

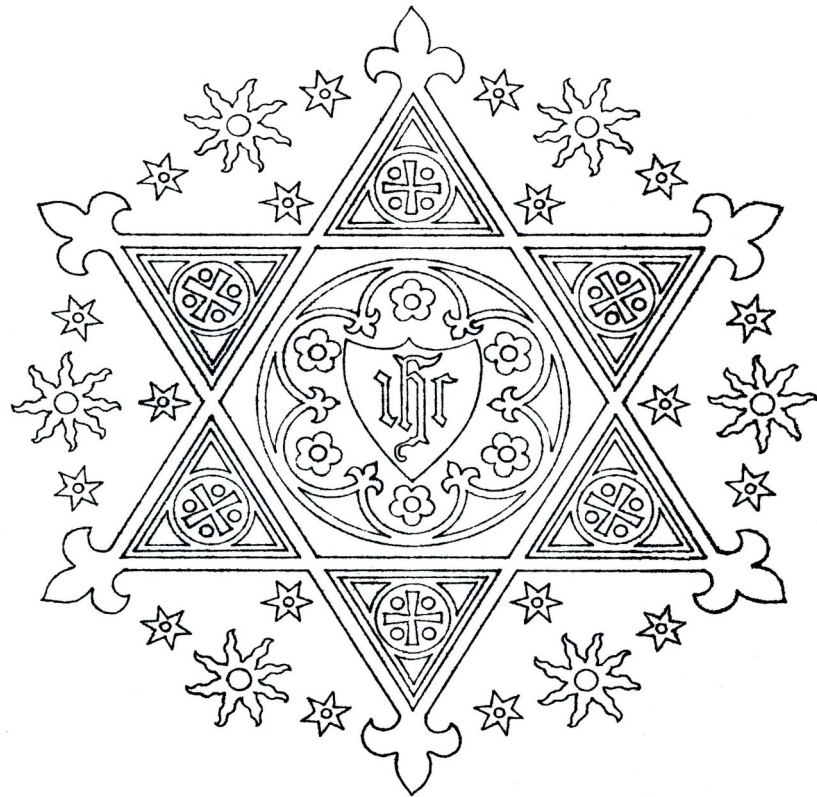
St. John's Episcopal Church

ANNUAL PARISH REPORT FOR 2020

Submitted at

THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

January 24, 2021



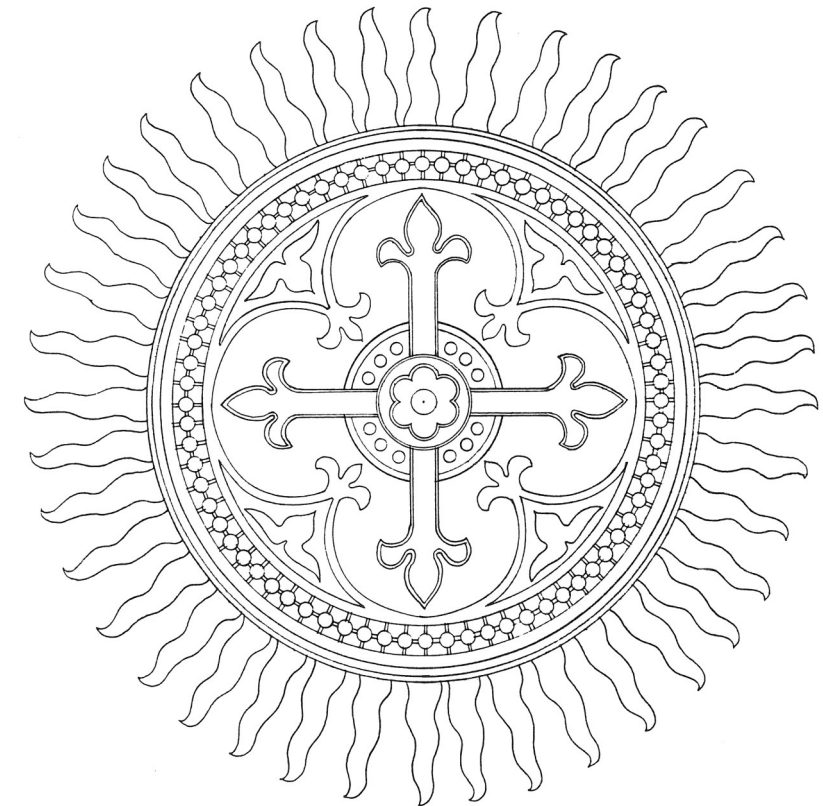
St. John's Episcopal Church

113 Madison Avenue

Montgomery, AL 36104

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year. Bookstore, Meal and Altar Flower expenses are projected to be less than half of previously budgeted and are \$10,750 less than 2020. Trust Fund Revenue will remain approximately the same, but is estimated to be \$1,230 less than prior year. Trust Fund revenue is derived from a formula set forth by our Trustees and is based on the performance of the Trusts over a trailing 3 year period.

Total Expenses of are budgeted to be \$81,140 less than 2020. There are reductions totaling \$90,353 from staffing changes and elimination of one-time expenses associated with future clergy search. As contemplated by the budget, a third clergy member will not be hired in 2021. Also, a maintenance position was eliminated. All other expense categories were adjusted to increase and reflect a gradual return to normal church attendance. Savings were partially offset by a \$30,150 increase in maintenance expenses.

Total Outreach of \$309,209 is reduced very slightly over prior year due to a small reduction in our Diocesan Covenant consistent with budgeted revenue and a decrease in seminary support created by the graduation of one of our seminarians.

The faith and trust represented by your gifts to St. John’s is respected, appreciated and taken very seriously by the Clergy, Vestry and those administering funds. You may be assured that all funds entrusted to St. John’s will be used carefully and well. St. John’s has a strong cash position at this time and a commitment to continued sound financial management.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Bradford
Treasurer

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2020

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ANNUAL REPORT OF THE RECTOR

After 25 years of ministry, the Rev. Robert Wisniewski retired as the XV Rector of St. John's. On September 1, I began my tenure as the XVI Rector. Sarah, the girls, and I have appreciated the gracious hospitality, the kind gestures of welcome in so many ways and your genuine concern for our new life here among you. We are confident that God has called us together to renew and strengthen St. John's spiritual and religious role in Montgomery and the South.

Please join me in giving thanks for the leadership of Margaret Ann Selman and Charlie Harris as search co-chairs. Along with the entire search committee, they were responsive and pastoral throughout the process, but more importantly, they were transparent and candid about the strengths, struggles and opportunities for St. John's. To be able to coordinate a call and transition in the middle of a pandemic reflects an exceptional and deep faith.

I also want to thank Jimmy McLemore for his leadership as senior warden. Not only navigating a search process, a call and transition, but keeping participation and engagement at meaningful level given the limitations of in-person worship and in-person gatherings. Jimmy was the solid and wise presence for so many unique issues this year. Please join me in showing appreciation to Jimmy for his direction and wisdom in helping draft the new Vestry bylaws. These documents will endure and limit conflict and chaos in the years to come.

We were sad to bid farewell to Jamie Osborne as he became a commissioned officer in the Air Force. Jamie was a solid and patient presences throughout the transition. Our loss is our country's gain. Jamie's departure provided the opportunity to extend a call to Deonna Neal to become our full-time associate. When Deonna accepted this call, we became a better parish immediately. Deonna is unrivaled as a teacher and a wise counselor. While she will assist in many areas of parish ministry, Deonna will take the lead in adult formation and education offerings.

Libby Poole's retirement after 25 years was an unexpected decision. However, we are blessed to have hired Heather Herring who comes to St. John's with experience and familiarity with church finances. Clearly, assuming a job held for a long and faithful time by someone else creates a steep learning curve, but Heather has the demeanor and the professional competence to be a wonderful steward of St. John's finances.

Your generous response to our stewardship campaign represented your ongoing commitment to the mission and ministry of St. John's. Thank you for your support. Adaptability has been the necessary virtue for 2020 and will continue to be for at least half of 2021. Be assured that I am mindful that you have been asked to be flexible, to forego many traditions and customs and that church life is far from normal. As we make decisions on liturgical offerings, programs, ministries we pray for guidance and wisdom knowing full well that no decision made during a pandemic is ultimately the decision we would all desire. We also pray for all of you and ask that you pray for us.

We will continue to explore various ways serve the entire community, to be God's heart in the heart of Montgomery. The program year in 2020 was interrupted by COVID 19, and we anticipate our full schedule of events and ministries will resume late summer, early fall. To accomplish this, please continue to follow the COVID protocols when you are at St. John's and out in the community.

Lastly, thank you. Change and transition can be difficult. Your lives have changed, my life has changed and life at St. John's has changed all in the last few months. Change does not need to be a criticism of the past, rather change can be an invitation to becoming more fully the person and the community God imagines us to be.

For a period as a teenager, I experienced a good deal of discomfort in my back. When it did not go away, we went to the doctor. After x-rays and diagnostic tests, the doctor's report was quite simple. My back muscles

REPORT OF THE TREASURER 2020

This has been a unique year. If change is the only certainty of life, then we endured more certainty in 2020 than most can remember. Over the last 12 months, Saint John's adapted to a global pandemic including several months without gathering to worship and we learned to attend and love St. John's through the internet. We congratulated Robert, Libby and Helen on their retirements and reflected on each of their more than 20 years of friendship and dedicated service to our spiritual growth and the well-being of our Church. We welcomed John Leach as our new Rector, said good luck to Jamie as he embarked on his new adventure, and celebrated Deonna's decision to expand her role with us. Heather Herring joined us as Financial Administrator and I am proud to be writing my first Treasurers Report.

Despite all this change, the Church enters 2021 in stronger financial condition than a year ago. In 2020, Parishioner giving exceeded budget by \$17,301. Church expenses were \$139,645 below budget without any significant impact on Outreach. We had a budget surplus of \$135,204. The Church is debt free.

Attached for your review are the 2020 fiscal year end balance sheet and income statement and the 2021 budget. The following analysis is based on those reports as prepared by Heather and approved by the John and the Vestry.

As of December 31, 2020, the Church reports total assets of \$1,356,639. Assets consist of \$485,960 in unrestricted cash and \$866,613 in temporarily restricted cash. The temporarily restricted cash includes a \$500,000 operating reserve and \$137,434 in various maintenance reserves. Current liabilities are \$4,066 and consist of current monthly payroll tax obligations. As mentioned above, the church has no long term liabilities. Net assets are \$1,352,573.

Total Revenues of \$1,844,493 fell \$4,440 short of 2020 budget. Parishioner Giving was \$17,301 above budget. Trust Fund revenue met budget. Other Revenues fell short of expectations by \$21,741. The main component of this shortfall (\$13,945) was a lack of income derived from activity at the Church like bookstore receipts, meals, Coke sales and altar flower donations. The upside is each of these categories had a corresponding reduction in expenses. Also, interest budgeted interest income from deposit accounts missed expectations by \$8,575. Interest paid on certificate of deposit and money market accounts fell significantly though the year negatively affecting this item.

Expenses were down in every category. With the exception of savings associated with staff changes, all cost savings were connected to our inability to use the facility as we are accustomed.

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. It is a great pleasure to report that in 2020 the Church made total gifts for community outreach of \$313,190. This was comprised of gifts from the General Fund budget (including awards by the outreach committee), the ECW, the Rector's and Associate Rector's Discretionary Funds, the Baldwin Trust, and the Honduras Mission.

For 2021, the Church is projecting \$1,753,807 in Revenue and \$1,767,793 in Expenses. This results in a budget deficit of \$13,986. Traditionally, we have adopted a balanced budget each year. The decision to approve a deficit budget was not made lightly. It was approved in consideration of the 2020 budget surplus and other conservative changes to revenue expectations.

Budgeted Revenue is \$95,126 less than prior year. Projected Parishioner giving makes up \$69,847 of that amount. While pledges increased slightly, there is a \$75,000 reduction in budgeted Special Offerings and a \$2,000 reduction in budgeted plate offerings. Special Offerings are unanticipated gifts received during the year. The Church has a consistent history of receiving such gifts, but since they cannot be planned or scheduled, it was deemed prudent to reduce our reliance on their receipt for budgeting purposes. The reduction in Plate Offerings reflect our challenges with in person attendance. Other Revenues are budgeted to be \$24,050 less than prior year's budget. This is a continuation of the trend from 2020 and reflects current interest rates and a reduced use our facility due to the pandemic. Interest income is budgeted to be \$13,300 lower than prior

	<i>MARKET VALUE 12/31/2020</i>
Endowment Fund	\$3,428,165.07
Cameron Trust	448,923.38
Murray Trust	2,018,667.43
Gallagher Trust	335,684.16
Maintenance & Upkeep	136,940.93
Baldwin Trust	274,147.19
Barrie Harmon Trust	42,844.50
McLemore Scholarship	181,666.22
Thomas Tyson Fund	159,717.03
Hill Fund	296,913.32
Rector's Discretionary Trust	265,726.56
George H. Jones, Jr. Trust	467,859.92
Paul Bently Jones Trust	27,838.25
Reeder Charitable Trust	47,156.21
Louise Meadows	306,459.28
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$8,438,709.45</i>

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 **MAINTENANCE AND UPKEEP FUND** (1978) is used at the discretion of the Vestry for the maintenance and upkeep of property belonging to the church.

The Thomas M. **TYSON FUND** (1980) is used at the discretion of the Rector for the education of young people who are members of St. John’s.

The Mary Oliver **McLEMORE FUND** (1981) IS USED AT THE DISCRETION OF THE Rector and Wardens to assist in the education of young people, with preference being given to the education of young women.

The William Inge and Ilouise P. **HILL TRUST** (1982) is used by the Vestry for religious, education, and charitable purposes within and sponsored by the parish.

The V. **BONNEAU MURRAY TRUST** (1989) may be used by the Vestry “...in furtherance of the religious and charitable mission of the Church, or for the benefit of any entity or institution under the direction, supervision, or control of the church, but not for usual and ordinary operating expenses...”.

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.

were struggling to keep up with my growing height. In other words, as I changed, I grew and as I grew there was just enough resistance to make me uncomfortable, but that discomfort was only temporary. Growth for us individually, and growth for us as a parish may resemble that experience, let us, however, be mindful that we are always becoming.

I look forward to growing together. God is very present in this beautiful and historic place, and God is very present in the beautiful people who call St. John’s their spiritual home.

God’s Peace,

John+
XVI Rector

REPORT OF THE ASSOCIATE RECTOR

This has been memorable year of transition, change, and uncertainty, as well as grief, excitement, and hopefulness. The parish conducted a search for a new rector; said good-bye to the outgoing rector, Robert Wisniewski Jr., and his family; welcomed our new rector, John Leach, and his family; and said good-bye to associate rector Jamie Osborne, and his family. All of that happened, of course, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and all of the political and social unrest that our country has gone through, e.g. the Black Lives Matter movement and all of the controversies surrounding the 2020 election.

On top of all that, I underwent a tremendously difficult discernment process myself and made the decision to leave my job as a professor at Air University to come on staff at St. John’s full-time as an associate rector. My decision to do that was aided in part by going to Eastern Point Retreat House in Gloucester, MA, in September, for an 8-day directed retreat. That proved to be an exceptionally helpful time away to do some significant discernment and prayerful reflection. I have been ordained for 18 years and this is the first time in my career that I have ever worked full-time as a priest in any setting, parish or otherwise. When I think about it, that is quite a remarkable statement to make.

The pandemic environment severely limited our ministries in 2020. For most of the year, everything was cancelled and the building was empty. We stepped up Facebook Live Morning Prayer from one day a week to five days a week in order to help people stay connected. That, combined with nightly online Compline, became a lifeline for many people and is still going strong. But, in-person worship, breakfast, Sunday school, centering prayer, choir practice, Hope Inspired Ministries, Heavenly Host, Carver Backpack Program, the Bazaar, Men’s Group, daily eucharists, guild meetings, the Honduras trip, EYC events, VBS, Lenten Lunches and Speaker Series and other gatherings all fell by the wayside. It was odd doing Sunday Morning Prayer for so long and preaching to a camera at the long end of an empty nave. Lent felt particularly somber; an empty church on Easter, very strange and subdued. I was glad when we finally could resume in-person worship in September and then resume communion in October. I still miss daily eucharists. Advent Lessons and Carols was a great highlight. Christmas services felt more mellow this year and went very smoothly. It was good to see people, even in the midst of all the constraints.

Adult formation classes continued, but we transitioned them to a virtual format. We began with me lecturing to an empty parish hall in March and April finishing up my class on N.T. Wright’s “Resurrection and the Son of God” and making the audio recordings available. Next we moved to parish wide Zoom classes after Easter. Robert, Jamie and I taught a class called “Staying Spiritually Grounded during COVID-19” in May and June and posted them to our parish Facebook page. We also did a special class on how to welcome a new rector in July. Jamie did a class on “Vocation” in September before he left, and I began a class called “Liturgy: The Work of the People” in October. John taught a fun and light-hearted class in Advent called “Theologies of the Season,” which focused on theological themes in popular holiday movies. I think the adult formation classes helped provide some sort of continuity for people, as did the continuation of our Monday noon Bible studies on Zoom as well. For some, it was the only time they “saw” and could talk to other members of the parish.

Some of my extracurricular activities included being selected as a “scholar-in-residence” at the School of Theology at the University of the South for two weeks in February. I enjoyed spending time with the seminary community and having time to think, read, and study in a quiet and beautiful setting. I also wrote two articles for the Living Church, one on marriage and one on gun violence. I also continued to offer lectures to various groups on the topics of “Moral Injury and Healing” and “Advising Senior Leaders.”

By the end of the year, all of the St. John’s clergy, departing, new, and remaining, each underwent significant transitions, in the midst of very challenging circumstances, and somehow the four of us and the parish made our way through it! It was interesting to be part of a clergy staff at the end of a 25-year pastorate, and then be part of a clergy staff on-boarding a brand new rector, one with a significantly different leadership style and approach to ministry. And, while my departure from the Air Force was filled with many mixed emotions, I am satisfied with the work that I offered to our nation’s service members and am looking forward this next chapter in my life and to what God has in store for all of us in 2021.

Deonna D. Neal, PhD.

Associate Rector

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES OF THE ENDOWMENT FUNDS
AND THE V. BONNEAU MURRAY TRUST

For the year ending December 31, 2020, the combined net return for the various trusts that we manage for the Church was 6.6%. We currently allocate 74% of our investments to equities/stocks and 26% to fixed income/bonds/cash. The 74% allocated to equity is further divided with approximately 80% invested in U.S. based companies and approximately 20% in non U.S. based companies.

Our objective is to achieve favorable long term risk adjusted returns compared to the appropriate indices to which we are exposed. Our exposure is best represented in the following indices with 2020 returns:

Indices Returns for 2020:

Dow Jones Industrial	9.72%
S&P 500	18.40%
MSCI EAFE	7.82%
Barclays US Gov/Credit Intermediate	6.43%

Below are the fund balances for the last four years.

	2020	2019	2018	2017
Endowment Fund	3,428,165.07	3,222,001.06	2,870,780.05	3,212,064.63
Consolidated Fund	2,542,953.57	2,448,594.75	2,224,341.71	2,404,543.27
Murray Trust	2,018,667.43	1,941,998.16	1,768,510.34	1,923,961.00
Cameron Trust	<u>448,923.38</u>	<u>438,672.02</u>	<u>395,445.41</u>	<u>435,787.33</u>
	8,438,709.45	8,051,265.99	7,259,077.51	7,976,356.23

St. John’s 2020 Trust Withdrawals

Withdrawals before end of year 2020:

Baldwin Annual Dist.	12,452.15
McLemore Scholarship	5,000.00
Endowment	162,308.28
Gallagher	16,257.43
Harmon	0.00
Hill	14,380.36
Maint. Upkeep	6,640.80
Paul Jones	1,349.99
George Jones	22,688.56
Murray	97,245.65
Rector's Discretionary	12,886.08
Reeder	2,286.78
Meadows	<u>14,088.43</u>
TOTAL	367,584.51

REPORT OF THE SENIOR WARDEN

My 7-year-old granddaughter says she is happy that I work for the church. She loves Sarah Collier's children's programs and attending worship. And because I'm usually on the door every time she attends, she thinks I'm full time here.

For 2020, she might think that we all work full time here. I think of it as the year of lay ministry. Transitioning to interim rector, Robert Wisnewski gradually passed the baton to the lay leadership as we searched for St. John's 16th rector. The search committee, chaired by Charlie Harris and Margaret Ann Selman, worked tirelessly to complete the rector search on schedule. As the pandemic continued, many of you took on new roles leading compline and online programs, finding new online communities in daily morning prayer, bible studies, and in Sunday and Wednesday rector forums and church school classes. You helped maintain a socially distanced worship space for in-person and live-streaming church services. Through prayer and various forms of ministry, you connected with each other to assist, console, and celebrate our life in the parish. For 2020, St. John's showed that the church is truly its people. Full time!

The acceptance of a call and arrival of John Leach as rector is quickly framing us for the next quarter century. The staff is functioning with clearly defined roles and objectives. Under John's guidance, the vestry undertook to restate and amend our 1949 and outdated corporate charter. It also adopted bylaws which codified the canons and our customs and practices into a single instrument, ensuring consistent application going forward.

The pandemic robbed us of all the traditions of saying goodbye to Robert and hello to John, and their families. In time, we will reconvene about that. But we adapted. Having to operate as their own transitioning committee, John and Sarah have seamlessly folded their families into our own, connecting with us in various and new ways.

Many thanks to Helen Wells for her 25 years of service as treasurer, and for her dedication and expertise which made work for the rest of us easy. We look forward to Richard Bradford's role as treasurer. He stepped in like he has been there all along.

The vestry was as dynamic and constructive a team as any before them. They were a model of how a church should conduct business. Always engaged and adept. And true to our church profile's description – revering our rich history while seeking a vibrant future in the ministry of God. With Radney Ramsey as senior warden and the stellar incoming vestry class, they will be even better. Thank you all, it was an honor and a great pleasure to serve with you.

Jimmy McLemore
Senior Warden

Organization	Amount
LEAD Education Foundation	\$2,000
Let God Arise Ministries	\$1,200
Medical Advocacy and Outreach	\$2,000
Medical Outreach Ministries	\$2,500
Mid-Alabama Coalition for the Homeless/Homeless Outreach Services	\$1,500
Mission Trip to Honduras (St John's)	\$10,000
Montgomery Area Council on Aging (MACOA)	\$12,000
Montgomery Christian School	\$1,355
Montgomery Education Foundation	\$2,000
Montgomery Habitat for Humanity	\$2,000
Montgomery Humane Society	\$3,000
New Beginnings Educational Center	\$2,000
Rebuilding Together Central Alabama	\$3,000
Renaissance Re-Entry Community	\$5,000
Respite Ministry at FUMC Montgomery	\$3,000
Resurrection Catholic Missions	\$1,500
Samaritan Counseling Center	\$2,000
Sawyerterville Work Project / Day Camp	\$5,000
Service Dogs Alabama	\$2,000
Specialized Alternatives for Families & Youth (SAFY)	\$2,000
That's My Child Youth Organization	\$2,500
Women in Training, Inc.	\$1,000
Women of Refined Gold, Inc.	\$500

Total Outreach funds awarded in 2020 - \$128,905

REPORT OF THE JUNIOR WARDEN

Dear Friends,

Wow, just wow. What a year 2020 turned out to be, certainly one we will never forget. To have the opportunity to serve St John’s as your Junior Warden and participate on the Search Committee that called John Leach as our new Rector were special opportunities indeed. To accomplish these duties in the midst of the Sars-Covid 19 pandemic made things all the more challenging. I will say that I am supremely proud of the parish and our handling of the entire situation. The “new normal” of pandemic induced schedules, routines, and outcomes that were both challenging and rewarding at the same time. But with God’s grace, we not only made it, but became stronger as well. I want to thank Robert Wisnewski for his amazing leadership the last twenty-five years, especially during the pandemic months. I wish him and Mary Ward all the best as they move on to the next amazing chapters of their lives. That said, it is a true pleasure to welcome John, Sarah, Poppy, and Ann Townsend Leach to our family. The future is so bright for us! As I have said before, I feel St John’s is poised to become the most vibrant, relevant, and active parish in the Alabama Diocese. John’s energy, wisdom, wit, and appreciation for “preaching the Gospel” are going to provide huge dividends for our beloved parish. Speaking of dividends, I am so excited that Deonna Neal has joined our staff full time. She is truly a gifted priest, and we are blessed to have her on our team. And speaking of teams, we are fortunate indeed to have such a fantastic staff from all aspects of church support; you all are the best! It has also been my absolute pleasure to advance my friendship and work side by side with Jimmy McLemore as Senior Warden. Jimmy’s undeniable love and dedication to St John’s are most inspiring. His steady leadership is unquestionable, and it’s truly been a pleasure to work and learn from him. I look forward to developing the same type of team relationship with Will Hill Tankersley. Will Hill is also a man of true character, who loves St John’s to the core. A huge shout out to all of our amazing Vestry members. What a great group of current, outgoing, and incoming members! We are blessed to have such solid, steady, and competent leadership in our Vestry. So bring on 2021 - what a year it should be! It will be my pleasure to be your next Senior Warden. Please reach out to me with any questions, concerns, comments, etc. I am always here for you. God bless us everyone.

Sincerely,

Radney Ramsey
Junior Warden

Organization	Amount
Absolutions Counseling Center, Inc.	\$1,250
Aid to Inmate Mothers	\$3,000
Alabama Writers Forum	\$2,000
All Saints - Todos Santos	\$500
Baptist Health Care Foundation / Camp Celebration	\$1,000
Brantwood Children's Home	\$3,000
Bridge Builders Alabama	\$3,000
Camp McDowell Special Session	\$4,000
Cancer Wellness Foundation of Central Alabama	\$3,000
Capital Area Adult Literacy Council	\$600
Catholic Social Services	\$1,500
Child Protect	\$3,000
Children's Center of Montgomery	\$2,500
Children's Harbor	\$1,000
Common Ground Montgomery	\$3,000
Dream Court, Inc.	\$3,000
Family Sunshine Center	\$2,000
Food for Kids Backpack Program	\$3,000
Fountain of Renewal	\$1,000
Friendship Mission Inc.	\$4,500
Girl Scouts of Southern Alabama	\$1,000
Girls on The Run	\$2,500
HandsOn River Region	\$2,000
Holy Comforter Episcopal Church Food Pantry	\$2,000
Hope Inspired Ministries	\$2,500
Hospice of Montgomery	\$1,500
Kid One Transport	\$1,500
King's Canvas Gallery and Studio	\$1,000

REPORT OF THE OUTREACH GRANTS COMMITTEE 2020

Despite the challenges and pain the pandemic has caused over the past ten months, one of the ways St Johns has remained a consistent and steady presence in the Montgomery Community is by providing financial assistance and aid to those that need it most. Our mission, from Mathew 25 “For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me” seems more poignant and relevant with each passing day.

This past year was a record year in terms of total outreach grants awarded - \$128,905 to fifty-one local non-profit organizations.

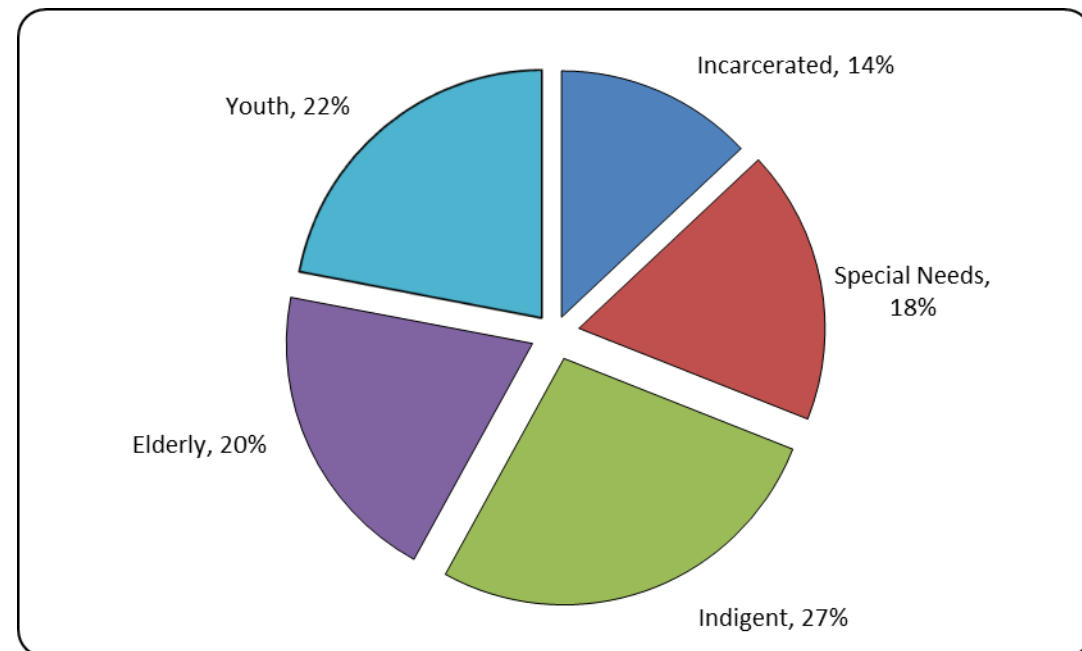
Speaking for the Outreach Committee, we remain grateful and appreciative of your support. We see firsthand how your financial support of St. Johns has a direct impact in our community. This past year, we had several new committee members join. Please don't wait for an invitation - if interested, we'd love to have you and will get started mid-summer. We are always looking for deserving organizations so please recommend and we will do our part.

2021 will offer new challenges and opportunities. One constant is that St. Johns will remain a beacon of hope and a steady presence to meet these challenges and embrace the opportunities that await us - exciting times!

Peace

Thank you!

Charlie Harris



REPORT OF THE CHILDREN’S CHRISTIAN FORMATION DIRECTOR

I am blessed to continue as Director of Children’s Christian Formation. This year has been challenging, but in a way I feel closer to everyone at church than ever before. St. John’s has an incredibly special group of children and families, and I enjoy seeing them all grow to love Christ. They bring happiness to my Sunday mornings, and I look forward to every time we are together (virtually or in-person). In addition, I would like to thank all the volunteers who help make this program successful. Their commitment and consistency have such an influence on our children. It is with much pleasure and gratefulness that I give this report.

On Sunday mornings, there are many activities for the children. This Fall, we began offering a virtual Sunday school class (for all children age birth-6th grade). Our Toddlers through Preschoolers meet for a very brief ZOOM session (9:00 am-9:15 am). During this time, they use a modified version of the “Play-n-Worship” curriculum, and they learn songs from the Alleluia II songbook. We incorporate videos, puppets, and crafts into these sessions. Each child (birth-5th grade) received a Sunday school curriculum bag, which includes a weekly lesson and craft. We incorporate these same lessons/crafts into our weekly ZOOM sessions.

Moreover, our Kindergarten through 2nd grade class is continuing to use Weaving God’s Promises. This is a 3-year curriculum, and many lessons have been updated with home connection pages, new crafts, games and even more. It is suggested to repeat the curriculum after the first 3 years, and it is designed to captivate children of all ages by including a variety of crafts and activities that follow the church year while weaving Episcopal tradition throughout every lesson. The 3rd-5th grade class is using the Lego curriculum titled “Building Faith Brick by Brick.” This is an imaginative way to explore the Bible with children. Each week they study a different lesson. Then, they are motivated to reconstruct the lesson using Lego bricks, figures and building plates. This is an exciting hands-on curriculum! Furthermore, the 6th grade actively 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 Kindergarten through 6th graders meet on ZOOM most Sunday mornings from 9:15-9:50 am. Once they are logged on, each age group is divided into individual breakout rooms (which are led by assigned Sunday school teachers).

In addition, our Children’s Chapel is continuing to grow! We could not meet in person during March through October; however, there was a special “Children’s Message” broadcasted on the St. John’s Facebook page. Each Sunday, children (and parents) could view a special message related to the gospel reading. We are now able to meet in person (during the 10:30 am service), and we have a large wooden sailboat where we sit together for worship and fun! Each week we participate in a Children’s Liturgy, setup our prayer table for a place of worship and incorporate picture books/read aloud(s) into our chapel. I often use www.storypath.com and www.sermon4kids.com as resources for Bible connections. I am delighted to be a part of St. John’s, and I look forward to even more exciting activities in 2021!

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

Children’s Lenten Series- “Fishers of Men”- Each week we learned about different ways to care for other others and how to be true “fishers of people.” We studied our Baptismal Covenant, and we conducted several on-site outreach activities.

Easter and Summer Goody Bags- We could not be together at church, so each child was delivered special bags with fun and meaningful activities.

Wednesday ZOOM with Mrs. Sarah- Children of all ages were invited to meet each Wednesday (4:00-5:00 pm). This was a fun way to stay connected during quarantine. Many themes included Show and Tell, virtual scavenger hunt, virtual field trip (to Zoo), Nailed It (baking competition) etc.

Children’s ZOOM Sunday school- Starting this Fall, all children were invited to participate in Sunday school

ZOOM. Each week, they are delivered a special prize for participation.

Children and Family Compline- A different family/child helps lead Compline each Sunday at 7:00 pm. They use the book titled, “Candle Walk, A Bedtime Prayer to God.” Each video is uploaded to the St. John’s Face-book page.

Weekly Children’s Message- We could not meet in-person (for Children’s Chapel) during the months of March through October. A special children’s message (related to the gospel reading) would be uploaded to the St. John’s Facebook page.

Confirmation Sunday- Our 6th grade children graduated from Confirmation class and were confirmed by Bishop Glenda Curry as member of our church! This was a private service for the immediate families of the children.

Blessing of the Backpacks

Blessing of the Animals- Each pet received a special blessing from a priest. We were joined by the Montgomery Zoo and collected donations for the Humane Society.

Riddles and Giggles- This was our Fall Wednesday night event- All children were invited to meet on ZOOM to share silly riddles and giggles!

All Saint’s Procession Advent Wreath Making- We did not meet for an in-person event; however, all families were invited to pick up the supplies. Families lighting the Advent Wreath at the 10:30 service

Las Posadas- Mary and Joseph visit with families during Advent

Christmas Angel Tree Outreach- We adopted a total of 17 families through Christmas Clearinghouse. Thank you to all who participated!

Annual Christmas Pageant- This year we created a “virtual” pageant. Our three Confirmation children met in-person to record the pageant, and we incorporated pictures of all other characters/children in their costumes!

Salvation Army Christmas Toys- All members were invited to bring new toys on Christmas Eve- All toys were delivered to the Salvation Army for children in need.

Installation of a new playground- This spring we installed a new playground! The new items include a twirly slide, swing set and mulch. We plan to add a new seesaw to the playground in 2021!

The Eagle continues to include materials for parents. In addition, we have a Facebook page “St. John’s Children’s Christian Formation”, and we use Instagram. All of these include information and photos of our children at St. John’s.

We currently have six 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. Our nursery staff is remarkable, and they make Sunday mornings so special for our young children and families!

I am blessed to be a part of St. John’s. Each child and family are dear to my heart, and I am thrilled to have this opportunity to share Christ’s love with you all! May the New Year bring you all much joy!

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Collier

Director of Children’s Christian Formation

Virginia Bannister

Wedding Guild Coordinator

Pastoral Care: Through a network of text messages, emails and phone calls, the monthly teams continued providing meals to parishioners who were ill and recovering from surgery. We welcomed John and Sarah Leach and daughters to their new home with a week’s meals while they moved into their new house. While COVID restrictions require limited participation, members of the committee stay in touch with parishioners on a regular basis.

The handbook for Pastoral Care procedures was updated and distributed to all Team Captains.

Elizabeth Via Brown

Pastoral Care Committee Co-Chair

Receptions: Christy Anderson, co-chairman of the Reception Committee, took advantage of her COVID-imposed vacation and compiled a detailed inventory of every dish, tablecloth, basket and piece of silver used for various ECW receptions. She has re-organized all the storage closets and we will strive to keep them in perfect order.

Christy Anderson

Receptions Co-Chair

Archives : Although unable to meet in person March-August, the committee did work from their homes completing the digital database so that every item in the archives has now been been inventoried. With his considerable knowledge of church history, Fred Matthews was welcomed as a new committee member and finished updating the memorial gifts file. Also, the gifts from the now-closed Holy Cross School have been catalogued, organized and displayed in the hall outside the Archives. The shelves and cabinets in the two rooms that comprise the Archives have been labeled making them more user friendly. The committee is also working on a brochure for visitors to St. John’s parishioners.

Melissa Carter

Archives Representative

Respectively submitted by

Elizabeth Via Brown

Publications/Communications Coordinator ECW

The Flower Guild is very appreciative of all the help Mike Jarrell, Myron Smoke and Jud George provide during the year.

Jean Smyth

Flower Guild Representative

Daughters of the King: (DOK) is an international order for laywomen who take a simple vow of prayer and service. The DOK chapter at St. John’s was chartered twenty-six years ago and currently has twenty-three members. All members are engaged in various areas of St. John’s and the community.

Typically, DOK has a monthly luncheon meeting scheduled after the 10:30 Sunday service. However, no in-person meetings have been held since February 2020 due to the pandemic, but members continue to engage daily in prayer. Prayer requests remain confidential within the Order. Many DOK prayer cards have also been sent to parishioners and friends for whom prayers have been requested.

The current officers of St. John’s DOK are:

President: Debbie Schremser; Vice President: Melissa Carter; Secretary: BeeLee Tullos

Anyone interested in becoming a member of DOK, have questions or prayer requests, may contact Debbie Schremser by text at 306-2043 or email at dschremser@bellsouth.net

Debbie Schremser

DOK Representative

Avis & All Angels: The new year began with a wine tasting social with Ted the Wine Guy providing instruction on a variety of wines. The next scheduled guild activity was a Lenten lunch, which was cancelled due to COVID. All guild activities were on hold for the remainder of the year.

Christy Anderson

Avis & All Angles Representative

Mary & Martha Guild: After meeting in person in January, the Guild was not been able to be together as a group again for the year. It also had to drastically curtail its involvement in the Backpack Program it sponsors at Carver High School, in which non-perishable foodstuffs are provided to students whose families’ incomes are below the poverty line. The Guild did collect school supplies from the parish to give to students attending class virtually and plans to continue that ministry in 2021.

J.R. Marshall/Ellen Habermacher

Mary & Martha Representatives

Wedding Guild: The Wedding Guild is responsible for assisting the Rector in making sure all weddings in the church run smoothly and are according to liturgical propriety. Guild volunteers assist in the logistics of the rehearsal, organizing the bridal party processional, informing the Altar Guild and Flower Guild of details, assisting lectors, facilitating the ringing of the bells and answering general questions from the bridal party. The Guild also serves as hosts for families and guests attending the wedding.

Due to COVID restrictions, there was only one small wedding at St. John’s in 2020. Charlotte Walker, a current member of the Vestry, and Jud George, a member of the church’s maintenance staff, were married in early December.

Currently, a new questionnaire for the bride and wedding party is being developed by the Rector and Guild chairman.

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF YOUTH MINISTRIES

2020 was the hardest year we have had but, through this difficult year I would like to give a great big “Thank You” to the EYC advisers, parents, and clergy. I’d also like to thank the EYC volunteers who have been supportive and willing to go the extra mile.

I am very proud of all the accomplishments we have achieved this past year. As a group we have completed many zoom calls, enjoyed fellowship with one another while maintaining social distance, and we have grown deeper in our relationships with God. Learning how to study the Bible while also learning how to be more attentive to our friends and families was also accomplished.

On Sunday evenings we dove head first into a new curriculum about Diversity. These lessons broke down all the ways teenagers are different. Opened up and gave the opportunity for all the teenagers to talk about how it feels to be different and how we can support one another through these challenges. On Wednesdays the youth met alongside other local EYC groups for Coffice at Café Louisa. This is a great opportunity for the youth to spend time with students who are at different schools and of different age groups.

St. John’s has a wonderful group of youth. They are talented, unique, energetic, and an important crucial part of the presence at St. John’s. We all spent time this year reflecting on what matters most to all of us and how in times of confusion and challenges God is always present for us. We all faced the new challenge of deciding what we find to be important and what we take for granted. 2020 was a year of growth for everyone, but especially the youth. We had difficult conversations about our safety and the world around us. We had many lessons on what makes us different and unique and how that effects the people around us.

Once again, I would like to say thank you all for the support that I have received over the past year. I’d like to give a HUGE thank you to Ryan Branton for his dedication and time for the youth group. We all know how crazy this year has been and Ryan has still managed to donate his time, effort, and money to our wonderful teenagers.

***Peace,
Joleen George
Director of Youth Ministries***

REPORT OF THE MUSIC DIRECTOR

2020 began as most other years have with the choir, instrumentalists and congregation participating in the services through hymns, anthems and instrumental contributions. As the coronavirus has done throughout all aspects of life, it has affected our music. That effect on music was felt in mid-March of 2020 when the Diocese took the necessary step of closing churches in order to mitigate the spread of disease in Alabama. This was just as Lent began. It affected Easter and has affected the approach to music through the remainder of the year, even as the church began to cautiously re-open to public worship in September.

It became known early in the viral spread that singing, and specifically singing in groups together, is one of the most effective ways to spread this virus. Because of that fact, the church has not sung hymns in worship nor the choir functioned since mid-March.

Additionally, in order to minimize time in the building and potential spread through air-handlers and general contact, the services have been truncated down to the most essential elements. This has naturally and necessarily affected music offered in the services.

For the majority of the year since March, due to the fact that communion was suspended, the instrumentalists' contribution to the services was minimal and often non-existent. As communion was re-introduced in October, the instrumentalists were brought back into the services.

The organ is in good shape with only minor predictable problems that would naturally occur. The choir continues not to function. Soloists have handled the singing functions on behalf of the congregation throughout the year.

Congregational singing is suspended. Even though it is still very different, my goal has been to maintain the sound of the services as closely as possible to how the services sounded before COVID-19 invaded our lives.

Time and health constraints, together with personal health concerns among various musicians have presented a challenge in scheduling but also a surprisingly enjoyable opportunity to think creatively about how to manage music in a much different way than I would ever have expected to think about it or create it. I am extremely grateful to the instrumentalists and singers who have stepped out into a very different environment to make music at St. John's this past year.

Going forward, I anticipate that we will be functioning in this same environment through much of 2021. It is not yet clear what effect a vaccine will have in returning life and musical practice to how it looked prior to March 2020. Also, it is possible that at the other end of this health threat we may see that there are ways to improve what we had been doing before we encountered it. If that happens, it will be because we have been forced to think about our presentations differently. If there is anything positive to gain from this health threat, it is that.

Musicians in the churches, as is the case throughout all the arts, have been forced to re-think how we practice our art. This is not altogether a bad thing, but it has changed the arts. In my opinion has changed them permanently.

Due to the fact that choirs are mostly volunteer organizations, and even under the best of conditions require weekly rehearsals together, it is my opinion that choirs throughout the Nation (whether in churches, schools, Universities, symphonies, or civic volunteer groups) must undergo a multi-year re-building process. Above all other arts groups, it is my opinion that choirs have been most damaged and will be the most difficult to re-build. I am convinced that will be the case for St. John's as well.

I am grateful for the leadership of the Diocese, the clergy, the vestry and the staff with whom I work. I say specifically and sincerely that I have seen character, kindness, and patience on unique display during a time that could invite exactly the opposite in lesser people.

Respectfully,
Joel Gregory

REPORT OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN (ECW)

A new slate of officers and excitement for upcoming plans launched the year with Debbie Schremser being installed as the new president. After its first meeting in January, the ECW had to discontinue its in-person meetings until we were able to meet again in November with safety precautions in place.

Because of the limited activities undertaken by the ECW, the members of the Executive Board have agreed to remain in place for another year to continue with plans begun in 2020.

Though we did not meet in person, we continued to work on and complete several long-term goals. In 2020, the ECW --

- Completed the revision of an ECW manual of Policies and Procedures and distributed them to the members of the Board.
- Canceled the much-anticipated fall bazaar but are planning for an even bigger event in 2021.
- Canceled the Spring Picnic and Fall Ladies' Night but hope to continue them in some form soon.
- Established a permanent office on the second floor of the Education Building to house Policy and Procedure manuals and Bazaar information and to provide a workstation for the Executive Board.
- Designed a tri-fold brochure outlining the activities and programs for newcomers and volunteers, which will be available in the spring.

Altar Guild: Up until regular church services were suspended March 13, the Altar Guild continued to prepare for two Sunday services and three weekday services. When Morning Prayer began being broadcast on YouTube and Facebook, the Guild continued to change the candles and the altar dressings proper for the seasons. On All Saints Sunday, limited Holy Eucharist with bread only began for Rite I at 7:30 and Rite II at 10:30 with the Guild adapting to various protocols achieved by the Rector and Chuck Moore, Guild chairman.

Only one Guild member serves at each service to achieve social distancing and all sanitary precautions are in place, including the wearing of masks and gloves. Until he could train an additional five members, Chuck has handled all the services alone, including all of the Christmas services.

Kitty Coleman

Altar Guild Representative

Flower Guild: This year the responsibilities of the Flower Guild have been drastically curtailed by the COVID-19 pandemic but in normal times, the Guild is responsible for arranging the altar flowers for the Sunday services each week. After the services, Guild members dismantle and rearrange the flowers into smaller vases for delivery to parishioners who are in the hospital, a nursing home or on the prayer list.

This year Sarah Spratling and a few of the Flower Guild members arranged flowers for the altar at Easter and on All Saints Sunday, as well as scaled back Christmas decorations for the Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services.

Mary Helen Mahan is in charge of scheduling Flower Guild members and Valerie Wilkerson is responsible for scheduling the Flower Delivery Team, when we return to a regular schedule. Kitty Coleman orders the cut flowers for the altar arrangements and Sarah Spratling provides design and creative assistance, especially at Easter and Christmas.