

# ANNUAL REPORT OF 2023



St. Augustine's Episcopal Church  
Annual Meeting - January 28, 2024



## FROM THE RECTOR

Dear Friends in Christ,

Welcome to St. Augustine's Annual Report! The pages that follow tell a story of our continual *becoming* — how we have grown as a community in the past year, and continued, with God's help, to live out our call to be the church here and now with grace, hope, and love.

2023 was a year of learning, deepening, and reaching out for our community. Our formation programs for all ages continue to strengthen our spirits and shape us as disciples, being further enhanced this year by the return of more regular Sunday adult forums, and the addition of Deb DeManno as Spiritual Director in Residence. Our bonds of fellowship have grown deeper, as we seek out ways to gather and connect, in good times and in hard times, too — a social grace that is a hallmark of the St. A's community. Our worship life continues to thrive and reflect the gifts and resources of our congregation — from a strong core of acolytes and other ministers, to seasonal outdoor worship, to ongoing collaboration with nearby churches for shared and innovative worship opportunities. And we have persevered in finding ways to serve the world in Christ's name, through outreach partners and opportunities old and new.

The work of building and stepping into the future God has for us continues. As you read through these pages, I hope you will savor the chance not only to look back, but also to think ahead: what has our life together this year — as church and as a society — revealed to you about how you might be called to lead and to serve in the coming year? What ministries do you see here that you could enrich with your gifts and talents? What's missing from these pages that you would like to lead St. A's into exploring? It is a joy and a gift to be on this journey with you. I look forward to all that the year ahead holds for us.

Blessings,  
*Nadia*

**ST. AUGUSTINE’S ANNUAL REPORT**

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# **ST. AUGUSTINE'S ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA**

January 28, 2024

Call to Order

- Opening Prayer: Nadia Stefko
- Appointment of Clerk
- Approval of Minutes from 2023 Annual Meeting

Continuing Warden's Report: Dave Carley

2023 Treasurers' Report & 2024 Budget Presentation:

Mark Farrell & Gray Curchin, treasurers

Outgoing Warden's Report, with Nominating Committee Report: Carolyn Eby

Election of new warden, vestry members, and delegates to diocesan convention

Commissioning of new vestry members and delegates

Thanksgivings and Appreciations

Closing Grace & Sending: Sue Nebel

Meeting Adjournment

# ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

St. Augustine's Episcopal Church - February 26, 2023

The Annual Meeting was called to order, followed by an opening prayer, by the Rector, Nadia Stefko. Theresa Kimball, Parish Administrator, was elected Clerk of the meeting. The minutes of the 2022 Annual Meeting were reviewed. Shiny Fields motioned to approve, and John Whiteley seconded.

## **Co-Warden's Report: Carolyn Eby**

Carolyn spoke about the special community we have at St. Augustine's, with everyone possessing unique gifts to share. As a warden, she was encouraged to share her own gifts in ways she had not considered before; and she invited everyone to share their gifts. She spoke about active participation as a path to grow in faith; as the heart of membership at St. A's; and as a way to become involved and to be on the "inside" of our community. She then invited everyone to review the many and varied ministries as reflected in the Annual Report and to complete the yellow sign-up sheet indicating the ministries they were interested in or would like to learn more about. Nadia invited everyone to leave their completed forms on the tables; ministry leaders would contact those interested in the weeks ahead.

## **2022 Treasurer's Report & 2023 Budget: Gray Curchin and Mark Farrell, Treasurers**

### **2022 Review—Mark Farrell**

Actual pledge revenue increased by \$24,407. Recurring revenue increased by \$18,205 above what was budgeted, due to Free Will Offerings. The budget made use of \$40,340 in non-recurring revenue. Expenses were \$38,322 under budget, due largely to timing of hiring of new staff, timing of return to in-person worship and lower than expected hybrid worship and computer costs. We ended up with a \$57,768 surplus to carry forward to the 2023 budget.

65% of actual revenue was from pledges, 5% from donations, 8% from Rose Hall, 15% from the Endowment Fund, 6% from the surplus and 1% other. 29% of actual expenses was for Clergy, 19% for Administration, 8% for Music, 1% for Education, 2% for Parish Development, 22% for the Physical Plant, 12% for the Diocesan Pledge and 5% for Outreach.

### **2023 Budget—Mark Farrell**

Planned Pledge revenue is down 1%. Planned Endowment distribution is down 29%. Total expenses are up 1%.

65% of planned revenue will be from pledges, 3% from donations, 10% from Rose Hall, 11% from the Endowment Fund, 10% from the surplus and 1% other. 28% of expenses will be for Clergy, 21% for Administration, 7% for Music, 6% for Education, 3% for Parish Development, 20% for the Physical Plant, 11% for the Diocesan Pledge and 4% for Outreach.

### **Endowment—Gray Curchin**

It was a difficult year in all markets (equity and bonds). A portfolio allocated 65% equities and 35% bonds should have returned a loss of 16.33%. The endowment return was slight better with a loss of 16.16% or \$285,983.

The Excess Capital Fund had an ending value \$348,290 with net additions of \$22,750 and remaining market gains of \$59,900. These funds had a loss of 9.6% considerably better than the blended index return of -13%. A nice outperformance in a terrible market.

### **Stewardship—Gray Curchin**

Pledges held relatively steady with a total 94 vs. 98 last year for a total of \$379,676, ~\$1,000 less than last year. 53% of pledges increased!

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## **Outgoing Warden's Report, with Nominating Committee Report: Brian Wright**

Brian reflected back to his first vestry meeting in February 2020, right before the pandemic, and the many ways we have adapted, discerned and pivoted over the past 3 years. Through it all, St. A's showed resiliency and remained committed to building relationships with each other and with God. Brian encouraged the parish, going forward, to continue to be clear about who we are, what we value, and what impact we seek to have on the world around us.

Brian introduced the uncontested slate of candidates, as presented by the Nominating Committee: Dave Carley, Co-warden (2-year term); Juli Bergerud, Greg Burns, and Nancy Darian, Vestry members (3-year terms); and Kristie Webber (3-year term) and Debbie Buesing (alternate), Convention delegates. All were elected by acclamation. Jerry Todd motioned to approve, and Verlin Fraser seconded. All newly elected vestry members and delegates, along with outgoing vestry members, were invited forward for the commissioning and for prayer.

## **Thanksgivings**

Outgoing Vestry members Brian Wright and Shiny Fields were thanked for their service, along with Linda Laatsch and Amy Jacobs (clerk), who were unable to attend the meeting. Nadia thanked Shiny for their 3 years of service on vestry as well as for their oversight of St. A's Youth and Confirmation program. St. A's had 5 youth confirmed in 2022 and have 5 more youth currently in this year's program. Nadia also thanked Brian for his 3 years of service, pointing out that she has served alongside both Brian and Shiny during her entire tenure at St. A's so far. Brian was thanked for the many ways he has served at St. Augustine's, especially as chair of the Covid-19 Re-entry Task Force, as St. A's learned to be a community in transition. All outgoing Vestry members were given special gifts by the rector on behalf of the congregation.

Many other members of St. A's were thanked by Nadia, including the Hybrid Worship Tech Team; the Re-entry Task Force (which wound down last spring); Good Samaritans; Columbarium Guild; Buildings & Grounds team, led by Carolyn Eby; Formation leaders, especially Becky Wright, Shiny Fields, Linda Laatsch, Greg Burns, and *all* children, youth and family ministry helpers; Karl Anderson and the Adult Formation team; Digital Communications led by new staff member Sabrina Nizzi, with crucial startup and messaging support from Brian Wright & Cecelia Mitchell Daspit; Outreach leaders Linda Laatsch, Tom Denman, Jim Bonamici, Amy Jacobs, and all the individual outreach ministry leaders; Financial ministries, including our treasurers, Investment team, and St. A's Stewardship Ministry team.

Nadia thanked ALL worship ministries, including our choir/musicians, with special thanks to Martin Kehe and Laura Kehe; Altar Guild, with special thanks to Robin Bourne-Caris and Mary Ellen Davis, who led a graceful transition to the Altar Guild's new leadership, Edie Stewart and Kristin Anderson; Mary Senn and our assisting ministers and acolytes; Terry Haight and our ushers; Frank Senn, John Lang & Mark Farrell for shared worship leadership; and St. A's newly-formed Liturgy Committee: Mary Senn, Stephan Lacor, Karl Anderson, Martin Kehe, Becky Wright, and Edie Stewart.

Also thanked by Nadia was the reinvigorated Social/Hospitality Ministry team (aka, the St. A's Socialites!) led by Carolyn Eby; the Newcomer Ministry team, led by Carol Telling, who made today so special; and finally, hugely, all staff: Pisa, Athina, Martin, Theresa, Sabrina, Becky... & especially Deacon Sue Nebel, Nadia's clergy partner—equally at home leading us into conversations that challenge (Sacred Ground) as she is with bringing a presence of comfort and care: a reflection of the essence of the gospel she proclaims each Sunday. Carolyn Eby then thanked Nadia for all *she* does, which was met with resounding applause!

Nadia invited a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:45 a.m. Brian Wright motioned to approve, and Martha Jacobson seconded. Deacon Sue Nebel then sent us forth with a closing grace.

Respectfully submitted, Theresa Kimball

## ST AUGUSTINE'S 2024 OPERATING BUDGET

# of Pledges 91

### OPERATING REVENUES

#### RECURRING INCOME

Pledges (Current Year)	\$	387,058
Open Plate/Free Will Offerings/Targeted Donations	\$	20,000
Weekly/Christmas/Easter Flowers	\$	5,000
Rose Hall & Usage	\$	52,177
Income From Endowment Fund	\$	80,572

**Subtotal Recurring Revenues**    \$    **544,807**

#### NON-RECURRING INCOME SOURCES

Past Pledges	\$	5,000
Anonymous Gift	\$	20,000
Previous Years Excess (Loss)	\$	41,043

**Subtotal Non-Recurring Revenues**    \$    **66,043**

**TOTAL ANNUAL REVENUE**    \$    **610,850**

#### OPERATING EXPENSES

Clergy	\$	169,353
Administration Staffing and Expenses	\$	124,080
Music Staffing and Expenses	\$	51,594
Education Staffing and Expenses	\$	37,963
Parish Development Expenses	\$	14,500
Physical Plant Staffing and Expenses	\$	125,990
Diocesan Pledge	\$	62,370
Outreach Commission	\$	25,000

**TOTAL EXPENSES**    \$    **610,850**

**EXCESS INCOME (EXPENSES)**    \$    **0**

## VESTRY BIOGRAPHIES

St. Augustine's Annual Meeting 2024

### Juli Bergerud: (Co-Warden) 2-year term

Having taken a circuitous spiritual path, I became Episcopalian in 1988, and was active in other parishes. My husband, Mark Farrell, and I had been looking for a church home and once we visited St. A's, we stayed. Since joining in 2017, I've been involved in several areas of parish life. Through Education for Ministry, Equipping the Saints, and Sacred Ground, I began to perceive where I might be called, going deeper into theology and practice, and how I might follow the path of Jesus more closely. I was elected to Vestry last year, and I focused specifically on Stewardship and Adult Formation, continuing the rebuilding and revisioning begun even as we emerged from the shutdown caused by Covid. I still maintain a strong concern and interest in social justice, and how we communicate our "why" regardless of circumstances. Through these experiences, I've gained a good overview of how the many pieces interact.

I remain humbled to be asked to serve alongside so many committed people, and deeply grateful for the leaders who have gone before. It is the spiritual life of this community that allows me to step forward in faith.

### Carrie Bach: 3-year term

I arrived in Wilmette in 2007 after many years in the city, with my husband Bill, our 2-year-old son Henry, and pregnant with our daughter, Campbell. We had not figured out a church when we arrived. A few years later we met the Janetzko family and they introduced us to St. Augustine's. We have been members ever since. Throughout the years St. Augustine's has been a constant in my life. I previously served on the Vestry for 3 years under Kristin White. I have also been on the stewardship team, and I have served as an usher and I very much enjoyed reading at services prior to my Alzheimer's diagnosis.

I am excited to further my involvement with the church in the years to come as our parish continues to grow. Although I am no longer working as a result of my medical situation I am grateful for the time I can give to the church and hopefully serve on the Vestry for the next 3 years.

### Tom Hamilton: 3-year term

I always have been active in Episcopal Parish life. Attendance is particularly important. I rarely miss Sunday, Friday, or Seasonal Services. The liturgy, choir, and worship opportunities of St. Augustine's are exceptional.

I serve as an usher, chalice bearer, and do weekly bookkeeping. Although I participated in the Stewardship and Building & Grounds Committees as a newcomer, I have a lot to learn. Certainly there are those in the congregation I do not know and many I do not know well. As a member of the Vestry I will work to know everyone well, to learn from others, and follow the advice of a neighboring religious voice:

"Collaborative governance needs to be more than calling on the advice and competence of others to make up our Episcopal shortcomings. Rather, governance involves seeking how God is revealing his work through others in the community." ~Blase J Cupich

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### Devon Law: 3-year term

The first time we set foot at St. Augustine's in September of 2022 we knew we had found our church home. I was baptized and raised in the Episcopal Church in Los Angeles and have been a member of various churches over time. I have been married to my husband, Dana, for 13 years. In 2018 we lived in Australia for two years where I felt called to renew my faith in worship. When we moved to Wilmette and were blessed with our son, Wyatt, we knew it was time to find our community church. Looking at the Gospel through the eyes of a mother is quite profound and humbling and has enriched my relationship with the church. St. Augustine's immediately felt like the right place for our family. The clear drive to serve is what makes this church very special to this community and truly follows Christ's example of what he wants from his disciples. I look forward to serving on the vestry as part of that community.

### Sara Menna: 2-year term

I am grateful and honored to be nominated to serve on the Vestry. My husband and I joined St. Augustine's about five years ago when we moved to the area with our two children. Our children have attended Sunday School and our oldest, Oliver, was recently confirmed. I have recently begun to serve as an usher on Sundays.

I appreciate the leadership and the community here at St. Augustine's. The sense of openness and inclusivity is something I cherish. The process our son went through with confirmation encouraged questioning. This is refreshing as the process of how we engage with our faith includes questioning if we are truly honest. I'm grateful this was tackled and not avoided.

I am a mother of two boys and a clinical social worker practicing on the north side of Chicago. We are happy to call Wilmette and this church our home.

## CONVENTION DELEGATE BIOGRAPHIES

St. Augustine's Annual Meeting 2024

### Debbie Buesing: 3-year term

These days you will likely see me singing in the choir, which is a delightful change of pace after many years of serving in ministries to children and youth. I joined St. A's shortly after we moved to Wilmette in 1994. Almost immediately, David Musgrave encouraged me and my husband to become youth group leaders, and so my focus was on Christian Formation for several years, both as a volunteer and member of the staff. During that era, I attended several Diocesan Conventions, both as a member of Diocesan Council and as a workshop leader, as well as singing in the convention choir. I was delighted to return to Convention last year as St. A's Alternate Delegate. I would be honored to step into the role of Delegate and to continue serving St. A's in new ways.

### Tom Denman: alternate

I grew up attending an Episcopal Church in Missouri. Like many of us, I sort of stopped attending church, until my oldest daughter started asking questions that I wanted help answering. We had attended a "Celebration of Life" service for a good friend in 1997 and gotten a very warm feeling about St. A's. Since then, we have been happily attending St. A's, where we have met many wonderful people. I did a short stint on the Vestry back in the David Musgrave days, and have been an active usher for many years, and served on the Christian Outreach Commission, for a while as the chairman. I'm looking forward to serving the church in a new capacity.

## Commissioning for Elected Lay Ministries in the Church

The Ministers of the Church are lay persons, bishops, priests and deacons. All are commissioned for ministry by the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. And, there are times when a public recognition and commissioning of a particular ministry is desired. Today we commission those newly elected to serve as vestry members and convention delegates.

**Presider:** Brothers and Sisters in Christ, we are all baptized by the one Spirit into one Body, and given gifts for a variety of ministries for the common good. Let us now commission these people to the special ministry to which they have been called and elected.

*The presider addresses the candidates.*

**Presider:** You have been called to a ministry of servant-leadership and representation in this congregation. Will you, as long as you are engaged in this work, perform it with diligence?

**Candidates:** I will.

**Presider:** Will you faithfully and reverently execute the duties of your ministry to the honor of God, and the benefit of the members and mission of this congregation?

**Candidates:** I will.

*The presider addresses the people.*

**Presider:** With your prayers, curiosity, and participation, will you support and uphold these people in their leadership and ministry?

**People:** We will!

**Presider:** Let us pray.

**People:** Gracious God, look with favor upon those whom you have called as leaders in your Church. Grant that they may be so filled with your Holy Spirit that they may minister in your name with wisdom, steadfast devotion and constant faith, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Presider:** May God who has given you the will to do these things give you the grace and power to perform them.

# ST. AUGUSTINE'S ANNUAL REPORT of 2023

## CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILY FORMATION

2023 was a year of continued growth in numbers and programming:

### **Nursery:**

The Nursery in “Little Puhlman Hall” is open and available for children from birth to 3 years. We are staffing the nursery with two care providers: one is through our contracted caregiver service, Jovie, who provides someone who has been professionally trained and carefully vetted, with background checks at the city, county, state, and federal levels. We also have Sophie, a local high school student volunteer. Children are welcome to stay with their families during the worship service, but the Nursery is available to those who wish to use it, or for those who are having an extra wiggly morning!

### **Sunday School:**

Sunday School is buzzing with energy! We have 2 classrooms this year: PreK-2nd grade and 3rd grade and above. When we have an overflow of children, we are able to expand into 3 classrooms—using our new combination office/classroom space. We use our time for an age-appropriate lesson, reflection, and prayer. As always, our focus is on building positive relationships with one another, the Church, and God.

A huge shout of gratitude goes out to Linda Laatsch, Greg Burns, and Liza Madden for their continued, consistent ministry. We are always looking for adults to join our team and spend time with our wise and curious children.

### **Youth:**

In the Spring of 2023, six youth chose to get confirmed. We will begin our next confirmation program in the Fall of 2024, in partnership with the Evanston Episcopal churches.

During the 2023-24 program year, the youth have a service-centered monthly meeting. Thank you to Shiny Fields and Nancy Freeman for guiding our focus toward the Migrant Donations Ministry.

We also have many youth and children serving as liturgical assistants: acolytes, lectors, ushers, altar guild members, and, for the newly confirmed, chalice bearers. Thank you, Mary Senn, for your guidance and training.

### **Intergenerational:**

We remain focused on increasing our intergenerational interactions and continuing our monthly opportunities, in order to encourage these relationships. These events are family-friendly, and the goal is enrichment for all generations. Intergenerational offerings include Summer Happy Hours, the Backpack Blessing, the Pet Blessing, Pizza and Game Night, Advent Wreath Making, the Christmas Pageant, as well as Cross-Quarter and Holy Week services (which are collaborations with other churches).

-Becky Wright ([becky.wright@staschurch.org](mailto:becky.wright@staschurch.org))

## ADULT FORMATION

With the intention of being imaginative and welcoming, we continue to build on work that was done as we navigated our post-Covid reality. Our deepest thanks to Karl Anderson, who co-led this effort in 2022 and through June of 2023.

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In raising our programming goal to two to four offerings a month, we hold that formation also happens in less structured, intergenerational gatherings (see the “Children, Youth, and Family Formation” report for details). Throughout our planning, we worked closely with Becky Wright, Director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministries, affirming the vision of Christian Formation as a continuum and recognizing that formation occurs in far more than the intellectual realm, regardless of age. We coordinated some topics across age groups, appropriate to level of understanding. To help in our planning, we used a parish survey last summer to gauge interests in types of offerings, formats and topics. We also sought to identify volunteers to lead or assist in programs.

Based on your feedback we will maintain these, as well as implement additional suggestions:

- **Formats:** presentations with question-answer and/or discussion, small groups, and self-paced online presentations.
- **Areas of interest:** Bible study, book group, Education for Ministry, and contemplative spirituality; seasonal-themed offerings during Lent and Advent.
- **Scheduling times:** Sundays after church, daytimes and evening during the week.
- **Availability:** in-person, hybrid, Zoom-only, and self-paced online.
- **Topics:** Theology, church history and governance, spiritual practices, social justice, creation care, and more.

### **Children’s, adults’, and intergenerational offerings January through June 2023**

These were already in place when we began our comprehensive look, to determine what we might add.

- Children’s Formation\*
- Cross-Quarter Celebrations with Evanston churches\*
- Confirmation Preparation\*
- Intergenerational book discussions with St. Luke’s\*
- Quiet Times for Reflection—Advent and Lent\*
- Adult Forums (see below)
- Book Group
- Education for Ministry (see EfM report)
- Sacred Ground

*\*Please see the “Children, Youth, and Family Formation” report for details.*

#### *Adult Forums*

- Outreach, presented by Linda Laatsch and Juli Bergerud (January)
- Lent as a Time of Initiation, presented by Frank Senn (February)
- Repentance, Reconciliation & Repair, presented by Brian Wright and Rebecca Cacayuran (March)
- Church Music, presented by Martin Kehe (April)
- Children, Youth, Family & Intergenerational Formation, presented by Becky Wright (May)
- Learn about Sacred Ground, led by Brenda Schumaker and Sue Nebel (June)

### **Adult Forums September through December 2023**

Several of these grew out of feedback from the survey and collaboration with several St. A’s ministries.

- Our Spiritual Connections to Creation, led by Nadia Stefko (September)
- Episcopal Charities, presented by Matt Berryman (September)
- Rooted in Abundance, led by Stewardship Ministry (October)
- Introduction to Spiritual Direction, presented by Deborah DeManno (October)
- Extended Advent, presented by Frank Senn (November)
- Thanksgiving with Indigenous Wisdom, led by Adult Formation (November)
- The History of St. A’s Needlepoint Kneelers, led by Nancy Freeman & Corkey Waite (December)

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### **Weekdays in 2023**

- Year round Compline (Tuesday evenings on Zoom)
- Lent Reflection Groups
- Advent Mini-Retreat
- Advent Reflection Groups

We look forward to planning our formation offerings in 2024. We welcome your participation, as well as your feedback, ideas, and suggestions. This is a group effort.

Sue Nebel ([s-hnebel@comcast.net](mailto:s-hnebel@comcast.net)) and Juli Bergerud ([jl.bergerud@gmail.com](mailto:jl.bergerud@gmail.com)), Adult Formation Co-Chairs

### **Sacred Ground:**

Sacred Ground is a faith-based series on race created by the national Episcopal Church. It is built on a powerful online curriculum of documentary films and readings. The material focuses on Indigenous, Black, Latino, and Asian/Pacific American histories as they intersect with the histories of European Americans.

St. Augustine's multi-parish effort to address the issues of racism and justice continued in 2023. Four groups of people from St. A's, St. Luke's, St. Mark's, and St. Matthew's completed the eleven-part series in March. Three new groups (two for laypeople and one for clergy) started in September. Brenda Schumaker serves as a facilitator for an evening group and Sue Nebel for a daytime group.

These dialogue circles walk through chapters of America's history of race and racism, learning about the roots and causes of white privilege. Participants work to connect their own family story, as well as economic class and regional identity, to this history.

-Brenda Schumaker ([bnielson@forwardspace.com](mailto:bnielson@forwardspace.com)) and Sue Nebel ([s-hnebel@comcast.net](mailto:s-hnebel@comcast.net))

### **Education for Ministry (EfM):**

Education for Ministry, or EfM for short, is for lay people who want to know more about the Christian faith (that's the Education part) and how to recognize and respond to God's call to carry out Christ's work of reconciliation (that's the Ministry part). Each week, participants meet for prayer, discussion of their reading assignments, and reflection in a supportive small group that seeks to discern God's presence in their lives and share insights that can shape how they live out their beliefs in the world.

We start at the beginning, with a deep dive into the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament) to plumb the foundational stories of our faith, the faith we share with Jesus, bringing it into conversation with our experiences of the world as we study, worship, and engage in theological reflection together. In subsequent years, participants can move through the New Testament, church history, and modern theology, toward a new understanding of the fullness of God's kingdom and how we might be effective ministers in our time and place.

The EfM group at St. A's meets on Monday evenings, both in Puhlman Hall and on Zoom, and is led by mentor (facilitator) Mark Farrell. We have welcomed additional members to the group of participants this past fall. We are always eager to welcome more people for the session that will begin in the fall of 2024. For more information, please contact Mark ([mhf60076@icloud.com](mailto:mhf60076@icloud.com)).



## **OUTREACH** - two types

### Active Outreach:

Active Outreach, which is parish member-led, has had an exciting year. We had lots of interest in new projects that are participatory and do not require grant funding.

The Christmas basket program, monthly food donations, hosting of Family Promise, Meal Train for parish members with medical needs (through Good Samaritans), and service at A Just Harvest community kitchen has involved many, many volunteers. To join Good Samaritans contact Julia Joehl ([jujoehl@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jujoehl@sbcglobal.net)), the dedicated leader of this 'in-reach.'

A important outreach was initiated by Nancy Freeman ([nfreeman@frii.com](mailto:nfreeman@frii.com)). She was very moved by the needs of the asylum seekers now living in our area. She started a new active outreach that involves collection of clothing and footwear for the newcomers. Contact her with your ideas about donations and about how you might help. We are planning events to raise funding in the 2024 winter months.

We continue to hope for new ideas for active outreach. To suggest a new active outreach, contact Linda Laatsch ([llaatsch@gmail.com](mailto:llaatsch@gmail.com)) to discuss details of your outreach, ways to promote the plan, proposed time frame, and how help can be provided. We will complete a short active outreach form together.

Our reorganization of St. A's Christian Outreach Commission's (COC) work to include both Active and Funded Outreach arms is two-fold: first, to facilitate participation of a greater share of the congregation in our outreach work — both newcomers and long-timers alike; and second, to ensure that all of our outreach efforts are working together to maximize impact both in the world *beyond* our walls, as well as *within* our congregation, shaping us as a community of engaged and growing disciples along the way.

### Funded Outreach:

The funding arm of St. Augustine's Christian Outreach Commission makes grants to worthy organizations (which must be registered 501(c)3 charities) who do God's work in support of those who need help. The work includes providing families with food, providing legal assistance, access to healthcare, mental health, shelter, providing for victims of domestic violence and access to other government services. There is a focus on local organizations and those that offer opportunities for parishioners to personally participate in delivery of their services. St. Augustine's believes in extending its ministry through financial assistance both to the Diocese and worthwhile charitable organizations. In recent years, St. Augustine's has given approximately \$25,000 per year divided among the various charitable recipients beyond the diocese.

St. A's 2024 outreach grant application is already on our website and the application is due early March. We plan to distribute funding to the chosen organizations in May of 2024. During St. Augustine's 2023 Grant cycle only 6 applications were received and COC provided grants to 4 different organizations with applications providing all requested information about their organization. We were also able to provide funding to two local church-based refugee housing ministries. Given the volume of asylum seekers in both Chicago and Lake county, the COC wanted to assist churches involved in local housing efforts.

If you have questions or proposals for Active Outreach, please contact Linda Laatsch ([llaatsch@gmail.com](mailto:llaatsch@gmail.com)). If you are interested in helping evaluate and distribute the Funded Outreach grants, contact Diana Hackbarth ([dhackba@luc.edu](mailto:dhackba@luc.edu)). Many thanks to all who give generously of your time, talent, and treasure to serve the community in Christ's name!

Sincerely, Linda Laatsch & Diana Hackbarth, COC co-chairs

## **Food Pantry Collections:**

The Food Collection and Delivery Ministry helps St. Augustine's fulfill its mission of service by delivering food and basic household products to four area food pantries: New Trier Township (Winnetka), St. Cyprian's (Chicago), C24/7 Father's Arms Ministries (Chicago) and Hillside (Evanston). This ministry has become even more important with inflation and an uptick in COVID.

Currently, 14 parishioners rotate on a monthly basis to deliver food collected from church members to one of the food pantries. Each food pantry receives three deliveries from St. Augustine's per year. C24/7 no longer runs a food pantry but the students that they tutor (generally over 50 students daily) need a snack after school. So, we will provide healthy food snacks during their three months.

The following individuals will help in this ministry in 2024: Jim Bonamici, Bruce Caris, Mark Farrell and Juli Bergerud, Greg Burns, Mary and Martha Jacobson, Verlin Fraser, Carolyn Eby, Terry Haight, Phil Steptoe, Karl Anderson and Hilary Kennedy. Most of these volunteers have chosen two months, so new volunteers stepping in for a month would be welcomed. Our beloved administrator, Theresa Kimball, alerts the volunteers when it's their month and helps out with the organization of donations.

You may have noticed the bags of food lined up in the hallway outside the church hall. They are waiting for collection and delivery to a food pantry or center. Basic foodstuffs in paper or plastic (no glass) are welcome, as well as household goods like toilet paper or soap. Small plates and napkins for C24/7 months would be helpful. Please contribute as you are able. Further details will be listed in St. A's weekly e-news. Please contact Linda Laatsch ([llaatsch@gmail.com](mailto:llaatsch@gmail.com)) if you would like to join us or have any questions. Thank you! -Linda Laatsch, Active Outreach Ministry Coordinator

## **A Just Harvest:**

A Just Harvest Soup Kitchen (AJH) is located at 7649 N. Paulina in Chicago. It is one of the largest food programs in Rogers Park and the greater Chicago area. With the help from over 6000 volunteers annually, the soup kitchen provides a hot nutritious meal for more than 125 men, women, and children 365 days a year. Participants can pick up box lunches between 12:00 noon and 2:00 p.m. each day or stay and eat in the dining room.

Volunteers from St. Augustine's are welcome to serve at the kitchen on the 4th Monday of every month, from 11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Duties are serving in the food line, assembling paper items, serving tables, cleaning up and socializing with the patrons and staff.

Financial support is always a need at AJH for building repairs, kitchen upkeep, replacement of furniture and equipment, purchase of food, etc. St. Augustine's has been an active partner with AJH since 1987. If you have any questions about service outreach at AJH, or wish to volunteer, please contact Mary Whiteley at [tomsswim@comcast.net](mailto:tomsswim@comcast.net).

## **Christmas Basket Program:**

Every year around Thanksgiving, the St. Augustine's congregation gladdens the hearts of many by participating in ReVive's Christmas Basket program. In the summer, volunteers at ReVive (an Episcopal Charities organization) interview hundreds of people in Chicago who hope to receive a Christmas basket. In the fall, ReVive sends us the names and personal information of qualifying recipients.

That information, together with instructions on how the program works, will be available through a link at our website. There members of the congregation sign up to adopt a family or individual senior. In 2023, St. A's gave wrapped presents and grocery gift cards to 24 families for a total of 69 people. Many thanks to all the sponsors who got the boxes to St. A's promptly and in good order. Special thanks to David Price for once again helping load the boxes into ReVive's truck. To help organize the effort for 2024, contact Kathleen Todd ([kmarytodd@comcast.net](mailto:kmarytodd@comcast.net)) or Hilary Kennedy ([kennedy3317@aol.com](mailto:kennedy3317@aol.com)).

## **Family Promise:**

You may know that Family Promise helps families with children to find new homes and stability. But are you aware that last year Family Promise Chicago North Shore (FPCNS; our local network) served over 1,100 families with all of our services (as described below)? St. Augustine's is a charter congregation in our network, FPCNS, since 2009. Along with our partner congregation, St. Elisabeth's, Glencoe, we have hosted guest families in the shelter program for over 14 years.

Shelter program: is the part of FP of which we are most familiar. Typically, families are hosted by churches and synagogues in the network 3 or 4 times per year where they are housed and provided meals and fellowship. St. A's turns our classrooms, lounge and offices into sleeping rooms for the guest families. Volunteers generously provide and host meals every evening as well as overnight support. In 2023 our congregation hosted families 5 times.

Homelessness Diversion & Prevention: FP is the "go to" for families who are on the verge of becoming homeless. Many call FP for help in finding resources like educational and rental programs. With counseling and referrals to fit their needs, Family Promise staff guide families before they find themselves homeless.

Financial Literacy Training: FP provides and requires guests to take a multi-week course: "Being a Good Tenant" that provides the basic financial skills most of the families are missing. The Keys to Good Tenancy and Financial Literacy workshops teach landlords' expectations, rules to follow and financial skills to prevent future homelessness.

Post-shelter support: Guidance and resources to keep our families stable, including housing, jobs, education (schooling, vocational, GED and certifications) childcare, clothing, school supplies and many other items for families after they have finished the program and are housed.

Staff – In the spring of 2023 the Board of Directors made the decision to sever the relationship with the current executive director (who was hired the summer of 2022). The decision was made after months of coaching did not improve her performance and financial issues developed when significant grant applications were not submitted to possible funders. Tracy McKeithen has resumed the position of Ex. Director, working part-time currently. Board members and part time staff have provided support. Tracy plans to resume full time work with FP in early 2024. Already significant improvements in general operations and finances have been made.

St. Augustine's parishioners have been faithful and generous to the mission of Family Promise. Many thanks to all for the prepared meals, gift cards, donations of food and other goods, and the generous financial support through St. A's Christian Outreach Commission grant and other individual gifts. St. A's is part of a wonderful network of congregations serving families in need in our community.

Please contact Kathy Gander ([kcgander@gmail.com](mailto:kcgander@gmail.com)) or Julia Joehl ([jujoehl@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jujoehl@sbcglobal.net)) to become part of the Family Promise effort to fight homelessness.

### **Support for the Newly Arrived / Migrant Donations Ministry:**

In September of 2023, St. A's formed a new ministry, Support for the Newly Arrived (SNA) in response to the continuing wave of migrants and asylum seekers, many bussed in from Texas. SNA is working with Refugee Community Connection (RCC), a six-year-old, Chicago-based volunteer organization that seeks to ease the transition of new arrivals into permanent housing. In 2023, RCC expanded and now supports refugees, asylum seekers, and others who come here with little or nothing, housed in emergency conditions at police stations, airports, temporary shelters, and "warming busses."

Through generous parish donations, SNA supplies RCC with welcome bags of basic necessities, items for free stores, and clothing that goes to shelters and individual families. Donation partnerships with SNA include Lutheran Campus Ministry at Northwestern University and Immanuel Christian Reformed Church in Sheldon, Iowa. Evanston's Immanuel Lutheran Church often acts as a collection site for the welcome bags. SNA also involved St. A's Youth Group in sponsoring and assembling bags.

45 welcome bags have been distributed to RCC from November 2023 through January 2024. Many clothing items were delivered to various Chicagoland Free Stores, several migrant shelters, and to RCC volunteers supporting migrant families. In addition, St. A's Prayer Shawl Guild members and other knitters/sewers, completed 27 hats and one cowl which were distributed to migrants through RCC "Hot Chocolate and Hats" events.

In 2024, SNA plans to continue St. A's clothing collections, partner with other groups, and explore conducting a fund raiser. Questions? Please contact Nancy Freeman ([nfreeman@frii.com](mailto:nfreeman@frii.com), 970-222-4663); or Lissa Anderson (847-912-3496).

### **Prayer Shawl Ministry:**

The Prayer Shawl Ministry is a warm community of parishioners who gather to donate their time and talents to creating prayer shawls. The shawls are made with love and are blessed by the clergy and given to those in need of prayers or care. They may be given to new mothers, to those who are sick or dying, to family members who have suffered losses, or to parishioners moving away from the church. Parishioners may also take them to give to friends and family in need.

We gather in members' homes, usually on Saturday afternoons or Friday evenings (in the summer) to knit/crochet, share patterns, nibble on goodies and enjoy each other's company. We embrace the saying 'Minds to think, hearts to love, hands to serve.'

We welcome anyone who would like to join us in this ministry. Knitting or crocheting expertise is not required. Members are willing to help those who want to learn a new skill and make shawls, and we've got lefties who can teach other lefties!

More recently, the Prayer Shawl Ministry group has responded to the need for hats and scarves for newly arrived migrants who aren't prepared for cold weather. At times, we are asked to create small "Prayer Squares" so, there is plenty for everyone who is interested to get involved.

It is a deeply meaningful ministry that is also loads of fun! If you are interested in this ministry, contact: Kristie Webber ([kpwebber63@gmail.com](mailto:kpwebber63@gmail.com)) or Carolyn Eby ([c\\_eby@sbcglobal.net](mailto:c_eby@sbcglobal.net)).

## **Good Samaritans:**

Good Samaritan volunteers are an immediate and loving presence to anyone among us who is temporarily in need by providing concrete assistance. Everyone is invited and welcome to offer help. Likewise, all in this community are encouraged to let the clergy or any other parish member know when you may need help and support. In 2023 some 25 individuals and families were helped with meals, rides, visits, errands and check-in phone calls. Some recipients were helped multiple times; about 100 meals were provided! Volunteers are always welcome, needed and greatly appreciated. This care from church friends is a blessing. Good Samaritans is one of our oldest established ministries of care. Interested in becoming volunteer? Please contact ministry coordinator Julia Joehl ([jujoehl@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jujoehl@sbcglobal.net)).

## **Funeral Receptions:**

One way our community at St. Augustine's supports its members through the loss of a loved one is by offering to provide a celebratory reception for family and friends following the funeral service. Parishioners are invited to participate by contributing food items for the reception table. During the last few years funerals and receptions of various sizes and set ups were planned observing Covid guidelines. For information about serving in this ministry now and in the future, please contact coordinator, Julia Joehl ([jujoehl@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jujoehl@sbcglobal.net)).

## **WORSHIP**

### **Liturgical Ministries:**

Our Sunday morning worship life grew and thrived in 2023. We were pleased to see an increase in worship attendance throughout the year; and we continue to work to connect and equip all who are willing to serve in various liturgical ministries as appropriate to their interest, ability, and age.

It's been a delight to see our core of acolytes grow this year. We welcome children and youth ages 10 and up to participate in training to serve in this role. There are now also several youth who serve regularly in the hybrid worship tech team ministry — a trend we hope to continue. Students in 3rd grade and above are also welcome to be trained and serve as lectors. If your child is interested in any of these roles, please speak to Mary Senn or Becky Wright.

We also welcome and encourage adults who are interested to serve as ushers, assisting ministers, chalice bearers, lectors, and prayer leaders. Training is provided. Please contact Mary Senn ([marysenn@gmail.com](mailto:marysenn@gmail.com)) or speak to her on Sunday morning if you want more information for any liturgical role; and contact Terry Haight ([terry.haight@gmail.com](mailto:terry.haight@gmail.com)) for information about joining the usher team.

2023 saw the long-awaited return of the common cup to our Sunday Eucharistic celebration, following the acute stages of the pandemic. We appreciate everyone's grace as we have worked to refine our practices to be as safe, smooth, and accessible as possible for all! This year we also moved to offering one Sunday service during the summer months (instead of two), held in our outdoor worship space, weather permitting. Many shared with us how much you enjoyed worshipping together as one community (and one coffee/lemonade hour!) for this part of the year as we do during the program year.

The work of our Liturgy Committee continued in 2023, now in its 2nd year. This committee looks at our Sunday liturgy with an eye toward what is working and going well, what might need more attention, how inclusive our Sunday mornings are, and what feedback the congregation offers. You may have noticed a few changes throughout the liturgical seasons; these typically emerge from work of the Liturgy Committee. Current members of the committee are: Karl Anderson, Martin Kehe, Stephan Lacor, Mary Senn, Edie Stewart, and Becky Wright, and the committee is facilitated by Nadia Stefko. If you have questions or ideas about our liturgical life, please reach out to any member of the team.

~Nadia Stefko & Mary Senn



## **Music:**

It was again my privilege in 2023 to lead St. Augustine's music program.

During much of the program year, choir members were able to enjoy some social time by sharing dinner at one of the neighborhood restaurants prior to rehearsals. We were also able to provide weekly anthems for in-person and Zoom services in spring and fall. During the summer months we experimented with having music at our outside services. Despite dealing with some troublesome audio equipment, the outside music was generally successful and well received. In addition, we were joined by our regular brass quartet to offer special music on Easter Day and by a string ensemble with soloists at our 8 p.m. Christmas Eve Eucharist.

In the spring we experimented with having a Sunday afternoon concert program, and we offered three programs of brass and organ music. While the music was of high quality, the attendance at these events was sparse due to many conflicting events. We may try to find a better time in future years or try to find different programming that will draw a larger audience.

Choir members participated in two Diocesan Evensong events at St. James Cathedral in Chicago during the year. The cathedral music staff is planning on making these events more frequent in the future and we hope to continue our participation in them.

During the year we continued the long-term process of evaluating the condition of the organ. In February some emergency repairs were done to the pipe chests and wind reservoirs (re-leathering), as well as repairs to the stop drawknobs and combination action to help increase their reliability. In May, the organ committee recommended to the Vestry that a larger digital enhancement of the organ be pursued involving the replacement of the console, which is worn out after more than 70 years of service. Examination of the organ's historical records in October revealed that the organ has been plagued with the same reliability issues since the 1960s, and we hope to have further plans to address this coming year.

In the fall we worked with Sabrina Nizzi to reconfigure the Choir and Music page of the website. As part of this effort, we launched a weekly feature called "Music Notes." These notes include discussions of the hymns, anthems, service music, preludes, and postludes each week. They also feature links to recordings so that congregation members can listen to and learn some of the new or unfamiliar music that may be coming up over the coming weeks. I encourage everyone to check this feature out to learn more about how the music supports the other aspects of the worship service each week.

As we move into 2024, we expect to continue our music ministry in much the same way for the time being. Musicians, young and old, with all levels of experience, are encouraged to contact me ([music@staschurch.org](mailto:music@staschurch.org)) to participate in the choir or to provide other musical offerings. Neither prior experience nor a long-term commitment is required! - Martin Kehe, Associate for Music

## **Altar Guild:**

Altar Guild works behind the scenes to update the altar, vestments, hangings, and linens. We work with the clergy and worship leaders to ensure the worship services run smoothly. This is done through preparing and caring for the Altar and Sanctuary, including vessels, vestments, candles and other items used for the celebration of the Eucharist and other Sacraments.

The Altar Guild prepares weekly on Saturday mornings for the Sunday services, working in groups of two on a rotating basis. The wine, grape juice, wafers, linens, silver, and candles all enhance the beauty and reverence of our celebration of the Eucharist. The Altar Guild not only works on the weekly Sunday services but also the Friday services, summer outdoor services, holiday services, and special services such as weddings and funerals. All this includes following the changes of the liturgical calendar of Advent, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Pentecost, the season after Pentecost and everything in between.

*(continued on next page)*

Many of our members have found their worship experience has been enriched by having a better understanding of why we use the objects we do. Our community includes both newer and longer term members of our congregation and is open to all. We are eager to welcome you to join us. Please contact Edie Stewart ([edie\\_stewart@me.com](mailto:edie_stewart@me.com)) or Kristin Anderson ([kia616@gmail.com](mailto:kia616@gmail.com)) co-chairs, to ask about sharing in this joyful ministry.

### **Hybrid Worship Tech Team:**

The tech team continued its ministry to make the worship experience at St. A's available to all during our indoor worship season regardless of their location or ability to join us physically in our space. The team manages all worship-related A/V needs of all parishioners on Sunday mornings.

If you are interested in joining this inter-generational ministry, please reach out to Brian Wright ([brianwrightmn@gmail.com](mailto:brianwrightmn@gmail.com)) or speak to a tech team member on a Sunday morning to start your orientation. Thanks to our 2023 tech team members that make this important ministry happen: Dana Law, Art Cacyuran, Brendan, Matthew, Asher, Mark Farrell, Theresa Kimball, Jerry Todd, Janice Hurley, Paul Luna, Steve Thorngate, Juli Bergerud and Brian Wright.

### **COLUMBARIUM GUARDIANS**

*to maintain physical and spiritual care and respect for that sacred space, and provide good guidance for its use as a cemetery*

The St. Augustine's Columbarium Guild continued its work in 2023. During the year this committee made significant accomplishments in four major areas:

- Physical Space: An impressive number of ground cover plants were added. The 2022 tree work made a difference as more sunlight got to our ground cover and plantings. In addition, plans are under way to replace the door going into the Chapel.
- Coffee in the Columbarium: Last fall we supported a coffee hour after Church and hosted it in the Columbarium. All ages enjoyed gathering around the Columbarium.
- Interment Space: Nearly three years worth of backlogged engraving work was completed.
- Policies and Procedures: Have been updated as well as presented to and accepted by the vestry.

None of this could have happened without the committee members who have made huge contributions: Corkey Waite, Cecelia (Mitchell) Daspit, Dave Carley, and Betsy Cox.

We look forward to hearing from people who would like to join our committee and welcome questions regarding the Columbarium.

Respectfully submitted,  
Terry Haight, Chairperson ([terry.haight@gmail.com](mailto:terry.haight@gmail.com))

### **HOSPITALITY & FELLOWSHIP**

It has been another fun year for Hospitality & Fellowship! The fabulous St. A's Socialites are in full swing and really know how to do it up right!! And we have a talented and generous congregation that always contributes to our gatherings!

We have hosted multiple events: the recent festive Christmas Eve Celebration, Easter's Champagne Reception, the delightful All-Parish Picnic, the Shrove Tuesday (Mardi Gras) Pancake Supper and the End of Year Party! It has been truly wonderful to celebrate the life of St. Augustine's together.

Where three or four St. Augustinites are gathered you'll surely find...festivity! Interested in getting involved? Contact Carolyn Eby ([c\\_eby@sbcglobal.net](mailto:c_eby@sbcglobal.net)).

## **NEWCOMER MINISTRY**

2023 was a busy year for the Newcomer Committee. We welcomed over 50 new people who worshipped with us. And happily, we welcomed into membership three groups of individuals, one group in the Spring and two in the Fall, totaling 40 individuals, of which 17 were children. Our newcomer welcome includes delivering bread, asking worshippers to attend coffee hours (using the red cups), sending a Welcome video that Sabrina Nizzi and our committee created, and answering questions about our community. We also host special receptions following Welcome Sunday services.

We encourage everyone at St. A's to get to know new worshippers. You will find many of their photos on the bulletin board in the hallway leading to Puhlman Hall. Nancy Darian joined Carol Telling, Verlin Fraser, Brenda Schumaker and Mary Whiteley on the Newcomer Committee in 2023. If you're interested in joining the team, please contact Nancy at [ncdarian24@gmail.com](mailto:ncdarian24@gmail.com) or Carol at [cbtelling@att.net](mailto:cbtelling@att.net).

## **STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY**

Stewardship is a key part of Christian theology, focusing on our relationships with God and each other, and how we think about our resources. We intend to return to this focus year-round, as we examine how we perceive each other and how we face current issues in the world. But the focus of this report is the part that people tend to name "Stewardship": our Annual Giving Campaign to fund the operating budget.

This year's campaign theme was "Rooted in Abundance," and it spanned the month of October. On October 1, three parishioners spoke about their relationship with God, the church, and their possessions. We heard why they came to St. A's and stayed, and why they give of their time, talent, and treasure. We could appreciate how we share, across generations and life experiences, a strong love for this church family. In the process we also recognized the importance of lay ministry. The next Sunday we heard the Rector preach on our relationship with God's Creation: How we receive and share the abundance we perceive, with gratitude. How we can be transformed in this process, to understand that "all flourishing is mutual." In further prominent raising up of lay ministry, the Stewardship Ministry team facilitated the Adult Forum October 15 on our perception of abundance and relationship with what God has given us. Then on Tuesdays during the campaign, as has been customary at St. A's, written testimonials from three more parishioners were sent out in stand-alone emails and displayed on the walls.

At the end of the campaign, recognizing that our goal had been an ambitious one that we hadn't met, we decided to bring it to you all once more, because this is what a healthy family does. We talked openly about our dreams and hopes, and what we are able to offer. We were quite sure that you all valued the work of God in this place.

And you responded so thrillingly! December giving resulted in an unexpected gain for the 2023 budget year. 2024 pledging increased to \$387K, although still less than the \$425K goal. And a one-time gift will allow us to maintain programs at their current level for this year, as we seek to grow our mutual understanding of how the abundant gifts we receive from God can in turn be given and blessed towards growth and even new life, new opportunities.

To everyone who pledged, who increased their pledge, or who initiated a new pledge, our heartfelt thank you. To our benefactor who gave so generously from the heart to inspire others, we are deeply grateful. To our wonderful Stewardship Ministry team (and we consider Theresa Kimball to be an essential member), whose passion and love for this community manifested in focused energy and a willingness to follow into uncharted territory: you made it possible!

We believe the Spirit is definitely at work here.

Juli Bergerud ([jl.bergerud@gmail.com](mailto:jl.bergerud@gmail.com)) & Carolyn Eby ([c\\_eby@sbcglobel.net](mailto:c_eby@sbcglobel.net)), Stewardship Ministry Co-Chairs  
Stewardship Ministry team: Katie Adams, Karl Anderson, Terry Haight, Tom Hamilton, and Linda Walker

## **DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS MINISTRY**

This past year, 2023, was an active one for Digital Communications and marked the first full year Sabrina Nizzi was in her role as Coordinator of Digital Communications under the guidance and leadership of Cecelia Mitchell Daspit.

The primary focus of Digital Communications is to create a content library that can be used in a variety of ways to increase awareness and enhance engagement with St. A's. This past year fresh content was generated with innovative contributions from parishioners and outreach partners to highlight the importance of collectively sharing content in order to grow the parish.

Some of the key 2023 accomplishments include:

### Parishioner Content Collaborations

- Janice Hurley narrated two videos for the website and social media
- Bill Walter's photos of the Sanctuary windows for the website and social media along with photos of the St. Mary's kneelers for the new photo gallery in the chapel narthex
- Newcomers Committee welcome video recorded at Carol Telling's home for the website
- Betty Jenkins interview about creating the St. Mary's kneelers for the website and social media

### Outreach Partner Collaborations

- Series of videos with A Just Harvest on location at their facility in Rogers Park
- Interview with Tracy McKeithen, Executive Director of Family Promise Chicago North Shore
- Interview with James Crockett, Founder of C24/7 Father's Arms Ministries

### Refreshed Webpage Template and New Website Pages

- Choir & Music
- Youth & Children
- Community Outreach
- Historical Highlights

Assisted in Developing the Social Media Policy for the Vestry

Edited Summer Sermon Audio for the St. A's YouTube channel

### Goals for 2024

- Continue to engage parishioners in new ways to generate vibrant content for the website and social media feeds
- Refresh and streamline website pages with the new template and fresh content collaborations
- Discover new approaches to optimize website for search engines
- Investigate different approaches to extending St. A's awareness within the local community

This year we look forward to continuing to collaborate in new ways with parishioners and partners to further elevate St. A's digital presence and overall awareness. If you have any questions or suggestions about Digital Communications or would like to be involved in content creation, please contact Sabrina ([sabrina.nizzi@staschurch.org](mailto:sabrina.nizzi@staschurch.org)).

## **BUILDINGS & GROUNDS COMMITTEE**

B&G has had another phenomenal year of accomplishments in 2023!

We have:

- Repaired and repainted the chapel windows, front narthex windows and vesting room windows, as well as the south exterior door to the sanctuary — another Episcopal red door!
- Built & painted a dividing wall in what was formerly the Rose Hall teachers' lounge to create another much needed Sunday School classroom.
- Organized, sorted and installed shelving into a now fabulous closet in the back hall.
- Cleaned out and re-organized all the storage closets in the hallway.
- Oversaw the re-installation of the parking lot behind the church!! That will theoretically last for the next 25 years-and the village is responsible for maintenance!
- Oversaw repair of the rectory chimney.
- Replaced the roof over the entire education wing and Puhlman Hall! A task that has been desperately needed for some time. Hanson Roofing deserves a shout-out for their fantastic work. As do Dorothy Dygos, Bill Kimball and Jim Shedivy for their incredible dedication to keeping our sweet little church fully functional and for being so much fun to work with!

And a huge thanks to Sabrina Nizzi in her invaluable role here and the entire B&G team who are so generous with their time and talent in maintaining St. A's!

Buildings and Grounds is a ministry that is always looking for people who would be willing to contribute time to our efforts. To learn more, please contact Carolyn Eby ([c\\_eby@sbcglobal.net](mailto:c_eby@sbcglobal.net)).



**STAFF**

The Rt. Rev. Paula Clark, Bishop of Chicago

The Rev. Nadia Stefko, Rector

The Rev. Sue Nebel, Deacon

The Rev. Andrea Mysen, Priest Associate

Mr. Martin Kehe, Associate for Music

Ms. Becky Wright,  
Director of Children, Youth & Family Ministries

Ms. Theresa Kimball, Parish Administrator

Ms. Sabrina Nizzi,  
Coordinator of Digital Communications & Building Operations

Ms. Athina Sato, Bookkeeper

Mr. Pisa Sybounheuang, Sexton

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