious humor and keen reasoning will guide the vestry and lay efforts from here. It has been a joy and honor to serve all of you, not just as Senior Warden, but for my 15 years on the vestry, including three as stewardship chair. I want to close by thanking all the people I have served with over the years who have made it a rich and at times riotous journey, especially our capital campaign team. Thank you to: Barry Heckler, Kelly Boston, Gerry Simpkins, Reggie Baird, Chris Sieve, Lizzie Bristow, Andy Bangs, Lacey Bangs, Art Parrott, Barry Heckler, Bertha Rocray, Brad Lown, Chris Kozak, Tracy Kozak, Dede Heckler, Elaine Wilson, Ellie Sanderson, Jimmy Dean, Joe Weir, John Bolduc, Chuck Silva, Meg Moran, Margaret Sofio, Peter Rice, Peter Tarlton, Randy Carey, Rick Considine, Tom Baker, Maggie Skafidas, Tom Gruen, Carol Gruen, Suzi Raeside, Bob Nalewajk, Lee Baxter, Bob Mennel, Wendy Cote and so many more. I love you all and look forward to when we are all together again.

Respectfully Submitted,

John Tabor
Senior Warden

Note from the Regathering Task Force

Recall, in March we all began to stay home, stopped physically attending church, tried working from home, schooling and teaching remotely. We were scared and confused, uncertain of the path ahead.

By summer, with the “new normal” more firmly established, the Vestry and Clergy, along with volunteers, decided to assemble a regathering task force with the hope that we might figure out a way to safely bring members of our community back to the church. We provided an update in July that was a balance of hope and realism.

Summer became fall. Fall turned to winter. Covid caseloads in New Hampshire and around the country remained high. And we continued to worship virtually.

From the beginning, the RTF said that we would:

1. follow the data (local cases, county and state information)
2. Be unwavering in our commitment to an “inclusive” regathering. We did not want to bring back only a select number from our community. It was an “all or none” mentality that was in keeping with the St. John’s ethos that “All are Welcome”
3. Listen to the Diocese and apply guidance to our specific situation (e.g. large number of participants, older physical buildings, tight spaces)

Unfortunately, the virus numbers didn’t subside. The physical space didn’t change (although it was certainly BEAUTIFUL during the Christmas season!). And as a result, we have yet to regather.

There are signs of hope. With vaccines being administered, and the winter already partially through, the RTF hopes that we will someday be able to regather safely and inclusively. It might be spring. It might be summer. It might be fall. But in the meantime, we’ll continue to stay connected virtually, continue with all of the great ministries that have taken place throughout the pandemic as a result of the amazing creativity of the Clergy and Staff, and pray for better days ahead.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jeffrey Croteau
Vestry Member and Chair of the Regathering Task Force

SECTION FOUR: TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer's Report

2020 was quite the year...unprecedented. Society was ravaged by the COVID-19 pandemic and other historic events. Throughout it all, St. John's continued to thrive even financially.

During 2020, we had a successful full audit of the 2019 financials by our auditors Plodzik & Sanderson Professional Association, from Concord, NH. We operate on a three-year rotating cycle – compilation, review, and full audit. We will have a compilation audit engagement for our 2020 financials, which is scheduled for the Summer of 2021.

2020 Operating Revenue & Expenses

We are reporting on ***preliminary*** actuals for 2020. Final P&L will be completed when our full audit is completed this summer. Despite a difficult year, we are projecting a \$2K surplus. [A detailed "line" item report of 2020](#) revenue and expenses is posted on the St. John's website, www.stjohnsnh.org, in the Annual Reports section.

Revenue Summary:

2020 operating revenue totaled \$820K, about \$79K less than our budget of \$899K. About 70% of our income was from offerings: Pledge, Plate, and prior year Pledges. A big thank you to our community not only for your annual giving but your extra generosity in this most difficult year. As a community you continued to fill the “plate” despite not being physically at church.

Parking revenue (Metered, Leased and Passes) was much lower than budget (and prior years) due to the pandemic. Revenue associated with parking was at \$184K, about \$66K less than our budget of \$250K.

Facility usage was also impacted by the pandemic providing a shortfall of \$8K.

SJC was the beneficiary of a one-time legacy gift of \$13K.

Our planned endowment draw was for \$65K which we used. Due to the Coronavirus pandemic we applied and received a Payroll Protection Program (PPP) loan for \$79,315. This loan was received in the Spring of 2020 and covered both payroll and other qualifying expenses. We will seek forgiveness of this loan in the coming weeks and it is highly likely the forgiveness will be approved.

Generous pledge and plate offerings along with the PPP loan allowed us to remain fully staffed and continue with our mission during these difficult and unprecedented times.

In the table below, you will find the operating revenue, by category, for 2020 compared to our 2020 budget, including a brief explanation of the variance:

Revenue Category	Actual 2020	% of Total	Budget 2020	% of Total	Act vs Bud Variance		Comments on Variances
					\$	%	
Pledge Offerings	\$ 474,040	57.8%	\$ 520,000	57.8%	\$ (45,960)	-8.8%	actual aligned w/ pledge commitments
Metered Parking	\$ 100,003	12.2%	\$ 145,000	16.1%	\$ (44,997)	-31.0%	impacted by COVID
Parking Lease & Donations / Passes	\$ 84,082	10.3%	\$ 104,500	11.6%	\$ (20,418)	-19.5%	impacted by COVID
Plate Offerings	\$ 97,245	11.9%	\$ 73,900	8.2%	\$ 23,345	31.6%	generous donations
Program & Outreach Reimbursement	\$ 31,794	3.9%	\$ 30,120	3.3%	\$ 1,674	5.6%	more expenses associated with reimbursement
Grants & Gifts	\$ 15,235	1.9%	\$ 1,873	0.2%	\$ 13,362	713.4%	actuals include one time gift
Economy Shop & Other	\$ 5,726	0.7%	\$ 5,244	0.6%	\$ 482	9.2%	
Building & Grounds Income	\$ 6,000	0.7%	\$ 6,000	0.7%	\$ -	0.0%	
Investment Income	\$ 3,685	0.4%	\$ 3,726	0.4%	\$ (41)	-1.1%	
Organ Fund	\$ 3,925	0.5%	\$ 3,000	0.3%	\$ 925	30.8%	
Facility Usage	\$ (2,020)	-0.2%	\$ 6,000	0.7%	\$ (8,020)	-133.7%	impacted by COVID, refund of prior income in actual
Total Operating Revenue	\$ 819,715	100%	\$ 899,363	100%	\$ (79,648)	-8.9%	
Endowment Draw	\$ 65,000		\$ 64,939		\$ 61	0.1%	4.5% of rolling 3 yr average / per CPA firm this is outside of our operating revenue
PPP Loan	\$ 79,315		\$ -		\$ (79,315)		SBA Loan thru the Paycheck Protection Program for the Coronavirus crisis
Total Op Revenue & Endowment Draw	\$ 964,030		\$ 964,302		\$ (272)	0.0%	

Expense Summary:

Our 2020 expenses totaled \$921K, about \$43K less than our budget of \$964K. Our largest category of expense is people: Clergy and Lay staff. We remained fully staffed throughout the year and our staff has been thriving, bringing new ways to experience church. The excitement and mission of the church continued to show despite the pandemic.

Not only did we manage within our budget, but we also spent less in various categories as we ensured fiscal responsibility not knowing what the impact of the pandemic would be

- Music
- Income Tax (due to less parking revenue)
- Adult, Children and Youth Programs
- Outreach

Other favorable variances against budget include lower Personnel costs due to one less employee (vs. budget) on our health insurance program and our Diocesan Pledge for April 2020 was forgiven by the Diocese due to the uncertainty of the pandemic.

We did spend more in Administrative costs due to higher costs of internet/website, mailings, on-line processing fees and audit.

In the table below, you will find the operating expenses, by category, for 2020 compared to our 2020 budget, including a brief explanation of the variance:

Expense Category	Actual 2020	% of Total	Budget 2020	% of Total	Act vs Bud Variance		Comments on Variances
					\$	%	
Personnel	\$ 616,437	66.9%	\$ 633,104	65.7%	\$ 16,667	2.6%	one less employee on Health Insurance program
Diocesan Pledge	\$ 98,501	10.7%	\$ 109,881	11.4%	\$ 11,380	10.4%	forgiveness of April assessment due to COVID
Building & Grounds	\$ 90,334	9.8%	\$ 90,303	9.4%	\$ (31)	0.0%	
Administrative/Offices	\$ 43,095	4.7%	\$ 34,946	3.6%	\$ (8,149)	-23.3%	includes higher audit,
Music	\$ 14,454	1.6%	\$ 26,150	2.7%	\$ 11,696	44.7%	impacted by COVID
Property Taxes	\$ 19,220	2.1%	\$ 10,256	1.1%	\$ (8,964)	-87.4%	includes property taxes on Optima Lot (offset in revenue)
Insurance	\$ 16,607	1.8%	\$ 16,073	1.7%	\$ (534)	-3.3%	
Income Taxes	\$ 10,421	1.1%	\$ 26,300	2.7%	\$ 15,879	60.4%	impacted by COVID
Adult/Children/Youth Programs	\$ 6,654	0.7%	\$ 8,589	0.9%	\$ 1,935	22.5%	impacted by COVID
Outreach	\$ 548	0.1%	\$ 7,000	0.7%	\$ 6,452	92.2%	impacted by COVID
Worship	\$ 4,710	0.5%	\$ 1,700	0.2%	\$ (3,010)	-177.1%	impacted by COVID, implementation of "virtual" church
All Other	\$ 26	0.0%	\$ -	0.0%	\$ (26)		
Total Operating Expenses	\$ 921,007	100.0%	\$ 964,302	100%	\$ 43,295	4.5%	
Diocesan Loan	\$ 40,959		\$ 40,959		\$ -	0.0%	loans not considered operating budget
Total Op Expenses & Loan Payments	\$ 961,966		\$ 1,005,261		\$ 43,295	4.3%	

With total revenue of \$964K minus total expenses of \$962K, we anticipate ending the year with a \$2K surplus.

Endowment (Long-Term Investment Funds)

Our endowment balance as of December 31st is \$1,614,683. We took one authorized withdrawal for operations during 2020. This year's withdrawal was for \$65,000, which funded operations. Below is a summary of our endowment over the past five years:

Endowment Values Last 5 Years					
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Starting Balance	\$1,387,368	\$1,439,025	\$1,493,929	\$1,338,626	\$1,496,740
Growth	\$105,657	\$120,404	(\$90,303)	\$222,114	\$182,943
Withdraws: Operating	(\$64,000)	(\$68,000)	(\$65,000)	(\$64,000)	(\$65,000)
Gifts	\$10,000	\$2,500			
Ending Balance	\$1,439,025	\$1,493,929	\$1,338,626	\$1,496,740	\$1,614,683

Due to the constraints of the pandemic, the Investment Committee did not meet in 2020. The committee will meet in 2021 at a later defined time.

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

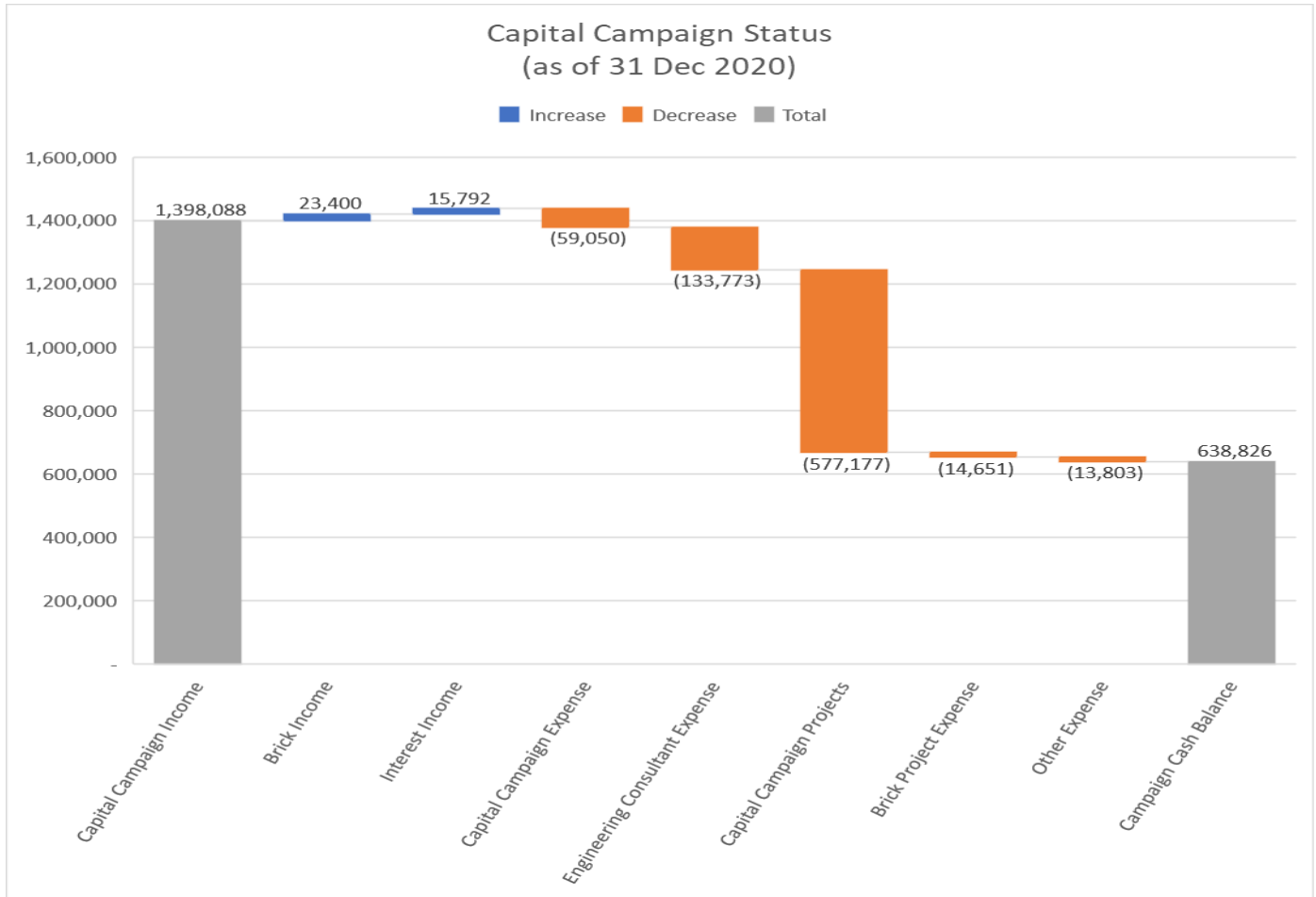
Connected in Christ Capital Campaign Revenue & Expenses

(inception to 12/31/2020)

This is the third year for us to report on our Connected in Christ capital campaign. We are overjoyed to report that we have commitments of \$1.42 million from 164 individuals or families to be paid over the three years, of which over \$1.398 million was received as of year-end. **Thank you very much for your continued generosity!!**

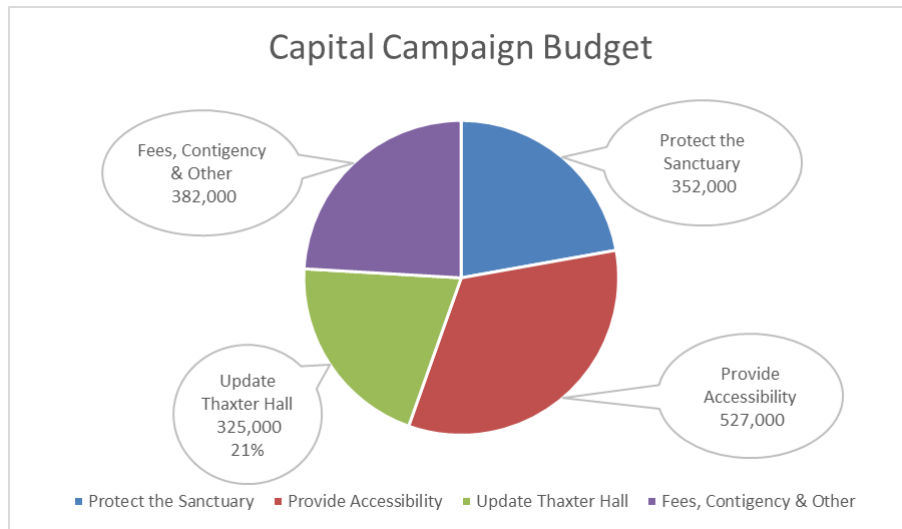
We engaged with Michael Campbell to manage our capital improvement projects, which started in 2020. There are strong project controls put in place to ensure fiscal responsibility and management of capital funds. We have a separate checking account with Eastern Bank.

Below are the increases and decreases of the campaign account since its inception:



- Includes \$23.4K of income from brick sales funding the walkway
- Approximately \$15.8K interest earned.
- Campaign consultants from Episcopal Church Foundation (\$59K) to assist with campaign approach and management.
- Engineering consultants, which include both JSA, Inc. for architectural work, and W. Michael Campbell for project management services.
- Projects completed to date.
- Expenses to date associated with the brick walkway.
- Other includes miscellaneous expenses such as mailing and communication supplies.

Of our Capital Campaign Budget (or goal) of \$1.6 million, you have pledged 89%. We are \$180K away from our goal. It is never too late to pledge to our capital campaign. The budget is categorized in the chart below:



- \$352K to **protect our historic sanctuary** by replacing our 38-year-old roof, updating electrical and plumbing, and improving our heating plant.
- \$527K to **provide accessibility** using a connector between Thaxter Hall and the sanctuary. We now have specifications on an elevator from ground level to the connector that can be included in this campaign and enable people of all abilities to come to church together.
- \$325K to update **Thaxter Hall** with new lighting and ceiling, storage, stage repairs, and new windows.

2021 Operating Budget

2021 will be challenging not knowing what the next few months bring with hopes of vaccines for everyone and thoughts of getting back to normal. The Vestry is pleased to announce that we have approved a balanced 2021 Operating Budget of \$1 Million. Most of our revenue stream comes from two sources: our Parishioners and the Parking Revenue. Our goal is to remain at staffing levels, maximize parking revenue w/ conservative assumptions and manage expenses accordingly. This year we will pull from the endowment at a higher percentage (5.5%) and we will seek additional government opportunities if they present themselves. Despite not knowing what this year will bring, our programs will continue to thrive and live out our mission in the coming year.

2021 operating revenue is planned at \$1M which includes an endowment draw of \$80K. About 66% of our income is planned from offerings: Pledge and Plate. Our Pledge assumption for 2021 is \$500K (our campaign goal from 300 pledges). We officially have pledge commitments from 189 families or individuals totaling \$393K. Your pledges and contributions are what sustain 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 not yet at our goal, but history shows even during a pandemic that we can support an operating budget of this magnitude, so please return your pledge card with whatever amount is possible for you.

In the table below, you will find the operating revenue, by category, for our 2021 Budget comparing to 2020 Actual (preliminary) including a comment to explain the variance:

Revenue Category	Actual 2020	% of Total	Budget 2021	% of Total	O/L vs Bud Variance		Comments on Variances
					\$	%	
Pledge Offerings	\$ 474,040	57.8%	\$ 500,000	54.2%	\$ 25,960	5.2%	2021 Goal is \$500K & 300 pledges (1/19 @ \$393K 189 pledges)
Parking Lease & Donations / Passes	\$ 100,003	12.2%	\$ 151,500	16.4%	\$ 51,497	34.0%	include 12 month of lease w/ Cambridge Trust both years / passes from \$1K to \$3-\$3.5K new metered lower lot
Metered Parking	\$ 84,082	10.3%	\$ 118,134	12.8%	\$ 34,052	28.8%	2020 includes one time gift \$20K / 2021 includes one time gift of \$34K
Plate Offerings	\$ 97,245	11.9%	\$ 105,344	11.4%	\$ 8,099	7.7%	
Program & Outreach Reimbursement	\$ 31,794	3.9%	\$ 29,054	3.1%	\$ (2,740)	-9.4%	
Grants & Gifts	\$ 15,235	1.9%	\$ 1,873	0.2%	\$ (13,362)	-713.4%	2020 includes one time gift & both years include Doris Goodwin Fund
Economy Shop & Other	\$ 5,726	0.7%	\$ 5,222	0.6%	\$ (504)	-9.7%	2021 included the temporary close of the Economy shop
Building & Ground Income	\$ 6,000	0.7%	\$ 6,000	0.7%	\$ -	0.0%	includes reimbursement for plowing
Investment Income	\$ 3,685	0.4%	\$ 3,726	0.4%	\$ 41	1.1%	
Prior Year Pledges	\$ 3,925	0.5%	\$ -	0.0%	\$ (3,925)		do not plan for prior year pledges
Facility Usage	\$ (2,020)	-0.2%	\$ 1,500	0.2%	\$ 3,520	234.7%	2020 includes credit for cancelled event due to Covid
Total Operating Revenue	\$ 819,715	100%	\$ 922,353	100%	\$ 102,638	11.1%	
Endowment Draw	\$ 65,000		\$ 80,392		\$ 15,392	19.1%	4.5% (in 20) vs. 5.5% (in 21) of rolling 3 yr average
PPP Loan	\$ 79,315		\$ -		\$ (79,315)		no government loan/grant assumed in 2021 but planning to apply if we qualify for 2021 PPP
Total Op Revenue & Endowment Draw	\$ 964,030		\$ 1,002,745		\$ 38,715	3.9%	

Notable budget assumptions for revenue include:

- Pledges of \$500K, aligned with the 2021 Annual Campaign goal of \$500K.
- Plate of 105K, which includes an already generous contribution received.
- Renewal of parking lease with Cambridge Trust (due April 2021).
- Parking revenue assumptions (\$145K) aligned with strong revenue streams for the past two years.
- 5.5% endowment draw (of the rolling 3-year average balance) for operations per policy.
- Budget does not assume a PPP loan in 2021; but we will apply for any funds that we qualify for.

In the table below, you will find the operating expenses, by category, for our 2021 Budget comparing to preliminary 2020 Actuals including a comment to explain the variance:

Expense Category	Actual 2020	% of Total	Budget 2021	% of Total	O/L vs Bud Variance		Comments on Variances
					\$	%	
Personnel	\$ 616,437	66.9%	\$ 626,051	64.0%	\$ 9,614	1.5%	includes health insurance 6% increase YoY and no annual increase for staff
Diocesan Pledge	\$ 98,501	10.7%	\$ 108,345	11.1%	\$ 9,844	9.1%	2020 includes no pledge for Apr
Building & Grounds	\$ 90,334	9.8%	\$ 95,248	9.7%	\$ 4,914	5.2%	aligned w/ maintenance plans for each year. 2021 includes stair repairs (\$4K) completion
Administrative/Offices	\$ 43,095	4.7%	\$ 32,297	3.3%	\$ (10,798)	-33.4%	2020 includes full audit in accounting fees; 2021 is audit completion
Music	\$ 14,454	1.6%	\$ 26,150	2.7%	\$ 11,696	44.7%	2020 impacted by COVID
Property Taxes	\$ 19,220	2.1%	\$ 19,115	2.0%	\$ (105)	-0.5%	
Insurance	\$ 16,607	1.8%	\$ 16,857	1.7%	\$ 250	1.5%	
Income Taxes	\$ 10,421	1.1%	\$ 37,458	3.8%	\$ 27,037	72.2%	2021 based on anticipated increase in parking revenue
Adult/Children/Youth Programs	\$ 6,654	0.7%	\$ 7,990	0.8%	\$ 1,336	16.7%	2020 impacted by COVID
Outreach	\$ 548	0.1%	\$ 7,000	0.7%	\$ 6,452	92.2%	2020 impacted by COVID
Worship	\$ 4,710	0.5%	\$ 1,700	0.2%	\$ (3,010)	-177.1%	2020 includes one time expenses
All Other	\$ 26	0.0%	\$ -	0.0%	\$ (26)		
Total Operating Expenses	\$ 921,007	100.0%	\$ 978,211	100%	\$ 57,204	5.8%	
Diocesan Loan	\$ 40,959		\$ 24,534		\$ (16,425)	-66.9%	
Total Op Expenses & Loan Payments	\$ 961,966		\$ 1,002,745		\$ 40,779	4.1%	

Notable budget assumptions for expenses include:

- Full staff to support programs, care, and outreach. Due to the pandemic uncertainty, there is no cost of living (COLA) increase assumed in the budget. This will be evaluated throughout the year.
- Health insurance premiums increased this year by 6%.

- Our contribution to the work of the Episcopal Church in NH.
- Maintenance funding (in Building & Grounds) for our facility upkeep and repairs. Budget assumptions agreed by the St. John's Building Committee (SJBC) volunteers, (which include Reggie Baird, Gerry Simpkins, Bob Nalewajk, John Tabor/Chuck Silva, Barry Heckler) and are aligned with previous years. 2021 includes an additional \$4K for the completion of the stairs repair.
- Administrative/Office expense lower due to the audit engagement in 2021 is a compilation/review not a full audit.
- Income & Property taxes aligned with income assumptions.

We budget to "break-even" 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.

Our five-year loan with the Diocese will be paid off during 2021. We have approximately \$25K left in loan payments with payoff expected in June. The original loan of \$195K funded the parking lot renovations in 2016.

In summary, 2020 was an extraordinary year. We have operated with prudence for the past several years, especially during 2020 and 2021 will be no different. I am extremely excited about this coming year as we have a reasonable budget, a full staff that supports our mission, and hopeful to see each one of you at our "Church on the Hill."

Personally, I continue to feel blessed to be an active part of this community. My son and I are looking forward to reconnecting face to face with so many of you hopefully soon at coffee hour, church dinners, and family nights.

The Vestry posts our meeting minutes each month, and at any time, 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 RECTORS' REPORTS

THE REV. NATHANIEL BOURNE

2020 was a year of unprecedented disruption brought on by the coronavirus pandemic. It shaped the year in ways none of us could have imagined, radically shifting how we relate to one another, the ways we can be together, and the worries and concerns that each of us face. In light of that reality, the story of 2020 is one of upheaval and adaption, stumbling forward with no compass or map to follow, but doing so together.

Rob left for sabbatical at the beginning of January, leaving Anne and me to jointly act as rector. We held Sunday services as usual through the season of Epiphany and into Lent. Our youth met on Sunday morning, they cooked for Cross Roads, and went on at least on Service Sunday. Anne and I began a Lenten group for those seeking confirmation, reception, or a deeper connection to the Church focusing on “The Episcopal Way”. The pattern of Sunday evening programming during Lent continued, with Dr. Damian Costello presenting on the life and legacy of Nicholas Black Elk, a program hosted with support of NH Humanities.

The beginning of March was a period of great uncertainty, both around the globe and in our community. Each day brought news of growing Covid caseloads around the country, and, eventually, in our state. Community transmission of the virus became a reality. Anne and I met with members of our community with medical expertise, we listened to the counsel of our Bishop, and we ultimately made the decision on March 15th to suspend in-person services. That decision coincided with churches around the state closing their doors, along with many businesses. We were seeing rises in cases here in Rockingham County, and there was still so little that we knew about how the disease was being transmitted.

This period of uncertainty forced us to adapt, to find new ways of being a community together. We moved worship online and continued to worship together virtually. Folks who a month earlier would’ve said they would never attend church online found themselves suddenly savvy navigating around YouTube and Zoom. Those first services were rough around the edges, but with leadership from Ashley Wade, the quality steadily improved over the year. Other aspects of our life together moved online. We began bi-weekly Zoom check-ins with the youth group; “The Episcopal Way” group moved online, and even moved onto another book; Lenten Complines continued through the month of July; Reading between the Lines continued to faithfully meet on Wednesdays. Instead of diminishing the conversations we had in each of those groups, the shift online brought about renewed connections. I think we were all grateful to have a way to be together.

Of those early adaptations, one of the most significant was the practice of Daily Reflections. Anne and I knew that we needed to be in regular contact with the community. We used the appointed readings for Lent to reflect on what was going on in our community and the world, a world that was changing rapidly. It was a way to hold up how Jesus was speaking to our present moment. As Lent drew to a close, it was clear that the Daily Reflections shouldn’t. We reimagined what they would look like, selecting a series of prompts and inviting members of the SJC community to offer their own thoughts. Today, over 300 people receive a daily email from St. John’s. Over the past year we’ve sent more than 240 reflections, written by more than 150 members of our community. The reflections have offered a way for us not only to stay connected, but to get to know one another on a deeper level. I am so grateful to everyone who has shared their reflections with us. Thank you to all of you who have put your hearts on the page and shared your words with the St. John’s community.

This Fall found us settling into a new rhythm of life together and continuing to adapt. We settled into a process of recording and producing worship each week that has continued to offer opportunities for us to pray together and appreciate the beauty of St. John’s musical offerings. The youth group transitioned to gathering occasionally for outdoor activities. We went hiking a couple times, and met for a service project cleaning up a couple historic cemeteries in Eliot, Maine. I’m grateful to Denise Croteau and Derek Birch for their assistance in adapting the youth program.

One of the highlights of the Fall was the multiple opportunities for small group formation. There are currently two groups meeting using the Episcopal Church's *Sacred Ground* curriculum to explore race and racism in America. The program has sparked intense and generative conversations about how we grapple with the injustices and inequities that have existed in our country. I'm excited to see where those conversations lead and how they help our whole community better live out the teachings of Jesus.

In Advent, a group met each Sunday evening to read, discuss, and pray with St. Julian of Norwich's *Revelations of Divine Love*. We looked to her for guidance on how to maintain faith in the midst of a pandemic. It was an opportunity for silence, stillness, prayer, and conversation. It offered a chance to pause and be together.

The staff and clergy of St. John's continue to seek out ways to adapt our life together to our current context. We will continue to provide virtual opportunities to gather, even beyond the time when we can again gather in the church. This spring I'm looking forward to a virtual Lent program that focuses on what we can learn from the saints in our tradition. I'll also be working on adapting the Rite 13 ceremony so that we can hold it in a safe and physically-distanced form.

2020 was a year like any other. I continue to grieve for those who have died, both from the Coronavirus and from racial violence. I grieve the times we couldn't gather together, and all the milestones that have been missed. And yet, I'm grateful for so much of the past year. I've been so inspired by the grace, creativity, and generosity of this community through it all. Thank you for all the ways you have shown the love of Christ to me in the past year.

Respectfully Submitted,

The Rev. Nathaniel F. Bourne
Associate Rector

THE REV. ANNE WILLIAMSON

There are many words I could use to describe 2020, a myriad of emotions and experiences to share, and it might seem strange that the word that comes to mind is gratitude. In the midst of grief and sadness and challenge, I am so very grateful for the blessings this community has offered to me, to one another and to our larger community in this very difficult year. Nathan has outlined the trajectory of the year so please see his report; I would like to focus on how pastoral care, which is at the heart of our community, was offered and received over this last hard, challenging year.

Pastoral care at St. John's is not a web of control but rather a network of support, organic and varied in nature, not perfect (perfectly imperfect as the staff have said about walking in this time) but beautiful. This network of support is seen in the generous gifts of time, talent and treasure offered by our wonderful St. John's community.

Here are a few examples from 2020:

writing, calling and emailing other parishioners;

sewing masks, including for indigenous communities;
establishing 'pandemic pods' for those who live alone for visits;
taking people shopping or shopping for them;
collecting coats, hats and other warm clothing for the wider community;
delivering lilies and poinsettias to bring cheer in the isolation;
giving gift cards and donations for gift cards (we have given out an amazing number of supermarket gift cards to address food insecurity in this time);
organizing and supporting the SJC food drive for Gather in June;
providing housing support to prevent homelessness;
funding and preparing Polar Packs for those experiencing homelessness;
preparing meals – throughout the year with - weekly for Common Table as well as for those recovering from illness or surgery, and the wonderful drive-in parish dinner! There was also the great Shrove Sunday dinner and the delicious soups for the Lent program;
bridging the digital divide by 'going to church' (using a telephone or a tablet) with someone who isn't online.
praying for the needs of our community, the wider community and the world;

There is a common thread through this network of support. Much of the support comes out of connections made through small groups which have continued mostly via email or Zoom, and for some groups, with very limited numbers, masked and physically distanced! Whether that is Reading Between The Lines on Wednesday mornings, Centering Prayer on Thursday mornings, Adult Formation groups, Common Table, the Altar Guild, the Choir, the Prayer Circle, the Economy Shop volunteers, the Vestry, the Building Committee, Outside the Box or connection opportunities for families and youth, we are stronger together and staying *Connected In Christ* is my prayer for us all.

There is a role for clergy in the organizing and offering of pastoral care and there have been baptisms, weddings and funerals in this last year, a very few at the beginning of the year in the sanctuary, and many outside since March! Some of these important pastoral services have been postponed until we can worship together again at St. John's, and the waiting is hard. Our annual Blue Christmas service was offered on Zoom and provided a time of care and support. Nathan, Rob and I continue to walk with members of the St. John's community and the larger community in times of joy and sorrow.

As I write this report, the season of Covidtide continues, the work of pastoral care continues and the network of support continues. If you know of someone who is in need of support, or if you have time, talent or treasure to offer, please let me know: anne@stjohnsnh.org

To paraphrase a verse from the book of Hebrews: *‘And let us continue to provoke one another to love and good deeds’*. I am so grateful to this community; I am so grateful for all the love and good deeds offered and received this year.

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. Anne C. Williamson
Associate Rector

SECTION SIX: MUSIC MINISTRY

Weekly Worship

The St. John’s music ministry has centered around one main word this past year: adapt! I have to admit, it’s not my favorite word. I’m grateful to be surrounded by a team of people who inspire and encourage me to embrace all the challenges (or shall I say, opportunities!) the year 2020 gave us. The St. John’s staff, parish choir members, section leaders, and various community members and musicians have truly banded together to offer musical pieces for our weekly Sunday services and special offerings (such as our week of Lessons and Carols!).

When we transitioned to virtual services, our music making methods changed. The Parish Choir now provides hymns for most Sunday services, as well as occasional virtual anthems by submitting individual voice tracks which then are combined and mixed through music software like GarageBand and Audacity. One completed virtual anthem goes through several steps: a conducting and accompaniment video is recorded and sent to the section leaders who then record their voice parts. Those submitted voice part tracks get synced up to the conducting/accompaniment video and are then sent to the Parish Choir for rehearsal and recording. Parish Choir members record their own voice tracks and return to me and the fun truly begins! These voice tracks are mixed together with minor audio edits, listened to several times for balance checks, and then finalized as one audio track. Ashley and I then work together to provide informational graphics to finish the video (Ashley Wade plays a huge part in this step and creates most of the beautiful music meditation graphics we see each week). All in all, this process takes 10-15 hours for one 3 minute virtual anthem video.

During the summer and fall of 2020, we were able to record music in small groups, making sure to rehearse outdoors and wear masks indoors right up until recording. This was a bittersweet process for our music ministry. Having these live music recordings enabled us to record several pieces in one session fairly easily, but we were unable to include all the voices of the Parish Choir.

While traditional sacred music still makes up a large portion of our musical repertoire, we have introduced a monthly ‘Songbook Sunday’ for our virtual worship services. Ashley Wade and

Olin Johannessen have played a huge part in this and often record these more folksy, contemporary Christian songs right in their own third floor home studio. I am grateful for their creative contributions to our services.

I am unsure what this upcoming year holds for us. I anticipate many more creative opportunities(!), but am hopeful that the later part of 2021 will allow more voices to make live music together. Thank you Parish Choir, Ashley and Olin, Bob Stibler, Sharon Jones, and our section leader team – Morgan King, Christina DeMaio, Andrew Sokol, and Joe Harris. Thank you for your willingness to adapt, for your creativity and vulnerability in offering your talents in these new ways, and for being a source of encouragement for our entire congregation throughout this year. I am grateful to be a part of this community.

Parish Choir – Additional Virtual Activities

In addition to providing hymn recordings and virtual anthems, the Parish Choir continues to stay in fellowship with each other through monthly virtual gatherings via Zoom. One of our choir members, John Stromgren, is also conducting a virtual class on Sight Singing for several of our Parish Choir members. This also occurs about once a month.

The Choir School at St. John's

The Choir School, an after-school tuition-free music program for students grades 3-8, was in the middle of our sixth year when the pandemic hit. We had been looking forward to an exciting project – our very first culmination concert with the talented choir from Philips Academy in Andover, MA. Our students were going to experience an afternoon at Philips Academy, rehearsing with the choir under the direction of Dr. Abbey Hallberg Siegfried and exploring the Philips Academy campus. We were excited to invite the students from Philips Academy to perform with The Choir School in late April at St. John's. This project had to be put on hold, but we hope to pursue this opportunity again in 2022.

The Choir School transitioned to an online model for the spring 2020 semester. Ashley Wade and I held Zoom gatherings (group and private coaching sessions) with the kids to continue fostering our community relationships. With the help of our board chair, Charles Leinbach, we produced our final project – a music video of “When You Believe”. We are very proud of the hard work our students put in to finish this project; overcoming poor internet connections, the fear of singing alone, the fear of singing where family members can easily hear you! Ashley and I are honored to work with these amazing kids.

The Choir School is currently on hiatus. We hope conditions are safe enough for the program to resume this coming fall.

The Young Organist Collaborative

The Young Organist Collaborative also experienced a hiccup during the spring of 2020. We had to cancel our masterclasses and our end of year student recital. Several students were able to continue lessons through Zoom, Facetime, and Skype. Others, understandably, were unable to overcome this technical challenge and went on break for the rest of the spring semester. Most

students and teachers were able to resume in person for the fall and are continuing to meet in person. The program has 13 students enrolled, from first year through 6th year of study. In November, committee member Nick Wallace presented a Zoom field trip for the students, offering a glimpse into an organ builder's workshop.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer McPherson
Director of Music and Liturgy
Co-Director, The Choir School at St. John's

SECTION EIGHT: COMMUNICATIONS AND CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

A review of 2020, from the person who no longer knows what her title is, Ashley Wade.

It's a little bit of a joke, but truly, 2020 took my job, threw it up in the air, and dropped it on a whole new geography that I had never navigated before. I have heard people call me the Communications Director, or the Creative Director. I like both those titles. There's still some other bits of Children's Music & Ministries and the Choir School hanging out there, but this year brought me to a place where a title could no longer hold me... I BROKE FREE OF MY TITLE! Well, that sounds kind of fun... and guess what? I'm closing in on my 10th year of employment at St. John's. Now I have a real track record of true love for this community, a church that has proven to be so much more than a building to gather in, and whatever I do here, it fills me with purpose. Thank you for another chance to catch you up on what's been keeping me busy.

Early in 2020, we hit the ground running like any other year, beginning rehearsals for *Into the Woods* with the youth theater crew, and a mini-performance of *Winnie the Pooh* with the cherubs. Twenty-four youth and fourteen children participated in our annual musical project in early 2020, performing their shows the weekend of February 15 & 16. One of the great highlights of this project was partnering with Kendall Mood as our director and Jennifer McPherson as our accompanist. Our little management trio was a lot of fun and kept the students busy! *Into the Woods* and *Winnie the Pooh* were excellent and cast the light on so many (38!/) of our young people. Chris Kozak worked his magic mic-ing the stage and managing the soundboard during dress rehearsals and performances ensuring all voices could be heard. Diane Halpin painted the beautiful vista of the woods on our scenery panels. And Kendall Mood really brought everything to life with her characteristic vision and energy. I'm so grateful we were able to accomplish this project early in the year (divine intervention in our planning perhaps) because so soon after our weekend of performances such events were canceled indefinitely.

As time pushed us forward, my focus at work shifted entirely to bringing our worship services online and managing our communication systems including the website, email, social media, and special mailings. Creating content was the new name of the game - photography, videography, audio recordings, graphics... wow! There was a lot to learn. Some people mentioned that they noticed every week was a little different... a little improved. That was my personal mission - get it up and out, and then, make it better... slowly... as we learned what that meant. Everything was an experiment. *Everything*. (Even this report is a little bit of an experiment.)

For me, the beauty and benefit of this was that there were no rules! (Yes, I thrive in that space.) While I didn't always know what I was doing or where I was going, I enjoyed the evolution of our process. I enjoyed seeing the results of the hard work and learning. I enjoyed navigating the vibration of life with my team. It was hard for everyone to make this shift, yet, there was grace for joyless days, for silliness, for crying, for laughing, for bloopers, for the many ways we were able to embody our mantra, "perfectly imperfect."

A highlight of my work in 2020 has been partnering more closely with Rob on our stewardship campaigns. Through these projects I have become closer with some of our church's leadership including members of our building committee and vestry.

The partner and friend I have found in Jennifer McPherson is such a gift and blessing. We have been working very closely together all year, partnering on all things virtual and musical, talking through processes and working out ideas so we could adjust our ministries in ways that worked in a Covid-19 reality. Early on in the year, we were working with the Choir School to prepare for exciting performances and partnerships. With the help of our board director Charles Leinbach, we were able to shift to an online model and release a virtual choir music video of our students singing "When You Believe."

As we started to realize that Christmas was going to be a virtual affair, I hit a wall of desperation - no pageant? No Lessons and Carols? No Christmas Eve? Were we really going to be able to re-imagine these offerings to fit an online space? Sadness. Exhaustion. Etc.

December is always an incredibly full month when you're a musician church employee. Running around like a chicken with its head cut off is an apt visual for what I'm usually like in person throughout the month of December. And 2020 would be no different... well, a lot different, but we sure managed to fill it up! I'm especially proud of Jennifer's conception of the Lessons and Carols program and how we worked to bring that to the community in a new and especially digestible way. And then, there was our virtual Christmas Pageant. The process for this pageant was truly unique to fit our needs, but we managed to get costumes out to our 11 young families who participated, a crew of 15 youth created the narrative over zoom, Justin Haight and Olin Johannessen worked to create the video framework and the audio tracks, and I did my best to put the proverbial "bow" on top with graphics and editing. Additionally, two alums of our youth program, Sakhan Warren and Liam Ellis, returned to add their voices to the songs virtually, continuing the tradition of coming back together to help the current students through their performance. I learned that doing a pageant this way is a LOT more work. I look forward to the days when we are in person performing in our church without having to collect audio vocal tracks, video tracks, build graphics, and edit video and audio for hours on end. It was a labor of love and I'm so grateful for the many students and families who were willing to participate this way. I think it brought a lot of joy to a lot of people - and perhaps even brought the spirit of Christmas into some hearts that truly needed it this year.

I feel so fortunate to work for a community that allows so much creativity and supports the vision of Rob and our whole team.

With gratitude,
Ashley Wade

SECTION NINE: COMMITTEES & MINISTERIES

ALTAR GUILD

This has been a very different year for all of us, especially the Altar Guild. Each month our teams look forward to the opportunity to serve, but in March everything changed. Lilies were placed on the front steps for anyone to take home and enjoy as the church doors were locked and shuttered.

At Christmas, we were privileged to decorate St. John's. This was done to give us all a glimpse of Christmas past and a view of Christmas to come.

We are a group of women and men ready to serve St. Johns on our monthly team. Our responsibility is to prepare the altar for all services including all special events.

We welcome anyone interested in joining the Altar Guild—simply contact me or any member of the Altar Guild.

Bertha H. Rocray, Altar Guild Directress

Virginia Edwards, Treasurer

BUILDING COMMITTEE

The SJC Building Committee—Reggie Baird, Gerry Simpkins, Bob Nalewajk, Kelly Boston, John Tabor/Chuck Silva, Rob, Barry Heckler, and our Project Manager, Michael Campbell—has had a very busy, exciting, and rewarding year working on the Capital Campaign Restoration and Construction Project, and offer the following review:

- 1) SANCTUARY Budget: \$352,000.00
 - A - The roof was replaced and a new, all copper, lightning rod system installed;
 - B - All new electrical wiring, and lighting installed;
 - C - A new Sacristy door with crash bar for safe fire exit has been installed and painted "St. John's Red" to match all other Church, Thaxter and Tebbetts exterior doors;
 - D - The interior of the Cupola has been repaired, the Church exterior trim and windows repaired and painted, and new scratch proof/yellowing resistant Plexiglas installed over the stained glass windows;
 - E - Heating system for the Sacristy has been completed.

All of the above was accomplished on time, within Budget, and with no "do-overs".

- 2) THAXTER Budget: \$325,000.00
 - A - All new wiring, and fire alarm system installed;
 - B - New acoustical ceiling, lighting for the Stage, chandeliers and fans for the Main Floor installed;
 - C - The entire Main Floor, Kitchen and Stage repainted, floors cleaned and buffed (they will be refinished after completion of the construction of Roberts Fellowship Hall/Phase II);

- D - All windows repaired, new storm window tops for the Main Floor installed;
- E - The Kitchen cabinets and windows have been repaired, and repainted;
- F - A new range and fire suppressant hood installed, along with a new microwave;
- G - The floor has been cleaned and buffed; it will be stripped and final buffed upon completion of the construction of Roberts Fellowship Hall/Phase II.

All of the above was accomplished on time, within Budget, and with no “re-dos”.

The Sanctuary and Thaxter work was part of Phase I of the Restoration Project. A huge thank you and debt of gratitude goes out to Reggie for his tireless effort and oversight of the work done to date. Reggie was our Engineer/Safety Man on the ground during it all—he talked to and worked with the contractors, and made sure all that was done was done right. Thank you, Reggie.

3) ROBERTS FELLOWSHIP HALL Budget: \$527,000.00

- A - HDC and Planning Board approval have been obtained for construction;
- B - The Building Committee/Project Manager are in the process of selecting a contractor for limited construction management and retain the services of sub-contractors for the construction of Fellowship Hall to make the joining of the Sanctuary and Thaxter a reality.
- C - Construction will begin early this Spring and is expected to take approximately 6-7 months to complete. We will prepare for, but not complete as part of the initial construction, the installation of the elevator from the Thaxter’s ground floor to the main, due to the unexpected high expense of the elevator and funding. The Committee is exploring other means of funding the purchase/installation of the elevator and will complete this part of the construction as soon as practicable—we will not give up, will get this done.

The above constitutes Phase II of the Restoration/Construction part of the Capital Campaign Project, and I firmly believe that this would not have become a reality without the exceptional work, attention to detail, and ability to interact with and respond to the concerns of the HDC without compromising the beauty and functionality of the Hall, by our Project Manager. We can’t thank you enough, Michael.

4) FEES, PERMITS, ENGINEERING, LEGAL, DESIGN, 15% CONSTRUCTION CONTINGENCY IN THE HISTORIC DISTRICT Budget: \$382,000.00

5) MISC

- A - If there can be an “upside” to this Pandemic it is that it has allowed us to complete all of the work outlined above without displacing our parishioners or our Outreach Programs, and get this much work done in an amazingly short period of time;
- B - The Committee Members and Project Manager could not be more dedicated to or conscientious in performing their duties and fulfilling their obligations to St. John’s.

It is an honor and a privilege to know and work with you all, and to call you my friends—thank you for all you have done and will continue to do.

Respectfully submitted,
Barry Heckler
Chair, SJC Building Committee

CENTERING PRAYER

Who could have dreamed in early fall of 2019, as St. John's began to gear up for an exciting new year ahead, that the coronavirus would shortly turn everyone's world upside down? In March of 2020 church services and the many gatherings and diverse activities that made St. John's such a vibrant church community came to a halt. Centering Prayer, which had met Thursday mornings for almost twenty years downstairs in Thaxter Hall, was one of the gatherings affected.

Centering Prayer was introduced to Saint John's by Dick Siener in 2002, the year he joined the clergy staff. In a nutshell, Centering Prayer is a simple form of quiet contemplative prayer. Richard Rohr, The Franciscan Monk, priest and prolific American religious writer, explains what Centering Prayer is as well as anyone. His entertaining and enlightening explanation, "[Becoming Stillness](#)" was recorded at Norwich Cathedral in England. It is easily found on YouTube and well worth watching.

In mid-June, missing our hour of prayer, reflection and conversation, a few Centering Prayer members agreed to a trial run of gathering outside one member's house in a carport sized woodshed with two sides open to the fresh air. Though the woodshed could accommodate only a few people, this trial gathering, with everyone wearing masks and socially distancing, went well. We agreed to meet again, though not as often as at St. John's and on a different day and time. On summer days we met under a canopy of green leaves to the back of the property on a little rise that seemed to always be blessed with a cooling breeze. We stopped meeting in late fall when our space was taken up by firewood and the air became too chilly for us to sit comfortably outside for an hour.

We are looking forward to returning to Thaxter Hall sometime later this year. When that day comes, we would be delighted if some of you would join us, and see for yourself what goes on from 10:30 to 11:30 in the Philbrick Room on Thursday mornings. We welcome you all.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Christy
Centering Prayer participant

COMMON TABLE

The Lord wants us to be His hands and feet in the world. In Matthew 25:35, it is written, “For I was hungry and you gave me food I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me”.

Common Table was not cancelled by the COVID 19 virus, but our table went from a sit down meal in Thaxter hall’s warm indoor dining room to an outdoor drive-through. The pandemic changed how we distributed food, but we didn’t miss a free lunch all year long.

When Saint John’s closed the church to large groups in mid-March 2020, Bob and Sue Nalewajk began cooking the Common Table lunches in their home, bagged them up and drove them to SJC to be distributed as guests drove through the parking lot in their cars. We were not sure that Common Table would have continued through the pandemic, had it not been for the Nalewajk’s decision to transfer our church kitchen to their own. They shopped each week, designed the meals and with three volunteers each week created our take-home meals. These were hot meals of pasta, beef, chicken and pork. There were hot Ruben sandwiches chowders and soups. These were all accompanied by desserts made fresh each week by our Dessert Brigade of volunteer bakers organized by Elaine Van Dyke and Judy Roberts.

The Nalewajks had help in the beginning from Peter Rice and Nathan Bourne to distribute the meals. As we got educated in social distancing, we added more volunteers to get the lunches prepared -Dawn Carswell, Ann Rogers, Suzi Raeside, Dick Coraine, Dave DeSalvo, Jimmy Dean, Conni White, Susan Tuveson and many others.

During the next few months on Thursdays, we distributed masks, handed out sanitizer, clothing from our church Thrift Shop and hot coffee. Margaret Sofio, Suzi Raeside, and Dianne Dean were dedicated in delivering meals each week to the door of those who could not leave their homes. Other guests stayed in the parking lot and ate their lunch, either sitting on the curb or in their cars.

We made it through the summer and then it was time for the Thaxter Hall dining room and kitchen to be renovated, including upgrading the lighting in the hall and installation of a new convection stove with a compliant exhaust system. We continued to prepare lunches during this time at several chefs’ homes, serving between 80 to 120 meals each week. Extra meals were brought to Gather and Salvation Army.

In November, we had a Sunday tailgate party in the church parking lot serving a dinner of mac and cheese with chicken and broccoli to about 60 parishioners. It was chilly out but a fun time with music by Ashley, Olin, and Jen. It was a great time to see real people, not just faces on a computer screen for a Zoom meeting.

December brought our annual Christmas dinner but not in Thaxter Hall as it remained closed. We reached out to the community and served a delicious holiday take-out meal, complete with glazed ham, roasted turkey, mashed potatoes with gravy, stuffing and cranberry, green bean casserole, corn pudding, pie and Lindt chocolates. We served 170 meals to drive through guests on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, delivered meals to the homebound and brought others to Gather. Over 30 volunteers were involved in preparation of this meal, including former chef, Scott Massidda, and Bobbi Koch, who made several dozen Blessing bags for the homeless and the elderly.

We look forward to having a sit-down meal in Thaxter Hall in 2021 when the pandemic situation is over. In the meantime, we will continue with drive-through take out bag lunches until the time that we can all sit down together for a lunch at Common Table.

In closing, thank you to the many parishioners and community members who continued to support the lunches with monetary donations, time and talent. We were also blessed this month with a new chef preparing meals from one of the Thirsty Moose restaurants. God is good!!

Respectfully,
Sue Nalewajk, Suzi Raeside and Judy Roberts

ECONOMY SHOP

The St. John's Economy Shop closed its doors last March, but the amazing spirit of giving that has been the shop's mission since its doors first opened in the early 1960's was not halted by the pandemic. The giving continued; a homeless woman had the opportunity to choose clothing and other personal items from the shop, dozens of bags of clothing were donated to Merrimack College students to help them raise funds for service trips, boxes of clothing and other items were donated to Fairtide in Kittery to help support their homeless program, and New Generation in Greenland will be receiving the Economy Shop's collection of children's books.

The surprises that have occurred over the years at the Economy Shop are too numerous to mention, but the comradery and spirit shared among staff and shoppers has truly been one of the many highlights of this program.

There are no plans for the Economy Shop at the moment, but we are certain that the outreach will continue in a different operating capacity sometime in the future.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Musselman and Brenda Johnson

OFFICE VOLUNTEERS

Can it be so? And how to report on a year when the office volunteers were quarantined, contributing so little, missing our cheery mailing get-togethers and all the fellowship that entails, with no office chores or phones to answer, callers to mis-direct, bulletins to print and envelopes to stuff. It was difficult to feel so removed from that part of St. John's life. What more can I say? I miss you and all the staff and clergy!

Lacey Bangs

POLAR PACKS

For the 2020/2021 winter weather period, the Polar Packs fund of St. John's Episcopal Church provided eighteen sets of sleeping bags, socks, hats, and gloves, along with nine two-person tents and six Burton jackets. The Polar Pack materials were delivered in mid-December and evenly divided among three organizations helping those in need: Salvation Army, Cross Roads, and St. John's. The total cost, after generous discounts by Kittery Trading Post, was \$5,000.

Sincere thanks to our generous Parishioners! Please help us to refill the Polar Pack fund with your contributions.

Peter and Ann Tarlton

PRAYER CHAIN – NOW THE PRAYER CIRCLE

Prayer Chain Annual Report 2020 We are marking the historic year of 2020 by giving this ministry a new name: The Prayer Circle.

When the Prayer Chain began in 1999, prayer requests were made and passed on by phone in the designated order of a chain. Email has made the phone chain obsolete, but the name was carried on.

The far greater change is the 2020 pandemic. Beyond the tragic loss of life, Covid has spread an emotional contagion of fear that contaminates everything. No vaccine can prevent the many forms of fear, but it can be treated with the strong medicine of prayer, available without a prescription.

God knows us better than we know ourselves, especially our fearfulness, as the first words of His promise to us through the prophet Isaiah demonstrate:

“Fear not, for I am with you, be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand.” (vs. 10)

Yet, as wonderful as God's promises are, many of us will still feel like the frightened little girl whose mother tried to comfort her by reminding her that God was with her. “I know, Mama,” she said. “But I want somebody with skin on.”

Jesus himself feared the cross and wanted his friends to pray with him as he prayed in the garden. He understands the child's need, and ours. He knows that we can get so scared that we hardly dare to approach Almighty God all by ourselves. Even when we believe that the Holy Spirit intercedes with us, we want somebody with skin on to be with us, the way we want someone to hold our hand in hard times.

That is the mission of the Prayer Chain. We all have skin on, and we are honored to pray with all who ask for our help and companionship in prayer. We've had a lot of experience in approaching the Throne of Grace, and we've often seen the outpouring of divine grace in response.

Finally, like all the other ministries of St. John's, we have asked ourselves, how could the Prayer Chain help more people in this time of great need?

Maybe we need a new image, as a parishioner once suggested. Images are powerful. A picture—even a mental picture—is worth a thousand words.

A Prayer “Chain” is hard to picture. The “Chain” image is not inviting, nor does it even hint at the warm and loving response of the prayer members to all requests.

The image of a “Prayer Circle,” in contrast, is easy to envision. The “Circle” carries associations of friendship, sharing, and support for those in need. It is an apt depiction of the ministry of prayer.

We hope that our new name will encourage all who need prayer to ask us to pray for them and with them. We are here to be companions, holding hands in spirit with those in need, as together we approach the Throne of Grace.

Thank you to faithful Prayer Circle members Barbara Widen, Helen Gettelman, Judy Roberts, Karen Parrott, Kathi Hardy, Linda Cheatham, Margaret Sofio, and Myrtle Moore.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Mennel

SALVATION ARMY

St. John’s volunteers started 2020 serving dinners each month to about 50 diners at the Salvation Army site on Middle Street in Portsmouth. This changed early in the year with the on-set of Covid-19 and the relocation of the Salvation Army to Heritage Road in Portsmouth. As the pandemic struck, St John’s began preparing a dinner each week to assist with the absence of other groups of volunteers. When the Salvation Army relocated, their diners were fed from a Salvation Army food truck parked on State Street in downtown Portsmouth. In the fall, the food truck was retired and St. John’s weekly meals were served instead at their new location. The hot meals usually consist of soup, meat, vegetables, fruit and dessert.

The Salvation Army continues to receive extra meals from Common Table and other events at St. John’s Church.

On another note, a big thank you goes out to Nancy Fessenden as she retires from her 35 years of service as chair to this ministry. Thanks, Nancy.