



# ANNUAL REPORT

— 2020 —



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
God's work. Our hands.



## A MESSAGE FROM ELCA PRESIDING BISHOP ELIZABETH EATON

Dear friends in Christ,

This year has been a challenging one! The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the church and society. We have had to shift the ways we engage in ministry from a focus on in-person worship and meetings to livestream worship, virtual meetings and gatherings in the parking lot. We have had to shift to teaching children at home and working from home. We have not been able to travel to see friends or relatives or to celebrate life events. This has also been a time to address economic and social justice issues, to shift our thinking and our way of life.

In times such as this, our baptism in Christ makes a difference and makes us different. Like Christians before us, we recall that God is faithful to God's promises and God's people. We see that God enables us to connect with one another even when we are separated. Shifts in the world invite us to be innovative in how we do God's work and reach out to all ages in making disciples. We see that God is at work not only in our buildings but beyond them as well. We have found new ways to serve our neighbors and reach those in need.

As we experience this time of uncertainty, we sense something new emerging. In many places there are new strategies and renewed energy for ministry, often generated by emerging leaders. We have developed a framework to build on, and now is the time to engage in hard work together. As you do in your congregation, we want our collaborative efforts to be both faithfully thoughtful and sustainable. We want to build up the body of Christ today and for the future.

Looking across the church, I am grateful for your generous giving of time, talents and resources. Yes, God does continue to bless us! God will provide both relief from life's struggles and hope for a stronger church, God's church. We do not need to know how the future will unfold. As members in the body of Christ, we need only trust that God is with us and will provide.

Building up the body of Christ together,

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton  
Presiding Bishop  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

*"The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love." —Ephesians 4:11-16*

## **St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church**

*Celebrating 250 years of Mission and Ministry, 1769-2019*

*February 28, 2021*

### **Agenda**

- Call of the 2020 Annual Meeting to Order
- Opening Litany (inside bulletin cover)
- Determination of Quorum
- Review and Approval of 2019 Annual Meeting Minutes
- Pastor's Report
  - Report of the Current Statistics of the Congregation
  - Recognition of Staff, Council Members, and Committees
- Council President's Remarks
- Council Committee Reports
  - Advocacy
  - Book Club and Communications
  - Boy Scout Troop 98
  - Cemetery
  - Christian Education
  - COVID Advisory Team
  - Evangelism
  - Finance and Audit Reports
  - MLK Day of Service
  - Music and the Arts at St. John
  - Mutual Ministry
  - Property
  - Quilting Group
  - Social Ministry
  - St. John's Nursery School
  - Stewardship
  - Worship and Music
  - 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee
- New Business
- Announcements
- Adjournment

**St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
*Celebrating 250 years of Mission and Ministry, 1769-2019*

**Minutes of 2019 Annual Meeting - held February 9, 2020**

1. The 2019 Annual Meeting to was called to order by Phil Vande Berg, Council President at 11:12am.
2. The opening Litany, provided by the ELCA, was led by Pastor Stephen Godsall-Myers.
3. Determination of Quorum: 60 active confirmed members in attendance. Motion that quorum was attained: Motion to approve: Justin Kiefski, seconded by Rita Stock. Motion carried.
4. Review of 2018 Annual Meeting Minutes
  - a. No changes or adjustments.  
Motion to approve: Justin Kiefski, seconded by John Scheffey. Motion carried.
5. Pastor's Report – Pastor Stephen Godsall-Myers
  - a. See Report.
  - b. Impressed with the resilience of the congregation during this 250<sup>th</sup> year.  
Motion to approve: Paul Linton, seconded by Lisa Scalise. Motion carried.
6. Council President's Report - Phil Vande Berg, 2019 Council President
  - a. See Report.
  - b. Happy and enlighten with our resilience during this year. Very optimistic and very thankful for all of the people and the work we do each day. Excited as we close out this special year.
  - c. Thanked going Council members and welcomed new.  
Motion to approve: Lisa Scalise, seconded by Vince Bruno. Motion carried.
7. Council Committee and Task Force Reports
  - a. Advocacy – Linda Carpenter
    - i. See Report.
    - ii. This group started up again in the fall. Check out the Advocacy page on our website.
    - iii. Mural Arts Tour scheduled to happen this spring. Carol Weidler described program.
  - b. Boy Scout Troop 98 – Bob Trejo spoke during the morning service.
    - i. See Report.
  - c. Cemetery
    - i. See Report written by David Stoy.
  - d. Christian Education – Vince Bruno
    - i. See Report.
    - ii. Year of growth and transition. There was an increase in enrollment with our Sunday School and Youth Group.
    - iii. Vince made announcement of how he appreciated all of the support for him and the youth and their activities.
    - iv. This year's goal is to grow our numbers in Sunday School and Youth Group.
    - v. The goal for VBS described and will be the first week of August. Focus VBS curriculum by Orange was ordered.
  - e. Evangelism – Joan Linton
    - i. See Report.
    - ii. Looking of Co-Chair for fall Car Show.
    - iii. New Ministry – Outreach with our local senior communities, Meadowood Senior Living and Sunrise of Blue Bell. There is a need for volunteers to help to visit and provide friendship and activities as part of this outreach.
    - iv. We are starting to meet and touch base with our homebound members more frequently.
  - f. Finance and Audit Reports – John Scheffey
    - i. Treasurer's Report – Review of Jack Ruse's written Report.

- Expenses were way down due to Pastor Sarah leaving in May and the giving to the Current Fund increased.
    - Actual congregational giving met 78% of our daily operating needs, while our third party income covered 19%.
  - ii. Finance Committee Reports
    - Reviewed budgets and funded accounts.
    - \$184,000 gain in the Endowment Fund. This is due to lower operating costs and an undesignated gift from Dick Fabian.
  - iii. Audit Committee - John Ganser
    - Excited to announce Nursery School is in the 39<sup>th</sup> year and will be starting it's 40<sup>th</sup> year next year.
    - Suggestion was made to look into developing a policy to manage delinquent accounts in the school.
  - iv. A question was asked regarding what happens with weekly undesignated gifts. Dale Koch explained 20% goes to Benevolence and 80% to the Current Fund.
- g. The Arts at St. John's - Larry Baker
  - i. See Report.
- h. Mutual Ministry Report – Terry Welford
  - i. See Report.
  - ii. Thanked out going members, Monika Bontempo and Carol Weidler, and welcomed Andrea Grace to Committee.
- i. Property – Guy Gilpin
  - i. See Report.
  - ii. Phil Vande Berg spoke to undesignated large gifts given to the church might be used to help with large building projects which will help us to move forward “before things crumble around us.” He asked the congregation to give thoughtful prayer if this might be an opportunity for us to make good use of these unique gifts.
- j. Quilting Group and Book Club – Anita Hill and Linda Carpenter
  - i. See Report.
  - ii. Anita thanked the congregation for the wonderful donations of quilt materials.
  - iii. Group was able to give quilts to local families in need due to a fire in our community.
- k. Social Ministry
  - i. See Report written by Monika Bontempo.
- l. St. John's Nursery School – Carrie Engel
  - i. See Report.
- m. Stewardship – Mike McConnell
  - i. See Report.
- n. 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee – Barry Stock
  - i. See Report.
- o. Worship and Music – Barb Tornetta
  - i. See Report.
  - ii. Request made for more volunteers for Altar Guild.

Motion to approve: Mike McConnell, seconded by Megan Kiefski. Motion carried.

## 8. New Business

- a. Transition Team/New Pastor Search – Beth Wood
  - i. Discussed what has been happening during this time of transition and what the next step is in this process.
- b. Linda Carpenter asked for support of our social media accounts for St. John by “liking” and sharing, as social media provides free advertising opportunities.

c. Church Directory – We will be taking a new picture of the congregation at our last celebration church service in June. The new directory will be put together then and distributed.

9. Announcements

a. Pastor Steve spoke about his time with our congregation during this transition period. He made the announcement he will be ending his time as our Bridge Pastor at the end of June 2020, but was committed to us until that time, or should a new Pastor be found.

The meeting was closed with The Lord's Prayer. Meeting adjourned at 12:31pm.

Respectfully submitted by Betsy Norton, 2020 Council Secretary

## Annual Report of the Pastor

I wonder what Jesus' ministry would have looked like if he began in a time when he could not touch people, could not hug them, could not stand near them, wash their feet, or gather them on a hillside while he shared who he was. I cannot imagine. Thankfully, that was not the case at the time and thankfully, evermore, that he was the Son of God and our Creator in the flesh. For he could do what he needed to do in the way he needed to do it.

Enter in a new pastor (a mere human), in a pandemic. To a region she has some familiarity with but in a time when she cannot touch people, hug people, gather with them. When her new flock could see her on screen every week but she could not. Rather she had fleeting encounters between snowstorms and in masked distance. Beloved, I cannot tell you how greatly I LONG to bond with and get to know you ALL.

Our Advent was, for all of us, the strangest one we've ever had. My week was lifted each Wednesday when a faithful few (including our precocious young Hank) joined for midweek Zoom devotion time. Our Christmas did not give us the weather we needed, still our Zoom connection was sweet and lovely. I know it all was so strange and so distant. I've never spent Thanksgiving and Christmas completely alone; I hope never to have to again. Yet we are doing difficult things right now out of love. To protect one another from this horrible virus.

Getting to know our youth in Confirmation, even through Zoom, has been great fun. It's such a strange time in ministry to have to figure out all over again how to do things we took for granted.

Color me impressed by the drive-up MLK day of service. The willingness of our inner and wider community to come out beyond all expectations with kindness and a giving heart was amazing, just amazing. The project coming direct from the hearts of Monika Bontempo and Kathy Erdman is something to be proud of, something to celebrate, something to give thanks for. What a living saint of God Kathy was. I wish, sincerely wish, I had had more time to get to know her but I know from talking to you all how amazing and loving and wonderful she was. What a gift to this community, her friends and family. I know she is in the loving embrace of the Savior whose calling she answered so faithfully.

Along with Linda Maurer, I was able to take a couple car loads of food to the seminary for the student food bank (from the MLK event). In a "good" year this is an invaluable resource to seminarians, in this past year it is even more important. In speaking with Courtney, the senior seminarian who runs the bank, they were so touched, and so happy for the help that we were able to bring, thanks to you all!

I remain eternally grateful for our hardworking staff. For Barry and the property team who continue to manage the church property but especially for prepping and repairing things in the parsonage to be ready for me. Marcie and Sue in the office have been putting on other hats as different challenges in our covid-tide existence come up. They are a wonderful asset and I give thanks. Katie and Linda have been doing a wonderful job of supporting communication on the web, which has been ever more essential in this time. Larry has been providing and selecting spectacular music that so beautifully supports the liturgies we've shared. I'll add one more, our volunteer tech-guru, Phil Wood has gone out of his way to bring his expertise and dedication to producing and getting out our virtual worship. Well done team!

This harsh winter came up fast, but it allowed us the grace of Ash Wednesday. So much is fleeting but thanks be to God that I was able to see so many of you eye to eye. I barely know you, and I miss you so much!

And that is the theme for me going into what I hope is the final weeks of winter. I miss you so much because you are my siblings in Christ. I miss you so much because I am your pastor and I am waiting to get to know all the personal reasons why I love you: the jokes you tell, the kindnesses you give quietly to others, the smile you have, the faithful ways you live out your callings. We'll clunkily struggle through winter and our limitations but come Spring, come better weather and come, GOD WILLING, a swift conclusion to this health crisis...we'll get to know each other more and more.

Perhaps you've seen something similar posted on Facebook or the social medias...but friend, you are doing well. You are surviving a once-in-a-century pandemic. We are struggling, we are doing our best, and the sun will come out tomorrow. We live in faith and hope, for the Son came out of the tomb that morning...Thanks be to God.

Pastor Rachel Manke



**Statistics for the Congregation in 2020** as of 12/31/2020

Baptized Members: 387

Additions to the Roll:

By Baptism: 1

By Transfer/Affirmation: 0

Removed from the Roll:

By Transfer: 0

By Death: 4

Adjustments: 5

**Current Staff and Council Information**

**Staff:**

Pastor Rachel Manke, Pastor

Sue Klosterman, Office Assistant

Lawrence Baker, Director of Music

Barry Stock, Facilities Coordinator

Marcie Godby, Bookkeeper

Ann Brennan, Visual Arts Coordinator

Katie Myers, Website Manager

**2020 Council Officers and Council Members**

Philip Vande Berg (President), Beth Wood (Vice President), Betsy Norton (Secretary), Jack Ruse (Treasurer), Barbara Tornetta, Carol Gorman, Carol Weidler, Caroline Frank, Cheryl Quinty, Linda Carpenter and Lisa Scalise.

Andrea Greyson and Megan Kiefski are our newest members to Council in 2021. We give thanks to Phil Vande Berg, Carol Gorman, Caroline Frank for their years of service on Council.

**2020 Non-Council Leaders/Committee Chairpersons**

Betty Jeanguenin: Candy Sale Coordinator

Jon Ganser: Audit (Chair)

Dale Koch: Financial Secretary

Linda Maurer: Counters Coordinator

Charles Sowers: Investment (Chair)

Megan & Justin Kiefski: Youth Group Advisors

Cheryl Posen, Sue Lorenski: Altar Guild

Bob Trejo: Scoutmaster, Troop 98

Joan Linton: Evangelism (Chair)

Monika Bontempo: Social Ministry (Chair)

David Stoy: Cemetery (Chair)

Brothers and Sisters of St. John,

The church is people. I have never been more reminded of this statement than in the year of 2020.....

We began the year with a nice, neat agenda that scheduled many projects, gatherings, and scripted moments, including a conclusion to our 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of celebration. By mid-April our lives and all the plans we had made were in question with the emergence of a highly contagious virus that preyed on the weak and let asymptomatic individuals transmit it unknowingly to others. As the world and St. John looked at how to adapt we had a difficult choice to make. We could choose to rely on our own understanding and let uncertainty, discouragement, anger, and fear thwart us at every move surely pulling us down further into disengagement and despair. Or, we could pray, listen, read, discern, and utilize all the things that the Lord was giving for this time, this moment, to thrive and continue to grow. We as a congregation looked to our Lord for guidance and chose to pull together, have meetings over zoom, and wear appropriate PPE to keep both ourselves and those around us safe when we could gather outside. We found solutions instead of focusing on problems, and created ways to spread the gospel to those seeking like never before. We were led by a dedicated and insightful call committee ultimately leading us to the call of a new Pastor in the midst of a global pandemic! Pastor Rachel Manke accepted the call and we ended the transition chapter by saying goodbye to Pastor Steve Godsall-Meyers, and ushering in a new moment in St. John history.

You will see in the pages to follow so many good things that were accomplished despite the many adversities and hurdles to overcome. Amazing people of St. John doing amazing things for our congregation and community in the name of the Lord. I truly believe that our faith allowed us to maneuver the many obstacles that were thrown at us.

As we move into 2021 it may not seem that much different than 2020 but I caution you not to get wrapped up in what we are denied, but look at what is so wonderfully fulfilled according to His purpose. Our mission has certainly not changed, in fact I believe we are carrying out the Word now more than ever. We are connected in a way that 50 years ago was not possible, giving us the opportunity to worship and minister with our community and each other no matter where we may be physically.

Thank you, people of St. John, for your faith, determination, resilience, trust, and servitude. Our building is beautiful, but without people it is merely brick and mortar. The Lord's church is each of you; unique, willing individuals with God given abilities that He wonderfully crafted and created. We His people are the life in that building, and the Lord worships with us wherever we are. Be willing to trust Him, and follow His lead even when you can't see the road ahead. Continue to pray for, and support Pastor Rachel and each other. Give where you can, and know we are all in this together, one body for Christ. God's church truly is people!

Yours in Christ,  
Phil Vande Berg  
2020 Council President



**advocacy**

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**Advocacy Team Report**

Members: Linda Carpenter (Chair), Dr. Charles Christine, Andrea Greyson, Maryellen Scheffey, Rita Stock, Carol Weidler (Pr. Steve and Jean Godsall-Myers, through 11/20)

At the beginning of 2020, the Advocacy team continued sharing weekly bulletin articles and Mural Arts pictures related to our monthly themes. In January, we focused on Concern for our Youth in Society; February, Racial Justice; March, Hunger. Of course, our March focus, and all other plans, including our Mural Arts Tour in Philadelphia, were interrupted and put on hold due to the pandemic.

The murder of George Floyd stunned our country and called us at St. John to focus more in depth on Racism and Racial Justice in America. For five Monday nights in July/ August, members of the congregation gathered on Zoom to discuss these challenging and painful issues, after watching thought provoking videos on YouTube. The number participating ranged between 19-13 people, with a total of 22 joining in for at least some of the discussions. When the series ended, we were left with the question, "What can we do to make change happen? Where do we go from here?" Immediately, we realized that though our own individual efforts, day to day as we interact with our family and community, might seem small, every word and action from us is important in helping to build a more just society for all people. In the future, as a congregation, we can look at participating in the ELCA's Anti-Racism Pledge.

One more opportunity was offered in October, when Barbara Speece led a Zoom discussion on the book, *Rising Out of Hatred*, by Eli Saslow, about how a young leader of a white nationalist group, changed his mind and heart and left the movement. All participants in the discussion group decided it was one of the most powerful and enlightening books they've ever read.

The needs for which we can Advocate as a congregation are many, especially during and in the aftermath of the pandemic. In coming months, our team will choose a new focus in hopes of bringing awareness and action from St. John members. Learn more about our ELCA Advocacy work: <https://www.elca.org/Advocacy> (Scroll down and look on the lefthand side of the page to see the links to various emphases and programs.)

Linda Carpenter

## Book Club

Year four of our Book Club, during the pandemic, provided challenges and benefits and blessings. Our group met at church, as usual, during January and February. As with everything else in the world, March brought Book Club to a halt. Once we discovered the possibilities of using Zoom, we met twice in April. We didn't read and discuss books, but rather used these gatherings as a time to check in with one another, share our concerns and support one another at such a difficult time. From May through December, we met on Zoom to discuss the book for that month. Somehow, being "face to face" on Zoom, seemed to actually bring our group closer, not just as readers, but as friends. We were happy to welcome two new members this year also. We also now know that bad winter weather need never interfere with future book club meetings, now that we can Zoom. The group is open to all members and friends, and we'd be happy to have you join us.

Linda Carpenter

## Communications

The pandemic has encouraged new ways of communicating at St. John. In an attempt to keep the congregation connected and up-to-date on church news, we began the weekly Wednesday ENews. This ENews, filled with important announcements, is emailed to members every Wednesday at mid-day. If you have not been receiving this, check your spam folder or confirm your email address with the office. A special feature of every ENews has been a letter to the congregation from a different member each week, sharing their thoughts, experiences and faith during the pandemic. If you have not yet written a letter for the ENews, please let the office know you would be willing to do so. We hope that when the pandemic is over and we can begin to gather in person in the church building again, we will be able to compile all of these letters as our own St. John history during 2020-2021.

Facebook is another means for the congregation to stay in touch and up on the latest news. It has also been a great place to share many photos this past year from MLK Day, Outdoor Services, Christmas Tree Trimming, etc. If you have a FB account, please follow the page and "Like" and Comment on various posts. The more people interact with the page, the more widely the post is seen by others.

Every Saturday, an email is sent with the link for our virtual worship, bulletin, additional music and Sunday School lesson. The link for the worship is also posted to Facebook.

During the pandemic, Pastor Steve began using a Robocall system to reach out to members with informational, inspiring and hopeful messages. Pastor Rachel has now begun this practice also.

Special thanks to Sue Klosterman who mails out the weekly bulletin and announcements to keep members connected, who are not able to receive email communications.

To keep communications going, please update your email address and phone number with the office.

Katie Myers and Linda Carpenter

Hello from Boy Scout Troop 98!

Greetings, parishioners of St. John's. Here's an update on the goings-on of Scouts BSA Troop 98 (for boys; there are girl ones now too). Troop 98 is chartered by St. John's, which means the parish is our official sponsor, or "franchisee".

We've completed a strange but also strangely successful calendar year of providing the Scouting program to boys. Most of our Scouts renewed membership for 2021 and we are still one of the largest troops in the area, with around 80 Scouts and over 20 Adults registered as members. Here's some of what we've been doing and plan to do this year.

- We're alive and well! Our Friday meetings have been strictly virtual since last March (can you believe it's almost a year now???) and we've had limited outdoor activities in a COVID-compliant way.
- You may have read about our Eagle Scout projects, of which we completed 10 last summer and 4 since. Fourteen projects in a year are a Troop record, but we feel it's been a great way to get Scouts busy and giving back to the community. There are more Eagle Scout projects underway, and someday soon we'll be able to recognize all these Scouts at a proper ceremony. We know it will be our largest ever awarding of Eagle Scout ranks!
- We've done lots of local hikes, and we continue to carry out a handful of activities outside at the church, including cooking, a grounds cleanup, and a "mini-campout" in the backyard. Over President's Day weekend we held a part-day snow carnival, and we were joined by over a dozen 5th grade boys, all of whom are eligible to join Scouts in the coming weeks. By the way, there are very few Scout troops whose sponsors afford them the ability to do activities like these on their grounds, and we're very fortunate and thankful to St. John's for this.
- For 2021, we're continuing our practice of offering virtual merit badges and limited gatherings, although we're hopeful at some point we'll be able to have more traditional events with improving COVID conditions and better weather. We have two summer camps planned, one in June and one in August, plus a two-week backpacking expedition to the Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico, postponed from last year. We have over 40 Scouts and adults signed up for that!

With the improving news on vaccines Troop 98 is looking forward to a decidedly different 2021, as we're sure the members of St. John's are. But you should know that we will continue to pursue the mission of Scouting with the many Scouts that are part of our troop.

At one of our recent virtual meetings, I played a clip from the Harry Potter movie where Professor Dumbledore's bird bursts into flames after Harry looks at it. Dumbledore explains that it's a phoenix, which is reborn from its own ashes. This is how I anticipate we will come out of 2021, strong, vibrant and relevant to the youth of our area.

You should know that the foundational tenets of Scouting are alive and well. We can still capture the interest of boys with the straightforward and fun activities offered by Scouting and Troop 98 continues to be a testament to Scouting's relevance and importance. The Scouts, parents and leaders of Troop 98 remain most grateful for St. John's continuing sponsorship and support as our chartered organization.

Bob Trejo  
Scoutmaster

## Report of Cemetery Finances for 2020 Year

| <b>Maintenance Fund</b>             | <b>Balance</b>            |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Forward Balance from 2019 report    | 4605.75                   |
| Income from 2020 investments:       |                           |
| 3726.91 – 1281.15 =                 | + 2445.76                 |
| (interest + dividends - admin fee)  |                           |
| Income from plot sales              | 0                         |
| (total sales x 20%)                 |                           |
| Income from Interment fees          | 750                       |
| Income from monument permits        | 100                       |
| Donations                           | 0                         |
| Total income in 2020                | + 3295.76                 |
| Monument repairs                    | ( 0 )                     |
| Mowing/maint. costs                 | ( 3997.50 )               |
| Total expenses for 2020             | ( 3997.50 )               |
| <br>Ending Maintenance Fund balance | <br><b><u>3904.01</u></b> |
| <br><b>Memorial Brick Campaign</b>  |                           |
| Balance forward from 2019           | <b>5493.45</b>            |
| Income from brick sales             | 125.00                    |
| Brick costs                         | ( 29.75 )                 |
| Ending balance 12/31/2020           | <b><u>5588.70</u></b>     |

**Endowment Fund Year-End value \$ 136,490.31**

(last year's Endowment Fund year-end value was 132,486.23)

## **Christian Education**

Christian Education at St John is in a bit of a transition period right now. We had a wonderful gift in Vince Bruno and were sorry to see him go. He helped us start many successful programs that we are eager to continue and constantly improve upon. The Christian Education Committee is currently restructuring how it functions as for the last few years we have relied heavily on the position of Youth and Family leader to perform the duties of the committee.

### **Sunday School**

- currently have 15 students on the roster
- In the early days of the pandemic Vince had sent weekly lessons to each Sunday School family via email. This was moderately successful at first but, due most likely to parents needing to rapidly transition to homeschool Monday through Friday exhaustion with this format became apparent and it was abandoned.
- Currently we have been using a series of kid friendly videos that are uploaded weekly to our YouTube channel for families to watch together at their leisure. The video series has been well received and we will continue with them for the time being until in person Sunday School can be resumed.
- Vince had coordinated in person outdoor Sunday school that was held during warmer weather which was a fun change of pace for all that attended. If the COVID-19 precautions continue as they are currently, we will consider doing more of these when the weather gets a bit more cooperative.

### **VBS**

- This year we did not do a traditional Vacation Bible School. Families were eager to have something more like what VBS has always looked like, but with COVID precautions in place. An ambitious plan of family led stations was planned and the team was excited to be able to provide some small sense of normal to our families. Unfortunately, the weather for the week planned was abysmal. With strong thunderstorms in the forecast for each day of the week, the planned station walk through was scrapped. Instead supplies and instructions for each station were packed into bags and families were able to pick them up and do the activities at home.
- Assuming an in person VBS will be possible this coming summer, the curriculum is already purchased and ready to go. The theme is God in Focus.

### **Youth Group**

- In early March the youth group participated in Box City at St. James Lutheran Church in Limerick. The overnight event was composed of many activities to help the youth better empathize with homeless persons in our community and our world. The group spent a very cold night sleeping in cardboard boxes in the church parking lot and came away with a lot of insightful thoughts on the whole experience. It was a fun and meaningful event for the youth, and we look forward to continuing to participate if the event continues after the COVID-19 crisis is behind us.
- We met weekly via zoom with in-person meetings when weather was cooperative throughout the year. Zoom meet ups will resume in the next few weeks.
- Summer 2021 was originally supposed to be the national youth gathering in Minneapolis. This event was pushed back until the summer of 2022 due to obvious concerns with



gathering 30,000 high school aged students in close quarters for the better part of a week. St. John's youth group is planning on attending the event, and fundraising ideas are being brainstormed to help offset the cost to families.

Respectfully submitted,  
Megan Kiefski, Christian Education Committee Chair

## **COVID Advisory Team**

St John's COVID Advisory Team formed in June 2020. At that time, our country was slowly moving towards opening back up. Our task was to understand what that meant for us at St John Church. Because of the closeness of typical church seating, singing, and the sharing of Communion, opening up a church for in house worship presents challenges. Our team began by reviewing resources and guidelines from various government agencies, churches, as well as from the ELCA. We developed a Protocol for being inside St. John's building. The team sent out a survey to the congregation to determine how people were feeling about inside and outdoor worship services. The survey results pointed us in the direction of recommending outdoor worship services. The team discussed St. John's Nursery School COVID concerns. The team had numerous Zoom meetings where we discussed how to safely have some groups, like the Quilters, in our building. The team developed a Sign-In for groups using St. John's building spaces. The team developed a "Code of Conduct for Group Building Use - COVID-19" as well as "Questions for Group Participants Using St. John Inside Facilities".

The team continues to meet and review the latest data and information from medical and churchwide agencies to get best advice and best practice. As numbers decline, weather improves, and vaccinations increase this team will help advise as we safely transition the ways we operate to the eventual "normal" that we are all eager to return to.

Pastor Rachel Manke  
Kierstin Capaldo  
Kim Even  
Justin Kiefski  
Susan Lorenski  
Barbara Tornetta  
Judy Winship

## **Evangelism Report**

The Evangelism Committee started 2020 with the continuation of visits to our homebound members. Some members of the congregation were also involved with this outreach.

Unfortunately, once we were hit with COVID-19 our activities and outreach had to be put on hold. After several zoom meetings it was decided to deliver a Friendship Bag to each member/household of the congregation. These Friendship bags were an attempt to reach members, let them know they were being thought about, and hopefully bring a smile to each face. In each of the Friendship Bags was included a smaller Friendship Bag that held the same items but was put together so that each of us could “pass it forward”, bringing caring thoughts to another person. These Friendship Bags seemed to be well received and appreciated.

A second outreach, similar in nature but involving more congregational input was in the planning stages when COVID-19 numbers continued to spike, and it was deemed not safe to carry out. In its place congregational members completed colored designs and sent them out with notes to our members who are homebound, do not have access to internet, or unable to attend the outdoor services.

An Advent Festival was planned for December 6, 2020. Different Advent crafts were to be offered for making in tents with tables appropriately distanced outside. All crafts were designed to be made with prepackaged materials and no need to share tools. Crafts were to be taken home for home decorating and some were to be used on the outdoor church Christmas tree. Once again, COVID-19 numbers were spiking and our Advent Festival which had been open to the public, became a drive through event. Bags were assembled with the makings and directions for many crafts, as well as the legends behind some of these items. People could return on December 13, 2020 to decorate the church tree. Cards with Christmas message were sent to assisted living residents of Normandy Farms Estates. Many of the cards included winter bird scenes on magnets with scripture verses.

Hopefully, the Evangelism committee will be able to regroup and move through the months ahead.

Submitted by Joan Linton, former chairperson.

# 2020 Financial Review

## OVERVIEW

2020 was a year of change and growth for St. John's. With the impact of COVID and a part time Bridge Pastor, our operating expenses were reduced in 2020 allowing us to end the year with a small but meaningful budget surplus. Despite the challenges' of COVID we moved forward as a congregation to find new ways to worship and come together as a community. We were able a make a number of investments in our future. Some, like the boiler, the bell tower and roof we had to make. Others, like our new audio and video system we chose to make.

## Current Funds Received

Overall, we needed less income in 2020 to cover current operating expenses. As you can see below *Congregational Giving* plus our reduced *Third Party Income* provided the funds needed to keep St John's running. This past year was the first since 2002 that we didn't need to draw from the *Endowment Fund* to cover our operating expenses.

## Current Expenses

We had reduced operating expenses across all of our major categories for most the year due to COVID and Pastor Steve working as part time Bridge Pastor for eleven months.

### *Current Fund 2019-2020*

|                                               | 2019                 |                     | 2020                 |                     |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| <b><u>Current Fund Income</u></b>             | <b>\$ 264,468.29</b> | <b><u>100%</u></b>  | <b>\$ 235,040.00</b> | <b><u>100%</u></b>  |
| <b>Current Congregational Giving</b>          | <b>\$ 206,399.86</b> | <b><u>78.0%</u></b> | <b>\$ 208,704.00</b> | <b><u>88.8%</u></b> |
| Weekly Current Envelopes                      | \$ 185,286.50        |                     | \$ 199,313.50        |                     |
| Plate Offerings - Current                     | \$ 3,822.40          |                     | \$ 2,175.00          |                     |
| Non-weekly Envelopes                          | \$ 12,595.46         |                     | \$ 5,209.00          |                     |
| Bulletins/Flowers                             | \$ 4,695.50          |                     | \$ 1,461.50          |                     |
| Christian Ed - current                        | \$ -                 |                     | \$ 545.00            |                     |
| <b>Current Third Party Income</b>             | <b>\$ 49,025.50</b>  | <b><u>18.5%</u></b> | <b>\$ 26,336.00</b>  | <b><u>11.2%</u></b> |
| Nursery School                                | \$ 26,133.00         |                     | \$ 15,625.00         |                     |
| Room Rental                                   | \$ 3,975.00          |                     | \$ 125.00            |                     |
| Visual Arts Program                           | \$ 13,167.50         |                     | \$ 2,486.00          |                     |
| 1810 Rent                                     | \$ 5,750.00          |                     | \$ 8,100.00          |                     |
| <b>Current Endowment</b>                      | <b>\$ 9,042.93</b>   | <b><u>3.4%</u></b>  | <b>\$ -</b>          | <b><u>0.0%</u></b>  |
| Current - Endowment                           | \$ 9,042.93          |                     | \$ -                 |                     |
| <b><u>Current Fund Expenses</u></b>           | <b>\$ 264,468.29</b> |                     | <b>\$ 232,423.34</b> |                     |
| Pastoral Care                                 | \$ 62,752.32         |                     | \$ 53,561.82         |                     |
| Worship & Music                               | \$ 55,247.99         |                     | \$ 46,741.97         |                     |
| Parish Administration                         | \$ 58,339.14         |                     | \$ 47,328.02         |                     |
| Building Services                             | \$ 86,864.56         |                     | \$ 70,482.72         |                     |
| Christian Education                           | \$ 1,263.68          |                     | \$ 14,308.81         |                     |
| <b><i>Current Fund - Net Gain or Loss</i></b> | <b>\$ -</b>          |                     | <b>\$ 2,616.66</b>   |                     |

## Benevolence & Mortgage

Giving for Benevolence and Mortgage were less this year than in 2019. Some members may be giving more to the Current Fund and less to these areas. Both Benevolence and Mortgage need our continued support. The Synod does a lot of great work on a tight budget. Mortgage contributions still exceed our debt service but your continued support is needed.

|                    | 2019         | 2020        |
|--------------------|--------------|-------------|
| <i>Benevolence</i> | \$ 22,134.00 | \$ 20734.00 |
| <i>Mortgage</i>    | \$ 15,399.00 | \$ 13946.00 |

## Capital Repairs

A number of needed capital improvements were made this year. We replaced the 40+ year church boiler; repaired the church bell tower; replaced the a/c units; repaired leaking Church roof and school roof; invested in an audio video system for recording and streaming church activities; we upgraded our current office computers with better and faster hard drives; we insulated the space under the parsonage kitchen to improve winter comfort and we completed a much needed project to drain water away from both the cemetery and church/school.

|                                 | Balance<br>1/1/2020 | Actuals<br>2020     | Total 2020<br>Funds |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Capital Repairs - Income</b> | <b>\$8589.82</b>    | <b>\$64,362.89</b>  | <b>\$72,952.71</b>  |
| Building Endowment              |                     | \$46,000.00         |                     |
| Net Cap Ex Fundraiser           |                     | \$15,602.89         |                     |
| Maint & Repairs Env.            |                     | \$2,760.00          |                     |
| <b>Capital Expenses</b>         |                     | <b>\$69,970.56</b>  |                     |
| Capital Expenses                |                     | \$69,970.56         |                     |
| <u>Year End Balance</u>         |                     | <u>(\$5,607.67)</u> | <u>\$2,982.15</u>   |

## Endowment Funds

The St John Endowment (shown on the next page) started the year at \$1.293 million. By the end of March, we were down by almost \$300,000. However, the church's money is invested in blue chip companies and quality bonds and our portfolio came back as the market recovered. Funds totaling \$55,815 were used mostly for Capital Improvements this year but we also put funds to work in our Mission Ministry, Music Ministry, Evangelism, and Youth Group activities. By the end of December, even with the funds we took out for a variety of good works, we still ended the year at \$1.282 million, only \$11,000 less than where we started the year.

The Cemetery Endowment had results that followed the St John Endowment. It started the year at \$132,854 and despite a volatile first six months, ended the year with a balance of \$144,447. We had no withdraws and transferred \$5,000 into the Cemetery Endowment in 2020.

### 4th Qtr 2020 Investment Summary

| <u>Account Summary:</u>                | <u>12/31/20</u><br>Cemetery Fund | <u>12/31/20</u><br>St John Fund | <u>12/31/20</u><br>Total |
|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>1/1/20 Market Value:</b>            | <b>\$132,854.09</b>              | <b>\$1,293,176.82</b>           | <b>\$1,426,030.91</b>    |
| <b>INCOME</b>                          |                                  |                                 |                          |
| Interest Income                        | \$220.99                         | \$8,146.17                      | \$8,367.16               |
| Dividends                              | \$3,505.92                       | \$25,940.18                     | \$29,446.10              |
| <b>Total Cash Reinvested</b>           | <b>\$3,726.91</b>                | <b>\$34,086.35</b>              | <b>\$37,813.26</b>       |
| <b>INVESTMENT GAIN</b>                 |                                  |                                 |                          |
| <b>Growth in Investments Value</b>     | <b>\$4,147.08</b>                | <b>\$22,422.05</b>              | <b>\$26,569.13</b>       |
| <b>Gain/(Loss) on Investment Value</b> | <b>\$7,873.99</b>                | <b>\$56,508.40</b>              | <b>\$64,382.39</b>       |
|                                        | 5.93%                            | 4.37%                           | 4.51%                    |
| <b>LESS</b>                            |                                  |                                 |                          |
| Administrative Expenses                | -\$1,281.15                      | -\$11,732.18                    | -\$13,013.33             |
| <b>Net Funds Available</b>             | <b>\$6,592.84</b>                | <b>\$44,776.22</b>              | <b>\$51,369.06</b>       |
| <b>Return on Investment</b>            | <b>4.96%</b>                     | <b>3.46%</b>                    | <b>3.60%</b>             |
| <b>DISBURSEMENTS (Thru 12/31)</b>      |                                  |                                 |                          |
| Cemetery Fund                          | \$0.00                           |                                 | \$0.00                   |
| St John -Cover Operating Deficit       |                                  |                                 | \$0.00                   |
| Building - Capital Expense             |                                  | -\$46,000.00                    | -\$46,000.00             |
| Music Fund                             |                                  | -\$2,000.00                     | -\$2,000.00              |
| Evangelism                             |                                  | -\$1,000.00                     | -\$1,000.00              |
| Mission                                |                                  | -\$2,000.00                     | -\$2,000.00              |
| Youth Gp-Events                        |                                  | -\$500.00                       | -\$500.00                |
| Youth Group - Director Salary          |                                  | -\$4,315.00                     | -\$4,315.00              |
| <b>DISBURSEMENTS - Total</b>           | <b>\$0.00</b>                    | <b>-\$55,815.00</b>             | <b>-\$55,815.00</b>      |
| <b>12/31/20</b>                        |                                  |                                 |                          |
| <b>Net Investment Growth</b>           |                                  | <b>-\$11,038.78</b>             |                          |
| <b>Contributions added</b>             | <b>\$5,000.00</b>                | <b>\$0.00</b>                   | <b>\$5,000.00</b>        |
| <b>Total Ending Market Value</b>       | <b>\$144,446.93</b>              | <b>\$1,282,138.04</b>           | <b>\$1,426,584.97</b>    |
| <b>Percentage Change</b>               | <b>8.73%</b>                     | <b>-0.85%</b>                   | <b>0.04%</b>             |

## **MLK Day of Service – Report for St John Lutheran Church 2020 Annual Meeting**

The 2nd Annual MLK Day of Service was held on January 20, 2020, chaired by Monika Bontempo and Kathy Erdman. There were close to 300 participants from our congregation and larger community that participated in this all-ages event held at St. John. We were able to help 16 different organizations with a wide variety of service projects.

Organizations supported included: Mattie Dixon Community Cupboard, Ken Crest Transition Homes for Kids, Cards for Hospitalized Kids, Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Our Daily Bread Community Food Pantry, Cecil and Grace Bean Soup Kitchen, Mural Arts Program, Gift of Life Family House, Home at Last Dog Rescue, Color Me Back: Same Day Work and Pay Program, Kensington Storefront Porchlight Project, Memory Center Unit at Artman Home, Elm Terrace Gardens in Landale, Good Shepherd Home in Allentown, and local first responders.

We give special thanks to all of our dedicated volunteers, as well as the following organizations that supported this event: BOY SCOUT TROOP 98, CENTER SQUARE VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY, DELTA SIGMA THETA SORORITY, GIANT FOODS, KING OF PRUSSIA DENTAL ASSOCIATES, OLYMPIA PIZZA, SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD, ST. JOHN NURSERY SCHOOL, ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH CONGREGATIONAL MEMBERS, THRIVENT FINANCIAL.

Submitted by Beth Wood, 2020 Council Vice President, using information from the 2020 MLK Day of Service brochure and volunteer communications.

## Music and *The Arts at St. John's*

Our music program was off to a great start in 2020 until that infamous day (Thursday afternoon March 12) when the mandate was issued that churches would be shutting down like everything else for the next two weeks due to Covid. For this musician who has been serving in parish music ministry for forty-five years, this was very hard to believe. Ash Wednesday had been observed one week earlier and we were now walking the way of Lent. Our choirs' folders were fully stocked with music for Lent and Holy Week. Everything was in the preparation stage. A twenty-eight piece orchestra had been contracted for our spring concert finale and we were on our way. Then the unthinkable happened ... and here we are eleven months later coping in a vastly different virtual worship reality.

Lutheran pastor and theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote "Music will help dissolve your perplexities and purify your character and sensibilities, and in time of care and sorrow, will keep a fountain of joy alive in you." Unfortunately one of the many staggering casualties of the pandemic has been the silencing of live music – particularly the human voice. Due to the aerosols produced from projected speech and singing, these activities (at least in live group settings) were silenced from the start of Covid. This was extremely hard for those whose lives, and livelihoods, were dependent upon music and live performance.

In order to keep this joy alive churches were charged to find new ways to sing their songs to the Lord. Virtual worship was explored, and St. John rose to meet the challenge presented by the pandemic. We were very fortunate that Phil Wood came forward and offered his skills in getting this off the ground. It was new to all of us and we are still learning week by week. For our early outdoor services a large singing screen was customized for us so that a single voice could provide vocal music while following strict health guidelines. Our own Jonathan Posen also came forward not only with his time, but with the needed equipment to make it happen. Since that time additional recording equipment has been purchased and graciously funded by our own members.

Since the fall our "Covid Quartet" has faithfully recorded each Thursday afternoon. The singers arrive one hour before each taping to rehearse, and then we meet with Phil and Pastor to tape the service that gets sent out each weekend. I am very thankful for our dedicated section leaders (Deborah Swider, MajaLisa Fritzhusten, Kurt Klinger-Wilensky, Jonathan Oehler and Rob Laird) who have kept our music going during these trying times.

Our Handbell Choir has been muted for many months. We were lucky to be able to hold one socially-distanced rehearsal according to guidelines, and play for our Reformation Service during our outdoor celebration last October. I look forward to their return when the warmer weather will open up more possibilities to safely play again.

*The Arts at St. John's* Concert Series had just finished its winter break and returned with our *Schubert & Friends* chamber music program last February. Unfortunately our spring concert finale and annual art show had to be cancelled due to the pandemic. We were able to record a virtual *Reformation Vespers* with socially-distanced singers and players that was viewed by nearly 150 people on YouTube. Our 2020-2021 season was to be a grand celebration of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *The Arts at St. John's* concert series. All plans had to be put on hold and we hope the fall of 2021 brings new opportunities once again for live performances.



In all of our separation, there were still opportunities to come together in small ways and outdoor gatherings. Personally, I was deeply moved as you all marked my 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary as your music director at the end of one of our outdoor services. It has been an honor and privilege to sing the church's song with all of you in Blue Bell over these many years.

Estonian composer Arvo Pärt has often shared that he feels "... the most sensitive instrument is the human soul. The next is the human voice." At the heart of Lutheran worship is the music of the gathered assembly. What I have deeply missed over these many months is all of you – singing and offering your voice, great and small, in our intimate, wonderfully-live worship space. I look forward to the day when our lamenting will end and we jubilantly, with full heart and voice, sing together of the feast of victory for our God.

*Soli Deo Gloria!*

**Lawrence Baker**

*Director of Music*

## *The Arts at St. John's*

The mission of *The Arts at St. John's* is to offer high quality classical and sacred music programs for the congregation of St. John while reaching out to the community at large.

### **2020 Programs**

February 16      *Schubert & Friends*

October 25      Vespers for Reformation Sunday (on-line presentation)

### **Financial Report**

|                           |                             |            |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|
| Balance January 1, 2020   | Univest Checking # ****0546 | \$9,897.00 |
| Income                    |                             |            |
|                           | Patron contributions        | \$1,735.00 |
|                           | Foundation grant            | 2,000.00   |
|                           | Cash offerings              | 880.00     |
|                           | Voided 2019 check           | 225.00     |
|                           | Total                       | \$4,840.00 |
| Expenses                  |                             |            |
|                           | Performances                | \$5,650.00 |
|                           | Total                       | \$5,650.00 |
| Balance December 31, 2020 |                             | \$9,087.00 |

Respectfully submitted,

Lawrence Baker  
Director

Dave Ochocki  
Bookkeeper

## St. John Mutual Ministry Annual Report for 2020

### Current Members:

Terry Welford, Chair  
Joan Linton  
Andrea Greyson  
Pastor Rachel Manke

### Summary:

The Mutual Ministry Committee was fairly dormant during 2020 for one main reason:

- St. John was in pastoral transition as the call process for a new pastor kicked off in January. Therefore, the timing was not appropriate to develop any new staff programs until we had a new permanent pastor in place. With Pastor Rachel's arrival in November, we're now in a position to set some 2021 goals for Mutual Ministry.

That said, two initiatives developed in late 2019 were implemented in early 2020:

- A staff Welcome Booklet (staff handbook) was distributed to staff during the first quarter of 2020.
- A new staff performance review program was piloted by Pastor Steve with a few staff members. We will revisit this program with Pastor Rachel's input and tweak as needed.

Staff job descriptions will continue to be reviewed and updated as needed. A new job description for Pastor was being created for the call process.

Submitted by:  
Terry Welford  
February 9, 2021

## St. John Property Committee Annual Report for 2020

### List of 2020 Accomplishments

- Cleaned and repaired Parson's House, multiple issues
  - Insulated Kitchen floor
  - Painted kitchen
  - Fixed railing on back stairs and steps that were loose
  - Repaired and painted front stair posts
  - Multiple plumbing issues were addressed
- Repaired bell cupola and cupola on school, and had them repainted
- Replaced Troster Room air conditioning units
- Had exterior of church windows painted
- We had a berm installed against the school building, grading the landscape away from the back of the church and school buildings to help with some water issues
- New boiler installed and working for sanctuary
- Painted lower back sanctuary wall of church and created a strip of blue paint between the top and bottom of the wall to match front of sanctuary
- Pothole repairs to the parking lot
- Replaced filters in HVAC system with upgraded versions
- Painted the pastor's office
- Replaced flat school roof and also fascia and gutters on the north side of the church to stop leaking
- Contracted new cleaning service
- Had carpet in Great Hall cleaned and stretched

There was much activity around the property in 2020 and we addressed many large projects that have needed attention for some time.

We would like to thank the Council, many church members who pitched in and simply did things on their own, Boy Scout Troop #98 for property clean up help. We'd also like to give a big thank the Nursery School for also pitching in and helping to keep the property clean and keep us aware of issues in the building.

There is still much to be done, but quite a bit was accomplished in 2020 thanks to funding, grants and volunteerism.

Submitted respectfully on behalf of the Property Committee:

Guy Gilpin, Chairman

Barry Stock

Ed Lorenski

Ron Nordmeyer

Jack Ruse

Bart Gorman

Mike DiDomenico

## St. John Christian Service Quilting Group: 2020 Annual Report

In spite of the pandemic the quilting group managed to assemble and distribute 35 quilts. Most of these mission quilts have been donated to organizations/ministries throughout our area. We actually sold one, which helped fund our batting (each shipment total is just over \$ 100). We generally need to order at least once/year, depending on how often we are able to meet.

On behalf of our congregation, we presented a quilt (of her choice) to our new Pastor Rachel Manke. Many thanks to St. John congregation for your support: 1)-donations of lightly used sheets (and fabric) and 2)-by purchase of an occasional quilt (at \$30 each) to help defray our batting cost. We do depend on your help and could not do it without you.

Quilt Distribution: 9 to Mattie Dixon Community Cupboard, Ambler

9 to Being Beautiful Foundation

9 to Norristown Ministries

6 to Main Street Ministries, Pottstown

1 for gift to Pastor Manke

1 purchased

Submitted by Anita Hill

Other members: Marilyn Bushaw, Kathy Erdman, Betty Jeanguenin, Joan Linton, Doris Petusky,

Dolly Saltmer, MaryEllen Scheffey,

## Social Ministry Committee

The Social Ministry Committee's activities were limited this year due to COVID-19 but we still supported the following organizations this past year.

Below is a history of the various organizations. Please take some time to explore these organizations websites.

Being Beautiful Foundation--Located in Ambler, Pa. the Being Beautiful Foundation is a non-profit 501c3 advocacy organization dedicated to improving the lives and outcomes of youth in foster care. Their programs provide food, clothing, therapeutic services and housing for up to 6 children per household. Their housing model combines the program benefits of larger congregate care along with the personal love, care and attention of traditional residential home living. The goal is to provide interim or long-term housing and care for these youth until they can either successfully re-unite with their biological parents or receive permanent placement with a loving adoptive family on going collections occur for bath and beauty products.

[Beingbeautifulfoundation.org](http://Beingbeautifulfoundation.org)

Cecil & Grace Bean Soup Kitchen- Cecil and Grace Bean's Soup Kitchen is committed to serving meals to food insufficient residents in the Norristown community. The soup kitchen's goal is to end hunger altogether and currently provides lunch on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, and breakfast on Saturday mornings. [beansoupkitchen.com](http://beansoupkitchen.com)

Interfaith Choice Pantry at Grace Lutheran- Founded in 1996, the Greater Philadelphia Coalition Against Hunger strives to build a community where all people have the food, they need to lead healthy lives. The Coalition connects people with food assistance programs and nutrition education; provides resources to a network of food pantries; and educates the public and policymakers about responsible solutions that prevent people from going hungry.

[hungercoalition.org](http://hungercoalition.org)

Ken-Crest - Ken Crest offers premiere transitional care homes that are uniquely designed for infants, toddlers, and children with complex medical needs.

<https://www.kencrest.org/children/transitional-care-homes-children/>

The Lutheran Theological Seminary now known as the United Lutheran Seminary at Philadelphia Food Pantry- Ongoing food collection throughout the year to assist those attending seminary who struggle to make ends meet. [unitedlutheranseminary.org](http://unitedlutheranseminary.org)

Mattie Dixon Community Cupboard-Ambler offers food, clothing, employment assistance/job help/resume building, medical referrals, housing referrals and emergency financial assistance. They are a nonprofit food pantry that rely on the generosity of the people in the communities they serve. [Community-cupboard.org](http://Community-cupboard.org)

Merakey- [merakey.org](http://merakey.org)

Mural Arts Program- The Same Day Work and Pay program is an innovative new initiative that combines participatory artmaking and access to social services in a unique model offering individuals who are experiencing economic insecurity an opportunity to earn wages. Participants are recruited through outreach and have the opportunity to connect, contribute, and engage with outreach specialists who can link them with support services, including social and/or behavioral health services and potential opportunities for longer-term employment while working in the program.

[muralarts.org/program/porch-light/color-me-back-a-same-day-work-and-pay-program/](http://muralarts.org/program/porch-light/color-me-back-a-same-day-work-and-pay-program/)

Pastor Stephen Deal- Our congregation supports him and his family and congregation as he serves as a Missionary in Costa Rica

SCPA- The Montgomery County Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals is a nonprofit organization dedicated to caring for unwanted, lost, and abused domestic animals. Established in 1909 and chartered in 1916, the Montgomery County SCPA, has 3 locations. [montgomerycountyscpa.org](http://montgomerycountyscpa.org)

Seaman's Church Institute- The Seaman's Church Institute of Philadelphia and South Jersey has a mission to serve proactively without prejudice the human needs of seafarers and the maritime community of the Delaware River. [Sciphiladelphia.org](http://Sciphiladelphia.org)

VA hospital- Today's VHA has roots spanning over 150 years and continues to meet Veterans' changing medical, surgical, and quality of life needs. New programs provide treatment for traumatic brain injuries, post-traumatic stress disorder, suicide prevention, women Veterans, and more. <https://www.coatesville.va.org>

We are blessed to be able to support various programs and our members of St. John's. We thank the congregation for their continued support and welcome anyone that might be interested in joining our committee.

Respectfully Submitted Monika Bontempo- chair

Members: Kathy Erdman, Katie Myers, Betty Jeanguenin, Rita Stock, Carol Weidler & Audrey Pyle

## St. John's Nursery School Annual Report

Registration for the 2021-2022 school year began for current students, siblings of current students and students who did not return because of the pandemic on January 7, 2021. We opened registration to the general public on January 15. Classes for the 2020-2021 school year are already full or nearly full as we are keeping numbers a bit lower than usual in case there are still social distancing restrictions.

Enrollment for the current school year is as follows:

Youngn's(2 year olds)

9 children on Wednesday/Friday

Full enrollment is 12 on T/TH, and 12 on W/F

Middies

15 children

Full enrollment is 30

PreK

24 children

Full enrollment is 38

Our teaching staff is as follows:

Youngn's

Mrs. Liz Rosti - lead

Mrs. Karen Delaney - assistant

Mrs. Eileen Ruegg - assistant

Middies

Mrs. Donna Dickson - lead

Mrs. Kathy Roman - assistant

Mrs. Bev Borkowski - lead

Mrs. Eileen Ruegg- assistant

PreK

Mrs. Donna Dickson - lead - Monday/Wednesday/Friday

Mrs. Maureen Cosenza - assistant Monday/Wednesday/Friday

Mrs. Sondra Haley - lead Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday/Friday

Mrs. Margaret Malloy - assistant Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday/Friday

Mrs. Jen Rosato - lead - Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday/Friday

Mrs. Denise Schwanholt - assistant - Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday/Friday

Director

Mrs. Carrie Engel

BookKeeper

Mrs. Karen Delaney

Three staff members asked for the year off for personal reasons surrounding the pandemic. We hope to be able to offer their positions back to them in the coming year(s).



We hosted our sixth annual Ice Cream Social and Art Show on March 9, 2020. Students came to school with their families to enjoy an ice cream treat and explore the classrooms which were beautifully decorated with art work from each and every student. Over 250 people attended during the course of the night. That was the last gathering of the year for the nursery school. On March 12, we were notified of the county shut down and 2 weeks led to the remainder of the school year. As you can plainly see by our profit and loss report, the year has had tremendous loss. With the generosity of most families who donated the two unused weeks of their March tuition to the nursery school, we were able to pay our teachers until the end of April. We had already begun collecting April tuitions and had collected lunch bunch and creative crew fees from most of the students who attended regularly. All lunch bunch and creative crew money was returned to the families. April tuition that had been collected was returned to those who would not be returning or applied to September for those who would return or had a younger sibling returning.

September came with not much looking better. We lost just shy of half of our students to families opting to keep their children home for the year. The church executive committee invited me to their meeting in August and it was decided that St. John's would err on the side of caution and begin school on November 1. We lost 5 more students at that time whose families wanted or needed them to be in school starting in September. We watched other local public and private schools have good experiences with keeping the spread of the virus out of their schools and were able to begin classes on November 2, 2020. At that time, we only collected tuition from about half of the students as many returning students had credit waiting from the spring. It was not until January that all credits were rectified and we began collecting tuition from all current families.

During September and October, families had the option to pay \$50 for 3 weeks or \$75 for 5 weeks of theme based packets that would help keep students busy and give them the opportunity to work on skills like numbers, colors, shapes, letters, sorting, cutting and matching. 30 students opted for packets. Pick up was in the parking lot each Tuesday where we also offered socially distant activities like a book walk, paint stations, chalk and scavenger hunt.

Our classrooms and offerings have been altered significantly in order to have less need for bathroom visits, food and for the time in masks not to become too excessive for the children. Our 2 year olds come only on W/F and spend 2 hours at school instead of 2.5. Our 3 year old classes come only T/Th for 2 hours instead of M/T/TH for 3 hours. Our 4 year olds come 3 or 4 days a week for 3 hours. We are not offering any lunch bunches, full days or creative crew. We keep each classroom self contained and have sectioned off the playground so 2 classes are never in the same area at the same time. Arrival and departure times are staggered so classes are not in the hallways or stairwells together. There are no extra programs or music being offered.

All staff and students are masked at all times inside and out. We do not offer snack this year to reduce possible spread of germs and to allow for masks to stay on. We have limited class sizes to no more than 10 students. Parents have been given a daily health check to review each morning, and students are temperature checked before entering their classrooms in the morning. Hand sanitizing stations were installed in each classroom so children hand sanitize or wash with soap and water throughout the day. The staff has increased their already stringent cleaning to include disinfecting all toys after use and fogging classrooms and bathrooms at the end of each day. A tremendous amount of money has been spent on the no contact thermometers, fogger and other cleaning supplies, that will all show on next year's P&L.

Back to School meetings were held via Zoom just before school began. We had excellent parent attendance. Our Covid addendum to our handbook, safety procedures, health checks, staggered starts and car line were discussed as well as communications and the general operations for the school year. We also scheduled orientation meetings for each student and one parent 15 minutes

apart the week before school started. Teachers made fun scarecrows to welcome the families back and met each student for 10 minutes in their classrooms.

Building enhancements that are reflected in this financial report are upper cabinets for storage in 5 classrooms along with a shelving system for books, puzzles, toys and instruments in the teacher's room and block room. The school also contributed most of the cost for the new, more secure entry system on the outer red doors and both ends of the school hallway. The teachers and assistants vacuum the classrooms and clean toys, tables and chairs. The school pays \$2,150.00 per month to the church for building usage and phones. We did not pay for the months the school was closed down. We have also been asked to contribute \$650/year to copier costs, we are happy to hear those copy costs will be reduced significantly with the new copier.

St. John's Nursery School is currently enrolling for the 2021 - 2022 school year. Since we have no visitors to the building this year, there is a virtual tour for each age group on our website, [www.stjohnsns.com](http://www.stjohnsns.com). A link to registration can be found there as well. As always, we appreciate the church congregation's support and recommendations to neighbors, families and friends!

Respectfully Submitted, Carrie Engel

**St. John's Nursery School**  
**Profit & Loss**  
 July 2019 through June 2020

|                                | Jul '19 - Jun 20 |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Ordinary Income/Expense        |                  |
| Income                         |                  |
| Donations                      | 263.44           |
| Lunch Bunch                    |                  |
| Middies Lunch Bunch            | -36.00           |
| Total Lunch Bunch              | -36.00           |
| Registration Fees              |                  |
| Nursery School Registration    | 3,320.00         |
| Total Registration Fees        | 3,320.00         |
| Returned Check Charges         | 15.00            |
| Tuition-Creative Crew          | 3,926.00         |
| Tuition-Lunch Bunch            |                  |
| Middies Lunch Bunch            | 2,656.00         |
| Total Tuition-Lunch Bunch      | 2,656.00         |
| Tuition-Middies                |                  |
| 2 Day Middies                  | 2,310.00         |
| 3 Day Middies                  | 68,541.00        |
| Total Tuition-Middies          | 70,851.00        |
| Tuition-Pre K                  |                  |
| 3 Full Day                     | 16,543.20        |
| 3 Full/1 or 2 half             | 17,806.00        |
| 3 Half Day                     | 20,876.00        |
| 4 Half Day                     | 7,115.40         |
| 5 Half Day                     | 12,470.00        |
| Total Tuition-Pre K            | 74,810.60        |
| Tuition-Youngins               | 28,475.25        |
| Total Income                   | 184,281.29       |
| Gross Profit                   | 184,281.29       |
| Expense                        |                  |
| Bank Service Charges           | 12.00            |
| Building Usage                 | 14,300.00        |
| Capital Improvements           | 5,069.89         |
| Cleaning Supplies              | 167.07           |
| Computer and Internet Expenses | 1,132.07         |
| Copier Expense                 | 600.00           |
| Dues and Subscriptions         | 145.00           |
| Gifts/Donations                | 1,322.70         |
| Insurance Expense              | 6,051.00         |
| Office Supplies                | 2,050.20         |
| Paper Products                 | 505.30           |
| Payroll Expenses               |                  |
| Employer Taxes                 | 12,102.70        |
| Gross Wages - Instruction      | 107,208.30       |
| Payroll Wages - Administration | 50,996.86        |
| Total Payroll Expenses         | 170,307.86       |
| Playground Maintenance         | 51.98            |
| Postage and Delivery           | 236.60           |
| Professional Fees              |                  |
| Prof Fees-Outside Accountant   | 2,700.00         |
| Prof Services - Non Staff      | 1,165.00         |
| Total Professional Fees        | 3,865.00         |

1:59 PM

02/10/21

Cash Basis

St. John's Nursery School

**Profit & Loss**

July 2019 through June 2020

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|                         | <u>Jul '19 - Jun 20</u>  |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Repairs and Maintenance | 2,140.50                 |
| Snacks                  | 1,781.97                 |
| Teaching Supplies       | 3,505.06                 |
| Telephone Expense       | <u>1,800.00</u>          |
| Total Expense           | <u>215,044.20</u>        |
| Net Ordinary Income     | <u>-30,762.91</u>        |
| Net Income              | <u><u>-30,762.91</u></u> |

## Stewardship Committee

The members of the stewardship committee are Pastor Stephen Godsall-Myers, Lisa Scalise, Jack Ruse, Barry Stock, Larry Erdman and Michael McConnell.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it was decided that the Giving program would be the Fearless Generosity program. This is the same program we have used in the past three years. Fearless Generosity is based on Ephesians 3:20-21 and explores how God has blessed us more abundantly than we can imagine.

The campaign included the following steps:

Sending a Stewardship Campaign letter to all members of the church. A special commitment card was also included with the letter.

Having Temple Talks during November Sunday services to discuss the financial challenges facing St John's and why St. John's makes a difference and deserves our support. Pastor Steve's sermons on those two Sundays focused on generosity and giving.

A special thank you to Larry Erdman and Lisa Scalise for doing the talks and Jack Ruse for working up all the financial data. Also I would like to thank pastor Steve for his leadership and spiritual guidance during his time with us.

The committee is looking forward to working with our new pastor Rachel Manke in 2021 and beyond.

Thank you for your continued support and generosity to the mission and ministries of St. John's.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael McConnell

## **Worship and Music Committee Annual Report 2020**

As with all the committees, music and worship committee found the year 2020 to be a real challenge. All meetings were done via Zoom, a new experience for us all!

Right after the COVID-19 shut down began, virtual church services began. Various parishioners took part in the services, reading the scripture, prayers and the leading the Apostle's creed. Who would have thought this would continue into the next year?

Shortly after the shutdown, a survey was sent out to the congregation. This survey questioned the willingness of parishioners to return to the church for inside services. Few were willing to do so.

During the summer and into the fall seven outside services were held. Attendance was great and everyone seemed thrilled to once again worship together and see their fellow parishioners. Communion was even able to be received thanks to prepackaged communion cups.

Two Christmas Eve services were planned for outside but had to be cancelled due to inclement weather.

Thanks to Barry Stock, the altar paraments were changed according to the liturgical calendar, eliminating the need for altar guild members to go into the church.

Pastor Steve was instrumental in keeping us all connected during this unprecedented time in the church history. That baton has now been passed on to Pastor Rachel, who is leading us on into the next chapter.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Tornetta

## 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee

St. John has been blessed with over 250 years of ministry and, although the year 2020 was a serious challenge when the Covid-19 pandemic surfaced locally in March, St. John members continued to hear the word and to serve. St. John survived during the yellow fever epidemic of 1783, and then the Spanish flu 1916-19, and we are still thriving through God's amazing grace now in 2021.

We began the year with a wonderfully successful Martin Luther King Day of service on 1/20/2020. Organized by Monika Bontempo and Kathy Erdman, over 16 agencies were helped by over 300 participants. We then missed out on the last three planned events:

- Katie, Anna and Me Presentation, 3/14/2020, a skit developed by Jean Godsall-Myers, would have given us perspectives on the lives and faith of Katie Luther, Anna Muhlenberg, and a present day member from St. John.
- Nursery School Homecoming Sunday, 4/26/2020 at 9:30 AM, a special service recognizing St. John Nursery School's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary school year.
- Concluding 250<sup>th</sup> Service and Congregational Luncheon, 6/07/2020 – Although we needed to modify the original plans of gathering, Pastor Steve Godsall-Myers led us in an enjoyable virtual service instead. There was a slide show of the creation story and its connection to St. John, a creative way of looking at our history using the steps to the Sanctuary, and retired Pastor Fluck reading the Nicene Creed. Many members virtually shared the readings, and many more shared the peace.

Here's a recap of what we were able to celebrate the first half of our anniversary year, from June through December 2019:

- New seasonal Sanctuary banners were purchased through generous member donations
- 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Kick-Off Service and Luncheon, 6/16/2019
- Annual Car Show, 9/7/2019
- Revolutionary War Reenactors and Historical Cemetery Walk, 10/12/2019
- Arts at St. John special 250<sup>th</sup> concert, Mozart's Requiem, 11/10/2019
- Wine and Cheese Tasting, 11/30/2019

A new church directory was in the works, to include 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary year photos, as well as member photos, contact information, and committees. This project remains on hold.

### Committee Members

|                            |                            |                       |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Larry Baker                | Kathy Erdman               | Joan Linton           |
| Monika Bontempo, Secretary | Larry Erdman               | Robbie Sowers         |
| Vince Bruno                | Jon Ganser                 | Barry Stock, Co-Chair |
| Linda Carpenter            | Joyce Gilpin               | Carol Weidler         |
| Linda Catherwood, Co-Chair | Pastor Steve Godsall-Myers |                       |

Submitted by: Linda Catherwood, Co-Chair  
2/16/2021

# ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING OPENING LITURGY

## LITANY

L. O God of all power and love ...

C. ... we give thanks for your unfailing presence.

L. O God of all power and love, we give thanks ...

C. ... for the hope you provide in times of uncertainty and loss.

L. O God of all power and love ...

C. ... we ask you to send your Holy Spirit to enkindle in us your holy fire.

L. O God of all power and love, we ask you ...

C. ... to revive us to live as Christ's body in the world.

L. O God of all power and love, we ask to be ...

C. ... a people who pray, worship, learn, break bread, share life, heal neighbors, bear good news, seek justice, rest and grow in the Spirit.

L. O God of all power and love, we ask you to be with us ...

C. ... wherever and however we gather. Unite us in common prayer and send us in common mission, that we and the whole creation might be restored and renewed, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

### Build Us Up, Lord

1 Build us up, Lord, build us up; set in  
2 Build us up, Lord, build us up; let our

us a strong foun - da - tion. Lead us to do your  
lives re - flect your glo - ry. Cast a - way all our

ho - ly will; form and shape your new cre - a - tion.  
doubts and fears; help us tell the world your sto - ry.

Build us up, Lord, build us up; as we  
Build us up, Lord, build us up; help us

guide and teach each oth - er, help us to share your love with the  
bear good fruit for you, Lord, give us vi - sion and keep us

world: ev - 'ry sis - ter, ev - 'ry broth - er.  
sure. Grant us faith that's stead - fast and true.

*Refrain*  
Grow - ing in Christ, we plant seeds for the king - dom; we fol - low in  
faith what's be - gun! Lord, set in our hearts the pow'r of your  
word to spread the news of your Son!

Text: Mark Glaeser, b. 1956, and Donna Hanna, b. 1952

Text © 2003 Augsburg Fortress

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In the early verses of Ephesians 4, the apostle Paul writes to the Christians in Ephesus, a city on the Aegean Sea at the mouth of a river and at the intersection of three trading routes. The letter was written about ten years after the church had started. During the early years of this congregation, Jews and Gentiles from several ethnicities and nationalities had come together to form "one body." Paul was aware that they had done well and commended them for their faith and love.

The word "one" appears more than seven times in the first four verses. This reflects the importance Paul gave to being called into the "unity of Christ." He wanted to note that, although many of the church members came from far off, there is "one Lord, one faith, one baptism." This oneness reflects God's gift of reconciliation in Christ.

A second emphasis from Paul was that, as believers, they were to "bear with one another in love." This would require humility, gentleness and patience as each of them practiced their faith. It would require tolerance to "maintain unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

A third emphasis was that each person had been given gifts by God and that these gifts were given to increase the whole. Because the Ephesian church was a young congregation and its members were just beginning in their faith journey, their understandings were often tossed to and fro. But as they grew in faith, each person contributed to building up the body of Christ.

The fourth and final emphasis was that by "speaking the truth in love," each person must grow into Christ. This means taking time to learn about one another and their gifts. Knowing these gifts, we can do God's work both within and beyond the faith community. When there are decisions to make or relationships to reconcile, we know to begin with prayer and reflection, always desiring to speak the truth in love — not for our own benefit but for God's glory, that we might become more complete.

As our members and friends gather today, whether face-to-face or online, we are reminded of our calling into "unity in Christ." We come from many places and work in many contexts, and yet we recognize "one Lord, one faith, one baptism."

Whether new to a worshiping community or further along the journey, we realize that humility, gentleness and patience are required both in the good times and especially in times of uncertainty and struggle. God wants us to be more complete through our work. Christ provides the way. The Holy Spirit is with us for guidance and courage. Each of us has been given the gifts to be complete, and through our faithfulness we will grow stronger and work together as one body.

**LET US PRAY: LORD, LET THE WORDS OF THE APOSTLE PAUL DWELL IN US DEEPLY. MAY WE EMBRACE THE RECONCILING POWER OF ONENESS WITH CHRIST. MAY THIS ONENESS GUIDE OUR CONGREGATION AS WE LIVE INTO THE NEW REALITIES OF THESE TIMES. AS WE MEET NEW PARTNERS IN MINISTRY, MAY WE TAKE TIME TO GET TO KNOW THEM WITH PATIENCE, HUMILITY AND LOVE. HELP US TO SEE HOW SHARING OUR GIFTS WILL MAKE YOUR WORK EASIER AND MORE FULFILLING WHILE BRINGING ALL OF US CLOSER TO CHRIST. MAY THE BLESSINGS YOU GIVE EACH DAY STRENGTHEN US TO A LIVING, DARING CONFIDENCE IN YOUR GRACE. AMEN.**