



St. John's

EPISCOPAL CHURCH ✝ DECATUR, ALABAMA

2021 Annual Report

Presented at the Annual Meeting—January 23, 2022

Rector's Report

The Rev. Chase D. Ackerman

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ!

Up, Down, Backward, Forward, In-Person, Virtual, Masks, No Masks, Delta, Omicron...it seems like everything in our world has been one big roller coaster of change these past two years. When we welcomed in 2021, our eyes were fixed firmly on the future and the expectation of a return to normalcy. However, as we all remember, it took less than a week into the new year to remind us that the world we live in is far from perfect, and some of the institutions and ideas we always assumed to be solid and unchanging, are in fact susceptible to change just like everything else. There was a time, if you can remember, when seeing someone walking around wearing a mask would have made us stop and wonder why? There was a time when someone could cough or sneeze in a crowded store without those around them glancing and wondering if they were sick. If there is anything this past year has taught us, it is that we are human, and we live in a world that is as predictable as North Alabama weather.

However, through it all, I have continued to be amazed and encouraged by the grace and faithfulness of this parish. When we were not able to meet in person, we smoothly transitioned to meeting virtually. When guidance dictated that we wear masks, we wore masks. Each and every step of the way, I have seen nothing but true love of neighbor from each and every one of you, and for that I am truly thankful.

The Catechism in the Book of Common Prayer states that the mission of the Church “is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ.” That is the only reason St. John's Church exists, and it should define all that we do. Because we are human, we look for ways to quantify and evaluate whether or not we are succeeding in our mission. Based solely on numbers, St. John's is very healthy indeed. Despite a year in pandemic, we have increased our membership, exceeded all previous years' financial pledge amounts, added fifteen first-time pledge units, and are offering more opportunities for children, youth, and adult formation than we have in the recent past, including weekly Wednesday-evening dinner and programs for all ages. These accomplishments have only been made possible through the hard work and dedication of our wonderful staff, vestry, lay ministry leaders, and volunteers. It also goes without saying that the addition of the Rev. Sarah Watts as our Associate Rector has been a blessing to our church, and she has already demonstrated her unwavering passion for spreading the Gospel!

As we look forward to 2022, I am encouraged by the renewed energy surrounding both our outreach and in-reach ministries, and I urge you to prayerfully consider how God might be calling you to serve, be it out in our community or within our church walls. A point of contact is listed with every ministry's report for a reason – contact them! There is no job that is too small, and there is no act of service that goes unnoticed.

Sisters and brothers, God has blessed us with innumerable blessings at St. John's. Through the ups and downs, comings and goings, being together and being apart, the Holy Spirit has continued to thrive in and among you all. Even amidst all of the changes and chances of our lives, the eternal changelessness of God will never fade. It is a joy and an honor to be your Rector, and I ask that you keep me in your prayers, as you are in mine.

Chase+

Associate Rector's Report

The Rev. Sarah E. Watts

As I am just marking my seventh month of being at St. John's, I would, first and foremost, like to say how very thankful I am to have the opportunity to be here with all of you. I find myself continually in awe of the Gospel work we all do together and the ways in which our community gives me glimpses of the Kingdom of God present here on earth every single day. Needless to say, these last months truly have been a great blessing, and I am looking forward to what the future will bring in the next months and years.

During these last months, I have had the chance to work closely with our Lay Eucharistic Visitors, our Outreach Committee, some of our youth and parents, and those taking Education for Ministry, and I am truly thankful for all of the time and effort so many have poured into these ministries.

Our team of five Lay Eucharistic Visitors (LEVs) is dedicated to visiting those within our community who are not able to physically join us at church. Over the last few months, our list has changed and morphed and grown as needs have arisen, and I am so thankful for this team's flexibility and dedication to this ministry. Over the past year (really in the past seven months), they have been sent out from our congregation bearing communion for a total of at least 30 visits which is a testament to their dedication. In addition to this ministry, many volunteers have been delivering Wednesday-night dinners to those on our LEV list week-in and week-out, delivering a total of 53 meals to 9 households thus far. I am so thankful for these volunteers as they have been integral in keeping those who cannot come to our gatherings connected (and well-fed!). Caring for one another in our times of need is a hallmark of building a caring and uplifting community in Christ, and I am so thankful for all who take part in these ministries.

I have also had the opportunity to work quite a bit with Grant Thompson, the chair of our Outreach Committee. I have thoroughly enjoyed dreaming with him about the future of Outreach at St. John's and remain in awe of his energy and faithfulness to our outreach ministries. I am thrilled to report that we have successfully put together an Outreach Committee that is already hard at work prayerfully evaluating the 29 grant applications we received from local non-profits this year. I would ask that you keep this committee in your prayers as they continue their work over the course of the next few weeks and months. For more information regarding their work, please see Grant Thompson's Outreach Report below.

I am also pleased to report that we were able to help a number of other organizations in other ways over the past year. For instance, we were able to feed lunch to about 40 people at Hands Across Decatur in July and a group from St. John's provided Snack Baskets to the staff at Decatur Morgan Hospital in September. Finally, the congregation took part in stocking Banks-Caddell's supply closet in September, donating personal hygiene items to the CCC in October, and gifting shoes to children at the Boys and Girls Clubs in November and December. As a result of all of this good work, I remain in awe of the dedication and generosity of this parish.

From a Christian Education perspective, I have had the opportunity to spend time with our high school girls, our parents, and those taking Education for Ministry over the course of the fall semester. Each Tuesday morning five of our high school girls gather together for breakfast and Bible Study and on Thursday afternoons two of our high school girls gather together for an afterschool snack and Bible Study. Last fall we discussed *The Five Love Languages of Teenagers* as well as The Enneagram, and both studies helped all of us get to know ourselves and each other better which will be particularly helpful as we now begin to turn our attention to big theological questions.

As far as adult education goes, our Parents' Sunday School class has discussed various theological topics, *The Five Love Languages of Children*, and we are now discussing questions from *Episcopal Questions, Episcopal Answers*. Our current study has given us the chance to not only discuss our own theology but also discuss how we would answer questions brought to us by children who are discovering and exploring their own faith. Finally, I am pleased to report that Sandy Barr and I were able to begin an Education for Ministry (EfM) cohort once again this year. We currently have

six people (5 Year Ones and 1 Year Two) alongside Sandy and I who spend our Sunday afternoons eating together, discussing our Holy Scriptures, and engaging in Theological Reflection. I am grateful for Sandy's dedication to this program as well as for our six members who not only read challenging material each week but who show up ready to share their hearts and minds with all of us.

It has been a wonderfully full seven months with all of you, and I remain entirely grateful for every moment. As I said earlier, it has been such a blessing to be here at St. John's, and I cannot wait to journey with you all over the next months and years.

Sarah+

Wardens' Report

Bingham Edwards, Senior Warden

Bobby Straub, Junior Warden

While 2021 was a year of submersion, emersion, and submersion again into Covid-19, it was also a year of recovery and accomplishment. St. John's ended 2021 with revitalized hope and as a stronger church body. As proof of this hope and strength, let us recap the year:

1. In January 2021, our Sunday services were being held virtually on Facebook but with a hope to reopen our services by Easter.
2. A year ago, we were just finishing rebuilding St. John's main stained-glass window. (We recognized that the next major project was protecting the 18 individual stained-glass windows throughout the church building.) In January last year, members of the parish spent many hours repairing 34 items around the church and the Episcopal Center.
3. St. John's ended its 2021stewardship drive with an increased pledge amount over the year 2020.
4. St. John's Capital Campaign was wrapping up its fourth year with a balance on the ServisFirst loan of \$94,728 and \$280,000 owing to our Trust Fund.
5. Our Annual Parish Meeting in January was held on Zoom.
6. The Diocesan Convention in late January was held on Zoom with over 350 attending. Chase, one of the youngest priests in the Diocese, was elected to a three-year term on the Diocesan Council (the "Vestry" for the Diocese).
7. In February, people began receiving COVID-19 vaccines. For St. John's Ash Wednesday celebration, ashes were mailed to each parishioner.
8. March 14, 2021, St. John's reopened its services with reservations (maximum capacity of 70), masks, contact tracing sheets, and temperature checks all required.
9. In April, thirteen people participated in CPR training and in the use of our Automatic External Defibrillator (located in the acolyte robing room).
10. In May and June, St. John's continued to reopen activities of the parish family, with dinner-on-the-grounds, and Cursillo Ultreyas.
11. St. John's bells were repaired in May 2021, resulting in all three bells working, rather than only one, for the first time in several years.
12. In mid-May, reservations were no longer required, and all pews were open for seating. Masks were optional for the fully vaccinated and temperature checks were no longer made.
13. Our Associate Rector, the Rev. Sarah Watts, was ordained a Deacon and began serving St. John's on June 15.
14. Theology on Tap resumed in July 2021, on the first Thursday of each month.
15. The Vestry adopted the Diocesan Alcohol Policy allowing beer and wine to be served in the Parish Hall in accordance with the Facility Use Agreement.
16. The Parish Workday on August 14, 2021, was very successful.

17. As we continued to reopen in October, St. John's held its Blessing of the Animals, Parish Picnic and the Halloween Carnival. In November, we held the Chili and Cornbread Cookoff, and the Simply Divine Bake Sale. St. John's also reopened all of its services and activities and mask were no longer required of anyone.
18. In November and December, the annual Advent Wreath Workshop, Pancake Breakfast, and Lessons & Carols were held. Year-round Wednesday-night dinners were instituted for the first time at St. John's. Sarah's ordination to the priesthood was held at the Cathedral Church of the Advent in Birmingham and a charter bus transported St. John's parishioners.
19. In December, our Stewardship campaign was the most successful in St. John's history with over 143 pledging units.
20. On December 31, following Bishop Curry's guidance, we encouraged masking for church services and other indoor activities as we were inundated by the potent Covid-19 Omicron variant. However, no activities of the church have been cancelled so far and our hope is that this setback is temporary.

St. John's has survived the pandemic thus far and in fact we have thrived. We have become a closer and more complete church because of everyone sacrificing together. In no small part, this is as a result of those parishioners who teach, cook, create beautiful flowers, tend the altar, and participate in St. John's outreach programs. A special thanks to Foster, Janet, Lauren, and our outstanding choir for enhancing our worship.

St. John's has a business side, and we want to thank those who help run that side of the church: our Treasurer, D Hall and our Vestry Clerk, Kathy Stoner (who are leaving those offices after serving for many years); Chancellor, office staff, office volunteers, and the Vestry. Six members are rotating off the Vestry: Bobby Greene, Dodie Hall, Bob Ledbetter, Betty Weaver, Cortner Crumlish (Youth Representative), and Bingham Edwards. We thank all of you for your service.

It has been an honor for us to serve St. John's this past year as your Wardens. As a Warden, you have a much closer contact with our priests than you would as a parishioner or even as a Vestry member. It has been a personal blessing to work alongside Father Ackerman and Mother Watts. We have found them to be capable and caring although hindered by Covid in some of their activities. On a personal note, your Senior Warden will greatly miss this close contact as he rotates off the Vestry.

Director of Youth Ministries Report (7th - 12th grades)

Zach Redfield

2021 was a big year in the Youth Ministry of St. John's, although it was a complicated one. It is hard to remember what happened even a year ago, as we were all back to socially distancing, streaming church, and met digitally for this meeting. Our youth, having briefly been back to meeting in person, were understandably put out by a return to Zoom EYC, but we managed to make it through to a summer where distancing and masking restrictions were relaxed.

This let us meet for a river day, a mission week in where we partnered with Westminster Presbyterian, and even a Lock-in! The youth who joined us had a blast on these fun activities growing closer to God and to one another. We capped our summer off with our messy kick-off day, a chance for Youth and Club 56 members to gather together for a slip-n-slide, unicorn duels, and water balloon fights as we welcomed both new and old members of our community in for another school year!

We have had 2 big innovations this past year in meeting with youth, the first being Jesus and Java. Sometimes referred to as Coffice Hours around the office, this is a no pressure fellowship opportunity for our youth every Friday after school until 5 p.m. at Highpoint Market. During this time youth are able to drop by for fun and fellowship and stay for a short while, a long while, or as most who come the whole time! The casual nature of this meeting has let our youth customize the length of their involvement to their own comfort levels as we continue to navigate the current pandemic today.

Our second innovation has been the start of a Highschool Girls' Bible Study! With many of our busy youth having entered high school during this pandemic, Mother Sarah saw a need and met them where they were. The group has two opportunities to meet a week, one before school on Tuesday mornings and one after school on Thursday afternoons. The response has been amazing and has caused us to rethink the ways we are doing ministry!

Club 56 had a rocky start when we launched it this summer, but it is doing much better now! This bridging program between the Children's and Youth Ministries has suffered a little from confusion but appears to be hitting its stride under new leadership. Alana Haughaboo and Sue Powell have stepped up to lead this program as of the start of 2022, and I'm so excited to see the program grow under their leadership!

Moving into 2022 brings a few excellent opportunities, namely interest based small groups and the re-launch of our Journey to Adulthood Program! This Lent will mark the start of a series of interest based small groups, opportunities for you the members of our parish to share your talents and passion with the younger generation as a way to help the youth bond with the parish at large. Our goal is to build community through shared interests in a way that meets youth when they are to accommodate for busy schedules. Journey to Adulthood will bring back Rite-13 to our church, along with the pilgrimage, and a rewritten program for older highschoolers.

None of this would be possible without our excellent volunteers who have pitched in to help along the way! I want to thank Samantha Burkett, Emily Nazarchyk, Lana Redfield, Mother Sarah, Pat Price, Jennifer Jackson, Sue Powell, Alana Haughaboo, and Betty Weaver, for jumping in to volunteer with our youth during meetings this year; this program could not happen without you! I also want to thank our Youth Shareholders committee of Erin Lokken, Sarah Arnette, Alana Haughaboo, Samantha Burkett, Pat Price, and our Clergy for the support and guidance they have brought to our programs this year! Lastly, I want to thank Cortner Crumlish for serving as our Youth Vestry Representative this year.

Speaking of our wonderful volunteers, we have a few opportunities for you to get involved! If you feel called to teach, we are looking for teachers, both lead and assisting, for our J2A program starting in Lent. You may also have noticed that we are beginning interest based small groups soon. The goal of these small groups is to help bond our youth together and to the parish. In order to do this, I will need the help of wonderful volunteers like you! We each have a collection of hobbies, whether it's fishing, hiking, painting, or any number of other things. If you would be willing to share your talent and passion with the EYC in a small group setting, especially if your passions lie in cooking, baking, arts, theater, or fiber crafts, please reach out to me at zach@stjohnsdecatur.org or (256) 698-3781 so we can talk about getting you plugged in!

All in all, I am so excited to continue working with each and every one of you and look forward to more and more members of our parish getting involved in our EYC as we move into a new and bright future!

Director of Children's Ministries Report (Nursery - 6th grade)

Sally Marsh

This year started much as December 2020 ended, children's instruction was still being held remotely. Our door drops of formational activities became more seasonal but contained more items. Godly Play was still being offered via Facebook with the help of St. Matthew's, Madison, St. Luke's Scottsboro, and St. Thomas, Huntsville became part of our Godly Playground School. Between the four churches, God's unending love was shared with 95 students.

St. John's sponsored a Mardi Gras Mask contest. ¼ sheets of foam board were provided with a standard mask shape traced on them. Children, their families, and the parish were invited to decorate a mask, returning them in time to be judged by the parish. The winners would be announced on Ash Wednesday. There were over 12 submissions, and many parish members braved the cold, rainy weather to submit their votes. It was nice to have a fun event with the parish. The staff started to make moves to open the doors to St. John's once again (after a short pause on in-person meetings). Easter Day the children of St. John's were invited to an Easter Egg Hunt on the lawn of the church.

Children's Church was started again and met in the Parish Hall where we could continue to keep our distance. I must admit I was glad to see our children again. The school year ended, and our focus changed to Vacation Bible School and how that would look. It was decided to hold a two-day event over the weekend. The community was invited to join us, and a small group of 27 children gathered to learn about Moses' Wilderness Escape. During the months of June and July, children were invited to Formation in the Park. We gathered at local parks to learn about our shared Episcopal faith. We held a Back-to-Bash cookout and tie-dye as a summer wrap up and school kick-off.

August started the new school year with in-person formation. We were happy to continue Godly Play with the help of several dedicated storytellers and doorkeepers. Pre-school lessons from *Growing Up for God* started being offered on a weekly basis and new faces began attending. Our Halloween Carnival was offered with no restrictions to the public. Advent wreaths were made, and our children's Christmas Eve pageant was shared during the 5 p.m. service. Life started getting back to some sort of pre-Covid rhythm.

The life and rhythm of the church is returning but one of the frustrations that not just I but many in Children's Ministries are experiencing is that families are not returning to church. Be it from getting out of the habit or fear of being exposed more than what they already are from public school, children, and their families are not returning. As we come to the end of this Covid life, I look forward to offering fun events where the children and their families can once again gather and strengthen our relationships as family.

Director of Communications Report

Ann Stewart

St. John's continues to be a leader in the Diocese in communications and technology! We offer many different vehicles to keep our congregation and the community informed:

- Weekly Newsletter
- Single-Topic Emails
- Parish-Wide Mailings
- Sunday Announcements
- Website
- Social Media - Facebook, YouTube, Instagram
- iTunes and Google Play Podcasts for Sermons
- Zoom Video Conferencing
- Church Life Directory App

Since March 15, 2020, due to COVID-19 restrictions, St. John's has provided a livestreamed worship service with an online bulletin each Sunday from our Facebook page. A recording of each service made available on our YouTube channel. Livestreaming will continue indefinitely. With improvements to internet speeds and regular maintenance of the equipment, streaming continues to be of good quality—never as good as being in church.

Offering the livestream takes a team of volunteers. Those helping to share the good news on a rotating Sunday morning schedule are Sarah Arnette, Dodie Hall, Ann Stewart, and Kevin Wilson. I am grateful for their time and dedication! The Media Ministry is a great opportunity for high school age and up to share skills or learn new ones. We are always seeking volunteers to learn the church audio-video system and to operate the system on a rotating Sunday schedule. If you are interested in training or just to see if this were something you would like to do in 2022, please reach out to Ann Stewart in the church office.

Our church website remains a place not only for visitors but for parishioners. Our "church at home" and other web pages—contact with the office staff, online giving, links accessing worship services, children and youth events, and online church directory—provide ease of access to staying connected with each other and the broader community.

In 2021, St. John's presence in the community took on many different venues. Several volunteers spent a September afternoon during the annual PACT Touch-A-Truck fundraiser saying hello to the community and handing out bags of goodies along with water bottles, church business cards, and information about our Beans and Rice Ministry and the upcoming Blessing of the Animals event. *The Decatur Daily* featured St. John's Simply Divine Holiday Bake Sale in November, and women from the church were highlighted in the December *Decatur-Morgan Living 50 Plus* magazine. Other newspaper appearances were from the pet section where Chase and Jeanne Ackerman and their dog, Sophie, and Nick and Julia Roth and their three dogs made headlines. St. John's was also spotted in the Decatur Jaycees Christmas Parade. The year ended with a sponsored tree in the Enchanted Forest of Decatur where visitors could write prayer requests and notes of gratitude to hang on the tree. Over thirty notes were placed on the tree! We are excited to be working on an ad to be placed in the 2022 *Explore Decatur-Morgan* magazine "Places of Worship" section! This is THE free tourism magazine that reaches new people moving into the area. It is given out by the Tourism Bureau in welcome packages as well as being available in hotel rooms, places to eat, and many other places in the community. Look for the new issue in March!

Many visible improvements have been made over the last year. Our on-site server was removed, and the office staff computers were transitioned to MS Office 365 Business Premium for Non-Profits which provides free access up to 10 users. The staff has access to Office desktop applications, cloud file-storage and sharing, advanced security features, the ability to work from anywhere, and more. Additional Wi-Fi access points were installed downstairs giving virtual options for the children and youth programs, choir, and other classrooms. Goals for the future include adding hearing assist devices for the church, expanding our audio-video capabilities to St. Mary's Chapel and the Parish Hall, and continuing to be a visible and supportive partner in our community. May 2022 be the best year for hearing and sharing the Good News!

Outreach Report

Grant Thompson

A mentor shared with me years ago a phrase about life in ministry I'll never forget: "The church needs to leave the building."

For nearly two years, we have witnessed the impact of the pandemic lay bare stress points in our society in ways none of us could have predicted. Not just weaknesses in our public health infrastructure, but also how public health impacts education, area non-profits being able to serve and fundraise, our local economy, and the role of the church just to name a few examples. The experience has given us as proclaimers of Jesus the chance – the circumstances unfortunate – to reflect on how we can deepen our support of our neighbors and the community.

St. John's has a rich history of serving in our community, and I am appropriately proud at our work while recognizing we can always grow. As you may know, our parish administers a good portion of our outreach support in the form of a grant application process, where area non-profits and ministries within the parish submit applications which are evaluated by a committee of parishioners. Groups with whom we have already established relationships submit a request for funding (usually no more than a few thousand dollars) that support an initiative or operations within their organization that impact locally and reflect the reconciling love of Christ in the Gospels. In spring of 2021, the committee approved grants for 10 non-profits and parish ministries in the amount of \$39,200, which was approximately 4.58% percent of our parish operating budget while our entire Outreach Budget (which includes our Diocesan Contribution, Sawyerville, Seminary Support, Episcopal Center Expenses, and the Community Garden) totaled 15.62% of our overall budget. Friends, that is incredible work!

In fall of 2021 and under the guidance of Mother Sarah, our parish made changes to the grant process to be more inclusive in our work moving forward. First, the makeup of the evaluation committee provides more structure and opportunity for a greater number of parishioners to be involved. It features the three members of the Vestry's outreach subcommittee, six diverse at-large members from the parish who have expressed interest in serving and

who will rotate on and off the committee in three-year terms, a clergy representative, and a committee chair. The goal of rotating members is to utilize the vast experiences and passion of our parishioners, providing more people the chance to serve, and building new lay leaders in our church. Second, this fall we expanded the number of organizations we invited to submit a grant application, which is an incredible chance to develop new relationships in our community and impact our neighbors in different ways – both financially and with new awareness of volunteer opportunities. Third, the application process is now online. While requiring a bit more work on the front end, the move streamlines the administrative and evaluation processes and helps the committee be more efficient with its time. I'm indebted to Mother Sarah for shepherding the committee through these changes that will strengthen the process for years to come.

The parish received applications from 29 organizations in the fall of 2021 – which is the most we have ever received – and the committee is currently evaluating each submission for distribution later this year. Once that process is complete, the committee will share with the parish the results of our work, where our resources are meeting needs in our community, and a path for what's next. Also, based on early numbers in the stewardship and budgeting process, the parish will potentially have more to distribute to our outreach partners than ever. Personally, I attribute that to our parish commitment to serving our hurting world. But more importantly, it is honoring the blessings God has given us and the call for the church to leave the building. We can in so many ways fulfill Paul's image of being the hands and feet of the Body of Christ. St. John's gives us so many chances to do that, humbly tell our story of being instruments of love, and encouraging others to join us. To quote Pres. Bishop Curry, that's the Jesus Movement.

If you have questions and ideas about outreach at St. John's, please reach out at (256) 783-4420 or grant.h.thompson@gmail.com.

Altar Guild Report

Kristen Propst

The Ministry of Altar Guild is one of time and talent to prepare all things necessary for the celebration of Eucharist, the Sacraments of Baptism, Marriage, and Burial of the Dead, and other occasions during the liturgical year of our church. Our five Altar guild teams have served our parish with devotion while facing the challenges of the pandemic. It is the calling of our guild to serve God and His people as liturgical partners with His priests. Thanks be to God for this group of dedicated members who share this ministry!

St. John's Choir Report

Lauren Cantrell Salerno, Choirmaster

The pandemic has been an interesting time to be a member of St. John's Choir. We've gone back and forth from a full choir format to solos and duets, and small groups while we've navigated the various waves of Covid. The GREAT news is we've learned we are nothing if not ADAPTABLE! Even though we've faced challenges, 2021 saw the return of our beloved Lessons and Carols service after a one-year hiatus. We've also gained some wonderful new choir members! If you are interested in joining the choir, please let me know!

Thinking of You/St. Anne's Bereavement Guild Report

Bunny Edwards

Members of the **Thinking of You Committee** cook and deliver a meal to parishioners in times of illness or when a parishioner has lost a family member who is not a parishioner at St. John's. There are twelve teams of 3 to 4 people, and each team is responsible for one month per year.

St. Anne's Bereavement Guild will prepare and serve a meal for the family (maximum of 25 people) on the day a funeral is held at St. John's. When the funeral service is not held at St. John's, the committee will supply the bereavement meal if the deceased is a member of our church or is a parishioner's spouse, child, or parent so long as the deceased is not a member of another Decatur church. The meal may be served at St. John's or at the home of a family member or friend of the deceased. During visitation the committee will provide coffee and ice water.

Both groups need more volunteers. If you are interested in helping, contact Bunny Edwards at (256) 227-3760 cell or email edwards.bunny46@gmail.com.

Family Life Committee Report

Bunny Edwards

The Family Life Committee provides fellowship opportunities for St. John's parish family. In 2021 the committee sponsored Dinner-on-the-Grounds, a parish canoe trip, the Annual Parish Picnic, the Chili & Cornbread Cookoff, and the Advent Wreath Workshop. Committee member Sally Bibb prepared Thinking of You cards which are signed by parishioners and mailed during the year. These cards go to those who are ill, homebound, or have had a death in the family. Our committee members are Amy Calame, Annie Cornell, Beth Gilbert, Betty Weaver, Blake Stewart, Carol Sandlin, Dana Baggette, Dashiell McKay, David Bibb, David Rice, Dodie Hall, Huey Hall, Jack Williamson, Janet Morgan, Jennifer Jackson, Joe Propst, Julia Roth, June Hall, Kathy Stoner, Kerry Standridge, Lana Redfield, Laura Ritch, Lee Martin-Sloan, Lori Pressnell, Lou Greene, Marlene Eads, Marthelyn Biles, Menine Rice, Nancy Turbyfill, Nell Standridge, Nick Roth, Pat Price, Rachel Wiley, Sally Bibb, Sally Quinn, Steve Price, Victoria Hughes, and Zach Redfield. To join this group contact Bunny Edwards at (256) 227-3760 or edwards.bunny46@gmail.com.

Common Ground Community Garden Report

Jason Anders

The Garden saw a lush and wet growing season that bore fruit and flower to the delight of St. John's members and visitors in the vicinity. Many thanks to those who worked the ground and put in the hard labor to effect that joy for the many.

Competing shade trees surrounding the plot have dictated the need to convert to a shade garden if the trees remain. With that change, we composed a new mission statement emphasizing conservation and native plants and pollinator-friendly selections.

The Committee reviewed plans to reconfigure the area extensively and/or include a meditation path and irrigation for the beds, but this has been put on hold pending a determination of the level of volunteer hours required and the long-term viability of the work. We are currently evaluating this and will bring a recommendation forward to the congregation soon.

Grounds Committee Report

Bill Briscoe

Our "new" landscape company has done a nice job with all aspects of our campus. A special "THANK YOU" to D.D. Martin for her work and care of our Jackson Street gardens. We will continue to make improvements as needed in 2022.

Stewardship Report

Bobby Straub

2022 Pledge Increase—6.35% over 2021

15 New Pledges

64 Same Amount as in 2021

16 Decreased Their Pledge

48 Increased Their Pledge

10 Stopped Their Pledge

74 Made No Pledge

227 Total Pledging Units

2022 Average Pledge \$5,676.67 vs. \$5,530.88 in 2021

Total Budget Income is up – 7.1%

2021—\$826,698

2022—\$885,164

Trustees Report

Sonny Craig

We have had a good year considering what an unusual year we have all been through with the pandemic. The monies held by the Diocese are invested with Tim Callahan of Monroe Vos based on the instructions and guideline of the Diocese Investment Committee. Please note that, at the earlier request of the vestry, the 2021 installment of \$70,000 was made toward the capital campaign's \$280,000 loan from the Trust. This was the fourth and final installment, completing the Trust's commitment to the capital campaign. I would like to remind every St. John's member that you may give to the trust at any time and are encouraged to do so through your will, IRA, and 401k designations with the help of your personal financial advisor. If you have any questions on how to do this, please feel free to contact Sonny Craig or Julia Roth for assistance.

Tim Callahan, Portfolio Manager, Monroe Vos; The Rev. Rob Morpeth, Staff Officer for Finance and Administration, Diocese of Alabama; St. John's Trustees: Dana Baggette, Sonny Craig, Woody Peebles, Nick Roth, Luke Slaton. We are supported by Ken Schuppert, Stan Evans, Bobby Straub, D Hall, Sonny Craig, St. John's Wardens, and the Rector. The investment balances are:

Trust Funds	Starting Balance (01/01/2021)	Change in Investment Value	Ending Balance (11/30/2021)*
Charles H. Eyster General Fund	\$121,223.07	(\$8,281.97)	\$112,941.10
Charles H. Eyster Choir Fund	\$121,822.52	(\$8,322.96)	\$113,499.56
Margaret A. Hoff Memorial Fund	\$187,762.82	(\$12,827.99)	\$174,934.83
St. John's Endowment Fund	\$81,103.39	(\$5,541.01)	\$75,562.38
Total	\$511,911.80	(\$34,973.93)	\$476,937.87

*At the time of publication, our December 2021 reports were not received, but Tim Callahan was able to give us the overall year-end total of \$488,412.55, an increase of \$11,474.68 from November 30, 2021. A revised breakdown will be published in *The View*.

Treasurer's Report

D. Hall

Balance Sheet as of 12/31/2021

Assets

Bank Independent (Checking + Money Market)	\$597,612
Clergy Discretionary Funds	23,832
Endowment	488,413
Petty Cash	200
Accounts Receivable	3,397
Total Current Assets	\$1,113,454

Liabilities

Accounts Payable	\$27,472
Payroll Taxes & Elective Deductions	8,522
Restricted Funds	1,004,469
Equity	72,991
Total Liabilities	\$1,113,454

2021 Operations Income/Expense Summary

Income

Pledge Income	\$768,626
Non-Pledge & Other Income	103,667
Trust Distribution	-0-
Total Operations Income	\$872,293

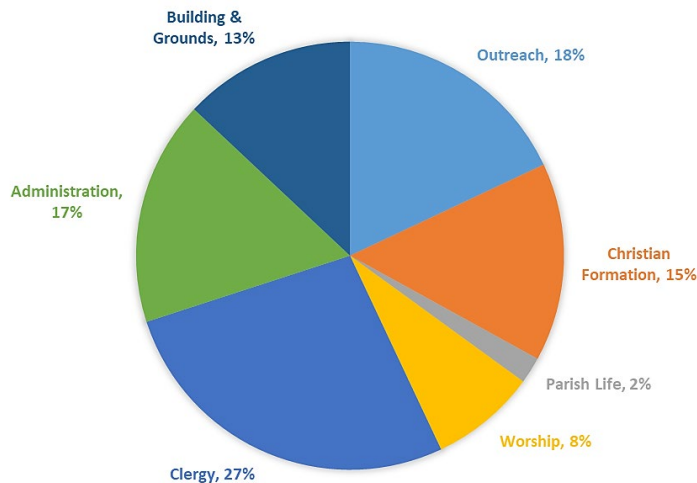
Expense

Outreach	\$136,213
Programs	371,077
Administration, Properties, Debt Service	365,003
Total Operations Expense	\$872,293

2021 Designated Income/Expense Summary

Designated Income	\$499,226
Designated Expense	353,102
Total Designated Net Income	\$146,124

St. John's 2022 Budget (Proposed)



Income

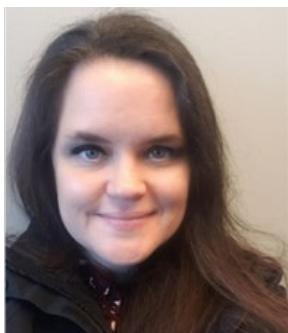
Pledge	\$811,764
Plate	14,000
Non-Pledge	37,000
Endowment Distribution	18,000
Interest Income	1,300
Breakfast & Dinner	3,000
Communion Wine Dedications	100
Total Income	\$885,164

For expense breakdown, see chart below.

Total Expense \$885,164

Area of Ministry	2022 Budget	% of Budget	2021 Budget	2021 Actual
Outreach	\$159,206	18%	\$135,235	\$136,214
Christian Formation	133,092	15%	124,620	115,964
Parish Life	15,400	2%	14,758	6,932
Worship	69,673	8%	66,953	64,428
Clergy	237,690	27%	231,545	183,753
Administration	151,103	17%	139,587	142,655
Building & Grounds	119,000	13%	114,000	222,347
Total	\$885,164	100%	\$826,698	\$872,293

Congratulations to these individuals on being nominated to serve on the Vestry of St. John's!



Sarah Arnette

St. John's is a place of family and security that also offers the challenge to dive deeper into my relationship with God and community. As my role in my family and community continues to evolve, I seek to serve in a deeper way. I look to welcome and invite people to walk with us in love and learn from each other on the way.



Sandy Barr

I have been an active member of St. John's for 27 years. I have raised my children and now, my granddaughter here at church. I have taught both adult and children Christian formation classes, mentored Education for Ministry (EfM) communities, worked in multiple guilds, and have sung in the choir for years. I have been nominated many times for Vestry but yet to serve.

I believe that we all must step up from time to time to share responsibilities in communities that we love. It reminds me of a flock of geese flying in V-formation. The goose flying point works the hardest because he breaks the air resistance for the rest of the group. The geese exhibit an amazing behavior. They rotate flying the point among the group members to allow the whole group to fly the distance.

I think as a holy community, God wants us to "do our part," sharing our spiritual gifts to strengthen our community. We are very lucky at St. John's to have so many talented, gifted members. I love our church and promise, if elected, to bring my God-given gifts to work hard to build and maintain our church family.



Mike Burnthall

Growing up in Decatur I remember going to St. John's as a child. At that time, the Rev. John Bodley was in the pulpit. When I first came back to St. John's, the Rev. Rich Webster had just left for St. Luke's in Birmingham. I remember when I first walked in, it was like stepping back in time, the stained-glass windows, the familiar pews and floors. All these things helped reinforce the idea that I needed to get back to church. I will admit that Steve Hammond assured me on the number one tee box at DCC that you can be in the 8:00 a.m. service and out at 9:00 a.m. with plenty of time to make it to the driving range and on the tee box by 12:00 p.m. for the match with the big group. My wife, Alison, goes to centering prayer with a group of ladies on Tuesday mornings. Every Sunday, parishioners are led to communion down the center aisle. When I walk out of St. John's on Sunday mornings, I always feel centered. I would be glad to serve on the Vestry or help St. John's in any way. I am honored to have been nominated. Attending St. John's has always made me feel like a part of the big group.



Cheryl Cornman

St. John's was a church that Cynthia and I were searching for. To us it was a church based on faith, love, and acceptance where all who entered were welcome, a church that serves God and makes a difference in the church and in the community. I have chosen to run for the Vestry to be a part of helping our church to keep creating a spiritual community where our church will be greater than the sum of all the parts.



Steve Price

My religious journey has taken many different paths before finally finding my church home in St. John's. I was baptized at First Baptist Church in Huntsville, and after going off to college, did not attend church for over 10 years until I moved to Decatur in 1980. I joined the Presbyterian Church and was active in the synod and Sunday School there but moved to the Methodist Church when my children were teenagers because of the strong youth program there. I joined St. John's in 2009 after becoming engaged to my wife, Pat, who has been a long-time member here, and we were married in the chapel in 2010. Over the past 12 years, I have grown to love my time here and have been lucky enough to have made many dear friendships in the church. My decision to stand for the vestry was made after much prayer and thought. I feel the need to give back to the church a small part of the many blessings the church has given me, and now that I am retired from my endodontic practice of 41 years (sort of), I feel like I have the time to be able to better serve on the vestry.



Kristen Propst

St. John's is where I come to seek and find God's love and God's purpose in my life. Bishop Curry says that we need "soul companions to help us on our way." Many opportunities for and the blessing of worship, study and ministry with you, my soul companions, at St. John's guides my path to live the Gospel. I am thankful that St. John's is where I am continuously inspired and challenged to grow and change in response to God's love. St. John's is where I am restored by the Light of the World that warms and illumines my life. To me, serving on our Vestry is a call to light our parish and our community with God's love through the programs, ministries, stewardship, and outreach of our parish. This Prayer of the People is my daily prayer: Bless all whose lives are linked with ours and grant that we may serve Christ in them and love one another as He loves us.



Carol Sandlin

As a faithful 8:00 service attendee, many of you may not know me or know I have been a member of St. John's for 45 years. I have 2 adult daughters who were baptized and confirmed here, one of whom was also ordained and married at St. John's. Over the years, I have served on the Vestry twice and Senior Warden once, including during a Rector's transition. I found that my terms as a Vestry member allowed me to give back to the parish that has offered so much to me over the past 45 years. It would be an honor to serve again in this way.

I have chaired and participated in many committees over the past four decades including Christian formation, Simply Divine Bake Sale, and Vacation Bible School. My fondest memories are the meaningful 30+ years I served on St. John's Altar Guild. These countless Saturday mornings were spent in fellowship with my Altar Guild team, preparing our church for celebrations of Holy Eucharist and other services.

St. John's has always felt like my church home. Members of the church and the clergy have comforted me during times of sadness and death and helped me celebrate during joyful times as well.



Karen Sawyer

I have been a member of St. John's since 2005. I regularly attend our 8:00 a.m. Sunday service. It has been my privilege to serve on several ministries, including Acolyte Leader, Acolyte Master, Flower Guild, Newcomers, Wednesday-Night Dinner committees, and several others. I have been on Altar Guild since I have been with St. John's. I currently serve on the Outreach Committee. I have served on the Vestry once before and enjoyed my three years. Thank you for considering me for the appointment again.

We give gratitude and thanks to our outgoing Vestry Class of 2021

Bingham Edwards (Senior Warden), Bobby Greene, Dodie Hall, Bob Ledbetter, and Betty Weaver;
and Cortner Crumlish, Youth Representative

In 2022, the Wardens of St. John's will be

Bobby Straub (Senior Warden) and Julia Roth (Junior Warden)

The Current Vestry

Class of 2022: Erika Huber, Sue Powell, Andrea Stewart, Bobby Straub, and Callie Tubb

Class of 2023: Beth Gilbert, Huey Hall, Jennifer Jackson, Julia Roth, Suzanne Thompson

John Thornton, Treasurer

Stan Evans, Bobby Straub, Assistant Treasurers

Sally Quinn, Clerk

Ken Schuppert, Chancellor

The Parish Staff

The Rev. Chase Ackerman, *Rector*, ext. 102; chase@stjohnsdecatur.org

The Rev. Sarah Watts, *Associate Rector*, ext. 103; sarah@stjohnsdecatur.org

Vickie Reed, *Financial Administrator*, ext. 101; vickie@stjohnsdecatur.org

Ann Stewart, *Director of Communications*, ext. 105; ann@stjohnsdecatur.org

Zach Redfield, *Director of Youth Ministries*, ext. 110; zach@stjohnsdecatur.org

Sally Marsh, *Director of Children's Ministries*, ext. 111; sally@stjohnsdecatur.org

Lauren Salerno, Choirmaster

Foster Bailey, Organist

Janet Varner, Associate Organist

David Wilcox, Seminarian

Monica Wright and Sandy Burleson, Nursery

St. John's Episcopal Church

202 Gordon Drive SE

Decatur, Alabama 35601

Office 256-353-9615 | Fax 256-350-0514

Monday -Thursday 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.; Closed for Lunch Noon - 1:00 p.m.

Friday: Closed

