

Faith, Ministry, and Fellowship: St. John's Annual Meeting 2018

Draft for Approval

The people of St. John's gathered to remember the many special moments of 2017 and plan for the year ahead at the Annual Meeting on January 21, 2018.

The meeting opened with prayer by Rector Ann Barker, followed by congregational approval of the 2017 Annual Meeting minutes. Rev. Barker then presented the State of the Church. "Our worship together inspires and renews us to do God's work in our daily lives," she noted. Worship highlights included the seventh Maundy Thursday loaves and fishes service and a beautiful Easter service that drew 74 people, an increase from 2016. Advent and Christmas services were inspirational moments in an often hectic season. "Our Advent wreath lighting liturgy continued to remind us of the faith, hope, joy, and love with which we await the coming of the Christ Child," said Rev. Barker. The always popular Lessons and Carols service was held on New Year's Eve. Also popular was the fall Blessing of the Animals at the church and the Shirlington Dog Park. St. John's once again offered Ashes to Go at the Ballston Metro Station on Ash Wednesday, extending inspirational worship out into the Arlington community. In the fall St. John's welcomed seminarian Kendrah McDonald, who assisted in leading worship. New worship ideas being considered for 2018 include using liturgy from *Enriching Our Worship* and the *New Zealand Prayer Book*. Also on the drawing board is a new monthly service such as a healing or contemplative service. Budgeted funds to purchase a music license will broaden the array of options for hymns and other music.

St. John's increased its emphasis on family programs in 2017. Jill McAfee served as Family Programs Director until September. Popular events included parties celebrating Valentine's Day, Dr. Seuss's Birthday, Harry Potter Hogwarts Back to School, and Halloween. These events drew participants from St. John's, Cristo Rey, the neighborhood, and the larger community. A week of Vacation Bible School (VBS) in July featured the theme of being heroes for God and included storytelling, arts and crafts, outdoor play, creative science projects, and the ever popular dinner time. VBS was led by McAfee, with assistance from arts and crafts leader Patricia Amaya and three team leaders. Peggy Blount led Sunday School until the summer break, while in the fall Debbie Carter and Peter Olivere served as interim teachers during the search for a new Family Programs Director. John Petrich continued to lead St. John's monthly effort to bag lunches for the Bailey's Crossroads Shelter, while Galen Henderson coordinated the Christmas Pageant in December. St. John's has hired Henderson as the new Family Programs Director. "We look forward to her contributions to our ministry," said Rev. Barker.

Outreach activities continued to be an important part of St. John's ministry in 2017. In addition to bagging lunches for the Bailey's Crossroads Shelter, the church continued to donate food to the Arlington Food Assistance Center (AFAC), bag food monthly at AFAC, and donate clothing and toys to needy children through the Salvation Army's Angel Tree project. St. John's also collected school supplies for Carlin Springs Elementary for the third year in a row. During Lent, members participated in the Region 3 Rise Against Hunger project, donating both time and money. This initiative packaged 10,000 meals in two hours that were shipped to places around the world where there is food insecurity. Also during Lent, St. John's increased its commitment to AFAC by asking members to pledge to step up their support by bringing in weekly food donations, making monetary donations, and volunteering their time. This successful effort resulted in 334 pounds of food being donated, along with \$1,330. St. John's outreach also included membership in People of Faith for Equality in Virginia (POF-EV), which supports a vision of inclusion, welcome, and equality for LGBTQ Virginians and their families.

Parish life continued to draw the people of St. John's together. Events included a game night in January, the Shrove Tuesday pancake supper in February, a Bingo Night with Cristo Rey in April, the Spring Tea in May, Glencarlyn Day hot dogs and beverages in June, and the Spaghetti Supper in October. The annual Shrine Mont retreat weekend in October was enjoyed by 13 parishioners and guests. Debbie Carter coordinated the weekend and led the program along with Rev. Barker and Diane Henderson.

St. John's held a roundtable discussion with Cristo Rey in September so that members could get to know each other better and discuss new ways to partner and support each other. These fruitful conversations resulted in a joint Thanksgiving potluck meal, which was a wonderful and well-attended event. In 2018 the congregations will partner on a Lenten outreach project, hold additional Bingo Nights, and potentially join in worship together.

Adult Formation in 2017 included a class on Hazardous Saints and a Lenten study on the Five Marks of Mission of the Anglican Church. Among other featured Sunday Seminar topics were icons, science and religion, fear of the other, an Advent study on Joseph, and a study of *The Evolution of God*.

St. John's welcomed Chelsea and Richard Kaufman in 2017, along with their son Pierce, who was baptized in March. Also welcomed was Lin Novak, who has been a member of the St. John's Book Club for several years. The congregation said a partial goodbye to Linda Trochim, who retired and will now spend part of the year in Florida. Bill Schenck and Carolyn Corlett have had to stop coming to church because of disability issues, while Lynn Christopher cannot drive anymore. The church misses Jean Harrison, who died in June.

Treasurer Bill Thomson presented the 2017 financial report. Although the budget deficit was \$38,565.51, the church investments benefited from the rising stock market and the overall account only dropped \$14,000 from the 2016 year-end totals. Thomson noted that although pledges were on target last year, plate contributions were down \$7,000 from what was budgeted. Finance Committee chair Dave Dunlap then presented the 2018 budget, which includes a one percent salary increase for staff. The budget of \$168,481 projects a deficit of \$46,881. The Finance Committee is constrained in reducing the budget because a large percentage of it goes to staff salaries and benefits. The committee also expressed concern that although the church has benefited in recent years from the rising stock market, there is no way of knowing if this trend will continue.

Bill Thomson presented a Building and Grounds update in the absence of Junior Warden Bryan Harbin. Maintenance work in 2017 included repairs to the furnace and lift. The church continues to benefit from all of the volunteer work done by individuals referred by Offender Aid and Restoration in Arlington. The question was raised as to whether the church needs to start a special fund for future replacement of the lift. The suggestion was also made to pursue grant funds to assist with putting in a new lift.

Rev. Barker highlighted two potential Mutual Ministry review topics for 2018, building a strong spiritual community and serving needs in the community. After discussion, the congregation asked the vestry to decide on a topic.

Senior Warden Lisa Pope thanked vestry members Bryan Harbin (Junior Warden), Jeff Aitken, Diane Henderson, Del Hunt, and John Restall for their service. Harbin, Henderson, Hunt, Pope, and Restall will continue to serve in 2018 (Restall extended his term by one year). New vestry members Peter Olivere and Bill Thomson were elected unanimously. Vestry emphasis areas in 2017 included supporting family programs, continuing to embrace welcoming through the new program Invite Welcome Connect, and strengthening the church's partnership with Cristo Rey.

Rev. Barker recognized outgoing vestry member Jeff Aitken for his service, along with vestry officers Lisa Pope and Bryan Harbin. Others recognized included outgoing treasurer Bill Thomson, new treasurer Peter Olivere, pledge clerk John Restall, stewardship chair Mike Birmingham, and altar guild chair Eileen Tallent. Also recognized were the dedicated St. John's staff: minister of music Lynn Robinson, organist Judith Marcinko, church administrator Virginia Pearson, sexton Julio Sorto, and nursery attendant Kaitlyn Osteguín. A full list of everyone who gives of their time and talents to serve St. John's will be published in *LOGOS*.

St. John's will continue to focus on discipleship in 2018 and to pray that we follow Jesus both individually and as a church. "We also pray that we will be inspired to invite new people to join our warm and welcoming parish," said Rev. Barker.