

**SAINT JOHN'S
EPISCOPAL CHURCH
Stamford, Connecticut**



**2015 Annual Report
Agenda for the Annual Parish Meeting
&
Agenda for the Annual Meeting of the
Episcopal Missionary Society of Stamford
(EMSS)**

January 31, 2016

**AGENDA FOR THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE
EPISCOPAL MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF STAMFORD (EMSS)**

January 31, 2016

11:45 a.m.

Opening prayer Rev. Jim Wheeler

Administration Peter Stroili

Declaration of Quorum

Call to order and acceptance of minutes

Members

St. John's Community Foundation

Budget Allocations Neil Charran

Budget allocation of EMSS to

St. John's Foundation & St. John's Episcopal Church

Motion to adjourn

Stand up and reconvene as St. John's Annual Meeting

ST. JOHN'S ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

AGENDA

January 24, 2016

12:15 – 1:15 P.M.

Declaration of Quorum Danielle Sullivan
Rector's report, staff updates, & introductions Rev. Jim Wheeler
Assistant Rector's report Rev. Kathleen Berkowe
Sr. Warden's Report.....Peter Stroili
Jr. Warden's Report Jewell Brain
Nominating Committee..... Jewell Brain and John Stearns
Election of new slate Rev. Jim Wheeler
Treasurer's report Neil Charran
Thanks to Departing Vestry members & officers.....Rev. Jim Wheeler
Meeting close..... Rev. Jim Wheeler
Closing prayer Rev. Kathleen Berkowe

- Motion for next year's annual meeting to be January 22, 2017 at 11:45 A.M. with a snow date of January 29, 2017.

THE 2015 ANNUAL REPORT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

St. John's Mission and Vision.....	5
Parish Records	5
Rector's Report	7
Assistant to the Rector Report.....	10
Warden's Report.....	12
Treasurer's Report	14
Financial Statements and 2016 Budget Projection.....	Addendum
Parish Administrator's Report.....	15
Welcome Incorporate Pathway	16
New Members/Welcoming Ministries Report.....	17
Worship and Music Pathway	18
Music at St. John's	19
Altar Guild Report	20
Lectors and Intercessors Report	21
Ushers and Greeters Report	21
Flower Arrangers Guild Report	22
Christian Education Pathway	23
Children and Youth Ministry Report	23
Adult Education Report	24
Outreach Pathway	26
Outreach Committee Report	26
Inspirica Meal Program Report.....	27
Parish Life Pathway.....	27
2015 Christmas Show Report.....	28
Pastoral Care Pathway	29
Flower Delivery Guild Report.....	29
Telephone Ministry.....	30
Stewardship Pathway	30
Stewardship Committee Report	30
Leadership Pathway.....	31
Communication's Pathway	32
Communication's Office Report.....	32
Printing and Mailing Office report.....	33
Facilities and Property Pathway.....	33

Facilities Use Committee Report.....	34
Parish Property Committee Report.....	35
Sexton’s Report.....	36
St. John’s Community Foundation Report.....	39
Minutes of the 2015 EMSS Annual Meeting.....	40
Minutes of the 2015 St. John’s Annual Meeting.....	41

SAINT JOHN’S MISSION AND VISION

Saint John’s Mission is to Live the Love of God with hearts open to all, strengthened by joyful worship, inspired by the Holy Spirit and dedicated to serving Christ in the world.

Our Vision: St. John’s is a dynamic multi-generational and multi-ethnic church growing by creatively attracting youth and young adults as well as those seeking a welcoming, inclusive place of worship; guided by strong leadership; focused on effective communications, and committed to enhancing our existing ministries.

PARISH RECORDS 2015

MARRIAGES: 2

BAPTISMS: 15

CONFIRMATIONS: 0

RECEIVED: 0

BURIALS: 3

TRANSFERS IN: 1

TRANSFERS OUT: 5

MARRIAGES:

Anna Pellettiere and Jason Tucker
 Kristen D’Avanzo and Anthony Gruner

BAPTISMS:

Calvin Simon
 Kaliyah Jourdin Stanley-Miles
 Holden Rhys Talcott
 Zachary Reginald Bernard
 Evan Terrell Rowe
 Bella Jiuliana Vite
 Chengxi Wang
 Isabel Ortiz
 Eva Crystal Ortiz
 Natalie Marie Craig
 Malinda Gayle Haschak
 Olivia Gabrielle Craig
 Aiden Anthony Lara Butler
 Jayden Rodriguez
 Gabriel John-Leonard Morano

CONFIRMATIONS: 0

RECEIVED: 0

BURIALS: Christina Horberg Sassi
Elissa L. Lord
Elizabeth C. Longhi

TRANSFER IN: Jewell Brain

TRANSFER OUT: Margaret Higgins
Garry Higgins
Michael Kunkel
Marcelo deMorais
Susan deMorais

ATTENDANCE AT SERVICES: 106

RECTOR'S REPORT – 2015

In this report I have given my take and summary of the events of our parish community for 2015. Please read the individual reports of parish leaders inside these pages.

Goals of Radical Welcome and Better Communications

At the beginning of the year the Vestry discussed what we felt was our biggest concern, the loss of members and the need to build the Body of Christ and see the parish grow in numbers again. We made two primary goals for the year: 1) to strengthen our welcome of newcomers and incorporation of new members and 2) to improve St. John's visibility in the community. The Newcomer's Committee was revitalized and brought a number of positive changes to the way we welcome and incorporate new members. Please visit our report under the "Welcome, Incorporate" Pathway.

One of the barriers to St. John's visibility has been the need for better signage. People often don't realize that there is a church at the corner of Grove and Main, they're not sure where to park and, if they do find their way into our buildings, they don't know where to go. A Communications Task Force of the Vestry and staff did an overall assessment of our signage and outside communications. We have a contract with Fast Signs of Stamford to re-do and improve all our outside signs. We are currently in the permitting process and hope to have new signs completed in the spring. The new signs will also recognize our partners in ministry, L'Eglise de L'Epiphanie and Iglesia Betania.

It's wonderful how the right gifts and talents often emerge when the needs are made clear. None of us knew that in addition to all his skills in cleaning, building and maintenance that our Sexton Dante Ibanez was also an artist and sign maker. He has put up a series of interior signs that now make navigating one's way through St. John's four buildings direct and clear cut. St. John's Boy Scout Troop came up with an Eagle Scout project coordinated by Patrick Gerard to re-make St. John's temporary signs. The old beat-up plywood signboards have been replaced by beautiful pressure treated boards, which form an attractive backdrop for posting St. John's seasonal worship services, special events and activities. Mike Russo, our Communications Coordinator, is making newer, more attractive signs for special events and making use of fliers and free postings in various multi-media sources to let the wider community know of St. John's activities and events.

Big Events

One of the big challenges for us this year was to raise money for our operating budget with a big fundraiser. The Vestry and Fund Raising Committee came up with *Broadway at St. John's* with Broadway's (and Stamford's) own Frank Mastrone as our featured performer combined with a goods and services silent auction. The October 17 event was a wonderful success, bringing in 300 people. We hope to build on this success with two fundraisers in the coming year.

In 2014 Shideh Khorasheh stepped up big time as the Producer of our annual Christmas Show. Shideh has had to re-locate back to Vancouver, British Columbia to help support her ailing father and disabled brother. How could we manage this year's Christmas Show without her? Again, God provided and the right person stepped up. Sandra Clarke-Guy has long been involved in the show as our dance choreographer and clearly loves it. She took over the reins of leadership and alongside Director, Dave Jackins, her enthusiasm and high energy helped us offer a memorable portrayal of Jesus' birth, enthusiastically received by the many

hundreds in attendance. The cast in the show this year was evenly distributed among members of St. John's, Eglise de L'Epiphanie and Iglesia Betania and truly represented a beautiful multicultural image of the God who became human in order to save us all.

New Ministries

How can we connect with the thousands of new residents (often younger adults) moving into Stamford's vibrant downtown? I had the idea of a summertime series of flash-mob style Eucharists in different locations of Stamford that would also combine with a volunteer social service activity. It was more complicated to arrange than originally thought and attendance was underwhelming. I hope to take what I learned and give it a more successful try this summer.

Jennifer Roland, our Director of Children and Youth Ministry, introduced us to *Lent Madness*, a competition paralleling college basketball's NCAA championships where we have a head to head competition between 34 Saints. Those who followed the online competition enjoyed the posts of a bright 7-year old named Oliver. Little did any of us know that it was our own Oliver Kinghorn who became a nation-wide celebrity in the event! Through Oliver and Jennifer's inspiration we created our own Advent Madness. Lent will be coming soon this year, so it's almost time to fill out your saints' bracket!

Our Wardens and Vestry felt that the parish office should be open 5-days a week and were pleased to hire George Howard to staff the office on Fridays.

We responded the best we could to the violence in our own country and the world. Danielle Sullivan, Denise Wade and Peter Stroili started a prayer vigil group meeting on Sundays in the chapel following the 10:15 a.m. service. A memorial garden and plaque were also erected in our St. Francis Garden following the Charleston church shooting. In a sermon to start the 2016 year I recommended that we explore what's involved in sponsoring or co-sponsoring a refugee family.

When one of our Vestry members (and also the very imposing Angel Gabriel in the Christmas Show), Terrence Green, was diagnosed with Multiple Myeloma, the Vestry invited parishioners to 100 days of prayer for Terrence and monthly Taizé prayer services. There was a strong response of prayer and support as Terrence underwent chemotherapy and stem cell transplant at Sloan Kettering hospital. Praise be to God that Terrence is in remission and cancer free today!

Jennifer Roland, our Director of Children and Youth Ministry, has begun Rhythms of Grace, a hands-on crafts and worship event for disabled children and their families. We hope to see this monthly program grow and flourish in the year ahead.

Physical Additions

This year we were blessed with a generous gift allowing us to replace the many worn out kneelers in the sanctuary with new ones. The altar rail kneelers were also in a sad state and were replaced by beautiful new cushions. New white festival clergy vestments were dedicated, as were 4 new processional torches. Thank you to the benefactors who gave these generous gifts. Less visible are stainless steel sinks and tables damaged by our former cleaning company that were replaced in an insurance settlement.

Speaking of visibility, Dante Ibanez our Sexton installed new, brighter outdoor spotlights that illuminate our beautiful sanctuary at night. Dante and his wife Rachel also vibrantly repainted an older nativity set in our basement and built a beautiful outdoor crèche, which stood on the corner of Grove and Main through

the Advent and Christmas season.

Challenge of Staffing our Ministries

One of our ongoing challenges is staffing our various ministry and leadership positions. I am currently recruiting for Altar Guild, Acolytes and Vestry. There is no one in charge of our fellowship ministry. Glenn Wecker and Kathryn Trusty bravely soldier on offering a wonderful and growing course in Conversational English to non-English speakers at noon on Sundays, praying that a couple other English speakers will assist them. Coffee Hour is a hit and miss affair depending if anyone signs up that week. Volunteers are needed to make our newly renovated kitchen available for commercial rental. Volunteers are needed to make visits on Sundays and extend our altar rail to the homebound. Four of our pathways (Parish Life, Pastoral Care, Stewardship and Communications) are in need of a chair. St. John's has a large and public ministry profile, but a small congregation, so staffing our ministries is likely to continue to be a challenge.

275th Anniversary

2017 will mark the 275th anniversary of St. John's Episcopal Church in Stamford. In the year to come we need to decide how we want to commemorate this milestone and celebrate our heritage.

Thanks

My report would be incomplete without a word of thanks to our parish leaders and staff. Peter Stroili and Jewell Brain bring strong and thoughtful leadership as Senior and Junior Wardens. Their Wardens' Report in this annual report is a great read and a wonderful testimony to the many leaders in our parish. Thank you to all our Vestry members who have worked extra hard in addressing St. John's challenges. They are a pleasure to work with. It continues to be a privilege to work with Mother Kathleen, who is an inspiring leader, an able administrator and a gifted priest. After five and a half years of ministry at St. John's it is past time that I recognize her leadership by upgrading her position from Assistant to the Rector to Associate Rector. Chris Shepard, our Director of Music, has very ably filled the organ shoes of our Organist Mark Swicegood, who was away for most of the year, filling in a maternity leave assignment in London for his day job as a corporate banker. No one was happier than Chris to welcome Mark back to the organ bench on Christmas Eve. Jennifer Roland, Director of Children and Youth Ministry, is training and working with new Godly Play teachers. She has brought a sense of fun and playfulness to the Christian education we offer to all ages. Sandie DeFilippis our Parish Administrator continues to juggle dozens of tasks at once, keep them all straight, and greet everyone with a smile who comes into her office. Mike Russo, our Communications Coordinator has worked to expand our footprint in the wider community. Each week he creates bulletins, flyers and newsletters. It is a pressure-packed job with weekly deadlines and he is generous and dedicated with his time. Thanks to George Howard, our bulletins and publications get printed, our mailings get mailed, our machines keep working and our mailing lists are up-to-date. The staff took over this work for a couple of months while George recovered from a broken foot. We can all attest the immense gift we have in this dedicated and capable parish volunteer! Dante Ibanez, Sexton-extraordinaire, continues to show his value to St. John's by his initiative in new projects, his creativity and diligence in care for our buildings and grounds. We have a fine and dedicated parish staff and they are a pleasure to work with.

Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine: Glory to him from generation to generation in the Church, and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever. *Amen.* Jim+

Assistant to the Rector Report 2015

This year has been busy at St. Johns. It has also been a time of anxiety and spiritual unease in the world, and a time when the Church is called on to witness to God's ever-loving presence the Word made flesh, His Son, Jesus Christ. More than ever this year I have witnessed the faith of St. John's people. And through your eyes and your prayers I know God's presence.

Worship and Preaching

I continue to share in celebrating services and preaching. With the three to four weekly services and Scripture studies, I am immersed in the Word.

Pastoral Care

I continue to help with the pastoral needs of the parish, visiting parishioners, speaking with them in times of need or choice, and praying with them. This is a sacred and precious part of our ministry, often unseen and unnoticed by others.

The Stephen Ministry

program at St. John's has expanded this year to commission two new ministers, Jiannethe Grajales and Edgar Caballero. Stephen ministry equips lay people to provide spiritual and pastoral care over a longer term for people in the parish. Their assignments are confidential. The ministers meet for additional training and supervision when they are active. Stephen Leader, Jewell Brain, now Junior Warden, has done a marvelous job of teaching both ministers in their 50 hours of training! Both ministers are active in the parish. We are currently recruiting applications for people who wish to be accepted into the Stephen Ministry program for training.

Adult Formation and Intergenerational Formation

We encourage parishioners to participate in Adult Spiritual Formation. Spiritual formation offers much-needed grounding in Scripture and Episcopal beliefs and practices. Adult Formation helps to develop more complex theological thinking, and deeper spiritual discernment. Together with worship, outreach, pastoral care, hospitality and the other aspects of parish life, adult formation provides a solid intellectual and spiritual foundation for spiritual growth and strengthening. Adult formation helps to prepares us for "greater things than we can ask or imagine." The Adult Formation Committee was formed to advise and participate in Adult formation activities at St. John's. The committee meets several times a year to give their input. Together with the children and youth minister, and with the input of the Adult Formation Committee, I also plan parish-wide formation activities that appeal to families and the different generations. Highlights this year include the "Care of Creation," where members of the parish and the public who care about the earth and creation, and express it in a number of practices, including vegetarianism, conservation, recycling, and intentional prayer, came together for education, to express their concern and to offer ways to heal. The four-part evening Lenten series, "Renewing our Faith", offered a varied format, including a shared meal, worship, and activities. The program included activities designed to accommodate a wide variety of learning styles, ages (youth to senior) and abilities. The program taught Scripture and reviewed fundamentals of the Christian faith and the Episcopal Church. We introduced spiritual practices and resources including prayer, journaling, scripture study and art. And we explored theology and spirituality through our faith stories and Biblical stories. A complete list of the programs and opportunities offered at St. John's in 2015 is listed in the Adult Formation Committee Report.

Stewardship 2015

This year the vestry stepped forward to help with stewardship, and thanks goes especially to Terrence and Toni Green for the stewardship luncheon, the vestry for supporting the lunch, Jon Saunders for the mail campaign, and staff for their support. For details please see the Stewardship Report.

Taize Service.

I led the Taize Services (alternating with Fr. Jim) during Lent 2015. We are grateful to the dedicated members of the parish and the public who attended and helped with preparations. We are also thankful to Olga and Juan Carlos, musicians and members of Iglesia Betania, who provided the music. Special kudos to Jane Holt who resumed leadership of the Taize services in Advent.

Social Justice Prayer Vigil Group and Community

Members of the Adult Formation Committee, attorneys Peter Stroili and Danielle Sullivan, started a social justice Prayer Vigil group in response to events. The group first came together to pray after the killings in Ferguson, MO. When there is a need, members meet in the Ladies' Chapel after the 10:15 service. The group also responds with public prayer and intercession when needed. The group held a Prayer Vigil on Sunday June 24 for Peace and to honor the victims of the killing at Emanuel Church in Charleston, SC. Together we prayed, planted flowers in the St Francis Prayer Garden and put up a plaque to honor the victims. The Group joined St. John's clergy and Stamford Interfaith Clergy in an Interfaith procession for Peace on June 7, 2015.

Stamford Procession for Peace June 7, 2015.

St John's coordinated with the NAACP Future Five, the National Urban League, The Stamford Police Department, the City of Stamford, Future Five and the Stamford Interfaith Clergy in a Procession for Peace in response to violence. We met at St. John's, and the event was widely reported in Stamford. Thanks to the prayer vigil group who helped to organize.

Diocese and Interfaith

I served as a Member of the Diocesan Property Committee of The Episcopal Church in CT (ECCT). The Committee developed a process and criteria for use and disposition of property of the Diocese. The committee advised the Bishop on whether properties should be sold, what limits there should be on sales (who could purchase, and other issues). The committee also advised on whether parishes should be consolidated or closed. We are blessed with strong interfaith and clergy groups. Clergy regularly participate in Stamford Interfaith Clergy, the Stamford Clericus and Stamford Clergy Group.

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. Kathleen Hawkins Berkowe

Wardens' Report for 2015

In our report last year we spoke of the challenge of being wardens in a time when we are being asked by the greater Episcopal Church to go beyond the safety of our church, beyond our doors, into the community and to become a “missional” church. How can we do that in an era when Church-going in traditional congregations is on the decline, budgets are tight, and our Church leaders are overburdened? Our new Presiding Bishop, Michael Curry, in his opening address has a helpful suggestion: we must become part of the Jesus movement: join Jesus who has left the empty tomb and gone into Galilee as the living and resurrected Christ and who calls us to “follow me.” We cannot just stay here and wait for new members to come to us, but rather we must go to Galilee, reach out into the community and meet up with Jesus to join a movement powered by God’s love which can set us all free. We at St. John’s have not just waited. It was a very, very busy summer and fall....

On June 7th, we literally did what we were asked in a Procession of Peace Against Violence. We gathered in the Eagle’s Loft with other area churches, civil rights organizations, and Future Five – an amazing group of young men and women that mentors other students who are particularly at high risk in our local schools. We then proceeded to march from our Church to McDonalds on Summer Street to the spot where Antonio Morales was killed by a group of young men for spilling coffee, left flowers from our garden on the spot where he died and marched on to Veterans Park to join together in prayer against violence and in support of hope.

Meanwhile, throughout the summer months, we all prayed and chanted our hearts out for the recovery of one of our most beloved parishioners, Terrence Green and his family. We also began a “Thank you Kelly!” daisy chain email, as a special way of saying thanks to Kelly Chatman as she rode off into the sunset to return where she grew up in Louisiana before we could say goodbye – or as one of you so beautifully put it: we “will miss you so much, but at the same time [we] feel as if we are watching a beautiful dove fly home, and that makes [us] smile.”

Later in June, six amazing young people of our own (B.J. Chaltas, Ravin Chery, Carolyn David, Natasha Lehner, Krantz Medeus and Brian Vezina) went as representatives of our Church to Haiti to join our mission partners in L’Acuil Haiti to offer a week of summer camp. Then, upon their return, Olive Grant organized a brunch to show our love and appreciation for our Seniors, our greatest “Time, Treasure and Talent.” (Incredibly, Krantz and Brian, whose arms were very tired because they had just flown back from Haiti, assisted Olive as set-up and clean-up crew). If we are to truly honor them, we must finally build a lift to the dining room. (To do that we must first repair the area near our driveway for which we are taking bids.)

On June 21, a few days after a group of parishioners had gathered for bible study in a church library (much like ours) at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, SC and were shot one by one, we planted flowers for each of the victims and gathered in our garden in remembrance and in solidarity.

A month later, in August, a group that later became known as the “fundraising committee” – or, in some circles, the “Dirty Dozen” – started meeting week after week, to pull off what seemed to many of us as “Mission Impossible.” Our staff, especially Sandie, Mike and, of course, Dante, kicked into high gear: managing tickets sales, PR, collecting donations, sending out flyers designed by Tara Williams, etc. In just a little over two months, we pulled off the biggest fundraiser in recent memory by raising over \$20,000 (after expenses closer to \$15,000). Hundreds of people from the community poured into our Church, including the Mayor and his wife, to attend “Broadway at St. John’s”, starring former Broadway singer Frank Mastrone, Anna Marie D’Ambrosio and Lenore Stefanik and the rest of St. John’s Choir, led by the inimitable Chris Shepard.

Olive Grant magically transformed St. John's into "Broadway" – red carpet and all -- with help from our stage crew (John and Derick) and the winner of the Sexton of the Year Award, Dante Ibanez, and his family. We managed to pull off our first large scale silent auction, collecting over sixty items in just over a month. Thanks to Glenn Wecker, Caroline Smit, Phyllis Wilson, Sunny Stearns, Jim Wheeler, Olive Grant, the voice of St. John's – Jon Saunders and so many of you who donated your time and auction items, and to Scott and Melody Vezina for the food and Ron and Cathy Bacchi for the wine. The magical night was topped off by the Mets beating the Cubs in the first game of the NLCS!. Sometimes as a Church and a perennial underdog fan base you just "Gotta Believe". Special thanks also to the bat or bird – or was it the Holy Spirit – that was flying round in the Church belfry during the concert for making it an even more magical evening.

With our collective strength almost all spent, we then still managed to put together a Stewardship Pledge Campaign spearheaded by Mother Kathleen and authored by Jon Saunders. Then, as Jim writes in his report, Sandra Clarke-Guy stepped up to the plate in the bottom of the ninth inning to organize and lead our tired ranks to a very successful Christmas Show, with Bernadette Savage providing a feast of pasta, trifle and ginger beer punch. (NB: Your wardens may need more of that punch or Olive's special elixir to get through one more year).

And all that was just the summer and fall. I have not even yet mentioned the Ice Cream Social on June 20 put together by Phyllis Wilson, who along with Olive, keeps coming up with one idea after another, and event after event, to help us get ever close to becoming a church of radical welcome.

Other things for which to give thanks:

- Negotiating a settlement with our tenant RFR to maintain for at least another two and a half years ten subsidized apartments in Canterbury Green and to partner with the non-profit organization New Neighborhoods, Inc. to manage the Program for us. (Over the last two years this has taken hundreds of hours of your wardens' time – we will wait until our term expires to forward our bill -- just kidding);
- Putting up new and better signage, improving our communications, and with the help and inspiration of Dante installing a creche at the corner of Grove and Main (see Jim's report);
- Obtaining a historic preservation grant of \$500,000 to preserve the beautiful and historic St. Luke's Chapel (where my ancestors found refuge and hope before the turn of the century);
- Celebrating the most successful season ever of St. John's Cricket Club team, number one in their league during the regular season and, like the Mets, making it to the Final Championship;
- Continuing, with the help of the Outreach Pathway (thanks Sheelagh, Jean and crew), St. John's tradition of Thanksgiving Boxes and Christmas doves and furthering our mission in Haiti; and
- Listening in awe to the first annual Steven Clapp memorial concert put together by Chris Shepard and perhaps the best year ever in musical and choral achievement by a choir (Fundraising note: We need to enter them in a "Pitch Perfect" choir competition).

In addition to finally installing the lift and continuing our efforts toward realizing a commercial kitchen, we must also address what we see as our major challenges as we approach our 275th anniversary next year, including:

- Transitioning toward a more dynamic, youth-oriented and more multi-cultural future, while preserving and treasuring the best from our tradition;
- Partnering and communicating more effectively with L'Eglise and Betania (who we will probably need even more than they need us);
- Improving our education program for teens and for us adults who need spiritual refreshment and personal direction; and
- Joining even more with our community to follow Jesus wherever he takes us.

TREASURER'S REPORT – 2015

By the Grace of God we ended the year 2015 in the black. With the help of Jane Holt, former Treasurer and current Assistant Treasurer and with the support of the vestry and the parish we have once again weathered growing expenses and a decline in pledges to see it through to another year. Our pledges are down significantly from the prior year, a trend we are hoping to reverse in the long term, while creating new income through outside fundraising in the short-term to help alleviate increasing expenses while unburdening the church from having to make additional cuts to programs and remain committed to the repayment of our bank loan.

Included in this report are a 2015 Statement of Funds and a 2015 Income Statement from Operations, which includes a 2016 operating budget that was approved by the current vestry. Also included is a Summary Income Statement for 2015 of actual vs. budget and actual vs. prior year, for those who prefer less detail.

In summary, the Operating Income Statement shows a net gain of approx. +\$4,500. Total Income was up from last year by approx. +\$17,600 mostly due to the successful fall fundraiser. Total Expenses were down approx. -\$800 from the prior year and came in under budget by approx. -\$20,000 mostly due to a one time property insurance credit. It cannot be stressed enough that without the credit we would have had a significant loss and that without the fundraiser we would not have ended the year in the black.

Once again, our pledge income was significantly down for the year dramatically impacting our budget and influencing our budget for the next year. Our pledge income was down by approx. -\$19,500, from the prior year and down approx. -\$24,000 under what was budgeted for the year. Pledges are a significant source of support to the church without which we could not continue our good work. The decline in pledges will have to be addressed in the coming years. We wish to thank those who pledged in the spirit of giving and their love for St. Johns contributing what they could and are truly grateful to those who have kept up their pledges for the coming year. Truly God has blessed this church by having your support.

I want to thank the executive committee, the vestry, Ann Barnett, Karen Behar, Sandie DeFilippis and the parish of St. Johns for all their support. And I want to thank all of our money counters and check signers, without whom we could not run our day to day operations. Finally, I wish to give a very special thanks to Jane Holt for all her help and ongoing mentoring. It has been my honor to serve you as Treasurer of St. John's Parish. As I close my term I reflect on both the challenges that were overcome and the hope

for the future that the church embodies as we walk together into the future with an eye towards to growth. I look forward to helping the new Treasurer in 2016 and wish all the blessings of God to St. John's Parish.

Yours in Christ, Neil Charran, Treasurer.

PARISH ADMINISTRATOR'S ANNUAL REPORT

2015

Dante has been here for a little more than a year now and I am sure you will agree with me that things around the campus have shown much improvement. To name a few, he has created and put up signage around the inside and outside of the building, has replaced lights with long-lasting LED so the front of our church is finally lit up rather than hiding in darkness. He has fixed minor plumbing and carpentry problems, donated a beautiful hand-crafted painting to our auction at the Fall Broadway at St. John's event and built a beautiful crèche for the holy family which was donated to us by our MRR friend, after repainting each of the statues, of course. Thank you Dante for all your good, hard work.

I tackled the high invoices from Frontier, our telephone provider, again this year and was able to secure a lower rate on all our phones. This new discount rate will be in effect for 3 years. Our oil burner was finally converted to gas. This will begin to show lesser fuel bills in 2016. For the past few months, I've been working on the problem of the "sink hole" in our back parking lot. We are looking to repair it but we are unsure of the extent of the problem at the present time. It could potentially be a very pricey issue.

Much consideration was given to the process of whether or not to distribute pledge cards which were eliminated last year by the Stewardship Committee. They decided to revert back to issuing them again. I sent letters out to every parishioner then a 2nd letter as a reminder then a 3rd letter to those who did not respond. In addition, I mailed out the quarterly statements and continue to record contributions in the computer. But I do have a wonderful group of volunteers to count the receipts from the weekly collections after which I record and deposit in First County Bank. Thank you so much Kiki Cook, Meredith West, Sunny Stearns, Cynthia Cunningham, Georgia Nostrand and new comer, Sylvia Norell. Good-bye to Dot Mazepa who moved to North Carolina. We miss you greatly Dot, but wish you happiness in your new home. Also a special thanks to Jane Holt and Karen Behar for their unending support. Mention must go to Marion George and Kiki Cook also because they find time in their busy schedules to help in the finance area as assistant treasurers. Without all these special people, the hours spent at my desk would be even longer.

Speaking of the office, it was suggested the Parish Office be open 5 days a week instead of 4. Thanks to George Howard, that has been accomplished. You may have noticed him sitting at my desk on Fridays. Please know that if help is needed, do not hesitate to call him or you can always call me Monday through Thursdays, as usual. When I do need to be away other than just Fridays (vacation, etc.) I have very capable volunteers to cover this station and they are Ed Cameron, Kelly Chatman, Derick Campbell, Cynthia Cunningham, Sylvia Norell and Sunny Stearns. Thanks to all of you for all you do for me as well as St. John's.

The Fall Fundraiser took a great deal of time to produce. We had mailings, posters, advertisements, tickets, auction items, decorating, refreshments and so much more. I was in charge of the tickets and money and reporting regularly to the committee. I sent letters to Vendors and Grant Recipients, thank you notes to donors and workers and produced a financial report. It was a huge undertaking by many but well worth the effort. St. John's enjoyed a very handsome profit.

Unfortunately, we were unable to offer a Women's Breakfast in 2015. The speaker had to postpone but I am hoping to revise this offering in 2016.

We have been sponsoring the Boys Scout Troop 5 for many years. The Scout Master was Nathan Newhall for a long time but now Nathan has stepped down for Joel DeGray. The boys have been wonderfully active

in erecting the new crèche, they directed guests from the parking garage to the church for the Christmas Show, collected and delivered the food and toys donated by the show's guests to Inspirica, made the backdrop for the outside signs and are always volunteering their time and talent for any way that St. John's might need. This year we welcomed Cub Scout Pack 28 led by Robert Messinger. These young men meet on Saturdays and train for the time they are old enough to join the Boy Scouts.

Every year I assist Ann Barnett in facilitating the Thanksgiving Dinner Program. This year we provided 50+ boxes and gift cards to Family Centers. This is a wonderful program which, through your generosity, assures these families will have a delicious full meal on Thanksgiving Day.

In spite of the fundraiser and the exertive stewardship campaign, the Christmas Show was delivered to the public on December 13, 2015. Once again, the help of everyone in our congregation was called upon. I am involved here as well because I need to mail tickets, answer phone calls, bank the proceeds and produce a financial report plus a myriad of other chores connected with this event. But thanks to the director, Sandra Clarke-Guy, another successful Christmas Show took place again this year at St. John's.

Facilities rental is an area that takes much of my time also but I am happy to comply since it produces revenue for St. John's. We still have two long-time shared maintenance agreements – The Over 60 Club and Iglesia Betania. Unfortunately, we lost Young Champions through no fault of St. John's. They just could not recruit enough students to justify the cost of their teachers. However, the good news is that I rented space 9 times in 2015 compared to 3 in 2014. Our Committee continues to work to improve and increase revenue. Thank you Melody Vezina and Gene Zacharewicz, for all your help, hard work and support.

I would ask for your patience and to especially acknowledge George Howard, Chris Shepard, Mike Russo, Jennifer Roland, Dante Ibanez and of course, Mother Kathleen and Father Jim, for without this terrific staff, I would not be able to accomplish the myriad of tasks that are required on a daily basis.

Respectfully submitted, Sandie DeFilippis, Parish Administrator

Pathways: St. John's is organized into **10 Pathways** to fulfill our mission and vision. Each report that follows in this Annual Report is placed within one of these Pathways. Each report that follows in this Annual Report is placed within one of these Pathways.

WELCOME, INCORPORATE PATHWAY

To welcome, engage, invite and integrate newcomers to St. John's into the spiritual life of the church.

“Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.” Hebrews 13:2

Greeters: To implement a program that selects, trains, and assigns Greeters to ensure that newcomers are properly identified, appropriately welcomed, and followed up in a manner that exemplifies 'the Love of God. In 2015 the Greeters were combined with St. John's Ushers who do both roles

Newcomers Committee: To develop and implement a process for receiving Newcomers, introducing them to the church and its leadership, and encouraging and assisting in their participation and membership

Early in 2015 the Vestry set two primary goals for the year, one of which was to improve our welcome of visitors and incorporation of new members. To this end Father Wheeler and Vestry members Danielle Sullivan and Shideh Khorasheh reorganized the committee. Mother Kathleen, Phyllis Wilson and Carol Wheeler .

shared in this work. Charlie Dixon, Mark Kinghorn and Bert Koehler were recently recruited to share in the ongoing work of the committee

The name tags were re-organized to be more easily accessed. Dante Ibanez made two racks, one at the back of the church and one at the ambulatory to put name tags. Our Parish Administrator maintains the name tags and puts used name tags back each week.

We discussed how best to track newcomers, so the committee now maintains a central Google Docs list of newcomers with alphabetical assignments so that every visitor is tracked, encouraged to participate in parish events and become active in the parish community.

We created two Welcome Tables to provide visitors with information about St. John's and the Episcopal Church, one at the back of the church and one in the central hallway. St. John's pens and magnets as well as fun stickers for children provide a welcoming gift to visitors. All Newcomer Committee members look to personally greet and welcome visitors. A Newcomer Committee member staffs the Welcome Table each week.

We will hold at least two events to welcome and get to know new members and visitors. Over 40 people attended our first event – an Ice Cream Social on June 20. Because it was a cold day the event was held in the central nave of the sanctuary. This ended up working so well that we decided to hold all our events there. Our next event is a Valentine's Social on Saturday, February 6 from 3:00 – 4:30 p.m.

New Member / Welcoming Ministries Annual Report for 2015

2015 kick-started this ministry. Weekly letters go out from Father Wheeler and Mother Kathleen to new and prospective member(s) to welcome them to St. John's with a copy to staff and lay leaders (wardens, vestry, church school, music program and me as program director) to lookout for the individual(s) or family(ies) so we can "welcome them".

On March 24th a committee brainstorming session with Father Jim, Mother Kathleen, Jewell Brain, Shideh Khorasheh, Danielle Sullivan, Carol Wheeler and Phyllis Wilson was held and ideas included **(items in bold have been completed): redoing nametags/emphasizing wearing them;** including better instructions in bulletins re sitting/standing during services for awareness; **including a list by first then last name of members in the directory, setting up tables in the narthex and lobby near classrooms with materials and a greeter after the 10:15 service; having ushers invite new people to bring up the sacraments;** to serve less food at coffee hour (vs. meals) so people can mingle easier **(this has happened as people aren't hosting coffee hour); delay starting meetings after the 10:15 services for 15 minutes to allow attendees a chance to attend coffee hour to meet newcomers;** when speaking with a new person, ask why they've come to St. John's; reaching out to local apartment complexes to invite residents to a service; notifying the Marriott and Sheraton of services and provide information on St. John's to their concierge; **hold a welcoming social, an ice cream social was held on Saturday, June 20 from 3:00 – 4:30 with hope that guests would stay for the 5:00 service. Due to rain the social was held in the main aisle of the sanctuary which led to great interaction with 40 attendees including children and will be repeated for future socials;** have the Friday office worker call newcomers to check in with them.

Father Jim has brought Deacon Carlos, a recently ordained priest with offices at St. Andrew's to St. John's to discuss the opportunity to reach out to young adults in the community. Danielle Sullivan organized a social at a local restaurant for this population and hopes to hold others. In late spring, Father Jim held an offsite worship service in the "Soto" area of town where Marilyn Tague, Danielle Sullivan and myself

worshipped followed by sharing a meal at Dinosaur BBQ to think of ways to reach the unchurched. We hope for further “radical church” outside the box worship activities to happen in the future.

The committee met again on April 28, May 26 and November 3. Members on the committee have changed. We said goodbye and thanks to Shideh Khorasheh who moved to Vancouver in November. We welcome Charlie Dixon, Bert Koehler and Mark Kinghorn as new members and look forward to the energy they bring to us in reaching out to others and sharing ideas they have.

While not a part of this ministry’s work, but of great importance to St. John’s, a Communications team was formed to review signage. A tour of the property with St. John’s Boy Scout Troop #5 leaders resulted in an Eagle Scout making four large signs for posting events and service notices outside the church. In addition, St. John’s new sexton, Dante Ibanez, single-handedly identified the need for and implemented beautiful, visible signage inside the church and common areas as well as putting in outside lighting at strategic areas to make the church more visible to passersby.

At Christmas, Dante and his son also made a beautiful manger with a lighted nativity scene on the corner of Main and Grove Streets to draw attention to the reason for the season and awareness of St. John’s. We are most grateful to Boy Scout Troop #5 and Dante for these generous works.

We are most thankful that our ushers and greeters have so graciously welcomed newcomers and hope members of the parish will do their part to reach out to those who are visiting to invite them to coffee hour, to tell them about programs and activities that are happening and to make them feel welcome.

We extend thanks to Carol Wheeler for continuing her work to organize the “Fellowship Gatherings” where people are provided the opportunity to meet at the church or parishioners’ homes for breakfast, lunch or supper combined with a spiritual chat and thank those who graciously served as hosts in 2015.

The committee offers appreciation to Sandie DeFilippis, Mike Russo and George Howard and for the office volunteers for their help this year to promote this ministry via the newsletter and announcements, providing name tags, and responding to calls and inquiries.

We are planning another social in February 2016.

The true goal of this ministry is for all existing parishioners to become involved and reach out to our newcomers and new members with the hope that they will join the church and in time become involved in the parish ministries that touch them and in turn, repeat the process themselves. St. John’s is truly blessed to have such a wonderful church family and we must reach out to everyone to share this.

Anyone interested in sharing ideas or becoming involved in the New Member/Welcoming Ministries efforts is asked to contact me at 203-961-1891 evenings or phyllisjwilson@yahoo.com.

Blessings always,

Phyllis Wilson

Director of New Member Ministry

WORSHIP AND MUSIC PATHWAY

To express, inspire, experience, and grow our faith through words, music and prayers

”O come let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.” Psalm 95:6

The Worship and Music Pathway meets periodically to support and advise the clergy in worship planning. In addition to feast days and special worship services of the Christian Year we have planned joint services shared with L’Eglise de L’Epiphanie and Iglesia Betania and Taize contemplative services. Committee members have supported our different guilds in recruiting new members. We are planning replacement of worn out kneelers, vestments and hangings. In 2015 we replaced the many worn out kneelers in our pews

with new kneelers, thanks to the generous gift of a parishioner. We accessed the All Saints Memorial Fund to replace the worn out white festival clergy vestments with a beautiful new set and to replace the beautiful but worn out and full of holes needlepoint altar rail kneelers with an attractive set of cushions. We hope to save and frame the needlepoint from the old kneelers representing part of St. John's continuing heritage.

MUSIC AT ST. JOHN'S 2015

ST. JOHN'S CHOIR

The Choir continues to contribute to a range of church services and activities throughout the year. Obviously, the anchor of their work is the weekly 10:15 service, during which they usually sing two anthems. Christmas and Easter are busy times for the choir, with Lessons & Carols and the Christmas Eve services in December, and several Holy Week services culminating in Easter Sunday.

Away from the liturgy, the choir has an important role in the Christmas Show every year. In 2015, they also participated in the very successful fundraiser that featured baritone Frank Mastrone; not only did the full choir collaborate with Frank, but soloists Anna Marie D'Ambrosio and Lenore Stefanik also had co-starring roles in the gala event.:

We also continued to have occasional Festival Choir Sundays, in which any congregation member could join us for an anthem.

The following is a list of choir members who have sung in the permanent choir at any point in 2015; professional soloists are marked with an asterisk

Soprano

Anna Marie D'Ambrosio*

Jean Aranha

Dorothy Hayes

Georgia Nostrand

Kiki Cook

Carol Wheeler

Alto

Olive Grant

Lenore Stefanik*

Meredith West

Dell Kendall*

Tenor

Tom Mooney*

John Svagr

Bass

Gregg Lauterbach*

Donald Shaver

CONCERT SERIES

The Concert Series continued to be successful in 2015, with four fairly well-attended concerts. By far the most successful performance was the inaugural Stephen Clapp Memorial Concert, which featured two of his students—Sirena Hwang and Jordan Hendy. I would like to thank Mike Russo for his hard work in preparing and distributing marketing materials in support of the concerts.

15 Feb	Stephen Clapp Memorial Concert
1 March	Jonathan Ryan, Organist
29 March	Dessoff Choir
26 April	Ben Larsen, Chamber Music

ORGAN & GUEST MUSICIANS

Mark Swicegood was in England throughout 2015 (he returned for the Christmas Eve service); we continued the practice of 2014 of inviting guest musicians throughout the year to provide variety in our music offerings. Again, this proved quite popular with the congregation, and we will continue to have guests in 2016 even with Mark back. Jon Hunt, Pam Perry and Rick Tripodi served as guest organists during the year.

Here are some of the instrumentalists who have joined us this year:

Bill Owens, Trumpet

Mikki Skinner, Trumpet

David Bergman, Percussion

Kristen Gygi, Flute

Elizabeth Van Cleve, Oboe

Ben Larsen, Cello

Respectfully Submitted,

Chris Shepard

Director of Music

ALTAR GUILD

Purpose: To select, train, and assign individuals to prepare, maintain, and restore the altar for all main services in keeping with the prescribed requirements.

For a couple years the Co-Leaders of St. John's Altar Guild, Kelly Chatman and Bunny Zwart have been warning that the guild desperately needs new members. Fr. Wheeler has written recruitment letters and made calls. Mother Berkowe put together a *What if there were no Altar Guild?* humorous series of bulletin inserts imagining torn bedsheets as altar linens, dirty broken cups as chalices, the clergy forgetting to buy bread for the altar, etc. With Kelly Chatman retiring and moving to Louisiana the situation was getting desperate. Father Wheeler enlisted the help of parishioner Jon Saunders, in advertising, to help run an Altar Guild marketing campaign. Following an appreciation lunch for Altar Guild members in the spring, in which Jon quizzed them about what was most important about the guild and devised a "marketing approach" that emphasizes both the importance of the guild and its unique role as a special calling of behind the scenes service. A beautiful Altar Guild brochure was professionally made and printed. In the beginning of 2016 a marketing campaign was launched, with public Altar Guild recognition, individual letters inviting 35 people to consider a call to serve on the Altar Guild and use of the brochures and corresponding posters. So far 3 new members have come forward.

Current Altar Guild Members: Bunny Zwart (retiring Directress), Anna Lettman, Enid Ottinger, Stephane Pady, Kedley Rambarran, Judie Schwartz, Aggie Segovia and Vicki Zacharewicz.

St. John's Altar Guild is more than just another committee; it's a calling.

Could God be calling you to this vital ministry?

LECTORS/INTERCESSORS

Purpose: To select, train, assign, and monitor individuals to read the Bible lessons and lead the Prayers of the People at the main worship services.

Father Wheeler oversees the scheduling and recruitment of Lectors.

The following persons served as Lectors and Intercessors in 2015:

8:00 a.m. service: Kelly Benshoff, Penny Burnett, Ed Cameron, Kelly Chatman, Dinie James, Tom Niles and Stephane Pady

10:15 a.m. service: Jean Aranha, Kelly Benshoff, Ed Cameron, Neil Charran, Anna Maria D'Ambrosio, Sharon Guinta, David and Natasha Lehner, Jon Saunders, Bernadette Savage, John Stearns, Danielle Sullivan, Paula Thompson, Peter Vanderwaart, Carol Wheeler and Colin Williams.

In addition many young people shared in reading scripture and leading prayers at our special Youth Sunday services.

USHERS/GREETERS' ANNUAL REPORT 2015

People no longer working in this ministry are Cleveland Perry, Leslie Ilaw and Kelly Chatman. However, we welcome Danielle Sullivan, Aldrich Wright and Anna Lettman.

Addendum to Guidelines (8/17/14):

New name tag racks in the narthex and the passageway heading toward the transept;

New kneeling prayer cushions along the altar rail, thanks to Denise Wade;

The perishable and non-perishable food items that have been blessed on Sunday are being delivered to the Food Bank of Fairfield County every Monday morning. Mike Russo then records the amount in the weekly bulletin. This was formerly done by the Outreach Committee but we are now taking care that it is being done regularly. Thank you George Smith and Olive Grant for your gardening ministry.

Last Spring, under the leadership of Kathi and Ron Bacchi, we served 6 delicious meals consisting of meat loaves with salad and sides to Inspirica. Thank you Kathi and Ron, Danielle Sullivan and family, Roslyn and Henry Mainville, Jon and Dianne Saunders, Terrance and Toni Green and John Stearns.

Areas needing improvement:

We must have at least 75 Communion Service Programs available every Sunday. Also, we must improve our way of saving them for the next service.

The cushions in the pews are 80 to nearly 100% worn out. It is very uncomfortable to sit on them for an extended period of time.

With winter weather approaching, please make sure the steps to the church are safe.

We need to have better team work as to who will be available to place the pledges and especially the open plate money into the safe. We need to have donation envelopes and pencils in every pew. Also, we need to have a bible in every pew. To better communicate with the group, we need to have the emails of all the ushers listed as a single group to let everyone know if they will not be available for their assigned Sunday. I want to especially thank Anna Lettman for stepping in to fill Kelly Chatman's amazing ministry at the 8 a.m. services. Know that I've been blessed with the assistance of a well organized team, I will be stepping down as chair. Thank you. Respectfully submitted, Sunny Stearns

St. John's Flower Arranging Guild Annual Report for 2015

As chair of the Flower Arranging Guild, St. John's parishioners and I extend our thanks to the Guild members for their commitment to providing St. John's with the beautiful arrangements each week and especially at holiday and celebratory times. My deepest appreciation to the Arrangers Guild members and our St. John's friends who helped with the preparation of the palms and Easter arranging and the "Greening of the Church" (hanging the wreaths) and "arranging for Christmas". Kudos and thanks to volunteers Caroline Smit, Vicki and Gene Zacharewicz, Beth, Charlie, Meredith and Jarod Ford, Ashley Nivicela, Olive Grant, Carole Wheeler, first time helper Guy Michelman for hanging wreaths, to young helper Ryan Fee for help at Christmas and our gratitude to Allen Bell for providing his vehicle and assistance to help Dante pick up the poinsettias for Christmas.

Flower Arranger Guild members arrange the flowers two-three months a year. They partner with another member and each arranges two Saturday's of the month (or one three times if five Saturday's.) The time commitment is 1 ½-2 hours on a Saturday morning (or Friday if preferred). Flowers and supplies are provided.

In 2015 the guild included Gordon Batiste, Ketty Jean-Baptiste (L'Eglise de L'Ephiphanie), Marie Celesna (L'Eglise), Joy Celli, Isoule Chery (L'Eglise), Marion George, Josette Joseph (L'Eglise), Georgia Nostrand, Kedley Rambarran, Sunny Stearns, Tira Vanderlinden, and Phyllis Wilson - chair. After many years of service we are sad to lose Joy Celli who has moved away. Her commitment over the years is gratefully appreciated and she will be missed. We welcomed our first member from Iglesia Betania, July Carvajal, and hope others will follow. We thank Patricia Chery (L'Eglise) and Father Eddie Lopez (Betania) for encouraging members from their churches to help with the flowers.

Guild members generously offered their time and catering talents when asked to provide dinner for the Inspirica Shelter in the south end on February 27th.

We were blessed again this year by the generosity of our parishioners for the donations given in support of the weekly and holiday flowers and memorial candles.

While we lost to relocation the generous donor of the beautiful Christmas wreath that hangs outside the fountain door each year, our sexton, Dante Ibanez has researched and will obtain a 5' artificial wreath at a very reasonable cost which can be used annually the same as we've done with the wreaths used for greening the church. Not only are these practical financially, we are conscious of the impact on our environment by using artificial ones.

In support of our goal to keep costs for holiday plants to a minimum without sacrificing appearances, we continue to order the Easter lilies and poinsettias from Grade A Shoprite on Newfield Avenue at a reduced cost. At the end of the holidays, the lilies and poinsettias that are in good shape are offered to the Stamford Over 60 Club members who truly enjoy them.

We continue to use Springdale Florist who has been our florist for many years and appreciate their efforts to provide a lovely assortment of flowers and are grateful for the assistance of our liaison Leigh Ann, their delivery team, and the staff at Springdale Florist for ensuring that our orders are right each week.

In 2016, a goal of the guild is to hold a training program open to all three parishes with hopes of recruiting 3-4 new members and ideally a chair or co-chair for the guild as after many years heading the guild, I would like to lessen my commitment as chair.

We express our sincere and deepest appreciation to St. John's staff including Dante Ibanez, Sandie DeFilippis, George Howard, Mike Russo, and clergy, Father Jim Wheeler and Mother Kathleen Berkowe for their direction and assistance throughout the year. I wish to personally thank Dante for always going above and beyond in helping without being asked.

Respectfully submitted,

Phyllis Wilson, Chair of Flower Arrangers & Delivery Guilds

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION PATHWAY

To grow deeper in knowledge, understanding and faith that we may reflect Christ by who we are and what we do.

“Grow in the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” (2 Peter 3:18)

- Christian Formation – Children and Youth: To maintain a proven program that teaches and motivates children and youth to discover the Bible, understand their Episcopal heritage, and experience Christ.
- Spiritual Growth – Adult: To develop and implement an ongoing integrated program designed to encourage parishioners’ growth in their Christian faith and knowledge.

Children and youth Ministry Report

2015 has been an eventful year in Children and Youth Ministry. I want to share some of the highlights with you:

The classes we offer Sunday mornings at 10:00 am are:

Nursery – infants through 3 years old

Green Godly Play – Preschool through 1st grade

Blue Godly Play – 2nd through 5th grade

Youth Class – Middle and High School

I really appreciate the hard work of the volunteers who serve our children and youth in these classes. We have added some wonderful new teachers this year that have brought a lot of great ideas to these ministries.

We had several baptisms this past year. I really enjoyed the opportunity to get to know these children and their families as Father Jim, Mother Kathleen and I helped them prepare for their baptism by sharing the Godly Play Baptism story and reviewing the service with them.

We are offering a service for special needs families and those that support them called Rhythms of Grace. We partnered with Sharon Betts of Rhythms of Grace to Go to really expand this ministry this past fall.

Thank you to the wonderful volunteers who help us provide this ministry. I am looking forward to seeing it continue to flourish in 2016.

I coordinated with Mother Kathleen to offer a multigenerational Lent program last spring to try to meet the needs of people of all ages and stages of faith. These sorts of multigenerational programs help us all learn and grow in community together.

I joined our recent confirmands on a Mission Trip to Haiti over the summer. We helped with the Vacation Bible School at Good Samaritan Church in L’Acul.

Over the summer I attended the Godly Play Conference in Tennessee where I had the opportunity to meet and learn with people who use Godly Play all over the world.

We can always use more volunteers to serve in these programs that benefit our children and youth. If you love God and love children, you have the qualifications we need. I would be happy to help you find the best way to offer your gifts to the young people in our congregation.

Jennifer Roland

Director of Children and Youth Ministries

Adult Education Report

The Members of the Adult Education Committee in 2015 were: Peter Stroili, Franklin David, Danielle Sullivan, Tamekia Walton, Vincent Gilmore, and The Rev. Kathleen Hawkins Berkowe.

The work of the Adult Education Committee is to further Adult Formation and Education at St. John's. The Committee meets several times a year to advise clergy on subject matter and timely needs for Adult formation. While clergy takes responsibility for planning specific activities, Committee members are encouraged to attend, invite and help organize and implement formation activities in areas of interest and expertise. In addition, the committee tries to encourage and develop new leaders for adult education.

An important part of the Committee's work in 2015 has been to adopt St. John's Adult Formation Annual Goals, based on parish-wide responses from the Reveal Spiritual Survey. The programs and resources are geared to encourage creative embedding of the Bible and Episcopal beliefs and practices, so that people can become more familiar with both. We seek to accommodate diverse learning styles and abilities and offer excellence in training and continuity of purpose. The goals are: 1. Offer an Annual Adult and Family Formation Program (Topics will vary for seasons and according to committee direction), 2. Create opportunities and resources for Scripture Study, and 3. Provide resources for devotion and spiritual formation for individuals, families and small groups

2015 Programs at St. John's

Care of Creation, January 11, an adult forum, took place after the 10:15 service. Dot Hayes, gifted author, musician, and dedicated vegan and animal lover, presented her spiritual story. She movingly shared the spiritual journey of caring for Creation and love of animals that led to her becoming a vegan. Members of the parish supplied delicious and filling vegan dishes. A lively discussion followed, moderated by Mother Kathleen.

From Bulb to Blossom Family Lenten Series, Wednesday evenings February 25- March 25, 7pm. This was a joint effort of Adult and children and youth ministries (with J. Roland, Children and Youth Minister). This was our first year using an intergenerational resource from GenOn ministries created to engage people of a wide variety of ages and ability in parish-wide activities to promote spiritual growth. The evenings followed a format of dinner, Scripture presentation and meditation topics from Mother Kathleen, table discussion and activities ranging from journaling to planting tulip bulbs, to art activities. The evenings also introduced resources for personal and family prayer and spiritual practices such as journaling and serving others.

Life and Joy after Loss – Community Panel Discussions and Conversations in Lent Wednesday Evenings
April 22, 29, and May 6 2015

The ideas for this panel came from needs that clergy and the parish had noticed in the parish, and the desire to make people aware of community resources as well as to think theologically about these times of life. I moderated the panels, and introduced the spiritual resources, including Comfort Ye, a resource published by Forward Movement. The first panel, Life and Joy after Death addressed Living with Grief, Suicide, and Prevention, Dealing with Depression. Panelists were Caroline Hale, Teen Talk Counselor at Western Middle School, Greenwich CT, Kathy Roach, Counselor at Stamford Counselling Center, and Jewell Brain, St. John's Senior Warden, and Stephen Ministry Leader at St. John's. In the next session, Life and Joy After Loss of Identity or Resources panelists addressed Job loss, empty nesters, and retirement. Jewel Brain was joined by a representative from AARP CT's "Living Smarter" program. The final panel, Life and Joy after

Loss of Ability, addressed aging, loss of mental or physical ability, and caregiving. Betty McOsker, Director of the Over 60 Club, which meets at St. John's, and a representative of Silver Source presented.

Renewing our Faith Family Fall Series September 23 and 30, October 14 and 28, 2015 The format included a shared evening meal, worship and presentation/discussion. This series prepared adults and children for baptism – and the parish for Renewal of Baptismal vows that accompanies the service! Thanks to Franklin David and Vincent Gilmore for their help in organizing! We used the Resource – I will with God's Help, from Church Publishing. Additional resources were available for those who wished to deepen their understanding, including The Episcopal Handbook, The Episcopal Church, and an outline of information and resources prepared by Mother Kathleen.

A Christian Response to Gun Violence with Bishop Michael Curry – Parish Online Course- September 2015 For the second year we continued to experiment with online adult formation. We announced the course and invited parishioners to listen together at the church or online -and comment. A series of courses, offered by ChurchNext, in association with the Episcopal Church's Forward Movement is available to all St. John's parishioners. We look forward to more activity in this area as more courses become available and as people become more comfortable with on-line education.

Scripture Study at St. John's

The Tuesday afternoon Bible Study, led by Denise Wade, has thrived with a dedicated core of attendees. The group has studied books of the Old and New Testament, and portions of the Apocrypha this year. As questions came up, the group invited speakers to address the issues more deeply.

The Tuesday Group has presented two special speaker series open to the public.

In Judaism and Christianity, Rabbi Philip Schechter, former Head Rabbi at a Stamford Congregation and resident scholar at First Presbyterian Church, spoke on the Hebrew Scripture and explained some of the basic tenants of Judaism. In Advent The Rev. Lynn Harrington gave a series of lectures entitled Mary, Mother of Christ. She explored Mary's role in Christian belief. The group discussed Mary as a prayer partner and intercessor, her role in art, and the special place she has in spiritual growth. .

Sunday Scripture Study is at 9:15am between services. The clergy lead a discussion of the Sunday Gospel or a reading. A hand-out study guide is available so that people can continue study at home during the week.

Taize Services, Monday evenings during Lent with Juan Carlos Abreu, pianist (member of Iglesia Betania) were led by clergy. Parish member Jane Holt resumed leading Taize in the Fall of 2015.

Parish Book Study (Intergenerational)– “The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe”. The parish gathered for discussion of the book over coffee hour.

Scripture Resources

Forward Day-by-Day regular and large-print versions are distributed at no charge throughout the church. The adult education budget pays for the copies.

Daily prayers online at www.forwardmovement.org

St. John's offers a variety of pamphlets addressing different life situations and circumstances – on prayer and faith, and on the Episcopal Church - free to the public (donations accepted)

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. Kathleen Hawkins Berkowe

January 2016

OUTREACH PATHWAY

To reach out in compassionate service to the community and to the world.

“How does God’s love abide in any one who has the world’s goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help? ...let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action.” (1 John 3:17-18)

- Bon Samaritan Clinic and School, L’Acul, Haiti - to provide education and health services for the village of L’Acul, Haiti and surrounding areas in partnership with the Bon Samaritan School and Clinic.
- Thanksgiving boxes - to ensure that socio-economically disadvantaged families have a complete day of meals for the Holidays through coordinating with other churches and social service agencies in Stamford
- Inspirica – to provide dinners once a month to the residents of the Inspirica Woodland Place campus
- Neighbor’s Link – to provide a safe and secure environment to support education, employment and empowerment to develop the communication skills of the immigrant population of Stamford and to foster assimilation through exposure to diverse points of view.
- Dove Program - to ensure that socially and economically disadvantaged families have a complete day of meals for the Holidays in coordination with other churches and social service agencies in Stamford
- Harvest Now Garden - To provide more nutritious fresh fruit and vegetables to the Food Bank to improve the variant and quality of food.

Outreach Committee Report

This was a very active year for the Outreach committee including the following highlights:

Dinners were served by parishioners at the Inspirica Women’s Shelter on a monthly basis;

St John’s provided 40 Thanksgiving Boxes to Family Centers of Stamford;

27 Dove Boxes for needy families were delivered to Person-to-Person in time for Christmas and 8 monetary gift Doves were also donated by parishioners;

ESL classes continued on Sunday mornings for immigrants unable to attend classes during the week at Neighbor’s Link. Glenn Wecker and Kathryn Trusty were the volunteer teachers for this class – thank you both!

A coat, hat and glove drive was held for Inspirica;

Food donations were taken to the Food Bank monthly by parish volunteers;

30 Easter baskets were made by the J2A class along with outreach committee volunteers and delivered to parishioners in need.

Haiti Mission Partnership A youth mission trip took place in June with 5 confirmands and several adult chaperones traveling to assist at a vacation bible school in L’Acul;

Teachers' salaries were supported for six months out of the school year;
The clinic continues to run weekly on Saturdays with the support of St John's;
\$2800 was raised at a fundraising dinner in March with a Caribbean theme;
Many thanks to the fundraising committee who raised over \$2,000 for Haiti by hosting two lunches and a tag sale;
\$250 was raised by selling paintings from a Haitian artist, Profelus Benoit who is from L'Acul;
Future plans include another trip in June 2016 for the Bon Samaritan vacation bible school and to provide medical services at the clinic;

Harvest Garden

This year, the crop yielded about 250 pounds in 2015 of fresh vegetables for the Food Bank. The crop consisted of: tomatoes, cucumbers, eggplant, bell peppers, hot peppers, spinach, potatoes, sweet corn and various herbs;

The Garden Team would like to everyone who helped to purchase seedlings and plants, especially Dante and Peter Stroili. They also wish to thank Sunny Stearns and others who helped to deliver the produce.

Future plans include increasing to 500 pounds of vegetables for the Food Bank who are in desperate need of fresh produce because of the increase in the number of people it serves in Fairfield County;

A BIG THANK YOU to our Garden Team: Olive Grant, Don Shaver, George Smith and Owen Brissett for this wonderful ministry!

Respectfully submitted,

The Outreach Committee

Sheelagh Schlegel, Gus Schlegel, Kathi Bacchi, Danielle Sullivan, Olive Grant, Jean Aranha, and Jiannethe Grajales.

INSPIRICA MEAL PROGRAM

Inspirica began as an outreach effort of St. John's Episcopal Church in the late 1800's, and is currently an independent non-sectarian charity, providing services to the homeless in Connecticut.

Our goal at St. John's is to support the Inspirica Women's Shelter and their mission to break the cycle of homelessness by helping women achieve permanent housing and stability in their lives.

We accomplish this goal by maintaining an ongoing program to provide meals to shelter residents on the fourth Friday of each month.

Parishioners are asked to volunteer to cook and serve meals at the Women's Shelter which is located at 8 Woodland Place in Stamford, CT. Anyone interested in volunteering for this ministry is asked to call Kathi Bacchi at 914 764 5758 for more information.

PARISH LIFE PATHWAY

To share, support, and enjoy our lives and each other as Christians.

"Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above ourselves." Romans 12:10

The Parish Life Pathway is in need of a parish coordinator.

Hospitality Committee: The Hospitality Committee has responsibility for the use of the parish kitchen, for coordinating Coffee Hour and for special parish events. Fran Caballero had chaired the Hospitality Committee for several years, but had to give up this leadership due to family and professional responsibilities. We currently have no member taking responsibility for this area. The Parish Administrator puts out a sign-up for Coffee Hour and parishioners volunteer as they feel moved.

The parish kitchen, which was damaged by our former cleaning service, has had the damaged sinks and stainless steel tables replaced in an insurance settlement. We need a Kitchen Committee to take charge of the kitchen so that it can be cleaned, organized, sanitized and made available for parish and commercial use.

Christmas Show Annual Report 2015

The 2015 Christmas Show was a great success with many positive feedbacks and so much spirit.

The number of rehearsals was reduced to only 3 and this worked for the most part. The first rehearsal was just to introduce the director, David Jackins, and to meet the cast, go over what is expected of them, as well as hand out scripts and do a walk through rehearsal. We were very flexible with everyone's needs as it related to whether they could not make the rehearsal or would be late. Email addresses and phone numbers were collected and I stressed that they should take note of emails with the subject "2015 Christmas Show" for all announcements and to take note of the weekly bulletin as well. This was a great form of communication for all involved, i.e., cast, crew, leadership roles, etc...

Although we started the talk of the show early to prepare, there was so much going on at St. John's that the show was not of much importance until all other events were concluded.

We can again start early this year but hopefully, by the time we need to start, we do not lose anyone that has already signed up. I can suggest that we get the leadership started and then maybe they can assist with casting and recruiting. Previously, many complained that putting on this show is too much work. I tried to get everyone the help they needed and I believe this worked.

St. John's Staff was great with walking me through things that needed to be done as the producer and this was extremely helpful. I have directed, assisted the producer, participated, helped where needed in the past, but learned even more for the 2015 show as the producer.

It would have been great to have more participation from our Youth Group. Some assisted but maybe it was just communication because I know they are usually always willing to help.

As mentioned in the announcement at the show "There are 3 Episcopal congregations that share this beautiful space, St. John's worship is in English, L'Eglise de L'Epiphanie's worship is in French and Haitian Creole and Iglesia Betania's worships is in Spanish. The cast is pretty evenly represented by all three congregations who join together to bring you this multicultural presentation of the story of Jesus' birth". And the show was well represented in all aspects.

I learned so much as producer, casting manager and choreographer and thank you for accepting the changes that were done.

Blessings,

Sandra Clarke-Guy

PASTORAL CARE PATHWAY

To share, support, and enjoy our lives and each other as Christians.

“Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.” Romans 12:10

In 2015 we welcomed two new Stephen Ministers, Jiannethe Grajales and Edgar Caballero who have completed 50 hours of training to prepare them for one-on-one pastoral ministry. Each have been assigned a pastoral care receiver. Thanks to Jewell Brain, who leads this ministry and provides the year-plus long training. We are looking now for a new class of Stephen Ministers. On the other side of the ledger we are down to one faithful Lay Eucharistic Visitor. The ministry of the Lay Eucharistic Visitor is to extend the altar rail and bring Holy Communion to the home-bound. We have at least six home bound parishioners who would love to have someone bring them Holy Communion on a regular basis. The training for Lay Eucharistic Visitors is simpler and less extensive. If you would be interested in being a Lay Eucharistic Visitor or a Stephen Minister please speak with Mother Kathleen or Father Jim.

St. John's clergy are responsible to provide timely, sensitive and caring support to parishioners in need. Hospital visits, pastoral counseling, spiritual direction, bringing communion to the sick and home-bound, phone calls and visits to those who have been absent, pre-marital counseling, grief counseling, helping people work through a problem or a concern: all are routine parts of our daily work as priests of St. John's. Many parishioners also help in this effort, whether as friends, volunteers, Lay Eucharistic Visitors, Stephen's Ministers, or prayer partners. In addition Mother Kathleen and I each pray for six parish families each week asking them in advance of any concerns they would like us to lift up in our prayers. Please do not hesitate to call on Mother Kathleen or me to schedule a time to talk if you have a pastoral concern or need. Blessings in Christ, Jim+

St. John's Flower Delivery Guild Annual Report for 2015

Despite continued efforts to reactivate this ministry only a few deliveries were made in 2015. Thanks to Shideh Khorasheh, Dianne and Jon Saunders and Beth Dempsey for answering the call when asked. At this time, a leader and members are needed to activate this guild. Please speak to the clergy if interested as Flower Delivery is a vital parish ministry and only requires 1½ hours time several times a year. After church on Sunday, the member takes apart one of the sanctuary arrangements and creates two small ones for delivery to members and friends of the church who for a multitude of reasons are unable to attend worship services. This is a wonderful opportunity for a family to share.

We are most appreciative of the behind the scenes efforts of St. John's business administrator Sandie DeFilippis and our clergy for keeping us informed of special delivery requests on a timely basis.

If interested in making a donation to the flowers (\$55 weekly donation suggested) and/or candles (\$5/weekly) fund or to request a delivery, please contact Sandie in the church office at 238-2619 x10.

We are always looking for new members to become involved in these ministries. Both require a minimum time commitment and no knowledge of flowers is needed. Please contact me at 203-961-1891 evenings or phyllisjwilson@yahoo.com if interested.

Respectfully submitted, Phyllis Wilson, Chair of Flower Arrangers & Delivery Guilds

TELEPHONE MINISTRY OF ST. JOHN'S "HOME-BOUND" PARISHIONERS

It has been my great joy to have the privilege of telephoning the home-bound members of St. John's Parish. These parishioners were once active members of our church family and served on the vestry, in the choir, as Sunday school teachers and, most importantly, as worshipers of God. These calls are not made as part of a numeric "pathway" – but rather as part of a loving, caring "pathway" in time of need.

Everyone knows how it feels to have to leave an organization – a community – a family of sorts – not by choice, but of necessity whether few in number or often and many. And in a very short time, these formerly active, but now "home-bound" members begin to feel forgotten – as no longer cared about or remembered by those who once sat next to them in church. And so, with God's help, and with guidance from Father Wheeler, I have tried very hard to keep in touch with these members by phone and occasionally in person, thereby again assuring them that although they can no longer sit in pews on Sunday morning, they are nonetheless loved members of St. John's Parish.

STEWARDSHIP PATHWAY

To continually share and prayerfully care for the many gifts, talents, and resources we have been given both as individuals and as a church.

"Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received." (1 Peter 4:10)

Annual Pledge Appeal - To build an awareness among all church members of the importance of their responsibility to financially support God's work in St. John's church and the world; and, to achieve a favorable response to the annual appeal.

Planned Giving - There is currently no planned giving program in place.

Fundraising Committee:

Stewardship Committee

Much gratitude and credit goes this year to Terrence and Toni Green who hosted the Stewardship luncheon this Fall. This was the initial activity for the Stewardship 2016 Campaign. Thanks to Shideh Khorasheh and members of the vestry who helped and contributed to the luncheon as well. As a result of the luncheon, over 60 pledges came in – a solid foundation for the rest of the Stewardship campaign.

This year's theme was 100% Pledging of Time Talent and Treasure. We asked everyone to pledge something – no matter how small – and to pledge their time and talent as well. We have urged people to look at pledging as a spiritual discipline rather than as an amount of dollars and cents. This message was underscored in the messaging, an article in the newsletter, and in sermons. At St. John's we still have a number of people who give regularly but do not pledge. We tried to educate the parish in the way things work, that pledging (even the smallest amount) makes a great difference in what we can plan and accomplish.

A new part of this year's Stewardship campaign is to ask for pledges of Time and Talent as well as Treasure. We appreciate all the gifts and talents, without which the parish could not function. Sharon Guinta is helping to collate those forms. We will send them to the various committees and groups, who will contact

people who have shown interest.

The rest of the 2016 Stewardship Campaign was done by mail. Major credit goes to Jon Saunders, who drafted the form of letters that went out for the campaign. Thanks and kudos to 2014 Committee and Chair, Vicki Zacharewicz, whose files and organization provided a solid foundation for 2015, and whose comments were invaluable. Thanks is due to Sandie Defilippis, who carefully typed each letter, and George Howard and Mike Russo for their support. We also thank Jon Saunders, Ron Bacchi and Gene Zacharewicz, who are making follow-up calls to people who have not pledged this year.

This year's campaign yielded solid results, with 70 pledges as of January 12, 2016. We are heartened by these results, though down from last year, because they were accomplished without the leadership of a formal Stewardship Committee.

A very important result of this year's effort has been to start building leadership for the 2017 Stewardship Committee. Vestry member, Danielle Sullivan, is among those who have stepped forward to begin recruiting a Committee and to start early planning in 2016 for the 2017 campaign.

Again, thanks to all who worked this year and all members of the parish who pledge time, talent and treasure to St. John's!

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. Kathleen Hawkins Berkowe

LEADERSHIP PATHWAY

To inspire, plan, guide and execute the implementation of activities that lead to the achievement of the St. John's Mission/Vision by lay and clerical leadership.

"To each one the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom and to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit..." (1 Corinthians 12:27)

Strategic Planning Committee: To design, implement, and monitor a creative strategic planning process that continually works towards the achievement of St. John's Mission/Vision.

Vestry: To fulfill the required Canonical leadership responsibility of St. John's always working to achieve the Mission/Vision.

Clergy: To provide timely and effective spiritual and temporal leadership of St. John's as guided by the Canons and focused the Mission/Vision of the church.

Leadership Development Program: To select, train, develop, and assign lay leaders in the ongoing work of the parish.

Young Adult Initiative: To develop and implement a creative, contemporary, and stimulating

program that attracts and supports many people in the Millennial Generation – the future of the church.

COMMUNICATIONS PATHWAY

To creatively use all appropriate media to attract, inform and inspire the St. John's congregation and the community.

“Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation.” (Mark 16:15)

Social Media: To effectively integrate the use of social media within the parish and the community to provide timely information and build a broad awareness of St. John's.

Public Relations: To develop and maintain an ongoing program that utilizes the press, broadcast, and related media to effectively inform the community of St. John's activities and public service.

Internal Communications: To coordinate and integrate all internal communications to assure that are timely, comprehensive, and effective.

ST. JOHN'S COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE 2015

My responsibilities at St. John's includes producing weekly bulletins and announcements, seasonal full service bulletins, holiday bulletins. I also update and maintain the church website and social media while supporting the clergy, staff and parishioners to promote various events and programs.

I additionally maintain St. John's computer network, back-up systems, electronic archives and work with our computer consultant and vendors on various projects.

Throughout the year I also attend special church events to meet parishioners and take photographs to post on the church's website, www.stjohns-stamford.org.

The church's Facebook page has continued to be a useful tool in directing people to the website and is ideal for short announcements and reminders. Facebook has built our public presence.

Most recently, I subscribed to Ignite Marketing, which will help St. John's improve its web presence through Google and other search engines. I will be working with the staff to make this opportunity a success for St. John's during the upcoming months.

During 2015, The Communications Department has made several advancements in overall production and promotions of St. John's activities through the use of advertising, the internet, social media, emails, flyers and mailings.

The most significant improvement this year has been the use of “Constant Contact,” an email program used to send weekly and or daily email messages to the entire parish and the public.

Through Constant Contact, I send out weekly newsletter style announcements which include up-to-date information, bulletins, church documents and calendar events.

Currently there are approximately 600 individuals, organizations, and families who receive the weekly emails and other announcements. Most recently, I have trained the clergy and staff to use Constant Contact to improve communication with parishioners.

Church activities I have been directly involved with promoting this year include The St. John's Concert Series last winter, the First Annual Stephen Clapp Memorial Concert, The Procession for Peace in June, Pentecost Sunday, the Ice Cream Social, Great Welcome Sunday, the Fall Fundraiser and the Christmas Show.

For the Fall Fundraiser, “Broadway at St. John’s,” and The Christmas Show, I facilitated the use of “Eventbrite,” an online ticket service to make it easier for parishioners and the public to make purchases. The outcome was highly successful compared to the traditional process of ordering tickets through our staff.

I also organized media advertising in The Stamford Advocate and Channel 12, which increased attendance at these events.

This year I also facilitated consultations with vendors to meet with the church staff to gather bids towards St. John’s outdoor sign project. I provided that information to the Vestry for their selection and approval. I hope to see that project get started in the upcoming months.

Most importantly, I keep staff members apprised of the day to day operations of the department, and discuss special projects and to give and receive input and suggestions during weekly staff meetings in order to work as a team.

Lastly, I would like to thank everyone for their contributions along with Chris Shepard, Jennifer Roland, Sandie DeFilippis, Father Jim, Mother Kathleen and George Howard for their direction and assistance during 2015.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mike Russo

Communications Director

PRINTING AND MAILING OFFICE ANNUAL REPORT 2015

First class standard mail that I delivered to the USPS in 2015 cost \$174.73. Bulk mail totaled 17,106 pieces and cost \$1,729.38. The copiers generated a total of 132,203 copies in 2015.

Many thanks to Sandie DeFilippis for her help and support throughout the year. I also wish to thank Derick Campbell for his help with collating documents and preparing mailings.

Regards,

G.C. Howard

FINANCE AND PROPERTY

To plan, implement and direct the efficient use, maintenance, development and financial management of all buildings and related facilities and the financial management of all church programs and activities.

“Think of us as servants of Christ and stewards of God’s mysteries.” (1 Corinthians 4:2)

Finance Committee

Property Committee

Facilities Rental Committee

FACILITIES USE COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2015

As part of living our vision, we may from time to time at the sole discretion of the Rector, make certain rooms of its facilities available for activities other than those sponsored by the congregation as a whole. In this regard, we may choose to allow individuals to use the premises for receptions associated with functions such as Christian weddings and funerals and religious, educational, cultural and community groups to use the premises for non-money-making purposes as well as for profit. In return for making its facilities available for approved events, individuals and groups must agree to both protect and respect the special nature of our facilities and to comply with St. John's policies and procedures governing use.

To date, we have the following organizations using our facilities on a long-term basis:

The Over 60 Club

Iglesia Betania

Model Railroad

Financially Strong

In 2015 we also had 9 short-term rentals for personal parties

This committee consists of Gene Zacharewicz, Melody Vezina and myself. Unfortunately, we lost a valuable member, Henry Cox, who moved away to the Hamptons. Our goal is to promote St. John's within the community thereby increasing the rentals and ultimately building up and increasing the revenue for our church.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandie DeFilippis

St John's Parish Property Committee Report 2015 – John Svagr, Chair

It has been a busy year for the property committee. Fortunately, Dante, our new Sexton has stepped up and made repairs that saved us a bit of money. In reverse order here are the projects completed or underway:

December	Leak found in a storage closet in Helmsley House and possible mold problem. Will track and complete repair in early 2016.
November	Septic system at Rectory needs a clean out. It should be repeated every three years.
September	Found that thermostat in Hemsley house main floor was not connected to the boiler. Had to hire electrician to run wiring and heating contractor to install and new thermostat.
August	Replaced kneelers in the church and communion rail cushions. Dante found that the toilet in the "Family Bathroom" of the middle building leaked because the bowl had cracks. He ordered one on-line and installed it for less than \$200.
July	Hemsley House boiler passed inspection, but had to clean out the chimney. Rectory needed new basement steps. Dante built/installed on his free time for about \$500.
June	Contracted to have a new Gas Fired Boiler and Water Heater for Hemsley House to replace the oil-fired system.
May	Lawn-sprinkler system needed repairs to get it back in service after a long winter.
February	Garage door at the rectory is not working properly so replaced the electric door opener. In the height of the winter, one of the church snow blowers failed. Dante got a replacement. Freezer in the Fellowship Hall kitchen stopped working. The compressor failed but was covered by warranty.
January	Contract cleaning company schedule changed from weekly to every other week. Three leaks in a pipe down in the boiler room. Dante has called Astacio (new vendor) for repairs.

Projects planned for 2016 include:

Have a full slate roof inspection of sanctuary, middle building and Hemsley house. Perform repairs where necessary.

Replace the seat cushions in the sanctuary.

Hire painting company to come and touch up damage to middle building and fellowship hall.

Upgrade security cameras as needed.

Determine remediation of the settling issue of the back parking lot.

Respectfully Submitted,

John Svagr

Property Committee Chairman



SEXTON'S ANNUAL REPORT

2015

General Routine:

Supply bathrooms with essentials

Collect and throw away garbage

Clean outdoor property of debris

Set up tables before and after events

Keep kitchen clean and organize the supplies

Clean indoors such as windows, floors, etc.

Snow removal and placing ice-melt

Replace light bulbs within the building

Wash the tablecloths after every event

Travel to Home Depot to purchase supplies

Meet with contractors such as alarm inspector, plumbers, etc.

Supply the church with candles, hymns, and other essentials

Clean the sink degreaser in the kitchen

Flush the boiler weekly

Lock all doors after everyone has left the building, set the alarm and check every room

Specific Repairs:

Replaced the ceiling tiles in the basement

Installed black tarp in the stairs outside the church

Replaced the water tank supply in the family (handicap) bathroom

Washed the chairs in the Eagle's Loft

Repaired the walls (patched and painted) by the elevator on the second floor

Stripped and waxed the floor in the Champion's Room (formerly International Institute Office)

. Power washed the stairs by the church, the stones outside and stone patio in the garden

Stained the Church doors facing the firehouse

Cutout and installed the safety glass in the fire escape door (between the kitchen and the choir room)

Replaced all church kneelers

Replaced the lights with LED in the Library

Renovated the entire Youth Room (formerly book room)

Shampooed carpet in the main hall of Helmsley House

Events:

Christmas: Prepared the stage for the annual Christmas Show. Built the stage which included placing the wooden platform, setting up the lights, and placing the wreath outside.

Broadway/Auction: Handmade the signs to put outside the hallway and decorated the dining room.

Cleaned and set up the entire building to prepare for the event. Placed and installed the lighting for the Fall Fundraiser.

Summer Barbeque: Set up tables outside and prepared the grill for the burgers. I cooked the burgers and hotdogs. I stayed afterwards to clean up.

Wedding and Birthday Setup: placed tables, chairs and tablecloths in preparation of event. I was also available for any special needs from organizers of church events as well as for renters. When the event does take place, I make sure that the people at the party are not breaking any rules that were made with their contracts. I also make sure that no one breaks anything and/or disturb other events in other rooms that may be happening at the same time. After each event, I clean up and get the rooms ready for the next gathering.

Thanksgiving Boxes: Help set up the tables as well as organized the boxes of food.

Additions:

Replaced 2 existing light fixtures with new LED ones outside the chapel

Installed 1 new LED fixture light and power line in the basement near the Model Railroad into the breaker panel.

Installed a bronze plate commemorating the mass shooting in Charleston, South Carolina. I personally engraved the scriptures of each person.

Built a new crèche for display outside. I repainted the statues and added missing details. New lighting was installed and a new shooting star. The Boy Scouts, Troop 5, helped to install all of this outside on the corner of Main and Grove Streets. Branches had to be trimmed to better view this manger.

Handcrafted and installed specials signs for specific events and occasions. Made signs for the building for people to more easily find the bathrooms, elevator, sanctuary, garage, etc.

Winter 2015:

Due to the severe snowfall in 2015, I had to use the snow blower to clear out the paths outside. The existing blower was broken. I was forced to find a new one quickly. Following much search, I found one in Ridgefield. Let us hope it lasts St. John's a long time.

Special thanks go out to Rachel, Lucas and Patrick Ibanez and Boy Scouts Troop 5 for your help and support in so many ways.

Respectfully submitted,

Dante Ibanez

Sexton

ST. JOHN'S COMMUNITY FOUNDATION 2015 ANNUAL REPORT

The St. John's Community Foundation was established in 1987 to help with broad social issues facing the Stamford community. We have awarded over four million dollars to more than 100 organizations with funding from a portion of the Canterbury Green ground rent.

The Foundation's Trustee Board is comprised of 15 members: 8 parishioners, 6 community members, and the Rector, Fr. Jim Wheeler. The Board meets 4 times per year. As of December, 2015, the parishioner trustees were: Ann Barnett (Treasurer), John Stearns, Phyllis Wilson, Scott Vezina, Sheelagh Schlegel, Toni Green, and Kathi Bacchi. Community member trustees were Cathy Ostuw (Chair), Donna Porstner, Ginny Fox, Julia Brennan, Monsignor Edward Surwilo and Steve Lamoreaux (Secretary).

The primary role of the trustees is to solicit, review and make decisions on grant applications to local non-profit organizations, using the funds allocated annually by the Episcopal Mission Society of Stamford, and to disburse the funds for St. John's share of the rent subsidy for the subsidized housing units in Canterbury Green, and monitor the rent subsidy program.

In 2015, we approved \$135,400 in grants to 33 nonprofit organizations. To build community bridges and monitor our grants, the trustees personally visited most of the recipients to ensure our funds are spent effectively.

Due to the issue with the Canterbury Green building management that arose in 2014 regarding the continued subsidy of some apartment units by both the St. John's Foundation and the Canterbury Green building management, a decision was made for a portion of available funds to be held in reserve from Grant distribution by the St. John's Foundation at this time. This was used to pay legal bills relating to the dispute. It is expected that the matter will be resolved soon.

As the trustees review grant applications and meet with grant recipients, we are reminded over and over again of the great needs right here in our own community. Requests for grants are always more than twice the amount that is available to distribute, and the decision process is always very difficult.

I am honored, as a member of the community, to serve as Chair of the Foundation. Stamford's non-profit community regards St. John's Community Foundation as a wonderful asset and a key partner in addressing social needs.

Cathy Ostuw

St. John's Community Foundation, Chair

St. John's

Episcopal Missionary Society of Stamford (EMSS)

Sunday, January 25, 2015.

Quorum Declared- Susan Bolognino

Minutes of 2014 annual meeting approved

Motion for Ground Rent Allocation-

The Vestry proposes to the 2015 Annual Meeting of the Episcopal Missionary Society of Stamford that the following distribution be made from the ground rent to be received from Canterbury Green.

12745.00 ground rent to be received in 2015

\$220,000.00 to St. John's Community Foundation

\$580,000 to St John's Operating Budget

\$100,00 to St John's Capital Budget

\$375,00 to Loan Repayment

This distribution would be unchanged from 2014

Discussion-

Jean- I feel we should be giving more to the foundation.

Jane- We don't have the funds, we have cut everything to the bone- The plate is down.

Peter- I would love to give more to the foundation but if we give more to the foundation we will have to cut programs that we run like the nursery or education. Where would that leave us?

Peter- Because of our financial situation we will hold a Harvest Festival complete with Broadway entertainment, silent auctions and we hope to raise at least ten thousand dollars – if we can do this we will be able to raise the foundation allocation without cutting funding. Date- October 17th

John Stearns- Mortgage on this building is down BELOW two million thanks to all who are keeping our budget down so that soon we will be free of debt.

Motion approved with two opposed.

Peter Adjourn meeting of EMMS

St. John's Episcopal Church

12:02- St John's Annual Parish Meeting

Sunday, January 25, 2015

Quorum declared-

Father Jim-opening prayer

Priorities for coming year:

To be more welcoming and hospitable to ALL –radical welcome and hospitality- we need people to sign up and be part of the welcoming pathway.

To communicate our message

Mother Kathleen-

This year we have made a commitment to rejuvenate our spiritual life. Prayer is where we start for personal and community activity. Bible study has become a part of our community. We are trying to raise up “lay people” for spiritual education.

open the way we thinkMake room for new ways to apply our Christian faith as our lives and our community changes.

Wednesday Evening starting February 25th- Lenten intergenerational parish nights!

Meals- the entire evening will be part of our spiritual lesson.

Chris Shepard- Music Director- “Be all things to all people” You should all be able to find a little something of what you love to hear. If you don't like the music- wait a minute, come back next week.

February 15-4pm- First Annual Stephen Clapp Memorial concert-

Jennifer Roland- Youth and Children's Ministry-

February- Beta test for special needs formation worship opportunity- will happen once a month.

Intergenerational Lenten Program-theme is growth.

Prize incentives for bringing a friend to our programs

**Plea for volunteers- I really need people who love God and Children- the major need is in the classrooms each week.

****12:26pm- Minutes from last year's annual meeting- approved*****

Welcome Dante Ibanez! (our new sexton)

Peter and Jewell- Senior and Junior Warden Report-

We have never had more than 150 members in our 273 year old history but we do GREAT things.

Stamford Hospital, Canterbury Green - I want to thank all who have given time, talent and treasure this year. Shideh Khorasheh - Christmas show, Vicki Zacharewicz - stewardship program. Thank Olive Grant and Gary Higgins.

Thank you Jennifer for making the sacrifice to come here.

Denise Wade and the Tuesday Scripture group. Kathryn Trustee and Glen Wecker - Neighbors Link program.

Saint John's is not one person it is all of us together and our history of doing things together.

This year's focus is GROWTH- growth is not just counting heads.

Saint John's is more than a collection of programs. Each of our programs has a mission which works together. We need to take our place at the table of the wider Stamford community.

Peter- Over 60's Club is what we are—We need to make it work! We cannot kick them out because they cannot pay rent.

October 17th Charity Event-

Jewell Brain (Jr. Warden)- Happy to be here and happy with the way this first year has gone.

We have a full slate of things we would like to do in 2015 - In order to do this we need to focus on communication. We will be looking at Signs!!!! We need signs for events and signs internally and this is part of reaching out!

Nominating Committee-

Gene Zacharewicz-Convener- Jiannethe Grajales, Caroline Smit, John Stearns and Phyllis Wilson.

Senior Warden- Peter Stroili nominated for a second 1-year term

Junior Warden- Jewell Brain nominated for a second 1-year term

Treasurer- Neil Charran nominated for a third 1-year term

Clerk- Susan Bolognino nominated for a third 1-year term

Four vacancies for 2015-

Jiannethe Grajales and Gene Zacharewicz completed three year terms

John Stearns completed the third year for Annalisa DiNucci's 3-year term.

Kathryn Trusty has retired from the Vestry, leaving 1-year on her term.

Vestry Nominees:

3 year terms: Francine Caballero, Shideh Khorasheh, Danielle Sullivan

1-year term: John Stearns

There is one parish vacancy for a 3-year term to serve on St John's foundation-

Kathi Bacchi nominated to serve on St. John's Foundation.

Vestry- proposal to reduce the number needed to reach a quorum from 25% to 20%

-This would mean the number we would need to vote would change from 43 to 36.

If we approve this it would go into effect for the next annual meeting.

Glen Wecker - Motion to table quorum request- unanimous approval!

Treasurer Report- Neil Charran-

Thank you all. Pledges are a significant source of our funding. Thank you Jane Holtz.

We ended 2014 in the red.

We need/hope to raise \$10 thousand dollars for the operating budget.

The Kitchen- commercial kitchen designation- rent out facility—

If we move forward with commercial kitchen we may not be able to use the kitchen as St. John's Community.

We will repair and move forward with commercial kitchen.

Proposal for next year's annual meeting Sunday January 24th snow date of January 31st. Approved