



St. John's

EPISCOPAL CHURCH + DECATUR, ALABAMA

2022 Annual Report

Presented at the Annual Meeting—January 29, 2023

Rector's Report

The Rev. Chase D. Ackerman

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

It goes without saying (but, I will say it anyway) that the past couple of years have been some of the most unpredictable and unprecedented ones any of us have ever witnessed. Twelve months ago, we were just beginning to celebrate the “end” of the pandemic. Along with the rest of the world, we were just beginning to wrap our heads around all the emotional and physical trauma the previous two years had brought. Twelve months ago, we were looking forward to restarting and restoring our lives, and thankfully, by the grace of God, we find ourselves at the dawn of yet another year. As 2023 begins and we pause to reflect on what 2022 was like at St. John's, we can do so with a huge sense of pride and gratitude for our many blessings.

As your Rector, I have the unique privilege to see how you, this uniquely wonderful part of the Body of Christ known as St. John's Church, use the many and varied gifts you have been given to spread the gospel message of Jesus Christ to each other and to the world around us. While the old joke may be that church folks only work one day a week (not true, by the way!), I can wholeheartedly attest to the fact that St. John's is a daily hive of action. Whether you help pack beans and rice, attend bible study, set up the altar or flowers for liturgy, work in the garden, or practice yoga, there is nearly always some group of people in our building doing wonderful and much needed work for the kingdom of God. And, by the way, that is how I measure success in our church: people growing closer to God and people serving others in God's name. Wow, what a joy!

If you are more of the numbers type, I can also assure you that St. John's has had a prosperous and fiscally healthy year as well. Our active church membership continues to increase through people transferring in as well as being confirmed. Thanks to superb efforts by our Stewardship Co-Chairs, Erika Huber and Stuart Tubb, our most recent stewardship campaign was the most successful ever, both in the financial amount pledged, but more importantly in the numbers of those who are pledging. When you combine all of this with the fact that our average Sunday attendance continues to increase, St. John's is indeed a healthy parish, and I am so proud of the welcome you give to those who come here seeking God's love.

All of these wonderful success stories are certainly not the work of just one person, and I consider myself to be extremely fortunate and blessed to work with simply the finest church staff there is. Every person who is in a role of ministry leadership or oversight has gone above and beyond the scope of their role this past year, and I believe the results speak for themselves. We, as a church, are so fortunate to have Sam Burcham and his family join us this past summer, and he has brought a renewed sense of life and excitement to our youth ministry program that I know you all see. With the combined efforts of our amazing staff, vestry members, lay and ordained ministry leaders, and numerous volunteers, St. John's is positioned like never before to live out our calling as Christians both within our walls and outside in our community. It is all extremely exciting, and I can't wait to see how God will use us in the coming year.

St. John's is a very special place. It is certainly special because of its historical beauty, amazing flower arrangements, and amazing receptions, but more importantly, it is special because of you. The memories you all share and the legacies you will leave are what make St. John's so much more than just a pretty building. This place, St. John's Church, is a living, breathing member of the Body of Christ, and with God's help, God's message of love and reconciliation will be known and felt by all who come here.

Chase+

Associate Rector's Report

The Rev. Sarah E. Watts

As I reflect on the past year at St. John's, I cannot help but be full of joy and gratitude for the gift that is the St. John's community. I am continually in awe of the work of this parish both inside and outside our walls and the sacred and life-giving conversations we have at Sunday School, on Wednesday and Thursday nights, and at casual points throughout the week. But most of all, I am continually thankful for the fellowship and community we create together and the deep blessing it is to be involved and part of both.

Over the course of the past year, I have had the chance to work closely with our Lay Eucharistic Visitors, our Outreach Committee, and our youth and parents.

We currently have five Lay Eucharistic Visitors who are sent out from our Sunday and Wednesday Eucharists to visit those in our congregation who are not able to join us for Holy Eucharist. This ministry of taking the sacrament out into the world is a true and deep blessing for many, and I am thankful for all of our LEVs who take the time to bring a bit of holiness into the lives of their fellow parishioners. I am particularly grateful for Mary McKimmon who keeps us organized and meeting regularly.

Another major area of my work at St. John's is working with Grant Thompson and the Outreach Committee. Our newly designed and online Grant Distribution Process worked very well last year, and we were able to distribute about \$60,000 in grants and outreach resources to local organizations (see Grant's report below for more details). What really impressed me, however, about this process was the time, dedication, and faithfulness of the committee who came together over the course of three months to have hard, honest, and prayerful conversations. It was a huge gift to be part of and bear witness to this work, and I am looking forward to our process again this year.

In addition to our grant distributions, the church, collected hygiene products for the CCC, diapers for PACT, towels/cookies for Sawyerville, school supplies for DCS and FACES, food for the Food Bank, shoes for the Boys and Girls Club, coats and winter clothes for the Youth Department's King's Home drive, and stocked the Decatur Morgan Hospital's supply closet. A huge thank you to all who have taken part in those drives over the past year!

Finally, last Spring and through the Summer, I had the chance to work not only with the Youth Minister Search Committee but also more closely with our youth, and I very much enjoyed and valued the intentional, fun, chaotic, and blessed time we all had together. More than ever, I saw and understood how our young people are not only the future of the church but are the church now and have an enormous amount to offer our community. Every day I am thankful for the gift of our youth minister, Sam Burcham, and the ways in which he is tending to, nurturing, and raising up all of the youth of St. John's. He has a true gift and vision for youth ministry, and St. John's is so lucky to have him.

All in all, I am enormously thankful to be part of this community. It is truly a joy and an honor to serve with and walk alongside all of you and I am looking forward to another year in ministry.

Sarah+

Wardens' Report

Bobby Straub, Senior Warden

Julia Roth, Junior Warden

St. John's was fully open for worship and service the entire year in 2022! That is the first time in a few years that we could say that. No matter what day of the week you came to the church, it was great to see people engaged in activities in the Parish Hall and the Nave. Whether it was bridge, yoga, Bible study, or other pursuits, there were people enjoying our wonderful St. John's.

Here is a summary of activities this past year.

In January, we installed a new class of vestry members and thanked our seniors for their service. We also installed John Thornton as the new treasurer. We adopted a budget based on over \$800,000 in annual pledges. Since we had a

surplus for the previous year, we applied \$128,000 toward the balance of the loan that the St. John's Trust had given to the capital campaign. The rest we used to restore our maintenance reserve to \$100,000.

The Vestry retreat was in February where we worked on envisioning how we want St. John's to look in the future. We also assigned members to their respective committees. The retreat is a way for the members to get to know each other better and learn how to work together for the betterment of the parish.

March saw the Outreach Committee award grants totaling \$48,000 to our outreach partners. We voted to fund the Community Garden project. Beth Gilbert is working to establish a Daughters of the King chapter at St. John's.

Easter at St. John's was spectacular as usual. The flowers were absolutely beautiful. Mother Sarah and Father Chase did a wonderful job all through Lent, Holy Week, and Easter. We had 440 people attend our Easter services. I should mention the outstanding job that Foster, Lauren and the choir do every week making worship even more meaningful and beautiful. They especially show off at our special services. Thank you.

In July, Erika Huber gave us a first look at the 2023 Stewardship Campaign "More Than Enough." Father Chase set up interviews with the finalists for the Youth Director position.

Rally Day went well. Several new families attended, and we all signed up for the ministries we want to work with this year. The first of three air conditioner units failed and was replaced, proving the need for a healthy maintenance reserve. Melba agreed to be our Food and Hospitality Coordinator, and we are glad to have her back.

In September, we thanked Mother Sarah for her work with the youth of St. John's during the transition period with that group. We welcomed Sam Burcham and his family to our church family. If you haven't met Sam and Holly, and their two girls, please do so. We all see great things ahead with Sam's leadership.

The rest of the year saw a fun Parish Picnic at the Propst's farm in Cullman. We had a very successful stewardship campaign. There was an increase in both the number of pledgers as well as an increase in pledged amount. The Bake Sale was successful and well attended. Thanks to Emily Nazarchyk, Leah Cayson, and all who participated. Advent brought Wednesday-night programs and took us to a beautiful and holy Christmas.

One thing that we should be especially proud of, the Gift Committee decided, and the Vestry agreed, to repair, clean, and protect all of our stained-glass windows. This work should be completed in the spring.

It has been an honor and a pleasure to serve as St. John's Senior Warden for the past year. I couldn't have done it without help from the Vestry, the amazing office staff, the worship staff, Mother Watts and Father Ackerman, and all my St. John's family. You just have to look around at our beautiful facility, the staff and clergy, and most importantly, the St. John's family, to know that St. John's is well positioned for the future.

Director of Youth Ministries Report (4th-12th)

Sam Burcham

This *isn't* really an annual report, I know...

Close readers will be quick to realize that I have only roughly four months of work on which to report; after all, I only officially began working for St. John's on October 1st. And yet, I'm not going to let a little hiccup like that stop me from giving as detailed a report as possible!

Mostly, things began—as they typically do within the Church—with *a meeting*. After a month of “orienting” (and let's be honest, I'm so new that I'm still in the midst of my orientation!) myself to the culture of St. John's, I decided that it was necessary to call a meeting of the EYC shareholders through which we would endeavor to define our vision, mission, and goals for both the EYC and Tweens/Club 456 programs at St. John's. Together, Father Ackerman, Alana Haughaboo, Erin Lokken, Pat Price, Kristen Propst, Mother Watts and myself met to engage in this work. Together, we produced a report which outlines not only what we *will* do as a program, but what we *hope* for in the long run. You can access the report by scanning the appropriate QR code below.

Through meetings, surveys, and engagement with St. John's young people and their families, I have in these first months discerned just how full their lives are. But I haven't just *talked* with students and their families about this: I've witnessed it firsthand by being present at Cross Country meets, awards shows, plays, recitals, visiting spaces where

students work, and more. And I can say that what with school, extra-curriculars, “tracks” (by which they are placed in—and pursue—certain areas of study/vocations), standardized tests, *and* after-school jobs—not to mention the need for rest and time with family and friends—I’ve learned that they are anxious about their ability to do it *all*. And they want to. After all, we have had quite a few young people show up for various events/programs when they can. Recognizing the reality in which our young people live, I have been working toward the implementation of a hybrid model of ministry for 2023. We still have our regular meetings, of course (Sunday School, Bible Study & Games at High Point Market, seasonal gatherings on Wednesday and Sunday evenings based on the liturgical calendar, as well as fun events: Advent Parties, a Tweens/Club 456 Chrismukkah Party, going to see Steve Trash perform, etc.), but I am hopeful that this new model will help young people and their families integrate their faith into their everyday lives. You can read more about this model and see the annual plan by scanning the appropriate QR code below.

There are some other exciting things of which to make note, too: a Design Team (consisting of our high school students) will meet for this first time in January to think about the ways in which they can invest in the program *and* the parish, as well as the return of the Senior High School Students’ Ski Trip (scheduled for February 2023)!

I want to take space in this report, too, to thank all those who have supported the young people at St. John’s! So many have given their time, talents, and efforts to our students, and you need to know: it matters; it makes a difference. I’m especially grateful for Alana Haughaboo and Sue Powell and their teaching and leading Tweens/Club 456. You should also know—though, I suspect that you already do!—how much groundwork Mother Sarah has laid for the youth ministry programming at St. John’s. She should be commended for her work!

Each day, I am more convinced of Keith White’s conviction that “if we speak of God [and the Church] without young people in our midst, then our conversations will be incomplete” (Child Theology Movement, 2001). If you have any questions about this report—or the others (which you can read below!)—please don’t hesitate to reach out with any questions, comments, or concerns!



Annual Plan



Program Outline

Director of Children’s Ministries Report (Nursery – 3rd)

Sally Marsh

The year 2022 saw the Children’s Ministries continue to find its footing as our world in general continued to emerge from the global pandemic.

Our Wednesday-night dinners may have had 25 to 30 people (up to 10 children), but the conversation and connections made were good. These were discontinued during the summer and were not picked back up in the Fall. April held our well attended Easter Egg Dash in the Parish Hall (the weather was horrible) following the early service on Easter. June saw a very small attendance in Vacation Bible School with 18 children and 19 volunteers. July had a family movie night.

As a new school year began, St. John’s saw the formal creation of a Tweens/Club 456 group consisting of the 4th, 5th, and 6th grades. These grades are no longer considered part of the children’s department and are considered part of youth.

The children’s department began to offer monthly family-friendly events. August was our Back-to-School Bash with a Tie-Dye Party. September was Game Night. October was a Halloween Carnival. November our children made mixes for the Bake Sale. During the warmer weather, Pre-school and Kindergarten had play dates at local parks. The Christmas Pageant was presented by our Tweens class with the children having a front row seat.

Two annual events will no longer be held due to low participation. St. John’s Halloween Carnival and the Children’s Mardi Gras Float. The number of children attending has been declining for several years, and it has been suggested that time, resources, and finances might be better used in other areas.

The population for this department saw a shift with the 4th and 5th grades no longer included. Most of our students are in the Nursery to Kindergarten age group. For the school year 2022-23, there were 12 in this age group with 8 in 1st through 3rd.

I was encouraged to join the Ministry Architects for the year. This was a cohort of other children's directors where we learned and shared how to help make our ministries sustainable. I have been able to use several of the suggestions from this group throughout the year and am using others in a more long-term goal setting. I want to thank Father Chase for suggesting and supporting my participation in this group.

Director of Communications Report

Ann Stewart

Our church communications goal is to promote the work and ministries of St. John's, to keep people in the loop, to engage and build relationships with each other, with the community, and with God. Numerous outlets are currently used to promote St. John's and to share information about how God is working in and out of St. John's.

Show Your Spirit—In the fall of 2022, we set up a “church store” in the Parish Hall where you may pick up all kinds of items to show off your St. John's spirit! We have church magnets and stickers (free) for your car, notebook, computer, phone, etc., and “Love God” lawn signs. We also have stainless tumblers (\$5), cotton tote bags (\$10), and notecards (\$10), too. *Keep a look out in the newsletter for the Grand Opening Announcement of St. John's online merchandise store (powered by Bonfire) where we will offer St. John's apparel—you shop and merchandise will be delivered directly to you.*

All-in-One Microsite—St. John's newest communication resource is LinkTree—an online bookmark of our associated links all in one convenient place! The basic free plan offers us unlimited links and a customizable platform to connect our community to everything we are. It's great for mobile devices so you can be on the go and in the know. Scan the funny looking square (QR code) with your phone's camera app to direct you to our site of associated links!



Weekly Newsletter—The newsletter, *The View*, is created in Constant Contact and distributed each week to 380 e-mail addresses. If you are not receiving the newsletter, please call the office (256-353-9615).

Website—The parish website, not to be replaced with LinkTree, is hosted through the Diocese of Alabama and Digital Faith (stjohnsdecatur.dioala.org) and continues to be an important source for information for those interested in learning about St. John's and for parishioners. Popular pages are worship team schedules, newsletter, clergy/staff, and the calendar.

Social Media—St. John's Facebook page (facebook.com/stjohnsdecatur) and Instagram (@stjohnsdecatur) have become central to marketing events and services to the community. Other areas of St. John's have a Facebook presence, too—Children's Ministries (Nursery-3rd), Tweens (4th-6th), Youth (7th-12th), Young Adults (~20 to 30 something), the Community Garden at St. John's, and the Simply Divine Holiday Bake Sale.

Media Ministry—St. John's provides a livestream from Facebook of the 10:30 a.m. Sunday service with an online bulletin. A recording of each service is also made available on our YouTube channel. To make the livestream happen we rely on volunteers. Sarah Arnette and Kevin Wilson share this responsibility on a rotating schedule. Their time and dedication to serve in this capacity is invaluable! The Media Ministry is a great opportunity for high school age and up. We are always seeking volunteers to learn how to operate the system. *If you are interested in learning how we broadcast with ease (and can use an iPad from the pew!), please reach out to Ann Stewart in the church office.*

iTunes and Google Podcasts for Sermons—Don't miss the sermon! You can access St. John's sermons when you subscribe to our iTunes or Google Podcast. Listen to your favorite sermon again or hear one for the first time.

Church Directory—It's easy to keep in touch with each other through our digital church directory (print is available, too.) Members and active non-members can access the secure online directory from any location with cell service or Wi-Fi access. You can tap an address and navigate to a parishioner's home for a gathering, tap another icon to text someone you're thinking about, see a family or individual photo (only if a photo has been provided), or directly dial them from the app. You can also update your contact information—address, email, phone number, add a photo. Need help going digital? Contact Ann!

Continues on next page.

Tithely Giving—Via LinkTree, website, mobile app, or iPad kiosk at St. John’s, secure online giving has never been easier with Tithely. You can even scan the Giving card in the pew on Sunday morning! Use a debit card, credit card, or e-check for a single gift or set up automatic recurring gifts with options for designating where your gift applies.

External Publications—St. John’s placed a paid ad in the 2022 Explore Decatur-Morgan magazine “Places of Worship” section! This is the Tourism Bureau visitors and newcomers guide provided in welcome packages as well as being available in hotel rooms, places to eat, and many other places in the community. We also appear in the 2023 Discover Decatur-Morgan County magazine—the official publication of the Decatur-Morgan County Chamber of Commerce. Thank you to Ellis Chenault for providing the photo of the church used in the ads!

In Action—St. John’s physical presence was seen in many different locations supporting our community partners.

- Volunteers spent an October afternoon at the annual Parents and Children Together (PACT) Touch-A-Truck fundraiser, under our St. John’s tent, saying hello to the community and handing out bags of goodies, water bottles, and information about our Beans and Rice Ministry and the October Blessing of the Animals event.
- St. John’s was also spotted at the Wilson-Morgan Fields playing in the Hospice of the Valley Annual Kickball Tournament. Team “Altar Egos,” outfitted in team shirts created by Emily Nazarchyk, played hard and had fun during our one game against our neighbors at NARCOG. Our morale stayed high even after our loss by enjoying breakfast at Cracker Barrel. We’re looking to take the field again for 2023!
- The year ended with St. John’s sponsoring a Christmas tree in the Enchanted Forest of Decatur at Founders Park/The Daikin Amphitheater where visitors could write prayer requests and notes of gratitude to hang on the tree. Numerous notes were placed on the tree asking for prayers for themselves or for someone else as well as notes of well wishes for the community and the world! Our participation supports the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society fight against blood cancer. Special thanks to the youth for decorating and undecorating the tree!

Wish List—Our wish list for St. John’s includes expanding our audio-video capabilities to St. Mary’s Chapel and the Parish Hall, adding hearing assist devices for the church, continuing to be a visible and supportive partner in our community, new exterior signage, and reviewing options to improve our church database.

Summary—Communication, especially through our words and actions, is working in and around St. John’s to advance God’s Kingdom!

Outreach Report

Grant Thompson

The church isn’t bodies in the pews; the church is hands and feet outside.

St. John’s has a rich history of serving in our community, and I am humbly 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 online 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 \$5,000) 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 2022, the committee approved grants for 15 non-profits and parish ministries in the amount of \$47,998, which was approximately 5.4% of our parish operating budget. Our entire outreach budget—which includes our diocesan contribution, Sawyerville and seminary support, and Episcopal Center expenses—totaled 18% of our overall budget. Friends, that is incredible work!

You may remember that 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. 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 experiences and passion of our parishioners, providing more people the chance to serve, and building new lay leaders in our church. This structure has and will continue to strengthen the process for years to come.

The parish received applications from 18 organizations in the fall of 2022, the committee recently completed application reviews, and is in the final steps of the process. Once that service 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.

Doing parish outreach work honors the blessings God has given us, and 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 opportunities to do that, humbly tell our story of being instruments of love, and encouraging others to join us.

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.

Music Report

Lauren Cantrell, Choirmaster

It finally feels back to "normal" for St. John's choir! We've had a great year which included the return of choir camp at Camp McDowell with the choir from Church of the Ascension, an Evensong service for All Saints, and our annual Lessons and Carols Service. We've recently transitioned to Sunday morning choir practice at 9:00 a.m., and we've added a few new choir members as a result! If you are interested in joining the St. John's Choir, please let me know!

Flower Guild Report

Altar Flowers, Sue Hennessy

Rearrangers & Delivery, Ann Stewart

St. John's Flower Guild mission is to bring the beauty of God's world into our worship space, while giving members of the congregation a meaningful way to remember loved ones or to celebrate special events with flowers. The Guild takes full advantage of the glorious natural flowers and greenery that our God given environment provides.

Currently, 24 members actively arrange altar flowers for Sunday mornings, special events, and receptions. The Flower Guild is open to anyone interested in helping arrange flowers—all levels of skills are welcomed. *If you would like to learn more about how to arrange the altar flowers, please call Sue Hennessy 256-318-2064.*

The Flower Rearrangers are a group of men and women who help after the 10:30 a.m. Sunday service to rearrange the altar flowers into small containers for the delivery team.

The Flower Delivery volunteers are a group of men and women, families, and individuals, who help distribute small arrangements on a rotating schedule to those who are homebound, have recently experienced an illness or surgery, or to those who are in the hospital. *For more information about rearranging and delivering, please reach out to Ann Stewart, 256-303-9758.*

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 time of illness or when a parishioner has lost a family member who is not a member of St. John's. There are twelve teams with 3 or 4 people on each team. 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. If the funeral service is not held at St. John's, the committee will supply a 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 area church. The meal may be served at St. John's or at the home of a family member or friend of the deceased. Coffee and ice water can also be provided during visitation. *Each group needs volunteers and chairperson or persons. If you are interested, contact the office.*

Family Life Committee Report

Bunny Edwards

The Family Life Committee provides fellowship opportunities for St. John's parish family. In 2022, the committee sponsored the Parish Retreat at Camp McDowell, Dinner-on-the-Grounds, the Annual Parish Picnic, the Chili/Cornbread Cookoff, the Advent Wreath Workshop, and Roadrunners (55+). Our committee members are Amy Calame, Annie Cornell, Beth Gilbert, Betty Weaver, Carol Sandlin, Dana Baggette, Dashiell McKay, David Bibb, David Rice, Dodie Hall, Huey Hall, Jack Williamson, Jackie Joiner, Janet Morgan, Jennifer Jackson, Joe Propst, Julia Roth, June Hall, Kathy Stoner, Kerry Standridge, Laura Ritch, Lori Pressnell, Lou Greene, Marlene Eads, Marthelyn Biles, Menine Rice, Nancy Turbyfill, Nell Standridge, Nick Roth, Pat Price, Rachel Wiley, Sally Bibb, Sally Quinn, Sara Reed Thompson, Steve Price, and Victoria Hughes.

We would love to have you be part of this group. To join contact Bunny Edwards at (256) 227-3760 or edwards.bunny46@gmail.com.

Cursillo Report

Erika Huber

Cursillo is an opportunity to grow in faith and spirituality. Cursillo in the Diocese of Alabama begins with a three-day weekend at Camp McDowell. During these three days, lay people and clergy share their experiences and perspective on a variety of topics related to the love of God, the Christian life, and Christian community. Through Cursillo we seek a deeper understanding of the teachings of Jesus and how we can serve Him. We work together to share God's love and encourage each other to persevere in carrying out our Baptismal vows. Cursillo *starts* with a three-day weekend, but THE BEST IS YET TO COME.

In 2022, St. John's sent four pilgrims to Cursillo: Emily Bell; Sally Quinn; Erin Lokken; and Jackie Joiner. I served on the staff of Cursillo #225 in October, after being a pilgrim myself in September 2019 (#219). St. John's also volunteered staff, money, and time to Cursillo #225 through our Ultreya.

"Ultreya" means "Onward" and each participant in Cursillo becomes a member of the St. John's Ultreya group which meets periodically to continue to celebrate our Cursillo experience. In addition, each pilgrim is encouraged to join a Reunion Group, a small group that serves to support one another in living out our lives as Christians.

In 2023, Mother Sarah will serve on the staff of #226 (February 23-26), and Father Ackerman will serve on the staff of #227 (April 19-23).

If you are interested in knowing more about Cursillo, please let me know. I serve as the Parish Lay Rector, the liaison between St. John's and Alabama Cursillo. I also serve on the Secretariat (the Board) of Alabama Cursillo as the editor of the newsletter, *The Vivencia*. I can be reached at chuber4404@gmail.com and 256-425-1877.

Cursillo dates in 2023 are:

#226 February 22-26	#228 June 7-11	#229 September 13-17
#227 April 19-23		#230 October 18-22

Community Garden: Common Ground Report

Ellis Chenault, Julia Chenault, Carol Hancock

Last year, we were faced with major irrigation problems, encroaching shade from the trees which surrounded the garden, and the need to replace many of the raised beds. The Common Ground Committee wrestled with these issues and decided to replace the roughly 12 raised beds with 7 new ones. Three areas were built with landscaping brick, the center spiral, and a large round one on the north side of it and another on the south side. Additionally, a double-decker L-shaped bed was built in both the northeast and southeast corners of the garden, along with two smaller wooden beds that we hope will be attractive and useful to the children of St. John's. Some fence modifications were made to allow for more visibility.

We decided that the mission of this plot of ground, a certified wildlife habitat, is *to bear witness to the good stewardship of this garden to the benefit of "all that encounter it."* It will continue to be organic and pesticide-free, and we will focus on planting as many native plants as possible. With less sunshine, Common Ground will become more of a meditative garden than one for harvesting vegetables.

We are grateful for our Vestry's generous funding for this renovation and to Wesley Swoops, Mr. Sprinkler, for the gift of new irrigation lines and heads. Thanks to the many volunteers for their sweat equity: Jason Anders, Russell Barr, Carol Chenault, Ellis Chenault (Construction Coordinator), Julia Chenault, Carol Hancock (Planting Coordinator), Kathy Landis, Anne Ness, Craig Ness, and Sally Quinn.

Grounds Committee Report

Bill Briscoe

Our landscape company, N2Grass, has done a nice job with most aspects of our campus. The Community Garden: Common Ground volunteers have done a wonderful job with their additions and renovations. D. D. Martin continues to care for our Jackson Street garden extremely well. We are continuing to refinish the teak furniture in the McKimmon Memorial Garden and that is turning out well.

Congratulations to these seven individuals for their nomination to serve on the Vestry of St. John's!



Tony Bolan

I was born here in Decatur at Baugh-Wiley-Smith hospital (which is now the Episcopal Center). When I came to St. John's about 8 years ago, I felt as if I had come full circle to attend worship so close to where I drew my first breath. I love my community, and I love my church. I have had one other term on the Vestry and enjoyed being able to serve our church in that role. Sharron, Emmett, and I are very glad to be a part of the parish here at St. John's and feel very loved and at home with all of you. In addition to previously serving on the Vestry, I have also served as a LEM, and I have volunteered with the EYC. I would be proud to serve St. John's as a member of the Vestry, and I am excited about the future God has for all of us.



Ellis Chenault

I have been a member of Christian churches since before I could walk—Presbyterian, Baptist, Episcopal, and a few “off brand.” I served on the session twice at Westminster. I'll admit I have had periods in my life where I did not attend any church for varied reasons from excuse, just don't want to, to just mad because “things” aren't going my way. I never doubted God and Jesus through it all. But I feel so lifted following the Holy Eucharist that I am a regular Rite II attendee. I do not think I could have survived my recent health issues without my church family and the plethora of prayers. I felt every single one. Even though I know many of St. John's parishioners, I am glad to have met and get to know many others. That has made the transition much faster and easier to volunteer and get involved in our activities. I have been honored to be one of the mighty few, with dirt under our fingers, to reimagine the Community Garden: Common Grounds. When we decided to come to St. John's, I believe God had his hand firmly on me to make that decision. I also think his hand was present in my decision to stand for the Vestry election. I will continue to give back to St. John's.



Lisa Dye

St. John's has been synonymous with home and family and love for me since the early 1980s when I attended Frs. Charlie McKimmon and Van Foreman's adult inquirers class. As the youngest member of the group, I was welcomed and encouraged to think, question, and explore my faith alongside adults who became role models and friends. Life happened (college, work, marriage to Andy, and the births of our children Sarah Beth and Allie). Our family returned to St. John's in 2000, and I accepted the position of Christian Ed Director and served the next four years. Andy and I were part of a mission team to Honduras as well as chaperones on EYC lock-ins and rafting and ski trips. I also experienced Happening as both participant and staff member. Through the years I have participated in bake sales and VBS and organized Wednesday-evening programs as well as children's programs and pageants. Most Sundays I attend the eight o'clock service where I currently serve as lector and LEM. I hope to continue serving my St. John's family as a member of the Vestry.



Erin Lokken

When I brought my two young boys to VBS in the summer of 2014, I was not looking for a church home. However, by the time VBS ended, I knew my family had to give St. John's a try. I had been pulled into helping in the kitchen for that VBS which meant the world to me as I felt welcomed as I was. I found St. John's to be a vibrant and warm and loving congregation that felt like home almost immediately. I had found a village that helped my boys to grow into fine teenage boys and know that they will have the support of their faith community as they become young men. As I went through rough patches, St. John's has been there for me, whether with a hand to pull me up or an ear to listen. I feel that I have always served St. John's in a "behind the scenes" role. At this point in my life, I am feeling a call to serve largely and visibly and so accepted an invitation to be nominated for Vestry. I don't have any big plans outside of offering my hands to God's service in whatever capacity that looks like.



Karen Smith

We joined St. John's when we moved to Decatur in 1987. To be perfectly honest, my family has been a member of the Episcopal Church for at least four generations that I know of. It feels like a part of my soul. I love the generational part of that. I love that we survived that new prayer book that was adopted in 1979 (my mother and grandmother did have some doubts but grew to appreciate it). I love that our church has faced current events, cultural change, and the world around us with compassion and thought for word of God. Over the years, I have come to appreciate that our church is open to the changes and welcomes everyone while maintaining strong biblical principles. I don't think I really understood that when I was younger and going to church because my parents and grandparents expected it. I am an 8:00 "o'clocker" because I love early morning and yes Rite I. I am an active member of the altar guild and a lector. I taught Sunday school for more years than seems real now. I have been an acolyte coordinator, a Lay Eucharist Minister, a VBS volunteer, a nervous nursery parent, parent of that noisy child, a Beans and Rice Ministry volunteer, and am always willing to show up and do something in a pinch. Why do I want to be on the Vestry at St. John's? Because I believe strongly that actions speak louder than words and that we should be part of the solution. That is what taking on a responsibility of this nature should be all about.



Brian White

St. John's Church is a beloved community. The most tangible way in which I experience God at St. John's is through the people of God who enrich my life as we try to serve God together and share the love of Jesus to others. People here work together, learn together and reach out together—what a respite from the fractured and contentious world in which we live. My aim is to have a role in continuing what I have found at St. John's. It is important to me that this church continue to welcome, include, and help people as they seek God and seek a place to belong as a part of the family of God. The character of this church is best demonstrated by its outreach programs, including the Community Free Clinic, PACT, and the programs helping Banks-Caddell Elementary School. These activities that the church supports, funds, and participates in, are vital to showing the love of God. To know what St. John's believes, the best testament is to look at what we do with the resources entrusted to us. St. John's will not stay the same church and positive growth is not inevitable. I want to work together in this family to be sure that this unique church keeps serving God and loving God's people and drawing God's people here in the way that I am drawn here to belong in this community of faith.



Rachel Wiley

Marrying Hagler Wiley 22 years ago brought me into the family of St. John's. We are raising two daughters, Hilton (19) and Harrison (16), with the help of our church family. My profession is to serve as a Realtor and Qualifying Broker for Tim Baker Real Estate. Within the church, I serve on Flower Guild, as a storyteller for Godly Play, a member of Family Life Committee, Thinking of You, a Convention Delegate, and am active in our Cursillo community. Over the years, I have taught Rite-13, J2A, and numerous iterations of children's Sunday school, along with serving on various committees. In my spare time, I enjoy riding my horse, anything outside, selling homes and land, reading, and being with my family. Being a member of the Vestry would allow me to serve others and understand the inner workings of our church in a new manner. "Do ordinary things with extraordinary love." – Mother Teresa

Trustees Report

Sonny Craig

This year has been a tough year for the investment market. However, our Diocese Investment Committee headed by Rob Morpeth and Monroe Vos Investments, represented by Tim Callahan, have done an excellent job for us as you will see from the commentary and report below from Mr. Callahan.

One important thing to note is that St. John's has paid back \$155,000 of the \$280,000 loan made to the fund used for the renovation of the church.

From the desk of Timothy A. R. Callahan, Executive Vice President of Monroe Vos Consulting Inc.

As we are all aware, 2022 was one of the worst years for both the stock and bond markets over the last few decades. Fiscal and monetary accommodations were being removed from our economic systems and with the sharp increase in interest rates [+ 425 basis points] by the Fed to combat record high inflation, the equity markets sold off and intermediate and longer dated bonds declined in value. The inversion of the yield curve warns investors of an economic slowdown with the possibility of a recession in 2023.

The overall performance for the St. John's portfolios for the one-year time weighted return ending 12-31-22 was -13.94% [an improvement over the custom benchmark at -15.39%] net of investment management fees. The 143-basis point improvement was due to a combination of the active managers protecting assets by declining less than their respective benchmarks and positive contributions from a small exposure to alternatives. The Trustees chose to keep the asset allocation fairly constant but made changes to the investments in bonds and cash equivalents. The portfolio ended the year at approximately 55% equities, 32% fixed income, 4% alternatives, and 9% cash equivalents. The Trustees meet quarterly [4th Qtr. review on 1-26-23] to review all investment components, asset allocation and the economic environment impacting the Trust.

Trust Funds	Starting Balance (01/01/2022)	Renovation Monies Returned	Annual Distribution Received	Other Changes in Investment Value	Ending Balance (12/31/2022)
Charles H. Eyster General Fund <i>supports outreach & care of properties</i>	\$114,915.55	\$37,093.12	(\$5,782.92)	(\$17,067.42)	\$129,158.33
Charles H. Eyster Choir Fund <i>supports music programs</i>	\$115,483.79	\$37,336.15	-0-	(\$17,593.62)	\$135,226.32
Margaret A. Hoff Memorial Fund <i>supports outreach & care of properties</i>	\$177,993.08	\$55,832.61	(\$8,957.18)	(\$26,313.83)	\$198,554.68
St. John's Endowment Fund <i>supports outreach & care of properties</i>	\$76,883.37	\$24,738.12	(\$3,869.02)	(\$11,412.95)	\$86,339.52
Total	\$485,275.79	\$155,000.00	(\$18,609.12)	(\$72,387.82)	\$549,278.85

Stewardship Report

2023 Pledge Increase—3.4% over 2022

23 New Pledges

77 Same Amount as in 2022

17 Decreased Their Pledge

40 Increased Their Pledge

9 Stopped Their Pledge

64 Made No Pledge

230 Total Pledging Units

2023 Average Pledge \$5,317.49 vs. \$5,676.67 in 2022

Total Budget Income is up – 3.38%

2022—\$885,164

2023—\$915,046

Treasurer's Report

John Thornton

St. John's financial position is strong.

We ended 2022 with a surplus (revenues minus expenses) of \$52,617. As background, each year the Vestry and then the Parish members are presented with a budget that allocates every dollar expected to be received in the coming year from pledges, plate offerings, etc. so that there is a zero balance projected for year-end.

In 2022, there was a period when the Director of Youth Ministries position was vacant and that, coupled with careful oversight of expenses, resulted in the year-end surplus. At its January 2023 meeting, the Vestry voted to allocate that surplus in two ways, approximately \$36,000 to be added back to the Maintenance Reserve, and another \$17,000 as a transfer to the St. John's Trust.

In 2021, the stewardship campaign was the best ever, but this year was even better with a total of just under \$835,000 in pledges. That amount added to other expected receipts has resulted in the total 2023 budget amount of \$922,000. Again, the total amount of receipts has been allocated for all the various expenses we expect to incur for the year.

None of what we do financially could happen without the generosity of the Parish, so thank you! The clergy, staff and Vestry always endeavor to be good stewards of that generosity. We should all thank Mrs. Vickie Reed, Financial Administrator, for her diligence and dedication to the Parish. She certainly makes my role as Treasurer easy!

Balance Sheet as of 12/31/2022

Assets

Bank Independent (Checking + Money Market)	\$513,236
Clergy Discretionary Funds	18,585
Endowment	549,279
Petty Cash	200
Accounts Receivable	3,491
Total Current Assets	\$1,084,791

Liabilities

Accounts Payable	\$7,465
Payroll Taxes & Elective Deductions	212
Restricted Funds	1,004,123
Equity	72,991
Total Liabilities	\$1,084,791

2022 Operations Income/Expense Summary

Income

Pledge Income	\$814,402
Non-Pledge & Other Income	58,742
Trust Distribution	18,609
Total Operations Income	\$891,753

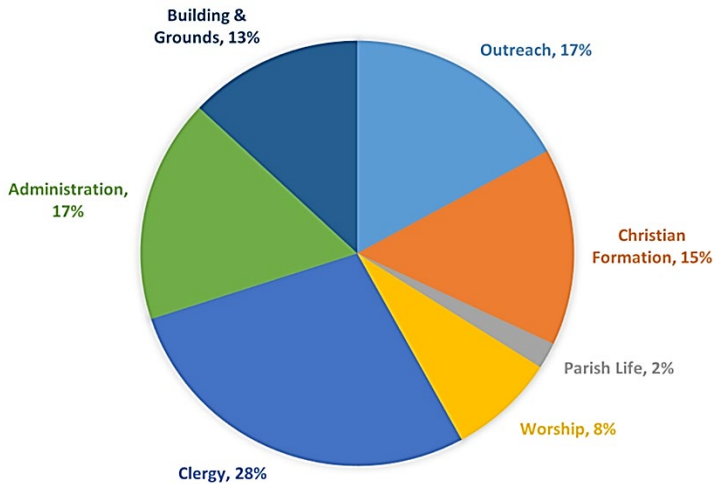
Expense

Outreach	\$158,781
Programs	418,329
Administration, Properties, Debt Service	314,643
Total Operations Expense	\$891,753

2022 Designated Income/Expense Summary

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

St. John's 2023 Budget (Proposed)



Income	
Pledge	\$834,846
Plate	17,000
Non-Pledge	45,000
Endowment Distribution	20,000
Interest Income	1,500
Breakfast & Dinner	3,600
Communion Wine Dedications	100
Total Income	\$922,046
For expense breakdown, see chart below.	
Total Expense	\$922,046

Area of Ministry	2023 Budget	% of Budget	2022 Budget	2022 Actual
Outreach	\$160,935	17%	\$159,206	\$158,781
Christian Formation	141,343	15%	133,092	100,611
Parish Life	17,760	2%	15,400	12,983
Worship	71,879	8%	69,673	68,280
Clergy	255,274	28%	237,690	236,455
Administration	157,855	17%	151,103	150,140
Building & Grounds	117,000	13%	119,000	164,503
Total	\$922,046	100%	\$885,164	\$891,753

We give gratitude and thanks to our outgoing Vestry Class of 2022

Erika Huber, Sue Powell, Carol Sandlin, Bobby Straub (Senior Warden), and Callie Tubb

In 2023, the Wardens of St. John's will be

Julia Roth (Senior Warden) and Steve Price (Junior Warden)

The Current Vestry

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

Class of 2024: Sandy Barr, Mike Burnthall, Steve Price, Kristen Propst, Karen Sawyer

John Thornton, Treasurer

Stan Evans, Assistant Treasurer

Sally Quinn, Clerk

Ken Schuppert, Chancellor

The Parish Staff

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

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

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

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

Sam Burcham, *Director of Youth Ministries*, ext. 110; sam@stjohnsdeatur.org

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

Lauren Cantrell, Choirmaster

Foster Bailey, Organist

The Rev. David Wilcox, Seminarian

Monica Wright and Sandy Burleson, Nursery

Melba Middleton, Food & Hospitality

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.; Lunch 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.

Friday: Closed

