

St. John's Episcopal Church



2013 Annual Report

February 2, 2014

Annual Parish Meeting

St. John's Annual Meeting

February 2, 2014

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Appendix: 2013 Income and Expense Report vs. Budget

2014 Annual Meeting Agenda

February 2, 2014

1. Reception of New Members
2. Election of the Clerk for the Annual Meeting
3. Approval of Minutes from the 2013 Annual Meeting
4. Reports from the Wardens, Treasurer, and Committee Chairs as Recognized by the Rector
5. Adoption of the 2014 Budget
6. Report of the Nominations Committee and Election of Church Officers

**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of
St. John's Episcopal Church
February 3rd, 2013**

The annual meeting of St. John's Episcopal Church was called to order by the Rector Thomas Mousin at 11:55am.

The meeting was begun with a prayer by Rev. Mousin.

A. Reception of new members

The rector introduced the newly bound members book which had been completed last year at the North Bennet Street School.

The following new members had already signed the book: Kelly Blackburn, Christy MacCletchie, Rebecca and Bobby Smith and Ron Gardner.

These members signed at the meeting: Jake Sterling, Charlie Stang, Sarabinh Levy-Brightman, Jane Struss, Lee Garrison, George Born, Matthew Hast and Ron Beaudoin.

The Rev. Lyn Brakeman and the Rev. Richard Simeone were presented as Priest Associates and each introduced themselves with a brief speech.

Election of the Clerk for the meeting

Nomination was made for Paul Newell as clerk to the meeting. The motion was seconded and passed without dissent.

B. Reports

Treasurer's report

In the absence of the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer, Alice Krapf reviewed the Treasurer's report under the Finance Committee.

Junior Warden's report

Louis' report reinforced the positive news contained in the reports to be presented. For instance, we have reached a position of not having to draw from the principal of the endowment, years ahead of schedule. We now have three priests instead of one and we have gone from a small parish to a medium-sized parish.

Nevertheless, he encourages the parish not to be complacent and to speak out with their own ideas and concerns and to contribute where they can contribute.

Senior Warden's Report

Steve spoke to his regrets leaving the position and of the positive accomplishments over his two year tenure. He reflected on his time at the church, memories of children and his pride that for the first time we have pledges over 100k. He offered thanks to the Junior Warden and everyone who contributed time to the church. He especially thanked those who participated in the Diocesan Convention and Partners for Sacred Places.

Rector's Report

The Rector reviewed the year with respect to three L-words Leadership, Loving and Longing.

Under Leadership he noted the services of the outgoing Vestry especially the Warden, Steve Spinetto. He and Paul Newell were brought to the front of the church to offer a farewell and a parting gift. He also thanked Assistant Treasurer Michael Bousquet in his absence and he too would receive the same gift, a framed picture of the church by Karen Tompros' mother.

C. Finance committee and Budget

In the absence of the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer, Alice Krapf reviewed the Treasurer's report. Among the highlights:

- Unrestricted donations for the past year were about \$126,000.
- Changes to the way personnel were paid were noted. Specifically, the organist would be provided a pension benefit and some staff would receive a health care benefit.
- The value of the trust increased 4 percent over the past year. It was expected that this would be applied to capital improvements.
- The building expense is second largest (after personnel) and includes \$19,000 to utilities.

Further discussion included:

- It was noted that the investment in Godly play offered returns as a source of grant income.
- The level of pledging increased 25%. The residual was dedicated to the paint job required in the wake of the building improvements.
- The assessment has already been sent to the diocese. It was 13% of expenses which was the full rate.
- Questions were raised about licensing music for certain hymns but this was not pursued.
- Various elements of the report were reviewed: Lessons and Carols were noted to be a loss where Altar flowers were, as always, break even.
- A proposal was made to allow adoption of a section of the fence as a way to raise funds but no action was taken.

D. Adoption of the Budget for 2013

Adoption of the budget was moved and seconded and approved without dissent.

E. Report of the Nominating Committee

Maureen Lavelly, Kyle Marshall, Ken Stone, Stratton McCrady, Evie Scoville and Adrienne Sweetser would all continue their seats on the Vestry.

Before we began, Jake Sterling asked that his name be withdrawn from nomination for Assistant Treasurer.

In addition the following nominations were made for the Vestry:

- Warden, Louis Tompros
- Junior Warden, Whitney Hayden
- Treasurer, Charlotte Maynard
- Clerk, Matthew Hast
- Three-year term, David Lee

The position of Assistant Treasurer would remain open to be filled.

Nominations for Delegates to the Diocesan Convention:

- Kyle Marshall
- Scott Squillace

Nominations submitted for Delegates to the Boston Harbor Deanery were:

- Kyle Marshall
- David Lee
- Kelly Blackburn

All the above nominations were seconded and approved unanimously.

The meeting was concluded with a prayer by the Rector.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Newell, Clerk

Rector's Report

Jesus also said, 'The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come.'

--Mark 4:26-29 (NRSV)

One might want to argue with the assertion Jesus makes about the mystery of scattering seed upon the ground. Today, we can accurately describe just how and why a seed sprouts and grows -what combination of nutrients, water, and warmth is needed to ensure its germination. Still, there is something miraculous about the growth of any living thing. We do what we can, we work hard to nurture a plant, or a pet, or loved ones in our care. And then, almost suddenly, we behold a mystery.

We are now in our third year together. It is not at all a criticism to state that some of the initial excitement about a new relationship between a rector and a parish has subsided. That is a good and natural thing. But it does not mean we should be less attentive to the new things that God is continually doing in our midst - to be attentive to the growth that sometimes happens with us hardly noticing. We can move from Sunday to Sunday, from season to season, not necessarily aware of the growth in our midst, and then suddenly, we behold it: the miracle of kingdom growth, nourished and watered by the Holy Spirit.

Let me identify just a few ways in which this growth has become evident.

GROWTH IN LEADERSHIP AND MINISTRY OF THE LAITY:

- During 2013, we saw a solidification of new and revitalized ministries, such as the Altar Guild and Ushers.
- The ECW continued to invite us to grow in our understanding of offering our gifts for mission, whether to St. Luke's/San Lucas in Chelsea or to families abroad receiving goats and chickens.
- Consider the Garden. I hope you know that due to the incredible efforts of the Garden Committee, our Garden is increasingly known as a place of quiet beauty and refuge for our entire neighborhood. It is not unusual to see persons from the neighborhood, or children with a caretaker or teachers, taking time in the Garden to consider the lilies.
- We participated in a diocesan sponsored series of workshops offered by Partners for Sacred Places. The team that attended is eager to help us undertake the tasks of making our old and sometimes creaking buildings fit for a church that is growing into the 21st century.
- We've seen an increase in the number of persons volunteering to help out in the Godly Play classroom.
- We have begun a monthly Evensong, and it is led by committed laypersons.
- Our Vestry, Finance Committee, and Stewardship Committees ably show us what faithful and committed leadership looks like in a parish.

GROWTH IN LEADERSHIP AND MINISTRY OF THE ORDAINED

- At this annual meeting, we mark the first anniversary of the Revs. Lyn Brakeman and Dick Simeone formally joining us as Priest Associates. Dick and Lyn have brought a wealth of experience to us, participating both in liturgical leadership on Sundays and in pastoral work

throughout the life of the parish. As non-stipendary priests, they give generously of their time, including providing pastoral coverage when I am on vacation.

- We also greatly benefitted from having two interns with us, Sarabnh Levy-Brightman during 2012-2013 academic year, and Emily Garcia during this year. Though neither is yet ordained, each is at a different stage of discerning what it would mean to become a priest in the Episcopal Church.
- In the last five years, three persons have moved through the parish discernment process, the first step in seeking Holy Orders: Michael Bousquet (priesthood) in 2010, Elizabeth Jordan (deacon) in 2012, and Charlie Stang (priesthood) in 2013. All have gone on to be approved as postulants, and a now a fourth person, Sarabnh Levy-Brightman, has just begun the process.

GROWTH IN WORSHIP

- We are growing in our participation in the liturgy. Perhaps you have not “heard” this growth from where you are sitting, but I hear it every week. Congregational responses, whether spoken or sung, are stronger. And the sound of our praise in the singing of our hymns continues to swell. Through Douglas’s leadership and the Choir’s example, we are more confident in the offering of our whole selves in song.
- A new Evensong service provides an opportunity to gather for prayer on a Friday evening once a month.
- More voices are being heard from the pulpit, and more laypersons have become involved as acolytes, readers, and intercessors.
- Our Children’s Choir has grown, and through your generosity, has been blessed with new cottas.

GROWTH IN GIVING

- With a focus on proportional giving and seeing pledging as a spiritual discipline, there has been continued growth in the number of pledgers and in the total amount pledged.
- Our children have been invited to participate in making a weekly offering.
- Our giving to mission is growing. The vestry committed this year to giving away the first 10% of any fundraising done by the parish toward mission. And our ECW has been leading the way in extending our mission efforts in Chelsea, at St. Luke/San Lucas, and with gifts to Episcopal Relief and Development.
- A significant bequest made by Daniel Carroll, the father of Laura Carroll, is a reminder of the surprising ways in which generosity of others continually blesses us.

GROWTH IN FORMATION

- A confirmation class for high school juniors and seniors has just begun, the first such class we have had in several years.
- Our seminary intern led Bible study and a Lenten study group, and occasional Sunday Forums have been introduced as educational and formation opportunities.
- An EfM (Education for Ministry) class, providing significant theological and biblical study for lay ministers, meets at St. John’s and includes several parishioners.

We are growing in ways seen and unseen, and for that we can give God thanks. Of course, growth also presents challenges. Those challenges will be met with our dedication and commitment, but more importantly, through the grace of God who has already provided so much for us. Among the challenges are these:

We have been blessed by an increase in giving by current and new members of the parish. Yet pledges represent only about one half of our operating expenses. As we grow, our budget will grow. I know that I will continue to invite persons to move towards a tithing – the offering of the first 10% of one's income - as an act of gratitude and as a spiritual discipline.

We have committed 10% of the proceeds of fundraisers to mission beyond our doors. A seed has been planted. How might that seed grow? What if we could imagine giving away the first 10% of all our income – 10% of our budget to – serving others beyond our parish? We “may not know how” that could ever happen. But then the seed begins to germinate and grow. Discerning how God calls us to be a servant community will still be a priority in 2014.

The seeds being planted in our children's programming are provided by committed and faithful adult leaders. If we are to continue to grow in this area, it will mean calling and equipping more leaders. The vestry is supporting the call to have another seminary intern with us in the year to come to assist us here.

How are all of us being nourished in the faith? We have persons who are being called into ordained ministry, but all of us are called to grow in our discipleship and commitment to Christ. A sermon, a service on a Sunday, a day in the Godly Play room – all these can plant a seed. But those seeds need to be nurtured and watered by ongoing Bible study, prayer, and other kinds of groups that provide support and encouragement on the pilgrim path.

Is ours a parish that has a particular charism for calling forth ordained leadership? As one member of a recent discernment committee put it, perhaps that is part of our mission work: to train leaders for the larger church. Such a call for us as a community requires resources – both personal and monetary – that can stretch a parish of our size. Yet if seeds are planted, they will germinate and grow.

Some excellent seeds have been planted by the participants in the Partners for Sacred Places program. We are learning more about how to engage with other groups and persons in our community to support our mission. And we are learning more about our buildings – our physical assets and what will be required to make them fully able to support our mission in the future. And of course, the more we learn, the more we will be challenged by the scope of the task ahead of us.

I've just highlighted a few of the challenges. But I have done so almost eagerly. For what has become so evident to me in my first two years here is the truth of Jesus's parable. – We offer ourselves, we make sacrifices, we give of our time, our talent, and our treasure. We scatter the seed on the ground. We are not sure if we will have enough. And then the seeds sprout and grow. We know not how - except that they do so by the grace of God. Ultimately it is God's growth that we are participating in. It is God's love, Jesus Christ's call, and the Holy Spirit's power that will continue to nourish and bless this community. It is my privilege and joy to continue the good work that we have begun together, for all that God intends.

THE REPORT OF THE RECTOR ON WORSHIP AND PASTORAL OFFICES

WORSHIP:

Sundays:

Sunday services were held 51 times at 8 am and 52 times at 10 am.

Of those services, the Holy Eucharist was celebrated 100 times, and Morning Prayer 3 times.

Sunday Attendance for Both Services:

| | TOTAL | WEEKLY AVERAGE |
|-------|-------|----------------|
| 2013: | 4,004 | 77 |
| 2012: | 4,417 | 83 |
| 2011: | 3,763 | 73 |

Liturgies in Addition to Sunday Mornings (with attendance in parentheses)

Ash Wednesday: February 13 at 7:30 am, 4:30 pm, and 7 pm: (36)

Holy Monday: March 25 at 7 pm: (11)

Holy Tuesday: March 26 at 7 pm: (13)

Holy Wednesday: March 27 at 7 pm: (16)

Maundy Thursday: Agape Feast and Eucharist: March 28 at 6:30 pm (47)

Good Friday: March 29 at 4:30 pm and 6:30 pm (52)

Holy Saturday: March 30 at 10 am: (5)

Easter Vigil: March 30 at 6:30 pm (31)

Christmas Eve: December 24, at 4 pm (107), and 10 pm (53)

Christmas Day: December 25 at 10 am (24)

Evensong was celebrated 11 times, on Fridays at 6:30 pm

Holy Communion in Homes or Hospitals: 14 Visits

PASTORAL OFFICES

Holy Baptism:

Feast of the Epiphany, January 6

Anson Merrill Ladd

4th Sunday of Easter, April 21

Meredith Patricia McCabe

Margaret Stewart McCabe

Baptisms continued on next page

Feast of Pentecost, May 19

Dylan Naomi Maurer
James Oliver Wolcott

4th Sunday After Pentecost, June 16

Evangeline Grace Marshall

Saturday, July 20th

Elyse Marie Valiente

Feast of All Saints, November 3

Camden Hayes Barber
Will David Baur
William Pabst Haldeman
Nolan James Newmark
Jackson Robert Schmid
Clark Marshall Slocum

Marriages:

Saturday May 25

Andrew Welt and Kimberly Rowan

Sunday December 29

Andrew LePage and Amy McDonough

Memorial Service:

Saturday November 9th

Nora Austin Cushing 10/29/13-10/29/13

Respectfully submitted,



Rev. Thomas Mousin
Rector of St. John's Episcopal Church

Senior Warden's Report

When I was in high school, my history teacher had our class read an article that has stuck with me to this day, and that I've been thinking about as I consider where we are as a community at St. John's. The article purported to be a "Top 20" list of the most important historical figures of all time. Jesus came in at number 2, followed by the Apostle Paul at number 3. Number 1 was the Prophet Mohammed. The article explained its positioning of its top three this way: although there were (at least at the time) more practicing Christians worldwide than practicing Muslims, the article took the position that Mohammed was more significant because he played a dual role. While Jesus ignited the Christian faith, it was Paul that did the hard work of establishing Christianity. The article's (somewhat oversimplified) argument was that Mohammed played both roles for Islam – both inspiration and establishment – so he got the number 1 spot.

I was thinking about this article because I see us as in a Pauline phase at St. John's. Compared to some periods in even our recent history, we are in a moment right now that does not – to me – feel like an instant of particularly radical change. Tom's steady hand as our Rector has guided us through 2013, and we will enter a third year under his leadership and care this year. As you will see in the financial reports and the proposed 2014 budget, the challenges that we face are real – but they are similar to the challenges we have faced and overcome in the past two years. Our ministries continue to benefit from the wisdom and experience of our long-time members, and from the steady influx of new faces. And the Nominating Committee is reporting only a small number proposed changes in leadership for the coming year as Vestry members complete their terms and rotate off – but the proposed leadership for the coming year looks, frankly, quite similar to the leadership for the past year.

If you have found what you were looking for at St. John's, if you love this community, and if you have felt God's presence here over the past year, then I have good news for you: 2014 is shaping up to look quite a bit like 2013.

Our work in a period like this is the work of establishment – of making sure that we do the day-to-day, week-to-week, month-to-month work that we are called to do, of strengthening our foundations and our processes, and of continued growth. This work is just as challenging – if not more challenging – than the kind of work that we are called to do in periods of radical change. It can sometimes be easier to feel inspired and to experience God's call in a time of "newness" or a time of great challenge, than it is in a time of stability or an "ordinary" time. It is critical that we continue to continue to be attentive, to be active, and to listen – to identify what is important and should stay the same, and what needs to evolve and change.

This is really, really hard work. And it is important that we are mindful of ourselves and each other as we are doing it. If you are feeling overcommitted, burned out, or unappreciated – pay attention to those feelings and *please, please* share them. Conversely, if there are people at St. John's whose daily work is a blessing to you, who you appreciate, or for whom you are grateful – *please, please* tell them.

In that spirit, I want to take the liberty, on behalf of the entire Parish, to offer a note of thanks for the hard, dedicated, and inspirational work of the members of our community.

Thank you first to our Rector, Tom – for your inspirational preaching, your visionary leadership, your thoughtful administration, and the care and love that you bring to St. John's and to every one of us in your pastoral care.

Thank you to our Music Director, Douglas – for the extraordinary work that you put into transforming our Sanctuary each Sunday with the beauty of your organ pieces, for taking the time to write explanations of the preludes so that even musical dullards like me can appreciate them, and for your leadership of a choir that, week-after-week, amazes. Thank you in particular on the occasion of your twenty-year anniversary at St. John’s. I was not there for the first ten of those years – but I can say this of the last ten: there has never been a time when we could have ever asked for anyone more perfect for this church, this organ, this community, and this parish.

Thank you to each of you that has worked to sanctify, enliven, and enrich our worship. Thank you to our Priest Associates – Lyn and Dick, for preaching to, caring for, and being with us week after week. And thank you to the interns, postulants, and others who preached to us this past year, including Sarabinh, Charlie, and Emily. Thank you to our Acolytes, including Roger, George, and Sarah – for the solemnity that you have brought to our worship by your service on the altar. Thank you to Lurette and the members of the Altar Guild – for unfailingly and lovingly preparing and maintaining our Sanctuary. Thank you to Nan – for making sure that our altar is alive with beautiful flowers every week. Thank you to Melissa and her cadre of ushers – for making sure that everyone who comes into our doors is welcomed, comfortable, and at home. And thank you to Jane for leading our Evensong worship on Friday evenings.

Thank you to each of you that has worked to enrich the spiritual lives of the children of our community. Thank you to our teachers Art, Emily, Simon, and David – for the wonder that you have inspired in our younger children through Godly Play, and the caring and thoughtful study you have facilitated for our older children through Living the Good News. And thank you to everyone that volunteered as a doorkeeper throughout the year, to make our Godly Play classroom possible. Thank you to our nursery caregivers, Laruen and Emily – without whom our Sanctuary would be even more boisterous than it already is! Thank you to our Children’s Choir Director Nan, her Accompanist/Husband Steve, and the dedicated members of our Children’s Choir – for working every Sunday morning before church to prepare joyous musical offerings. And thank you to Evie – for envisioning our Children’s Choir in robes and organizing a bake sale to make it happen!

Thank you to each of you that has worked to maintain the sacred space that is St. John’s. Thank you to our Sexton, Brian – for your hard work on keeping up with the ever-changing needs of a growing church. Thank you to our Building Committee Chair, Ken – for offering us your vision, your extraordinary breadth of knowledge, your tireless effort, and your ability to find a solution to even the most seemingly impossible building problems! Thank you to Joanne and the members of the Cutler Garden Committee – for relentlessly maintaining a space that serves both as a parish gathering place, a beautiful retreat, and a place of worship. And thank you to George, Michael, Melissa, Steve, and Ken – for your long-term building planning work with Partners for Sacred Spaces, helping us to understand, appreciate, preserve, and maintain our church.

Thank you to each of you that has done the often invisible – but extraordinarily critical – work that keeps us operational. Thank you to our Parish Secretary, Priscilla (who might quite possibly be the greatest Parish Secretary who has ever lived) – for getting us organized, keeping us organized, and repeatedly going above and beyond the call of duty to take care of the needs of this Parish and its members (all in just two days each week!). Thank you to our Treasurer, Charlotte, and our Assistant Treasurer, Sarge – for handling the ins and outs of our finances, for doing so when it is extraordinarily time consuming, and for taking on all of this (often thankless!) work even knowing the financial challenges that the Parish faces. Thank you to our Stewardship Chairs, Melissa and Kathleen – for facing head-on and with grace and care the challenge of talking to parishioners about money (and for following up so thoroughly that we ended up with a record-breaking year in financial pledges). Thank you to Alice and the Finance Committee – for digging into the numbers,

helping us understand where there are places to be optimistic and areas for concern, and giving us sound and reasoned guidance on how to manage the financial life of the Parish.

Thank you to each of you that has offered your unique skills to do the things that enrich the life of the parish. Thank you to Jake – for your extraordinary artistic eye and your tireless effort, with which you gave us the gift of our beautiful publicity materials, our website, and the Harvest Fair Journal. Thank you to Evie – for coming up with and implementing a system for coffee hour that really works! Thank you to Sarabinh – for leading a Lenten study group that participants were still talking about all the way through Advent. Thank you to our Harvest Fair Chairs, Christy and Whitney – for putting on a Fair was not only a financial success, but a great community gathering event. Thank you to the leaders and members of Episcopal Church Women – for all of the multifaceted work that you do, but in particular for maintaining the focus and attention on our mission work. Thank you to Rosemary – for many things, but in particular this year for again coordinating the Blessing of the Animals, a day when it seemed like every furry face in Charlestown was in our pews! Thank you to the members of our Discernment Committee, Jonathan, Matt, Maureen, and Steve – for your thoughtful deliberation as we made the decision to recommend Charles Stang for Postulancy. And thank you to the members of our Nominating Committee, for your work identifying those who will carry on these ministries going forward.

Finally, thank you to the members of the Vestry who have so faithfully and diligently served St. John's this past year – Adrienne, Bobby, Charlotte, David, Evie, Ken, Kyle, Matt, Maureen, and Whitney. What awes and amazes me about each of you is not that you're willing to wrestle with the big-picture challenges and opportunities St. John's faces, nor that you're willing to roll up your sleeves and do the work that has to get done; what amazes me is that each and every one of you is unfailingly willing to do *both*. It has been an honor to serve with all of you for the past year (and I'm delighted that so many of us will likely get to do it again together in the coming year!).

Finally, I wouldn't want anyone to read this report and imagine that we haven't seen changes over the past year, and that we won't see continued changes in 2014 – of course we have, and of course we will. One of the most significant changes that we have to look forward to is the election of a new Bishop, and the retirement of our current Bishop, the Rt. Rev. M. Thomas Shaw, SSJE. Bishop Tom has had a close relationship with St. John's and has been one of our greatest supporters and friends. We will miss his leadership. We will also have important work to do as we play a role in the election of his successor, and as we begin our relationship with the new Bishop.

We have also seen some programmatic changes – including the introduction of a recurring Sung Evensong service (led beautifully by Jane Struss), a new Lenten study group, the advent of a Community Carol Sing, and a year away from the traditional Lessons and Carols service. And there will be more to come, including (we hope) a spring fundraiser, new mission and outreach programs, and continued experimentation and evolution in our worship. Most notably, 2014 will see – at long last – much needed restoration work for our organ (and we will see what further magic Douglas will be able work once that is complete!).

As we enter 2014, I would invite you to – in the words of our newcomer welcoming folder – “Experience St. John's.” In particular, whether 2014 is your first year at St. John's or your 80th, I would invite you to experience St. John's in two ways.

First, I invite you to experience St. John's by receiving. Download a couple of the sermons that Tom has offered over the past year from the website that Jake carefully maintains, and listen to them in the middle of the week. Walk through the Cutler Memorial Garden – in the snow or in the spring, and experience the peace that that space – so lovingly maintained by the Garden Committee – can offer right in the middle of our busy city. Come in a little before 10:00 on a Sunday morning and

experience the transformative power of the organ preludes that Douglas offers. Take a look through the historical documents and photographs that George has helped to identify, and pause to reflect on what has happened in this space over the course of many lifetimes. Spend a Sunday morning in the Godly Play classroom to hear Emily or Art tell a story, and witness how the children in our community experience the word for the first time. Find a new way that St. John's can give to you, and receive it.

Second, I invite you to experience St. John's by giving. Be like Paul—be part of the day-to-day work of establishing, maintaining, and caring for the church. If you are not already making a financial pledge and you can pledge any amount, please do. If you are already pledging, give more. And give in a way that is unrestricted—rather than identify the things that you think matter to you about St. John's the most now, make a pledge or an offering that the Parish can use in a way that addresses its most vital needs. But more importantly, give of yourself. I will again repeat a call that I have made in my report to the Annual Meeting every year: find something at St. John's that you are passionate about, and do it—now. We need your talents, but we need you to figure out what your talents are, and help us to figure out how to put them best to use.

Respectfully submitted,



Louis W. Tompros, Junior Warden
January 20, 2014

Junior Warden's Report

"Hello Church" as Father Tom greets us during Sunday worship announcements.

We are all blessed with the opportunity to be part of the Episcopal community of St. John's. As I reflect on the past year in the life of the church, I did a bit of calculation and I believe I began walking through our historic doors close to a decade ago. I will have to consult Stratton McCrady on the exact year. I was seeking a home to re-engage in my faith after years of being away from my childhood parish in New Jersey and found one at the historic church at 27 Devens Street. This year I was called to serve as Junior Warden serving under the strong leadership of Louis Tompros. Just as I remember those first Sundays that I was welcomed by the consummate St. John's greeters in the mid-2000s, I was welcomed by our Rector, Louis and the Vestry to serve. We continue to open our doors and greet new guests and new members as well as greet those that have called St. John's their home of worship for over fifty years.

After experiencing an increase in members over the past few years, this year was more steady and stable. We did experience growth from increased programming from our Parish ministries. Among them were the Garden Club's Mexican feast in the garden, the Carol Sing during Advent, and the addition of older children Sunday fellowship and education. Although, we continued to have fiscal challenges this year, the commitment of time and talents from our Finance Committee, our Treasurer and the Holy Spirit kept us on track and will keep us focused on operating responsibly in the year ahead. The other notable commitment we made as a Parish was to practice tithing. This historic standard of giving is 10% of an individual or in this case, Parish's income. For example, we presented a \$600 donation to a local Charlestown food pantry, Harvest on Vine, which was approximately 10% of our fair proceeds.

We will continue to have operating challenges in the year ahead. And I offer that if each one of us reflects on the spiritual guidance and fellowship that we receive from our "Church", we will find it is a pleasure to increase our individual time, talent, and treasure to continue to experience the richness of our community. The Parishioners who have experienced the peaks and the valleys of our history understand and embrace this fact and with Prayer and commitment we will be able to continue experience stability and growth.

Thank you "Church" for each one of you.

Thank you Tom. Sunday after Sunday, month after month, and now year after year, you guide and lead us all spiritually with love and care. St. John's and Charlestown are blessed to have you.

Thank you to Priscilla for the love and care that you do your job. After not much of any transition, you have made a profound impact to the St. John's organization. When you pulled me aside at the Harvest Fair with a suggestion about how to manage one of the tables, I was very grateful and appreciated your experience.

Thank you to our Sexton, Brian, for your continued commitment to care for our building and grounds.

Thank you to Ken Stone, who shares a passion for our sacred space. He is behind the scenes ensuring that our building continues to house us safely and comfortably.

This year we are celebrating 20 years of service for our faithful and talented music director. Douglas, you continue to deliver music that challenges and delights us all. We look forward to 20 more years. Thank you for educating the Parish on the history of hymns and anthems that we sing and hear during worship. Thank you to the St. John's choir. The output per choir member is extraordinary. Thank you for sitting among us in the pews and encouraging us to sing. Thank you also to Nan Armstrong for directing the Youth Choir. We have some potential future Adult Choir members being developed.

Thank you to those who ensure that we are spiritually fed week after week. We have been so fortunate to have Lyn and Dick preach and preside over worship this year. We are also blessed with those who are in different stages of Episcopal study and have chosen St. John's to pursue their practical work here. These include, Emily, Charlie, and Sarabinh.

Thank you to those who make our worship sacred and in order. We thank Roger, Sarah and George for your commitment to serve as Acolytes week after week. Thank you to Nancy for your ministry of managing the altar flowers. Thank you to Lurette for leading the Altar Guild and to Melissa and her welcoming ushers.

Thank you to those who are committed to the education of our children. The growth that we have experienced over the past few years has been notably in the number of children who attend Godly Play and the program for older children called Living the Good News. This growth and stability is attributed to the quality and care that Art, Emily, Simon and David devote to teaching our children. The teachers encourage anyone to join one of their sessions as an observer. I know personally, I would squat even more if I wouldn't miss Tom's sermons. Thank you to the volunteers who serve as greeters. The structure of the Sunday program, including the greeting, that the teachers have instituted has maximized the time that the children can spend on fully experiencing the stories that they are leading the children through.

Thank you to the many committees and ministries that are committed to St. John's in ways that our community and beyond benefit from.

Thank you to the Cutler Garden Committee for maintaining the sacred space with such care and vision. When I learned that my son's class ventured to see what a garden looks like in the winter, I asked which garden. Johnny replied, "You know Mom the church garden where I was baptized." Then he added "I can't wait for summer." The garden serves as a haven for our children after a morning of inside activities and a sanctuary for those committed to worship during the spring, summer, and early fall.

Thank you to the work of the Episcopal Church Women (ECW) group who within their scope has assisted us in looking thoughtfully on the mission work that St. John's has done and guiding us in defining the mission work for the future.

Thank you to Christy MacLetchie and her family for Co-Charing a successful St. John's and Charlestown community event. Her daughter Annie spent many hours aside her mom cleaning and organizing for the event. Thank you to Jake Sterling for sharing his artistic talents with us. He designed several publications for St. John's events including the large task of the Fair Journal cover artwork as well as the layout.

Thank you to our Stewardship Committee chairs Melissa and Kathleen. You led this year's process with ease and comfort. This Ministry is vital to the continued stability and vitality of our "Church."

Thank you to the Vestry members of 2013 who demonstrate care, discipline, honesty and love as they serve. The members include, Adrienne, Bobby, Charlotte, David, Evie, Ken, Kyle, Louis, Matt, and Maureen. I am honored to be a part of this group.

In a recent Vestry meeting we read a passage from the Book of John. We discussed the ways in which God is present in our lives. We all agree that God is present at St. John's. I ask that you add to the work of God among this community and commit to trying something new this year. If you are seeking ideas, look no further than your neighbor in your pew or a conversation during coffee hour. Thank you "Church".

Respectfully submitted,

Whitney O. Hayden, Junior Warden
January 25, 2014

Music Director's Report

In 2013 your Rector and I put a good deal of thought into how we can broaden, enrich, and support our musical life at St. John's. In a rapidly changing church and society we walk a fine line between keeping up with the times and compromising a high level of quality. I think we have risen to this challenge by introducing new material without falling prey to chasing trends. You may have noticed a greater emphasis on choral music in English, and the introduction of materials from supplementary hymnals or folkloric traditions and some variation in how we sing or chant the Psalms---good music is everywhere if you look for it.

With an eye toward broadening our repertoire of hymnody we have launched a 'Hymn of the Month' program, selecting underused or new-to-us hymns to learn by weekly repetition and add to our rotation. We have an enormously rich Hymnal. Let's use it.

Over the summer months I began writing brief notes on the organ preludes for inclusion in the Sunday bulletin. This has been so well received that I'll continue whenever possible. We organists can often forget that our work can seem obscure to non-organists. If we can offer a context for what is heard on Sunday, possibly we can deepen awareness of the organ prelude as integral to preparation for liturgy.

You will have noticed that on most Sundays the choir is now seated among the congregation for the first half the service. This experiment was meant as a way to help support congregational singing. I have received positive reports on this, and I can hear the difference from my perch.

At the urging of Jane Struss our calendar now includes a monthly service of Evensong. This all sung and chanted service dates back to the reforms in the Church of England following the death of Henry VIII, and is a beautiful tranquil way to end the week. The small congregation that meets monthly by candlelight would welcome you. When the weather is appropriate we meet in the garden.

In 2013 we took a hiatus from our ten year tradition of offering a formal Service of Lessons and Carols in Advent. This was the result of personnel and scheduling issues. In its place we held a less formal and more family-friendly Carol sing and party, which proved to be a very happy and successful event, and, I believe, a refreshing change of pace.

In 2013 we were sad to lose a choir member to graduate school out of state. Stratton McCrady is sorely missed. The choir membership as currently constituted is Louise Ambler Osborn, Shops Howard, Maureen Lavelly, Alice Krapf, Jake Sterling, Jonathan McCormick, Pell Osborn and Dan Simpson. As always, the choir would welcome new members.

Finally, I am very happy to be able to store my music library and perform many of my tasks in my new office, the product of heroic work over the spring and summer by Ken Stone, Jonathan McCormick and Stratton McCrady.

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas Witte

Priest Associates' Report

It is a privilege and a joy to serve this parish as Priest Associates. At the 2013 Annual Parish Meeting we were recognized by prayer and applause as the Priest Associates of the parish at the behest of the rector, the Rev. Tom Mousin, and consent of the vestry. We consented too!

Here's how it all began..... We retired from our ministries of thirteen years in Gloucester, Dick as rector of another St. Johns parish and Lyn as priest associate there with a practice in pastoral counseling and spiritual director in a neighboring UCC parish. We moved to Cambridge, cities being a few of our favorite things, and shopped for a parish. We were becoming pew people.

The transition was, well, like transitions are – whirlwind. Retirement is a funny thing – joyfully free and unsettling not to have a 9-5 schedule to keep you on track. But we attended a parish and our Boston deanery meetings, enjoyed lively urban culture, spent too much money eating out, and one of us gained weight.

For a number of reasons our time in our first parish came to an end. The dean invited us to continue to come to the deanery clergy meetings. We had not decided what to do or where to go. At one such meeting we heard this tall friendly guy named Tom say, "I'd love to have a couple of retired priests in my parish." Bingo! – more biblically Behold! – we saw the light. And so we came to check out another St. Johns and you know the rest.

This year we have filled in for the rector on occasion and covered pastoral care emergencies as needed. Our small staff meetings are both fun and productive as we together brainstorm, tinker, and plan for the best possible curricula and liturgies for the parish. We even had an elegant and delicious staff luncheon at the rectory, served by the rector's spouse who cooked for us.

We are confident in everyone on staff and grateful to the rector for his welcome and ongoing trust – not to mention the warmth and effusions of the people of St. John's. Color us content.

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev'ds Dick Simeone and Lyn G. Brakeman

Parish Intern's Report

I feel so lucky to be parish intern this year at St. John's; I'm grateful to the whole community, but especially to Tom for his patience and guidance, and to the Godly Play parents for their openness and support.

I've certainly felt that this is a rare place for me to serve. I have so much to learn and improve on, and this church has been gracious and supportive as I learn. Compared to some of my friends' experiences as interns in other locations, I've never felt that I was just a sort of necessary cog – I've always felt that I was welcomed as myself, a whole person and invited to be part of the church to whatever extent I desired.

The majority of my time has been spent planning and organizing the Godly Play classroom—see the GP Report for more information about that! I've also preached a couple times and will preach twice again in this coming semester. Preaching for a parish is very different than preaching for a chaplaincy, so I've enjoyed getting the chance to practice this on such a forgiving crowd! I also enjoyed attending a Vestry meeting in January, and hearing about the sorts of decisions that are made and how they're come to. I hope to attend at least once more before the year is up.

The main thing I've learned so far, though, is that I have a LOT more to learn! I've become aware ever more acutely what a wide variety of opportunities and challenges can come into even a small and loving parish like this one—and I'm that much more grateful to have started my education amongst you all!

Respectfully Submitted,

Emily Garcia

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's job at St. John's just keeps getting easier and easier because of the hard work and dedication of this community. This year, Priscilla, St. John's part-time secretary, performed the lion-share of bookkeeping. She was responsible for receivables, for tracking pledges and donations, and for making deposits. She also helped with bill payment. I am extremely grateful. The Finance committee steered by Alice Krapf presented a very helpful budget for 2013 which reminded the Vestry and committees to be mindful of our expenses.

It is remarkable how accurate the budget was. There were only a few significant variations from the budget. They were: a lower than expected income from non-pledge donations (approximate \$10,000 less than expected), a lower endowment dividend income (\$4,744.59 less than budgeted), a higher utilities cost (\$2,572.53 higher), and a 165% increase in the capital improvements from what was budgeted. These variations from budget left us with a negative operating income for 2013; however we were able to absorb the loss without taking principle from the endowment because of the cash balance at the beginning of 2013 and the generosity of our parishioners.

The endowment grew by over 10% this year. The beginning balance was \$602,167.61 and the balance as of September 30, 2013 was \$660,943.55.

The day-to-day financial activity of the church followed much the same pattern of previous years. New Year's through the spring, we were able to pay all our bills and maintain a safe balance in our general checking account. During the summer months, the cash balance dwindled precariously low due to lower attendance. There was a small bump in the early fall, but then there was not enough money in the account to pay the bills prior to the Christmas Holidays. Finally, in the last few days of the calendar year, because of an unexpected, generous donation of \$10,000, we became solvent again.

The difficulties in early December are because the Diocese assessment must be paid in full before the end of the year and because many of us (myself included) fulfill our pledges at the very end of the year. In 2014, I would like to encourage members to fulfill their pledge earlier in the year and as treasurer, I will try to pay off our Assessment monthly.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

Sincerely,

Charlotte F. Maynard

Stewardship Report

St. John's parish has had a very good year. Parishioners who have been her for years continue to pledge and new parishioners have also joined in supporting the mission and ministry of St. John's. This year children too have pledge envelopes to help develop the early sense of ownership and participation in the life of the church. Pledge season ended on Consecration Sunday with a celebratory lunch. We are so grateful for the many ways parishioners give to St. John's with their time, talent and treasure.

The facts are this:

| | | |
|----------------------|-----------|--------------------------------|
| Pledges for 2014 | \$109,893 | (up 7% from \$102,138 in 2013) |
| Total pledging units | 57 | (54 in 2013) |
| New pledges | 13 | |
| Returning pledges | 44 | |
| Moved | 4 | |
| Increased pledges | 27 | |

These pledges not only speak to the growth of St. John's as a community but also to the gracious generosity of those many individuals who have pledged.

With gratitude,

Melissa Giese
Kathleen McCormick
Stewardship Co-Chairs

Finance Committee Report

Members: Barbara Bush, Alice Krapf, Charlotte Maynard, James Moody (beginning September, 2013), Maureen Lavelly, Adrienne Sweetser (retired: May, 2013)

Also attending: Rev. Tom Mousin, Louis Tompros

The Finance Committee meets almost every month to review financial operations compared to budget and to manage cash flow (i.e., is there enough in the checking account to meet payroll and the other bills?). We send our written notes to the Vestry in time for their monthly meeting. This year we had a few very close months, but seemed to always get enough funds in to pay the bills, even if it was at the last minute. By the end of the year, there was enough cash in the checking account to meet all the parish's obligations even though the budget is in deficit. Our cash reserves are now at a very low point, so we are hoping pledges are fulfilled in a timely manner in 2014.

Finance also monitors areas of concern such as the utility bills, fulfillment of pledges and other income. Michael and Melissa Giese stepped in to monitor oil use. This analysis began the process toward getting a new heating system for the church and Parish House, which we hope will be a "budget neutral" event, the savings in fuel being used to pay the debt service on the Diocesan Loan for the new system. We also had help from Chris Hayden who set up a "liquidation account" where parishioners can fulfill their pledge by donating stock.

Other help has come from Priscilla and Steve "Sarge" Locke who have stepped up to help enter data and keep the accounts up to date. We are ever grateful to Treasurer Charlotte Maynard and her financial acumen for keeping us informed and sharing her clear eyed view of the parish's finances. We are also happy to announce that former Committee member Adrienne Sweetser has volunteered to do the audit of our books, which is not only good practice, but will result in the release of a Diocesan Congregational Development Grant for new liturgical and children's and teens programs. Our rector has also had a side job as a realtor, renting out Parish House space to various groups and organizations that has added much needed income to the budget.

We continue to be concerned about the need for capital improvements, especially in the Parish House, which the parish cannot now afford to make. It would be wonderful if 2014 could be the year when the Parish House is painted and that last repair to our beautiful organ could be done to complete the restoration started in the late 1990's.

Respectfully Submitted,

Alice Krapf, Chair

Building Report

In the Spring of 2013 it was discovered that an eight inch diameter metal duct located in the basement of the sanctuary that supplied heat from the oil furnace to the sanctuary floor register had fallen to the floor. The sexton Brian O'Neil, Tom Slaman and Ken Stone reattached the duct.

The city water line that comes from Devens Street to the parish house basement started leaking just inside the foundation wall. The Boston Water and Sewer department gave a no interest loan and also did a good job on a snowy day replacing the old lead pipe with a copper pipe.

A fairly new sump pump used during storms and located in the parish house basement floor suddenly stopped working during a storm and was replaced in a short time by our sexton. The new pump does a better job than the old one ever did but it would be a good idea to have a second backup sump pump to help the existing new sump pump. The cost of the sump pump was generously paid for by Steven Locke.

An old storage room in the rear of the second floor of the parish house was subdivided into two new spaces. The smaller room is for limited storage and it also has an existing door for emergency egress. The larger space is now used by Douglas Witte as an office. A new wall with a plexiglass window separating the two spaces was built by Stratton McCrady and Jonathan McCormick. The two new spaces were painted by Ken Stone.

The tenants that occupied the parish house apartment moved out in September and a new tenant moved into the unit after it was painted and cleaned by the sexton. It was also necessary to replace the not-old gas stove.

Recently St. John's learned that one of the oil fired boilers in the parish house basement was at the end of its life. This is bad news but then again it might bring long needed change to how heat is provided.

The exterior parish house entrance doors just before winter received a needed protective coat to help preserve them. This was done by the sexton.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ken Stone

Altar Guild Report

The Altar Guild is a growing, vibrant ministry that has had a very successful year. The Altar Guild carries out the meaningful ministry of preparing our place of worship, in particular the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. It is responsible for setting the altar each Sunday, preparing for baptisms and funerals, and making sure the linens, silver, and brass are in tip-top shape.

Currently we have seven active members and two emergency backup members. Altar Guild also has one member who is in charge of the fair linens. We would gladly welcome more members to our ministry. The guild met twice this year at Lurette's house with Tom for nibbles, socializing, and learning about our important ministry. We also met at St. John's the Saturday before Easter and the Saturday of Christmas Carols to polish the church's silver and brass.

Very special thanks to my fellow Altar Guild ministers who have been extremely helpful and supportive of me as well as making my job most enjoyable and easy.

Respectfully submitted,
Lurette C. Bourne

Children's Christian Education Report

Report from the Godly Play Classroom:

Godly Play has had a great first semester, and we've also enjoyed the beginning of the new year! We've had two teachers in the classroom, Art Schintzel and myself; and we've been blessed with a variety of Doorkeepers (parent assistants) who have made our Sundays go more smoothly. We have between 2 and 20 kids each week, and have found our attendance to be more consistent than the previous year.

We've done a few things slightly different this year, the first of which is sending out a weekly email with some of the highlights of the day. We hope very much that this will allow parents to better understand and respond to whatever tidbits their kids bring home. I'm also so pleased to say that we've started making time to ask for questions from our students after each story (instead of getting questions before or after GP time). This isn't part of the official curriculum, but we feel it's definitely an important part of our Christian formation.

You might notice that we've also put up signs with the books of the Bible written on them! We've worked our way through most of the Hebrew Bible and are about to start on the New Testament. In addition to all these intellectual pursuits, we've added two new behavioral goals as well: (1) Walking out of sanctuary slowly, and (2) Taking only two food items at Coffee Hour before waiting for their parents to give them permission to eat more. This latter goal was added after discussion between Tom and myself, when we became concerned especially about all the kids (e.g. when there's a group of 16) eating much of the Coffee Hour treats before the prelude is even over! We've started reminding kids to "share with people – even if the people aren't in the room yet!"

One small change in our room will hopefully be coming before the end of the school year: We're hoping to get some brand new bookshelves for the classroom, which will (a) allow us to store our extra/replacement materials neatly, (b) provide a more welcoming space for the children's craft materials, and (c) make a more professional entrance to Fr. Tom's office.

Despite all these good new developments, Godly Play at St. John's is facing a big change next year. Art has been slowly "phasing out" this year, and doesn't anticipate doing any teaching in the coming year; and in September I'll be leaving for seminary. Although we have a group of committed parent helpers, we haven't yet found anyone who feels called to be a teacher.

One option, which we've proposed to the Vestry, is to hire a seminarian to do his or her fieldwork here in the Godly Play program. This would cost money and would also cost Fr. Tom a lot of time and energy, as he would have significant mentoring responsibilities. Another option (which costs no money and spreads the cost of time among many) would be to have three or four parents become teachers, and they might each teach once a month, perhaps all having one Sunday off a month, or taking weeks off as necessary. Other options are certainly available, and we'll discuss these at the February 4th Godly Play Parents' Dinner, to which everyone is invited! Regardless of the parish's choice, a decision should be made soon, so that we can start preparing for the fall and be ready to go!

Report from the Older Class:

We spent the fall figuratively wandering the path of Jesus's life from Nazareth, around the villages of Galilee, down the dusty road to Jericho, and finally to Jerusalem. We used props including maps, word puzzles, and even a blind-fold game (this is popular with the kids and helps them with the idea of 'seeing' differently). Each class includes us reading a passage from the Gospel, taking it in turns to read. We then discuss the passage and talk about how it relates to the journey (Jesus's, our own etc.) Since Christmas we have covered the Flight to Egypt, and Lamb of God story - both have strong visual imagery and a chance for the kids to get their maps out.

I enjoy the class and hope we can continue to grow this group. Having a 2nd teacher will be very helpful. Perhaps we can advertise this opportunity in the bulletin and make a brief announcement at the parish meeting.

Best wishes,

Simon Ringrose

Children's Choir Report

After a summer off, we were so happy to start our rehearsing again. The choir's musical offerings have been beautiful and they are singing more as an ensemble. We began with a great spiritual - 'This little light of mine'. The excitement continued with a very fruitful fundraiser/bake sale for the children's cottas. We raised \$528. and then received a generous gift of \$500 from a dear friend.

Hooray, \$1028! At the Christmas Carol Sing in December, we not only showed off our voices with 'People look East', but the children were wearing their new cottas.

For Bishop Shaw's final visit in January, we sang a rousing 'call and response' and had fun teaching it to the congregation.

The rehearsals continue to be lively and fun, with much vocal growth and stronger signs of confidence.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Armstrong

Harvest Fair Report

The Harvest Fair for 2013 brought in revenues that totaled \$7,102.42. This was the first year that we committed to tithing 10% of our proceeds to a local Charlestown mission. We chose Harvest on Vine and presented them with a \$600 contribution. This total was the result of parish participation and the efforts of the following people:

Whitney Hayden & Christy MacLetchie - Co-Chairs
Steve Spinetto - Turkey Dinner
Jake Sterling - Journal cover design, layout & printing

The fair was organized into the following sales tables - Nancy's Designer Boutique, Mugs & Sports Raffle, Silent Auction, Books, Family, Attic Treasures, Jewelry, Baked Goods and Garden Committee. Many thanks to the entire parish for their auction donations and time spent working before, during and after the auction to ensure its success.

Respectfully submitted,

Christy MacLetchie Whitney Hayden
Harvest Fair Co-Chairs

Flower Guild Report

Each week flowers are picked up at the Bunker Hill Florist. Then I arrange them in urns for the altar. We ask for extra monetary help for our Christmas poinsettias and Easter lilies. The weeks following Pentecost through the end of August, our altar is undecorated. Of course, memorial and celebratory flowers are honored no matter what time of year.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Armstrong

Garden Committee Report

The St. John's Garden Committee regrouped in March of 2013 for its annual goal setting session and kept going throughout the year until the end of December. We also welcomed two new members this season, Melissa Giese and Jake Sterling.

Our major goals consisted of improving the landscape adjacent to the walkway near the parish house, continuing fundraising efforts, joining in with ECW for the Sidewalk Sale, and a commitment to hold a lighted hearted garden party in the summer.

Plantings this year included white ground cover roses and the popular knock out roses along the new walkway. Blue fescue grass accented between the roses was a nice touch. In addition, we made every effort to get the grass to grow on the side yard. After two summers of trying, it appears we will need a landscaper's advice to get the grass to grow here. Gratefully, the dogwood tree planted last fall seems to be flourishing.

For fundraising, we hosted a lively coffee hour on March 17th with a St. Patrick's Day theme with shamrock plants from Bunker Hill Florist. Lurette's lollipops and the 1 shamrock cookies were a big hit as well. On April 27th, we joined efforts with ECW to support a Sidewalk Sale. We coordinated the tree trimming in the rear garden and right side yard with support from the vestry. Then on June 20th, we held our garden party called Summer Fiesta that included music from Bob Berger of New Haven and food with a Latino theme. The poster and publicity designed by Jake Sterling was stunning. The event was very well attended and motivated us to consider planning another in 2014. In the fall, we organized and supported a "Welcome Back" cookout for the parish. Steve Spinetto graciously accepted to "man" the grill. We planted tulips throughout the front and side yard. We met and pulled together our crafts and donations to host a table at the Harvest Fair with a garden theme. In early November, Maureen Lavelly, our treasurer, again kicked off and graciously managed the successful Christmas wreath fundraiser. At year end, our neighbor, Noel Ataman has graciously offered to include us as she plans to replace the chain linked fence in the rear of the woodland garden, adjacent to the parking lot. We look forward to this collaboration and plan to review our side yard fencing as well this year. Our next round of fundraising will support this effort for 2014!

Overall, another busy year for this dedicated group. Most of all, we enjoy our time together to reflect on how gardening at St. John's nourishes our souls!

Please join us in the spring if you enjoy gardening.

St. Johns Garden Committee

Joanne Graziano, Maureen Lavelly, Francie Malo, Rosemary Kverik, Kathleen Steen-Walsh, Lurette Bourne, Marie Hubbard, Marion Wood, Heidi Clement, Ken Stone, Adrienne Sweetser, Robin Moody, Melissa Giese, Jake Sterling.

Partners for Sacred Places Report

During 2013, a team from St. John's participated in a diocesan sponsored series of workshops offered by Partners for Sacred Places, a non-profit group based in Philadelphia. The organization helps faith communities care for and make good use of their historic properties. The two overriding goals of the workshops were these: (1) to show a parish and its surrounding community the enormous value of its buildings as a community asset and (2) to use that understanding to attract new partners and new resources to maintain those assets.

Michael and Melissa Giese, George Born, Steve Spinetto, and Tom Mousin made up the original team, and were accompanied to one or more workshops by Ken Stone and Sarabinh Levy-Brightman.

The program's "Tool Kit" consists of five primary tools, some of which the team has begun to use:

1. *Calculating Your Public Value*: A web-based tool helps a parish identify all of the ways in which its building is used by the community, and with that data, calculates the public value of programs and services. Melissa Giese has been collecting that data for us, and will continue to work on this aspect in the year to come.
2. *Exploring Your Heritage*: Telling our story to the larger community means we need to know our story, including our history. George Born led an Adult Forum on the parish's history, and there will be many more opportunities to learn and discover what we have among our church archives.
3. *Assessing Your Building*: Ken Stone and George Born completed an assessment of the physical structures, which will be an important resource as we look toward maintaining and improving them. Already this work has led to an assessment of our heating systems, with the possibility of obtaining green grants for updating them to a more energy efficient system.
4. *Discovering Your Partners*: With much work still to be done in this area, we are asked to look at the most likely sources for support and partnership, particularly if down the road we decide to engage in a capital campaign.
5. *Telling Your Story*: With the results of the first four tools, these resources will help us to find ways to convey the mission of St. Jon's in a way that will raise our visibility and enable us to gain more support for all that we do.

Although we have finished the workshops, we will continue to meet in 2014 to work with these tools, and to update the vestry on our progress. We welcome the participation of others who are interested in our work.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tom Mousin

Usher Report

The usher ministry at St. John's grew again in 2013. We wrapped up the year with a dozen ushers. This fall three new ushers answered the call to join our ministry. We are grateful for our newest ushers: Jane Struss, Robin Moody and Sandy Nilson. Sadly, we lost Courtney Merrill when her family moved out of town over the summer.

In October, we gathered for a casual dinner to review ushering duties and to share our experiences. The Rector presented a new informational folder for newcomers, reviewed a number of procedures, and answered questions. Ken Stone presented a new plan for communion logistics that the group immediately implemented with great success.

The following individuals rotated usher duties and substituted for others as needed each Sunday as well as during Holy Week and Advent: Matthew Hast, Jenn Herlihy, Rosemary Kverek, Joey Lacey, David Lee, Courtney Merrill, Robin Moody, Sandy Nilson, Kathleen Steen-Walsh, Ken Stone, Jane Struss and Michael Giese. Their dedication to this unique hospitality role is integral to St. John's warm and welcoming presence in our community.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Giese, *Chair*

Blessing of the Animals Report

The seventh annual blessing of the animals was held on Sunday, October 6, 2013. Because of the inclement weather, the ceremony was moved from the fountain at the Thompson Triangle to St. John's Church at 9:30 a.m. The ceremony was conducted by the Reverend Thomas Mousin of St. John's Church, and Father James Ronan from St. Mary-St. Catherine. Father Daniel Mahoney of St. Francis de Sales was unable to attend this year because of another commitment. The ceremony this year was particularly moving and enjoyed by the many pet owners present.

This ecumenical ceremony offers an opportunity for the clergy and Charlestown's residents to unite to reflect upon the positive impact animals have on our emotional, physical and spiritual well being. The event provides a wonderful opportunity for animal owners to have their pets blessed for good health and long, happy lives. Each animal's owner received a certificate stating that his/her animal was blessed and each animal had to be on a leash, in a cage or in a container. Favorite stuffed animals or photos of a pet were also part of the ceremony.

The total cost for the event was just for an advertisement in the Charlestown Patriot-Bridge and the churches shared this expense. All the posters, publicity and certificates were donated for the event. The Boston Homes, The Patriot- Bridge and the Patch published articles on this event and received a thank you note for their assistance in promoting this event.

Many pet owners expressed their hope that this will be an annual event.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemary Kverek, *Chairperson*

Episcopal Church Women (ECW) Report

In 2013 the Episcopal Church Women (ECW) of St. John's Charlestown responded to Christ's call to us all. We continued our focus of support in three areas: Out-reach activities (beyond St. John's), In-reach activities (within our church) and devotional activities (growing spiritually). During this year we also had an administrative change when Elizabeth (Jay) Jordan resigned her position on the Steering Committee and Kathleen Steen-Walsh stepped up. We thanked Elizabeth for her commitment and work in getting ECW established and welcomed and thanked Kathleen for her willingness to serve along with Kathleen McCormick and Maureen Lavelly as board member.

In support of our parish, our activities included our ongoing baptismal anniversary ministry. Along with the garden group we also sponsored a sidewalk sale which facilitates the recycling of unwanted items of some, to be purchased at a reasonable price by others. Our proceeds from this sale were \$350.00. We also supported the Blessing of the Animals, ably spearheaded by Rosemary Kverek. Earlier in the year we worked to help clean out the cabinets in the kitchen after some donated cabinets were installed.

In support of outreach, our activities included support of a child through the collection of monies to purchase a flock of chickens and a nest of honey bees which Episcopal Relief and Development will distribute on our behalf. We also purchased bookmarks for distribution to the congregation. With our funds, we donated 10 packages containing 12 mylar blankets which were delivered to a homeless program run at our Cathedral of St. Paul's. Used clothing and goods continue to be brought to St. Luke's in Chelsea. UTO boxes were distributed in the spring and \$107.41 was sent to help Episcopal organizations throughout the world.

A highlight of our devotional activities was the in-house retreat on Saturday, July 20th led by our own Rev. Lyn Brakeman. It was a wonderful day of reflection, and focus on the beautiful Russian Icon Lyn shared. This prompted Jane Struss to arrange a trip to the Russian Icon Museum in Clinton, MA, which was enjoyed by many. Evensong continues on the fourth Friday of every month. We look forward to scheduling another retreat in 2014, possibly with the Sisters of St. Margaret in Duxbury. We continue to consider ways to serve. Our future agenda includes exploring ways to feed hungry Charlestown children, producing an historic throw to sell and fund the restoration of our Parish House, and continuing our Baptismal Anniversary cards. Watch for the announcement of our meetings; they are held after coffee hour approximately every six weeks. We invite all women to join us.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Scargle McCormick

Report of the Discernment Committee for Charles Stang

At the request of the Rector, a committee was formed to discern the vocation of Charlie Stang, a congregant at St. John's. The committee consisted of the following:

Matthew Hast
Maureen Lavelly
Steve Spinetto
Jonathan McCormick

We met eight times, two of them with Deacon Pat Zifcak, sent to us from the Diocese. She provided valuable guidance and assured us, during the second meeting, that we were on the right path and were asking the right questions.

It was the strong consensus of the committee that Charlie Stang should proceed on his path to the priesthood. Our report was presented to the vestry at their June meeting, and they voted to support the recommendation of our committee. In December, Charlie received news from the Commission on Ministry of the Diocese of Massachusetts that he will become a postulant in June of 2014.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan McCormick, Chair

Nominating Committee Report

The Nominating Committee met over the last two months to prepare a slate of candidates for church officers, Vestry members, and delegates to diocesan organizations, as required by our Constitution.

The Vestry is made up of the rector, and officers elected annually: the two Wardens, the Clerk, the Treasurer, and the Assistant Treasurer. The rest of the Vestry consists of up to seven members, who serve for three-year terms which can be renewed for a second consecutive term.

The Nominating Committee is pleased to report that the following Vestry Members have agreed to continue to serve their terms on the Vestry:

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|----------------------------|---|
| 1 year of term remaining: | Kyle Marshall Evie Scoville Maureen Lavelly |
| 2 years of term remaining: | David Lee |

The Nominating Committee presents the following candidates for officers and positions:

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|------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| For one year terms: | Senior Warden: | Louis Tompros |
| | Junior Warden: | Whitney Hayden |
| | Treasurer: | Charlotte Maynard |
| | Assistant Treasurer: | Stephen Locke |
| | Clerk: | |
| For a three year term: | Vestry Member: | Bridget Nyhan |

The Nominating Committee presents the following candidates for positions as delegates:

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| Delegates to the Diocesan Convention: | Stephen Spinetto Scott Squillace |
| Delegates to the Boston Harbor Deanery Assembly: | David Lee |

Though not required by our Constitution, the Nominating Committee also presents the following persons for leadership in church ministries:

Finance Committee Chairperson:

Alice Krapf

Stewardship Co-chairpersons:

Kathleen McCormick
and Melissa Giese

Altar Guild Directress:

Lurette Bourne

Usher Ministry:

Melissa Giese

Harvest Fair Co-chairpersons:

Whitney Hayden
Christy MacLetchie
Adrienne Sweetser

Building Chairperson:

Ken Stone

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Tompros, Bobby Smith, David Lee, Thomas Mousin

Nominating Committee of St. John's Episcopal Church