

# SAINT MARY'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Wayne, Pennsylvania

2021

# Annual Report



# THE RECTOR'S REPORT



It shouldn't surprise you that most people are hardwired to look at the world in terms of what we don't have or compare the realities of today with a nostalgic mosaic of yesterday. The fact is that it is easy to have a world view of scarcity rather than abundance, especially during a pandemic. I catch myself from time to time doing just that with our beloved St. Mary's. There is so much that I want for St. Mary's and like many of you, I suffer from the typical American sin of wanting it all and wanting it now. The fact is that when we get bogged down with the day-to-day business of being a church, it's often easy to lose sight of where we have been and where we as a church would like to go in the coming years. In light of this confession, I found it cathartic to go through my cell phone pictures. The photographs showed a different story than the one building up in my mind. In fact, these photos served as a timeline of sorts, showing me in vivid color a church in action, not asleep. A church open and worshipping when most other churches were closed. A church that chose to take the challenges of the pandemic and develop new ministries. As I scrolled through my photographs, they showed me that despite my yearning for so much more for our beloved St. Mary's community, that we could always rely on God to provide for our daily needs.

God's faithfulness, meeting St. Mary's daily needs, has set the stage for 2022 and beyond. This year we have the opportunity to not only imagine, but actually be thriving as a post-pandemic church. Your vestry is excited to lead the way. Already, we have begun with the basics. With the clean slate the pandemic has afforded us, we've been able to ask ourselves the question, what should a church be doing? Not what should St. Mary's be doing, because that comes later. The former question allows us to dream based on the prompting of the Holy Spirit and today's possibilities rather than being constrained by our past. Already, these broad questions about any church are leading us to specific steps for St. Mary's. Some of these steps we already do well like worship, live-streaming and Noah's Ark. But other identified areas appear to be untouched and ready for either exploration or reinvigoration. Evangelism and youth come to mind here. Quite frankly this work is going to be challenging and exciting. It will set the course for generations to come.

While there is indeed so much more that the vestry and I want for St. Mary's, we will take a first-things-first approach. And yet I am here to reassure you that we are alive and well and



ready for your return. Within the pages of this Annual Report, you will find signs of abundance. You will find some words and many pictures depicting a timeline for 2021. You will not see everything but rather you will see and read some of the stories of a faithful people responding to a faithful God. My prayer is that you will be inspired. My prayer is that you will see and understand the hopes and dreams of your clergy, wardens and vestry members and want to join in. My prayer is that you will be so inspired that you can envision yourself, engaged through your passions helping St. Mary's live into our calling. No scarcity. No regrets. Abundance abounds!

*The Rev. Joseph K. Smith, Rector*



# THE RECTOR'S REPORT

# THE ASSISTANT RECTOR



35 years ago when I began to wonder if I were called to the priesthood, I met with a Discernment Committee in my home parish. They asked me to write down the story of how I became a Christian, what is now sometimes called your “spiritual journey.” I dutifully set down the sequence of revelations that I thought had led me to faith, mostly discovered in books I’d read. Mere Christianity by C.S. Lewis, and C.G. Jung’s Memories, Dreams and Reflections led the list, but there were others, and I brought this record to the committee wholly persuaded that it was a full and passionate explanation for the faith that was in me. Imagine my dismay when I discovered that, as important and exciting as it was for me, it moved them NOT. In fact, I was told to go back to the drawing board and this time, write down my “Resurrection Story.”

My committee was right. What they correctly understood was that in the realm of faith, intellectual persuasion can only go so far. Ultimately it falls short in accounting for the mystery of grace: coming to believe that you have been saved from the power of sin and death by what God did and said through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It was hard for me, but I had to learn to go deeper and ask myself, When did I reach my end, and His Beginning? When did I have to give up on myself, so I would more readily give myself up to God, and not for the last time, but for the first of many times? When could I point to a time in my life when I believed that instead of death, God was offering me the promise of Life?



I still believe that my reading was a huge part of my spiritual journey, but now I think its chief purpose was to help my mind come to its limit, where I would have to surrender to the sheer mystery of God acting in my life. Reading in theology and philosophy and even the Bible is still an important way for me to draw closer to God, but it is primarily a way to help my mind surrender to the longing of my heart: that God loves me, and loves the world, as foolish as that sounds. Discovering my “Resurrection story” convicted my heart—and my mind, too—with gratitude for grace, like St. Mary, gratia plena! My experience of God’s power raising me from

the dead —spiritual death— through no credit to me, but purely by grace, I came to believe God wanted me, and all of us, to be fully alive through the power of His love.

Recently, Father Joseph and St. Mary’s vestry resolved that Worship and Evangelism will be our dual foci in the coming year. In the New York City church where I was converted in my twenties, God’s grace was mediated to me by powerful preaching of the Gospel and meaningful, reverent worship, Bible Study, prayer groups, singing in the choir and serving the many folks in need who came to our Clothes Closet and stayed nightly in our shelter. Taking part in these ministries, my heart found a way to trust in the Word of God and take the leap of faith, and it all began with Worship and Evangelism in word and deed.

The power of Resurrection lives in all of us, a deep and powerful force. It is God’s power shared with us, and it is meant to be shared with others. When we do, we are revived and raised up again and again, empowered for true life and love.

In his First Letter, St. Peter gives us our marching orders: “In your hearts, sanctify Christ as Lord.” And then: “Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands an accounting for the hope that is in you.” Worship and Evangelism. Let it be so, for us all. Amen.

*The Rev. Lucy Ann Dure, Assistant Rector*



# THE RECTOR'S WARDEN



An additional year as the Rector's Warden was a continued honor and privilege. As I wrote my report for 2021, we were anticipating a return to pre-pandemic normalcy and were looking forward to seeing our pews filled with new and returning members. As many felt a continued frustration with the limitations placed on them by the new strain, I once again witnessed the commitment and faith demonstrated by Father Joseph and Mother Lucy Ann.

### **What are the goals and purpose of this position?**

The Rector's Warden exists to assist the Rector in any way he/she needs. That can mean anything from helping to set vestry meeting agendas to being available for building emergencies in the Rector's absence. Working with Father Joseph in this capacity has been an honor.

### **Challenges experienced this year due to COVID?**

When I wrote my annual report in 2020, our Vestry had just held a retreat to begin to discern the direction St. Mary's would take in its mission and ministry. In 2021, that work was once again slowed by the continued restrictions that the pandemic placed on us.

### **A few things that were accomplished that were exciting despite COVID:**

We came together as a parish in 2021 to defray the costs of a \$94,000 air conditioning system. As of this writing, we have various pledges and donations equaling \$91,000. Although there is a relatively small shortfall, once again, our community has met the challenge that maintaining our beautiful physical facilities sometimes presents. St. Mary's has developed a new relationship with Liberti Church who now shares/rents our space for their worship services. This has been beneficial to both St. Mary's and Liberti and we hope to continue to develop this connection and perhaps be able to share and expand our ministries.

### **Last year's dream for the future...did you make any progress?**

My stated dream for the future of St. Mary's in last year's report was for us to learn to take full advantage of our wonderful location in the heart of Wayne to become a place where, not only our own members, but the broader community is drawn to our ministries through outreach and liturgies. To that end, I believe that the addition of Liberti and its members offer an opportunity to increase our presence and visibility in the community.

In addition, as Father Joseph continues to lead the new vestry through the now renewed discernment process, I believe that new opportunities and ideas will be discovered, and further steps taken towards this goal.

*Janice Radford, Rector's Warden*



Serving one more year as People's Warden has been a privilege. I recently read a quote from an unknown author "Difficult roads lead to beautiful destinations" and immediately thought of St. Mary's. We have always been a united parish. Yes, we have continued to face many challenges with COVID, but this congregation will always join hands and come together.

**What are the goals and purpose of your commission? Why does your commission exist?**

The People's Warden is available to you as parishioners in whatever way is needed. If you have a question or concern, the People's Warden is here. A key priority this past year was continuing to help St. Mary's stay safe and secure during the pandemic. A commission has been Stewardship to help inspire parishioners to share their "Time, Talent, and Treasure".

**Challenges your commission had this year due to COVID?**

Live streaming is a gift, but we still have to work harder to stay connected. We definitely moved forward lightening COVID restrictions for our church, but we all can't wait to engage and hug one another at coffee hour!

**A few things accomplished this year that surprised you or excite you...despite COVID:**

It was amazing to see this parish unite to finish replacement of the air conditioning system contributing financially and sharing talent. Based on our generous parish family, the system is installed, and we have a good plan to fully meet the financial commitment.

We have an amazing wonderful physical structure to spread God's word and bring all together to live as dedicated Christians. We are blessed Babbie Fulton heard God's call to connect us to Liberti to rent space to them after our Sunday service. The relationship is working well and St. Mary's is spreading the word and spirit of God to even more people!

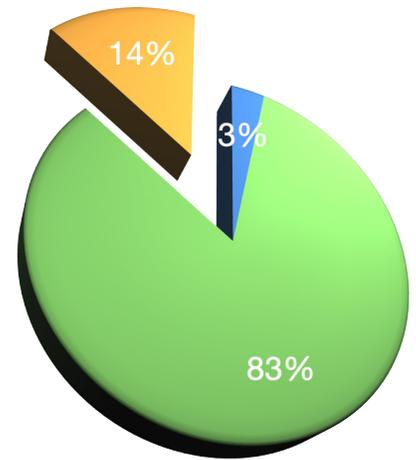
St. Mary's was truly blessed with the gifts of your Time, Talent, and Treasure. For 2022 we have a generous number of parishioners who pledged and we are in a good financial position.

**Last year's dream for the future...did you make any progress?**

We made incredible progress with last year's dream for the future and our mission for "St. Mary's to be even more united and spiritual to continue our mission to serve friend and stranger alike." The number of parishioners attending live services has grown, and thanks to Allyson Radford and Father Joseph, live streaming capabilities have gotten better with several parishioners involved to help keep it a permanent option. *Pat McKay, People's Warden*

**PPP Loan Forgiveness:** In 2020, St. Mary's applied for and received a Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan in the amount of \$48,537. This loan provided much needed cash to help offset the impact of the pandemic in 2020. In 2021, St. Mary's applied for and received forgiveness of the loan under the PPP program. With the conversion of this PPP loan to a grant, St. Mary's booked additional Miscellaneous Income that significantly improved our Financial Statements for 2021.

**A/C Capital Campaign & Loan:** In 2021, the installation of the A/C Capital Replacement project was successfully completed. The cost of the project came in on budget at \$93,919. To date, we have received Capital Campaign Contributions totaling \$77,498, with another \$2,950 in future pledges. In 2021, St. Mary's also received a \$50,000 loan from the Diocese to help pay for the cost of the project. We have begun making payments on the loan, and the 12/31 loan balance is \$42,010. We anticipate and look forward to lower summer utility bills moving forward. Currently, we have \$13,471 left to raise.



**AC Project Total: \$93,919.00**

*\$77,498 Collected*

*\$2,950 Pledged but yet to collect*

*\$13,471 Short of our goal*

**Liberti Church:** In 2021, we started a mutually beneficial arrangement with Liberti Church of the Mainline. Liberti Church will be using our Sanctuary (and other facilities) for their Sunday services following our 10am liturgy. We also held a few successful joint events in 2021 attended by Liberti Church and its members. The rental income in 2021 was a welcomed additional revenue source, and our ongoing relationship also significantly improved our 2022 approved budget.

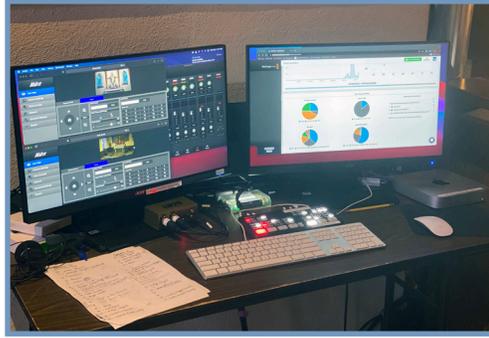
**Pandemic:** St. Mary's approved budget for 2021, although balanced, reflected the fiscal uncertainty from the Pandemic and the potential for lingering impacts. Despite these precautions, St. Mary weathered the fiscal storm. Even with some unanticipated capital expenses late in the year, we ended 2021 with a surplus.

## The Year Ahead and Beyond

**Property Rentals:** In 2022, the Finance Committee will be working on development of a standardized set of Rental Policies and Procedures. These include guidelines for insurance requirements, rental rates, agreement forms and other specific considerations. The goal is to help provide Fr. Smith and Staff with the necessary tools/information to help evaluate potential renters that propose to use the facilities at St. Mary's and make this process easier for all involved.

**Capital Improvements:** In 2022 and beyond, we anticipate starting discussions for developing a long-range plan that will help address needed capital expenses (anticipated and unanticipated) in the near future. The goal is to try to develop a plan that can respond to required capital needs on an annual basis and not with ad-hoc fundraisers as issues arise. We want to be responsible caretakers and stewards of the buildings and grounds here at St. Mary's, and a longer-range capital fiscal plan will help accomplish this goal.

*Craig Hoogstraten, Parish Treasurer*



“As members of the Vestry serving on the Worship Committee, we try to look at the many things that contribute to our corporate worship to make it meaningful to the whole parish family, throughout the church year. “

### **Accomplishments in 2020-2021**

Without a doubt the most exciting addition to our liturgy these past two years has been the addition of our live-streamed worship. While this was brought on as a response to the Covid crisis it has become a full-fledged feature of our Sunday worship. It has also enabled greater participation in the daily offices of morning and evening prayer.

We are also excited that the vestry approved funding for additional equipment to allow for a better presentation of our live-streamed worship and eliminate the cameras and wires in the midst of the congregation.

The Worship Committee has met periodically to discuss and evaluate how best to present our liturgies. One outgrowth of our discussions this past fall was the decision to once again present the live nativity on Christmas Eve as an in-person public service and the late evening mass as both in-person and live-streamed.

The magnificent Evensong on the 21st of November in Thanksgiving for all those lost in the time of Covid was especially well received by both members and visitors.

### **Our Hope for the Year Ahead**

As we look toward the future we are hopeful that we can once again have greater involvement of both youth and adults as acolytes as the conditions for greater in-person worship participation permit.

### **A Dream for the Future**

An especially wonderful opportunity for parishioner involvement would be for anyone interested in learning to assist with the live-streaming. Training would be available for anyone with the time and interest.



*Christopher Hart, Worship Commission*

# CHRISTIAN FORMATION



The continuing goal of the Christian Formation Committee, led by Mother Lucy Ann Dure, is to offer classes that promote mature thinking about theology, scripture, spirituality, discipleship, and church history. Among the several courses presented via Zoom in 2021, we highlighted a Udemy N.T. Wright class entitled Simply Jesus, a study of Acts of the Apostles and a second N. T Wright-based class on Paul's letter to the Philippians. We anticipate returning to our suspended weekday video theology class as soon as circumstances permit.

For the first time, we offered an in-person 11:30 class on Sunday mornings for those not able to join us at 8:30 on Zoom. We were able to reintroduce an Advent Quiet Day with a guest speaker, but have not been able to offer traditional church school or youth group.

**Our dream for the future** remains to involve more people in learning about the faith, through lively offerings with innovative speakers and experiments with new formats or delivery systems. We have made good progress toward this goal. All we need is your participation.

**A. Adult Christian Formation program** --“well-rounded diet” which encourages us to recognize the richness of the Christian tradition; invites us to strengthen our love and understanding of God and our neighbor; and helps us to be “transformed by the renewal of our minds” (Romans 12:2) We want to be guided by 5 main areas of study during the course of the year:

1. Theology/Philosophy —“God-Talk” — religious terminology can seem like a foreign language. How do we talk about God?
2. Scripture—Let's Gain (even more) Familiarity with the Bible—there's always more to know, learn and discuss from the Word of God eg., Basic Introduction to Hebrew Scripture or Basic Introduction to Gospels Or Intro to Mark, since that is the Gospel for the year beginning in Advent
3. Spirituality and Worship—How do we practice our faith?...How do we actually experience our relationship with God? Worship and Liturgy— “Shape of the Mass”. Offer a “Guided Eucharist.”The history of the Holy Eucharist in the Book of Common Prayer. Intro to Spiritual Disciplines: Prayer, Meditation, Confession etc. Experiencing God in Poetry, Architecture, Art and Music
4. Discipleship—how do we carry out our Baptismal Covenant? Who inspires us and shows us how to follow Jesus in the world today? How can we, do we, seek and serve Christ in all persons...?
5. Church History



**B. We will try to offer opportunities for different constituencies with different needs.** We have folks in different phases of life at St. Mary's. Different subject matter can benefit from different styles of pedagogy — keeping in mind we have new Christians, mature Christians, young adults, families, singles, parents, couples, women's spirituality, men's spirituality, etc.

**C. How to attract those at St. Mary's who have not so far shown much interest in Christian Formation?** Try to benefit from the greater availability of unscheduled time for some people now, and the situation we find ourselves in with this pandemic... Offer classes and discussions during weekdays at lunch time or weeknights if there is interest and enthusiasm

1. Different times of day for meeting
2. Different style of learning —less of a "classroom" style? More personal?
3. Find out what subject matter is needed and wanted
4. Holy Happy Hour at Home on Zoom?
5. Book discussion groups
6. 9-3 Advent and Lent Retreat days
7. Benefit from Diocesan offerings, especially on Zoom; Anti-Racism training

**D. We currently plan to have these different kinds of offerings**

1. Inter-generational Lenten program
2. Continuing Monday morning Bible Study with Erlis and Father Joseph
3. Regular ongoing Sunday morning Adult Formation class before Church and in person after
4. Father Joseph's Scripture Study with video and discussion

**E. Keep what is working among our current efforts** —Continue meeting on Sunday mornings in a Zoom class before worship and in person after

*Erlis Wickersham, Formation Commission*



# OUTREACH

The Interfaith Hospitality Network located in Norristown, helps low-income families and families experiencing homelessness achieve sustainable independence through a community-based response. Led by Mary Dixon, St. Mary's parishioners took meals twice during their assigned week to IHN as well as donated gift cards for the families to use at restaurants or for supplies from stores. They also ordered necessities from IHN Amazon's wish list and items were delivered right to the families. Books and activities were delivered to IHN children during the holidays. Due to Covid, the families in the program are staying at IHN headquarters in Norristown and still are not rotating through churches. IHN hopes to get back to their regularly scheduled programming of having families stay at the various churches for meals and lodging in 2022.

The Little Free Pantry continues to be heavily used and contributed to. Wayne Elementary was asked to donate to it on their Giving Fridays and they have been generous with their donations. The kids enjoy stocking it each Friday after school.

St. Marys' Food Pantry in Chester received White Gifts that were delivered before Christmas and 2 full carloads of non-perishable food was donated to St. Mary's of Chester Food Pantry in the fall. They continue to be thankful for our contributions.



The Refugee Committee continues to sponsor an Afghan family of four in Bryn Mawr with the help of Wayne Presbyterian Church and Radnor Friends Meeting. Volunteers assist with ESL, school, cultural orientation, transportation, medical appointments, and employment. The biggest focus and challenge is finding new and affordable housing for the family by May 1, 2022. If anyone knows of an affordable, 2-bedroom apartment, please contact Rena Counsellor.

In 2022, the Outreach Committee will continue to explore ways to connect to communities outside of St. Mary's. The Unity In The Community event scheduled for the last weekend in August 2022, is an opportunity to do just that. This upbeat block party on Highland Avenue celebrates and supports the Highland Avenue community and beyond. Backpacks with school supplies are a highlight. They are collected ahead of time and given out to a range of school aged children. The food and activities are donated by St. Mary's parishioners, local vendors, and other churches in the area. Please think of ways you'd like to give and watch for the save the date sometime in June or July.



Good Works is a hands-on program based out of West Chester where we gather one Saturday each quarter to assist in home repairs. *AnnaMarie Jones, Outreach Commission*



**Our mission** is to serve the needs of the Wayne community and beyond by selling gently used donated household items.

### **COVID Impact**

We closed in March, 2020 due to COVID, re-opening July 7, 2021 following the installation of a new church air handling system and with a safety plan in place that the Noah's Ark Steering Committee developed after several ZOOM meetings.

### **Accomplishments:**

We were able to reopen safely in the undercroft of our beloved church. Due to fewer volunteers, we had to shorten the number of days of the week we are open from three days to two. During the time the shop was closed, volunteers came in very small groups to clean out the back storage areas and items were donated to various organizations. Our shop area was thoroughly cleaned and reorganized to expand our shop area. Our customers and our 25+ volunteers are so grateful to be back, and have been happy to comply with required masking and hand sanitizing. Many of our customers are elderly and/or managing challenging medical conditions, but many of these people have remarked how happy they are to have a safe place to greet friends and feel "normal" during this period.

### **Goals For the Future:**

Our goals are to continue to improve our marketing strategy to better communicate our important mission, and to increase our donations and the number of volunteers and customers involved. In addition, we also strive to continue to provide a safe place for customers to shop for affordable clothing and household items. We plan to continue to provide funds, as well as goods, to several outreach organizations that touch the heart of the Altar Guild. Some of these organizations include Laurel House, Broad Street Ministries, Delaware County's SPCA, Green Drop, Bethesda Project and Planet Aid. We also provide supplies for urgent requests. *Susan Huck, Noah's Ark Captain*

# FELLOWSHIP

“When we get together, I want to encourage you in the faith, but I also want to be encouraged by yours.” Romans 1:12

Fellowship is an important part of our faith. Coming together to support one another is an experience that allows us to learn, gain strength, and show the world exactly who God is.

No other recent trials have been more devastating on our ability to meet for fellowship than the COVID-19 pandemic. We have had to make friends with technology and so Zoom, Facebook and the website have become our friends engaging in meaningful fellowship from the safety of our homes, connecting with and encouraging one other.. We have slowly reintroduced the in person coffee hours and other events.



St. Luke’s Fishing for People discourse, (Lk 5:1-11) as well as John’s post resurrection story about putting your net out on the other side, (Jn 21:4-8) each vestry member was challenged to re-imagine our ministry and our call to serve Jesus. We as a vestry have been reaching out to members by phone just as a check in, to allow members of the church to know we are here for them, never going away, and we care.

We as a church can become frustrated when it feels we aren’t moving forward. We are moving forward: in new technological ways and slowly reintroducing the in person, human events that worked before. We are growing, slowly.

Has St. Mary’s truly stalled? A quick glance at our website shows that St. Mary’s offers many weekly activities... Sunday services, faith formation classes, daily office prayers, Bible study, Hymning through Lent with Dr. Turk, Book Club, and more. But the question begs, can we do more? The answer is always yes.

I believe Jesus is calling us to go deeper. We need to trust Him and possibly change the way we engage our community to share the Good News. In a world that seems to be distancing itself from religion, it is even more important that we find meaningful ways to share with others how God is working in our lives, helping them develop their own faith. It is crucial that we keep fishing. We shouldn't simply go through the motions . . . we need to prayerfully seek God's will and prayerfully discern His calling to seek the best path forward.

To quote Winston Churchill "To improve is to change; to be perfect is to change often."

The question that the Fellowship commission needs to wrestle with, using the Bible passages as our guide, is where should we cast our nets now? I believe there are many exciting opportunities, capitalizing on our location and other strengths, and look forward to prayerfully considering how we can best serve God.

### **A Dream for the Future**

Our goal is to leverage our two key assets: our members; and our buildings and grounds in order to spread the word of our Lord through hospitality and fellowship.

*Kathy Buckley, Fun and Fellowship Commission*



FELLOWSHIP



# BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

The cornerstone of St. Mary's was laid on June 27th, 1889. This was the vision of Dr. George Childs and Anthony Drexel who purchased the property upon which Wayne is built. A vision of a planned community of cottages, hotels, opera house, and churches where people could gather and worship Christ as our lord. The church itself was completed and consecrated Easter Day, 1890. The debt of construction was paid by donors as well as the residences of Wayne.



Our bell tower consists of 10 bells that can be programmed to play various songs of inspiration during the day. The history of our church is evident everywhere. The bell on the right was given by the children of St. Mary's on Easter Sunday, 1891.



The pandemic continues to present challenges in our ability to meet and enjoy our buildings and grounds. With the commitment of our committee and their time, we have been able to maintain our gardens, plant flowers, perform fall clean up, and spring workdays.



In 2021 we installed a new HVAC system for the sanctuary. This required a considerable capital investment, but now we can worship in comfort. Our extended congregation that joins us electronically via live streaming in daily prayer and Sunday has noticed a major improvement in the quality of the broadcast. We upgraded the system to include three remote cameras and new software.



# BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS



In December, the Vestry approved the expense of replacing the Parish House lower-level carpet with new floors. This included the hallway, classrooms, and office. We are grateful for Allyson Radford leading this effort as well as painting the rooms with the new floors.



Our Rectory is on the list of improvements in 2022. We will begin with upgrading the ninety-year-old electrical system, installing new lights, and fixtures thanks to a gift given to St. Mary's by The Bob and Norma Thorne Charitable Fund.



The Parish House roof sometimes leaks, and it needs to be replaced as well as the Sanctuary roof. We are currently soliciting quotes. This will require a major capital investment and the Vestry will be exploring options.

*Jim Anderson, Buildings and Grounds Commission*

# MUSIC



“...and the beat goes on, the beat goes on...” an old pop song says...and music continues to be a significant part of the worship and community experience at St. Mary’s. The choir has been present as much as conditions would permit, and our quartet of professional singers have “stayed at the helm” through all these difficult months. So, for the choir and solo quartet, Fr. Joseph’s and the congregation’s support of our music ministry, we give a hearty expression of gratitude.... ‘Deo gracias!’ - “Thanks be to God!”

The Quartet plus a few choir members provided all the usual (plus additional) music that we have come to expect and appreciate during the rigors of Holy Week and Easter, and soloists continued each Sunday throughout the summer months. We were able to resume ‘normal’ choir in late September, albeit with reduced forces.



During Lent of 2021, I was able to present weekly informal chats and music from the organ console that were live-streamed with the assistance of a special Tech Crew – Fr. Joseph.

I discussed historical and anecdotal information of familiar hymns, played the hymns and other music related to them. You may join us each Wednesday during Lent at 5:00 pm for this year’s addition.

On November 21st we were able to present a special ‘Evensong of Remembrance and Thanksgiving’. It included a Service of Light (with many candles), the reading of the Necrology of those who died during the pandemic, and appropriate prayers and Scripture readings. All of this was enriched by the ambitious yet moving singing of the choir and soloists, accompanied by a chamber orchestra. We “remembered and gave thanks” singing the music of Italian and English



Baroque composers, Vivaldi, and Purcell. We enjoyed the preparation for this special liturgy, and I think it was the most beautiful and satisfying evensong that it has been our privilege to experience at St. Mary's in a long time.

Since Christmas we have received some fine new chairs that are specially designed for 'singing posture'. We are grateful for these chairs, and I am anticipating 'good results' in our rehearsals. You can see these trim, minimalist chairs in the Fr. Greene Room. We are also in the process of receiving new choir robes, the old ones being as old as thirty and forty years, and we hope to 'debut' them for Easter.

We are always looking for additional persons to join us for singing, and now that we are beginning to emerge from pandemic limitations, it is a good time to consider joining the music opportunities at St. Mary's. Singing can do anyone and everyone a world of good, physically, mentally, and spiritually. Give this some consideration, even invite a friend to come with you. We have new chairs and new robes (including spares). The media tells us that "we're all in this together", well, here is a great reason to be together (still practicing social distance, etc.)

Come and try a chair, we'll warm up your vocal cords, even if you haven't sung in a long time, put you in a new BLUE robe... and together we can "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord".

(Psalm 100, KJV) *Dr. Gordon Turk, Organist and Choirmaster*



