

# Annual Parish Report

## For the year 2020



Rector's Report  
Wardens' Report  
Reports of Parish Organizations

February 2021

The Reverend Robert W. Fisher  
*Rector*

The Reverend Savannah Ponder  
*Associate Rector*

The Reverend William Morris  
*Assisting Priest for Engaging Faith and the Workplace*

Kaye Edwards  
*Assistant for Church Growth*

Brent Erstad  
*Director of Music and Organist*

Samantha Scheff  
*Associate Organist*

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## RECTOR'S REPORT

Dear Members of St. John's,

Bishop Mariann said at this year's diocesan convention, "Hope is not a plan. It's a grace that will inform strategies and plans." She went on to say that her hope in Jesus calls her to steady determination to continue, in the face of change and challenge.

We faced our share of change and challenge this year. There were three major themes that begin with the letter "P": pandemic, protests and politics. A book could be written about how each of these affected our parish life in the last twelve months, presenting obstacles, opportunities, and many surprises. I can assure you that at every stage, Jesus' presence was near, giving us the hope that empowered us to carry on with grace and steadiness, always grounded in his love.

I witnessed this year innumerable ways that St. John's parishioners continued to quietly and faithfully show up and serve. This is a community of service, and it was displayed in the ways people learned new skills, took on new responsibilities, and repeatedly showed up whenever there was a need large or small.

There are too many people to name who exemplified this across our leadership, staff and lay volunteers. I will only name a few individuals who went especially above and beyond, namely our Wardens, Paul Barkett and Jeff Hantson, our Director of Music (and video editing wizard) Brent Erstad, and our tireless Director of Operations, Kim Carlson.

You can read on in the pages ahead about all the ways that the ministries of St. John's continued throughout this year—showing agility and versatility at virtually every step. We even introduced numerous brand new opportunities for prayer, fellowship, service, pastoral care and learning, many of these coordinated by the Rev. Savannah Ponder.

Importantly, our community has responded to the outcry for racial healing and justice that drew thousands to the steps of our church in the days following George Floyd's appalling death. It was not enough to show our support by our presence at the demonstrations—which we did—but we have since taken the opportunity to dig more deeply into the difficult work of honestly facing and responding to the enduring plague of systemic racism. Our work is only beginning, but to better equip ourselves we have embarked on a dialogue series called "Sacred Ground." The Rev. Will Morris has led this effort, aided by a diverse team of lay leaders, and we have more than sixty parishioners participating. Sacred Ground is designed to be more than informative, but transformative for those who participate. My hope and prayer is that the wisdom, awareness and transformation fostered in these learning and reflection groups will work like a seed planted in the heart of our community, which will blossom into actions and new ways of being as we work against racism within our own parish as well as in our broader community and nation. We are called to do this work, which will be both difficult and liberating.

Along the way, I am also grateful for the new partnerships that we have made in our broader community this past year, including with civic and ecumenical faith communities in DC, not least of which P.A.I.N.T.S. Institute which partnered with us to shine God's light from our boarded up windows transforming them into murals painted by two dozen local artists, and which will ultimately be donated to the Smithsonian.

One final point to highlight about this year is that it seems we are happily turning around what had been a multi-year downward trend in pledging. As our Treasurer, Casey Evans, points out in her Treasurer's Report, the overall trend is a concerning one, and it has been going on for a number of years. However, the number of pledges, and the total amount pledged, are both currently higher than at this point in the previous two years. Also, this increase we are seeing is happening even while we are in the midst of a pandemic. I am hopeful that this new trend will continue and perhaps even grow as we regather for in-person worship, fellowship and outreach.

While the changes and challenges we will face in 2021 may not be quite as dramatic and historic as those we saw in 2020, we will be living into uncharted territory in the year ahead of us. Thankfully, we have hope, knowing that Christ will be present with us at every step of the way ahead, as he has been this whole time.

Faithfully,  
The Reverend Robert W. Fisher

## WARDENS' REPORT

Resilient. "*Adjective. Able to withstand or recover quickly from difficult conditions.*"

Dear Parishioners:

If there's one word that describes St. John's Church in 2020, it would have to be *resilient*.

While we won't dare compare St. John's to Moses and the Ten Plagues, a pandemic, protests, a fire, a street closure, and an 8-foot fence surrounding our beloved church have certainly made 2020 a trying year.

Yet to each of those difficult situations we responded, adjusted and recovered. We are indebted to our talented and committed staff, both clergy and lay, for their perseverance in some very difficult situations. Thanks to their efforts, and those of many lay volunteers, we have adapted quickly and efficiently to new ways of being a church.

Financially, we remain on solid footing. You'll hear more from Casey Evans, our very capable treasurer, but we ended 2020 with a balanced budget. While St. John's is blessed with an endowment which supports our operating budget, pledges from parishioners remain our main source of income. Pledging for 2021 has been strong; we hope to break the downward trend of the past few years. We have been able to craft a budget for 2021 that allows us to maintain our most important ministries and initiatives.

As you might guess, safety and security has become a paramount concern for the Vestry. A Security Task Force, led by Vestry member Lauren Edwards, has been meeting for several months and will be presenting their first round of recommendations to the Vestry in the coming weeks.

The annual meeting is always a bittersweet time for the Vestry as we say goodbye to three members whose terms have ended: Andrew Clarke, Martha Ellison, and Jessica Sanchez. In addition, two of our officers are retiring. Andrew Tomlinson has very ably served as our secretary for the past two years and Chris Wall has served as our parish counsel for more than 15 years. As a congregation, we are indebted to these individuals who have in many, many ways contributed immeasurably to our common life together.

It is a privilege for us to work with our staff and to serve you in this historic center of mission and ministry on Lafayette Square.

Paul Barkett  
*Senior Warden*

Jeff Hantson  
*Junior Warden*

## ACOLYTES AND CRUCIFERS REPORT

Due to the pandemic and the closing of the church beginning in March, the acolyte program was suspended. I look forward to resuming this worthwhile and popular activity once conditions improve and it is safe to regather in large groups again.

We did say goodbye to long time acolyte Caroline Huettner, who graduated from high school in the spring of 2020; she will be solely missed.

Our acolytes are: Hugh Agnew, Audrey Anikeeff, Charlie Bader, Reese Crochet, Walker Crochet, Thea Crouch, Zoe Fisher, Charlotte Galm, Spencer Galm, Carolyn Gardner, Ben Garland, Alexander Lehmann Weng, Oliver Lehmann Weng, Sebastian Lehmann Weng, Claire Montgomery, Cooper Thesmar, Elizabeth Thesmar, and Lily Venzke.

We were without crucifers as well, from the March 15th church closing until we reopened for small, in church gatherings on September 13th. Currently, crucifers are back to their usual rotation although we are limited to one service a Sunday.

We will miss loyal member Andrew Tomlinson, who moved to Baltimore.

Our crucifers are Paul Barkett, Matt Bode, Wendy Fibison, Andrew Hunt, Stewart Jeffries, Leo Lex, Paul Mandelson, Michelle Mangrum, Brandon Montgomery, Eric Peters, Dax Tejera, Thom Sinclair, and Carl Ward.

I am counting the days until church is back in full swing, and we can again see our acolytes and crucifers hard at work!

Deborah H. Hailey  
*Acolyte and Crucifer Coordinator*

## ADULT FORUM COMMITTEE REPORT

The Forum Committee presented the following speakers during the preceding year. We look forward to continuing our work in the new year.

### 2019 Adult Forums

- **January 5: Richard Bell**, scholar, writer, and associate professor at the University of Maryland. His research focuses on the history and culture of the United States between 1750 and 1877. He spoke on his book, *Stolen: Five Free Boys Kidnapped into Slavery and Their Astonishing Odyssey Home*.
- **January 12: Christopher Costa**, former intelligence officer of 34 years, former Special Assistant to the President and current Executive Director of the International Spy Museum. He spoke on The International Spy Museum.
- **January 19: David Garrow**, Pulitzer Prizewinning biographer of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. He spoke on The Life and Legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.
- **January 26: Vestry Candidates' Presentation.**
- **February 9: Dr. Meredith Evans**, Director of the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum. She will spoke about the library and the museum and the Carter presidency.
- **February 16: Robert Strong**, William Lyne Wilson Professor in Political Economy at Washington and Lee University. He spoke on The Jimmy Carter Presidency.
- **February 23: Ambassador Stuart Eizenstat**, chief White House domestic policy adviser to President Jimmy Carter. He spoke on his book, *President Carter: The White House Years*.
- **March 8: Hank Handler**, noted craftsman and master builder, co-founded Oak Grove Restoration Company 40 years ago to specialize in the conservation, preservation, restoration, and retrofitting of historic buildings. He spoke about the restoration of the Dolley Madison House.
- **July 19: Professor David Blight**, Professor of History and Director of the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition at Yale University. He lectures in the US and around the world on the Civil War and Reconstruction, race relations, Douglass, and W.E.B. Du Bois. He spoke on his Pulitzer Prize-winning biography, *Frederick Douglass: Prophet of Freedom*.

- **August 23: Marc Morial**, President and CEO of the National Urban League, the nation's largest historic civil rights and urban advocacy organization, and former mayor (1994-2002) of New Orleans.
- **September 13: John Barry**, award-winning author of several books including the best-selling *The Great Influenza: The Story of the Deadliest Pandemic in History*. An advisor to the Bush and Obama White Houses and to the United Nations and WHO on pandemic preparedness and response, he is a professor at the Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine. He spoke on *The Great influenza Pandemic of 1918: Lessons Learned and Not Learned--and Where We Are Now*.
- **September 20: Christian Appy**, Professor of History at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. He spoke about the Vietnam War.
- **September 27: Elaine Pagels**, American religious historian and the Harrington Spear Paine Professor of Religion at Princeton University. She spoke on her book, *Why Religion, A Personal Story*.
- **October 4: Jim Tankersley**, covers economic and tax policy for *The New York Times*. Over more than a decade covering politics and economics in Washington, he has written extensively about the stagnation of the American middle class and the decline of economic opportunity in wide swaths of the country. He spoke on his book, *The Riches of This Land: The Untold, True Story of America's Middle Class*.
- **October 25: Charlie Cook**, Editor and Publisher of *The Cook Political Report*, and a political analyst for the National Journal Group and NBC News. He spoke about Election 2020.
- **November 1: Victoria Arbiter**, CNN Royal Commentator. She spoke on *The Windsors: A Chat about the British Royal Family*.
- **November 15: Katharine Hayhoe**, climate scientist and Professor of Public Policy and Public Law at Texas Tech University. She spoke on *Barriers to Acceptance and Action on Climate Change in 2020*.
- **November 22: Eric Liu**, co-founder and CEO of Citizen University. He directs the Aspen Institute's Citizenship and American Identity Program. He served as a White House speechwriter for President Bill Clinton and later as the President's deputy domestic policy adviser. He spoke about the concept of American citizenship.

- **December 20: John Negroponte**, an American diplomat. He has been Ambassador to Honduras, Mexico, the Philippines, the United Nations, and Iraq. In Washington he served twice on the National Security Council staff, first as Director for Vietnam in the Nixon Administration and then as Deputy National Security Advisor under President Reagan. He has also held a cabinet level position as the first Director of National Intelligence under President George W. Bush. His most recent position in government was as Deputy Secretary of State. He spoke about the Biden Administration's Foreign Policy.

Clark Ervin  
*Chair*

## **ADULT INQUIRERS CLASSES REPORT**

Due to the closure in March of the church and Parish House to meet health and safety guidelines, the scheduled spring adult inquirers' class was not held. By the fall of 2020, the Rector was an expert at leading classes on Zoom. Twenty-seven adults, most of them newcomers to St. John's, attended the fall class, led by the Rector. The class was a three-day (an hour and a half each day) experience of exploring our faith, the history and tradition of the Church, and the spiritual life of the Episcopal Church and St. John's Church in particular.

The class is designed for newcomers to St. John's; for adults seeking baptism, confirmation and reception into the Episcopal Church; and for anyone, newcomer, or longtime member, interested in learning more about St. John's and the Episcopal Church.

Seventeen members of the class and participants in earlier classes took part in an outdoor Service of Confirmation at Washington National Cathedral on October 24.

Kaye Edwards  
*Assistant for Church Growth*

## BOOK GROUP REPORT

In 2020, the St. John's Book Group met twelve times on the first Thursday of every month. We did not take our customary summer recess in light of the pandemic. We democratically select our reading list every six months, and our 2020 selections reflect a wide range of cultural, historic and spiritual topics, both non-fiction and fiction. In August 2020, book group members devoted our meeting time to sharing our personal recommendations for excellent reading. We have about 20 participants on a regular basis and we have 40 on the mailing list. If you are interested in our reading lists, please contact Janet Edmond. We thank Leila Taaffe for her many years of dedicated Book Group leadership.

Janet Edmond  
*Chair*

## CARE OF CREATION COMMITTEE REPORT

2020 began normally enough. Care of Creation prepared a Sunday luncheon using locally sourced materials to the extent possible, and showing off sustainable materials and practices that could reduce waste and carbon footprints in our homes. We used china and silverware the parish owns, and its new dishwasher, in order to limit our trash stream. We were pleased when other St. Johns groups did likewise.

During the pandemic Care of Creation (some 35 strong) met virtually to touch base with one another and raise concerns, to discuss the volunteer work we were doing in our communities, and to share sources for learning. Some members are doing active advocacy in their jurisdictions.

- John More has helped develop and implement a climate change online curriculum, consisting of three sessions, focused on encouraging active engagement. Three members enrolled in the fall. More sessions are planned for 2021, so contact him if you're interested. John is also active with environmental justice work through the DC Sierra Club chapter and WIN (Washington Interfaith Network).
- Abbott McCartney continues his work at the Diocesan level through the South Africa Partnership Committee.
- Tammi Hoback has done beach clean-ups at her Key West home community.
- Joanne Hutton has developed a relationship with Northern Virginia's Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions, and in June co-facilitated a workshop for some 60 participants on greening faith community campuses through Plant NOVA Natives.

Savannah Ponder, our clergy sponsor, has shared with our group some of her studies at Duke's school of theology in ecological frameworks for studying theology. She recommends particularly Ellen Davis' agrarian readings of the Bible as a starting point.

In November Care of Creation hosted atmospheric scientist and climate communication expert Katherine Hayhoe for a popular, outstanding program. It may be viewed here if you missed it at the time <https://youtu.be/-IW8GUxHy8o>. NB: Dr. Hayhoe's most recent efforts at educating the public include a \$10million campaign aimed at mothers: <https://sciencemoms.com/take-action/#/1/>.

In December the Creation Care group enjoyed an informal book swap, and planned for a program in January 2021 on recycling and the circular economy with expert Annie White. This lecture will also be posted on our YouTube channel.

Some resources we've found engaging and helpful this year include:

- NYTimes series Climate Forward
- Project Drawdown
- Global Weirding website by Katherine Hayhoe

More sustainable lifestyle developments we've noted during Covid have included better time/life balance; teleworking and reduced commutes; cooking more intentionally with planned meals and less frequent shopping; walking more; simpler clothing; redesign of workspaces; and more gardening and growing of food.

The Care of Creation plans a series of conversations around David Attenborough's *A Life On Our Planet* book and movie for 2021. We welcome new members. To join our list-serve community and develop future initiatives, contact Joanne Hutton.

Joanne Hutton  
*Chair*

# CHRISTIAN EDUCATION REPORT

## CHURCH SCHOOL

### Children's Ministry

We began the year with a church school formation hour in between the 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. services, as well as a Children's Chapel during the 11:00 a.m. service. Church school utilized Godly Play storytelling, while Children's Chapel focused on the lectionary texts for the day.

On the first Sunday when the church was closed, church school met over zoom. We transitioned swiftly to an online church school, meeting every Sunday morning for music, lessons, stories, and prayer. This continued until June. Over the summer, church school met virtually once a month over zoom and prerecorded video lessons were emailed out. In the fall, we began offering a brief church school immediately before our outdoor communion services in Alexandria.

The Christmas pageant, a beloved tradition, took place in 2020 virtually and was shared as part of our Advent 4 worship livestream service. Although logistics were complicated and we had to adjust many times due to unexpected limited access to the building, the church school families were resilient and pressed on. Many thanks to the families who made it possible to drop off costumes all over town and film wonderful videos at home. Additional thanks goes to the music department, especially Brent and Lisa, for their work editing this production together.

### Youth Ministry

Youth began 2020 meeting once monthly for studying the Way of Love curriculum and once monthly for service projects, such as serving a meal at Grace's Table. In January, they attended an overnight retreat with the Presiding Bishop, the Most Rev. Michael Curry and our diocesan Bishop the Rt. Rev. Mariann Edgar Budde at the Bishop Walker School.

On the first Sunday when the church was closed, youth met over zoom. This youth group has continued since then and has been consistently well-attended. The zoom youth group consists of time for fellowship, study, and prayer. Youth also gathered over zoom for service projects as opportunities were available.

*Special thanks to the teachers from our 2019-2020 Program Year:*

*Katie Adams, Beth Couturier, Nicole Crochet, Laura Doucet, Anna Ehrich, Kings Floyd, Carrie Garland, Susan George, Debby Hailey, Laura Herzog, Joanne Hutton, Emily Lucio, John More, Owen Owunwanne, Katherine Raab, Cate Rooney, Hap Rigby, Nora Rigby, Matthew Taylor, Anna Wieger, Sarah Wood, and Keiko Yoshino.*

## **NEW ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION OFFERINGS**

### **Bible Study**

In January 2020, we added an adult Bible study to the Sunday offerings. Clergy invited retired minister Jack Reiffer to organize and lead this group. In March the meetings moved onto Zoom as part of the adjustments for the pandemic. Those receiving the weekly study materials have grown to over 40 names. Average Sunday attendance is 13. The group studied the structure, audience, and themes for the Gospel of Matthew, Genesis, and the Epistle to the Romans, as well as a study this winter of how each of the gospels introduces the birth and early ministry of Jesus. Conversations often explore the connections with the Sunday lessons and sermons.

### **Daily Office Prayer**

In March, St. John's members gathered together every weekday for prayer at noon via zoom, mostly led by lay leaders. This expanded to Evening Prayer on Sunday evenings and Compline on weeknights. At the beginning of the fall, we transitioned to offering compline every Tuesday night, with a few special compline services related to particular events in our world and in the church year.

### **Centering Prayer**

As an outgrowth of the Pastoral Care Ministry, The Rev. Jane Hague began an online Centering Prayer group over zoom. Thom Sinclair took over leading that group as Jane left St. John's. It has been well attended by St. John's parishioners and visitors. Centering Prayer met weekly every Wednesday morning.

### **Sacred Ground**

In the fall, the Rev. Will Morris coordinated a new educational offering over zoom called "Sacred Ground." Over 60 parishioners dedicated their time and energy to this endeavor. This is a film and readings based dialogue series on race, grounded in faith. Small groups examine chapters of America's history of race and racism, while weaving threads of family story, economic class, and political and regional identity.

The Rev. Savannah Ponder  
*Associate Rector*

## CHURCH GROWTH COMMITTEE REPORT

The Church Growth Committee was dormant for most of 2020 due to members' involvement in other ministries at St. John's that needed an extra investment of time. In some ways, the landscape has been so different that the original plans for the year became obsolete. In others, however, the pivoting that St. John's has done through the pandemic has accidentally advanced us toward the Committee's goals.

In early 2020, we explored the notion of membership—not only the technical definition of who is a member of St. John's, but also how to encourage a deeper belonging among everyone from first-time visitors to long-time members.

In particular, a frequent request has been to produce a new parish directory. In the past, these were printed periodically, including photos, addresses, and phone numbers for each member. A number of new considerations will change the format, however. First, an online directory will reduce production costs and allow for regular updates. Second, new considerations about privacy mean that we want to make it only available to members who authenticate with a personal password. Finally, both of these changes also make it reasonable to allow members to fine-tune which information is shared with other members.

The Realm software that powers the parish database system offers these directory features; we just need to use it. An increasing number of members have made online donations and pledge payments through Realm, so we are one step closer to making the online directory a reality.

Active Growth Committee members are: Lauren Edwards and Andrew Hunt, Co-Chairs; Kaye Edwards, Staff Representative; Andrew Clarke.

Andrew Hunt  
*Chair*

## EDUCATION FOR MINISTRY REPORT

### WHO

Parish support of the Education for Ministry (EfM) program, in its twenty-seventh year at St. John's, has a robust legacy. **Sixty-six people** have completed the program through our parish, many others have participated for one year or more, and graduates of other EfM groups join our parish from time to time. **Nine participants** currently pursue their studies and explorations **one evening weekly** throughout the school year, three of whom are scheduled to graduate in May of 2021. The program is led by **co-mentors Carolyn Crouch and Lyle Elder**.

Most of our EfM participants are parishioners, although we also have benefited from welcoming other recruits who have enriched the texture of our community with their ministries; some have been members of our weekday parish, others belong to a different branch of God's church. At least two study groups in other parishes spun off from this one, facilitated by trained lay leaders who are spurred by the power of study, reflection and growth within a small community of seekers where we grow in faith and love.

### WHAT

EfM sets itself apart from other courses of Bible study through its **combination of stimulating graduate-level theological studies and a thorough exploration of our call to live out our baptismal covenants** through the many and varied ministries we exercise on a daily basis. Prayer, study, worship, conversation, theological reflection, laughter and gathering around a common table are among the joys discovered anew along the way. In our time together we learn to put together and lead worship services; we develop a vocabulary with which to describe our faith and beliefs; we share personal stories and discover their universal dimensions; we spend time with the big questions, reflecting theologically. We approach each year through the lens of an overarching theme, like living faithfully in a multicultural world, developing a mature spirituality, and our journey to God.

### WHEN

Learners register for **one year of study at a time**. The first year investigates **Hebrew scriptures**, the second takes up the **New Testament**, the third broadly covers **Church History**, and a fourth year focuses on **theological questions and developing your personal theology**. The program forms excellent preparation for future leadership and servanthood in the church by grounding our ministries in sound theological understanding and reflection.

## HOW

Want to be part of this journey? Want to know if there might be another EfM group closer to your place of work or home, or meeting at a better time for you, or even meeting online? Contact EfM mentors Carolyn Crouch and Lyle Elder. You can also visit the EfM website <https://efm.sewanee.edu> to find out more and read excerpts from the curriculum.

Carolyn Crouch and Lyle Elder  
*Co-Chairs*

## FLOWER GUILD REPORT

2020 was a year unlike any other for our country and for our church. In March, St. John's closed in person Sunday morning worship services as the global pandemic, COVID-19, altered "life as we know it." Along with the rest of America, St. John's parishioners began wearing face masks, practicing social distancing, and ramping up hand washing hygiene. Words like Zoom, virtual, quarantine, and virus became part of our daily vocabulary. Within a matter of weeks, the world changed.

The Rev. Rob Fisher and church staff pivoted quickly to this new reality. Due to the pandemic, in-person meetings and committees like the Flower Guild were temporarily suspended. The worship service was prerecorded for Sunday morning viewing and moved to online platforms like Zoom and YouTube.

And after a couple of weeks of viewing a bare altar, a small group of Flower Guilders – Joanne Hutton, Pat Dalby, and Katherine Kyle – swung into action. It began with the prospect of a flowerless Easter and a request from the Rev. Rob Fisher to adorn the main altar with lilies. Surprised by the joy and positive comments that a half dozen potted Easter lilies generated, a concerted effort was made to bring flowers back to St. John's. Master Gardener Joanne graciously shared flowers and greenery from her yard. She was joined by Co-Chair Pat who supplemented Joanne's homegrown offerings with grocery store blossoms. After the flower wholesaler reopened, Flower Guild Chair Katherine, who was observing strict quarantining, was able to have flowers delivered to her home for arranging.

However, COVID was not to be the only challenge 2020 would throw at St. John's. Late May would find the church in the nation's spotlight as racial unrest and protests against the death of George Floyd brought the conflict directly to St. John's. During a night of violent rioting, a fire was set in the downstairs church nursery. On the Sunday after the fire, with the church closed and windows and doors boarded up, the flowers intended for the main altar were moved outside to the front door of the church. Cards expressing support for "all who speak out against injustice and work for peace" and "sympathy to the Floyd family" were affixed to the arrangements. Those flowers remained on the doorstep during the days to follow when hundreds of peaceful protesters marching on H Street past the church were dispersed with tear gas.

With the church closed frequently and the staff working remotely, it was no longer possible to arrange flowers onsite. Weekly worship flowers were consequently arranged at home and carried to church in time for either the midweek taping or on Sunday morning after the church moved to the 9 a.m. live service. Flower Guild spouses Powell Hutton, Garry Dalby, and Pete Kyle helped navigate the logistical challenges caused by DC road closures, police barricades, and protective fencing. They were especially helpful when it was necessary to park blocks from church and walk the flowers in! Thank you Powell, Garry, and Pete!

## **Christmas**

If there was ever a year when we all “need a little Christmas, right this very minute!” 2020 was that year. Dedicated to the task at hand, Joanne, Pat, and Katherine collaborated on Christmas planning. Then under Joanne’s direction, and joined by Guild members Jamie Finch, Julia Koster, Anne Harrington, and spouses Powell Hutton and Robert Harrington, the group spent days filling the sanctuary and front of the church with wreaths, greenery, and poinsettias. They gave freely of their talents to create a glorious and joyful virtual celebration for all to enjoy. The results were absolutely spectacular!

## **In Appreciation**

We thank Anne Harrington who lovingly continued as Wedding Coordinator. And, it is with much regret that our dear Mary Raether resigned in August. Mary wrote... “I have loved my many years (almost 40) and I will miss you, my friends on the Guild and the opportunity to focus on being creative surrounded by so many beautiful flowers. I have learned so much over the years and will never forget any of them.”

Many thanks also to Kim Carlson and Sharlyne Griffin for coordinating our flower deliveries with staff availability and reduced church hours.

Finally, the Flower Guild owes an enormous debt of gratitude to our wonderful Sextons, Javier Obregon, Geegee Bryant, and David Gamboa. Simply stated but so true... flowers at St. John’s would not have been possible in 2020 without their assistance. Thank you Javier, Geegee, and David!

## **Honoring Loved Ones with Flowers**

Each week parishioners have the opportunity to honor loved ones by making a donation to the flower fund. Your contribution sponsors the main altar or the narthex or all of the church’s arrangements for a given Sunday. The names of your loved ones appear in the church bulletin along with your dedication, which can be in memory, in celebration, or in thanksgiving for a person or event.

## **In Closing**

Throughout 2020, flowers continued to be a part of St. John's weekly worship service. Despite the pandemic, civil unrest, and church closures, the Flower Guild of St. John's at Lafayette Square fulfilled its mission of beautifying the church to the glory of God.

## **A Special Thank You to our 2019 Flower Guild Members**

Sarah Agnew  
Karolina Arias  
Paul Barkett  
Barbara Bulla Brown  
Becca Brown  
Thea Crouch  
Jamie Finch  
Barbie Harper  
Anne Harrington

Lily Happi  
Susan Heil  
Amanda Claire Hoover  
Tara Hupman  
Joanne Hutton  
Kristin Josey  
Nicole Kleman Neufeld  
Julia Koster  
Elizabeth Lewis

Liz Morin  
Hanna Pillion  
Allie Raether  
Laurie Rossbach  
Adelle Simmons  
Ryan Toney  
Jennifer Urquhart  
Pamela Venzke

Katherine Kyle  
*Chair*

Pat Dalby  
*Co-Chair*

## GREETERS MINISTRY REPORT

Until our beloved church had to close in March due to Covid 19, our greeters warmly welcomed, in the chill of the winter months, our guests, parishioners and potential new members each Sunday as they entered the church.

When we are able to gather in person, greeters provide a warm welcome for the 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. services during the regular schedule and the 10:30 a.m. service during the summer schedule. Once the service is finished, a greeter stands next to the large “Ask Me” sign where we answer any questions guests may have and provide Welcome Cards to those interested in membership at St. John’s. In addition, a “rover” makes sure everyone feels welcomed and not standing alone. Greeters encourage newcomers to attend the Forum after the 9:00 a.m. service and the Hospitality Hour and Parish Lunch following the 11:00 a.m. service, providing a welcoming environment where newcomers can meet parishioners and we can learn more about their interests.

Since we live in a vibrant, international city, we unfortunately lose greeters who move away from Washington for new opportunities. The Greeter Committee is always in need of new greeters to have “a deep bench.” Four greeters are needed each Sunday during the regular season, and we try to limit the greeting commitment to once a month. We encourage all members of the parish, as members of one body, to consider themselves greeters, whether in an official or unofficial capacity. Only a small amount of time is required to welcome and the service provided is invaluable. We often hear new parishioners say they joined St. John’s because they felt so welcomed. *Now, more than ever, after a year of pain, division, and a world health pandemic, making everyone who enters through St. John’s doors feel wholly welcomed and included will be of utmost importance.*

Please extend a warm thank you to the following members of our Welcome Team for doing a wonderful job:

Andrea Charters	Sara McGanity	Kerri Stelcen
Garry Dalby	Eleanor Odom	Desiree Stolar
James Doyle	Peter Odom	Leila Taaffe
Caroline Faris	Ethan Papish	Brenda Wolter
Andrew Hunt	Jacquelyn Papish	Willy Wolter
Kat Kehoe	Laura Patten	Rick Young
Patricia Leslie	Raymond Petniunas	
John Lucio	Susan Petniunas	

If you are interested in joining the greeters team, please contact Kaye Edwards.

With blessings,

Kat Kehoe  
*Chair*

Note: We bid farewell to our leader Kat Kehoe and to Leila Taaffe, both of whom moved out of the Washington area. We thank them for their faithful service in welcoming parishioners and newcomers.

## INVESTMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

The Investment Committee's responsibility is to assist in the oversight and management of the church's endowment. The members of the Committee in 2020 consisted of: Richard Metzger, Paul Barkett, Krista Becker, Lisa Kirchenbauer, Justin Dean, Casey Evans and Sara McGanity.

Brown Advisory was retained by the church in 2011 to handle the day-to-day management of its investment portfolio. The Investment Committee relies on the advice and guidance of Brown Advisory to achieve its overriding objective of increasing the value of the church's portfolio over time through capital appreciation and dividend and interest payments. In addition, the church's endowment annually provides an income stream to support the church's operating expenses.

### Investment Committee Meetings

The Investment Committee met twice during 2020 with representatives of Brown Advisory. The discussion during these meetings primarily covered the performance of the church's endowment accounts over the course of the year, developments in national and international debt and equity markets that could affect the church's portfolio, and the income needs of the church. Brown Advisory continues to rebalance the portfolio by selling equities to capture profits and maintain a liquidity reserve so that they can maintain the long term strategic targets and support operating budget income needs.

### Market Conditions and Portfolio Performance

In 2020, the scope and scale of unknowns for the global economy and financial markets remains high given the tight link with developments with COVID directly (vaccines, treatments, rapid testing, contact tracing) and indirectly (re-opening of the world's economies, additional policy support, consumer/business sentiment). Interest rates have remained low and real interest rates have turned negative in response to global monetary policy intended to support growth. The stock market has remained strong and has generally skewed in favor of large fast growing technology companies and tech enabled companies, given their stronger growth prospects, higher profitability and better quality business models. Through active management of the funds, the endowment accounts have continued to support the ongoing income needs of the church and maintain capital appreciation.

In 2019, the church borrowed funds from the Endowment Account in lieu of using a commercial line of credit to meet renovation cash flow needs. The church pays a quarterly fixed interest rate of 2.7% on the outstanding amount and the loan, is held as fixed income asset in the Endowment Account. In 2020, quarterly interest payments were made to the Endowment Account as well as principal payments of \$165,089, and the loan remains an asset in the account.

## **Socially Responsible Investing**

In 2020, the Committee initiated a review of our current investment policy definitions related to socially responsible investing and reviewed our current holdings. The committee intends to continue to review our policies and recommend changes to our current policy that will ensure that our investments align with our social and moral values. It is expected that recommended policy language will be presented to the Vestry for consideration in 2021.

On a final note, it's been an honor to serve as chair of the investment committee for the past six years and I've been thankful to have been able to assist in the growth of the church through this role. I am transitioning the role to Virginia Bader in 2021. She has great institutional knowledge of the church finances and is well equipped to lead the committee in overseeing this valuable resource.

Krista Becker  
*Chair*

## LATROBE FELLOWSHIP FOR YOUNG ADULTS REPORT

The Latrobe Fellowship is an active, energetic, joy-filled group of young adults at St. John's Church. Latrobers are single and married adults in their 20s and 30s who find themselves at different places in their life and on their spiritual journeys. Developing and deepening relationships with God and other young adults is very important to us. In a normal year, we gather on the First Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. for a joyful celebration of the Holy Eucharist. Following the service, we then gather for dinner, fellowship, and an opportunity to learn about food, faith, wine, the Episcopal Church, and a variety of other topics throughout the year.

Latrobers also participate in the larger life of St. John's Church by serving on Sunday mornings as ushers, greeters, readers, chalice bearers, musicians, Sunday school teachers, and in many other ways. Additionally, many serve on Vestry, the Rector Search Committee, as delegates to Diocesan Convention, and in other parish leadership roles. Young adults have worked on many different outreach projects, including the Christmas toy drive, the clothing drive, and Grace's Table. As we move into 2021, you will continue to see young adults active and engaged in the good work that is being done in this church and community.

As with many other aspects of parish life, the Latrobe Fellowship adapted to the changes brought on by the worldwide pandemic to continue our ministry. The Fellowship was able to gather in person for the first three months of the year, moved to "Zoom" gatherings, and was able to have a few socially distanced events during the fall. The Latrobe Fellowship welcomed the Rev. Savannah Ponder to the Latrobe team in the summer.

Here are the events that the Latrobe Fellowship sponsored in 2020:

- January 8, 2020: Champagne Tasting
- February 12, 2020: Shrove Wednesday Pancake Night
- March 4, 2020: Operation Gratitude
- April 1, 2020: Discussion on Faith in the Workplace with the Rev. Will Morris (virtual)
- May 6, 2020: Zoom Happy Hour (virtual)
- June 10, 2020: Reflection on the racial justice protests (virtual)
- July 8, 2020: Zoom Happy Hour (virtual)
- August 5, 2020: Discussion on the history of "the Church of the Presidents" (virtual)
- September 5, 2020: Black Lives Matter Plaza artwork dedication
- October 7, 2020: Outdoor Service of Holy Eucharist at St. Paul's K Street
- November 14, 2020: Outdoor Service of Holy Eucharist at Christ Church, Georgetown

We are especially grateful to members of the Latrobe Steering Committee: John Derrick, Becca Brown, Cal Trepagnier, Martha Spieker, Taylor Jetmundsen, Anna Wieger, Jess Unger, Claire Kim, Dax and Veronica Tejera, and Carl Ward.

Matthew Taylor  
*Chair*

## MUSIC MINISTRY REPORT

This year has certainly presented challenges with the COVID-19 pandemic, but we have adapted our skills and continued to make music that enriches our worship and social programming. Singing together is at the heart of our life as a Christian community. Our communal song helps us to explore our faith, to share our stories, and to contribute depth and beauty to our liturgies. This year we were asked to imagine what it means to sing together when we can't be together.

Our choirs continue to be the foundation of our music ministry. After processing the initial shock of not being able to sing together, our singers did what singers do best—they got creative. Over the past year they have embraced the new reality of the virtual choir. They have waged battle with iPhones, erected make-shift studios in their showers, and perfected the subtle art of “business on the top, pajamas on the bottom.” By the time this report is published, they will have recorded more than 50 virtual choir projects. They have showed up to sing in church on Sunday mornings as well as in parking lots, in amphitheaters, and in grassy fields. Most importantly, they have remained profoundly committed to the role that they play in realizing the beauty of God's creation. As the hymnist writes:

*As over each continent and island  
The dawn leads on another day,  
The voice of prayer is never silent,  
Nor dies the strain of praise away.*

Though our concert series and festival services took a hiatus this year, we continued our musical outreach to the community and our engagement with local musicians in new ways. Notably, throughout the season of Advent we collaborated with several excellent local instrumentalists who contributed to our live-streamed worship services.

Our annual Advent party attracted more than 100 participants and featured singers and pianists spreading Christmas cheer via Zoom from remote locations throughout the city. We're indebted to the members of our flower guild who provided stunning decorations in the Parish House and to Carolyn Crouch who contributed humor and grace in her role as master of ceremonies.

In a year of remarkable firsts, the musical highlight was surely our virtual service of Christmas Lessons and Carols. Our musicians worked for more than a month to prepare and record the music for the service which was enhanced by a quartet from the Air Force Strings. In true Episcopal fashion, we sought beauty not only in music, but also in light, shadow, and architecture. The service was filmed and recorded by a team of professional videographers and audio engineers. Though our congregation couldn't gather in person, we experienced our historic building anew through the architectural photography of the Rector.

We're all deeply indebted to the work of our associate organist, Samantha Scheff. Now just over a year into her tenure with us, Sam has proven herself a godsend to our team. Her organ playing is thoughtful and articulate and her collegiality is without compare. This has been especially welcome in a year when nothing can be taken for granted. On several occasions, we learned on short notice that our building and organ were inaccessible. Sam showed flexibility

and artistry as she decamped to any number of local churches to record for our Sunday services.

Lisa Koehler stepped into an expanded role as music administrator. In this capacity she has not only strengthened our organization but has taken on a significant share of the video editing for our choir videos and worship services. Her willingness to meet the needs of this moment are driven by her natural pastoral gifts and her love for this community.

This past year could not have been anticipated, nor do we wish to repeat it. Even still, glimmers of God's grace were discovered around every corner and imbedded in each unexpected challenge. We're grateful for the dedication and artistry of the small army of folk who allow our music ministry to thrive in times of prosperity and particularly in times of adversity. They are:

### **The St. John's Choir**

- Sopranos: Dena Goodman, Anne Sutton, and Tory Wood.
- Altos: Lisa Koehler, Charlotte Stewart, and Louisa Waycott.
- Tenors: Noah Calderon, Johnathon O'Neal, and Ned Sieverts.
- Basses: Chuck Bowers, Justin Dean, and Christopher Jones.

### **The Parish Choir**

- Sopranos: Annette Anfinrud, Dena Goodman, Whitley Herndon, Margaret Leer, Julia Lenoard, Kenlyn Klamper, Margy Love, Kathy Luhrman, Gay Pasley, Anne Sutton, Alyssa Tomlinson, Tory Wood, Quin Woodward Pu, and Christina Wilson.
- Altos: Alison Adkins, Sarah Banks, Thea Crouch, Wendy Fibison, Sara Joey, Julia Kerrigan, Lisa Koehler, Katherine McClintic, Virginia Pasley, LaFleur Paysour, Louisa Waycott, and Margo Wiegenstein.
- Tenors: Philip Anfinrud, Craig Burkhardt, Noah Calderon, Johnathon O'Neal, and Jack Reiffer.
- Basses: Jeff Bozman, Justin Dean, Chris Jones, Chuck Bowers, Bill Josey, Ryan Toney, and Peter Wu.

It continues to be a privilege to work and make music at St. John's. I'm grateful to the Rector, clergy, staff, vestry, and especially to the congregation for your continued support of this music ministry.

Brent Erstad  
*Director of Music and Organist*

## OUTREACH COMMITTEE REPORT

As Christians, we are called at Baptism to “seek and serve Christ in all persons.” At St. John’s, our Outreach ministries are focused on partnerships to serve others, both in our community and around the world. In 2020, the Outreach Committee continued to build many of our long-standing partnerships in a different world due to the global pandemic. The Outreach Committee moved its work online as it continued to support numerous projects throughout our community. The Outreach Committee also implemented a new application process for ministries supported by the Committee. Dozens of parishioners and friends were involved in Outreach during 2020, and we supported and served a variety of communities in Washington, DC, South Africa, and Jerusalem. The Outreach Committee utilized a substantially decreased budget of \$91,000 during 2020 due to the ongoing fallout of the pandemic, and the Committee is grateful to the Vestry for this generous allotment. Our resources were allocated as follows:

### EDUCATION: \$38,000

- Communities in Schools of the Nation’s Capital           \$19,000
- Bishop Walker School   \$19,000

St. John’s provided significant support to **Communities in Schools of the Nation’s Capital** (CISNCAP) through funding for the general operations of the organization and through the time and talent of its parishioners both as volunteers in schools and on the Board of Directors. CISNCAP’s mission is to surround students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life. To do that, CISNCAP places a Site Coordinator in each of its partner schools whose responsibilities are focused on case management, targeted interventions, whole school prevention services, and parent engagement.

Efforts around CIS this year focused on increasing awareness of and participation in volunteer activities throughout the Congregation by offering additional opportunities to volunteer with CIS. These new opportunities include volunteering at the Family Food Market once per month, participating in career fairs at various times throughout the year, reviewing report cards at volunteer-student conferences with children quarterly, and participating in the Journal Project, which was piloted in 2015. The Committee voted to rename the school-specific line budget line item to “**CIS Special Projects**,” which for 2020 included funding the continuation of the successful pilot journaling project with middle and high school students and Communities in Schools sites.

**Bishop Walker School**, born of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington, is a tuition free institution for children in kindergarten through fourth grade. St. John’s provides a variety of support for the school, including financial support and giving books to students as part of our annual Christmas toy drive. The School currently serves 93 students between kindergarten and sixth grade. The Outreach Committee voted to increase our support for Bishop Walker School to promote its mission in the Diocese.

**PARTNERSHIPS:**

*Washington, DC*

- Grace’s Table \$6,500
- All Girls Boy Scout Troop Washington, DC 1,500

*South Africa*

- Kwasa Centre, South Africa \$15,000
- Clergy Education \$2,000

*Diocese of Jerusalem*

- St. Paul’s Shafr’Amr \$1,000
- American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem (AFEDJ) \$1,000
- Princess Basma Centre \$1,000

This year the Outreach Committee continued to build our partnership with **Grace’s Table**, an outreach ministry of Grace Episcopal Church in Georgetown during the first months of the year. St. John’s continued to support Grace’s Table through the purchase of box lunches. This fellowship prepares and shares a meal at 11:30 a.m. on Saturdays for persons who are homeless or on the margins of being homeless. Starting in September 2013, we have committed to providing volunteers to host Grace’s Table on the third Saturday of each month. Teams of 5–8 volunteers purchased and prepared the food, and then gathered with guests to eat and socialize together. The number of guests has varied from about 50 to 70, in addition to volunteers. This wonderful local partnership enables St. John’s parishioners to make an impact close to home and build relationships within our community. This year we provided a \$6,000 donation to support the operating costs for Grace’s Table, and allocated the remainder of the funds to reimburse volunteers for the cost of the food they prepared and served.

**The South African Companion Group** partners with the Kwasa Centre and the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul in the Diocese of the Highveld to provide education and other services to children living in an informal settlement near Johannesburg.

St. John’s continues to partner with the **Diocese of Jerusalem**. We continued donations to our partners at St. Paul’s Shafr’Amr and the American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem (AFEDJ). A group of pilgrims from St. John’s visited the Holy Land in February 2018, and a second group visited in January 2019. The pilgrims from the 2018 and 2019 groups have hosted several events including parish lunch and Latrobe Fellowships to discuss their journeys.

We also continued a relationship with the **All Girls Boy Scout Troop of Washington, D.C.**, which is led by a parishioner at St. John’s, Craig Burkhardt.

**HOUSING:** \$12,000

- Rebuilding Together \$9,000

St. John's continued to support **Rebuilding Together** this year.

**EVENTS:** \$1,500

- Annual Gift Drive \$1000

The annual **Christmas Gift Drive** collected hundreds of books, clothing, and other gifts for more dozens of children. We worked with four organizations to collect children's Christmas wishes and distribute gifts: Bishop Walker School (BWS) and Communities in Schools.

**IMMIGRATION:** \$4,000

In early 2017, we recognized that sponsoring a refugee family would be a huge undertaking, and certainly not the only way to support refugees in Washington. With every resettlement, there is a need for a welcoming community to embrace, support, and connect the refugees to needed resources. Some preliminary research uncovered a number of DMV area parishes active in refugee support, and their progress and ideas helped shape a written proposal for St. John's to start prayerfully exploring what refugee support might look like for our congregation.

The committee continued their work in 2020 by supporting several refugee families in the Washington metropolitan area by furnishing a new refugee family's home by providing clothes, furniture, and other housing necessities.

**DONATIONS:** \$14,500

- Downtown Cluster of Congregations \$7,000
- Washington Interfaith Network \$3,000
- Seabury Resources for Aging \$1,000

In 2019, the Outreach Committee continued our partnership with **Seabury Resources for Aging**.

Several Outreach Committee continued to advocate with **Washington Interfaith Network** (WIN) in 2020.

**MOVING FORWARD:**

The Outreach Committee, under the guidance of the Rev. Savannah Ponder, looks forward to continuing our work in the community and with our partnership organizations throughout 2021.

Matthew David Taylor  
*Outreach Committee Chair*

## PARISH LUNCH REPORT

The Sunday Parish Lunch is a wonderful and important fellowship opportunity at St. John's. Parishioners were enjoying this fellowship for a couple of months before the Coronavirus pandemic required the Bishop shut down all activities as of March 12. Before the shutdown, both the newly renovated Parlors and basement dining room were being used. Procedures were in the process of being refined to facilitate both venues.

Community Building Potluck Suppers also continued by popular demand as an opportunity to informally gather and establish relationships within the Parish.

In response to requests by parishioners and informal polling, we decided to establish Agape Suppers during Lent. We had a full schedule to be hosted by parishioners in all jurisdictions inhabited by parishioners before everything had to be cancelled.

Special appreciation is extended to the following individuals and groups who organized, cooked and hosted these events during which parishioners enjoyed fellowship:

**Parish Lunch:** (roughly 300 served and participated at 6 events)

- Care of Creation Committee (63)
- 2019 Holy Land Group (40)
- Book Group (40)
- Sarah Wood & Laurie Adams and Families (38)
- Mardi Gras Karen Zachary & Thom Sinclair, Krista & Larry Bradley, Andrew Clarke &
- Chip Sherrill (65)
- Friends of Bishop Walker School (50)

**Potluck Suppers:** (all were at capacity established by hosts')

- Alex & Desiree Stolar, Roslyn VA
- Dick & Joy Nathan, Falls Church City
- Elizabeth Lewis & David Abernathy, Capitol Hill

**Agape Dinners:**

Caroline & Stephen Faris NW DC

Holly Sukenik  
*Parish Lunch Coordinator*

## PARISH REGISTER REPORT

### Transfers into the Parish in 2020:

Hillary Garber – from St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Terrace Park, OH  
Christine Davies – from St. John’s Episcopal Church, Ellicott City, MD  
Kenlyn and Collin Klamper – from the Church of the Holy Trinity, New York, New York  
William Rhys Dodd – from St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Salem, VA  
Thomas G. Bell III – from Trinity Episcopal Church, Staunton, VA  
Mary English Saunders – from All Saints’ Episcopal Church, Atlanta, GA  
James D. Hague – from Christ Episcopal Church, Kensington, MD  
Jess Edward Christiaan Unger – from Grace Episcopal Church, Brunswick, MD  
Cary and Kevin Kelly – from Christ Church, Alexandria, VA  
Allen Edward Dennis – from St. Thaddeus Episcopal Church, Aiken, SC

### Transfers out of the Parish in 2020:

The Klug Family (Mark, Amy, Mathis, and Caroline) – to All Saints Church, Chevy Chase, MD  
Allen Jamerson – to St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church, Richmond, VA  
Carolyn and Michael Becraft – to Gethsemane Episcopal Church, Fargo, ND  
Megan Evans – to St. Columba’s Church, Washington, DC  
Sloan and Audrey Evans (children) – to St. Columba’s Church, Washington, DC  
Geoffrey B. Baker and Kathryn Donaldson Baker – to Christ Church, Georgetown, Washington, DC

### Confirmations, Reaffirmations, Receptions, Baptisms, and Funerals in 2020:

#### Confirmations

William Brandon Adkins  
Charles Patrick Bond  
Clayton Crawford  
Joseph Wesley Creech  
Kathryn Gene Adams Holder  
Amanda Claire Grayson Hoover  
Zealan Taylor Hoover  
Ting Chi Sienna Siu  
Bailey Mara Thomas  
Jess Edward Christiaan Unger  
Deborah Jennings White

#### Receptions

Everett Peter Haugh  
Lauren Moriarty  
Ryan Anthony Schowen  
Alyssa Ann Tomlinson

## **Reaffirmations**

Emily Louise Able  
Nora Christine Duesterhaus

## **Baptisms**

James Cooper Hailey  
Natalie Kathleen Davis Stolar  
Peter Carl Ward  
Francis Armistead Cash Davis  
Elizabeth Grace Eversole  
Hunter Moore Yeomans  
Christian Berlin  
Turner Calvin Kroese  
Beau Joaquin Sanchez  
Charlotte Dalton Highsmith  
Anne Harper Duthé  
Scarlett Parker Johnston

## **Weddings**

Sofia Rhyne León and Joseph Augustus Ryan  
Margaret Ann Slattery and Toby William Stock  
Hillary Lamb Garber and Timothy Stuart  
Caitlin Brooks Rooney and Randall Austin Schrimsher  
Lauren Elizabeth Moriarty and Clayton Joseph Crawford

## **Funerals**

Caitlin Warren Archer  
Bonnie Louise McWhorter Duvall  
Teresa McVicar Huettner  
Eric Neff  
Samuel Johnston Watson III

## PASTORAL CARE AND LAY EUCHARISTIC MINISTRY REPORT

The Pastoral Care Ministry at St. John's Church complements and supplements the work of our priests by contacting, visiting, and praying for members of the congregation. 2020 marked the first year of this new ministry. The ministry combined long-time ministries at St. John's- such as the Lay Eucharistic Ministers and the Christmas Poinsettia and Easter Lily ministries- with new ideas for providing Pastoral Care for the parish.

The first meeting was February 24. The committee began exploring possibilities for pastoral work including possible prayer groups and healing ministries. The committee agreed to meet on the 4th Monday of every other month. This all changed in March as the pandemic began unfolding. The team quickly adapted to this new challenge.

The committee began meeting frequently as a whole and in small groups. During the early weeks of the pandemic, the Rev. Jane Hague initiated a committee project to reach out to parishioners who lived alone and/or those who were older. The members each took a part of the parish membership list to write and call as many parishioners as possible with a focus on those groups. The members were able to connect with long time and newer parishioners on how people were handling the isolation and new protocols for staying safe. As the online offerings from the church increased, the committee had opportunities to be sure parishioners were aware of these options for worship and for joining in the range of small group options.

The committee also focused on a group of parishioners who were homebound or very ill, keeping in contact and holding them in prayer. The members prayed regularly for all those on the prayer list. Every day, at least one member is praying for those on our parish prayer list.

In collaboration with the Vestry, the committee created a Google survey to identify congregational needs during the pandemic. There were very few requests for support from the congregation. The committee continued to focus on parishioners who were dealing with illness, loneliness, family crises, hospitalizations and issues of health and wellbeing.

As an outgrowth of the Pastoral Care Ministry, Jane began an online Centering Prayer group. Thom Sinclair took over leading that group as Jane left St. John's. It has been well attended by St. John's parishioners and visitors.

When Jane left St. John's in August, the committee expressed their sincere gratitude for what she had done to organize this current version of pastoral care work in the congregation. In September, we welcomed the Rev. Savannah Ponder as our Clergy lead for pastoral care. Finally, in December, the committee was able to deliver Christmas poinsettias to over 30 parishioners to remind them that they are in our prayers and loved.

A huge thank you to Jack Reiffer and the amazing work he did to document our work this year.

Committee Members: Laurie Adams, Wendy Fibison, Ann Gardner, Kristie Hansen, Anne Harrington, Joanne Hutton, Richard Price, Jack Reiffer, Thom Sinclair (chair), Diane Spaulding, and Margo Wiegenstein.

Staff Members: Kaye Edwards, the Rev. Jane Hague, and the Rev. Savannah Ponder.

Thank you to two members who left the committee: Mary Jane Checchi and Carolyn Crouch.

Thom Sinclair  
*Chair*

## **PLANNED GIVING REPORT**

As of the end of 2020, there were 55 existing members of our parish who have committed to providing a legacy to St. John's through their estate planning bequests as part of the 1816 Society, and additionally, another 14 parishioners have indicated in their stewardship cards that they have added St. John's to their estate plans. We are grateful for this outpouring of both interest and action. This has been a challenging year to focus on some of these longer-term efforts as we have all grappled with the pandemic, economic and political challenges for our church. In the next year, we are hoping to take a more proactive approach to our planned giving strategy. In addition, as a part of the Chair's participation in the Faith + Finance initiative with the Financial Resource Committee of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington, we expect to bring more financial education to St. John's in the near future.

Lisa A.K. Kirchenbauer  
*Chair*

## PROPERTIES COMMITTEE REPORT

The Properties Committee is responsible for issues involving the condition and operations of the Church's buildings and grounds. It provides oversight and support to the administrative staff in the area of property management. The Committee works directly with Kim Carlson, Director for Operations, to implement its decisions. The Committee's members are Rick Busch, Barbie Harper, Joanne Hutton, Patricia Leslie, and Richard Grimmett, Chair of the Committee.

Actions of the Committee were curtailed in 2020 due to the Coronavirus restrictions on access to the church property. The principal actions undertaken by the Committee are as follows:

The Committee continued its program for the removal, restoration, and reinstallation of the historic Lorin memorial Stained-Glass Windows of St. John's Church. During 2019, two windows, one each in the North and South Gallery-- the Buchanan and Turnbull windows--were removed. Both required substantial renovation work. They have been restored by our contractor, Shenandoah Glass of Front Royal, Virginia. They will be reinstalled once it is feasible for the contractors to access the church. These restored windows are original, historic, Lorin windows and were designed and fabricated in Chartres, France in 1883-1884 and all installed by 1885. Shenandoah Glass has restored most of our windows over the last decade. They have also installed custom-built, state-of-the-art, protective covers, called Insulated Glass Units (IGU), on the windows throughout the church. These IGUs protect the windows from damage that results from expansion and contraction of the stained glass caused by excessive heat or cold outside when the temperature inside the church is the opposite, whether during Washington's hot summers or its cold winters. They also help protect the stained-glass windows from physical damage.

After the two Gallery windows are reinstalled, only three of the historic-Stained Glass windows of St. John's will remain to be restored in the church. One of these windows is in the North Gallery on the AFL side of the church--the Presidents W.H. Harrison, Tyler and Taylor window, located on the door adjacent to the large demi-lune Bishop's window. The other two historic windows are the Swords and Shields windows installed in 1885 and located at the lower level of the stairs leading to the Gallery; one on the H Street side of the church, and the other on AFL side. All three of these needs notable, long-deferred, restoration work. It is the Committee hope that it can contract for restoration of these last three windows during 2021.

Planning actions were taken in 2019 to carry out plantings in key areas around the West front Plaza and elsewhere around the exterior of the church. Closure of the church in 2020 required deferral of any actions based on these plans.

Richard F. Grimmett  
*Chair*

## STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

The Stewardship Committee's focus continues to be on annual giving. Receipts from pledges account for approximately 46% of the total budget at St. John's. Here is the record of pledge amounts received over the past few years:

Year	Pledged	Units
2016	\$1,025,960	427
2017	\$1,020,000	371
2018	\$1,035,765	375
2019	\$933,468	368
2020	\$940,383	336

As of January 13, 2021, we have received pledges from 315 units totaling \$929,401. We've seen at least 68 new pledges and 113 increased pledges, as of Jan. 6.

Typically, parishioners continue to submit pledges for several months into each calendar year, as new members join our church or members reevaluate their charitable giving plans. **To those members of our parish family who have not yet pledged for 2021, we ask you to carefully and prayerfully consider making a pledge. Any pledge, no matter how small, makes a difference!**

The difficulties St. John's faced during the pandemic and summer of unrest led to a late start to our stewardship efforts. But once we were up and running, the Committee hit its stride. Members of this year's Stewardship Committee and the list of people providing assistance to the committee includes (but is not limited to) Andrew Clarke, David Gallalee, Carter Keithly, Dick Nathan, Sara McGanity, Powell Hutton, Eleanor Odom, Matt Bode, Martha Ellison, and Richard Metzger. We were also pleased that so many members of the Vestry volunteered to make outreach calls—and especially to Desirée Stolar and Anthony Pegues who supplemented Stewardship Committee testimonies with their own.

I especially want to recognize the outstanding support that the St John's office staff has provided in facilitating our Stewardship work. Kim Carlson joined not only our regular Stewardship Committee calls but also worked closely with Rob and me through additional planning sessions—and dealt with my many (many!) email questions with grace. RJ Gravina, Evangeline Gravina, and Sharlyne Griffin have been instrumental to the logistics of the process, Kaye Edwards has brought to bear her longstanding relationships with and knowledge of so many parishioners. And Preston Cherouny maintains records and makes the necessary financial reports to the appropriate church committees and the Vestry, while also fielding many questions with diligence. We continue to be blessed as a result of their hard work.

Rob deserves special singling out for his deep commitment to stewardship, his willingness to speak about it early and often during services, and his ability to carve out time for this committee during a year when so many other urgent matters needed his attention. We're planning to continue meeting through 2021 and will more regularly discuss stewardship with the parish community, while seeking to begin this fall's efforts earlier than last year. To the extent St. John's is able to get back to more normal gatherings after vaccines become widely available, we anticipate improving results again in 2021-22.

Faithfully,

Toby Stock, *Chair*

## TOUR GUIDES' REPORT

During 2020's pre-pandemic days, the St. John's volunteer Tour Guides speak to visitors on the history and current activities of the church and its outreach efforts. We conduct regularly scheduled tours on most Sundays following the 11 a.m. service, as well as specially scheduled group tours on weekdays. Unfortunately, we were able to conduct only two tours before our congregation switched to online services, and several special group tours later in the year were postponed indefinitely.

Nevertheless, there is good news about the Tour Guide Guild. After two of our longtime volunteers passed away in 2019, we recruited nine new volunteers. Training materials for them are being prepared so that whenever the quarantine ends we will be ready to go. We also are exploring a plan for developing a podcast-style audio tour that would permit visitors to use their cell phones for a self-guided tour. Such an option would be especially useful for weekday visitors and those who visit on Sundays when there is no scheduled tour.

Thank you to both our veteran guides: Richard Busch, Carolyn Crouch, and Richard Price. In addition, we are grateful for our new volunteers: Katie Adams, Bill Josey, Kenlyn Klamper, John Lucio, Jacob Parnell, Allie Raether, Diane Spaulding, Matthew Taylor, and William Wolter.

Karen Zachary  
*Chair*

## TREASURER'S REPORT

### 2020 Highlights

Despite the significant challenges that 2020 brought, St. John's continues to be a financially sound church with substantial resources.

When St. John's closed its doors in March, many parishioners paid their pledge in full early to support the church in efforts to cover its expenses, which included a commitment to retaining all employees. Additionally, over the summer, St. John's received an unbudgeted increase in pledges and non-pledge contributions to assist in repairing the fire damage the nursery and parish house sustained during the protests. Both assisted St. John's in meeting its commitments and getting the church closer to its budget goals than otherwise possible, given the challenges of 2020.

While St. John's received more in pledge than budgeted in 2020, the downward trend in total pledges this trend reversed in 2020, 2020 was higher than 2019, 2021 is higher than 2020 and volume of unpaid pledges and its increased reliance on a 5% annual draw from the endowment is a cause for concern.

### Income

Total pledges in 2020 (\$942,183) exceeded the budgeted amount by approximately \$32,180 (3.5% greater than budget) but fell short of pledge income St. John's has received in previous years.

Last year, St. John's transitioned from cash basis accounting to accrual basis. Switching accounting methods enhanced the accuracy of our financial reports and improved our financial reporting procedures. As part of the switch to accrual basis, the church tracked contributions receivable and unpaid pledges in 2020. At the end of 2020, \$70,877 in pledges remained unpaid (7.5% of total pledges of \$942,183). Given St. John's reliance on pledges to meet its operational needs, unpaid pledges pose a risk to the church's ability to meet its obligations.

Non-pledge contributions (\$43,692) and offerings (\$156,793) fell behind the budgeted amount by \$4,808 and \$23,207 respectively (12% less than budget). However, the holiday offerings were the same as in prior years (approximately \$29,000 total). Additional income sources include program and event revenues of \$23,501.

### Disbursements

The majority of St. John's 2020 program expenses (\$1,256,724) fall into four categories: Clergy (35%), Program Support (13%), Music (22%), and Outreach and Education (20%). Other operating expenses consist of administrative, maintenance, and repair costs.

Overall, program expenses were 6% under budget in 2020. However, several unanticipated worship costs were incurred due to the impact of COVID on in-person gatherings. Investments were made in technology and production for virtual worship. While there were unexpected costs, St. John's remained able to fully maintain choir salaries, the diocesan pledge and outreach commitments.

Due to the fire over the summer, the building sustained approximately \$500,000 in damage. The repair of the fire damage is ongoing, and repair costs are largely covered by insurance

## **2021 Budget**

The Vestry approved a balanced budget for 2021 using approximately \$53,000 of reserve funds provided by surpluses from prior years. The budget for 2021 is based on an anticipated \$973,000 in income from pledges, increasing from the pledges received in 2020. The budget assumes the resumption of full worship and program schedules no later than October 1, 2021.

The following are the principal changes in recurring expenses from 2020 that are included in the 2021 budget:

- No increase in staff and clergy salaries.
- Outreach is at a tithe level of \$97,300, which is 10% of projected pledges.
- Diocesan pledge is \$145,000 (an increase of \$5,000 from the 2020 budget).
- Two new part-time staff positions to streamline and evolve our current staff structure.
- Added 6% in reserves for unpaid pledge balances.

In light of the downward trend in pledges in previous years, the Vestry decided to use a 5% factor to calculate the church's support from its endowment account. The 5% support from the endowment was used again in the 2021 budget to ensure the church's primary ministries' financial support.

Casey Evans  
*Parish Treasurer*

## USHER GUILD REPORT

For the past 134 years, Ushers have had an integral role at St. John's Church, Lafayette Square, more than 200 years after the placement of its cornerstone on September 14, 1815. Over 70 years after services began on October 27, 1816, the Vestry approved the hiring of Ushers from the local community to seat growing numbers of visitors and parishioners. In 1894, volunteer male members of the congregation were given the opportunity to serve as Ushers to offer service to the church on committees and the Vestry. In 1941, the Usher Guild was formed. In the 1970s, volunteer female members of the congregation began to serve on the Vestry and in the 1980s as Ushers. In 2003, female parishioners assumed roles as Assistant Head Ushers.\*

Today's volunteer Ushers are members of that legacy Usher Guild, and warmly greet and assist parishioners and visitors as they attend services at St. John's Church. Ushers help with seating so as not to disrupt the worship of others, and participate during the Offertory and administration of the Holy Eucharist. Ushers serve in small teams once a month at each of its Sunday services, and this year Ushers were able to assist at Sunday afternoon gatherings in nearby Maryland, District of Columbia, and Commonwealth of Virginia locations. They may also volunteer to serve as Ushers for funeral and memorial services, and other special events. Members of the Usher Guild usually sponsor one of the splendid festival music programs, including that featured at the Easter Sunday services.

Ushers strive to ensure that appropriate decorum and the integrity of personal security of worshipers are maintained. They also assist in the event of emergency situations that may occur during church services. As first responders, the Assistant Head Ushers and many Ushers are certified in use of emergency cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) techniques and Automated External Defibrillator (AED) equipment.

During 2020, almost 60 parishioners served as Ushers. The teams of Ushers were led by Assistant Head Ushers Jeff Agnew, Matt Bode, Bud Harrell, Robyne Johnston, Graham Keithley, Richard Metzger, John More, Anthony Pegues, Nora Rigby, and Alfred Thesmar. Church growth continued to increase slightly during the year, despite unique COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. The Christmas Eve Pageant and Easter Sunday services are normally the most highly attended regular services held at St. John's Church.

Ushers look forward each Sunday to serve the entire St. John's Church parish and the surrounding community. I invite to consider being part of this exciting and dedicated ministry. Try it – YOU will like it. If you would like some additional information, please contact me here at any time.

James H. Czerwonky  
*Head Usher*

\* Information was sourced, in part, from Green, *The Church on Lafayette Square*; Harper, *Years of Change*; and Grimmer, *St. John's Church, Lafayette Square*.

## VESTRY NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

Under the Canons of the Episcopal Church, the Vestry of St. John's Lafayette Square is responsible for the economic health of the Parish and for the support of the ministry of the clergy. The Vestry consists of the Rector, the Senior Warden, the Junior Warden and twelve members of the Vestry elected by the Parish. The Vestry is assisted by the Parish Officers -- the parish Counsel, the Secretary, the Treasurer and the Assistant Treasurer. Officers are appointed by the Vestry annually.

The Senior and Junior Wardens serve one-year terms while the twelve members of the Vestry serve staggered terms of four years. Each year, the terms of three members of the Vestry expire. This year the departing members are Andrew Clarke, Martha Ellison, Jeff Hantson (departing as Junior Warden) and Jessica Sanchez.

On Sunday, December 13, 2020, members of the Vestry Nominating Committee met to consider potential nominees to fill the vacancies. Based on the recommendations of the Committee, the following parishioners have agreed to stand for election to the Vestry:

Senior Warden – Paul Barkett  
Junior Warden – Clark Ervin  
Unopposed Vestry – K. Scott Raab

Vestry Member (three to be elected):

Krista Rimple Bradley  
Wendy Fibison  
David Gallalee  
Julia Koster  
Katherine McClintic  
Alfred Thesmar

Paul Barkett, Senior Warden, introduced the candidates at a Zoom Forum on Sunday, January 31, 2021 and each candidate gave a presentation. Voting will take place at the Annual Meeting (by Zoom) on Sunday February 7, 2021 and the results should be announced at the end of the meeting.

Andrew Clarke  
*Chair*

## WASHINGTON INTERFAITH NETWORK (WIN) REPORT

In 2020, Washington Interfaith Network, Inc. (WIN) was forced to significantly change the way it operates in response to the COVID pandemic. WIN usually depends on in-person individual and group meetings, mass rallies, and door knocking. WIN turned to social media, phone banking, and Zoom meetings and made what was a rebuilding year into one of significant accomplishments in the areas of racial inequality, District budget priorities, and affordable housing (including in particular public housing for the poorest families). WIN also elevated environmental justice to a more significant role in organizing.

During the 2020 demonstrations around racial justice and counter demonstrations, St. John's and three neighboring WIN member churches suffered damages. St. John's, Metropolitan AME, Asbury UMC, and Luther Place supported each other and spoke up against attacks on each other.

### DC Budget Victories

WIN along with allies achieved significant wins through its "Budget to Build a Beloved DC" campaign with the backdrop of COVID and continuing issues of inequality in the District. The budget that was passed included over \$150 million in increased funding for crucial housing, immigration support, and community safety initiatives, including:

- \$25 million for public housing repairs
- \$88 million for the Housing Preservation and Housing Production Trust Funds
- \$12 million for eviction prevention
- \$7.4 million for tenant-based LSRP (Local Rent Supplement Services) vouchers
- \$8.6 million for homelessness services
- \$20 million for community safety priorities, such as mental health resources and violent interruption
- \$9 million for the Excluded Workers Fund, which provides funds for undocumented workers and others excluded from Unemployment Insurance
- \$6.6 million for the DC Healthcare Alliance, which provides healthcare for undocumented residents and others excluded from Medicare and Medicaid
- \$2.5 million retained for immigrant justice legal services that WIN and allies have fought for in the last few budget cycles

### Affordable Housing

WIN continued its long-term campaign for equitable housing in the District, focusing on requiring (1) deeply affordable and affordable housing in new developments and (2) preservation of public housing through renovations and new construction that maintains access for existing tenants.

WIN's particular focus was on Reservation 13 near RFK Stadium and the DC Jail. WIN leaders lobbied the DC Council, the Mayor, and District officials to support its "1/3 - 1/3 - 1/3" campaign:

- one-third deeply affordable (priced at 30% of Area Median Income) for, e.g., minimum wage workers, grocery store workers, retirees on Social Security

- one-third affordable (priced at 30-60% of AMI) for, e.g., school teachers, DC firefighters and police
- one-third market-rate (priced at \$2,450/month average Capitol Hill rent) for better situated DC residents.

Among other actions, WIN held an online blessing of the Reservation 13 land that reaffirmed the need to dedicate DC owned land to housing equity. Mayor Bowser has welcomed WIN’s support for creating deeply affordable housing at Reservation 13 and other sites.

WIN celebrated the Temple Courts ground breaking in 2020 – the results organizing with former displaced residents for over a decade. When completed, Temple Courts will serve as an important model of mixed-income housing with hundreds of deeply affordable units. Of the 750 total units, 504 will be affordable, of which 252 will be deeply affordable priced at 30% or less of Area Median Income.

**“Corporate Accountability & Racial Equity” (CARE) Campaign**

In 2020 WIN launched a major campaign to obtain better racial equity in the areas of Black and minority businesses and workers in the District, especially in Wards 7 and 8. Its initial focus was on Pepco in the context of its rate increase hearings. As a result of online organizing and testimony at the Public Service Commission on the rate increase, WIN leaders conducted a series of meetings with the management of Pepco (and its parent Exelon) that has resulted in initial commitments by Pepco to provide significantly increased utility services training to DC disadvantaged residents at the DC Infrastructure Academy, to work with its contractors to increase Black and minority employees and wages, and to provide significantly increased funding to Black and minority businesses. Work is continuing to turn these commitments into written agreements and legislation.

\* \* \* \* \*

What is WIN? WIN is a broad-based, multi-racial, multi-faith, strictly non-partisan, District-wide citizens’ power organization, rooted in local congregations and associations. WIN is committed to training and developing neighborhood leaders, to addressing community issues, and to holding elected and corporate officials accountable in Washington, DC. WIN’s 48 dues-paying members, including St. John’s, represent 25,000 families in every section of the District and reflect its theological, racial, geographic, and economic diversity. WIN is an affiliate of the Industrial Areas Foundation.

St. John’s has been a member of WIN since its founding in 1996. Parishioner John More, who serves as Treasurer of WIN, coordinated the participation of St. John’s in WIN. For further information, contact John More.

John More  
*Chair*





## **Welcome!**

AT ST. JOHN'S CHURCH, we believe Christ is calling us to be a renewed church in a changing world. Empowered by the Spirit of God, we respond to Jesus' call as we deepen our bond with Christ through worship, become a community where all are accepted, and work together as laity and clergy to do God's work in the world.

ST JOHN'S WAS ORGANIZED IN 1815 to serve as a parish church for Episcopalians residing in the neighborhoods in the west end of the District of Columbia. Its cornerstone was laid on September 14, 1815, and it was consecrated on December 27, 1816. Beginning with James Madison, every person who has held the office of President of the United States has attended a service at the church. Several Presidents have been communicants. Thus, St. John's is often referred to as the "Church of the Presidents." Pew 54 is the President's Pew. The architect of the church was Benjamin Henry Latrobe, who assisted in the rebuilding of the U.S. Capitol and the White House after the War of 1812. Twenty-five of the stained-glass windows in St. John's were designed and executed by artisans of the noted Lorin firm of Chartres, France.

BROCHURES DESCRIBING PARISH LIFE, the history of St. John's, and the Episcopal denomination can be found in the church entrance. If you are visiting, please fill out the visitor information card found at the end of each pew to enable us to welcome you personally into the life of our parish.

ST JOHN'S WEBSITE [WWW.STJOHNS-DC.ORG](http://WWW.STJOHNS-DC.ORG) has up-to-date information about the Church including the weekly calendar, the Sunday service schedule, Speaker Series speakers and topics, the music calendar and newsworthy events.

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### ***Vestry***

Paul Barkett, *Senior Warden*

Jeff Hantson, *Junior Warden*

Laurie Adams, Andrew Clarke, Carolyn Crouch, Lauren Edwards, Martha Ellison, Peter Odom, Anthony Pegues, Scott Raab, Nora Rigby, Jessica Sanchez, Desirée Stolar, and Carl Ward.

Casey Evans, *Treasurer*

Sara McGanity, *Assistant Treasurer*

Andrew Tomlinson, *Secretary*

Christopher R. Wall, *Parish Counsel*

### ***Head Usher***

James H. Czerwonky

### ***Staff***

Kim Carlson  
*Director for Operations*

Preston Cherouny  
*Financial Secretary*

Sharlyne Griffin  
*Receptionist*

R. J. Gravina  
*Program Coordinator*

Javier Obregon, *Sexton*

Glynnis Bryant and David Gamboa,  
*Assistant Sextons*

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### **Parish House**

1525 H Street N.W. Washington, D.C. 20005-1005

Telephone 202 347-8766

Website [www.stjohns-dc.org](http://www.stjohns-dc.org)