



ST. JOHN'S  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
2021 ANNUAL REPORT

MEETING DATE: JANUARY 23, 2022

2020 ANNUAL MEETING NOTES INCLUDED

100 Chapel Street Portsmouth, NH 03801 603-436-8283  
[www.stjohnsnh.org](http://www.stjohnsnh.org)

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# SECTION ONE - CLERK'S REPORTS: ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES 2020 & 2021

St. John's Episcopal Church  
Clerk's Report: **2020 Annual Meeting Minutes**  
January 26, 2020

**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 MerrowVista 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 Plodzik & 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](http://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 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 describes 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 several 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 4<sup>th</sup> year of study. In April, Louise Munding 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 included 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 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

St John's Episcopal Church  
Clerk's Report: **2021 Annual Meeting Minutes via ZOOM**

*At 9:05AM, the Annual Meeting was called to order by The Rev. Robert E. Stevens, Jr. via Zoom. Rob reviewed the agenda and led the 68 online participants in a prayer.*

*John Tabor, our outgoing Senior Warden, summarized the annual report videos that we received daily this past week. Details are found below.*

*Chuck Silva was introduced by John and shared his thoughts on being called to the position of Senior Warden. Chuck looks forward to gathering again in person.*

**Rector's Report:** The Rev Robert Stevens, Jr. had delivered his [Rector's Report](#) via an emailed video on January 25<sup>th</sup>.

- Vestry: In the video, Rob announced that there is not a Vestry election this year. Vestry membership is "frozen" for the duration of Covid because it is a difficult time to on-board new members. John Tabor has retired from his role as Senior Warden and was thanked for his years of service. Chuck Silva has agreed to step up to the role of Senior Warden and has been working with John on a smooth transition.
- Covid Response: Our "Daily Reflections" email with writings from members of the community on topics like "gratitude" and "resilience" has connected us in a whole new way and we are grateful for all the volunteers who shared their thoughts with us.

**Treasurer's Report:** Kelly Boston had delivered her [Treasurer's Report](#) via an emailed video on January 26<sup>th</sup>.

- In the video, Kelly described that the 2020 prelim actuals reflect a break-even year with \$964k income vs \$962k expenses, thanks to the PPP loan, an endowment draw, and extra generosity of our parishioners.
- 2021's budget has been approved by the Vestry and plans another break-even year with \$1003k revenue vs \$1003 expenses. Most of our revenue will come from parishioners and parking revenue.

**Senior Warden's Report:** John Tabor and Chuck Silva had delivered their [Senior](#)



[Warden Report](#) via an emailed video on January 27<sup>th</sup>.

- In the video, John Tabor made some farewell remarks, introduced Chuck, and described the training and transition of the Senior Warden's role.
- Chuck and his wife moved from Albany to Portsmouth about 10 years ago and were pleased to find a new home in the community of St. John's. Chuck retired from his law practice this past year and is looking forward to serving our community in this new way. Chuck thanked John for his many years of service, acknowledged the team's creative communication, and said that as we come out of Covid we will have a stronger community and new improved spaces to gather.

**Regathering Taskforce:** Jeff Croteau, a member of the Vestry, had delivered his [Regathering Taskforce Report](#) via an emailed video on January 28<sup>th</sup>.

- The taskforce's guiding principles are to follow the data, adhere to diocese, state, and local guidelines, and to regather with inclusivity so that "all are welcome".
- There is hope that someday we will be able to regroup, thanks to the vaccine roll-out. In the meantime, we will stay connected virtually and will continue our creative programs.

**Junior Warden's Report:** Gerry Simpkins had delivered his [Junior Warden's Report](#) via an emailed video on January 29<sup>th</sup>. Gerry gave special thanks to Reggie & Barry regarding the completion of Phase I's work to the Sanctuary and Thaxter Hall:

- Sanctuary: We put a new roof, new lightening system, new cupola, new wiring, new lighting. All lighting is LED to save energy. New Window trim, window repair, and new plexiglass over stained glass windows to preserve for years to come.
- Thaxter Hall: In the hall, we repaired the windows, painted throughout, and installed a new ceiling, new chandeliers, and new ceiling fans. In the kitchen, we painted throughout, repaired cabinets, and installed new stainless-steel counters for food safety. and cooking equipment. Outside, we completed the brick way to the cemetery and repaired the granite stairs leading to the parking lot.
- Phase II will start in April and will include the Roberts Fellowship Hall and the Connector. The project will take about 8 months to complete.

**January 31 Annual Meeting Q&A via Zoom:** 68 participants zoomed into our Annual meeting and filled our Q&A with questions & positive feedback.

- Nicole Benevenia commented that she loved the Senior Wardens' video of the theme

of the “peaceful transfer of power”.

- Lucinda Lloyd asked if we could keep the videos online for future reference. Rob replied that we will keep them online for everyone to see.
- Judy Roberts asked if we could get a hard copy of the Annual Report in the mail. Ashley said that hard copies are available on request.
- Bertha Rocray asked about the memorial stones when the Connector building was finished. Rob replied that the stones will move to the section of the walkway that has been extended to the cemetery.
- Gerry Simpkins updated the group that the new heating system is in place in the sacristy.
- Suzie Raeside asked if we receive additional income for the stones. Rob replied that we do not make money, we only pass on the cost of the stones & etchings.
- Sue Nalewajk put up a challenge to the new vestry to double our revenue from parking. Rob replied that Vestry just accomplished this by updating the parking fee structure. The new structure will triple parking revenue from where it was in years past.
- Jeff Croteau shared that he has received positive feedback on his Regathering video. It is a great way to connect with folks from as far away as Oklahoma. Rob said that we will continue the virtual community to stay connected and to continue to welcome all.
- Lucinda Lloyd said that when she first joined St John’s, she received a directory with pictures and addresses. Rob replied that we have added the “Realm” database so that all parishioners can upload their information for an online directory. We will assist parishioners with Realm sign up when we are able to gather again.
- Dick Davidson asked about the elevator. Gerry replied that the elevator is delayed because contractor bids have been well-beyond our budget. We are proceeding with self-contracting to lower the price and will ask for pledges for the capital campaign so that we can include this in the project. Rob reminded participants that our balanced budget is based on pledges and reminded folks to join us in making their pledges. John described that the shaft will be included in the buildout of the Roberts Fellowship Hall and we will install the car and lift as soon as the funds are available.
- Judy Roberts asked about hearing aid support. Gerry replied that now that we have electrical installed we can proceed with putting in a hearing aid loop.
- Tim Platt, Suzie Raeside, and Rob discussed how we are experiencing a learning curve in using Realm and the pledge functionality.
- Ellie Sanderson shared her thoughts that our Zoom meeting is such a wonderful way to connect and she agrees with sending a hard copy to those who could not join us today. Ashley asked participants to send her names of anyone who might need a hard copy of

the Annual Report.

**Associate Rector's Report:** The Rev. Nathaniel Bourne recapped the year in numbers. He introduced his presentation by saying that in a year filled with numbers, we want to highlight St John's with numbers that tell a different story of resilience, perseverance, and community. Highlights included:

- Parish Life: Over the course of the year, we had 100 small group zoom meetings and 268 Daily Reflections.
- Youth & Children: 11 families and 15 additional members participated in our first-ever Christmas Pageant and 20 young people went hiking together to stay connected in a healthy way.
- Liturgical Offerings: Nathan reminded us that in St John's services we breathe in God's love so that we can breathe out service to the community. Liturgical offerings included 228 services and 70 recordings of music that received online views from 4 countries and 20 states. Easter Service alone generated 1k views!
- Outreach: 51 Common Table lunches were served, with 5k individual meals prepared. This past year, we deepened our connection with Gather by sharing our kitchen with them 3x per week, collecting food donations, and facilitating a \$2600 cash donation.

***The 2021 Annual Meeting concluded at 10:00AM following closing remarks by Rob and a closing prayer by The Rev. Anne Williamson.***

Respectfully Submitted,

Karen Thurston Barsanti

Clerk

January 31, 2021

## SECTION TWO - RECTOR'S REPORT

*January 19, 2022*

*Dear St. John's,*

*This Annual Report is submitted with love and care. I encourage you to take some time and read it with that same love and care. 2021 was a challenging year for most of us and our St. John's community worked hard to live into our mission of Welcoming All in the Name of Christ and caring for the least, the lost and the last. Covid-19, named for a virus discovered in 2019, still lingers and forces us to adapt...and we have done just that.*

*One possibly surprising number that has arisen through this year is that we have more people joining us for worship on Sunday now than we had in March of 2020. Our ASA (Average Sunday Attendance) is close to 400 people now. This is made possible by the adaptation to hybrid worship of both in-person and livestream. I believe this development, made mandatory by this virus, will be looked back on many years from now, as a defining moment that allowed us to continue and more fully serve our community. I confess that I did not see this coming, and my favorite joke is, "I never signed up to be a televangelist!" Yet, this ability to serve people who, for many reasons, cannot physically attend in person, is one that is far-reaching and incredibly positive.*

*Most of all I wish to thank you. This community has risen to the occasion and continued to be a beacon of hope and light in a dark time. I cannot fully express my gratitude, yet I commit to continuing the work of sharing the light of Christ and working for justice and peace for all people.*

*Peace be with you,*

*Rob*

*The Rev. Robert E. Stevens*

## SECTION THREE - SENIOR WARDEN'S REPORT

Emerging (almost!) from the craziness of COVID, and the impacts of that experience on our parish and our ministries, was certainly the dominant theme of 2021. These impacts will reverberate for some time.

The response of Rob and his team – and the parish community as a whole – to the COVID crisis exceeded our expectations.

With the steady guidance of Jeff Croteau, we managed the regathering process in a safe and incremental fashion, using a hybrid approach to in-person services – a socially-distanced, masked Rite I in the sanctuary, followed by an outdoor Rite II with music and all the trimmings at Strawberry Banke – while at the same time continuing to build out our online content.

As Rob's team realized that there was a growing appetite for an online experience among both our traditional parish community and our remote on-line audience, they cranked out daily reflections (with excellent participation from parishioners), streaming and recorded worship, and more and more streaming and/or recorded musical programming and other special programming, such as Blue Christmas and the Advent Meditation services. None of this would have been possible without the timely addition of Olin Johannessen, who joined Ashley Wade and Jen McPherson as full-time members of Rob's creative team. Figuring out how to continue to leverage the creative and technical skills of this talented trio, combined with the significant investment in streaming and recording equipment and technology, to increase and improve our streaming, recorded and written online content will be an area of focus as we enter 2022.

We entered 2021 with great uncertainty about the continued impacts of the COVID reality on stewardship and parking revenue. We ended the year relieved to have experienced, due to the continued generosity of our parishioners, stewardship revenue exceeding expectations. And despite entering the year with a COVID hangover that inhibited downtown shopping and dining activity, parking revenue for the year also exceeded our budget assumptions. Combined with lower-than-budgeted expenses, we ended 2021 ahead of budget.

Our capital building program continued in earnest during 2021, as we broke ground on Roberts Hall in July. The foundations and floors were poured, the structure was framed, and windows and doors were installed before the cold and rain arrived in the fall. Since then, progress has accelerated quickly. The elevator will be installed shortly, and the

erection of the brick façade will soon commence (if it has not already). To date, there have been few surprises of any great consequence, and none that appear significant enough to put the project over budget. This reflects the constant daily presence of Reggie Baird on the building site, most often accompanied by Junior Warden Gerry Simpkins, keeping an eye on the contractors, and responding immediately to address any problems as they arise. With their continued oversight, we hope this good fortune will continue.

The 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.

Respectfully Submitted,

Chuck Silva

Senior Warden

## SECTION FOUR - TREASURER'S REPORT

Despite continuing COVID-19 impacts, our 2021 financial performance exceeded expectations, and we start the coming year in a position of financial strength, which is reflected in our budget for 2022.

During 2021, we had a successful compilation of the 2020 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 review audit engagement for our 2021 financials, which is scheduled for the Summer of 2022.

### **2021 Operating Revenue & Expenses**

We are reporting on ***preliminary*** 2021 financial results. Final audited results will be available once our audit is completed this summer. Our operating income is essentially in line with operating expenses. A detailed "line" item report of 2021 revenue and expenses is posted on the St. John's website, [www.stjohnsnh.org](http://www.stjohnsnh.org), in the Annual Reports section.

#### **Revenue Summary:**

2021 operating revenue totaled \$994K, about \$72K more than our budget of \$922K. About 61% of our income was from offerings: pledge, plate, and prior year pledges. A big "Thank You" to our community for your continued generosity during another 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 higher than budget as the economy started to open back up in the latter half of the year. Revenue associated with parking was at \$337K, about \$67K more than our budget of \$269K.

Generous pledge and plate offerings along with the revenue allowed us to remain fully staffed and add a position to the Lay team (Olin) which allowed our programming not only to expand, but to be made more available online.

In the table below, you will find the operating revenue, by category, for 2021 compared to our 2021 budget, including a brief explanation of some of the variances:

Revenue Category	Actual 2021		Budget 2021		Act vs Bud Variance		Comments on Variances
	\$	% of Total	\$	% of Total	\$	%	
Pledge Offerings	\$ 530,959	53.4%	\$ 500,000	54.2%	\$ 30,959	6.2%	2021 Goal was \$500K & 300 pledges, actuals higher than pledge cards strong parking due to re-opening of economy due to covid, budget assumptions were conserva
All Parking	\$ 337,110	33.9%	\$ 269,634	29.2%	\$ 67,476	25.0%	
Plate Offerings	\$ 73,884	7.4%	\$ 105,344	11.4%	\$ (31,460)	-29.9%	2021 actuals lower than budget as we were not in person all year
Program & Outreach Reimbursement	\$ 31,084	3.1%	\$ 29,054	3.1%	\$ 2,030	7.0%	
Building & Ground Income	\$ 6,570	0.7%	\$ 6,000	0.7%	\$ 570	9.5%	
Economy Shop & Other	\$ 4,417	0.4%	\$ 5,222	0.6%	\$ (805)	-15.4%	
Investment Income	\$ 3,751	0.4%	\$ 3,726	0.4%	\$ 25	0.7%	includes reimbursement for plowing
Prior Year Pledges	\$ 2,550	0.3%	\$ -	0.0%	\$ 2,550		
Grants & Gifts	\$ 2,390	0.2%	\$ 1,873	0.2%	\$ 517	27.6%	
Facility Usage	\$ 1,415	0.1%	\$ 1,500	0.2%	\$ (85)	-5.7%	
<b>Total Operating Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 994,129</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$ 922,353</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$ 71,776</b>	<b>7.8%</b>	
Endowment Draw	\$ 80,310		\$ 80,392		\$ (82)	-0.1%	5.4% (in Act 21) vs. 5.5% (in Bud 21) of rolling 3 yr average of endowment value
PPP Loan	\$ -		\$ -		\$ -		no PPP loan in 2021
<b>Total Op Revenue &amp; Endowment Draw</b>	<b>\$ 1,074,439</b>		<b>\$ 1,002,745</b>		<b>\$ 71,694</b>	<b>7.1%</b>	

We withdrew our planned endowment draw of \$80K. A very small portion was used to fund operations, we paid off our loan with the Diocese as planned and the remainder was earmarked for special capital projects, including the Livestream Infrastructure Initiative led by Olin.

### **Expense Summary:**

Our 2021 expenses totaled \$996K, about \$17K more than our budget of \$978K.

Our largest category of expense is people: Clergy and Lay staff. We were able to bring on our Director of Technology Integration (Olin) mid-year and we lost our Curate (Nathan) as he embraced a great opportunity. Our staff has been thriving as a team. The enthusiasm with which they continued to fulfill the mission of the church, despite being in the second year of the pandemic, was obvious.

Several cost categories spent higher than budget. The majority of the overspend was in Building & Grounds as we had unplanned repairs to the garage, steam trap, boiler, and cupola. We also replaced the carpet in the Sacristy. The higher expense in income taxes is due to the higher parking revenue. Higher administrative expenses reflected increases in our audit and communication expenses.

Expenses were lower than planned for music and outreach, as well as for adult, youth, and children's programs, reflecting the gradual return to in-person worship during the year.

In the table below, you will find operating expenses, by category, for 2021 compared to our 2021 budget, including a brief explanation of some of the variances:



Expense Category	Actual 2021	% of Total	Budget 2021	% of Total	Act vs Bud Variance		Comments on Variances
					\$	%	
Personnel	\$ 619,678	62.2%	\$ 626,051	64.0%	\$ 6,373	1.0%	mix in staff (minus Curate mid year, addition of Lay personnel)
Building & Grounds	\$ 117,347	11.8%	\$ 95,248	9.7%	\$ (22,099)	-23.2%	aligned w/ maintenance plans for each year. 2021 includes one time repairs (Boiler & Cupola)
Diocesan Pledge	\$ 109,857	11.0%	\$ 108,345	11.1%	\$ (1,512)	-1.4%	
Income Taxes	\$ 44,524	4.5%	\$ 37,458	3.8%	\$ (7,066)	-18.9%	additional tax expense associated w/ higher parking revenue
Administrative/Offices	\$ 36,093	3.6%	\$ 32,297	3.3%	\$ (3,796)	-11.8%	higher audit fees than planned in budget
Music	\$ 21,352	2.1%	\$ 26,150	2.7%	\$ 4,798	18.3%	lower expenses due to covid challenges (not in person all year)
Property Taxes	\$ 19,330	1.9%	\$ 19,115	2.0%	\$ (215)	-1.1%	
Insurance	\$ 16,864	1.7%	\$ 16,857	1.7%	\$ (7)	0.0%	
Outreach	\$ 5,642	0.6%	\$ 7,000	0.7%	\$ 1,358	19.4%	lower expenses than planned
Adult/Children/Youth Programs	\$ 3,988	0.4%	\$ 7,990	0.8%	\$ 4,002	50.1%	lower expenses due to covid challenges (not in person all year)
Worship	\$ 874	0.1%	\$ 1,700	0.2%	\$ 826	48.6%	lower expenses due to covid challenges (not in person all year)
All Other	\$ 15	0.0%	\$ -	0.0%	\$ (15)		
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 995,563</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>\$ 978,211</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$ (17,352)</b>	<b>-1.8%</b>	
Diocesan Loan	\$ 24,534		\$ 24,534		\$ -	0.0%	loan paid off according to schedule
Special Capital Projects	\$ 54,341		\$ -		\$ (54,341)		using remaining endowment withdrawal to fund special capital projects
<b>Total Op Expenses &amp; Loan Payments</b>	<b>\$ 1,074,438</b>		<b>\$ 1,002,745</b>		<b>\$ (71,693)</b>	<b>-7.1%</b>	

Our loan with the Diocese was paid off during 2021 according to the schedule. The original loan of \$195K funded the parking lot renovations in 2016.

With total revenue of \$994K minus total expenses of \$995K, we anticipate ending the year with a minor (\$1K) operating deficit.

### Endowment (Long-Term Investment Funds)

Our endowment balance as of December 31st is \$1,716,488. We took one authorized withdrawal during 2021 of \$80,310 (or 5.4% of the 3-year average balance). This withdrawal was used to fund operations, partially fund the Livestream Infrastructure Initiative, and pay for other special projects.

Below is a summary of our endowment activity over the past five years:

Endowment Values Last 5 Years					
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Starting Balance	\$1,439,025	\$1,493,929	\$1,338,626	\$1,496,740	\$1,614,683
Growth	\$120,404	(\$90,303)	\$222,114	\$182,943	\$182,115
Withdraws: Operating	(\$68,000)	(\$65,000)	(\$64,000)	(\$65,000)	(\$80,310)
Gifts	\$2,500				
<b>Ending Balance</b>	<b>\$1,493,929</b>	<b>\$1,338,626</b>	<b>\$1,496,740</b>	<b>\$1,614,683</b>	<b>\$1,716,488</b>
<b>% of draw (3 Yr Rolling Avg)</b>			<b>4.5%</b>	<b>4.5%</b>	<b>5.4%</b>

Due to the continued challenges of the pandemic, the Investment Committee did not meet in 2021 but did meet on Friday 21 Jan 2022.

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.

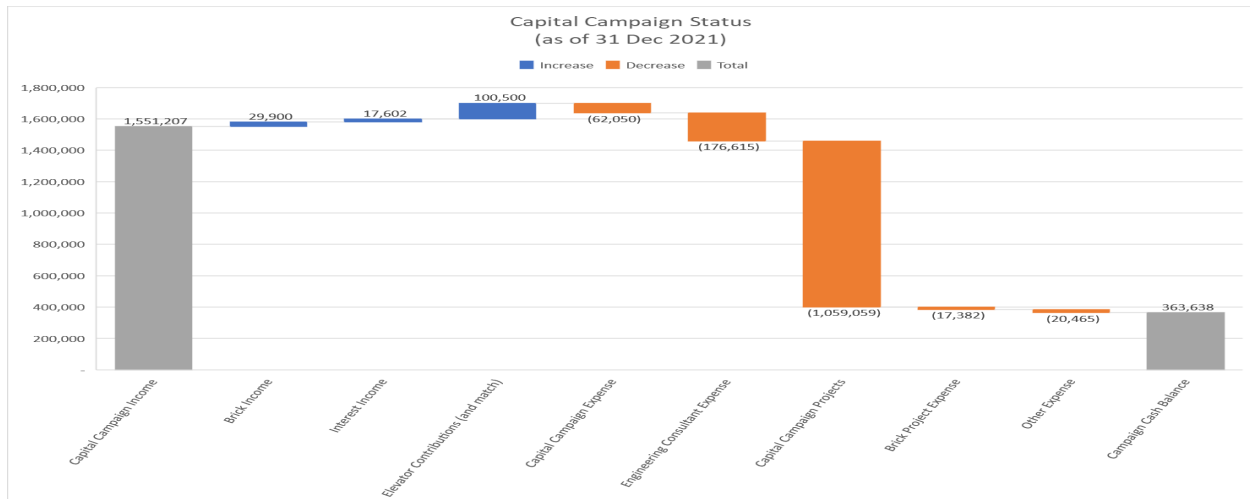
## Connected in Christ Capital Campaign Revenue & Expenses (inception to 12/31/2021)

This is the fourth year for us to report on our Connected in Christ capital campaign, and we expect to wrap up the capital projects tied to this campaign with the completion of Roberts Hall at the end of 2022.

**Thank you very much for your continued generosity!!**

We engaged with our architect 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. Capital campaign funds are deposited in a separate checking account with Eastern Bank.

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

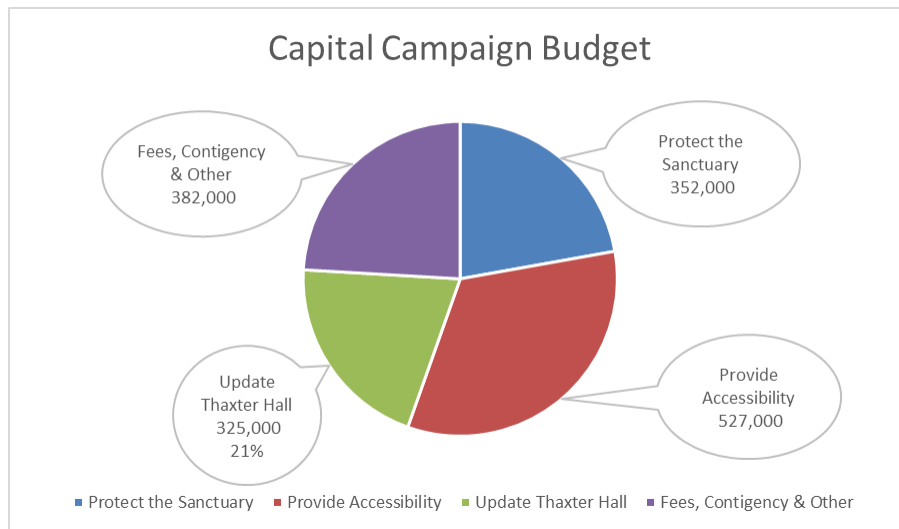


Details of the increases and decreases of the campaign account since its inception:

- Includes \$29.9K of income from brick sales funding the walkway
- Approximately \$17.6K 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, we have collected over \$1.5 million. It is never too late to pledge to our capital campaign.

The original 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.

## 2022 Operating Budget

Although we start 2022 still facing uncertainty about the continuing impact of COVID, the Vestry is pleased to announce that we have approved a balanced 2022 Operating Budget of \$1.1 Million. Most of our revenue stream comes from two sources: our Parishioners and the Parking Revenue. Our goal is to recruit an Associate Rector, maximize parking revenue w/ conservative assumptions and manage expenses accordingly. This year we anticipate that we draw from the endowment at a lower percentage (3.9%). Despite the continuing COVID uncertainty, we will continue to affirmatively pursue our mission and deliver our programming.

2022 operating revenue is planned at \$1.1 Mio which includes an endowment draw of \$63K. About 69% of our income is planned from offerings: Pledge and Plate. Our Pledge assumption for 2022 is \$550K (our campaign goal from 300 pledges). We officially have pledge commitments from 203 families or individuals totaling \$497K.

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 2022 Budget comparing to 2021 Actual (preliminary) including a comment to explain the variance:

Revenue Category	Actual 2021	% of Total	Budget 2022	% of Total	Act 21 vs Bud 22 Variance		Comments on Variances
					\$	%	
Pledge Offerings	\$ 530,959	53.4%	\$ 550,000	53.0%	\$ 19,041	3.5%	currently at \$497K w/ 2023 pledges
All Parking	\$ 337,110	33.9%	\$ 275,767	26.6%	\$ (61,343)	-22.2%	Cambridge Trust Lease reduced, metered/passes parking increased but conservative parking assumptions
Plate Offerings	\$ 73,884	7.4%	\$ 169,500	16.3%	\$ 95,616	56.4%	budget 2022 includes additional one time gifts (difference of \$90K)
Program & Outreach Reimbursement	\$ 31,084	3.1%	\$ 27,362	2.6%	\$ (3,722)	-13.6%	
Building & Ground Income	\$ 6,570	0.7%	\$ 2,250	0.2%	\$ (4,320)	-192.0%	assuming less Cambridge Trust reimbursement due change in lease
Investment Income	\$ 3,751	0.4%	\$ 3,726	0.4%	\$ (25)	-0.7%	
Economy Shop & Other	\$ 4,417	0.4%	\$ 4,424	0.4%	\$ 7	0.2%	
Prior Year Pledges	\$ 2,550	0.3%	\$ -	0.0%	\$ (2,550)	#DIV/0!	nothing planned for 2022
Grants & Gifts	\$ 2,390	0.2%	\$ 1,900	0.2%	\$ (490)	-25.8%	
Facility Usage	\$ 1,415	0.1%	\$ 3,000	0.3%	\$ 1,585	52.8%	planning higher in 2022, still conservative
<b>Total Operating Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 994,129</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$ 1,037,929</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$ 43,800</b>	<b>4.2%</b>	
Endowment Draw	\$ 80,310		\$ 63,404		\$ (16,906)	-26.7%	5.4% (in Act 21) vs. 3.9% (in Bud 22) of rolling 3 yr average of endowment value
<b>Total Op Revenue &amp; Endowment Draw</b>	<b>\$ 1,074,439</b>		<b>\$ 1,101,333</b>		<b>\$ 26,894</b>	<b>2.4%</b>	

Notable budget assumptions for revenue include:

- Pledges of \$550K, aligned with the 2022 Annual Campaign goal of \$550K.
- Plate of 170K, which includes an already generous contribution received.
- Parking revenue assumptions (\$276K) aligned with strong revenue streams for the past two years. Includes a partial renewal of the Cambridge Trust parking lease.
- 3.9% 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 2021 Budget comparing to preliminary 2021 Actuals including a comment to explain the variance:

Expense Category	Actual 2021	% of Total	Budget 2022	% of Total	Act 21 vs Bud 22 Variance		Comments on Variances
					\$	%	
Personnel	\$ 619,678	62.2%	\$ 714,818	64.9%	\$ 95,140	13.3%	includes Assoc Rector, full year of Lay EE compared YoY, COLA/Merit increase, Health Insurance increase of 4.5
Building & Grounds	\$ 117,347	11.8%	\$ 98,398	8.9%	\$ (18,949)	-19.3%	2022 includes maintenance plan approved by Bldg Committee, 2021 included one-time repairs (Boiler & Cupol
Diocesan Pledge	\$ 109,857	11.0%	\$ 113,304	10.3%	\$ 3,447	3.0%	
Income Taxes	\$ 44,524	4.5%	\$ 48,367	4.4%	\$ 3,843	7.9%	aligned w/ parking assumptions & change in CT lease
Administrative/Offices	\$ 36,093	3.6%	\$ 38,413	3.5%	\$ 2,320	6.0%	higher accounting fees for audit compilation
Music	\$ 21,352	2.1%	\$ 26,150	2.4%	\$ 4,798	18.3%	2021 lower expenses due to covid challenges (not in person all year), 2022 assumes "back to normal"
Property Taxes	\$ 19,330	1.9%	\$ 27,737	2.5%	\$ 8,407	30.3%	2022 includes property taxes previously paid by CT (lease)
Insurance	\$ 16,864	1.7%	\$ 16,857	1.5%	\$ (7)	0.0%	
Outreach	\$ 5,642	0.6%	\$ 7,000	0.6%	\$ 1,358	19.4%	2021 lower expenses due to covid challenges (not in person all year), 2022 assumes "back to normal"
Adult/Children/Youth Programs	\$ 3,988	0.4%	\$ 8,589	0.8%	\$ 4,601	53.6%	2021 lower expenses due to covid challenges (not in person all year), 2022 assumes "back to normal"
Worship	\$ 874	0.1%	\$ 1,700	0.2%	\$ 826	48.6%	2021 lower expenses due to covid challenges (not in person all year), 2022 assumes "back to normal"
All Other	\$ 15	0.0%	\$ -	0.0%	\$ (15)	#DIV/0!	
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 995,563</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>\$ 1,101,333</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$ 105,770</b>	<b>9.6%</b>	
Diocesan Loan	\$ 24,534		\$ -		\$ (24,534)	#DIV/0!	loan paid off according to schedule in 2021
Special Capital Projects	\$ 54,341		\$ -		\$ (54,341)		in 21 using remaining endowment withdrawal to fund special cap projects, no special cap projects budgeted in
<b>Total Op Expenses &amp; Loan Payments</b>	<b>\$ 1,074,438</b>		<b>\$ 1,101,333</b>		<b>\$ 26,895</b>	<b>2.4%</b>	

Notable budget assumptions for expenses include:

- Full staff to support programs, care, and outreach including full benefits for a new Associate Rector (starting mid-year). Reflects anticipated aggregate compensation expense increase of 4-5%, in line with Diocesan guidelines. There was no increase during 2021.
- Health insurance premiums increased this year by 4.5%.
- 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, Chuck Silva, Barry Heckler) and are aligned with previous years.
- Administrative/Office expense higher due to the enhanced audit engagement in 2022 (review vs. compilation.)
- 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 self-funding programs (such as Common Table and Choir School) that are part of our mission, but not part of the operating budget.

In summary, 2021 was strong year financially due to the continued generosity of our parishioners and prudent operations for the past several years, especially during 2020/2021. We are confident that 2022 will be no different.

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 RECTOR'S REPORT

*'Continue – to let gratitude be the pillow upon which you kneel to say your nightly prayer and faith be the bridge you build to overcome evil and welcome good.'*

From the poem 'Continue' by Maya Angelou

I continue to be filled with gratitude for the privilege of serving at St. John's and I am so grateful to have this opportunity to thank some of the many people who have contributed to the life of St. John's in so many ways during this extraordinary year, our second year of contending with the coronavirus pandemic.

Firstly, I give thanks for the ministry of the Rev. Nathan Bourne, Associate Rector, who has blessed us with his ministry since 2017, and who received a call to serve as Rector of St. George's Durham NH earlier this year. Nathan's wisdom and grace helped us navigate this second year of the pandemic, creating and leading formation activities for youth and adults as well as outreach and ministry endeavors. He is greatly missed!

There are many people who have given generously of their time and talent throughout 2021 in a rich variety of ways. Heartfelt thanks to all involved in the following ministries:

### ***Adult Formation/Worship***

*Advent Reflection Series* - Hope, Peace, Joy and Love: Our Advent offering this year took the form of reflective Sunday evening services, focusing on the themes represented by the candles on the Advent Wreath: hope, peace, joy and love. We drew from a resource of the Episcopal Church, *'Preparing to Become the Beloved Community'* as we committed ourselves anew to the work of becoming Beloved Community and growing loving, liberating, life-giving relationships across the human family of God.

I am so grateful to Diane Harvey, Peter Tarlton, and Sam Deflitch for their reflections on Hope, Peace and Love, respectively. Those reflections were then offered as Daily Reflections (The Daily Reflection ministry is one of the greatest gifts in this challenging time!). The theme of Joy was experienced in the wonderful Festival of Lessons and Carols. Many thanks to the readers for Lessons and Carols: Steve Falci, Anne Reiner, Whitney Westhelle, Charlie Hudson, Abigail Lown, Seth Kozak and Kathi Hardy.

*Blue Christmas Service* – We returned to an in-person offering of our annual Blue Christmas Service, a time to honor the tension there can be between the joy of the festive season and the reality of loss and grief that needs space in which to be held. Many thanks to Sarah McEvoy for offering the reflection, which again is available as a Daily Reflection.

The beautiful music for the Advent Reflection Series and Blue Christmas were offered by the amazing trio of Olin Johannessen, Jennifer McPherson and Ashley Wade. See the playlist on YouTube!

## ***Lent Programs***

*Guides in the Wilderness – Journeying with the Saints through Lent* - a six week online Lent program, followed by Compline, which explored the lives of the Saints to find inspiration to face the challenges of our own time. Thanks to Dr. Liza Anderson who reflected on the Desert Tradition and the Jesus Prayer, and Steve Falci for his reflections on *St. Ignatius, Jesuits and the Examen*. The program began with *Finding Our Guides: Saints Ancient and Modern*. I offered reflections on the life and ministry of *St. Columba and Celtic Spirituality*, and Nathan reflected on the *Saints of the Russian Church and Praying with Icons*. We concluded the program with *Walking with the Saints through Holy Week*. All of these sessions are available to watch on the St. John's YouTube channel. Please reach out to me for a link.

*Lent in a Bag, Holy Week in a Box* – A big thank you to Christine Hudson for not only the inspiration but the creation of these two offerings at a time when we were still not able to meet for in-person worship. Here was an opportunity for all to engage in the stories of Lent and Holy Week with a variety of items, from seashells to 'gold' coins, with Bible Readings to accompany each week in Lent, and each day in Holy Week. We combined *Lent in a Bag* with an *Ashes to Go* drive through on Ash Wednesday.

*Reading Between The Lines* – RBTL is our weekly Bible Study, using a Lectionary based resource from *The Educational Center* to explore our stories through the stories of the Bible. RBTL continues to meet on Zoom on Wednesdays at 10:30; our time together concludes with Noonday Prayer. Many thanks to Diane Harvey and Sarah McEvoy for sharing the leadership with Rob Stevens, Nathan Bourne and myself on the study (and handling the tech!).

*Sacred Ground* - Sacred Ground is a ministry of the Episcopal Church which provides a curriculum to explore race and racism in America. Two Sacred Ground Circles concluded in early 2021, and a new Sacred Ground Circle, facilitated on Zoom by Steve Falci and myself, began in October 2021. I am grateful to Steve for his partnership in this endeavor. The conversations prompted by the Sacred Ground material, and our own stories, have prompted good, hard, rich conversations, which we hope to continue to lead to informed thought and action.

## ***Outreach***

Reports are offered elsewhere on St. John's various outreach initiatives, but I would like to highlight the generosity of the St. John's Community generally, and in particular fostered by the wonderful Outside The Box Committee. OTB has offered excellent online meetings throughout the year and worked hard to make the 2021 'Fill The Hall' for Gather the most successful ever, both in terms of money and food donated. OTB also applied for and was successful in accessing a \$4000 grant from The Diocese of New Hampshire for the UN World Food Program for Afghanistan – contributions from St. John's brought the total to \$10,000 – fantastic!

## ***Pastoral Care***

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 examples of the care this community continues to offer during the pandemic:

*writing, calling and emailing other parishioners, 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 again been able to give out an amazing number of supermarket gift cards to address food insecurity in this time); organizing and supporting the 2021 SJC food drive for Gather in June, the most successful ever!; providing housing support to prevent homelessness; funding and preparing Polar Packs (thank you Ann and Peter Tarlton for your inspiration and continued effort here!) for those experiencing homelessness; preparing meals – throughout the year – continuing the weekly to-go meals by Common Table as well as for those recovering from illness or surgery.*

There are folks who have helped bridge the digital divide by 'going to church' (using a telephone or a tablet) with someone who isn't online – a shout out to Linda Harville, Jane Holway and Courtney Patrick for faithfulness in this ministry. I am grateful for all those who continue to pray for the needs of our community, the wider community and the world in these challenging times.

There is a role for clergy in the organizing and offering of pastoral care and there have been more baptisms, weddings and funerals in this last year, including in the Sanctuary – amen! - with the added dimension of the ability to livestream services becoming more sophisticated. Being able to offer pastoral services that had been postponed, and to meet in church again, has been such a blessing. Rob and I continue to walk with members of the St. John's community and the larger community in times of joy and sorrow.

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](mailto:anne@stjohnsnh.org)

## ***Safe Church***

There has been a pause in Safe Church training offered through the Diocese as they revisit the provision of online and in person Safe Church Training. Many thanks to Christine Hudson for her help in preparing for the change in training protocols and bringing our Safe Church Database up to date. As we await the new training offerings, I commend to you the Safe Church guidelines displayed on the notice boards in the Narthex of St. John's, in Thaxter Hall and at Tebbetts house. There is a new system for



background checks and we will be reaching out to all who require a background check to reup using the new system.

Respectfully Submitted,

The Rev. Anne C. Williamson

Associate Rector

## SECTION SIX – MUSIC & LITURGY

### **Weekly Worship**

We began 2021 with a completely virtual worship model: pre-recorded Morning Prayer services with clergy, a couple readers, and virtual choral tracks supported by a small group of singers recording in person. On June 6, 2021, we joyfully transitioned to an in-person service model once again, after nearly 15 months of strictly virtual worship. Rite I moved back into the church and our Rite II liturgy was held in the Goodwin Garden at Strawberry Banke. We were thrilled to celebrate Holy Eucharist together once again, sing, and even hug one another – it felt “almost normal”! Many thanks to Larry Yerdon and the team at Strawberry Banke for graciously welcoming us every Sunday morning. We hope this is the beginning of a new St. John’s summer tradition, worshipping God in the beauty of the outdoors.

October 24, 2021 marked Rite II’s official return to the St. John’s sanctuary - fondly referred to as Homecoming Sunday. It was such a special moment to finally have both services return to our beautiful sanctuary on top of the hill. The health of our church community has been our top priority, so our Rite II Holy Eucharist liturgy has experienced a few very slight modifications, in order to keep the service length under an hour. By the end of 2021, we were singing most verses of our hymns and brought back the chanting of the psalms. We continue to have a spoken Eucharist at this time.

### **Parish Choir**

I do not have enough words to adequately express my gratitude for the Parish Choir and their constant enthusiasm, encouragement, and dedication to our church community. The Parish Choir spent the first part of the year recording tracks for our hymns and various virtual anthems. I think we all agree that while we were so grateful to be making

music in any way possible, we were not sad to say goodbye to this particular version of our virtual music ministry! Encouraged by reports that singing outdoors was a relatively safe activity (particularly for vaccinated people), we met a few times throughout the summer to rehearse and provide music for our outdoor worship services. What a thrill it was to move back to our familiar space in October, singing in our favorite corner by the Brattle organ.

A particular highlight of 2021 was our Lessons and Carols service on December 12. The choir was excited to prepare for this beloved service and performed beautifully. Nearly 200 people were physically present that evening, while roughly 80 viewers watched the livestream. There are currently 590 views of the service on our St. John's YouTube channel.

### **Building our Team**

We were thrilled to welcome Olin Johannessen (officially) to our music staff in July 2021, serving as Associate Director of Music. Olin has hit the ground running, fine-tuning our virtual music ministry, composing music for the Parish Choir, directing, singing, accompanying – the list goes on. I have enjoyed his partnership in planning, and I appreciate his skill and vast experience in choral conducting. I'm excited to see the ways our music ministry can expand over the next few years.

### **The Choir School at St. John's: A History**

*(This excerpt taken from Ashley Wade's Daily Reflection, September 14, 2021)*

For four years we operated out of our downtown church space, beginning in 2015, serving students in and around Portsmouth in elementary and middle school. During the winter of 2020, we did our best to maintain our program online, culminating in a "virtual choir" music video. During the academic year of 2020-21, we waited patiently for the world to show us our path forward.

In the fall of 2021, our fifth year of programs, we were eager to get back to working with students who find joy in singing and making music. A partnership at Dondero emerged for several reasons: our buildings are under construction, and we can't safely transport students to St. John's after school from multiple locations. Given the restrictions of the pandemic and access to our physical space, we turned our sights on Dondero because of the consistent support we have received from Principal Kate Callahan and music teacher Abigail Keller. Coming to Dondero allows students to stay in their own space and gives us access to a thoughtfully designed classroom as well as the outdoor space and structures we plan to use daily, weather permitting. A huge goal for us in our planning is

making the program as accessible as possible, and the range of dismissal options we can offer from the school is a real benefit to families.

Jennifer McPherson and Ashley Wade are the veteran leaders of the program, while Olin Johannessen officially joins us this year as a full-time St. John's employee, and we are thrilled for his direction and expertise in the Choir School program. Mr. Johannessen comes to co-direct Choir School with us fresh off a 10-year career as the Grades 6-12 Choral Director in the Portsmouth School District, however he has been a consistent presence in our children's music programs at St. John's for years. We are inspired to envision growth in this program in the coming years and look forward to offering our young singers many exciting opportunities as we go.

### **The Choir School at St. John's: *Where we are now***

*(Written by Jennifer McPherson)*

We were thrilled to finish our fall 2021 semester with 9 students from Dondero. We witnessed substantial growth in our students with each of our three performances, from singing a pop song in unison at our first performance in October, to a beautiful collaboration with Abby Keller on violin with two-part harmony in November, then finishing the semester singing both a Spanish language carol with the adult Parish Choir, and our own solo piece in two-part harmony during our Lessons and Carols service in December. It has been inspiring to watch them grow musically and personally each week, building confidence as we learn to listen and support each other through our music making together. We officially began the second semester on January 18, and greatly look forward to our winter/spring semester with performances in February, March, and April 2022.

### **The Young Organist Collaborative**

The Young Organist Collaborative has fully returned to in person lessons and activities. The program has 13 students enrolled, from first year through 5<sup>th</sup> year of study. In April, Susan Ferre and Wesley Hall 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 2020-2021 program year. In November, we took the students on a field trip to see several organs around Nashua, NH.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer McPherson

Director of Music and Liturgy

Co-Director, The Choir School at St. John's

## SECTION SEVEN – COMMUNICATIONS / YOUTH & CHILDREN’S MINISTRY

2021 began during a pandemic. Early in the year, church services were pre-taped and edited before release. We wondered how to welcome and address newcomers who found us online first, those who may have never, and perhaps will never, step foot into our actual building. The questions we ask ourselves every year held greater weight as we were removed from the pulse of weekly in-person rhythms. Adults, children, youth, healthy, sick, aging... all of us, despite being told to stop living, continued through our various seasons of life.

In the spring of 2021, we celebrated the milestone of Rite 13 with youth members and their families, under the leadership of The Rev. Nathaniel Bourne. While we hadn’t seen much of each other in the season leading up to our May ceremony, we were grateful to celebrate twelve youth participants who had become teenagers amid the uncertainty and upheaval of a pandemic.

Since The Rev. Bourne’s departure from SJC, the youth ministry has been tended by myself, Olin Johannessen, and Rob Stevens. This fall, with the help of talented and creative volunteers, we resurrected the Cooking for Crossroads ministry and Service Sundays. A highlight of the fall was an intergenerational community project that featured the youth group’s passion for feeding people. Over the course of two Sundays, youth members harvested apples from a local orchard, then processed them into many delicious pies which were then distributed by young families to some of our beloved elders. The youth harvested so many apples, in fact, that we had a second cooking experience to process the apples into jars of apple sauce that are still being distributed and enjoyed.

As we envision where we might go with our youth in the next year, we are seeking out new curricula and guidance. Our team of three (Rob, Olin, Ashley) participated in a two-part training entitled: Dismantling Racism Youth Curriculum in September and October 2021. As we discern the ways this will influence our youth formation offerings, we are prayerful that we will continue to serve the youth and their families with service opportunities, community, and spiritual formation options that bring life and spread light.

Our return to church was gradual and while we continued to gather outside in the garden at Strawberry Banke, we adapted some routines to fit the space. Our normal Sunday school gathering was turned into a children’s picnic, led by volunteers or youth members. Often, we played games or sang songs or wandered through the

beautiful outdoor spaces we were fortunate to borrow on those Sunday mornings. These more casual gatherings brought us into community that felt a little more relaxed and a little less defined. Lesson plans and crafts were not the focus, but instead, it was the joy of seeing our friends again and making space to play.

This sense of needing play time brought the Parish Retreat at Merrowvista back into our orbit. With thoughtful conversations with our friends at MV, we planned a retreat that suited our group of 51 humans, including 20 children and youth. As we moved through the fall and the average temperatures on Sunday mornings dropped lower, we deep cleaned the rooms we still have access to despite the construction and gathered the volunteer team to lead Sunday school beginning on October 24, 2021. It had been just over 19 months since we had come together in those spaces. Since then, a team of 6 adults and 3 youth have been sharing the duties of three “classrooms” and a nursery on Sunday mornings. I feel very fortunate to have dedicated individuals who share their experience of joy and wonder with our youngest members each week.

On Sunday mornings after church, the kids come together to sing in the choir room. This has been known as Cherub Choir in the past, but this season we expanded to welcome children of all ages, and even figured out how to squeeze in a Christmas Pageant. To keep our contact time low and our spirits high, we rolled pageant rehearsals into Sunday mornings and welcomed several youth volunteers to help kids prepare. The pageant was performed by a full cast in the sanctuary and live streamed on December 19, 2021. Children also performed at the 4pm family service on Christmas Eve.

2021 has brought hope and growth and yet we navigate moments of doubt and darkness on this path. The value of community and celebration shines clear, so I pray for more opportunities to live and love together in 2022.

Respectfully submitted,

Ashley Wade  
Director of Communications / Children’s Music & Ministries

## SECTION EIGHT – TECHNOLOGY MINISTRY

As things stand today, we can officially say that St. John’s Episcopal Church has a technology ministry. This is remarkable given that a year ago we couldn’t say that. Our evolution and progression to, and eventual arrival in this place has been long, but not exactly slow. I say this primarily because our church has been behind others in this region in offering an online worship experience prior to Covid, but since we came back together, the timeline to bring us into the hybrid-livestream era has been quick and relatively smooth.

### I. From where we came

When the world entered Covid-19 lockdown in March of 2020, our church was not engaged in any digital distribution of services. Our only sharing of in-service content was the publication of sermon audio recordings on our website. We did not capture video of our services, as we did not have means of capturing our services or musical content, and we did not have a viable YouTube channel. To continue delivering the message and worship experience to our community, the St. John’s team began to offer pre recorded virtual church in a Zoom meeting format, quickly evolving to pre-taped and fully produced services then delivered to our congregants via YouTube each week. This process began humbly and evolved steadily into a beautiful and robust virtual worship experience throughout the year-plus of our physical spaces being closed. The technology utilized was relatively simple; iPhones for capturing video, a Zoom Audio recorder for audio, iMovie software for editing video, GarageBand software for editing audio, and the online platform Canva for producing graphic slides and text overlays. Musical offerings were recorded alone in an empty church, or created in individual homes by individuals, then shared via the internet, and edited together to form more cohesive pieces.

### II. Recognizing next steps

I officially joined the SJC staff in July of 2021 with the understanding that it was my primary objective to problem solve around the issue of pre-producing virtual church services, which was costly for our staff from a labor-hours perspective, and help move the church in the direction of being able to capture and distribute our in-person worship experience via live streaming technology so our program staff could return to their in-person roles without also having to dedicate hours to taping, cutting, editing, and producing virtual church services for the internet. With the long-term goal of purchasing and implementing a professional-grade live streaming system of cameras, media switcher control surface, broadcast-grade computer interface, area-specific lighting solutions, as well as a new digital audio mixer and high-quality microphones to

capture and process our audio, I took my first meeting with an audio-visual vendor representative on July 8, 2021. Throughout the remainder of July and August, the project was put out to bid with three separate audio-visual vendors, eventually separating the audio needs from the visual, and putting those elements out to bid with companies specializing in live audio.

### III. Temporary workaround, learning as we go

Our first live streamed service was a funeral on August 6, 2021. Due to the nature of the service and the family's need to have it live streamed and captured, I spent the weeks leading up to this preparing our physical space and connecting it with the online space. I temporarily wired our space for better audio capture via microphones we already owned, brainstormed, and researched and implemented camera solutions using technology we already owned, and downloaded a few small pieces of software, mostly free or inexpensive, that we could use for the broadcast component in order to push content to our YouTube channel. The clergy and program staff worked together to understand how adapting to this new medium would require additional planning, rehearsal, and in-situation awareness of how we deliver our worship experience without sacrificing the integrity of the in-person experience while also creating a high-quality representative product for those watching at home. These challenges would serve as guiding lights as we continued to learn about live streaming technology, solicit quotes, and prepare the physical church space for the installation of a professional-grade system for live streaming. Meanwhile, with some free broadcasting software, two iPhones, and some luck, we began regularly live streaming our 8:00am Rite I Holy Eucharist Sunday services on August 9, 2021.

### IV. Respecting the past, updating for the future

Once we approved the project bids and entered into agreements with Robert Haigh of Access AV (visual and broadcasting elements; Concord, NH) and John Coretto of WHB Concert Production Services (audio elements; Hampton, NH) in September, we began the process officially by engaging the design, demolition, and building services of longtime parishioner Jim Wakefield. Jim was recommended to me by Rob Stevens and several others who spoke very highly of him and the fine craftsmanship he demonstrated, most recently on the built-in safes in the sacristy, and several other projects he'd completed for St. John's over the many years of his membership in the church. Jim met with me to discuss our need for the creation of a control booth with desk surface upstairs in the balcony/choir loft, a project that would require the removal of a dividing wall and bench seats between pew boxes and construction of a U-shaped desk surface. Jim took measurements, and we talked through what the new equipment would require in terms of space, dimensions, and functionality, as well as the desire of all parties that the new control booth space and desk surface must reflect the authentic design and style of our historic building. In short, the mission for Jim was to create a modern booth with modern functionality and strength that would look and feel as

though it had always been part of our 1807 building. Jim took on this project and succeeded mightily, completing the project on time and to the specifications required with incredible care and precision; especially notable given the challenges presented when working in a 200-plus year-old building. If you haven't been upstairs to see it yet, I cannot say this enough times: you must.

#### V. Final preparations, installation, and implementation

Our physical sanctuary space was further prepared with additional infrastructure updates to the electric and internet, bridging a hardwired connection from our modem in the Thaxter Hall basement over into the sanctuary, and running up to the control booth. Additional Cat-6 cabling was installed by Holway Electric, both for audio and visual purposes: three cable runs for audio (new audio technology enables audio signal to be conveyed via Cat-6 prior to XLR) from downstairs front pews up to the booth; and seven cable runs, both downstairs and upstairs, for cameras. All four of the purchased PTZ cameras (the title PTZ refers the camera's features: pan 170° side-to-side, tilt 90° up and 30° down, and 30x optical zoom) run with a technology called PoE, or Power over Ethernet. This simplifies the installation process, as you don't have to run electric to them in addition to signal cabling: the Cat-6 cable carries power to, and returns video signal from, the cameras. Additionally, eight new electrical outlets were installed in the control booth for the new equipment, and two on opposite sides of the balcony molding for lighting.

The month of December is intense for any church. Advent and Christmas services present feelings of anticipation and escalation and, for clergy and staff, exceptional busy-ness. In the first two weeks of December 2021, with all that was going on, we added the additional challenge of the installation and implementation of our newly purchased live streaming system. Four PTZ cameras were mounted, the professional-grade broadcast computer (called a TriCaster) was installed in the booth. A pair of stereo condenser microphones were suspended above the balcony to capture the organ, choir, and congregation. The new 48 channel digital mixer, of which we had taken delivery on earlier in the fall, was relocated to the booth, programmed, and populated with all our various sound sources. I spent many late evenings in the church teaching myself how to use the TriCaster and PTZ cameras and media switcher control surface prior to a day-long training session with our vendor representative. Our first service live streamed with our new system was the 8:00am Rite I Service of Holy Eucharist on Sunday, December 12, 2021, a mere 6 weeks after inking contracts. In addition to weekly Sunday services, we have since streamed our Service of Lessons and Carols, our annual Christmas Pageant, and the 8:00pm Rite II Christmas Eve service.



As of January 9, 2022, we are streaming both Rite I and Rite II Sunday Services. January 20 marked the return to in-person Thursday Morning Prayer service, with live stream, and we are preparing to live stream our annual meeting on Sunday, January 23.

## VI. Imagining ahead

Although some may look with a critical eye or question the necessity, I can say with full confidence that the decision to pursue and implement this live streaming system is one that will continue to serve our community, both in-person and remote congregants by minimizing the divide between what happens in-person, and what we deliver to our at-home congregants as a worship experience. We are now at a point where individuals who normally worship in-person may choose to stay home and still participate for any reason, whether it be a temporary health issue or physical ailment, distance or proximity, weather, or travel restrictions, etc. As our physical space continues its progression toward greater accessibility via the new Roberts Hall connector and the new elevator from lower-to-upper Thaxter, so too has our congregation's access to the worship experience itself. We as a program staff are in awe of the robustness of this system and have only begun to scratch the surface of what we can do with its power, and how to marshal its considerable capability in engaging congregants near and far, and we are brainstorming ways to create digital-only content to supplement our broadcast service offerings and expand our digital ministry.

It is also notable that with this high caliber, professional-grade equipment, we can now offer a robust solution for many different types of in-demand services including concert live streaming and recording, as well as fully produced wedding and funeral live streaming and recording, to name a few. In my previous career as the Grades 6-12 Choral Director for the Portsmouth Public Schools, I often found myself searching for ways to capture and preserve our performances, something for which our new system is perfectly suited. Recently, in speaking with musicians and conductors from around the Seacoast, I can say that our church is now uniquely positioned as a sensible and attractive performance and recording venue complete with high quality video and audio broadcasting and recording capabilities, all of which adds further value for name recognition, word of mouth recommendations among artists and ensembles, and enhanced foot traffic and continued viability within the wonderful artistic community of the greater Seacoast region. The Music Hall we are not, but that's not the point. Many ensembles, small groups, and soloists don't require or even want such a large venue with large overhead costs. I believe we can fill a unique niche with some careful consideration and gentle promotion.

## VII. For the (historic) record

In the process of demolition, Jim Wakefield uncovered something awe-inspiring. On the unpainted side of an original 1807 pew support board, in white chalk, is what appears to be the script signature of the name “James Grant.” Some cursory research by Jim Wakefield, in partnership with the Portsmouth Athenaeum, indicates that there was a James Grant living in the area at the time, and our presumption is that he played a role in the construction of that interior architecture. In this vein, I would like to include the names of those individuals who helped install this system for us, effectively helping us move into a new future for our historic church. With gratitude for all who’ve helped bring us to this point:

Jim Wakefield, engineer and builder of our control booth and desk surface

Access AV: Robert Haigh and team members

WHB Concert Production Services: John Coretto, Evan Paraskos

Holway Electric: Jim Holway, Jonathan Philbrook, Bud Moore, Ian MacDonald

Respectfully submitted,

Olin Johannessen

Director of Technology Integration and Associate for Music and Youth Ministries

## SECTION NINE – COMMITTEES & MINISTERIES

### ALTAR GUILD

As the virus loosened its grip on us and the doors of St. John’s opened, the Altar Guild was once again able to prepare the altar for services. Soon it was summer, and we were privileged to hold services in the beautiful garden of the Goodwin Mansion at Strawberry Banke. This was a wonderful opportunity to meet visitors and interested parishioners. We wish to thank Strawberry Banke for their generous offer and warm hospitality. Next, we enthusiastically prepared for “opening day”-cleaning, polishing and pressing linens. It was truly gratifying to be back doing what we all love to do- preparing the altar for all services including Baptisms, weddings, and funerals.

The Altar Guild at St. John's is a ministry that has been active since 1930 when the wife of The Rev. Maxwell Ganter recognized the need for this service. Originally it was open only to women, but now it is open to both men and women. Anyone wishing to join the Altar Guild, please speak to any member or to Bertha Rocray, Altar Guild Directress.

Another responsibility of the guild is to maintain the flower chart found in the narthex. The chart is for those wishing to donate flowers in memory of a loved one, or in thanksgiving of a special event. We would like to thank all those who generously contributed to the Christmas and Easter flowers. We would also like to say thank you for new carpeting and a new larger safe for all our precious items.

Respectfully submitted,

Bertha H. Rocray, Altar Guild Directress

Virginia Edwards, Treasurer

## BUILDING COMMITTEE

The SJC Building Committee—

Bob Nalewajk, Kelly Boston, Anne McSally, Chuck Silva, Gerry Simpkins, Reggie Baird/General Contractor, Michael Campbell/Historic Architect, Project Manager, Barry Heckler—has had a very busy, exciting, and rewarding end of Restoration/Construction, Phase II, Capital Campaign Project, and offer the following for review:

**ROBERTS FELLOWSHIP HALL CONSTRUCTION** Budget: \$956,193.00

(1) New Addition/Fellowship Hall—completely architecturally compatible with the Church and Parish/Thaxter Hall, is completely enclosed, windows, roof, gutters, drains and ice melt with auto temperature-controlled system installed; exterior brick install to be completed asap by new our Mason, Patrick Nesius Masonry;

(2) Elevator—shaft framed out, sheetrock installed, electrical and communication service to elevator control room in place, elevator control room framed, awaiting elevator installation.

(3) Chairlift—to transport passenger from Thaxter main floor through Fellowship Hall to Vestibule of Church, to be installed asap/Techs are on standby.

(4) Flooring—estimates have been received for installation of new tiles in addition to repair and refinish of floors in Thaxter;

(5) Exterior/Interior Doors—temporary exterior entrance door installed, awaiting order and lead time for delivery of all interior doors.

The Historic Architect/Project Manager, Michael Campbell, General Contractor, our own Reggie Baird, the Building Committee, and the Contractors working with us—Rogers Carpentry, Fern Lessard Roofing, MJA Plumbing, Holway Electric, Patrick Nesius Masonry, T. Roy Construction, Perry Bros, Mike Petlick/GSPM—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 continue to do to make Roberts Fellowship Hall a reality.

Respectfully submitted,

Barry Heckler

Chair, SJC Building Committee

## CENTERING PRAYER

After a long, COVID driven hiatus, The Saint John’s Church Centering Prayer Group is again meeting in the Parish Hall, Philbrick Room every Thursday morning from 10:30 to 11:30 mask and social distancing are required.

Centering Prayer is a form of contemplative meditation. The hour is spent in twenty minutes of silence, evoking an awareness of God’s presence in us and in the world, followed by prayer and reflective conversation.

Anyone is welcome to join this friendly and caring group either to just “check us out” or to participate more often. There are no obligations whatsoever. If you have questions, please contact St. John’s Associate Priest, The Reverend Dick Siener, care of the parish office 1-603-436-8283.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Christy and Centering Prayer Ministry

## COMMON TABLE

For I was hungry and you gave me food.” Matthew 25:35.

Nothing describes our Christian purpose to be the hands of God more than this verse. The volunteers of Common Table worked tirelessly every Thursday to provide a meal to all who asked. Here are some of the highlights for the year.

Previously, we spent most of 2020 getting used to serving lunch as a take-out meal in a bag handed out in the lower parking lot. So, continuing this process another year, although frustrating because we couldn't eat in the newly renovated Thaxter Hall, was standard operating procedure for us. We now had a regular rotation of six to eight chefs who planned their own menu, purchased the supplies and ingredients for that meal, and then directed the Common Table (CT) volunteers in getting the meal cooked. Each week, 120 lunches were prepared including an entrée, salad or other side, dessert, fruit, napkin, utensils, and wipes all in a paper bag.

Our lunch menus could cover the world. We've served shepherd's pie (Ireland), chicken enchiladas (Mexico), pastrami sandwiches (Jewish), Philadelphia cheesesteaks and other American hero sandwiches. *BTW*, Elaine Vandyke and her crew of cookie bakers are second to none, continuing to provide the desserts for these meals.

The CT team of chefs took on a new look this year. In addition to individual volunteers, CT now had the Thirsty Moose Restaurant and the Portsmouth HS Culinary Arts Program students providing lunches for us. These efforts give the CT volunteers a break from cooking and provide a learning experience for the PHS students – both for cooking the meal and participating in the distribution of the bagged lunches in the parking lot.

We also instituted two new “chef opportunities.” Instead of one person responsible for the entire meal, we had a “Boy's Day” and a “Girl's Day.” Each of these respective days allowed the men and women volunteers to work together to prep the meal, encouraging camaraderie and teamwork among these two groups, while serving a hearty meal for our guests. We always welcome new volunteers to help these teams.

Did you know that several of the CT volunteers didn't even cook! They provided transportation to bring lunch to many SJC homebound parishioners. On the reverse side, several of the recipients of these meals included the construction crew working on the connector project – tying the church to Thaxter Hall. I like to think that a good meal helps with good construction.

Next year we look forward to serving lunch in Thaxter Hall again. Thanks to all who helped this year.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Nalewajk

## EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS & READERS

When the pandemic canceled in-person worship, the dedicated group of Eucharistic Ministers and Readers found themselves at a loss. Cleverly, the clergy quickly began recruiting folks to read for the taped services, even adding a few new people to the list.

When we returned to the church and to the Goodwin Garden at Strawberry Banke during the summer those readers continued their roles, and now the increased number of readers add an important element to the services. Limiting the number of people in the confined space at the altar means using fewer Eucharistic Ministers, but we are hopeful that we will return to a more normal situation in the near future.

We are very fortunate to have such a willing and flexible group whose participation in the worship services gives additional depth and richness to the experience for all.

Respectfully submitted,

Lacey Bangs

## OUTSIDE THE BOX

*“God’s love refuses to be kept in a box”*

So said Bishop Rob Hirschfield at St. John’s in April 2018, echoing the Presiding Bishop, Michael Curry’s vision of our being the Beloved Community.

In 2021 we, like many of us, had to adapt to online meetings and are grateful for the great support and encouragement from our clergy and technical support. We were very pleased to grow our steering committee and expand our outreach, responding to both local and international initiatives which both inspired and educated us on the amazing work of God’s kingdom. We learnt more locally from Gather (and contributed to the Fill the Hall Food drive), Cross Roads, Hope on Haven Hill, and Seacoast Mental Health. Internationally we supported the World Food program’s feeding children in Afghanistan and with Ascentria resettling Afghan refugees in Portsmouth NH. We successfully applied to the Diocese for a Sustainable Development grant of \$4000 and we are grateful to have received a further \$6000 from St John’s making a total of \$10,000 raised and now at work in Afghanistan.

Watch for news on our next OTB meeting in February 2022 which we hope to be “I got bridged” and an update on the work in Afghanistan. We are always pleased to receive ideas for future Outside the Box meetings.

*Sandie Dika, Carol Gruen, Charlie Bickford, Sandra Pagel, Linda Cheatham, Ned Thompson, Sooky Lassen.*

Respectfully submitted,

Sooky Lassen

## POLAR PACKS

Due to the generosity of members of St Johns and the Seacoast community, and Kittery Trading Post, we again positioned eighteen **Polar Packs** at places for homeless people. By early December, the Salvation Army, Cross Roads, and St John's Episcopal Church each had six sets of dual sleeping bags, hat, gloves, and warm socks. We now include more, easily assembled yet sturdy, two person tents with the **Polar Packs**, in order to protect people against cold rain, wind and snow. We truly appreciate your sustaining support for this compassionate mission, as we are likely saving lives. We are touched by your generosity and sincerely thank all who help!!

Peter and Ann Tarlton

## PRAYER CIRCLE

The St. John's Prayer Circle 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 Circle has been there for all of them over these many 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](mailto:susanmennel@gmail.com) to add a name to our daily prayer list.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Mennel

## USHERS

Although the Usher Team's role has been limited since the start of Covid, we have nonetheless been able to continue our ministry under extreme circumstances. The Usher Team currently has 27 Ushers on our roster with about 9 of those ushers being inactive currently. Since we started up with in-person church last Fall we have been able to activate 8-10 Ushers out of the 27 on a steady basis. We try to schedule 5 Ushers per service but have been able to make do with as few as 3 Ushers if circumstances prevent us from having a full roster on Sundays. I suspect that the reason we have had such a limited staff since we started with in-person church service is likely due to some of our members not feeling comfortable coming back to church until the Pandemic is over. Covid, and general health issues have generally affected our staffing numbers week to week. I am of the belief that our attendance numbers at church will return to normal later this year once the Pandemic has run its course.

Despite the Pandemic, I have been so proud of our Usher Team in such a time of uncertainty. We had a lot of fun over the Summer at the more casual outdoor services at Strawberry Banke, and I hope that we can do these again this Summer. Oh, we were also able to add 2 new ushers to the team from my conversations over the Summer as well!

There is such a spirit of fellowship at St. Johns and willingness for people to serve and help out when needed. I've been truly humbled and in awe and thankful for our church community through it all!"

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Carey



## WATCH TEAM

It's hard to believe that the St. John's Watch Team is one year into our ministry to help keep our Parish Hall & Sanctuary secure! The Watch Team was born out of a casual conversation I had with Reggie Baird in January of 2021. Because of the Pandemic and St. John's church going to a virtual service, Reggie was concerned that our buildings were suddenly left unattended and unoccupied. This presented an issue in that there was no one to make sure our buildings were locked and that there could also be mechanical issues that we would be unaware of.

Thus, the Watch Team was created that day, consisting of a wonderful team of caring individuals that love St. Johns and want to make sure that our buildings are safe and secure. The Watch Team includes Randy Carey, Sarah McEvoy, Sharon Orr, Anne McSally, & Brad Lown. We decided that it made sense to pick volunteers that live within 10 minutes or so of St. Johns to do the inspections.

I am very proud of our team and the fantastic job everyone has been doing. We have discovered during our daily inspections, doors and windows left open or unlocked, lights left on, plumbing and heating leaks, water infiltration from the connector construction, and other minor things too numerous to mention here.

The St. John's Watch Team plans to continue this service through the end of major construction on the connector and Thaxter Hall which is anticipated to be done by early Summer, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Carey

## SECTION TEN– DICESAN CAMPAIGN *from deep roots*, NEW LIFE

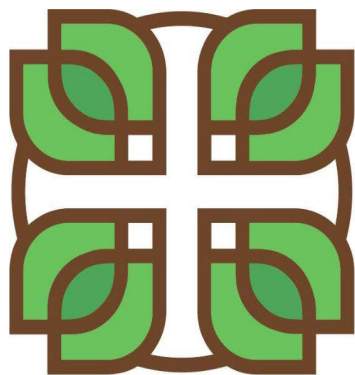
After many years of consideration, Bishop Rob and leaders of the Diocese have decided to explore the readiness of Episcopalians in New Hampshire to support a capital campaign to raise funds for the vitality of the church.

We will be sharing updates with you so we can all follow the progress with the whole diocese. There is a dedicated area on the diocesan website devoted to this effort. There is also a brief survey there to share your thoughts about the proposed projects to help complete a diocesan vision. Please review the videos on the website from Bishop Rob and those who have already benefited from the proposed funding areas.

<https://www.givingsites.com/deeproofs>

“We fervently believe that the Church is emerging from a period of pruning and is poised to grow, flower, and thrive in ways we do not yet completely understand. Please join as we enter a period of discernment for diocesan-wide initiatives.” -Bishop Rob

Please reach out to Rob with questions: [rector@stjohnsnh.org](mailto:rector@stjohnsnh.org)



from deep roots

**NEW LIFE**