St. John’s Episcopal Church

ANNUAL PARISH REPORT FOR 2014
Submitted at
THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
January 25, 2015

St. John’s Episcopal Church
113 Madison Avenue
Montgomery, Alabama
(334) 262-1937

St. John’s Episcopal Church
113 Madison Avenue
Montgomery, AL 36104
334-262-1937
www.stjohnsmontgomery.org
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In the beginning of the oldest writing in the New Testament, Paul speaks of the remarkable faith community that has developed in Thessalonica and matured into a beacon of wisdom. He hopes to people far beyond its physical boundaries. So a remarkable community of faith exists here at St. John’s and its witness to the Gospel extends far beyond what we have imagined. Having just completed our 180th year, rather than focusing on what has gone before, our interest lies more on the work that is ahead. There is an understood humility about this place that humbles us with a sense of responsibility to play in the extension of God’s kingdom. May this annual report of the parish be part of the stimulus to further our mission to worship God and make disciples for Jesus Christ.

Not only has 2014 been a year of stability but it falls in an era of stability. All our various statistics — number of members, financial giving, baptisms and deaths, new members joining and others moving away — reflect a year with no major overall changes. We are not growing dramatically statistically, nor are we declining, and such has been the case for the past several years. Our leadership is steady and mature yet with a fresh spirit. In the community and around the diocese we are described as healthy, strong, and influential. We continue to attract new members and hope to attract even more.

Several young, vibrant, and gifted people joined our program staff a couple years ago which provided a great complement to those who have served longer tenures. The mixture has proven to be very successful and reflects the energy of the parish at large. Many of our parishioners have been here their whole lives and many are very new. The result is a peaceful respect for tradition along with an inquisitive sense of adventure. We are in a good place, perhaps the very best in our long history, but there is a sense among the Staff and Vestry that the very best is yet to come.

Beyond stability, our parish exists currently in a state of deepening. The program staff, for instance, after having added several newer members, has now been through a full year of working with each other. They seem to know and love the territory. They also possess tremendous gifts which work as a leaven for growth. There is a deep respect for each other, a deep commitment to the Gospel of Christ, and a collegial atmosphere of support and challenge. Every day we are stretched by the calls God has put on our hearts and the unique opportunity of this parish with its unlimited potential. Walk in the door on any day at any time and you will be greeted with energy, enthusiasm, laughter, and earnestness. We foster that in the membership, this is true and that is why we are here, but do not overlook the fact that the staff reflects the spirit of the parish. We are here because of God. And we are here because of you.

Our stability as a parish is sometimes expressed as complacency. While I am aware that our offerings are the best they have ever been, I also see less overall participation than I would like. Partly that is due to our resource size as a parish. We offer so many things that not everybody can partake of everything. Parishioners in the midst of their busy schedules must pick and choose what they attend. If they don’t attend one particular offering, another excellent one will soon be coming. Another reason for less physical participation in programs may be that we are increasing our availability electronically. A parishioner recently was thanking me for my weekly writing in the newsletter: "When I read that on my phone, I feel like I am right there at St. John’s." We do reach people and connect in ways other than our worship and classes. That is good and it is by design. But I still worry about overall attendance. Our strategy is to focus on excellence in offerings. Feeding the sheep is more important than counting them but monitoring numbers helps us offer better food. We yearn for better participation in the high quality worship and Christian Formation events. Sometimes at St. John’s we take things for granted and just assume things will go well without us but each event offers a new glimpse of the kingdom and deserves our presence.

Worship is our central focus. Our niche in the market, so to speak, and what we do the very best, is to provide an intentional, traditional, Sunday morning Eucharist which envelopes the congregation in awe and wonder. Presenting the Gospel in the preached word is taken seriously and is sophisticatedly received by the listeners. Presenting the Gospel to our children in a manner they can understand is gracefully undertaken. Our music is incomparable. Careful and inspired preparation of the Sunday morning experience is evident. Application of that experience is carried out in our daily living.

Newer forms of worship have been added in the hopes that we will gain a broader exposure and deeper appreciation of God’s ways. We have experimented successfully with Evensong. A beautiful Advent Vespers service has been well received. We hosted the Montgomery Chorale and the Atlanta Baroque Orchestra for the performance of Bach’s Mass in B-Minor, a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity which a standing room only crowd enjoyed. A monthly Casual Sunday Eucharist at 5:00 with capable and talented musicians has grown and meets a great need. Weekday Eucharists in the Chapel continue, offering an intimate sense of the holy.

Christian Formation experiences abound for children, youth, and adults. Sunday morning is our key time of programming but nearly every day a substantial offering is made to people of all ages. Seasonal offerings in Lent and the Fall are quite successful. Four Education for Ministry groups allows for a remarkable depth of study for about forty persons. Numerous parishioners take advantage of spiritual direction offered by our clergy and a lay person is receiving training so that this ministry may be expanded. The ripple effects of these spiritually formative offerings certainly contribute to the overall health of our parish. There is wisdom in the walls here that we carry with us into the world.
Outreach is a hallmark of St. John’s and has been for many years. We are heavily invested in meeting the needs of the poor and hungry in Montgomery and beyond. Family Promise and One Church Mission, both homeless ministries, depend heavily on our gifts and hands-on participation. Habitat for Humanity, Rebuilding Together, Meals on Wheels, and local public schools, continue to attract us as places where we can serve those in need. Our Annual Bazaar, this year among our very most successful, raised over $20,000 for outreach efforts. Holy Cross Episcopal School which receives a huge amount of support from us, financially and in human hours, is among the most diverse schools in our region, public or private. It is an inspiring and nurturing place in so many ways. Our Honduras Mission thrives. The money we give, and the personal involvement we provide in all these outreach efforts, is transformational.

Great challenges and opportunities await us as we end the year and begin another. One of our talented Associate Rectors, Daniel Cenci, leaves us to serve as Rector of St. Paul’s in Clinton, North Carolina. He has impacted us greatly with his preaching, teaching, pastoral care, and ministry to the poor. As God calls him to live into his lifelong dream of rural ministry, may God also equip him for the challenges he will face. St. John’s attracts gifted clergy and we pray for God’s blessing on our search process.

The Bishop of Alabama, after a two year period of discernment, prayer, and study, has decided that he will now allow for the Blessing of same-sex unions in the parishes which choose to offer it, in accordance with action taken by our General Convention in 2012. I was asked to serve on the Commission which developed the process and guidelines for parishes to follow in order to make their decision. The work which I have engaged thus far has been challenging as we have sought to listen with respect and sensitivity to God’s children who are not of one mind on this matter. Your Vestry has hard work ahead of us. We will take our time and ground our conversation in prayer, seeking the wisdom and guidance of God. No decision will be imposed upon us. We will do what we believe God is calling us to do in this holy place at this pivotal time. The manner in which we make the decision will be more important than the decision itself. We will seek the mind of Christ and then make our decision. Too often in life, we approach decisions as places where we must prove something to each other or to God in order make things good. Good decisions, however, come about as we seek the goodness of God. We are well-equipped to deal with this matter, drawing on our deep scriptural tradition and engaging the new information science and the world presents. God is unlimited in the ways in which he leads us. We will listen for the voice of God and your voices will be part of how God guides us. We ask for your support, your perspective, and your prayers. All shall be well as we seek not just to handle a difficult decision but to be transformed by the very presence of Christ.

In my twentieth year as your rector and one of your priests, I feel healthy and grounded in your midst. You have shown me the Christ repeatedly and have taught me more than I have taught you. There is much that lies ahead for you and me together, hard and challenging work, and the rich opportunity to be shaped in the image of our Lord and Savior. Perhaps it is true that through God’s grace you and I bring out the very best in each other. May we greet with joy that which is in front of us as we give thanks for the tremendous blessings of the past.

Yours faithfully,
Robert C. Wisnewski, Jr.
XV Rector of St. John’s

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**REVENUES**

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**EXPENDITURES**

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**Revenue vs. Expenditures**: 526 71086 70580
It is a great pleasure to report that in 2014 this parish made total gifts for community outreach of $277,395, including gifts from the General Fund, the ECW, the Rector’s and Associate Rector’s Discretionary Funds, the Baldwin Trust, and the Honduras Mission. Of that amount, $187,375 was paid from our General Fund budget comprising over 11% of budgeted funds. St. John’s has long felt a responsibility and a desire to share our blessings by reaching outward to meet the spiritual and physical needs of the less fortunate in our community and beyond.

Because of your generous gifts combined with careful expense control by the staff and Vestry and a commitment to sound financial management, St. John’s continues to be in strong financial condition.

Respectfully submitted,

Helen Camp Wells
Treasurer

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ASSOCIATE RECTOR 2014

According to The Book of Common Prayer, the priest is “called to work as pastor, priest, and teacher . . . and to take [their] share in the councils of the Church.” (p. 531) These three descriptors of the call to priesthood define my purpose and intent as a faithful witness among the parishioners of St. John’s.

As A Pastor
Pastoral care is one of the highest callings in ministry, whether one is ordained or lay. It is the call to care for others, to consider their needs, and to tend to those who are sick or hurting or alone or marginalized in ways that bring comfort or peace. This past year the establishment of Lay Eucharistic Visitors, or LEVs, has brought significant comfort and peace to many of our parishioners who are no longer able to attend church services. This ministry is comprised of twelve lay persons. These persons have been trained in taking the Eucharist that is blessed on Sunday morning to parishioners who are shut-in or sick or suffering from some condition that does not allow them to get to church. Two to three parishioners are visited each week. The response to this ministry has been overwhelmingly positive. Those parishioners who can no longer come to church are comforted not only by the LEV’s visit, but by knowing that though they are no longer active at St. John’s, St. John’s has not forgotten them and continues to reach out to be in relationship with them through the sacrament of Holy Eucharist. If you know of someone who can no longer attend church and would like to receive a visit and Eucharist from an LEV, please contact the church.

As A Priest
My favorite day of the week is Sunday. I find the liturgy, breakfast, and Christian education opportunities to be a fulfilling and nourishing way to begin each week. Liturgy is an important part of my call to priesthood and I believe it offers us a life-giving way of being in this world, not just in church but in our homes, schools, work environments, grocery stores, club houses, etc. The liturgy is not only a means to worship God, but a way of understanding how we are to be with others and in the world. To that end, there are some ways of being in the liturgy that also begin to help us become more intentional and thoughtful. You may have noticed “the pause” that happens between the sermon and the Creed. That pause is irritating and/or uncomfortable for those who do not understand its value. Just as words are important, so is silence. That brief moment of silence is an opportunity to allow the inspiration of the sermon to settle into the soul. It is not a time in which one should agree or disagree with the sermon, but to sit with what was said and reflect, even briefly, in order to open oneself to God’s call through Scripture. That moment of silence is immediately followed by the voices of all those present in the congregation professing our faith. This order in liturgy is purposeful and important. We have just listened to the word of God, reflected on that word, and in response we profess our faith. That is one of the ways liturgy forms and shapes us to go out in the world as God’s people and serve others.

Another important aspect of the priesthood for me is Scripture. This year we are encouraging the congregation to read the Bible in a year. As Episcopalians we have a daily office lectionary that allows for the reading of most of the Bible in two years. If you were to attend church every Sunday for three years, you would hear about 80% of the Bible. We read a lot of Bible in the Episcopal Church. The challenge to read the Bible in a year is intended to offer a vibrant path toward personal spirituality and Biblical awareness. Reading the Bible daily and in the method offered by the Bible Challenge is like being the driver versus a passenger in a car—you pay more attention to the journey. Reading the Bible in a year will help you become aware of details in familiar stories or introduce you to stories you did not know. At the same time, it will give you a broader sense of the historical happenings of the Bible. But most importantly, as Mike Jerrell says, “Reading the Bible everyday changes the way you think about things.” If you are not already, I encourage you to start reading.

As A Teacher
In 2014, I had the opportunity to teach a variety of classes at St. John’s. The Women’s Bible Study has studied the Book of Daniel, Paul’s Letter to the Romans, and is now studying the Acts of the Apostles. There are two opportunities to be a part of this study each week—an evening meeting on Monday nights at 6pm in private homes and a Thursday morning class in The Loft over the kitchen at 8:30. Women’s Bible Study is open to all adult women in the church be they 18 or 118! Sunday School meets at 9:15am throughout the school year. In 2014, I taught Speaking the Word with Caroline and Tommy Lawson. This class studied and presented the Passion Narrative on Palm Sunday. Caroline and Tommy have graciously offered to teach this again during Lent. I also taught The Work of the People—a class that explored theology and doctrine in the church; Invite, Welcome, and Connect a class about helping the church to grow; an Advent series on Experiential Waiting; and recently, Scriptural Parallels, a class that examines parallel passages in the Old and New Testaments. I have also taught throughout the diocese at various Lenten or Advent offerings. Last Lent I presented on the Baptismal Covenant at Holy Trinity in Auburn. This Lent I will give a talk at St. Paul’s in Selma. I had two speaking engagements over Advent—Christ Church in Tuscaloosa and All Saints in Montgomery. I also did a series with the Men’s Breakfast at Ascension this past fall on Liturgy and Ethics.

Sharing in the Councils of the Church
This past fall I was asked to fill a Southern District presbytery vacancy on Diocesan Council. I have served on Council for a few months now, but will run for election to the remaining term of that seat at Convention in February. I have been elected to serve as a clergy deputy to General Convention (GC) this summer in Salt Lake City. This GC will elect a presiding bishop along with tending to other work of the Episcopal Church. I would appreciate your prayers for myself, the other deputies, and bishops who are charged with this work. I also serve on the Committee on Liturgy for the Diocese.
It is a joy and pleasure to serve the parish of St. John’s. I am heartened by the witness you offer to the world through giving of money and time to outreach in Montgomery and in Honduras. It is a delight to be part of your witness and engage in the work of our Lord with you. I look forward to our time together this year and the joys of our ministry together.

Light and Life,
Candice Frazer

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SENIOR WARDEN 2014

2014. Another year in the life of St. John’s Episcopal Church. In reflecting on this report, I was drawn back 15 years ago when I had the privilege of serving as Sr. Warden for the first time. At that time, the church was evaluating our physical facilities and determining what was needed for the first time in fifty years. As always, the families of St. Johns responded and we are so incredibly fortunate to have this wonderful worship space. While the challenges we face change over the years, St. Johns continues to carry out its mission ofworshiping God and Making Disciples for Christ. By continuing to focus on God’s grace, his mercy, and his love for all, St. Johns is well prepared for whatever lies ahead.

In many ways, this past year was similar to our recent history—a year marked with a worship experience steeped in liturgy, outstanding preaching, and music as an integral component; challenging and enlightening adult educational programs; a vibrant Youth Program for all ages; an Outreach Program that continues to engage in our community with numerous “hands-on” projects as well as provide funding at a record level for many deserving organizations; an incredible bazaar plus numerous other activities and programs.

Another constant is the strong leadership from our clergy. Robert, Daniel, and Candice work so well together with their strengths complimenting each other. St. Johns and the Montgomery community are fortunate to have them. Daniel and Jessica will be greatly missed but it continues to be exciting seeing priests start their ministry at St. Johns move on to other parishes and take on larger roles.

The vestry has done an incredible job and it has been a privilege to serve with each of them. I cannot say enough about the staff at St. Johns. Joel Gregory, Libby Poole, Fay Worilow, Ann Tippett, Mike Jarrell, Myron Smoke, Mary Sweat, Caitland, and Sara are, to put it simply, the best.

2105 will offer its own challenges. I encourage you to be engaged in the life of your church. There are numerous opportunities—take advantage of them. Your presence and participation will not only make our community stronger but, even more importantly will challenge, enlighten, and encourage you in your personal spiritual path.

Respectfully Submitted,
Charlie Harris

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TREASURER 2014
ANNUAL MEETING JANUARY 25, 2015

The year 2014 began with a very generous response to the every member canvas, which resulted in a 6.5% increase in pledging. The increase was very encouraging, since it followed two years of small decreases in pledging.

Although pledges collected in 2014 were slightly less than pledges made, special offerings were unusually high, (exceeding budget by almost $37,000), and other giving categories were also better than expected. As a result, total giving by members and friends of the parish exceeded expectations by over $27,000. Expenses were less than budgeted due to a generous gift applied to music expenses, expenditures for sitters, choristers and instrumentalists that were well under budget, and careful spending, resulting in savings in various categories. Every expense category was under the budget for the year except building expenses, which are only slightly over budget due to high equipment repair costs and higher than budgeted utilities costs. The Outreach category appears to be over budget, but the excess is due to additional Diocesan Covenant paid because unrestricted revenues were higher than budget.

Our cash balances at the beginning of the year were strong. As a result of the unexpectedly generous giving and good results on expenses, the year 2014 ends with an excellent cash reserve of $713,369.

Pledging results for the coming year are disappointing, yielding a slight decrease from last year. The anticipated pledge income for 2015 is only $5,400 higher than four years ago in 2011. Nonetheless, a year of progress is projected, with careful expense management. The 2015 anticipated revised budget is a balanced budget which reflects reductions in many items throughout the budget with the intention of operating within the revenues provided.

There are two reports attached for your review which reflect the operation of the parish in 2014. The first report attached shows actual revenues and expenses of the General Fund for the year 2014 compared to budget and, as you will see, shows revenues of $27,312 more than budgeted and expenses of $43,248 less than budget, resulting in an excess of revenue over expenses of $70,360.

The second report attached, the Cash Flow Statement, shows in a summary fashion the activity not only in the General Fund but also in all restricted funds. The first column shows our General Fund cash, receipts and expenditures.

All other columns show funds restricted for various purposes that do not fall within the General Fund budget. The names of the various funds appear at the top of the page and the headings down the left side of the page show the sources and purposes for which funds were received and paid and beginning and ending cash balances for each segregated fund. Cash on hand in the General Fund is at a very satisfactory level. It is expected that a portion of the cash reserve will be required to pay for expensive equipment repairs or replacements (primarily chillers for the air-conditioning system) needed in the very near future, which cannot be covered within the budget.

The Building Fund, which is held distinct and separate from the General Fund and does not impact the General Fund budget, is reported in the third from the last column and reflects transactions only during the year 2014. During 2014, loan principal due was reduced by $325,000, leaving a balance of $750,000 of building debt outstanding. Cash on hand at December 31, 2014 in the Building Fund is $62,055, which will be used for monthly interest payments and will allow further debt reduction.
The **ENDOWMENT FUND** (1948) is used for church purposes or for any religious, charitable, or educational institution...which may be owned by the church or which may be under its direction, supervision or control.

The **Abram Martin and Elizabeth Ewin BALDWIN FUND** (1955) is paid to the Rector for disbursement; 50% goes to needy persons in the parish, and 50% to needy Blacks in Montgomery.

The **GALLAGHER MEMORIAL TRUST FUND** (1972) is used at the discretion of the Vestry, normally for purposes outside the parish.

The **Barrie H. HARMON TRUST FUND** (1975) is used at the discretion of the Rector and Wardens to assist in the education of worthy ministerial students.

The **RECTOR’S DISCRETIONARY TRUST** (1995) consists of investment securities donated to the Record and Curate many years ago and transferred to the Endowment Fund Trustees for management. Income is used at the discretion of the Rector.

The **DOROTHY CAMERON UNITRUST** (2004) is a charitable remainder trust.

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**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE JUNIOR WARDEN 2014**

At the risk of “preaching to the choir”, I want to begin by saying that St. John’s is a wonderful place to worship. As I prepare this report two days before Christmas, my heart is filled with joy and anticipation knowing that tomorrow the church will be beautifully decorated in celebration of the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We will have magnificent music and, undoubtedly, one of our outstanding clergy members will deliver a superb and meaningful sermon. However, all of those things are present and happen each and every time we come to this beautiful church. We are truly blessed to have the kind of clergy, staff members, congregation and the magnificent facility that we have here at St. John’s for us to worship and grow. For each of these things, thanks be to God.

It is truly an honor and privilege to serve on the vestry of this great church and to have the opportunity to serve as Junior Warden. I thank each of you for that opportunity and privilege. In my opinion, we have a hard working, excellent and diverse vestry. You routinely see your vestry members on the door on Sunday morning which provides each of us the occasion to meet and greet the congregation as well as to visit and get to know each other better. The vestry meetings are a time for the vestry and clergy to discuss and conduct the church’s business. These meetings are also fun and informative. Open discussion is encouraged and occurs regarding various aspects of church business. I would like to thank each member of the vestry for their dedication to St. John’s and to give particular thanks to the outgoing Vestry Class of 2015. In addition, Charlie Harris has been an outstanding Senior Warden for this church and I thank him for all that he has done and for his leadership of the vestry. To the remaining vestry, I look forward to our future time and continued work together on behalf of St. John’s.

Our clergy leadership is second to none. The Lord has truly blessed St. John’s with Robert, Daniel and Candace. At the time of preparing this report, we have just learned that Daniel has accepted a call to serve as Priest-in-Charge of St. Paul’s in Clinton, North Carolina. Daniel’s talents in all areas of the ministry, particularly Outreach, have been a great asset to St. John’s. I have no doubt that Daniel will continue to excel as a young priest and will lead his new congregation well. As most of you know, Jessica is an RN in the NICU at Baptist East. Jessica took good care of my grandson, Fred III, in the NICU in January 2013 for which I will always be grateful. We are losing an outstanding young priest and a wonderful nurse and we wish the Cencis the very best in the future. It is both exciting and comforting to know that by the time of the annual meeting, Robert will have begun his efforts to secure the next outstanding clergy member of St. John’s.

We are very fortunate to have a dedicated and hardworking staff at St. John’s. Within each of their departments, Libby, Fay, Anne, Mike, Myron, Mary, Caitlin, Sarah and Joe all do an outstanding job and keep the church running smoothly. As Junior Warden, I have had occasion to work more closely with our bookkeeper, Libby Poole. Like all of our staff, Libby is a wonderful person and carries out her duties in an efficient, friendly and appropriate manner. Please join me in thanking each of our staff members for their good work and dedication.

At the time of preparing this report, the Annual Stewardship Campaign is winding down. Each year this campaign requires the time and effort of many volunteers. This year is no exception and I want to thank each and every person who helped in any way for your efforts towards the campaign. Our 2015 projected budget calls for an ambitious 5% increase in giving. Although at the time of preparing this report we have not reached our goal, we are continuing to work to do so and we remain hopeful that our goal will be met by the time this annual report is distributed. Regardless, we are always grateful for your financial and spiritual support of St. John’s.

As we move into the new year, St. John’s future is bright and promising. As this church has done for years, the current membership, clergy, staff and vestry will continue to fulfill our mission of “Worshiping God and Making Disciples for Christ.” To mention just a few of our ministry programs: pastoral care (whose work I have seen more closely of late) will continue to do the great work of visiting and comforting those in need and St. John’s outreach, which has been increased, will continue “To Do God’s Work in the World.”

Again, it is truly an honor to serve on St. John’s vestry as Junior Warden and I am grateful for having been provided that privilege during this past year. Like the joyous anticipation of the Christmas season, I look forward to working with each of you, the clergy, staff and the new and remaining vestry members in the year to come.

Respectfully submitted,

*Fred Tyson,*

Junior Warden
ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHILDREN’S
CHRISTIAN FORMATION DIRECTOR 2014

The year 2014 has been such a wonderful year for St. John’s! I am beyond grateful to continue as Director of Children’s Christian Formation. It has been a blessing getting to know all of the sweet children at St. John’s, and I look forward to building even stronger relationships with them over the next several years! Moreover, I would like to thank all of the volunteers who help make this program such a success. Their devotion and time has such an impact on our children at St. John’s! Thank you for sharing your sweet children with all of us! It is with much joy and gratitude that I give this report.

On Sunday mornings, there are many activities for the children. The Toddlers continue to use Catechesis of the Good Shepherd materials (Stories in a Box). The pre-Kindergarten children are using a new curriculum titled, “Hands-On Bible Curriculum.” Each lesson comes along with a learning kit, and included are fun, hands-on manipulatives, a talking puppet named “Whiskers”, and Big Story books related to the Bible lesson(s). This curriculum is an exciting way for the children to learn about the stories of the Bible. Kindergarten through 5th grade continue to use Weaving God’s Promise. This fall we returned to the 2nd year of this 3 year curriculum. It is suggested to repeat the curriculum after the first 3 years, and it is designed to engross children of all ages by including a variety of crafts and activities that follow the church year while weaving Episcopal tradition throughout every lesson. This curriculum has been labeled as a huge success among the teachers and children. Moreover, the 6th grade excidedly participates in Confirmation Class. This year they continue with the Episcopal Diocese of Alabama curriculum in preparing to join the church as adult members. Our Children’s Chapel is transforming, and I am excited about even more activities that will go on in the year 2015! St. John’s is such an amazing place to be, and I look forward to many more years to come!

Other activities and events took place throughout the year for Children’s Formation. They include:

- Children’s Lenten Series – “Keeping the Fizz in your Faith” (The children learned to trust in Jesus and remain excited in our faith through fun Science experiments!)
- Palm Sunday & Children’s Procession with Donkey
- Children’s Easter Egg Hunt in the Labyrinth
- Parish Picnic - We had many inflatables, outdoor games, and delicious food!
- Confirmation Sunday - Our 6th grade children graduated from Confirmation class, and were confirmed by Bishop Kee Sloan as members of our church!
- Vacation Bible School – “Kingdom Rock” - This year The Church of the Ascension hosted VBS. We had a medieval theme, and the children learned to Stand Strong for God. We enjoyed many fun songs, science experiments, medieval outdoor games, and Bible stories!
- Kickoff Sunday - This replaced our annual “Round Up Rodeo.” – fun and fellowship kicking off the new year with games, prizes and class information
- Blessing of the Backpacks
- Blessing of the Animals - joined by the Montgomery Zoo and donations to the Humane Society
- October Wednesday Night Series - “Superheroes of the Bible” (Children learned about different Bible superheroes and comic book heroes. They learned that we all can strive to be a superhero for Jesus. He is the Ultimate Hero!)
- Halloween Carnival
- All Saint’s Procession
- Operation Christmas Child - shoebox gift outreach (This year we collected over 50 shoeboxes!)
- Advent Wreath Making
- Families lighting the Advent Wreath at the 10:30 service
- Los Posadas - Mary & Joseph visit with families during Advent
- Christmas Angel Tree Outreach
- Annual Christmas Pageant
- Birthday Sunday - the first Sunday of each month we gather for a blessing and cake

The Eagle continues to include materials for parents on our Children’s News page. In addition, we have a Facebook page, and we are starting to use The City. All of these include information and photos of our children at St. John’s!

We currently have nine qualified nursery workers who provide childcare on Sunday mornings and other events. We hold a meeting once a month to stay updated on our childcare needs.

I am excited to call St. John’s my church home, and I am even more blessed to have this opportunity to share Jesus’ love with your sweet children! I wish you and your family much happiness in the New Year!

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah Collier
Director of Children’s Christian Formation
This past year brought a number of changes to the Outreach Committee. Stephanie Norrell “retired” as Chairperson after serving for longer than any previous chairperson. She did an outstanding job and continues on the committee. We received applications from 52 different organizations and were able to provide a total of $110,000 (a record amount) to 39 different groups. This would not be possible without your gracious financial support of St. John’s. Our financial assistance is making a real difference for a number of different very deserving organizations.

Over the past year, we’ve highlighted the different groups St. John’s has supported. Below is a summary broken out by “category”. In late February or early March, we will mail out applications. I implore you to think about this and if you know of a group, please request an application and we will contact.

There are other areas St. John’s provides outreach to our local community, the diocese, and also internationally. This is one area where you can make a big difference. Please consider this when you are praying about your financial support of St. John’s.

Annual Report of the Outreach Grants Committee 2014

Two thousand fourteen has been a year of growth for St. John’s EYC. In the fall we welcomed a large class of rising 7th grade students to our group. We also welcomed Leslie Little to our collection of amazing EYC advisors.

Youth meet for EYC AM every Sunday before the 10:30 Eucharist. Our time together consists of coffee, cinnamon rolls, and good conversation. This formational time is planned by Caitlin and led by Price McLemore with the help of Dinah McLemore, Lawrence Hughes, and Mary Margaret Kyser. This year we are using our very own curriculum written by Caitlin. The Gospel According to YOU is a lectionary based discussion guide that seeks to bridge the gap between the words of the Gospel lessons and actions in the daily life of our teens. Other activities range from pop culture debates, prayer stations, and Bible Jeopardy.

On Sunday evenings we continue to gather for EYC PM from 5:30-7:30. The senior and junior EYC members meet separately for program time. Dinner for all ages is served in between the two meetings. We are grateful for all the parents who have provided us with meals this year! We’ve also enjoyed incorporating the Casual Eucharist into our schedule at the end of each month. Highlights from this year include a Secret Spaces of St. John’s tour led by Robert and the Canned Food Scavenger Hunt for the Holy Comforter Food Pantry. Consistent support from our advisors Jim Marshall, Steve Frazer, Leslie Little and Mary Margaret Kyser makes everything possible. We’re extremely thankful for the support of Daniel and Candice who often join our group.

On Wednesday afternoons our youth meet with Ascension’s EYC to fill Café Louisa to the brim. It’s a casual time for us to set aside the chaos of our week for two hours of snacks, coffee, and conversation. We look forward to the continued growth of this fellowship time.

This year we focused on outreach ministries during EYC: SERVE. This event began with serving dinner to the hungry at One Church Mission on the fourth Monday of each month. We have expanded EYC: SERVE to include events like the Canned Food Scavenger Hunt, shopping for Christmas Clearinghouse’s adopted families, and baking homemade cookies for the dinners at One Church Mission. Our goal is to participate in at least two types of outreach ministry each month.

In July five youth traveled with our mission team to Tela, Honduras. They worked tirelessly repainting the church walls and bell tower at Espiritu Santo. In the afternoons they led Vacation Bible School for sixty something children in the neighborhood of San Martin. We are counting down the days until we can return!

Our youth have also enjoyed participating in Diocesan Youth Department events this year. We had several youth participate in Happening #64, Young People Paint Birmingham, Awakenings, Christmas Conference, and summer sessions at McDowell. In the fall we also attended District Day at Ascension. We’re looking forward to our district EYC friends joining us for The Feast of Lights too.

As the New Year swiftly approaches we have so much to be grateful for and look forward to. January brings The Feast of Lights and our annual Ski Trip. We’re excited to have Fran McKendree with us to lead the music for Feast of Lights. We’ll be finalizing plans to take ten youth to Honduras in the summer as well as focusing on mission work within the local community. Several of our youth are already signed up to participate in Happening #66 both as staff and participants. With all of that and our regular EYC schedule, 2015 is looking like our best year yet!

Respectfully submitted,

Caitlin Gilliam
Youth Director

Respectfully Submitted,

Charlie Hughes
Youth Director
**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MUSIC DIRECTOR 2014**

**ADULT CHOIR**

The choir is a mix of professional and volunteer singers. It consists of 15 singers. While we enjoy good singers at St. John’s, the pool of skilled singers in the Montgomery area from which we may recruit continues to shrink and was already very small. Singers from other church music programs are occasionally brought in to sing when our performances and services do not conflict with their own. The choir library expansion continues to be a multi-year goal.

**INSTRUMENTALISTS**

The church continues to employ and enjoy the skills of a group of instrumentalists that play for the morning services (primarily for communion) and occasionally at other services. I restate this year, as I did last, that I consider this a valuable endeavor for the church. It shows St. John’s to be supportive of a high form of art in its worship and supportive of the arts and musicians in the larger community. It is my goal to find ways to use these musicians effectively throughout the service.

**CHILDREN’S CHOIR**

For the 2nd half of 2014, I attempted to move the children’s rehearsal from Sunday mornings at 8:45 to Wednesday evenings to coincide with the Wednesday evening programs. My hope in doing this was to plan the children’s rehearsal at a time when other events were occurring so that something could be offered for both the parents and the children at the same time. I was hopeful that this strategy would encourage more to attend and be easier on the parents. This was met with even less success than the Sunday morning rehearsal time. It will need to be re-evaluated. I restate this year that it is extremely important that St. John’s establish and maintain a children’s choir program that parents feel and realize is an important part of their children’s participation in the worship life of the church.

**ORGAN**

The organ is a combination pipe and digital (electronic voice) instrument built by the Wicks Organ Company with digital voices by Walker. It is one of the larger, more flexible instruments in the city. Only normal maintenance and repair issues are expected. It is maintained and tuned by R.G. Capra Organ Co. Beyond regular maintenance and tuning there are no repair or improvement issues that need to be addressed in the immediate future.

**MUSIC OFFERED OUTSIDE OF SUNDAY MORNING**

There has been a conscious effort to offer services and music programs outside of the normal Sunday morning services over the 2013 year. We have presented the following:

- **Choral Evensong**
  - An Organ Concert - We Presented Daniel Brondel, Organist of St. Patrick’s Cathedral, New York City in Concert.
  - A Concert for Cello and Violin - Presented by Peter Povey and Alexei Romanenko.

- **Advent Vespers** – An Evening service of worship during which music and readings centered around the Advent theme was presented – most notably a performance of Johann Sebastian Bach’s Cantata 36 with orchestral accompaniment. This service was sung by the Choir of St. John’s and members from the Choir of the Church of the Holy Comforter.
  
  I think that it is important that music events and services be presented outside of the Sunday morning because, just as with the Wednesday Lenten series, each event brings people in to St. John’s who might not otherwise be able to attend.

**OVERVIEW**

In this my 3rd year as Organist and Choirmaster, I feel that we are making considerable progress toward the music program that I envision for St. John’s and thank the congregation and clergy for the gracious support and encouragement that I have been given.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joel Gregory
Organist and Choirmaster

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ALTAR GUILD 2014**

It has been my privilege to continue as acting chair of the altar guild after my wife's death last July. I am most grateful to the sixteen other members for their dedicated service and for making this difficult time as painless as could possibly be. Robert and I have not discussed future leadership of the guild; I plan to continue as acting chair until he or I decide we need to make a change.

The seventeen of us currently on the guild prepare for over two hundred sixty celebrations of the Holy Eucharist each year. We consider it a solemn obligation to appear when we are scheduled and, at the same time, a privilege to be allowed into the Lord's service in such a wonderful way.

We could make good use of a few more people, and if you are inclined to explore such a possibility, I'd be pleased to have you speak to me.

Respectfully submitted,

Chuck Moore
Altar Guild Acting Chair

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE FLOWER GUILD 2014**

The Flower Guild has been arranging flowers for the altar for the past twenty-five years. We have thirty-six active members and welcome new members at any time. Each member’s commitment consists of arranging the flowers for Sunday services on preceding Friday or Saturday. Then the members dismantle and rearrange in vases that are delivered to parishioners who are shut in at home or are in a nursing home or hospital after Sunday services. Each three member team rotates by the schedule every two and a half months. Except for the Sunday’s following a wedding the Flower Guild provides altar flowers year round. We as a flower guild do not arrange flowers for weddings or funerals.

Kitty Coleman and Catherine Woodson select and order the cut flowers each week. Fay Worroll arranges the schedule. Jean Smyth is in charge of organizing and ordering supplies. Sarah Spratling and Martha Allen coordinate the Easter and Christmas decorations, with the Flower Guild members arranging flowers, wreaths, and greenery in the church, parish house, hallways, and on doors. Sarah, with assistance from members, arranged the altar flowers. The Flower Guild members maintained the advent wreaths in the church and the chapel. At Easter Richard Woods arranged the flowers on the sign at the front of the church.

Plants, cut flowers, dried arrangements, and greenery were placed in the hallways and parish house throughout the year.

Valerie Wilkersen with fourteen additional members make up the Flower Delivery teams and rotate once a month. After Easter and Christmas the group delivered potted plants to the shut-ins. St. John’s is blessed to have these dedicated members.

The cooperation and help from Mike, Myron, and Mary are greatly appreciated by all of us.

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Allen
Flower Guild Chairman

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ARCHIVES COMMITTEE 2014**

As we have done since the Archives of St. John's was begun in 1984, the committee still meets on Thursday afternoon to work on scrapbooks, filing, exhibits, updating the index cleaning out files, storing photographs, old documents, bulletins and Eagles, and preserving the history of St. John’s Episcopal Church. We need volunteers for the Archives group since some of our group are trying to age gracefully but won’t last forever.

Since the Archives Committee continues to work in the Archives room each week the church needs a separate committee to lead tours working with the City and Landmarks. It is our hope this can be established in the near future.

Respectfully submitted,

Sadie Millspaugh
Catherine Woodson
Melissa Carter
Kitty Marks
Betty Robison
Debra Voglegesang