

St. John's Episcopal Church
Arlington, Virginia
Ministry Reports for 2025 Annual Meeting
February 23, 2025



Rector's Report

In the spring of 2024, our long-time Parish Administrator retired. We were able to celebrate Virginia Pearson's more than two decades of service with a lovely party in the church parlor, and send her home with several gifts and many well-wishes. Later in the year, when Kay Wells' family let us know she was turning 90 and wanted to celebrate with her St. John's family, there was another very lovely gathering, organized by Liz White. We also celebrated picnic-style, and handed out treats to the neighbors as we marked Juneteenth, just a few days after ringing out a warm welcome for the start of the Glencarlyn Day parade. We paired that with another rousing evening of carol singing, hot chocolate, and crafts for the neighborhood in December.

St. John's likes to enjoy one another's company, and to welcome guests in to become friends.

Spring also brought a new opportunity for service, and after some conversation and a bit of construction by Boy Scout Mohammad Dannan and his crew, the Little Free Food Pantry that previously had been located at Arlington Central Library was installed outside St. John's, and is now serving those who might otherwise go hungry. Demand is growing, and St. John's is proving to be dedicated stewards of the pantry, managing a bit of mess made now and again and looking to expand the circle of donors. Our food ministries with the Arlington Food Assistance Center (AFAC) and the Bailey's Crossroads shelter continue, as does the annual school supply drive for Carlin Springs Elementary.

The partnership with St. Patrick's in Falls Church gave this congregation the chance to serve dinner for the Hypothermia Shelter clients, and to assist in a large dental clinic offering to the community, as well as to study and pray together. One thing we considered this past year was our own mortality and how we hope to be remembered at our burial services. There are Celebration of Life Checklists available to be completed and a few copies of the fuller reference tool the discussion group used last summer. I would very much encourage you to make plans for your family and friends to follow, it will ease their grieving. I'm happy to have completed checklists on file, and hope I don't need to use any of them too soon!

The undercroft was painted in 2024, thanks in large part to Ed Martin and those who labored here as part of the Offender Aid and Restoration (OAR) program. The OAR workers have recently vastly improved our grounds as well. Next steps in caring for our common home include plans to refurbish additional areas inside the building and to take care of the trees that are being planted through the EcoArlington program.

Over the summer and early fall, Patricia Broida and Susan Thompson of St. John's joined Bob Cascella, Dave Jones, and Winnie Lebo to form a Discernment Committee for Julie Tran of St. Patrick's as she considered applying for Holy Orders. Julie has moved forward in her process and was named a Postulant of the Diocese in December 2024. She plans to enter seminary in the fall of 2026.

Bishop Stevenson assigned the Reverend Deacon Mary Cushing to serve St. John's and St. Patrick's shortly after her summer ordination, and she is now here, focusing primarily on outreach and also reaching into her previous government employment professional skills bag.

Mary is facilitating the development of a Covenant Agreement between St. Patrick's and St. John's that describes the collaboration between the two congregations as it has developed since I joined you in December 2022 and gives us some direction for the way ahead. In addition to Senior Warden Cassandra "Sandy" Winger and two representatives from St. Patrick's, Susan Thompson joined the Covenant formation group as a non-Vestry member from St. John's and has been a real asset to that process. We are aiming to complete the Agreement in time to present it to the Bishop when he is here on March 9.

In other news, the Episcopal Church, for only the second time in its history, elected a Presiding Bishop on the first ballot; the Most Reverend Sean Rowe, who succeeded Bishop Michael Curry. Our nation undertook a more contentious election, and we, in this region in particular, are even now discerning what the future will hold for us as people of faith who worship a compassionate and loving God.

You all have seen my recent comments in *LOGOS* about the need for Vestry leadership and concern about "perpetual Vestries." The Treasurer's report outlines the challenge of not having paid administrative assistance for the parish, and the work being done to clarify the potential uses of the church's cash reserves. I commend those reports to you, and ask you to join me in thanking the current Vestry: Senior Warden Sandy Winger, Treasurer Peter Olivere, Patricia Broida, Dave Dunlap, Diane Henderson, Lisa Pope, and Christine Williams.

It has been almost a year since the Celebration of New Ministry during which I was certified as your Rector. This celebration was followed by—you guessed it—a lovely party! I would like to close with the Collect for the Feast of Saint John, which was prayed at that service:

Shed upon your Church, O Lord, the brightness of your light, that we, being illumined by the teaching of your apostle and evangelist John, may so walk in the light of your truth, that at length we may attain to the fullness of eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Yours in Christ, Julie D. Bryant +

Senior Warden's Report

I have been fortunate enough to have been the Senior Warden for St. John's since before the pandemic, including before Rector Ann Barker left in 2020, and during our time with Rev. Larry Packard and other supply priests. I was also fortunate enough to be on the search committee that brought Rector Julie Bryant to St. John's in 2022, and now my time has come to an end.

I want to thank everyone who has worked with me down through the years, including those who have helped to prepare the bagged lunch meals for the Bailey's Crossroads shelter once a month and have contributed generously to the annual school supply drive for Carlin Springs Elementary. I also appreciate those who have joined in all our St. John's social and outreach events, including the memorable monthly Zoom Bingo nights during the pandemic.

A special thank you to Treasurer Peter Olivere for all of his efforts on behalf of St. John's (and a personal thank you to him for training me to handle the Zoom livestream of the worship service whenever he is not able to do it...and for training me to be a better financial teller!)

I appreciate all of St. John's volunteers who pitch in every week to serve before, during, and after the worship service (and another special thank you to Lynn Robinson, who is always there to assist in setting up for me when I have fellowship and to provide a wonderful dessert). These efforts have been amplified by the OAR volunteers, who have assisted not only here in the church but also in the homes of some of our members who needed help.

St. John's is a warm and welcoming community because of all of you. Thank you for being part of the St. John's family.

Report Submitted by Sandy Winger, Senior Warden

Treasurer's Report—Financials 2024 and Budget for 2025

Below is a summary of the 2024 budget and actuals and the 2025 budget:

	2024 Budget*	2024 Actual	Difference	% of Budget	2025 Budget
Income					
Pledges	\$67,950	\$72,205	\$4,255	106%	\$74,500
Plate	3,500	2,394	-1,106	68%	2,700
Other Contributions	3,000	374	-2,626	12%	1,600
Building Fees	16,640	27,440	10,800	165%	33,040
Other Income	3,100	2,506	-594	42%	2,775
Total Income	\$94,190	\$104,919	\$10,729	111%	\$114,615
Expenses**					
Clergy-Related	\$65,730	\$65,284	-446	99%	\$67,988
Staff-Related	39,191	24,720	-14,471	63%	26,343
Facilities-Related	18,940	18,471	-469	98%	20,788
Other	11,472	7,769	-3,703	68%	10,243
Total Expenses	\$135,334	\$116,244	-\$19,090	86%	\$125,362
Net Ordinary Income	-\$41,144	-\$11,325	\$29,819	28%	-\$10,747

* 2024 budget and actuals reflect corrections to exclude investment income not distributed and correct facilities-related expenses. **Expenses include non-designated minus net of designated.
Revised Feb. 8, 2025.

Highlights

The budget for 2024 projected a deficit of \$41 thousand, but we ended the year with a deficit of \$11.3 thousand. The proposed budget for 2025 has a deficit of \$10.7 thousand. The 2024 differences from the budget and changes for 2025 are summarized below.

Income

Contributions – The pledge and plate contributions have been dropping the past few years. For 2024 we again lost several more individuals who had been significant contributors. There is an increase in 2025 over the actual 2024 giving because a number of members increased their pledge amount. The table below compares the past few years' contributions.

<i>(in thousands)</i>	2022	2023	2024	2025 Budget
Budgeted Pledge and Plate	\$89.2	\$81.4	\$71.5	\$77.2
Actual Pledge and Plate*	\$92.6	\$88.7	\$74.6	

Building – The 2024 revenue was \$10.8 thousand over the budget. The agreement with the Seventh-day Adventist congregation was renewed and renegotiated in the late spring and rates were increased to more appropriately reflect market value. The 2025 budget reflects that higher level for the full year.

Expenses

Staff – The cost of staff was \$14 thousand less than the budget, including a difference of \$10 thousand for the parish administrator and \$3 thousand for the organist. Although a few members of the congregation are covering some of the duties previously performed by the parish administrator, most duties are either being left undone or are being performed by the rector. There are no plans to refill the position in 2025. Considerably more support from other members of the congregation is needed to perform these activities.

Costs for the organist will be slightly higher in 2025 than in the 2024 budget.

Clergy – The increase for 2025 reflects the Diocese's recommended cost of living increase and the increase in the health care premiums.

Financial Position

Assets (1)	<u>End of 2023</u>	<u>End of 2024</u>
Checking and Certificates of Deposit	\$59,671	\$48,699
Investments (2)		
Money Market	3,380	13,922
Unrestricted	75,598	72,599
Restricted King fund for RDF (3)	21,119	22,663
Previous McNeely fund (4)	76,637	84,539
Other assets		<u>2,500</u>
Total Assets	236,405	244,922
<u>Liabilities</u>	\$704	\$3,551
<u>Assets minus Liabilities</u>	\$235,701	\$241,371

(1) Assets above include only funds, not the building, grounds, or contents.

(2) The market value of all the investments increased by \$17 thousand during 2024. Within the investments, \$10 thousand was moved from unrestricted investment to the money market.

(3) King Fund – In 2025, the terms of the Cecil King bequest and a separate gift of stock, both of whose earned income supports the Rector's Discretionary Fund, will be reviewed to ensure a full understanding of the terms by which the parish received those gifts.

(4) McNeely Fund – The parish has long considered an investment account that was named for a generous bequest from Elsie McNeely to be restricted funds. In 1987 Elsie McNeely left funds for use in acquiring air conditioning and maintaining the HVAC system. Over the past 27 years, the amount of the original bequest has been completely used to fund HVAC installations and upgrades. However, since the funds were invested during this period, the growth in the fund has greatly exceeded the original bequest.

In 2024, the Treasurer and Rector examined several files and Vestry minutes going back to the 1980s and brought those findings to the Vestry. As a result of that examination, the growth in the fund above the original bequest has been reclassified as unrestricted, making it thereby available for any purpose. This action results in no change in the total assets of the congregation, nor in the

investment vehicles being used. It applies only to the reclassification of the funds from restricted to unrestricted.

The Vestry approved the budget for 2025 and the reclassification of the McNeely fund on February 12, 2025.

Report Submitted by Peter Olivere, Treasurer

Outreach Ministries

AFAC and Bailey's Shelter Ministries

St. John's started 2024 with two outreach ministries focused on feeding the hungry: Support of the Arlington Food Assistance Center (AFAC) and the Bailey's Shelter and Supportive Housing. (A Little Free Food Pantry was added as another food ministry in the fall of 2024.)

AFAC

The people of St. John's continued supporting AFAC with contributions of food, money, and labor in 2024. The St. John's community donated more than 1,500 pounds of food in 2024 and contributed \$450 in monetary donations through the church. Thank you to all who offered their continuing support, including Roger Ludwig, who delivered the food contributions to the AFAC warehouse, and to those parishioners who chose to send their financial contributions directly to AFAC.

In addition, a team of our volunteers gathered at the AFAC warehouse on the second Friday of each month to bag produce and staples for distribution to those in need throughout Arlington County. Thank you to Dave Dunlap, Peter Olivere, Sandy Winger, Lynn Robinson, Christine Williams, Robert Herman, Barbara Wien, Virginia Pearson, Kevin McWeiner, Faye Pritchard, and Bill Pritchard. Thank you also to Dave and Carol Dunlap's two granddaughters and to Rector Julie Bryant, who also volunteered from time to time, and a special thank you to Bill Pritchard for coordinating the volunteers.

AFAC feeds over 3,400 families in need each week, yet another increase in demand over the year before.

Bailey's Shelter and Supportive Housing

One Sunday a month attendees at the St. John's morning worship service gather afterward in the undercroft to pack bag lunches for Bailey's Shelter and Supportive Housing. We extend our thanks to Sandy Winger, who coordinates this ministry and buys the food supplies using church funds.

The Bailey's Shelter is open 24/7 and provides 48 beds for adults as well as services that include case management, employment assistance, housing assistance, meals, a day program, and connection to community services.

School Supplies

Each August and September the people of St. John's gather school supplies for Carlin Springs Elementary School, contributing first and foremost the items that the school lists as its most needed supplies. Our contributions in 2024 included pocket portfolios, pencils, erasers, highlighters, dry erase markers, crayons, washable markers, colored pencils, composition books (lots of composition books), glue sticks, sandwich bags, tissues, scissors, and more.

Carlin Springs is both a Title I school and a Community School that relies on a partnership with individuals and community organizations such as St. John's to provide extra support for their students' educational, social, emotional, and health needs. Faye Pritchard coordinates the school supply effort, but it could not be done without all those who respond so generously, both by buying supplies and contributing financially. Thank you for your continued support.

Report Submitted by Faye Pritchard

Little Free Food Pantry

St. John's embarked on a new outreach ministry in 2024 when it became the home for a Little Free Food Pantry (LFFP). Created as an Eagle Scout project, the LFFP needed to be relocated after the Arlington Central Library was unable to continue as its sponsor. The parish discerned in this an opportunity to minister to neighbors who experience food insecurity and, after thoughtfully engaging with the Glencarlyn community, offered to be the pantry's new host. The Boy Scouts installed it by the St. John's parking lot over Labor Day weekend, and we formally dedicated the LFFP on September 7, 2024.

A committed group of about a dozen parishioners has taken the lead in tending to the pantry. Someone checks on it almost daily to restock as needed, and in November Peter Oliver spent a day repairing storm damage to one of its doors. We have continued to engage with the neighborhood through updates on the parish website and in the *Village View* newsletter, including by extending invitations for contributions. Our neighbors have responded generously with both in-kind donations and monetary contributions.

Precise information on the LFFP's usage is elusive, given that it is accessible around the clock and sometimes items are left directly in the pantry. However, the speed with which items are taken suggests it is meeting a genuine need. We are aware of at least one client who currently is experiencing homelessness and has expressed gratitude for the pantry.

Unfortunately, some loss of food has occurred with items being opened and their contents poured or spread around, as well as cans that have been dented, burst open, and then left on the ground. Such mischief is a loss to those who rely on the pantry offerings, and it is troubling to the neighborhood to see things go to waste and create a mess. The volunteer team is exploring ways to prevent future damage. We also plan to contact the hosts of other LFFPs in Arlington to learn from their experience and offer mutual support.

Report Submitted by Deacon Mary Cushing

Altar Guild

I continue to be most grateful for each member of our small but mighty guild. We are a good team—each member contributes enthusiastically to the best of their abilities and they are willing to fill in or help as needed. The current members of the Altar Guild are:

Eileen Tallent–Chair

Carol Dunlap

Barbara Olivero

Faye Pritchard

Lynn Robinson

Sandy Winger

Each member normally serves about one weekend per month. All, like most members of St. John's, play another role at our church and are spread thin. We could definitely use more members, especially younger ones—male or female—as the existing crew has some physical limitations that make carrying and lifting the larger heavy vases challenging at times. We do have options for other smaller vases—brass, glass, and pottery—which can add interest.

In addition to preparing the altar for weekly services, the Altar Guild is also responsible for other special services or events within the church such as weddings and funerals.

Parishioners considering joining the Altar Guild may find the cost of purchasing the flowers for the altar to be prohibitive. We should consider a special fund or other provisions for members as I would not want this to be a deterrent to an individual who might like to join our team. Trader Joe's consistently has beautiful flowers and plants at a very reasonable price and the weekly cost for altar flowers typically should not exceed \$25 to \$30. Special occasions such as weddings, funerals, and religious holidays like Easter and Christmas would be addressed separately. For example, sometimes for special occasions the family may provide flowers arranged and delivered by a local florist. In these cases we are just setting up the altar.

I believe that we can still do a better job with flower dedications. Perhaps the flower dedication chart could be better positioned, such as upstairs in the narthex for better visibility. In years past, the Altar Guild members or the church administrator would call the individual listed as making a dedication on the flower chart to finalize the wording for the Sunday bulletin and to see if there is a specific type of favorite flower or a favorite color that could be accommodated within reason. This type of personalization might encourage increased dedications. The donation for flowers would then be a separate payment to the church and should be recorded for a better accounting of the Altar Guild budget and expenses. This remains a big area of opportunity. Altar flowers could also be delivered to sick parishioners or given to those celebrating a birthday, etc., as it is a shame to leave them in the empty church all week.

Another area of opportunity is using a variety of plants and different types of vases or pottery to create interest. We tried this at Lent last year and it was well-received. I feel it is also important

to encourage creativity and expression in Altar Guild members while still respecting the tone of the season.

There is still a need for an Altar Guild meeting for social and training purposes. This could be a joint meeting with St. Patrick's to talk about "housekeeping" items such as proper care and ironing of the linens, polishing, and flower arranging. Rector Julie Bryant and I have begun the process of thoroughly clearing and cleaning the sacristy, which should not continue to be a catch-all area for random items.

Report Submitted by Eileen Tallent

Music

St. John's is currently without a permanent part-time organist. While this position has been open and advertised, we are using supply organists in the meantime. Please pray that a permanent organist comes our way soon.

Carol Dunlap and I meet often during the liturgical year to choose hymns and service music for our weekly and occasional services. We take into account the lessons and season of each week, as well as whether the hymn is known to us or not. If there are hymns you would like to have added to this list, please send one of us the hymn number and name. We will do our best to include your suggestions in a service.

Report Submitted by Lynn Robinson

Book Club

St. John's Book Club meets from September through June at 7:30 p.m. on the first Tuesday of the month. Meetings are held in the undercroft. Along with the lively discussion, we also enjoy light refreshments. Our book list for the year is determined at the September meeting, when participants bring their suggestions for both fiction and nonfiction selections. We then check those recommendations for library availability and length. A longer book is typically selected to be read over the summer and then discussed at the September meeting. We try to make sure each book is available in many different formats at the library. Selections may include popular and literary fiction, classics, biographies and autobiographies, mysteries, and historical nonfiction.

Report Submitted by Lynn Robinson

Usher Ministry

On Sunday morning at St. John's, the first person most people see is the usher, who greets arrivals, distributes programs, hands out name tags, and generally provides a warm welcome to all. The usher also takes note of attendance, makes sure the Eucharistic elements are taken to the altar, and takes up the collection. These activities have been running smoothly.

In 2024 the usher corps doubled in size. In response to appeals for more ushers, various individuals stepped forward to volunteer, and we now have six ushers. This is twice the size of last year's group. We thank all who have responded and joined the usher team. In 2025 we will continue our efforts to recruit and train more ushers, since, as we all know, many hands make light work.

Report Submitted by Dave Dunlap

Prayer and Card Ministries

The Card Ministry sent 44 Birthday and 14 Anniversary cards over the past year. Thinking of You and Get Well cards have occasionally been sent if I am aware of the need. There has been a suggestion to have different people prepare the cards throughout the year, which is a thought for the future. In the meantime, I am planning to have a card signing event during the fellowship time during one Sunday in June.

We are using Form III for the Prayers of the People during the Sunday worship services. A blank Prayer Request sheet is placed in the back of the church each Sunday for those who have special requests for prayers.

Report Submitted by Barbara Oliver

Communications

The primary communications vehicles at St. John's are the *Weekly Update* email and the *LOGOS* newsletter. The *Weekly Update* is generally distributed each Thursday and highlights upcoming events and both new and ongoing announcements. *LOGOS* is published bimonthly. The newsletter includes a Rector's column, articles about congregational news and events, a Words on Hymns column written by Carol Dunlap, and a Parish News feature. Coverage also includes announcements about joint St. John's and St. Patrick's activities. Lisa Pope serves as *LOGOS* Editor and Bill Pritchard often contributes photos from St. John's events. *LOGOS* is primarily distributed by email, with some print copies mailed to those without email access.

Communications updates are also posted on the St. John's website at <https://www.stjohnsarlingtonva.org/default.asp>. The website features the message that "We welcome children of God of all races and nations who are young and old, gay and straight, rich and poor, believing and doubting. You have a home with us." Other features include news items, a Calendar of Events, details on worship services and parish life, information for visitors, and a link to make electronic donations to St. John's via PayPal. Peter Oliver serves as St. John's Webmaster.

Brief announcements about outreach activities and upcoming events are included each week in the Worship Bulletin and also featured in the worship service. In addition, St. John's runs a monthly ad in the Glencarlyn neighborhood *Village View* newsletter, posts special signs about upcoming events outside the church, and distributes flyers in Glencarlyn about events during the year. Through St. John's varied communications forums, the goal is to reach parishioners and community members with news of parish life and the many ways they can worship and participate in activities and ministries at St. John's.

Report Submitted by Lisa Pope