

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PARISH

DECEMBER, 2022



**REVIEWING 2022 &
LOOKING AHEAD TO 2023**



ST. JOHN'S
EPISCOPAL CHURCH



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AGENDA

AGENDA for St. John's Annual Parish Meeting, Part I
December 4, 2022

- 1 The meeting is called to orderThe Rev. Sarah Phelps, Rector
- 2 Prayer is offeredThe Rev. Philip Zoutendam, Curate
- 3 The Clerk of the meeting is appointed.....The Rev. Sarah Phelps, Rector
- 4 The Agenda is presentedThe Rev. Sarah Phelps, Rector
- 5 Thanksgivings for outgoing Vestry class of 2022.....The Rev. Sarah Phelps, Rector
- 6 Nominees for Vestry class of 2025 are presented.....Elizabeth Melvin, Sr. Warden
 - *Four members will serve for three years.
 - *Nominations from the floor are received (if any). Vote is taken (or, if no additional nominations are made, candidates are elected by acclamation).
 - *On appointed member is introduced (Gabrielle Keffer). She will complete the term of former Vestry member, Jeff Heynen, who needed to resign early due to conflicts with work and family commitments.
- 7 The Senior Warden's Report.....Elizabeth Melvin, Sr. Warden
- 8 The Junior Warden's Report.....Kevin Closson, Jr. Warden
- 9 The Treasurer's Report.....Al Sauer, Treasurer
- 10 A report from the Chair of the Strategic Design Team.....Lois Sauer, Chair
- 11 The results of the Vestry election are announced.....Elizabeth Melvin, Sr. Warden (or second ballot distributed, if needed)
- 12 The Rector's Report and Dialogue with the Parish.....The Rev. Sarah Phelps, Rector
- 13 Closing Prayer.....The Rev. Sarah Phelps, Rector
- 14 The Meeting is adjournedThe Rev. Sarah Phelps, Rector



ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES FOR 2021, PART I SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 10:45 am by Reverend Sarah Phelps, who then led the congregation in a prayer. David Bennett, Sr. Warden was introduced, and Suzanne Hetzel was appointed Clerk of Meeting. Mo. Sarah presented the agenda. She then expressed thanks for the past year. Special thanks were given to Troy Thomas, Mynn Paige, David Bennett, and David Bland for their contribution as Vestry members who are retiring at this time. David Bennett introduced the new candidates for Vestry: Pamela Ali, Kenille Baumgardner, Bill Van Cleve, Roxanne Johnson, and Bill Kovacs. MOTION: John Rich moved the nominations to be closed. Seconded by David Bland. Other candidate nominations were opened. With no further nominations the discussion was closed. The motion was approved unanimously. Rules for voting as prescribed by the church were explained by Mo. Sarah. Ballots were distributed, filled out, and collected for counting.

Sr. Warden David Bennett gave his report on the past year including the reopening of the preschool, hiring a part time youth director, part time children and families Associate Rector, and Music Director. The parish also engaged the services of Ministry Architects to consult with the congregation as it grows, and expands its ministries. We enhanced our worship capabilities and slowly reopened the sanctuary. The staff began the process of migrating to REALM, a new organizational platform for church operations projected to take effect in the new year. He reflected that any two of these would have been an accomplishment in a normal year, but this was a great investment in St. John's future. He stated it was important to step back and paint a picture of a vibrant and engaged group of people. Robert Stell, Junior Warden gave his report, reflecting on how active the church is all the time; not just the building but the people.

Treasurer Al Sauer reported on the financial health of the church. He reflected the growth and activity of the church even with hiring three new staff. He spoke of the refinancing of the Education Building loan and the prospects of paying it off in less than 3 years. He also discussed Payroll Protection Plan grants that helped pay for continued operations of the preschool and church. Detailed reports were available for anyone who wanted one.

Lois Sauer reported on the Strategic Design Team that is working with Ministry Architects. The seven congregants and Mo. Sarah are the team who are working to make sure St. John's functions and thrives as it continues to grow and welcome new guests, programs, and members. They are evaluating and expanding staff structures to operate more efficiently. Lois explained the visual presented: Strategic Pillars, which are arranged in four teams. They are working to: Iron out the wrinkles of the new database, New Parish Care Team, 35 Parish leaders for a Vision Summit, Create a draft Mission Statement and Value Statement, Map out the internal structure of the church, Finalize the mission and value statements, Document the responsibilities of groups, individual positions, and committees.

Joy Shillingsburg reported on Outreach. She spoke to the progress over the last five years in support of the Wake Forest Community Meal Programs, which will be converting to the Wake Forest Community Table. Joy gave an overview of the advancement of the programs from feeding children in a summer program to being awarded a Grant to continue to support the mission. She spoke of not just feeding those in need, but understanding the source of need and addressing it from its origin. The food service now operates 3 days a week in conjunction with Olive Branch Church. Hope House, Wellington Mobile Home Park, and Olive Branch Church are the beneficiaries of these programs. As an example, over 10,000 meals have been served at Hope House, and quarterly gatherings are held to connect and educate people.

The results of the election were announced; Kenille Baumgardner, Bill Van Cleve, Roxanne Johnson, and Bill Kovacs were elected. Mo. Sarah gave the Rector's Report, pointing out the incredible faith and resilience over the last two years. She stated the challenges have made us stronger. Discussion was opened to the congregation. David Bland asked how new people respond when Mo. Sarah meets with them. Responses generally are: Joining because of the music and the Music Director, clearly such a community feeling love and care, moved by the community work, Mo. Sarah stated these are our gifts from the Holy Spirit. Gratitude was shared by Pinky Cooke for a church funeral during COVID. Bob Hill expressed thanks to Al Sauer. Lois Sauer thanked all who make audio visual events possible in our church. Mo. Sarah closed with a prayer. The meeting was adjourned at 11:55 am.

Suzanne Hetzel



ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES FOR 2021 PART 2 SUNDAY, JANUARY 30, 2022

The meeting was called to present the final draft of the Strategic Design Team's Mission and Values statements, a set of 3-Year Goals, and the Vestry-approved Operating Budget for 2022 to the Parish.

The meeting began at 10:40 am with a prayer by Rev. Sarah.

The Mission, Values and Goals were presented by Lois Sauer, Chair of the Strategic Design Team. This document was sent out in an email to the parish previous to the meeting and Lois just went over the summary of the newly stated mission and values for the Church. Lois said that the input from the parish questionnaire along with brainstorming of other parish leaders helped with making the mission, value, and goals. Goals were formed with a need to be manageable and concise and easily followed. She hopes that ultimately we will be true to the parish dream for the Church. She assured parishioners that even though a ministry might not have been mentioned, does not mean they were ignored. This mission statement is simply a guide as we form a plan for our parish. She urged parishioners to read and ponder the goals and give feedback as necessary.

Al Sauer, Vestry Treasurer, gave a presentation of the 2022 budget:

Operating budget - \$436,895.00

2021 budget - \$453,891.00 compared to 2020 which was \$425,808.00

Estimated giving for 2022 - \$361,095.00

There is currently no plan for another PPP loan/grant for the coming fiscal year

Salaries - included for 2022 is a 2% COL

Clergy expenses- \$163,843 (2022)

Staff costs- \$154,731.00

Total budget for personnel- \$318,574.00

Maintenance costs- \$21,750.00

Miscellaneous office costs - \$25,250.00 (office supplies etc)

Diocesan fair share - \$41,340.00

Utilities - \$14,600.00

There is a drop in cost of natural gas but electricity is up because of the use of Ionizers to clean the air for the building.

Program costs (all Ministries) - \$25,950.00

Mortgage has 2 years to go - \$28,039.00

Deficit budget - \$48,108.00 (11% of income)

Total operating costs - \$485,003.00 (2022)

A question was asked regarding whether the church paid for convention fees. In the last few years before Covid some was covered by the Church.

Elizabeth Melvin, Senior Warden mentioned how thrilled she is about the direction the church is going and feels confident about the budget (despite the noted deficit) as this is getting us closer to our goals. She is also thrilled about the decision to hire Rev. Stephen and Marcia, the Organist/Music Director. She is looking forward to the coming year and getting to know more parishioners.

Parishioners were reminded to send thoughts and comments regarding the Mission, Vision, Goals, and 2022 budget and to be faithful members of the community.

Meeting ended at 11:25 am

Submitted by,
Pam Ali
Clerk of the Vestry



REPORT OF THE RECTOR

Priests, I think, are not supposed to have favorite scripture passages or liturgical seasons, kind of like you're not supposed to have a favorite child. But I do. Advent is my favorite season, and the scripture passages we read in Advent are among the ones I treasure most in all of scripture. (There. You've heard my confession. Please don't tell the bishop.)

I love that in our Christian life we prepare for Christmas by remembering the words of those who longed for God to send a Savior, and trusted God to do it; to not remain far off and aloof as a God "above all things" but to come and be "God with us" – to be by our side (and before us and behind us and above us and below us) in this holy mess of a world we inhabit.

I love it that during Advent we remember that all our days of life on this planet are lived in a "between" time, between the first coming of Christ and the promised second coming; between what is "already" and "not yet"; between the beginning of the salvation and redemption of the whole Creation and the day when this beautiful work which Christ has begun in us will be "brought to completion" (Philippians 1).

This "in between-ness" is where we live, and we can respond to this reality in a couple of different ways: We can choose to focus on what is "not yet" -- on what needs fixing in us and in our world; or we can choose to delight in signs of God's ongoing restoration project all around us and on the future which is, in the Christian imagination, bright with hope.

There is good reason to focus on what is broken in the world, and to remember who and what can provide the fix. That's what we focus on during Lent. But I'm glad that in this particular moment, when our planet is in peril and anxiety is the air we breathe, we are asked to light the candles of Advent and remember that this mess the world is in, is not our final destiny.

This past Sunday, the "Advent Word for the day" was "DELIGHT" (see <https://adventword.org/en/home/>) and as we review and reflect upon the past year during our Annual Parish Meeting, I want to focus on what I've seen among us this year that I hope delights God, and which I hope delights all of us.

First, a little history: After spending several years at St. John's recovering from a very hard season when the parish community was divided and had grown distrustful of leadership, and the long period of financial hardship that accompanied it, in 2016 St. John's found itself on the threshold of renewal. The parish was ready to let go of the past and to move into the future with hope.

It was at this time that I received a call from then Sr. Warden, Ken Marsh, who told me that St. John's needed an interim rector who would love you and help you define a new, "outward-facing" vision as you emerged from years of difficulty that had left you "inward-facing," licking your wounds. Ken said, our next step is this: We need to remember our call to be "the face of Jesus" among our neighbors in the community. That will give us a healthy sense of purpose again.



REPORT OF THE RECTOR

So that is what we set about doing. He said you needed to be loved; and that part was easy! I loved you from the first day I met you, heard your story, and heard your hope for the future. And I love you more than ever today.

From 2016 – early 2020, we focused our energies on developing that outward-facing vision. We embraced the vision of building Beloved Community. We began to grapple with systemic racism in us and in our community. Out of that was borne our Community Meals program which started off as a 10-week summer meal program for food insecure children on summer break; and that has grown and evolved through the pandemic years to a year-round ministry involving our whole Wake Forest community. We named it this ministry “Wake Forest Community Table (WFCT)” and at this “table” we now feed food insecure neighbors of all ages twice per week, and we gather the community quarterly to “look upstream” together, as Archbishop Tutu encouraged, to understand what forces are pushing people into the stream of food insecurity in the first place.

In 2022, WFCT was established as an independent non-profit corporation through the remarkable leadership of Joy Shillingsburg, our Outreach Director, and its ministry continues to flourish through the contributions of many St. John’s parishioners, and other people of faith and good will around Wake Forest. This status allows the ministry to seek financial contributions from a wider circle of support which stabilizes it for the future. WFCT is a sign of God’s coming kingdom, for sure -- a kingdom which has a little more of a foothold here in Wake Forest because of St. John’s vision to reflect the “face of Christ” in our community; and that is something in which we should all DELIGHT!

The Covid years have been hard on all of us – as individuals and as a parish. In 2019, St. John’s was growing by leaps and bounds. 90 new members joined the parish in that year alone. We were running out of space in our pews and in our parking lot. We had 20 – 25 children processing out to Godly Play most Sundays. And then suddenly in March 2020, we couldn’t gather in person anymore. As the weeks passed, and it dawned on us that it could take many months, even years, to return to “normal”, we pivoted, and applied tremendous creativity to gathering online and outside whenever possible.

In 2022, we are now celebrating our return to in-person gatherings without mandatory restrictions, but we are forever changed by our experience of the pandemic. We were fortunate to survive the Covid years even while three parishes in our diocese sadly faced closure. During these years we are grateful to have not just survived, but even thrived in some significant ways:

First, the pandemic years helped (forced!!) us to develop the capacity to gather online and begin to learn how to integrate in-person and digital communities for worship, fellowship, and faith formation. The need and desire for this “hybrid” community remains, and so we have a whole new ministry area in which to grow and explore. We also had to learn to be flexible in how we worship in-person. Our Worship ministry, led by Head Verger, Elizabeth McDuffie, helped us pivot, and pivot, and pivot again on how we administer Communion. An ad hoc team led by Lois Sauer helped us spread out in the pews and manage the ever-changing guidelines on masking and seating restrictions.



REPORT OF THE RECTOR CONTINUED

Second, the pandemic years gave us time and space to equip ourselves as a growing church – to work with the help of Ministry Architects to build the communications/ technology and organizational infrastructure to invite, welcome, and connect with a growing number of neighbors in our community who are seeking a church like St. John's. This work is not yet complete, but it's well underway and the implementation of our new Ministry Match tool and Ministry Engagement Team, led by Roxanne Johnson, are an example of the fruit of this work. In addition, a new Small Groups ministry (for spiritual growth & formation) is being developed under the leadership of Beth McCauley, and new fellowship groups are being formed under the coaching of Suzi Hetzel. In the months ahead we will see more new faces engaged in more new serving ministries, fellowship groups, and formation groups; and this, too, is something in which we should all DELIGHT!

Third, the pandemic years gave us all cause to appreciate more than ever the value of caring relationships and the need for love in our lives. At St. John's, even before the pandemic took hold, we began to see the need to be more intentional about cultivating caring relationships within our parish. As the parish grows, it is easier for people to get "lost" and to be just another body in a pew instead of a real person who is known and loved and who experiences a sense of belonging. Whoever we are, whatever our life experience, gender, sexuality, race/ethnicity, national origin, class status, or abilities – we all want to experience being beloved to one another and to God. That is what building "Beloved Community," both within the parish and in the wider community and world, is all about.

After hearing this concern loud and clear – that we're doing well with "outreach" but need to focus more on "inreach" (reaching out to each other within our parish) -- we responded in 2021 and 2022 by forming our new Parish Care ministry. Kitty Kovacs has done a marvelous job of expanding and forming new teams of folks to call, visit, send notes, and check in on each other; to bring Communion when we're not able to get to church; and soon, to run errands and/or help parishioners with minor home repairs. Certainly there's more to explore and do in this ministry, but we are well on our way.

So, even while some things are still kind of "messy" at St. John's (particularly with knowing who does what and how to get involved and other matters of communication), there are many new processes "under construction" that I pray will serve us well as we seek to grow on our "inward journey" of strengthening our personal faith and becoming Beloved Community to one another, and on our "outward journey" of loving God and loving our neighbor.

2022 has been a lot of work, but a truly DELIGHTFUL year in so many, many ways. Please join me at the Annual Parish Meeting, Part 2 on January 29th after the 9:30 AM service. That's when we'll consider all the delightful things that God may have in store for us in 2023!

This comes with Love,
Mo. Sarah+



SENIOR WARDEN'S REPORT

It has been an honor and my pleasure to serve as Senior Warden for 2022. We have had a wonderful year as a church to expand our mission, programs, and membership! The pandemic certainly posed major problems for our church community: we could not meet in person and we had to close our Pre-School. We lost our feeling of being a church family and having our time together on Sundays. But after a year of rebuilding, 2022 felt much more like a "normal" year. We are back in the pews on Sunday with Coffee Hour in the Parish Hall. Our attendance at church is on an upward trend with communion gradually going back to our original tradition. The Pre-School is going strong, restarted its Church Buddies program and enrollment is increasing with each year. The SAGE group is resuming their activities, the Christmas Pageant will be back at the church, and the list goes on!

This was my second opportunity to serve as Senior Warden and I end my tenure so confident with the level of professionalism from our competent staff. We are so very fortunate to have Mo. Sarah, Fr. Stephen, and Fr. Philip providing us with inspirational sermons and children's and adult formation. They are the catalysts for the attendance every Sunday and are responsible for the expectation of spiritual fulfillment we sense when we enter the church doors. Joy and Marcia are outstanding in their roles at St. John's and have grown their programs so much this year. And I have been so fortunate to work with Barbara and Mimi, both of whom keep the wheels from coming off the train!

Another accomplishment this year was the work, nearly finalized, with the Ministry Architects. As part of the Strategic Design Team, I am assured that the many hours of work completed will provide an internal structure that will provide a firm foundation for St. John's for years to come.

I leave my role knowing that St. John's is in an enviable position of strength, growth, and stability. I still have another year on the Vestry so I anticipate another year of positive change as we move forward together.

Elizabeth Melvin

Sr. Warden



JUNIOR WARDEN'S REPORT

The Junior Warden's primary duties at St. John's include assisting the Senior Warden and Rector, leading the Building & Grounds committee. But what the Junior Warden is most known for is as the primary point of contact for maintenance and improvements to the church buildings and grounds.

With the help and hard work of many people, especially Bill Kovacs, Al Sauer, Tom Baker, and Cliff Rogers, we've done our best to keep the buildings, systems, and grounds of St. John's running.

Major projects this year include:

- Repair and replacement of a number of HVAC components
- Construction of a storage shed
- Significant repairs to soffits on the Education Building
- Ongoing Columbarium and campus grounds maintenance
- Removal of old piano
- Maintenance of parking lot
- Numerous small replacement and repair jobs

Kevin Closson

Jr. Warden



STRATEGIC DESIGN TEAM REPORT

The Strategic Design effort this year has moved in several different directions that are all part of equipping St. John's to organizationally function better as we continue to grow and welcome new people that God invites into our midst.

1. In cooperation with the vestry, and based on input last fall from many active members of St. John's, we focused on **clarifying our priorities and parish sense of direction** via our work on our Mission, Values, and Goals statements. Those entities name and point us toward where we collectively sense God calling us.
2. We have worked to identify and implement cost-effective **technology changes** to better support our data management needs (membership info, finances, IT support, church calendar, shared documentation files for ministries & events, etc).
3. We have worked to identify where **new structures and ministries** are needed, and have begun to bring those ministries into being (Worship Coordination, Small Groups Coordination, Fellowship, Communications, Facilities Management, etc) It is a slow, time-consuming process!!

We established the Ministry Engagement Team. Through their efforts, the Ministry Match tool was implemented at St. John's to help **equip and empower participation and leadership** in our many ministries. Every person at St. John's now has the ability to explore where their God-given gifts and talents may fit with a ministry that can be meaningful and life-giving for them. Empowering lay ministry leadership means fewer details and decisions need to flow through our staff, and allows our staff to focus more on higher level coordination.

Clearly there's been a LOT going on, but there is still much work to be done. This attention to – and innovation in – parish structures will be a long term effort. Most importantly, the processes and structures that are evolving and emerging are specific to the needs and growth of St. John's. We can all delight in knowing that we are working together to create and implement a vision for St. John's that captures our individual and collective goals for the future of our parish.

Over the next few months the Strategic Design Team (in collaboration with the Ministry Engagement Team) will be working to launch and support the immediate teams and leadership envisioned, and set tasks & procedures in motion to enable those efforts to bear fruit even as the SDT winds down our official time of service (in roughly March). What we have begun will be enabled to continue and grow within the leadership structures that will be in place.

At times all of this has felt confusing and overwhelming...and continues to feel daunting. Your prayers and support have been so important to us!!!

Thank you!

Lois Sauer

Strategic Design Team Leader



PRESCHOOL REPORT

Through prayer and hard work, St. John's Preschool completed the 2021-22 school year with a slightly positive financial result. Lisa Girimonte was hired as the full time director and has had a successful opening of the 2022-23 year. For this school year, we have extended the school day for the 2's, 3's, and 4's to 1PM, which includes lunch time. Based on our increased enrollment and classes offered this year, the extra time was well received by parents.

Currently, the preschool employs 1 director and 14 classroom teachers who serve 65 children. Additionally, our special programs include Music, Creative Music and Movement, Second Step, (a social/emotional program), and Godly Play. The preschool offers full and partial scholarships to families that are in financial need. Presently, we have one family using this assistance. In October, our "Church Buddy " ministry began for the 9th year with a Social gathering and activities for the members of our congregation and the 4 year old's.

We look forward to another gathering this spring. St. John's Preschool is in its 21st year and continues to be a vibrant and joyful ministry of our church. We would encourage members of the congregation to visit and perhaps volunteer in this wonderful program for children in our greater community.

Jane Hill and Lisa Girimonte

Preschool Co-Directors



EPISCOPAL YOUTH COMMUNITY (EYC) REPORT — MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH

For 2022-2023, EYC adopted the theme of “CRASH,” because we pray every Sunday, “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.” God’s Kingdom breaking into our corrupt and complacent world is a CRASH.

New EYC leaders Christina Kastendike and Mike Phelps are still getting on their feet and plan to diversify EYC activities as the year progresses. We started with a focus on weekly meetings and have met 14 times on Sundays beginning August 21, alternating in-person and online. Most meetings include: an ice breaker to build community, a brief discussion of prayer, reading and discussion of scripture, a closing prayer focused on concerns and joys mentioned by the kids, and a snack. For content, we have adopted the ambitious agenda of working our way through the Bible starting a Genesis 1. We focus on major stories and characters to see how God’s Kingdom breaks in unexpectedly. We ended Genesis by asking: what is God like in Genesis and is this God worth following? Kids also benefited from a session with Stephen Mazingo on liturgy and sacraments.

Starting to diversify what we do, we had our first recreational activity at an Escape Room and hope to incorporate outreach activities in Spring 2023. We have had our hands in the community garden at Wake Forest Presbyterian Church at the end of summer for harvest and in the fall. We look forward to working with other ministries at St. John’s to provide outreach and community building.



OUTREACH REPORT

We continue to be the hands, feet, eyes and ears of God outside of the church walls! St. John's has remained committed to walking with our neighbors and building a Beloved Community through our outreach ministries. Relational, not transactional service remains our focus. New members to St. John's continue to tell us that our work outside of the church walls is a primary reason for joining our church family. The broader Wake Forest community continues to recognize St. John's as a church that loves its neighbor and lives the Gospel.

Food security has been a major focus of our Outreach this year. St. John's has launched the newly formed 501(C)3 Wake Forest Community Table which has served over 23,000 meals and thousands of pounds of produce since the start of the pandemic. WFCT has also gathered hundreds of community members for quarterly gatherings to discuss the history and systems that necessitate a food distribution program in our Town.

Once again we joined our neighbors in CROP Walk for Hunger. The lower level of our Education building is a satellite pantry for Northeast Wake Backpack Buddies, an organization that sends home thousands of shelf stable meal/snack bags to children in WCPSS each week. Our faithful Wednesday packing group supports this effort. We donate shelf stable food each week to Tri Area Ministry with your donations that are placed in the bin in our Narthex. We have faithful bakers who provide delicious desserts to each meal distributed on Monday nights at Hope House. Volunteers of all ages have worked in two community gardens (WFPC Giving Garden and the Northeast Community Garden) for more than six months. These faithful gardeners have had the pleasure of planting, caring for and harvesting crops at each site to distribute at Wake Forest Community Table program and dozens of parishioners have helped pack and distribute meals at Hope House and Olive Branch Baptist Church each week through the Wake Forest Community Table.

We were also very excited to rejoin the coalition of churches to work on six homes in the Northeast End with Habitat for Humanity this Fall and look forward to the Spring work days. This year, St. John's has brought food and companionship to several Afghan refugee families who were temporarily living on the campus of the Seminary through Welcome House and USCRI. Through these connections to refugee aid organizations, we are currently supporting a local Ukrainian refugee family with weekly groceries and companionship. One of the members of that family is now regularly attending Sunday services because she has felt the love and care of our community.

As this year comes to an end, dozens of new and old members of St. John's attended in person and on zoom Outreach Information Gatherings to learn more about our ongoing efforts. Our future endeavors will continue to focus on food security and relationship building as well as caring for creation and our neighbors in need. Thank you for supporting the vibrant and growing Outreach Ministry here at St. John's through your prayers, donations and time.

Joy Shillingsburg
Outreach Director



MUSIC MINISTRY REPORT

Reflecting on this year, music enhancing the Word through congregational song, choirs, ensembles, and solos, was abundant--St. John's is blessed with open hearts and minds supporting innovative ways to serve through God's gift of music.

With an emphasis on exploring new hymnody, in February, throughout Black History Month, all choral anthems, solo keyboard literature, and service music, was written by African American poets and composers. Bulletin notes provided biographical and compositional information for worshippers. Additionally, a weekly ZOOM class—the St. John's Song Lovers—surveyed multiple spirituals, songs, hymns, and service music, found in our Episcopalian worship resources, and were selected based upon the Lectionary. The month of March, Women's History Month, followed a similar format featuring diverse music written throughout centuries of sacred traditions, including the introduction of works from VOICES FOUND, the Episcopalian hymnal comprised of works by, for, and about women.

Laying the groundwork for exciting future plans encompassing the arts and greater Wake Forest community, through the generosity of many, St. John's purchased ukuleles in a wide palette of colors. These fun little instruments offered outreach opportunities for hands on playing and singing both at Hope House and Olive Branch during evenings of food distribution (Thank you, Joy!). Additionally, the ukes took a prominent place in St. John's booth during the Juneteenth Festival at the DuBois Center. The pinnacle of summer music was the inaugural weeklong music and arts camp, Ukulele Summer Adventures 2022. Enthusiastically attended by campers from the congregation and town of Wake Forest, children, and youth (even the adult assistants) experienced an incredible week of music learning, playing, singing, creating phenomenal visual arts (Thank you, Suzi Hetzel!). Camp week culminated in a musical presentation during Bishop Rodman's visit to St. John's at the end of June.

As music ministry amplifies at St. John's and the word choir requires more clarification, the vocal and handbell choirs explored creative names identifying each group. The vocal choir selected the name Cantate—Latin for “sing,” while the intergenerational handbell choir voted for the name—Bells of St. John's. Excitement to share musical gifts abounded in both ensembles with a full complement of ringers for our 3-octave set of handbells and a 300% increase in vocal choir membership from September 2021. Throughout the liturgical year, both groups offered anthems in worship and festival services. During the month September and through St. Francis Day in October, the celebration of Creation Care Season was represented through a variety of choral anthems offering new styles and cultures, each referencing creation, while the handbells prepared a unique setting of the Genesis story told through ringing, percussion, and narration.

The season of Advent has introduced new service music of multiple cultural origins and, yet another first for St. John's, an Advent Lessons & Carols Service which will be led by the Cantate Vocal Choir. On Christmas Eve, the Cantate Choir will be joined by the Bells of St. John's, the newly formed St. John's Flute Trio, as well as instrumental soloists. And...looking further ahead into 2023, St. John's first worship service of the New Year will be Christmas Lessons & Carols including all the musical ensembles of St. John's.

The journey of sharing God's Word through words and music continues.
Thank you, St. John's, for your support of this ministry!
Soli Deo Gloria!

Marcia Klinder-Badgley
Director of Music Ministry



PARISH CARE REPORT

This committee began in November 2021, and I am fortunate to be the chair. We began with a list of over 55 parishioners identified as being out of touch during the pandemic. A wonderful group of volunteers called all of them to check in, offer support and update people as we lifted covid restrictions. The responses were quite positive.

Ongoing parish ministries of the meal train, LEVs, cards for birthdays/loss/illness, prayer team, and memorial receptions all continue, and many have taken on new volunteers over the year. We have held meetings to review visitation safety and protocols and offered a group Safe Church training required by the Diocese.

In November, we had two well-attended “seminars” on the Realities of Aging where we covered spiritual, medical, and legal aspects we face for ourselves or loved ones. We have also started a friendly visitors team who are providing monthly meetings to some of our treasured folks who are lonely or less able to come to church.

2023 goals include a “fix-it” brigade to assist those less able with some minor home projects or yard help. We also plan to provide more presentations on topics such as aging in place versus alternative living arrangements, grief, suicide prevention, and other ideas brought to our attention.

A heartfelt thank you to all of our wonderful volunteers in the many aspects of parish care.

Kitty Kovacs
Parish Care Team Leader



WORSHIP MINISTRIES REPORT

Worship services at St. John's are supported by organized lay guilds and groups with numerous members who prepare the nave, participate in services, and/or facilitate cleaning the church after services. Known collectively as Worship Ministries, the individual guilds are:

Acolytes	Altar Guild
Chalice Bearers (Lay Eucharistic Ministers)	Flower Guild
Lay Readers	Liturgy Guild
Ushers	Verger Guild

We are grateful to the members of all of our guilds who execute their respective responsibilities every week behind the scenes and in front of the congregation to create meaningful worship services for all of us.

At the beginning of 2022, the chalice bearers returned to the service to resume administration of the sacrament of wine after the COVID-19 hiatus. Eleven months later and in conjunction with the beginning of Advent last week, we are now offering the common cup for intinction as an option as we move closer to returning to our usual eucharistic practices.

The Flower Guild reports an increase in the number of flower dedications during the year and an increase in the number of people interested in joining the guild as a result of the ministry match process. A flower arrangement workshop was held during the 2022 year and will be offered again in 2023.

New acolytes appear regularly and we are grateful for their interest and commitment to serving; training is offered on a regular basis, thanks to Dave and Nicholas Roberts.

In September, the Worship Ministries were spotlighted during the 9:30 services with members of the various guilds speaking to the value of their own participation in these guilds. It has been especially gratifying to see young people join the Acolyte Guild during the past year and new faces joining our other guilds as well.

We continue to welcome and incorporate new members into our teams. There is continuous change in the membership of our various guilds as new members join and experienced members take a break or explore other passions. Serving in these groups kindles friendships while offering our talents to the glory of God. Thank you to all who serve!

Elizabeth McDuffie

Worship Ministry Team Leader



CHILDREN & FAMILY MINISTRIES REPORT

This past year has been full of transition. Responding to the pandemic spike of COVID cases in early 2022, we held a hybrid children's formation program called Storymakers during Lent. This helped to bring some of our children and families back to church and reengage. In addition, we recreated the Children's Ministry Committee to support the vision and guide the Children's ministry of St. John's. Below you will find a summary of the activities we have been busy within 2022.

Godly Play

Over the Spring, we scheduled training for our Godly Play leaders and helpers and worked to bring back this vital ministry during the summer. Even though Godly Play is not a ministry we usually have during summer, it was necessary after a long period to restart Godly Play and reengage with our children. We have consistently had Godly Play since June this year with the dedicated work of our Godly Play leaders and helpers. However, we need more participation and will be holding another training in January of 2023 to expand the leader and helper pool.

PRAYground

PRAYground has continued to be an intergenerational once-a-month worship service. This year we expanded to include a meal for each one, including an end-of-Spring cookout. We also formalized the liturgy for this service for the fall. While this is a ministry of the whole church, it engaged explicitly with some of our families who have been using this as their church service once a month.

Farm to Fork

With coordination from our outreach director, Joy, we held gardening events at two of our local community gardens twice a month. This continued through the summer and fall, and many families participated in this vital ministry.

Special Events

An intergenerational Stations of the Cross was held in Lent of 2022, which included natural elements of our campus utilizing our teaching garden with the help of the Environmental Stewardship Committee. We were able to have an outdoor service for Easter this year, as well as an Easter Egg hunt. We will also be holding our Christmas Pageant in person for the first time since 2019.

Our Faith Our Church

This year we launched a new program for our 4th and 5th graders. The program has the children engage with the various elements that make up the ministry of St. John's while also learning aspects of the Bible and our tradition.

The Rev. Stephen Mazingo
Sr. Associate Children & Family Ministries



INVITE WELCOME CONNECT (IWC) REPORT

In spite of pandemic, the IWC didn't slow down thanks to an engaged and enthusiastic team. In the last year we have accomplished much. We have revived and reinvented the name badges so they are more wearable, and hopefully easier to access. Thanks to Al Sauer for rebuilding the badge holder. We have FINALLY designed and ordered our new church sign, which we hope to have it installed in the very near future. It will be surrounded by brick posts and plantings. People will be able to find us with ease. Many have been involved with this process, which has been extensive with design, permits, and ordinances but we did it! Thanks to the Stephanie & Cliff Rogers, Bill Kovacs, and all those involved in the design and permitting process.

We also have fired up the Welcome Desk again under the guidance of Helen Holt and all the many volunteers who man the desk every week, welcoming those who come through our doors. Thanks to all those who have had a part of recovering from COVID, inviting, welcoming, and connecting us all.

Suzi Hetzel

Former Invite Welcome Connect Team Leader



ADULT FORMATION REPORT

I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints. – Ephesians 1:17-18 (NRSV)

Many reading and discussion groups that moved online during the Pandemic continued meeting virtually through the first half of the year and beyond, and the fall of 2022 saw the re-launch of regular adult formation programs. Clergy and lay leaders identified several “streams” for current and future offerings on Wednesday evenings, including:

- the Beloved Community stream, focused on issues of racial justice and reconciliation
- the Episcopal Tradition stream, exploring the roots and global connections of our faith
- seasonal streams for the Season of Creation (September) and Advent

All classes in these categories were offered in a hybrid format, with meetings in the Parish Hall broadcast via Zoom, allowing in-person and virtual participants to read, reflect, and discuss together. (Most weeks also included a visit from Cosmo, our neighborhood cat and de facto parish mascot.)

The Rev. Philip Zoutendam
Curate



TREASURER'S REPORT

St. John's had continued its rebound in 2022. Overall, the parish is financially very sound. Members of the congregation, both long time and newer, have faithfully come through with their time, talent and financial contributions all year long. That faithfulness has kept St. John's on a firm financial footing and allowed us to support our staff and keep our church mission on track!

This was a year of expansion where we had sufficient cash reserves to hire Fr. Steven half time to lead our Children & Family Ministry. We entered the year with a deficit budget of nearly \$58K, but we had faith in our vision. Our end of year pledge (EOG) income is expected to be very close to the budgeted amount. Our plate income is also expected to be at or above our expected amount.

Our expense have returned to their pre-pandemic levels or higher due to the high inflation that has happened this year. We have carefully monitored the activities and have adjusted the budget throughout the year to match the changes, but not nearly as often as during 2020 and 2021. Most of our expenses are at or below budget for the year except for utilities and maintenance. The return to normal use of the HVAC systems has taken a toll this year and we have had several unplanned expenses with repair or replacement and the cost of electricity and gas has gone up a lot.

Last year, we changed the financial tracking for the WF Community Meals to a separate entity (like the Preschool). That ministry has now received their 501(C)3 status and is launching as their own entity next year. You can still give to WFCT through St. Johns and those gifts will be reflected on your pledge statement. Or, you will be able to give to WCFT directly.

The BIGGEST positive for the year was the Bury The Debt campaign to finish off our mortgage loan for the Education Building. The members of St. Johns stepped up and we were able to accomplish that and paid it off in September! That was amazing!!

Next year will be continue to be challenging as we work to expand our worship to meet our growth and support our community around us so that we can continue on the journey that God has called us. We have adapted, overcome, and are moving on!!

Thanks Again!

Al Sauer
Treasurer



STEWARDSHIP REPORT

The Stewardship Committee helps to prepare our congregation at St. John's to prayerfully consider their financial gift to the church.

In November Kevin O'Donnell and I spoke to you about our Grace in Action campaign, as did our current and former Senior Wardens through newsletter messages. Stewardship is a commitment to return a portion of those gifts from God to God as expressed through the work of the church. Our financial commitment allows us to be His hands and feet as we serve St. John's and our extended community. Ministry efforts such as our Preschool ministry, Weekly Community Meals program, Backpack Buddies, Farm to Fork Outreach, CROP Walk, Habitat for Humanity and the Joy of Christmas depend on both gifts of our time and our treasure.

Making a financial pledge to St. John's can be a wonderful way to provide accountability in giving. Completing the commitment card helps me to be disciplined throughout the year in my giving. That is not to say that there is no allowance for change. Life happens and emergencies arise. If you realize your pledge is not going to work, you can update your pledge during the year to better reflect the situation you find yourself in.

If you have not yet returned your pledge card for 2023, it's not too late! Members of the Vestry and Stewardship Committee will begin following up with parishioners who have not yet returned a pledge card. This is only a gentle reminder if you are planning to return the card and haven't, or our ask to you to prayerfully consider making a pledge.

Our 2023 budget and plans will be built around the financial gifts that are pledged. Our financial gift enables the ministries that are so important to St. John's and our extended community.

Thank you for considering a pledge, as well as your contributions of time and talent in furtherance of our answer to God's call for action.

Camille Stell
Stewardship Chair



CREATION CARE REPORT

“Hope is how we create new facts.” – Jane Goodall

That quote from Dr. Goodall’s “Book of Hope” is a helpful refrain as we think about climate change and the care of God’s creation. Dr. Goodall’s assertion is that hope is not passive, rather, hope and action go together.

Creation Care has been active in 2022 with events throughout the year interwoven with parish life. As a committee of St. John’s, our goal is to provide educational and spiritual opportunities for parishioners of all ages to make the connection between caring for God’s creation (“Creation Care”) and caring for God’s people (“Outreach”). The two are interwoven and intrinsically connected.

Key activities in 2022 included:

- Earth Day/Climate Action Week – April 22nd – May 1st
 - 2022 Theme – “Sacred Trust: Our Children’s Right to a Livable Future”
 - Blessing of the Children during the April 24th service using materials [from Interfaith Power and Light](#)
 - Following the April 24th service, many parishioners signed postcards pledging to consider the environment when voting in 2022. Post-cards were submitted to Interfaith Power and Light.
 - Copies of the prayer for the children used in the April 24th service were shared with St. John’s Preschool parents. Many preschool parents also signed postcards.
 - April’s PRAYground was held at the [Northeast Community Garden](#) and Gathering Space where parishioners of all ages worked side-by-side with some of our Northeast Wake Forest community neighbors to weed plant beds and harvest veggies. (see pictures below). Father Stephen led the group in prayer in the shade of the garden’s gathering space and we joined in Communion with our neighbors.
- Native Teaching Garden – year-round
 - Many thanks to committee member Cathy Brittingham for her on-going work to organize our volunteer gardeners who keep our Native Teaching Garden growing and blooming! Many thanks to committee member Helen Holt for her continued expert gardening guidance. And thanks to all of our garden volunteers!
 - A lovely and informative handout about the plants in the Native Teacher Garden is available at the Newcomer’s Desk in the Narthex. Please grab one, even if you’re not a new!



CREATION CARE REPORT CONTINUED

- Creation Season – Fall 2022
Volunteers planted three native dogwoods and mums at the home of Theresa Adams, who for many years staffed the nursery at St. John’s. (Habitat was also working on her porch and ramp the same day!). The plantings fulfilled St. John’s commitment to 1t.org - an initiative of the World Economic Forum which brings together partners around the globe to plant and conserve one trillion trees worldwide by 2030 as part of addressing our climate crisis.
 - Book study - several St. John’s members gathered (virtually and in person) over the course of three Wednesdays in September to discuss Dr. Goodall’s “The Book of Hope” and how it might speak to us.
 - This discussion continued at our Oct. 16 PRAYground. In 2021, as part of our Creation Care Season PRAYground, we joined together for a Circle of Hope, during which we shared with each other what gives us hope and keeps us going in the face of climate change. (It can be very hard – and that’s when the power of community can be the key.)
 - This year, buoyed by Dr. Goodall’s inspiration, we joined in small group discussions to build on her assertions that *hope and action go together* and *hope is how we create new facts*.
- The Creation Care Committee invites you to consider the following:
 - What action might you want to take – big or small – to help create new facts/new hope in our world?
 - What action might we want to take as a church community to help create new facts/new hope in our world?

As you consider these questions, please let Mo. Sarah know if you are interested in joining the Creation Care Committee. And, if you feel called, please let Mo. Sarah know if you might be interested in chairing or co-chairing the committee, as we are looking for a new chairperson(s).

Many, many thanks to all of the Creation Care Committee members for all of their work over the past year: Julie Arthur, Kenille Baumgardner, Cathy Brittingham, Helen Holt, and Gena Renfrow!

Gena Renfrow
Creation Care Leader