ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

ST. John's Episcopal Church

January 19, 2020

523 Hartford Turnpike, Vernon, CT 06066
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ST. JOHN’S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
523 Hartford Turnpike
Vernon, Connecticut 06066
January 19th, 2020 - 10:30 a.m.

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St. John's Episcopal Church, Vernon, CT
January 19, 2020

1. Call to Order
2. Opening Prayer
3. Verification of a Quorum by the Clerk for St. John's, Vernon
4. Acceptance of Minutes of 2019 Annual Meeting
5. Vote to accept Annual Report (except for Treasurer's)
   a. Treasurer's Report
   b. Presentation of 2020 Budget
6. Presentation of Slate of Candidates/Officers
7. Election of Vestry and Officers
8. Rector's Report
9. A.C.C.E.S.S Presentation
10. Senior Warden’s Report
11. Benediction

annualmeetingcalltoorder
Call to Order: Bill Francis called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. He thanked vestry members for providing the meal and all those who helped in the kitchen.

Verification of Quorum: Alfreda Barber, Vestry Clerk, confirmed a quorum was present.

Rev. Virginia gave an opening prayer followed by a moment of silence to remember those parishioners who had passed during the year.

Acceptance of the Annual Report 2017: A motion was made to accept the 2017 minutes by Letty Naigles and seconded by Linda Collier. The motion passed unanimously.

Acceptance of Minutes of 2019 Annual Meeting: A motion to accept the 2019 minutes as written was made. A motion was made to accept the Annual report with the exception of the Treasurer’s report by Nancy Simon and seconded by Carol Nelson. The motion passed unanimously.

Presentation about the Lester Fund: Rev Virginia gave a brief overview of the Lester Fund and how much it has meant this year. 81 claims where covered helping 29 members making a huge difference in helping with medical expenses. Any member in good standing can apply to the Lester Fund. Applications are available in the narthex or by asking. Rev. Virginia encouraged folks to apply and again thanked the folks from East Hartford for this gift they brought to St John’s.

Treasurer’s Report and Presentation of 2019 Budget: Kevin Fenner, Treasurer reviewed the 2018 budget and introduced the 2019 budget. Highlights included the following for 2018:
- $749 is our surplus this year.
- 9.4% greater revenue than the budget
- 107 Pledges received in 2018. 13 new
- $17,601 non pledge income.
- 14.7% income from endowment investments
- Total income is $308,779 for 2018.
- $22,500 capital improvements included a choir room piano, new playscape, new parking lot light, organic garden, wireless microphone for and office renovation.
- Faith in Action: $64,000 financial grants given this year
- The Lester fund distributed $115,000 this year. As a parish we have given away almost $180,000 this year.

2019 Budget has very little changes in most lines. Note a 7% increase in salaries and $9,350 for clergy during Rev. Virginia’s sabbatical leave.

A round of applause followed with thanks from Bill for everything Kevin does for the Vestry and the parish. More applause followed
Election of Officers:
Jackie Petrizzo presented the slate of 2019 Vestry Officers for nomination to a one year term: Alicia diLeao, Senior Warden; Don Wills, Junior Warden; Kevin Fenner, Treasurer; Andy Halpryn, Assistant Treasurer; and Alfreda Barber, Clerk. Nominations for new Vestry Members: (Two year terms) Paul Finney, Linda Collier, Bethany Chanthavisouk, (Three year terms) Bill Francis, Gretchen Shea, and Steve Nilipak. Representative’s appointments to the Episcopal Diocese Annual Convention are Jim Hutton, Shirley Finney and alternate Dwight Feenstra.

Bill Francis called for a motion to accept the Treasurer’s report and the 2019 budget. The motion was made by Don Wills to accept the Treasurer’s report and seconded by Terri Sessions. A vote was taken to accept the report for 2018 and accept the 2019 budget. It passed unanimously.

Bill than called for a motion was made to accept the slate of officers, new vestry members and the representatives this was moved by Kevin Fenner and seconded by Letty Naigles. The motion passed unanimously.

Short Moments of Mission:
John Hutton spoke on the behalf of the Brotherhood of St Andrew and the ECW. He shared activities that support Veterans at Phelps House, the food bank at Cornerstone. More volunteers are welcomed.

Deb Halpryn represented the Environmental Committee sharing information about the Garden. She shared how important fresh produce was to the tri-town pantry and our community.

Carol Cronsell shared an overview on the Cooks for a Cause Ministry at St John’s. Each Sunday morning our dedicated volunteers serve 60 to 80 meals. It is a very rewarding ministry and she welcomed folks to join in this worthwhile venture.

Alfreda Barber gave an overview of the Relay for Life. The Spirit Walkers began in 2011 and to date has raised $40,000. Melissa Fenner was acknowledged for all the hours she has been.

Terri Sessions shared an overview of the Reservation and work that Rev Margaret does. We help through by sending $500 twice a year to the Reservation for the food bank and supporting the work of HawkWing. She thanked all who have donated and shared what a difference it makes.

Rectors Report
Rev. Virginia thanked and acknowledged the incredible staff of St. John’s and all the work that each and every one of them does Markus Centola, Music Director; Margaret Mullen, Parish Administrator; Paul Brown, Sexton and Bill Gutzmer, Asst. Sexton. She acknowledged them for all the extra hours they put in and all the fine work they do to.
Rev. Virginia recognized and thanked Bill Francis for an amazing three years as he has served as Senior Warden and is glad he will continue on the vestry overseeing working on facilities. She thanked Alicia for having been Junior Warden and welcomed her as Senior Warden. Rev. Virginia thanked Kevin Fenner for all the work he does as the Treasurer, Andy Halpryn for being the assistant treasurer, setting up new systems, guiding our conversations about the Children’s Sunday School and planned giving. Andy and his family also coordinate the coffee hour. Rev Virginia thanked Alfreda Barber for being the Clerk. Rev Virginia thanked the departing Vestry members: Lexi Fontaine, Jackie Petrizzo and Ray Carmichael for their service over the past few years.

Rev Virginia thanked Erica Feenstra and recognized all the Sunday School Staff. Dwight Feenstra for his work with the acolytes. David Clarke was thanked for all his work on communications, technology and the website. Rev Virginia acknowledged and thanked Tom and Terri Sessions for keeping us focused on the needs of the community and world around us. She recognized and thanked John Hutton and Art LaPlante. Rev Virginia thanked all the altar guild and helpers; the Counters were thanked. Carl Schaeffer who keeps the furnace running; she thanked the Lawn Crew, who do a terrific job. Chris Emery, Diane Gutzmer and Mary Wilson were thanked for all the assistance they give behind the scenes in the kitchen.

She thanked everyone and our generous ways. She is grateful for us all.

**Senior Warden’s Report:**
Bill Francis encouraged folks to read his report in the packet. He shared that we are blessed at St John’s. Our facilities are well maintained. We are growing steadily and on any given day there is activity on campus there is always something going on. He thanked everyone

**Benediction and Adjournment:** Rev. Virginia gave the Benediction. Rev. Virginia called for a motion to adjourn the meeting this was moved by Skip and seconded by Polly. It passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 12:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Alfreda A. Barber, Vestry Clerk
The Rector's Annual Report, January 11, 2020

I love serving God with all of you at St. John's and I am truly and deeply grateful for our ministry, prayer, and sacramental life together in Our Lord Jesus. In 2019 I was reminded in so many ways of all the aspects of St. John's that I love and appreciate: the many parishioners who have stepped up into new responsibilities and have committed to managing some essential set of tasks or ministry or fellowship, your generosity in community and your collaborative gifts, your volunteerism and “can do” attitude about all manner of challenges and projects, your care for people you know and people you don’t, and your great kindness to me and to Tom and our family. These are the features of the good people and parish of St. John’s that I most deeply cherish.

The merged one St. John’s continues to step out in faith to contribute to God’s mission in the world, and the people of St. John’s continue to work collaboratively to meet the challenges that face all communities of faith and fellowship in our region today. Living a faith that is contagious is not easy, but the people of St. John’s are not all about the easy path, thanks be to God! From our fruitful relationships with St. Vincent’s School in Port au Prince, Hawkwing and the Cheyenne River Lakota Indian Reservation, the Cornerstone, EHIM, and Phelps Village, to our growing and hugely successful and awesome Relay for Life Team, our local food ministry (in Vernon and East Hartford), our Organic Garden, our monthly nursing home Eucharists in Vernon and East Hartford, our role as a Diocesan leader and partner in Environmental ministry and witness, our Joining Jesus team, our Bring Them A Meal Ministry, the continuing richness of our East of the River collaboration, the fact that 2013’s, 2016’s, and 2019’s confirmands are still active and engaged with the ministry and fellowship of St. John’s, that our Church School is small but mighty and staffed by willing, able and kind adults and young people who are awesome volunteers of our parish, are several of the many signs that the Holy Spirit is moving among and through us and doing exciting things in Vernon. I am so pleased by all the ways in which the good people of St. John’s are engaging in the mission of God in the world, outside the safety and security of our Sanctuary doors. This emerging pattern is both our joy and our continuing challenge in faith.

One of the biggest reasons our parish works is the excellence and dedication of the staff we have. Markus Centola is a truly gifted musician and we are so blessed to have him as our Director of Music. He has helped us widen our musical horizons and his professionalism, his playing of our instruments, and his leading of our choir add immeasurably to the beauty of our worship and the bonds that unite us. Markus is a delightful human with whom to work! Markus’ management of the Concert Series has been a great boon to the parish. We have so much for which to thank Markus! I especially cherish Markus’ flexibility, generous ways of being, and enormous competence in every pastoral and worship situation: Sundays, Festival and Holy Day celebrations, and all the funerals and weddings we do together.

Margaret Mullen is the parish’s indispensable woman. She is unwaveringly cheerful, capable and efficient. She gets mountains of work done in two days per week. She manages a million
little details with calm aplomb and enduring optimism and I could not do my job without her kind, generous, good humored and cheerful help and foresight. I also must remark upon Margaret’s incredible patience (especially with me)! Margaret is a rock and we are blessed by her dedication, kindness, practical commonsense, and steady reliability.

If Margaret is the right hand of the parish, Paul Brown and Bill Gutzmer are the sturdy arms and strong back of this place. Every year I am amazed at all they do!! Our buildings and grounds shine (really, I wish my home was as clean and dust free as my office!) Our grounds are always beautifully decorated for Christmas, and they handle all sorts of odd jobs with their customary cooperative, faithful and “it’s all in a day’s work” approach. Paul and Bill work SOOOOO hard for our parish! I never take their devotion, loyalty, industry, or their open and warm hearted ways for granted. Especially when things need urgent attention, they are always right there, calm, cool, and collected.

Markus, Margaret, Paul and Bill make all things possible by who they are: their skills, their character, their compassion, their collegiality, and their professionalism. It is a privilege to work with all four of these fine people and I cannot imagine being Rector without each of them working in their areas of expertise. They make weekdays fun and I appreciate and cherish our teamwork! And if all this sounds like what I wrote last year, it pretty much is. I cannot say enough about what a superlative and able staff we have!

The Vestry of St. John’s remains strong and fully engaged. We have had a wide ranging variety of significant, and sometimes challenging, conversations. After each discussion, we vote and then move on together as a body unified in seeking what is best for St. John’s Church as we live into our call to be the Body of Christ in this place and time. I thank Sr. Warden Alicia DiLeo for her steady and sensitive, wise and gracious leadership this year. Don Wills has been hugely helpful and ever available in his first year as Jr. Warden. I am deeply gratified that the dynamic duo of Alicia and Don are continuing in their leadership roles. Bill Francis has done a magnificent job managing our Facilities issues again this year. Nobody does Facilities like Bill!! I look forward to continuing our work together. Our trusty and steady Treasurer, Kevin Fenner, keeps his arms tightly around our finances, and he has done it in his characteristic competent, faithful, cheerful, and dedicated way. We owe Kevin a debt of gratitude for his hard work again this year. We have moved forward with strength after merging the financial records, responsibilities, and assets of two parishes and this is because Kevin handles so many absolutely essential details. Andy Halpryn, our Assistant Treasurer, has helped in so many ways this year, especially in managing our technology needs and challenges. (Andy and his family also generously manage the leadership and coordination of our Coffee Hour.) I am grateful to Alfreda Barber for her careful and thorough taking of minutes, and for continuing in this leadership position, and I thank each member of the Vestry for their prayerful presence and careful deliberation on behalf of our parish and community life.

Four departing Vestry members need special mention. Elaine Anderson has been a steady and refreshing stream of new ideas and perspectives. She has challenged us in so many
valuable ways to think bigger, always outside the safety of the "box." Her initiative and leadership of the A.C.C.E.S.S. project, along with Andy Halpryn, has been critical during this past year. Tom Sessions is one of the wisest and kindest men I have ever had the privilege to work with. Tom is rock solid and can be relied upon to always be looking for ways to expand our work in God's mission and our ministry near and far. Cheryl Abbott enjoyed Vestry so much that she signed up for a second term a year or two after her last term ended. Cheryl knows the people of our parish so well and has a unique knack for thinking about so many ideas and plans from other people's point of view. Paul Finney is leaving Vestry a year before the end of his term as his October Kitchen business continues to grow and expand, demanding evermore time and attention. And why not? Paul has served continuously first on the St. John's, East Hartford Vestry and now the ONE St. John's Vestry for more than 20 years. This is an extraordinary legacy of leadership and I cannot think of someone more deserving of a break than Paul.

I wish to thank Andy Halpryn and Erica Feenstra for their dedicated service in running our small church school. In 2019, with the kind volunteer help of Linda Hull, Kimmie Farrell, Bethany Chathavisouk, Elaine Anderson, Maria Evans, Amelia Halpryn, Clarissa Halpryn, Damien Wilson, Donny Wilson, Kiera Wilson, Victoria Minietti, Isabel Mund and Charlotte Mund, a cheerful and safe environment for our small ones to engage with God and each other was created and I am grateful every Sunday for all they give of their time and their hearts. I offer abundant thanks also to Diane Dalo for her leadership of and ministry with our Confirmation Class in 2019. Diane brings such great heart and energy to this ministry. Dwight Feenstra continues his extraordinary work with the children and youth of our parish who acolyte. Dwight is a man of infinite patience, great skill, and unique resourcefulness. I depend on him and all he manages to make our worship run smoothly.

I thank all our outside lawn, leaf, and tree men. What a capable and dedicated crew they are! Dave Smith, Carl Schaefer, Ron Cronisell, John Horan, Don Wills, and Doug Marshall have worked so hard. The men have managed grass, weeds, leaves, and falling branches on nasty, rainy days and on hot, humid ones. Their work is absolutely essential and we are grateful.

Thank you to our Altar Guild who make our sanctuary beautiful and our worship run smoothly. I think that most of us don't realize what the Altar Guild really does and how lost we would all be without their tireless quiet work, organization, and weekly efforts. In addition to managing all the Sunday worship, special services, and decorating at Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter, they help at weddings and funerals and think of every, single, little thing! Every priest and parish should be blessed by an Altar Guild like ours. You know who you are ladies and I love and appreciate you all! God is good indeed! I appreciate our esteem Co-Directresses Lois Valliere and Sue Douglass (who are rocks!) more than they will ever know!

Also behind the scenes is our Communications Coordinator, David Clarke. He handles the recording of Sunday worship, with the reliable help of Tom Sessions and recently John Palica. David makes all our flyers and manages our publicity efforts. David spends huge
amounts of time and energy maintaining and managing our website. It is a masterful, artful, giant piece of work that David has curated. This year David helped manage updates and changes to our sound system as well. I am deeply and humbly grateful for all David does, always with his wry humor and good cheer. David is my “go to” person for so many quirky details. I appreciate his skill, willingness, and competence more than he can know!

Thanks also to Brett Palmer and his gifted daughters, Olivia, Grace and Claire who offer the gift of music on Easter morning, Christmas Eve, and several Sundays throughout the year. Our Senior Choir is so very dedicated and I appreciate all their efforts and harmonies, week after week. Abundant thanks to Tom and Terri Sessions, our Outreach Chairs, who both keep us focused on what matters most. Enormous gratitude to our official “gasman” Carl Schaefer, and his friend John Martin, for all their skill in keeping the heat on! Special thanks to John Horan and Art Plante for all they do to keep our food ministries running smoothly and manage our relationship with Phelps Village, and thanks to all of you who continue to bring in food to be donated. Thanks also to our Kitchen Queen, Jackie Petrizzo, and Diane Gutzmer, Mary Wilson, Chris Emery, Carol Clayton, Marsha Francis, Carole Cronsell, and Carol Fenner for all their help again this year with funeral families and arrangements here at St. John’s. Letty does amazing work in leading our organic garden efforts. She has a veritable army of volunteers who all contribute to the fruitfulness of our vegetable and fruit beds. I greatly appreciate Skip Sutcliffe’s dedication to our Stewardship work and his leadership of our annual appeal, our ushers, and our counting teams. All these individuals’ work and vision is integral to our survival and success as a parish and I am grateful for all the ways in which they share their passion for our Lord and for St. John’s by their gifts of time and talent.

Mission, service and fellowship continue to be the underlying and intertwined themes of our endeavors and encounters. The list of mission and fellowship groups that meet within our parish is long and growing. The Brotherhood of St. Andrew, our food ministries, our work with the Veterans of Phelps House, the National Guard, the Cornerstone, the ECW, the Youth Group, the music program, the concert series and the Choir, the Knitting Fellowship, the Environmental Committee, the Book Club, the Caregivers Support Group, the Prayer Group, our Relay for Life Team, the Joining Jesus Team, the Senior Lunch Bunch, the church school teachers and children, and Confirmation Class, the new and very vibrant Women’s Spiritual Growth Group initiated and led by Kelli Peters, the Acolytes, the Counters, the Altar Guild, the Flower Ministers, Pastoral Visitors, Lectors and Lay Eucharistic Ministers, the Ushers, the Greeters, the Cooks for a Cause, the Outreach to our “away at college and in the service young adults”, the Facilities, Outreach, and Stewardship Commissions, all our gardeners and growers, seed planters, weeder, waterers, and harvesters, and the outward expression of our connection and bonds manifested by the Tree of Life and our Tree of Light, are all essential and integral parts of our community expression of faith. We are invited to deepen our living of our Baptismal Covenants as we respond to God’s call to seek and serve Christ in all persons. Our various service and fellowship groups help us to answer this call and they deepen and enrich our personal and communal experience of our faith.
journey. As I think of each one of you and these shepherding groups, I smile and I give thanks to God.

This year also saw the addition of a new ministry initiative. Maria Evans, R.N., got trained and certified as a Faith Community Nurse, aka, a Parish Nurse. She got started in her ministry just as I departed on Sabbatical. Ben Brockman found Maria’s help, common sense, wisdom, pastoral sensitivity, and health care knowledge to be indispensable. And I entirely agree with Ben. Maria only started in late May of 2019, and I already cannot imagine our parish or my job without her dependable and compassionate help, advice, and advocacy for our parishioners in healthcare settings. Maria’s work as a parish Nurse has been the most unexpected gift of this past year. God is good indeed!!

I baptized six children, conducted two weddings and handled eleven funerals this year. We had seven youth confirmed and three adults received in May in a regional service led by our friend Bishop Laura Ahrens. I also continue to consult for the ECCT with two parishes in transition. I am mentoring two people currently in the ordination process, and I am an elected member of the Cathedral Chapter. I also worked collaboratively with clergy in our region and our region’s Missionary, Maggie Breen, on a Lay Preaching Class this past fall. This initial class was a great joy to be a part of and we are offering another class after Easter. St. John’s gained two lay preachers from the class; Elaine Anderson and Paul Finney. It has been my goal to be pastorally available whenever needed, to facilitate and support your ministry ideas and fellowship initiatives, and to offer appropriate leadership in our common life as the Body of Christ gathered in this place. I always try to strike a balance between being fully engaged as a partner in ministry and mission, and encouraging you to try on and implement the ministry directions the Holy Spirit has inspired within you. Sometimes I am successful in this balance and sometimes I am probably not. You always have my full attention and devotion. I love living and working amongst you and I am grateful every day for the privilege of serving and glorifying God alongside you.

A highlight of 2019 for me was a restful and rejuvenating Sabbatical leave of three months. I read and read; history, fiction, and books on racism, justice, and racial reconciliation. I also knit every day, traveled to Canada, and spent lots of time with my children, granddaughter, sisters, Mother, and Mother and Father-in-law, and of course my beloved husband of 39 years, Tom. None of this would have been possible without your consent and support, and the incredibly capable leadership, wise professionalism, and whole hearted willingness of the Rev. Dr. Ben Brockman. There is no one I trust more to tend St. John’s when I am away. Ben is an exceptional human, priest, and pastor. We are truly blessed to have Ben and Linda in our midst. Thank you Ben!!

All communities have challenges and ours is no exception. We need to continue to strengthen our programming for Christian formation, for children, young people, and adults. We need to assiduously follow up with visitors and newcomers to St. John’s. Our Greeting and Hospitality ministry are absolutely critical to our future. We have been blessed to welcome several new members this year. And there is more that we could be doing together to welcome new
people and to encourage people to visit us. We are called to welcome and offer the hospitality of our Lord to all who enter our doors. Our ministry to the sick, elderly, homebound, and bereaved among us remains a priority. The Youth Group delivered a record number of gift bags to homebound members of the parish this Easter and Christmas and several of us continue to bring the Eucharist and worship to Fox Hill and Riverside nursing homes on a monthly basis.

We must continue to push ourselves to venture out into the world to see what God is doing and how we can participate more fully and perhaps in ways that are hard to imagine, at least at first glance. Engaging further with the greater Vernon area and the NE CT Regional Mission Group remains an important challenge. Another Stewardship season awaits us shortly and the financial realities of these days continue to press us forward towards sacrificial service and generous giving. Sustainability (environmentally, fiscally, and missionally) and the critical and challenging work of Evangelism and embracing all God’s people remain the primary challenges for St. John’s as they are for all parishes across our Diocese and New England. Our commitment to living a faith that is contagious is essential as we journey forward and deeper together in Christ’s love. We are each called to “come and see” and then to “go and tell” as we live the GOOD NEWS in our personal journeys of faith and in our communal life.

I look forward to the year of 2020, a year that marks the 165th year of St. John’s history as a worshipping community of the Episcopal Church. I am deeply pleased about the A.C.C.E.S.S. proposal/project. There are infinite new possibilities for our parish as we work with great intentionality to be a place of not only spiritual but also physical inclusion and welcome. This work will be central to making our beautiful sanctuary truly welcoming and actually accessible to ALL our distinguished elders and ALL who are other-abled. What a wonderful and exciting time to be a member of St. John’s; celebrating our past and looking forward with faith in our future!!

In all the changes and chances, in all the challenges and joys of our life together, I rely on the grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the movement of the Holy Spirit. God is good and continues to push, prod, pull and provoke us to be His hands and feet in this place and time, in new ways, and with open hearts. “Christ has no hands and feet but us.” I am convicted that God’s power and love working in us can do infinitely more than we can ever ask or imagine, and I thank God for all of you and for our ministry together. Thank you for witnessing to God’s love and redeeming power, for your prayerfulness, and for your kindness and generosity, especially to me and Tom personally, and to our family. With a full heart and with deep gratitude and love, I remain faithfully yours in service to Our Lord.

The Rev. Virginia W.G. Army, Rector, St. John’s, Vernon
Sr. Warden’s Annual Report 2019

When Virginia asked me in the summer of 2018 to assume the role of Senior Warden, I spent a good deal of time hemming and hawing about what my answer should be. I came up with solid reasons for saying yes AND no. Then I stopped and considered my previous six years on Vestry, and I thought – I could do much worse than spend one evening a month sitting at a table filled with dedicated, congenial people who answer the call time and time again to serve our Church in this particular way.

Our 2019 Vestry includes eight former Senior and Junior Wardens, a few who have served Vestry terms in the past, and some who are brand new to Vestry and thus bring a fresh perspective to the conversation. There is a wealth of experience and prudent consideration behind every decision we reach, and I rely very much on this group’s combined wisdom and counsel. I’m grateful to Kevin Fenner for his continued work as Treasurer. Bill Francis is indispensable as our Facilities Chair. Both positions take a great deal of time and they do those jobs with grace and expertise.

I’m also grateful for Elaine Anderson’s persistent nudging that NOW is the time for the Vestry and the parish to tackle the issues of how best to make our sanctuary and beautiful campus accessible to all persons, regardless of their physical abilities. God’s House exists for all who wish to enter. As a community of faith we have a moral obligation to provide physical access in a way that promotes the dignity, comfort, and safety of all who wish to worship alongside us.

When I realized my first year as Senior Warden would coincide with Virginia’s sabbatical summer, I was filled with dread. Then I learned Ben Brockman answered the call to serve during that time, and I took a calm, grateful breath. I knew all would be well. What could have been a summer of “just waiting for Virginia to get back” was instead a summer spent listening to man of deep intellect and insight, whose sermons both challenge and soothe. We ended the summer deeply enriched by his presence and pastoral care. For that he has my enduring gratitude.

The fellowship and insights of departing members Cheryl Abbott, Elaine Anderson, Paul Finney, and Tom Sessions will be missed. Thank you all for your service and good cheer throughout 2019.

2019 was a good year for St. John’s. We showed up, we did the work, we looked beyond our own walls and doors to see where we were needed. Most importantly we kept asking, “What could we do better?” Which leads us to 2020.....

In faith,

Alicia di Leo
Senior Warden
Relay for Life Annual Report 2019

6/9/19 - Well, our 9th year of Relay for Life is complete and I have St. John’s parish to thank. Over the years I have shared with you many of the inspiring stories of the folks we meet during the event. This year was a bit unique and therefore so must this report. One week before Relay began the event had only raised $89k of its $145k goal, but by Monday stretched towards it with $96k raised. We have an, unofficial, Saturday event total of $140k, with monies still coming in, I faithfully believe the events’ goal will be reached. In a world that seems to be gasping for hope, hope had a large ever present around us. Relay 2019 was a holy audible one in the following ways:

Squeaking of the many wagons wheels carried loads and loads of the equipment needed to make a successful event from hauling tents, lights, chairs, snacks as well as goods to share/sell, and items, like our new angel wing ornaments by Mary Wilson, crafted with love, care and prayers to be sold and raffled.

The sound of music that set the rhythm for the evening to come, the mood when it was time to remember, and delivered the stamina to carry us to the finish line.

Feet pounded the track whether walking, running, dancing or behind a wheelchair lap after lap.

Exclamations!! at the annual mug reveal- Thanks to Susi Byers mug donations every year folks flock to see the newest addition to their collection.

Laughter- on the track from re-acquainted souls of old or newly met now bonded from 21+ hours together in unity and even during the seemingly unending evening hours under our very own tent-(Mpop-pop).

Children gleefully playing- ball with family and friends in the center of the football field, enthusiastically in the bounce house or unabashedly rippin’ around the track.

Gasps from walkers as their beads, used to count their laps, had spilled to the ground.

Popcorn- popped along with the heavenly smell that brought in the customers. Thanks, once again, to the Brotherhood for loaning it to us.

Generators-hummed in the darkness to light our tent and/or the larger track.

Clicking of lighters- lighting each candle of every luminaria purchased in honor/memory of those we love and those we have lost to cancer that lined the entire oval of the track.

Tears- (the most audible of all our 9 years participating) heard from groups marching in step linked arm-in-arm, family members standing still and embracing, and solo warriors walking in quiet prayer during the solemn luminaria lap.

A dog making a most unusual bark that brought levity just after a glorious sunset.

Zumba music at midnight rockin’ us into the wee hours.

Cracking of glow-sticks to light the way during the night time laps.

A warm resounding 4am welcome to Gretchen complete with spotlight halo-a wonderful sight to see.

Birds whimsically chirping (believe it or not) at 3am to welcome in the dawn-that didn’t come for an hour.
Donkey braying who somehow slept in until 6am reminding us of a biblical connection to get up and finish the sometimes scary work God has set before us with a smile.

Car alarm waking anyone who thought they could get a few more minutes of shut eye.

Dripping of water off our tent roof, from the HEAVY dew that had blanketed us overnight, into some of our mugs- sold at no extra charge.

Tennis Balls bounced on the court adjacent to the track from the Saturday morning regulars setting the pace for a new day.

Ice coffee ice cubes rattled in the dunkin cups so needed as we broke down our tent/wares in the thankfully warm sun- we were blessed with beautiful weather the entire event.

And finally, applause of/for the few remaining Relay warriors as we learned the results of our efforts. St. John’s set a goal of raising $5,000 and have a current unofficial total $5,753 $5,894 currently over $6,000.

Thank you again for all your support this past year and for doing what St. John’s does best, show up. Thanks to my dear friend Relay Planner Partner-in-crime Alfreda Barber for selling and connecting with not only folks of the parish but with all those who visit our tent site- we wouldn’t be nearly as successful without you. Thank you to the Core Four (Barb Feldstein, Erica Feenstra, Diane Dalo and I) for being just about the best humans to hang out with at a Relay for Life Event - I wouldn’t want to spend an overnight, under a tent, wrapped in blankets, in the middle of a high school field with anyone else. Thanks to these lovely lap-takers: Tom and Terri Session, Kevin and Jake Fenner, Elisha and after work for two laps Rachel Feenstra, Lexi Fontaine, Hannah Army, The Stupcenski clan of Sheila, Marsha, Werner and Willy. Kelli and Steven Peters along with Ella and Addy, Deb Halpryn and first timers Maureen and Max Toth. And thanks to our two-timers, those who walked Friday and returned to walk again Saturday (early) morning - Kelli returned for a midnight shift, Margaret Mullen at 1am, and prior to 7am Gretchen Shea, Lois Valliere, and Maria Evans. Thanks to the Saturday crew Carole and Ron Croness and Dave Smith who came bearing gifts of dunkin- a New Englanders morning dream in a cup. And to Linda Boravka, Mazie, Roxie and Kimmie Farrell, Emily, Bentley, and Bethany Chanthavisouk - your clan bound in with the joy and energy needed to help complete a job well done. And well done it was. Some of our Relay notables: Carolyn Fenner fresh off the DL completed 16 miles. Fresh out of school Clarissa with 7.5 miles and Amelia 17 miles. Barbara Feldstein completed 12 miles, Erica Feenstra 17 miles and the 2019 #1 lap maker Diane Dalo with 20 miles.

We were all winners but St. John’s swept the goods. Not only did Kevin Fenner and Kimmie Farrell win some raffles at other booths at the event but DeLynn Mund donated a gorgeous multi-blue colored shawl won by MaryFran Sumple (Melissa’s mom), Linda Shorts won the Crabtree & Evelyn Basket And, Cheryl Abbotts stunning quilts were won by Carol Fenner, Diane Dalo and Letty Naigles. Congratulations!! not only to these winners, but to all of us for wielding hope in the darkest of times as examples to the world that we are doing the work of the Lord in our community, for the ones we love, and for the ones we don’t know who are relying on us to just show up and do what needs to be done, in Jesus name. Thank you St. John’s for continuing to show up and for your prayers and support.

Melissa Fenner, Alfreda Barber, Diane Dalo, Erica Feenstra.
The members of the Altar Guild in 2019 were: Linda Borovicka, Evelyn Clarke, Carol Clayton, Carole Cronsell, JoAnn D’Amato, Sue Douglass, Lisa Duszyk, Maria Evans, Marsha Francis, Susanne Kulikowski, Donna Lemay, Dorothy Morganson, Carol Nelson, Joanne Palica, Jackie Petrizzo, Gretchen Shea, Lois Valliere, Priscilla Wills, and Mary Wilson. Our newest members were installed and presented with their Altar Guild pins during services on September 8.

Thank you to all our Altar Guild members for all the time and effort they put in to make our church beautiful and our services run smoothly all year long. The commitment they make is for one to two weeks a month, in addition to covering special services as needed. We would also like to thank Diane Dale, Kimmie Farrell, Lois Valliere and Mary Wilson for providing bread for our Eucharist again this past year.

Our sincere thanks and appreciation to Paul Brown, Bill Gutzmer, and Ron Cronsell for their continued assistance and support of the Altar Guild this past year. We also want to thank the many people of Saint John’s who assist us on a weekly basis and provide encouragement and support. Your help at Easter and Christmas is especially appreciated!

We continue to realize considerable savings by purchasing smaller weekly flower arrangements from Michelle’s Florist, and by using refillable oil canisters for all of the candles.

Sadly, we lost our beloved Priscilla this year but we know she is safe and at peace in God’s arms. We will also miss Lisa Duszyk and JoAnn D’Amato as they have decided they must step down as an Altar Guild members for the foreseeable future. Our hope in the coming year is that we will recruit some new St. John’s members to join Altar Guild. Help is especially needed to cover the 10:00AM services.

Please let Virginia, Lois, or Sue know if this important and fulfilling ministry is something you would like to be part of.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lois Valliere and Sue Douglass
Annual Report from Director of Music 2019

Markus Centola

It has been a pleasure to serve as Director of Music at St. John’s this past year. It is always my goal to create a variety of inspirational music for worship, prayer, and meditation.

I would like to begin by thanking the choir for all their hard work and dedication week after week. This core group of dedicated singers provide the musical support that is a vital part of worship. The choir currently meets Sunday mornings at 9:00 a.m. for regular rehearsal. This rehearsal time has been scheduled to accommodate weekday work schedules as well as provide an open invitation to anyone who would like sing with the choir. The choir continues to go through ups and downs with a steady base of choir members. Therefore, we are in need of new members, especially women voices to balance out the voice sections. We welcome anyone that has an interest in singing to sit in on a rehearsal on Sunday morning.

The St. John’s Concert Series continues to gain great recognition throughout the community with many new attendees as well as a continued patronage of music lovers from the congregation. I appreciate everyone’s continued support for this ministry and continuing to invite friends and family to our concerts and creating fellowship around music. The St. John’s Concert Series hosted two concerts in 2019, which include: Music of the Americas performed in September 2019. This group presented a cultural background of story telling expressed through the folk music from Latin America and Mexico. The group was lead by Carlos Hernandez Chavez, a visual artist, educator, and musician on classical guitar and vocals together with Gonzalo Cortez, an accomplished classical flautist and virtuoso pan-flute player. The Jolly Beggars returned to St. John’s by popular demand and performed in November 2019, with their very lively and comical arrangements of traditional Celtic folk music and Irish folklore.

Once a month an open music Sunday is an opportunity for anyone in the congregation to come forward and share their musical gifts for worship. I would like to thank the Palmer family, Brett Palmer, Olivia Palmer, Grace Palmer, Claire Palmer, for their ability to jump in any time needed. They are always ready to bring it, with contemporary songs and stunning harmonies. I also would like to thank Kimmie Farrell for her musical leadership on flute and willingness to participate anytime there is a need. I also would like thank Sarah Clarke for her beautiful liturgical dance performance on Christmas Eve.

Additionally, a big thank you goes out to Virginia and Ben, and to our awesome staff: Margaret, Bill, and Paul and to all the parishioners for your continued support you have shown towards the music ministry. I am very thankful to be part of the family here at St. John’s and I look forward another year of music making.

Respectfully submitted, Markus Centola, Music Director
St. John’s, Vernon CT, Jan 2020
What is The Brotherhood of St. Andrew? The Brotherhood of St. Andrew (BSIA) is a ministry for the spread of Christ’s kingdom, especially among men and youth, in the Episcopal/Anglican Communion. Founded in 1883 in Chicago, it is the oldest missionary and evangelism ministry of the Episcopal Church. Brothers of St. Andrew vow to support each other in faith and follow the disciplines below in order to help men and youth everywhere find a personal relationship with our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ.

The three disciplines of The Brotherhood of St. Andrew:

The Discipline of Prayer is to pray daily for the spread of Christ’s kingdom, especially among men and youth, and for God’s blessings upon the labors of the Brotherhood. The Discipline of Study is to study the Holy Scriptures regularly and the teachings of the Church, to attain a better understanding of how to follow Christ and bring others into his kingdom. The Discipline of Service is to make continuous efforts, week by week, to bring others nearer to Christ.

Monthly meetings: The BSIA group meets the second Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Church undercroft and all are welcome. At St. John’s, the BSIA provides a comfortable setting in which to explore our faith as men. In addition to supporting each other in fellowship, Brothers pray for the joys and concerns of each other and our congregation, as well as the special needs of friends, family and our greater community. Faith and prayer are the cornerstones of our group and our most important contribution to the St. John’s community. And when help is needed by the congregation, you will very often find one or more of our Brothers there to lend a hand on a wide variety of service projects. We find it a privilege to serve such a wonderful congregation as St. John’s. We welcome all men of St. John’s to join us. Just ask one of our members about the Brotherhood or drop by one of our monthly meetings this year.

Some notable 2019 Brotherhood items:

- Fund raising by the Brotherhood is mainly through the annual Parish Steak and Chicken Dinner, which is a wonderful fellowship event for St. John’s each year. We thank our parishioners for the great support of that event. Our financial outreach support went to The Saint Vincent’s Center in Haiti ($500), Food Share ($200) Cornerstone ($200).
- Brothers also supported the residents of Phelps Village, which is located in Rockville and run by Chrysalis, a non-profit organization that assists veterans. The Brothers also provided five Walmart $50 gift cards to Veterans new to Phelps or new to Vernon who were recently homeless.
- Brothers are also active in numerous ministries at St. John’s including assisting with church buildings and grounds maintenance, the vegetable garden, managing the acolyte program, lay Eucharistic visits, ministering communion, helping with the Christmas Bazaar, lectionary reading, ushering at Sunday services, and leading Youth Fellowship events.
- Brothers volunteer in the larger community by participating in many charitable activities including the St John’s food pantry, the Special Olympics, Boy Scouts and the Cornerstone Soup Kitchen.

In addition to our group study of scripture at our monthly meetings, we read and discussed Dr Martin Luther King’s writing “Letter from A Birmingham Jail”. We also viewed and discussed videos on The Brotherhood, the Anglican Church history and the Episcopal Church.

St. John’s Chapter Membership as of December 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jim Hutton - Director</th>
<th>Steve Filipek</th>
<th>Art Plante</th>
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<td>Dave Smith</td>
<td>Richard Clark</td>
<td>Tom Valliere</td>
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<td>Paul Brown - Assistant Director</td>
<td>Ron Cronsell</td>
<td>Paul (PJ) Janovicz</td>
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<td>Bill Gutzmer - Treasurer</td>
<td>Al Dreher</td>
<td>Don Willis</td>
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<td>Dwight Feastera</td>
<td>Ray Carmichael</td>
<td>Russ McClelland</td>
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<td>Ben Brockman</td>
<td>John Horan - Secretary</td>
<td>Jim Morrow (Storrs)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Virginia Army (Advisor)</td>
<td>Bill Byers</td>
<td>Tom Sessions</td>
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Greetings All:

I am making the first Annual Report for St. John’s Health Ministry, which initially began with a quite direct question to Rev. Virginia ,” What would you say if I said “Parish Nurse” and she replied “awesome, do it”.

I had personally been interested in this type of nursing since I had become disabled and searched for a way to utilize my nursing experiences locally in a church community. Parish Nursing has become my way and my ministry. It wasn’t until I started discovering a spiritual home at St. John’s, that it came to mind that I could serve this congregation. After 3+ months of online course work, I became certified in “Faith Community Nursing” or Parish Nursing. Virginia and I had a discussion and we both agreed those most in need were the homebound of the congregation. The plan was for me to visit each of our homebound members over the summer and I wanted to attend the Lunch Bunch monthly to perform blood pressure and glucose monitoring. Wow, what a bite I took! I thought 10-12 hours a week.

At that point, Virginia was leaving for Sabbatical and so the Health Ministry (of 1) began with Rev. Ben and it was quite a busy time of tending to members who were ill, those that passed and their families, sometimes opening pandora’s boxes when I met with a homebound member and those that had various other acute concerns. Ben and I made quite a team, trying to spread the wealth. We started and now continue a rule of confidentiality and insisting on communication between myself and Ben and now Virginia as members allow. Some I knew, some he knew, but most agreed to both spiritual and health care participation and all received what we could offer. But, despite all we had done, many saved up their issues for Virginia and she was bashed even before her Sabbatical had ended and upon return. I was quite surprised about how much Ben and I had done and Virginia did this and much more full-time! This parish has a minister that lives amongst us and I for one am incredibly grateful for any and all of her ministering and inspiration.

Being the only member of the Health Ministry at that point, I became quite busy. Until a recent personal break, I spend about 16-18+ hours per week on ministry work . I reached out for help and am delighted to have a generous group of members who are Safe Church trained, training in confidentiality, being mandated reporters and always remembering they are the hand of St. John’s reaching out to the sick and vulnerable in our parish. Going forward as the Visitors begin, I will be more available to members I have not been able to reach out to and/or who need medical attention. I hope this will provide a Ministry that does or does not have to have a nurse to visit, to listen, to provide comfort and fellowship to carry on. That was my goal and I hope it takes off.

I would like to thank Virginia, the Vestry, ECW, the Brotherhood of St. Andrews, Linda Borovicka (Flower Ministry), Diane Gutzmer (Greeting Card Ministry), Mary Wilson (Prayer Ministry), Lois Valliere (Knitting Fellowship and Altar Guild), and of course, the new members of the Health Ministry for supporting me and working with me to provide comfort and care to those in need in this congregation. I hope going forward to provide opportunities for continued outreach within our Faith Community and the surrounding communities.

Presented respectfully,
The St. John’s Health Ministry

Maria Evans RN, FCN, Terri Sessions, Gretchen Shea, Elaine Anderson, Art Plante, Sue Howell, Susanne Kulakowski, Steve Filipek, Chris Emery, and Kelly Schmitt
Parishioners’ Fund 2019

The purpose of this fund is to help those of St. John’s who find themselves in financial hardship. Pay back to this fund is optional. The fund is maintained by gifts. There were 2 gifts given out this year, for a total of $2,564.52. A balance of $1624.39 remains.

Respectfully submitted, Diane Gutzmer

Senior Luncheon/Lunch Bunch 2019

The Senior Luncheon is now the Lunch Bunch, and anyone can join. The lunch is served the first Tuesday of each month, weather permitting. All young and old are always welcome. This is a potluck lunch – if you are unable to bring anything, that’s ok. A special thank you to Al Dreher, Dorothy Morganson and Chris Emery.

Respectfully submitted, Diane Gutzmer

Homebound 2019

During the year 2019, we have had an average of 28 homebound. A card from the parish is sent every other month plus a Christmas card. Gift baskets are made for Christmas and Easter and given out by our Youth Group and Virginia.

Respectfully submitted, Diane Gutzmer
St. John's Flower Ministry
Annual Report 2019

The flower ministry is a group of faithful parishioners who deliver the two vases of altar flowers after the 10 a.m. service to members of St. John's who are either homebound, in the hospital, or struggling with illness or other situation. We deliver flowers every week, with the exception of Palm Sunday, Easter Sunday, the Sunday before and the Sunday after Christmas, as well as Christmas Day, and New Year's Day. The flower ministry is a small commitment of no more than four to five times per year and the smiles these flowers bring are the reward for the few extra minutes it takes to deliver them. This is not a visiting commitment, as there is another group of people who visit, and the flowers are usually dropped off on the way home from church; however, if necessary, they can be delivered later in the day or on Monday.

The schedule is made at the beginning of the year with every effort made to accommodate special requests such as being scheduled on the same day as a member has altar guild, or avoiding vacation dates. I send a reminder at the end of each week to the scheduled members to give the recipient's name, address, and phone number, and on Sunday morning, I give the scheduled member a printed postcard with that information. The scheduled members are also listed in the Sunday bulletin each week. There is no concern about unexpected changes in members' personal schedules. I request that if a member is unable to deliver on a scheduled Sunday that he/she send out an email asking for a substitute. We have a very cooperative team who willingly switch when necessary.

The following people have graciously given their time this year for the flower ministry. Mary Chesley, Elaine & Dick Clark, Pat Cleveland, Linda Collier, Lisa Duszyk, Betty & Don Ellwood, Chris Emery, Shirley Finney, Sharon & Paul Janovicz, Skylar Marshall, Sue Morehouse, Jackie Petrizzo, Gretchen Shea, and Maureen Toth.

I currently have four new members joining us for 2020 – Elaine Anderson, Alexis Averett, Bethany Chanthavisouk, and Carol Clayton. Thank you very much for joining our group; I look forward to working with you. I am sorry to say that Lisa Duszyk has decided she must step down for 2020; however, she has agreed to fill in for one Sunday. We will miss her.

This was my first year as the lead for the flower ministry. I am very grateful for the willingness, cooperation, and dedication of this group. You are all what makes this work so well.

This ministry can always use more people. As is said, "Many hands make light work." The more members we have, the fewer times each member delivers. Should you have any interest in joining this rewarding ministry, I would welcome you with open arms. Please contact me at lborovicka@comcast.net, 860-878-0358-cell, or 860-871-7270-home.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Borovicka
Flower Ministry Chairperson
Tree of Light
Annual Report 2019

The Tree of Light celebrated its 5th annual event in 2019. It continues to grow each year financially and in popularity, not only within St. John's, but with our friends outside of St. John's. In our first year, we proudly raised approximately $300. By our third year, we surpassed $500. In the past two years, we have raised over $700 with a grand total in 2019 of $736.

The money collected is donated to a worthy cause each year. This year, we chose the World Central Kitchen (WCK.org). WCK is a not-for-profit non-governmental organization devoted to providing meals in the wake of natural disasters. Founded in 2010 by celebrity chef José Andrés, the organization prepared food in Haiti following its devastating earthquake. Its method of operations is to be a first responder and then to collaborate and galvanize solutions with local chefs to solve the problem of hunger, immediately following a disaster.

Here is a sample of their work:
- **Puerto Rico**: 3.7 million meals after Hurricane Maria
- **Guatemala**: 500,000 meals after the Fuego Volcano eruption
- **North Carolina**: 300,000 meals after Hurricane Florence
- **Indonesia**: 550,000 meals after the earthquake and tsunamis
- **California**: 400,000 meals after multiple wildfires
- **Tijuana**: 250,000 meals to refugees from Central America
- **Washington, DC**: 100,000 meals for Federal employees during the government shutdown
- **Colombia**: 670,000 and counting meals for Venezuelan refugees
- **Haiti**: Over 13,000 meals to those affected by recent unrest
- **Nebraska and South Dakota**: 22,000 meals after severe flooding
- **Mozambique**: More than 350,000 meals after Cyclone Idai

We sell lights for $2 each, 3 for $5, or 6 for $10. In 2019 we had 358 tags on the tree in Memory of, In Honor of, or Special Wishes for. In December we gather for the lighting of the tree with a prayer; dinner of soup, bread, and dessert; and an evening of caroling. This year we added a couple fun holiday trivia games. It was truly enjoyed by all.

The lights will remain on the tree until Epiphany (1/6). After that date, if anyone wishes to take the tags as a memento, please let us know, and we will save them for you.

The Tree of Light is proof of “every little bit counts,” and how far $2 will go to help others in need.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Borovicka & The Compound
Kimmie & Dave Farrell and Bethany & Sid Chanthavisouk
Tree of Light Organizers
Annual report of the Communications Ministry
St. John’s Church, Vernon, CT — 2019

St. John’s has continued to communicate our activities and the Good News during 2019.

This year, I became the St John’s liaison to the Diocese of Connecticut ’s Northeast Region. Our Regional Manager, Maggie Breen, sponsored one get-together where we met with other churches in the region. Another meeting was specifically centred on web page design. Several suggestions were made for our site, which I have implemented. For instance, if you had ever noticed the secondary menu above the headed photo collage, you will find it is missing. It has been incorporated into the main menu below the header photo. Having said that, now would be a good time to remind everyone that the St John’s webpage is frequently updated. One should especially pay attention to the top of left-hand column on the Welcome page. It often shows upcoming special events or the change in service times. One should be aware, however, that due to the way browsers cache web pages, it is often necessary to click on the refresh ‘button’. or 

in order to see the latest page information.

The recording of Sunday services has been continued this year. The complete service is recorded and then edited down to a manageable size, usually consisting of the Gospel, the sermon, and the anthem. This is then uploaded to our web page and to our PodBean “feed”. Tom Sessions has continued to fill in on those occasions when I was unable to do the recording myself. This year, John Palica has signed on as an alternate. I can’t thank these two enough.

I continued to advertise St. John’s to our local community in the Hartford Courant and Journal Inquirer, online journals like the Vernon Patch, and the Community Voice Channel public access TV channel. Posters have also been created for our events and posted on our FaceBook page.

It was a great relief to me when Andy Halpryn took over the email task last year and converted us all to a Google Group server system. However, the appearance of “spam” emails supposedly coming from Virginia has forced us to take a second look at the use of gmail accounts. You should expect to see changes in the coming year.

St. John’s webpage: http://stjohnsvernonct.org
St. John’s PodBean feed: https://stjohnsvernonct.podbean.com/
St. John’s YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCGq7_XVev88Wk53KJe77_Mw

Respectfully submitted

David L. Clarke

David L. Clarke, Communications Coordinator
Annual Report of the Environmental Ministry, St. John’s Church, Vernon, 2019

We continue to experience diverse interactions with our world through the earth, learning, and fellowship:

We continue to promote recycling, buying sustainable products, and conservation opportunities at church and in the community: this year, we especially encouraged interaction with our legislature on a number of ‘creation-care’ related bills—and some of them passed!

We donated $100 to onetreepotted.org, which plants trees after wildfires so as to prevent erosion of the soil.

We held highly successful collections for Hawkwing, for distribution to our Lakota brothers and sisters: we were able to send them clothing and other goods worth upwards of 2300, and close to $1000 was donated for food! Rochelle Ripley at Hawkwing has shared that we at SJV always ‘give the best of the best’, and ‘really know what Hawkwing needs’!

We held two Clean and Green Sundays, in April and September, when we appreciated home-made goodies, organic fruit, and organic, shade-grown, fair-trade coffee.

  • In April, we co-hosted a Plastics Forum with the Inter-Religious Eco-Justice Network (40+ attended), with a film showing of ‘A Plastic Ocean’, plus sobering yet inspirational speakers from the Connecticut Rivers Conservancy, the Connecticut League of Conservation Voters, and Virginia.

  • In September, we hosted the ‘Paris to Pittsburgh’ film (24 attended), and then shared our thoughts and plans for moving ahead with folks from St. Peter’s Cheshire and Unitarian-Universalist, Manchester.

We now have an Environmental Bulletin Board in the Lower Parish Hall! We try to keep it up-to-date with helpful and inspirational information about caring for God’s Creation, so please check it out.

We had another amazing year with our community organic vegetable garden, growing upwards of 600+lbs (we finally fenced out the marauding woodchuck)! We had excellent yields from our new raspberry patch, as well as our greens, eggplant, and carrots! As usual, we donated our produce to the folks at Cornerstone.

Head gardeners: Letty Naigles and Sarah Gerrity
Stalwart fence builder: Jim Hutton
Generous donors of seeds, seedlings, and supplies: Sue Morehouse, Hart Seeds
Timely mulch and compost delivery: Bill Byers, Sarah Gerrity
Always reliable waterers: Kelli Peters, Virginia Army, John & Marcia Horan, Lois Valliere, Elaine Anderson, Marsha Francis
Dedicated harvesters: Debbie & Clarissa Halpryn; Sue Morehouse; DiLeo-Palmer Family
Count-on-us deliverers to Cornerstone: Sue Morehouse, Sue Douglass, Maria Evans, Letty Naigles, Carol Fenner, DiLeo/Palmer family, Susanne Kulikowski, John & Marcia Horan, Dave Smith, Shirley Finney, Linda Collier, Virginia Army, Pat & Grover Cleveland, Lisa Duszyk

Our butterfly garden is also growing beautifully—and sometimes weedily—so we held two work days to take care of the weeds and put down some mulch. Expert weeders included Marsha Francis, Tom Sessions, Skylar Marshall, Alicia Dileo, Ben Brockman, and Bill Gutzmer!

Thanks to all for your support!
Respectfully submitted,
Letty Naigles

Members: Elaine & Dick Clark, Bob Dickinson, Terri & Tom Sessions, Gretchen Shea, Dee Ayodejiadeyinka, Skylar Marshall, Lauren Horowitz
Facilities Report

2019 has been a good year for facilities with no major unbudgeted repairs. In addition to normal "wear and tear" type maintenance issues we made some improvements to our campus this year highlighted by the purchase of a new zero-turn mower. The new mower saves time that our volunteers spend on our lawns and is safer to operate on our hills.

We are blessed to have such a dedicated sexton staff in Paul Brown and Bill Gutzmer who do much to keep St. John's in good repair. We thank our volunteers including Dave Smith, Don Wills, Carl Schaefer, Ron Cronsell and John Horan who spend countless hours keeping our campus beautiful on a hilltop we all can be proud of. Their efforts saves St. John's at least $175 weekly during lawn care months.

A special thank you to Carl Schaefer. Carl does much behind the scenes to see that our furnaces, boilers and air conditioner units remain in good repair. We rely on his expertise, talent and experience which saves us untold time, inconvenience, and repair costs. Thank you so much Carl for all you do.

Respectfully Submitted

Bill Francis
Facilities
Greeters Annual Report

The greeting ministry is chugging along, and we have seen a few new people from time to time. This is an important ministry. We have a vibrant, involved church community. It would certainly be appealing to those who want to help the world. All we need to do is hook them in.

We are really suffering from a lack of greeters for the 8 a.m. service. Somehow we end up with a schedule of 3, and that is asking a lot. If anyone in the 8 a.m. service can find it in their hearts to greet, please let myself or Virginia know. A smile costs nothing but gives much.

Holly Filipek

COOKS FOR A CAUSE

Cooks for a Cause Ministry at St. John’s was started by Maggie and Vance Mortensen. After some financial difficulties this year they are up flourishing. We have dedicated teams that take one Sunday a month out of their busy schedule to give back to their community by cooking brunch for the soup kitchen. There is a family that comes in every Sunday to serve because they also want to teach their children to give back to the community. We serve between 50 to 70 meals, depending on the need. We have had some new faces added to our volunteers in 2019: Marc Toth, Art Plante, Sue Howell, Susanne Kulikowski, Dee Adeyinka, Alison and Paul Finney, Ray Bienkowski, Tom Sessions, Carol Clayton, Ron and Carole Cronsell.

The Environmental Ministry at St. John’s has a garden in the summer and donates the produce to the soup kitchen.

There are many challenges, to feed and clothe the homeless, but the rewards are numerous. You may feel that you are too busy to give up a Sunday morning once a month, but what a great feeling when you leave and see how grateful these people are for your help and the love you show them by giving up a few hours of your time. Many thanks to all who help to make this ministry a success.

Respectfully Submitted, Carole Cronsell
This year started with the Epiphany celebration. The New Year 2019 calendar was presented.

January, the ECW sponsored a hat and mittens collection as well as Undies Sunday. As in the past, both events were successful.

It was agreed that there are too many ECW meetings throughout the year. A vote was taken and approved that the ECW would change to the following schedule. There will be one monthly meeting in September, October and November to determine any outreach programs and organize the yearly bazaar. In January our yearly Epiphany party would take place and two other meetings, one in May and the last in June. It was also voted and approved to move the meeting date from Tuesday evenings to Sunday after the 10 a.m. service.

Rev. Margaret at the Cheyenne River Lakota Reservation in North Dakota (one of the ECW Outreach Programs) was mailed a $500.00 check.

April: while looking over the ECW By-Law I noticed the current by-laws were written and approved in 2011. At the Steering Committee meeting it was agreed the By-Laws should be updated. Virginia Army agreed to start this process.

In May Virginia presented the By-Laws to the Steering Committee who voted on and approved them as written. During the following Vestry meeting, these changes were approved as submitted. All ECW members who attended the May meeting were given a copy of the new by-laws to review and were asked to make any changes they felt necessary. A vote will be taken at the January 2020 meeting to approve the new By-Laws.

August: Again this year school supplies for 200 children (approximately $250) were assembled with the assistance of several church members under the amazing organizational skills of Paul Finney. This year we included 50 bags to high school students who have different supply needs from the younger children. While much laughing and bantering that went on, all bags were filled, checked and sealed in record time. Thanks Pat and Grover Cleveland for delivering all these bags to the schools.

The Vernon/Rockville public school system presented Carol Fenner and Pat Cleveland a certificate of thanks for St. John’s Episcopal Church continued yearly contribution of school supplies. The framed document proudly hangs in the lower parish hall for all to see.

September the ECW agreed to donate $1500.00 to help pay for the new riding lawn mower. In addition, it was agreed the old Boy Scout shed be donated, repaired and given to the Girl Scout troop. ECW helped pay for these repairs and the shed was renamed: THE SHE SHED! A sign with the new name will be purchased for this purpose. Nancy Simon agreed to head this committee.

The new ECW officers were introduced. Carol Fenner remained President, Linda Collier Vice President and Cheryl Abbott Secretary. After Cheryl attended a few meeting, she respectfully resigned as Secretary of ECW due to several conflicts in her schedule. Ruth Hoffman agreed to step in as Secretary.

During the October meeting, the ECW agreed to send the Cheyenne River Lakota Reservation their bi-yearly check for $500.00.
November brought continued discussion of the bazaar with the committee chair women. It was agreed that cookie night be moved to Thursday. It was reported that when cookies were baked on Tuesday, some of them were not as fresh as they should be. Thank you to all who participated in the yearly event.

Nut night was a huge success this year. Approximately 50 people gathered in the lower parish hall for this fun filled evening. A light dinner was served prior.

December 7th brought about St. John’s annual bazaar. The Lower Parish Hall was decorated by Nancy and Jim Simon and Ruth Hoffman, with beautiful large ornaments, tinsel and candy canes. Each of the 25 tables was set with red table cloths, the windows were decorated with snow flakes and the Christmas tree was set up and decorated beautifully.

Saturday morning was bright and sunny but extremely cold. Our volunteers for the Bazaar arrived early, had coffee and donuts, manned their stations and set to work. Hundreds of people attended and each person was greeted by Pat Gaskell who gave anyone who wanted a thank you note from St. John’s with a small candy cane attached.

Santa arrived shortly after the doors opened and children’s pictures were taken with Santa, by Santa’s helper Hannah. To date St. John’s Bazaar has a gross profit of $7,150. After expenses, the Bazaar has netted $6,070. Please note that all expenses may not be included in this amount and during the calendar year we continue to receive bazaar money from various other sources.

As in past years, the ECW gave seven Vernon/Rockville school nurses $25.00 each in early January to be used to purchase necessary items that are needed throughout the school year. (This year the 14 East Hartford school nurses will also receive $25.00 gift cards). ECW donated to 21 school nurses at a total of $525.00 to these deserving school nurses.

On a personal note, I would not have been able to accomplish any of this without the help of Paul Brown and Bill Gutzmer. No matter what I asked them to do, they did it without complaint, a smile on their faces and always a yes. Much thanks to both of you.

Without each and every one of our ECW members, St. John’s would not have been able to accomplish these Outreach programs in 2018.

On a personal note, I would like to thank everyone who helped throughout the year: all 50+ people who worked at the Bazaar and those members who attend the monthly meetings. These meetings are where ideas are suggested, voted on, approved, started and accomplished. Thank you to all who participate.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carolyn Fenner

President, ECW
Stewardship Commission 2020 Annual Report

On February 10, 2019 we had another very successful, well attended Stewardship Dinner which kicked off the pledge ingathering. Our speaker for the evening, Bishop Laura Ahrens, asked us to reflect on what we are grateful to God for - what we are thankful for. She suggested that if Jesus were speaking to us that night, he would emphasize the way that we live so fully into our faith and ministries.

At St. John’s we do that today in many ways—such as by supporting active evangelism and outreach ministries through our stewardship of time, talent and treasure. With our generous giving, we make it possible to maintain active and vital faith spaces like St. John’s. Following up on the 2019 stewardship program, our 2020 program will again begin with a parish dinner in the setting of a faith-filled evening reflecting on the need to support God’s church, with another thoughtful and inspirational message to reflect upon.

I would like to thank all of the faithful parishioners who generously volunteered their time to make invitation and follow up calls, and everyone who pledged their time, talent and treasure. The body of Christ is truly alive and well at St John’s.

Yours in Christ,

Skip Sutcliffe

Counters Group 2020 Annual Report

St. Johns has four faithful groups of weekly counters, led by three head counters. We tally the weekly offering, report to the Treasurer, and make the bank deposit. In 2020 we are thankful to have added another new team of counters to our ministry as well. While this is a routine set of tasks, we are grateful to be able to offer this service to the community of Christ.

Ushers Guild 2020 Annual Report

We currently have eight teams of ushers – three for the 8 o’clock service, and five for the 10 o’clock service. In 2019 we assisted in the Sunday services to ensure that the service bulletins were handed out at each service, the collections were handled, and the elements were brought to the altar. We are grateful to be able to assist in the worship service, and in 2020 we hope to further add to our ranks for both services.

Yours in Christ,

Skip Sutcliffe
**Kitchen Report 2019**

This past year, there has been a change in who oversees the general function of the Parish Hall Kitchen. The reins have been turned over to Jaclyn Petrizzo.

As always, the Kitchen is open to all church members for their use. We do request those that use it clean up after themselves and leave no food items or food containers in the refrigerator or on the counters unless marked for someone to pick up. If you want to donate an item to the kitchen, please call Jackie before doing so. If there are any supply needs or problems, please let Jackie know.

Respectfully submitted, Jaclyn Petrizzo

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**Girl Scouts 2019 Annual Report**

Girl Scout Troop 10730 continued to meet at St. John’s. The troop has been meeting here since 2010, when the majority of the girls started kindergarten. (They are now freshmen in high school.) The girls earned their Silver Award, the top award for middle school Girl Scouts, working on bat houses and teen mental health projects. The girls provided service to the church by making the candy bags for Cornerstone at Easter and Christmas. They also helped with the fall clean-up of the grounds.

The Girl Scouts of Vernon/Rockville found a home for their shared equipment in the shed behind the parish hall. The shed, which was previously used by the Boy Scouts, was refurbished for their use as an Eagle project for Drew DePalma of Troop 86 in Vernon. (Thank you, Drew!) The Girl Scouts also used the parish hall for the town-wide award ceremony when the Troop 10730 girls got their Silver Awards and one girl in town, Emily Linton, received her Gold Award, the highest award in Girl Scouting.

The Girl Scouts, especially Troop 10730, would like to thank St. John’s for their continued support.

Debbie Halpryn
St. John’s Book Group - 2019 Annual Report

St. John’s Book Group are very happy to welcome some new members for 2019. We had a very busy and productive year reading a wide variety of books. Our reading list included:

*The Hate U Give*, by Angie Thomas  
*Them*, by Senator Ben Sasse  
*Varina*, by Charles Frazier  
*After the Sun Does Shine*, by Anthony Ray Hinton & Lara Love Hardin  
*Where the Crawdads Sing*, by Delia Owens  
*Before We Were Yours*, by Lisa Wingate  
*A Gentleman in Moscow*, by Amor Towles  
*Katherine*, by Anya Seton  
*Bear Town*, by Fredrik Backman  
*Devil in the White City*, by Eric Larson  
*The Art Forger*, by B. A. Shapiro

Our group meets monthly. Everyone is welcome to join us in choosing books and to join us for our 3-times-a-year pot luck dinner!

Respectfully submitted, Virginia Army

St. John's Tree of Life - 2019 Annual Report

The St. John’s Tree of Life was dedicated by the Rev. Virginia Army on September 9, 2012. Since then it has blossomed and flourished! The Tree was conceived and donated as a sort of visual memory book for the family and friends of St. John’s Parish, providing the opportunity for us to mark important celebrations or life milestones.

The Tree of Life provides a tangible way to remember and celebrate such events as the birth of a child or grandchild, milestone birthdays, baptisms, confirmations, graduations, engagements, weddings, anniversaries, particular thanksgivings, the passing of a loved one, and many other special life events.

The tree has generated over $23,000.00 which is being used to help fund our Parishioners’ Outreach Fund, our Capital Reserve Fund and our General Budget expenses. Funds from the tree were recently used to replace the carpet in the Upper and Lower Narthex.

Please feel free to contact Mary Wilson or pick up a pamphlet in the upper Narthex if you have any questions.

Respectfully submitted, Virginia Army
Knitting Group Annual Report 2019

We are a dedicated group of knitters, crocheters, beaders, quilters; or more simply put, craftswomen, who meet almost every week to create and talk together. We help each other with projects and share our stories and journeys. This year we changed our meeting time from Monday nights to Wednesday mornings at 10:30. This has vastly improved participation.

The women of the group create fun and useful items for our families, friends, the Relay for Life, the Christmas Bazaar, the Cheyenne River Lakota Indian Reservation, baptismal candidates (baby blankets), parishioners who are sick (prayer shawls), and confirmands (prayer shawls). We celebrate each completed project and love making things to give away to people who will love to use them.

We always welcome new members/crafty people! So please feel free to join in our creative fun!

Respectfully submitted,
Lois Valliere

Home Away from Home Ministry Annual Report 2019

Going away to college or into the military is an exciting time for high school graduates but at the same time, it can be a little lonely at times. 2015 was the kick-off of the Home Away from Home Ministry. Several members of our parish make a care package once a semester for each of the college students or young military personnel from our parish who are living away from home. We rotate the assignments so that the same person doesn’t get the same student each time.

Joining me in this ministry are the following parishioners:

Linda Borovicka  
Joanne Pallica  
Letty Naigles  
Ed Petrizzo  
Hannah Army  
Lois Valliere  
Diane Gutzmer  
Sue Douglass  
Marsha Francis  
Betsy Sartori  
Terri Sessions  
Paul Janovicz  
Diane Dalo

We have received some very positive feedback from the students who enjoy getting a package and being reminded that their St. John’s family is thinking of them.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jaclyn Petrizzo, Home Away from Home Ministry Chairperson
Church School 2019

Children from toddlers through elementary school students are welcome to join us in the upper parish hall at 10AM on Sundays. Through discussion, activities, and crafts, students become familiar with Jesus’ acts as recounted in the Gospels and are guided to a deeper understanding of Jesus’ teachings. They learn the Gospel stories that recount the events of Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost. This year has seen an increase in attendance over last year. We have started to include the pre-school in our worship service.

Erica Feenstra and Andrew Halpryn share responsibility for the program. The church school and nursery are made possible by the parishioners who kindly volunteer their time on Sundays: Kimmie Farrell, Bethany Chanthavisouk, Elaine Anderson, Linda Hull, Amelia and Clarissa Halpryn, Victoria Minietti, Donnie, Damien and Kiera Wilson, and Isabel and Charlotte Mund, Respectfully submitted,

Andrew Halpryn

Vestry Member and Church School Volunteer

MEMORIAL GARDEN REPORT 2019

There have been no changes this past year however I had much help maintaining the garden with the addition of Walt Kustwan and Doug Marshall pitching in. The large maple tree strategical located next to the alter has a rot problem. Bill Francis had an Arborist assess its condition and said it was dying and could not be saved. We will monitor its condition and in a few years have it removed. This spring I plan to plant more shrubs on the west side to screen us from the neighbors.

Don Wills, Memorial Garden
Faith in Action Report 2019

This year I find it almost overwhelming to report a summary of the ways St. John's has reached out in generosity to help others there are so many.

Sources for our contributions include: income from The Nancy Braender Endowment, contributions to the Relay for Life, activities of the ECW and the Brotherhood of St. Andrews, money raised by the Environmental committee, produce from the organic garden, individual donations for our holiday outreach, the Tree of Light, donations of knitted and sewn goods, and other clothing items, the Rector's discretionary fund, and the many other ways individuals have contributed their goods and labor.

These contributions have gone locally to The Cornerstone Foundation, Phelps House housing for veterans, KidSafe CT, East Hartford Interfaith Ministries, Tri-Town Fuel Bank, and to local schools. Statewide and nationally contributions have been made to the Episcopal Church CT, Camp Washington, Hartford Area Habitat for Humanity, Hartford Interval House, Cheyenne River Lakota through Hawkwing, the American Cancer Society, IRIS refugee and immigrant services, and IREJN Earthkeepers. Internationally donations have gone to Episcopal Relief and Development, World Central Kitchen, St. Vincent's Center for Handicapped Children in Haiti, and to help with the education of a seminarian from Haiti.

More details of these activities can be found in the reports of the various organizations and the treasurer's report.

It truly is more blessed to give than receive. Let us continue our generosity in 2020.

Tom Sessions
Acolyte Guild Report 2019

The Acolyte Guild is a ministry of service to the clergy as well as the congregation. Our acolytes are required to perform many duties before, during and after the 10:00 A.M. services in addition to the many holiday services.

The commitment of this responsible group of young people is an asset to St. John’s parish. Their ability to work together and handle any added unexpected duty shows a level of maturity needed for the service at God’s Altar.

I would like to recognize Grace Palmer for the many years of service.

We welcome Emily Chanthavesouk into our Acolyte Guild this past year and we are happy to have her with us.

There are currently 11 acolytes:

Claire Palmer, Amelia Halpryn, Clarissa Halpryn, Victoria Minietti, Alex Minietti, Isabel Mund, Charlotte Mund, Damien Wilson, Donny Wilson, Kiara Wilson, Emily Chantovick

The Acolyte Guild is one way to nurture the spiritual growth of young Christians. Any child in fifth grade or above is encouraged to join this important ministry.

Respectfully submitted,
Dwight Feenstra
Verger
ST. JOHN’S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

VESTRY NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

Nominations Slate for 2020:
   Senior Warden – Alicia DeLeo (just completed 1st year)
   Junior Warden – Don Wills (just completed 1st year)
   Treasurer - Kevin Fenner
   Assistant Treasurer - Andrew Halpryn
   Clerk – Alfreda Barber

Class of 2023 Nominated:
   Sharon Janovicz
   Jim Simon
   Betsy Sartori

Vestry member nomination for the Class of 2021:
   Shirley Finney – 1-year term ending 2021

Remaining Vestry:
   Linda Collier – 1-year term ending 2021
   Bethany Chanthavisouk – 1-year term ending 2021
   William Francis – 3-year term ending 2022
   Gretchen Shea – 3-year term ending 2022
   Steven Filipek – 3-year term ending 2022

Representative appointments to the Episcopal Diocese Annual Convention for 2020 and 2021 are:
   Jim Hutton and Shirley Finney
   Dwight Feenstra - Alternate

Respectfully submitted by the Vestry Nominating Committee,

   Cheryl Abbott
   Dave Clarke
   Tom Sessions
A Short History of St. John’s: Different Times, Connected Lives.

1855 to 2020 means 165 years of worship together and so much more. As the pages turn in the album at the back of the church, documents and pictures reveal different lives and times along with strong connections that weave together our communal life as the Body of Christ in Vernon.

The St John’s Vernon story starts in the mid-19th century (1855) when 300 people traveled to the village of Rockville by foot and horse and carriage to the first recorded Episcopal Service. Soon after, regular services were held at the Rockville Hotel followed by an upstairs room at the Sears Block building, the Town Hall, and the Lutheran Church. The moveable service continued for twenty years until the December 1875 St John’s Church dedication. It must have been a vibrant time in Connecticut as down the road in East Hartford another beloved St John’s worshipped in their new church home in 1869.

Did you know St John’s Vernon had twenty-nine rectors in their first 100 years, while St John’s East Hartford had three? Organ dedications were 65 years apart as the first (with great fanfare) was in 1910, and the second (computerized one) happened in 1975. And the 1890’s church supper menu? Oyster Supper. And in 1957? It’s the popular “Green Ham” dinner! We probably do not want to suggest a nostalgic supper tradition.

The ministries of men, women, and youth, through prayer, altar guild, fellowship opportunities, and service to those in need provoke many stories in the records. In the 1880’s the Ladies Aid group at St John’s assists with the care and upkeep of the parish, and the purchase of the hymnals and pews by hosting dinners. The making and sale of ice cream is how the Men’s Guild funded the maintenance of the building. In the 1890’s these groups electrify the church and order the essential hand fans for summer services.
In the early 20th century, St John’s ministries reflected the changing world. The 1912 annual Call to the Parish recognized women as well as men for the first time. The outside world was considered part of parish life. St John’s became a place for war work and established an Honor Roll for Service members in 1925. Supported causes evolve to outreach to Visiting Nurses, the Red Cross, Widows and Orphans, Japanese Relief Funds, and Aged and Infirm Clergy. These efforts are connected to outreach today through the organic garden and Cornerstone, Sioux and Lakota support, Haiti, Honduras and Puerto Rico connections.

We are connected today to these changing times, by our own changing times. Mid-20th century church activities included trees, quilts, and palm crosses. These events are part of our St John’s story. In 1947 eight trees on the Sunday School walls were decorated with Easter Offering leaves. Are these trees the seeds for our Tree of Life and Tree of Light? In 1951, blankets and quilts were collected and sent to Korea, and we know today we have a very strong quilt and knitting force among us. A 1980’s photo shows palm cross instruction – something that still takes place every year (because many of us forget how to do it from year to year).

As we journey further into this century and our 165th year we do not need to turn the pages to see the power of prayer and the strength of our spiritual life at St John’s. Our faith in action, our fellowship and friendship, our prayerful worship life together, and our church celebrations are all part of the 21st century risk taking journey committed to in 2017 by the brilliantly merged one St John’s as we strive to be disciples of Our Lord Jesus, fully present in our world and fully engaged with the mission of God.

During this coming celebratory 165th year, please share your own stories from our merged St John’s history – whether from the album or not - so we can discover new connections to the past and imagine all that can be accomplished as we go forward in faith together.