

St. Augustine's in-the-Woods
Episcopal Church
Annual Report for 2023
Annual Meeting
January 28, 2024



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Agenda	3
Slate for Vestry and Alternate Delegates	4-5
FROM THE RECTOR	6-7
FROM THE SENIOR WARDEN.....	8
FROM THE JUNIOR WARDEN.....	9
MINUTES FROM 2022 ANNUAL MEETING	10-11
ENDOWMENT FUND.....	12
PARISH DISCRETIONARY FUND.....	12
TREASURER’S REPORT.....	13
BUDGET.....	14-15
STATISTICS	16
ADULT FORMATION	17
ALTAR GUILD.....	18
ANIMAL MINISTRY.....	18
ARTS & AESTHETICS	19
BUILDING AND GROUNDS.....	20
CARING MINISTRY	21
COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE.....,	21
EPISCOPAL PEACE FELLOWSHIP	22
GREENING COMMITTEE.....	23
GREETERS.....	23
HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE.....	24-25
MISSION SUNDAY OFFERING.....	25
MISSIONER OF MUSIC.....	26
PROCEDURES & POLICIES	27
SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE.....	27
STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE.....	28
TRANSITION COMMITTEE.....	29
TRASH & TREASURE	29

Annual Meeting Agenda - January 28, 2024
following our combined worship service at 9:30 a.m.

1. Call to Order
2. Prayer
3. Zoom Link and Instructions (see p. 30 of the Annual Report)
4. Opening Comments - *The Rev. Jennifer Cleveland* (report printed in Annual Report)
5. Approve Minutes of the 2022 Annual Meeting (printed in Annual Report)
6. Warden Reports -
Kathryn Beaumont (report printed in Annual Report)
Frank Shirbroun (report printed in Annual Report)
7. Election of new Vestry members. (See brief bios on p. 4 of the Annual Report)
Bryan Avila (3 years)
Ron Costeck (3 years)
Maureen Masterson (3 years)
*Nominations from the floor, if any, must be submitted per our by-laws no later than 2 hours before the Call to Order
8. Election of Delegates and Alternate Delegates to Diocesan Convention
(See brief bios on p. 5)
Jan Hightower (Delegate for 1-year term)
Len Hightower (Delegate for 2-year term)
Curtis Price (Alternate Delegate for 1-year term)
Kate Scott (Alternate Delegate for 2-year term)
9. Budget presentation (printed in the Annual Report) - *Nancy Ruff*
10. Community Discussion (World Cafe)
11. Sending Blessing
12. Adjournment

SLATE FOR THE VESTRY

Ronald A. Costeck

Ron is a native of Toronto, a lawyer, and has broad legal and life experience, including working at a refinery, serving as an executive for the BSA, and teaching as an adjunct professor at Temple University. His legal career began in earnest in the Pacific Northwest where he served as a Prosecutor in Grays Harbor and Skagit Counties and then in the City of Bellingham. In 2005, Ron founded a law firm serving clients in Island, Skagit, Whatcom and Snohomish Counties in criminal defense, family law, and personal injury matters. After 13 years of private practice, he was hired on as Island County's full time District Court Commissioner and continues to serve in that capacity. He lives in Oak Harbor with his wife Natasha, a professional flutist, their 2-year old daughter Katie, and an eighteen year old stepson who has left the nest for college at UW. Ron grew up in the Anglican Church (Grace Anglican, Markham).



Bryan Avila

Bryan Avila became a part of the Saint A's family back in 1990. Following an extended hiatus, during which he dedicated eight years to the U.S. Navy as an aircraft mechanic, he seamlessly transitioned into a successful career in commercial aviation. Since reuniting with the congregation and taking on the role of a torchbearer, he eagerly anticipates contributing even more to the community.



Maureen Masterson

I have attended St. Augustine's in-the-Woods for 22 years. During that time I have volunteered as chair of the Mission Sunday Offering, and worked as a tabulator, coffee hour host, and acolyte. I have also volunteered for the Trash and Treasure sale and Holiday Market. I completed the Education for Ministry Program. I am currently retired from 42 years in community mental health and have recently returned to volunteering with community theater.



SLATE FOR 2024 CONVENTION DELEGATES & ALTERNATES

Jan Hightower (1-year term)

I have attended the Episcopal church since 2009, first at Church of the Messiah in Santa Ana, CA, and since August 2022 at St. Augustine's-in the-Woods. I attended the Quiet Circle book group, the Wednesday morning prayer group and the Altar Guild. My involvement at Church of the Messiah included Intercessory Prayer, Parish Nurse with a team of 3 others, Stephen Minister, and Pastoral Care Team. I was a co-leader of a Caregiver Support Group with another Parish Nurse. I also participated on 3 trips to Nicaragua with a ministry team, providing healthcare and services to a rural community. My heart is in service. That is where I find purpose and joy.



Len Hightower (2-year term)

I am Len Hightower, the husband of Jan Hightower, and have been attending St. Augustine for about 1.5 years. My involvement with the church has been to serve on the Audit committee and to serve as a member of the Peace and Justice committee, and when needed have helped to set up and clean up for special events. At our prior church I served as a member of Vestry, Discernment Committee, and Finance Committee; Coordinated and taught in the Adult Education group; and served as a Reader and Usher. What engages me about serving as a convention delegate for this church is the chance to represent you and to learn more about our community in the process.



Curtis Price (1-year term)

I grew up on South Whidbey in the 1960s and 70s (although at the time I attended Langley UMC) and returned to the "South End" with my wife, Bethany Wojahn in October 2022. I have enjoyed a long career with the U. S. Geological Survey and taught at the South Dakota School of Mines in Rapid City, SD. I was a founding member of Equality South Dakota. We come to St. Augustine's from St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Rapid City. At St. Andrew's, I directed handbells and choir and served on the Vestry. I also served several times as parish delegate and alternate to the South Dakota Diocesan Convention.



Kate Scott (2-year term)

I joined St. Augustine's church in 1997. At the time, we had just moved to Whidbey from Mukilteo with our two children, now in their mid-thirties. My husband is not an attending church member, but he is certainly supportive of my participation. I am a former teacher of Spanish, and English as a Second Language in the public Schools. I have served in our church program with Godly Play for a number of years. I have recently been serving as the transportation coordinator for rides for parishioners. I am also on the altar guild, and I am helping a team for coffee hour hosting. I was an alternate delegate for convention about twenty years ago, back then the main discussions and votes were related to the topic of same-sex marriage. I am excited to find out what the topics and votes will be for Convention in 2024. I am honored to serve as a delegate to the convention again.



FROM THE RECTOR

Dear Friends,

After my first Sunday here on November 27, 2022, *I blinked and am now reflecting on 2023, my first full year in this community. I give thanks for the opportunity to be in ministry with you, in this place, in this time. What an honor. The Annual Report is filled with many of the details of how we have been living out our call to be and become, ever more fully, Beloved Community. But even the Annual Report is a mere tracing of all that is unfolding.*

For my part, much of this first year was filled with beginning to get to know this community (St. Augustine's-in-the-Woods), people and places on Whidbey, and the Diocese of Olympia, of which we are a part. This entailed gathering in worship together (oftentimes to celebrate, but also to mourn), listening and learning, and considering how to continue to expand and deepen our welcome.

Gathering Together:

- **Sunday Mornings:** I cannot tell you how much I look forward to worshipping with you on Sunday mornings—at both the 8:00 and 10:30 services—and sharing hospitality, fellowship, and conversation (and delicious nourishment), as well. Sunday morning worship is at the center of our life as a church community and involves all of us. I am grateful for the dedication to making sure that all those who wish to join in worship—in person and via the livestream—are able to do so, despite our occasional computer hiccups. Both services involved a wide array of people: altar guild, greeters, ushers, readers, Lay Eucharistic Ministers, and more. The 8:00 Rite I service offers a quieter, more contemplative worship experience. At the 10:30 Rite II service, many musicians offer their gifts. Henry Lebedinsky joined the staff as St. Augustine's Missioner for Music in the spring. The Choir sings from the loft on the first three Sundays of the month. We celebrated the Sophia Singers' decades of a *capella* leadership earlier this year. *It is a joy to gather with you on Sunday mornings.*
- **Community Gatherings in 2023 (a partial list):** St. Augustine's participated in the Celebration of New and Mutual Ministry at St. Stephen's, Oak Harbor on February 5, 2023, followed by St. Stephen's joining in our Celebration of New and Mutual Ministry two weeks later, on February 19, 2023. Bishop Provisional Melissa Skelton and deacons were present at both celebrations, recognizing the two congregations' respective new and mutual ministries, as well as the joint ministry we share as the Episcopal congregations on Whidbey Island. And don't forget the pancakes we ate and those we flipped during the pancake relay after the Celebration here! On June 17, a hearty St. Augustine's contingent walked in Coupeville's first Pride Parade; in July, we took part in Langley's Pride Parade, their first since 2019. The annual Parish Picnic on August 27 had a super turnout. A full car of people participated in Convene on September 30, along with many others from around the Diocese. The Stewardship Brunch on November 19, put on by the Vestry and the Stewardship Committee, was yet another celebration.

Listening and Learning:

- **Transition Coffees:** The first Transition Coffee took place on January 26, 2023, and the last Transition Coffee took place on December 14, 2023. Thank you to the Transition Committee for organizing this year of coffees, to all those who hosted the coffees, and to all those who attended. What a wonderful array of beginning conversations.
- **Discussion groups:** Two discussion series were offered during Lent: one, a weekly zoom on the Lenten lectionary, and the other a discussion on Jesus in film, led by the Rev. Jim Friedrich. During the summer, there was an 8-week hybrid (zoom/in-person) book discussion (*Do I Stay Christian?* by Brian McLaren) + *dessert*.

(Continued)

Expanding and Deepening our Welcome:

- The Vestry re-affirmed St. Augustine's commitment to welcoming all and participated in a half-day retreat in July, exploring ways to do that more widely and deeply.
- In October 2023, the first-in-awhile quarterly welcome event for newcomers took place.
- The Communications Committee and Molly Felder have developed consistent communication streams to let the wider community—on Whidbey and in the Diocese—know what is taking place here.
- Buildings and Grounds and Alder Guild: many improvements have served to extend welcome and hospitality to all those who come to St. Augustine's.

2023 was a big year: There is a lot going on at St. Augustine's-in-the-Woods and everyone went above and beyond in bringing me on board, into the life of this glorious community.

- **A word about Frank, Kathryn and Molly:** Just about every day, Frank Shirbroun (Senior Warden), Kathryn Beaumont (Junior Warden) and Molly Felder (Parish Administrator) responded to my questions, big and small, with good humor, patience and grace.
- **The Body of Christ - YOU:** The Annual Meeting is much more than our once-a-year business meeting. It truly is a time to remember that this community is flourishing because of you. Everyone's presence, everyone's unique constellation of gifts and experiences are not only welcome, but needed, as we seek to be and become Beloved Community. You offer and invest yourselves in this community—in generous and generative ways—each and every day. **Thank you, ALL!**

*May our appreciation and affection for one another continue to expand,
May we seek to be stretched, to extend wide embrace to all whom we meet;
May our common life lead us more deeply into the joyous and life-giving ways
of the One who calls us Beloved. **Amen.***

Respectfully submitted,
The Rev. Jennifer B. Cleveland

FROM THE SENIOR WARDEN

2023 has been an *extremely* busy year for the leadership of St. Augustine's in-the-Woods. It has also been a happy time of settling in with our new Rector, The Reverend Jennifer B. Cleveland, and our new Missioner for Music, Henry Lebedinsky. For the Wardens, the Vestry, the various committees and ministries, it has been a year of "getting our house in order" to bear faithful witness to Christ in our island community and in the world. And it has been a year of discovery of the *abundance of gifts* from God that we enjoy. Just a few highlights!

January 1: Rev. Jenny begins her full time ministry among us. **February 4:** Vestry Retreat, "Pilgrims in This Place", creatively organized and led by Rev. Jenny. We surveyed all parts of our campus to identify potential new uses for what God has given us. **Feb. 4:** The Vestry voted unanimously to hire Henry Lebedinsky as our Missioner for Music. **Feb. 5:** Carrying the banner of St. A, we join in the Celebration of New and Mutual Ministry at St. Stephen's with their new Rector, The Reverend Paul Price. **Feb. 19:** With Bishop Provisional Melissa Skelton presiding and with our friends from St. Stephen's present, we joined in joyous celebration of our New and Mutual Ministry with Rev. Jenny. The pick up choir directed by Janet Holland offered beautiful and moving music. **Feb/Mar:** "Jesus in the Movies", a Lenten series offered by The Reverend Jim Friedrich. **April 30:** Installation of Henry Lebedinsky as Missioner for Music with surprise musical offerings by the Sophia Singers directed by Melisa Doss. **August 19:** Dedication of our new 1920 Chickering "Quarter Grand" piano with music performed and donated by Henry Lebedinsky and Tekla Cunningham, Director of the Whidbey Island Music Festival, whose other concerts brought us joy! **August 27:** All parish picnic at the lovely home of Diane Divelbess and Grethe Cammermeyer. **October 1:** First meeting of the reconstituted St. A choir. **Dec. 3:** Celebration of the first year of ministry of Rev. Jenny with the gift of a stole created/donated by The Reverend Amy Donahue and a donation of \$2,250.00 from St. A to the Diocese of Jerusalem in honor of Rev. Jenny. **Dec. 9 & 10:** Sold out concerts to "A Celtic Christmas" by the Beggar Boys directed by Henry Lebedinsky.

During 2023 the Vestry worked diligently on our three Mutual Ministry Goals. **Safety and Emergency Preparedness:** Develop safety protocols and procedures to meet various emergencies, such as sudden health issues, fire, earthquake or disruptive behavior. **Organizational Chart:** Create an organizational chart that shows how all of our various ministries are interconnected. **Communication:** Establish consistent pathways for communicating within, as well as outside the Parish, such as revamping our website, utilizing social media, and exploring ways to make more effective the live streaming of services.

Finally, I would like to thank several people not already mentioned:

Kathryn Beaumont, Junior, for her faithful and able service this past year.

Other Vestry members, all faithful stewards on your behalf: Bernie Barker, Stephen Schwarzmann, Gail Corell, Elaine Ludtke, Mark Anderson, Brad Portin, Maureen Masterson.

Nancy Ruff, Treasurer, and **Joan Johnson**, Clerk, both for peerless work with the Vestry.

Meade Brown for leading another highly successful stewardship campaign.

Laura Valente, Chancellor, for expert legal advice and all of it by donation.

Rev. Jenny for her extraordinarily fine and nourishing sermons, loving pastoral care, and close attention to all the administrative details of our parish. It has been my privilege and joy to work closely with her again this year. 2024 has been a very good year, indeed!

Respectfully submitted, Frank Shirbroun

FROM THE JUNIOR WARDEN

It has been a humbling, engaging, and rewarding experience to work with Jenny, Frank and the Vestry and to serve you this past year. Thank you for this honor.

In early 2023 the Vestry transferred responsibilities for overseeing maintenance and repair of our church campus--traditionally part of the Junior Warden portfolio--to a newly formed Buildings and Grounds Committee composed of folks with relevant, helpful experience. This freed leadership and me to reinvent my role, and I have spent much of my year listening, learning, connecting, and acting in whatever ways are hopefully most helpful to our parish community. One of my primary goals has been to keep my eyes, ears, and heart open to the dreams and concerns of this parish. My activities during 2023 included:

1. Attending meetings of many of our parish committees and ministries, some on an occasional basis and others more regularly. I've tried to listen and learn. Where I've spotted overlap between the work of several ministries, I've tried to connect them so work can be shared or absorbed by the appropriate committee(s).
2. Contributing articles to the E-pistle that spotlight some of our ministries, including the Building and Grounds Committee, Greening Committee, Altar Guild, Alder Guild, and Card Ministry, and that highlight some of the Vestry's work.
3. Attending meetings and working on issues that address a variety of topics, including: safety and emergency preparedness, acquisition of our new grand piano, publicizing services and events at St. Augustine's, revising our facility rental forms and agreement, volunteer transportation, budgeting and finance, chairing our Nominating Committee, and chairing our Communications Committee. I meet weekly with our Rector and Senior Warden to discuss projects, issues, events, needs, and both short- and long-term planning for St. Augustine's.
4. Participating in parish events, such as concerts, speakers, movie presentations, annual parish picnic, Honeymoon Bay road cleanup, Stewardship brunch, and greening of the church, and serving as a eucharistic minister and lector at the 8:00 a.m. service.

As we move into 2024, we have much to celebrate joyfully and anticipate hopefully as our St. Augustine's community continues to bloom and flourish. There is also much turmoil in the world around us, which we sometimes internalize. As we move forward, I hope we can care for each other and communicate gently, genuinely, and respectfully in the ways I summarized in an early E-pistle column: Listen open-mindedly and without interruption. Express disagreement in a nonjudgmental and respectful way. Honor confidentiality. Presume best intent on each speaker's part. By doing so, we grow together as an even stronger, more welcoming Beloved Community.

Kathryn Beaumont, Junior Warden

ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES - January 22, 2023

1. Call to Order:

2. The Reverend Jennifer B. Cleveland called the meeting to order at 10:55 in Campbell Hall, following a 9:30 combined worship service. After an opening prayer all were welcomed to the Annual Meeting whether in-person or via Zoom, and the presence of a quorum was confirmed (at least thirty Communicants in Good Standing). Those in-person were reminded to sign in and to check the Parish Directory for accuracy. Those attending on Zoom were given instructions on use of the mute feature, the chat feature, and voting procedure.

3.

Total in Attendance: 65 (57 in person plus 8 on Zoom)

Vestry and Staff in Attendance:

Jennifer Cleveland (Rector)	Bernie Barker
Molly Felder (Parish Administrator)	Kathryn Beaumont
Nancy Ruff (Treasurer)	Gail Corell
Joan Johnson (Clerk)	Mic Kisinger
Frank Shirbroun (Rector's Warden)	Stephen Schwarzmann (on Zoom)
Bill Skubi (People's Warden)	

Additional Parishioners in Attendance:

Carol Anderson	Karen Fay	Mathias Pierson
Mark Anderson	Barbara Graham	Zakris Pierson
Kate Anderson	Mickey Grimm	John Porter
Beverly Babson	Arnelle Hall	Robin Porter
Bob Barker	Dick Hall	Brad Portin
Beth Birdsong	Carole Hansen	Curtis Price
Rebecca Birdsong	Jan Hightower	Brian Reid
Patricia Brookes	Janet Holland	Gary Rickert
Ted Brookes	Sue Idso	Kathryn Rickert
Meade Brown	Elaine Ludtke	Albert Rose
Wendy Close	Maureen Masterson	Janis Skubi
Natasha Costeck (and Katie)	David McClellan	Richard Tussey
Ron Costeck	Dorian McGlannan	Carole Tyson
Teresa DiBiase	Ron McKinnell	Laura Valente
Melisa Doss	Celia Metz	Yvonne Werttemberger
Andrea Downs (and Dylan)	Carolyn Otterman	

Parishioners Attending via Zoom:

Eileen Jackson	Diane Jhueck	Sara Ann Lockwood	Mary Vaughn
Dann Jergensen	Jessica Johnson	Chris Lubinski	

2. Rector's Remarks:

Rev. Jenny welcomed all to what was probably St. Augustine's 71st Annual Meeting (founded in 1952). She acknowledged three New Year's celebrations: Advent (11/27/22), New Year's Day (1/1/23), and Lunar New Year (1/22/23, the year of the Rabbit) and charged us to "meet with courage the challenges of this world". She said she was looking forward to a "slow reading" of the Annual Reports and to learning more about the activities at St. Augustine's, her new Parish home. Her written report is printed in the Annual Report.

3. Approval of 2022 Minutes:

MOTION: that the minutes of the January 16, 2022, Annual Meeting as presented in the Annual Report be approved

1st – Celia Metz

2nd - Kathryn Beaumont

Passed

ENDOWMENT FUND COMMITTEE

Trustees: Stephen Schwarzmann, Chair, Celia Metz and Bert Speir

Mission Statement:

Oversee invested assets on behalf of the vestry *in an advisory role* for maximum returns commensurate with vestry-adopted principles of ethical investing for faith communities, and with a high level of security and at a minimum cost for administration of the FUND. Provide transparency to the Vestry and congregation and encourage donations in concert with the Stewardship/Planned Giving Committees.

St. Augustine's endowment funds are invested in ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) portfolios with the ECF (Episcopal Church Foundation) .

Recommendations adopted by the Vestry in Nov. 2023 for the withdrawal of funds for use in 2024:

The Vestry approved an annual 3.5% endowment fund withdrawal for 2024 in the amount of \$39,966 in total to be withdrawn in increments as needed.

The Vestry approved the 3.5 % withdrawal amounts for 2024 be divided between the three sub accounts as follows: \$19,254 from the General Quasi Endowment #01, \$16,010 from the Permanent Endowment Fund #02, and \$4,702 from the Judith Yeakel Quasi-Endowment Fund #03 withdrawn in increments as needed.

The Vestry approved the use of funds for the Scholarship Fund from the Permanent Endowment Fund #02, in the amount of \$4,000 in increments as needed for 2024.

The Vestry approved the use of funds for the Mission Sunday Offerings (MSOs) non-profit organizations from the Permanent Endowment Fund's 3.5% withdrawal in the amount of \$12,000 withdrawn in increments as needed for 2024.

The following motion was made and passed at the Nov 17th and Dec. 20th 2023 Vestry Meetings: that the General Quasi Endowment be used to supplement 2024 pledge and plate income in order to call a full-time Rector for St. Augustine's. The GQE is not to be used for operating expenses other than those required for the Rector's total compensation. GQE funds used for this purpose are to be viewed as a loan at 0%, repayment to begin no later than 2027.

Note: this motion may be renewed in subsequent years, but must be reviewed annually.

The Permanent Endowment fund received a bequest of \$1000 from the estate of Diana Klein. *Please consult your attorney, financial advisor and/or CPA for possible personal income tax savings or estate tax savings/ benefits for planned giving to St. A's Endowment Fund.*

Submitted by: Stephen Schwarzmann, Chair

PARISH DISCRETIONARY FUND

The Parish Discretionary fund is intended to be used by the leadership of the parish for "good and charitable purposes." The normal signatories on this fund are the rector and senior warden (in the absence of the rector). Most of our donations go to parishioners. In 2012, our financial oversight team developed a more sophisticated system of record-keeping that - at audit - protects the anonymity of recipients, while providing the appropriate detailed information about the fund itself to the auditors.

In 2023, the Parish Discretionary fund account at U.S. Bank was closed during the first quarter of the year (related to the church's changeover to Savi Bank). In 2023, \$500 was distributed in support of car repairs. The current balance in the discretionary checking account is \$2,204.55, with an additional \$12,463.69 available in the Discretionary Fund. which replenishes the checking account when needed.

Respectfully submitted,
The Rev. Jennifer B. Cleveland

TREASURER'S REPORT

Every year we approach development of an operating budget with hopes that it will be a bit less complicated and more accurate than the previous year. Sometimes we hit it and often we don't, but we keep trying.

Use of our Endowment Funds is a serious proposition. Our Permanent Endowment Fund is reserved for outreach into the wider community, dealing with calamities or major maintenance issues to protect our physical plant and our spiritual body - our continuing presence. In 2022, the Vestry authorized around \$60,000 to restrain our building and this year close to \$20,000 to make improvements to our parking lots. This was in addition to our annual Mission Sunday Offering donations to local charities and our scholarship donations.

Several years ago, the Vestry gave serious and prayerful consideration to the use of the General Quasi Endowment Fund to meet the obligations of a full-time Rector. This fund allows us to authorize a loan to ourselves to meet emerging needs or other major decisions to further our mission and grow our congregation. Approval of the loan must be reviewed and reapproved annually by the Vestry, and it is our hope that we will not be dependent on loan funds to meet our budget but for a short period of time. The loans are no interest and repayment must begin in five (5) years from when the loan was authorized.

God has provided us faithful and generous donors so that we are able to fulfill our goals for outreach, the preservation and improvement of our physical plant and our ability to implement new programs to enhance both our worship and our ministry to our larger community. And we must continue our financial diligence, protection and care as we recognize that continuous long-term payment of recurring expenses with non-recurring funds can only result in the exhaustion of the investment accounts.

The 2024 budget was developed carefully and prayerfully. Income and expenses are based on past history and guesstimates of how inflation will continue to impact our expenses - we underestimated some increases in 2023 and hope we're a bit more accurate this year, but the budget in many cases is still best guesses in the face of some continued uncertainty. Another loan to ourselves from the Quasi Endowment Fund to cover most of the expenses of the priest should allow us to have a balanced budget in 2024.

A special shout-out to our efficient and able Bookkeeper, Shantina Steele. She is the calm in my frequent storms and is as protective of our finances and committed to this Parish as all of us are.

Financial and treasurer's reports are posted on the Vestry bulletin board in the hallway. We welcome questions and suggestions on how to do our jobs better and hope that you trust that we are managing your stewardship appropriately and efficiently. We never forget the enormous responsibility we have with managing your money.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Ruff

BUDGET

	Budget	Actual	Budget
PROJECTED INCOME	2023	2023	2024
Pledges	\$261,672	\$265,747	\$321,146
Plate	\$14,000	\$31,475	\$15,000
Hall Rental	\$500	\$2,731	\$2,500
Other Income (Forward Day by Day,	\$100	\$20	\$25
Interest Income	\$100	\$477	\$600
Total: Income	\$276,372	\$300,450	\$339,271
EXPENSES			
Water	\$1,500	\$1,635	\$1,700
Electricity	\$5,000	\$4,938	\$5,000
Propane	\$7,500	\$6,077	\$7,500
Telephone & DSL	\$2,000	\$2,209	\$2,800
Trash Collection	\$1,650	\$1,527	\$1,600
Total: Utilities	\$17,650	\$16,386	\$18,600
Priest Sabbatical Reserve	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000
Priest Compensation	\$101,962	\$98,881	\$106,653
Priest Business Reimbursement	\$3,600	\$1,579	\$2,000
Priest Retirement	\$18,353	\$18,435	\$19,198
Priest Medical etc. Insurance	\$8,176	\$0	\$28,044
Cell Phone	\$500	\$327	\$400
Total: Rector's Compensation	\$133,591	\$120,222	\$157,295
Custodial Service	\$9,000	\$13,703	\$15,000
Event Custodial Service	\$0	\$0	\$1,200
Missioner of Music	\$27,500	\$25,700	\$30,238
Formation Director	\$0	\$0	\$0
Parish Administrator	\$50,024	\$49,774	\$52,330
Bookkeeper	\$9,360	\$9,333	\$9,360
Supply Musician	\$1,000	\$600	\$1,050
Parish Administrator Pension	\$3,100	\$3,180	\$4,710
Travel & Reimbursement	\$150	\$248	\$400
Payroll Taxes	\$15,000	\$9,415	\$12,000
Groundskeeper	\$3,750	\$3,303	\$3,800
Supply Priest	\$4,500	\$1,231	\$4,500
Total: Wages and Compensation	\$123,384	\$116,487	\$134,587
Advertising and Publicity	\$700	\$314	\$750
Altar Expenses (hosts, candles, etc)	\$1,200	\$1,474	\$1,800
Insurance	\$6,500	\$6,990	\$7,000
Bank Charges	\$500	\$474	\$500
Diocesan Assessment	\$38,487	\$41,203	\$49,194

Tax and Legal Filing Fees	\$200	\$161	\$200
Communications: Website	\$450	\$887	\$1,200
Communications: The Light	\$0	\$0	\$3,600
Total: Parish/Admin Expenses	\$48,037	\$51,503	\$64,244
Supplies - Sunday School	\$100	\$0	\$100
Supplies - Music	\$0	\$0	\$1,000
Music and Streaming License	\$470	\$425	\$450
Guest Musicians	\$0	\$0	\$1,000
Parish Youth Ministry	\$0	\$0	\$0
Adult Formation	\$200	\$151	\$200
Total: Christian Formation/Music	\$770	\$576	\$2,750
Continuing Education - Rector	\$1,000	\$533	\$1,000
Clergy and Staff Conferences	\$450	\$0	\$450
Convention Delegates	\$400	\$35	\$400
Total: Training and Development	\$1,850	\$568	\$1,850
Custodial Supplies	\$500	\$491	\$400
Event Custodial Supplies	\$0	\$0	\$250
Kitchen Supplies	\$150	\$452	\$500
Copier Lease	\$5,750	\$6,440	\$6,600
Building and Grounds	\$7,000	\$8,481	\$7,000
Postage and P.O. Box	\$1,000	\$458	\$1,000
Office Supplies	\$2,000	\$3,104	\$4,000
Office Equipment	\$100	\$43	\$100
Total: Supplies and Maintenance	\$16,500	\$19,469	\$19,850
Greening Committee	\$250	\$250	\$250
Church Windows Support	\$1,150	\$1,048	\$1,200
Total: Miscellaneous	\$1,400	\$1,298	\$1,450
Coffee and Supplies	\$1,000	\$316	\$500
Coffee Hour Host Reimbursement	\$225	\$20	\$225
Fellowship and Hospitality Events	\$800	\$216	\$800
Stewardship (inc dinner)	\$800	\$571	\$800
Total: Hospitality	\$2,825	\$1,123	\$2,325
Alder Guild	\$1,000	\$643	\$1,000
Rector Office Furniture	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$0
Other Furniture	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$0
Total: Other	\$9,000	\$8,643	\$1,000
Total Expenses:	\$355,007	\$336,275	\$403,951
Total income less expenses	-\$78,635	-\$35,825	-\$64,680

STATISTICS

Preliminary 2023 Statistics:

Average Sunday Attendance (2023) for 52 Sundays:

Total Sunday Attendance: 4988

Average Sunday Attendance: 95.92 (96)

8:00a.m. - 48 services: 19.52 (20)

10:30a.m. - 47 services: 71.40 (71)

Combined - 5 services: 89

(Parochial Report 2022: Average Sunday attendance was 62)

Total in-person attendance for Easter (including Easter Vigil): 167

Easter Vigil: 44

Easter Day 8am: 17

Easter Day 10:30am: 106

(Parochial Report 2022: Easter Vigil / Easter Sunday attendance was 114)

Total in-person attendance for Christmas Eve (4pm / 7pm) and Christmas Day: 212

Christmas Eve - 4pm: 105

Christmas Eve - 7pm: 83

Christmas Day - 9:30am: 24

(Parochial Report 2022: Christmas Eve and Christmas Day attendance was 166)

For the first time since March 2020, St. Augustine's-in-the-Woods held in-person services (2 services or 1 combined) on all 52 Sundays of the calendar year! While we have experienced some technical difficulties with livestreaming (that now seem to be resolved), we are committed to livestreaming both the 8:00 and 10:30 services. Monday Evensong is also regularly livestreamed.

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. Jennifer B. Cleveland

ADULT FORMATION

Sunday Scriptures: Each week, I prepare a brief meditation / reflection, based on the upcoming Sunday lectionary readings, that is sent out via Constant Contact on Tuesday (typically, but not always). These reflections seek to help us focus on how the readings for this week speak to what we are living through here and now.

No-host Book Group: I co-facilitated an 8 week book discussion on Brian McLaren's *Do I Stay Christian: A Guide for the Doubters, the Disappointed and the Disillusioned* this past year. These hybrid discussions, (in-person and via zoom), in a group of 8-12, were based on questions generated by the members of the group to explore reasons for leaving, reasons for staying and how to stay if one does.

A Thankful Reflection on An Evening with Thomas Merton's Poetry

"...The message of hope the contemplative offers you then, ...is not that you need to find your way through the jungle of language and problems that today surround God: ... but, that if you dare to penetrate your own silence and risk the sharing of that solitude with the lonely other who seeks God through you, then you will truly recover the light and the capacity to understand what is beyond words and beyond explanations, because it is too close to be explained:..." Thomas Merton from *The Hidden Ground of Love*, pg. 157

A group of nine gathered for an evening of silence, images, fabrics, meditation, conversation, music, and prayers using twelve selections from Merton's *Book of Hours*. Many of the poems came from Merton's *Asian Journal*, written during the final weeks of his life. That Asian connection was highlighted by displaying the poetry and prayers on three traditional *malongs* from the *Marano* people of the Southern Philippines. (These *malongs* were given to Kathryn Rickert by Sheila Payumo, a former scripture student.)

The *malong* is widely used for several aspects of daily life, by young and old, rich and poor, from cradle to grave, as well as *an art form*. These 4' x 6' tubes of cotton with striking, complex geometric patterns and distinctive colors are used as hammocks, curtains, tablecloths, clothing, changing rooms, shrouds, baby carriers, and more.

Both Merton's powerful faith and the exquisite multi-usefulness of these unique *malongs* demonstrated and called our attention to the ways in which God comes to us through the real and often challenging events of our everyday lives. The images, the poetry, the conversation, and fabrics all worked together to remind us that God hears "the cry of our hearts because it is God who cries out within" us.

The "method" for this evening came from using what we find in the ingredients of our lives today. "...they had to use what they could pick up, like pigeons in a public park." *Marigold & Rose*, Louise Gluck p. 19

This method demonstrates the wide availability of what we need to "stay found" by God, as well as the wide availability of what we need to nurture our lives of faith. This group "dared to penetrate our own silences and risked sharing with others who also seek God, from that solitude." That sharing, much of it from painful and awkward life experiences, led us to savor Merton's view of Communion: "...*Communion is wordless. It is beyond words, and it is beyond speech, and it is beyond concept. Not that we discover a new unity. We discover and older unity. ...we are already one. But we imagine that we are not. And what we have to recover is our original unity. What we have to be is what we are.* Merton's *Asian Journal*, excerpt p. 308

Respectfully submitted,
Kathryn Rickert

BEAUTIFUL CORNER

The Beautiful Corner has experienced some remarkable books for spiritual reflection this year. In the Spring we followed a variety of readings in a collection entitled *All Shall Be Well: Readings for Lent and Easter*. This was followed by a memorable experience with *Cup of our Life* by Joyce Rupp. Advent and Christmas found us enjoying the message and visual beauty of Ruth Chou Simons' *Emmanuel: an Invitation to Prepare Him Room at Christmas and Always*. Between seasons and books we began turning to the daily meditations of Richard Rohr, *Yes, And . . .*, which routinely offer new perspectives on the Christianity to which we have become accustomed and possibly inured.

Submitted by:
Carole Hansen

ALTAR GUILD

The Altar Guild is divided between four teams working in weekly rotation, each team **servicing one week per month**, as well as serving special services, such as memorial services and weddings. Both women *and men* serve as long as they choose to do so.

The **captains** of the four teams are as follows:

Aljean Muncey: Team Four, Care and repair of altar linens.

Arnelle Hall: Team Three, Altar Guild Manual.

Jan Skubi: Team Two, Sacristan and Liaison to the Rector and church staff.

Frank Shirbroun: Team One, Liaison to the Vestry and Annual Report.

Other **faithful Altar Guild members** include the following: Teresa Di Biase, Susan Sandri, Sue Idso, Stephen Schwarzmamm, Carol Tyson, Kate Scott, Jincey Jergenson, and Bernie Barker. During 2023 we happily welcomed several **new members**: Mark Wicks, Wanda Roe, Brenda Collett, Jan Hightower, Andrea Downs, and Canon Joan Anthony.

Several members are gifted **flower arrangers**, including especially the following: Sue Idso, Susan Sandri, Stephen Schwarzmamm, Teresa Di Biase, and Carol Tyson. The beautiful arrangements you see each Sunday are mostly made up of flowers from the gardens of our parishioners!

The **function of the Altar Guild** is to prepare the holy banquet table for the Celebration of the Eucharist, to care for the instruments used in the celebration, to arrange flowers for the worship services, and to clean and decorate the sanctuary for Christmas--"the hanging of the greens"--and Easter. We work closely with and with the guidance of Rev. Jenny. The commitment involves one week per month for a couple of hours, plus helping with the Advent and Easter preparations.

I heartily agree with the following commendation offered by Jan Skubi: "I commends the entire Altar Guild for their consistent, tireless work. Even though we are assigned to four different teams, we are actually ONE team, all focused on keeping God's house functioning smoothly, so the people can worship in peace, without distraction."

We welcome new volunteers, with or without experience, to participate in this very rewarding ministry. Wouldn't you like to help prepare a banquet?!

Respectfully submitted, Frank Shirbroun

ANIMAL MINISTRY

The Animal Ministry hosted the annual St. Francis Day Blessing of the Animals on October 1st with 47 pets participating this year. The Reverend Jennifer Cleveland presided over the ceremonies. The Whidbey Island community was invited to have their pets blessed no matter the size (horses to tiny dogs).

The committee collected food and money donations each Sunday for Oasis (a catch, spay, and release group that serves feral cats) and WAIF (animal shelters for the Island. We donate on average about 5 lbs. of pet food a week to these agencies.

Sent 9 cards of condolence to those parishioners and friends who lost an animal companion.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret Schultz, Brian Reid
Animal Ministry Co-chairs

ARTS & AESTHETICS

PURPOSE: The Arts & Aesthetics Committee, a Standing Committee of the Vestry, combines the functions of the antecedent Liturgical Arts and Building Furnishings committees. The A&A Committee nurtures an overall aesthetic for the building and its interior public spaces and furnishings. Organic integrity with our identity, land, architecture and mission is the goal guiding the committee's existence and decisions. Among others, the scope of the committee's responsibilities includes oversight of the Gallery Wall and consideration of material gifts offered to the Parish.

2023 accomplishments:

- together with Buildings and Grounds chairperson Mark Anderson and the Rector's Warden Frank Shirbroun, designed and selected the new center aisle carpet for our Sanctuary.
- approved the new 1910 piano as aesthetically befitting of Campbell Hall.
This was NOT a difficult decision!
- accepted and placed the gift of a Tree of Life wall sculpture for the Narthex. It was given by Frank Shirbroun & Teresa DiBiase
- successfully argued for replacement of the deteriorated 12 year-old club chairs in Campbell Hall. Fifteen new club chairs were purchased at good price, and are now in Campbell Hall and the Fireside Room.
- Began work on improving the church office furnishings. 3 file cabinets and a large office desk for our Parish Administrator have been donated but are not yet in place. A large pew-type settee has been accepted for donation (from Brad Portin and Mark Wicks), which will facilitate beautification of the entrance area to the office. Replacing / removing deteriorating desk chairs is to follow. Cupboards or other storage solutions are also needed. Suggested solutions are welcome!

Gallery Wall highlights in the past year included:

- the MLK, Jr. installation by Robin Porter,
- Easter installation by Kathryn Richert with Pat Brookes and others,
- Thomas Merton quotes and photographic images by Dorian McGlannan and Kathryn Richert, - the Greening Committee's photographic display and updates on Island County environmental action,
- the THANKSGIVING 'offerenda' style display of things for which we are grateful (included Rev. Jenny's 1st year anniversary with us, Henry's new ministry, photographic honoring of St. A's veterans, and tables for parishioners' photos and mementos), and
- Bethlehem - past, present, and eternally, by Robin Porter and Susan Sandri.

Submitted by Susan Campbell Sandri, Arts & Aesthetics Committee chairperson

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS

Mission Statement:

The **Buildings & Grounds Committee** is charged with maintaining our worship facility to insure that it is a safe and welcoming presence in this community. Our purpose is to oversee the condition and functioning of our buildings.

Accomplishments over the last year:

Our principal project for 2023 was the **Refurbishment and Improvement of our Parking Lots**. In the interest of safety our objective was to remove trip hazards and to refresh the gravel surface. We believe the resulting project will make our parking lots more “user friendly” and more attractive for parishioners as well as guests. The project involved over 150 tons of gravel, 75 new and ‘recycled’ concrete curbs, 14 cubic yards of topsoil, 18 rugosa roses, as well as signage and landscape rock.

In addition the Committee implemented or oversaw a wide variety of maintenance and repairs to our facilities. The list is long and includes:* * (a more extensive list is available)

- rebuilding of our Free Library,
- pressure washing, leaf blowing, and weed-eating projects,
- addressing requests from our Fire Department safety review,
- electrical and plumbing repairs and maintenance,
- enhancements to the Columbarium,
- door and window repairs,
- assessment, maintenance and repair of our heating system.

Projects for the coming year:

The literature shows that 70% of accidents and violent acts happen *outside* of church buildings. One of the ways that we have of being “proactive” as a church is to improve our outside lighting. For 2024 the Buildings & Grounds Committee will be looking into additions and improvements to our existing **exterior lighting**. Increased lighting, particularly during winter evening hours, would make it easier and safer for all of us as we come and go from St. Augustine’s.

Additional projects may include the painting of the ‘Shoffice,’ improvements to the Alder Guild shed, gutter replacement, a shelf system for the basement storage, and *your suggestions* (?)

The B&G Committee is made up of a group of intrepid, determined volunteers:**

Barbara Graham	Merrick Lockwood	Sara Ann Lockwood
John Porter	Brian Reid	Gary Rickert
Susan Sandri	Bill Skubi	Art Taylor
		Mark Anderson - Chair

** We are tenaciously supported by the *stalwart* members of the **Alder Guild!**

Submitted by: Mark Anderson – B & G chairman

Date: 01/18/2024

CARING MINISTRY

Caring Ministry members met with the rector during the first quarter of 2023 to review the group's mission, history, and status. Details of the initiatives of past years were reviewed. The group discussed at length the need for reorganization and new approaches to support the pastoral needs of the congregation. During the remainder of 2023 the group did not meet formally, but activities such as the card and prayer ministries continued while possibilities for a new structure for pastoral care were being identified.

A subgroup of the Caring group met formally with the rector in mid- September regarding the increased transportation needs of parishioners due to the temporary cessation of medical rides provided by Island Senior Resources for the communities' non-Medicaid patients. It was decided at that transportation meeting that four drivers from our parish would take on the additional demand for medical rides for our parishioners. In the last quarter of 2023, we provided an average of four rides per month, while Island Senior Resources could not provide these rides. We will continue to provide the rides to our parishioners until Island Senior Resources can resume giving additional help in this regard.

Cathy Haworth (secretary) and Kate Scott (transportation coordinator)

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Mission: To provide consistent, effective, and efficient pathways and tools for communicating within the St. Augustine's parish and to expand our external communications with the wider island community, partner churches and organizations, and the Diocese.

Committee Members: Kathryn Beaumont (chair), Brad Portin, Brian Reid, Albert Rose, and Bill Skubi (2023). Newly members as of 2024: Emily Licastro and Linda Quigley-Senff.

Accomplishments: The committee's key accomplishments during 2023 include:

1. Website update: Our primary focus during 2023 was completing the update of our church website. With enormous help from our website consultants, Molly, our interim webmasters (Brad Portin and Albert Rose), and committee members, our new website went live in October! It has been well received and well used, with about half of viewers accessing our website via their mobile phones. During 2024 we'll continue to monitor the website to add timely content and announcements, photo galleries, new photos, and links to keep it useful and dynamic. Your comments and feedback are always welcome.

2. Publicity: We have developed a successful protocol and contacts for regularly publicizing St. Augustine's news and scheduled special events in our building using free (*Whidbey Weekly*, social media, our website) and low cost (Drewslist) sources. Conversations with attendees and anecdotal information indicates these announcements have helped expand our outreach to our island community,

3. The Light: In 2023 *The Light* changed from a monthly newsletter to a quarterly journal. We also moved our publishing from inhouse to a commercial printer in Everett to achieve a much more sophisticated presentation than was possible from our office printer.

We are currently refining the nature of our content in light of our readership – moving from information sharing to a more contemplative focus. Currently, *The Light's* greatest need is more staff literate in computer graphics, photography, and publication design and layout.

4. Budget: The committee worked with our treasurer to establish a realistic and transparent budget for 2024 that captures all communication-related expenses.

Projects for 2024: The committee's work in 2024 will focus on: (1) Evaluating St. Augustine's overall communications program and developing a communications plan that identifies ongoing tasks, needs and possibilities, priorities, and implementing steps; and (2) Continuing to develop and make recommendations to the Vestry on whether, when, and how to upgrade our livestreaming capabilities.

Kathryn Beaumont, Communications Committee Chair

EPISCOPAL PEACE FELLOWSHIP

Episcopal Peace Fellowship (EPF) members make the following commitment. “In loyalty to the person, teaching and Lordship of Jesus Christ, my conscience commits me to God’s way of redemptive love: to pray, study and work for peace and justice, and to renounce, so far as possible, participation in war, militarism, and all other forms of violence.” **The Episcopal Peace Fellowship seeks to fulfill this pledge through prayer, study and action.**

Prayer and Study: Maintained a bulletin board to inform the parish of EPF prayer, study and action concerns. Responsible for the January Narthex Wall display featuring the Black Freedom Movement and racial justice. A gun violence prevention trifold was created for Pentecost Sunday. The parish was encouraged to wear orange ribbons signifying gun violence prevention.

Action and Advocacy: Sponsored the 17th annual Martin Luther King, “Blessed Are the Peacemakers” community event held in January of 2023. Theme was America’s Original Sin: Slavery, the Consequences of Slavery, White Racism and the Struggle for Racial Justice. At least 25 individuals were participants as readers or musicians in the event. Over seventy individuals attended the event. The 2024 18th annual event has been planned around the theme “Swords to Plowshares: gun violence prevention.”

EPF sponsored the Whidbey visitation of Fr. Fadi Diab and his family. Father Diab is the Rector for St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church in Ramallah (Occupied Palestinian Territory). At St. Augustine’s the Diab family gave a community presentation to educate regarding the plight of the Palestinians under Israeli occupation. St. Augustine’s EPF has kept contact with the Diabs and shared information from Palestine during the Israeli-Hamas conflict. EPF created a “Behind The Wall” trifold explaining the Palestinian Christian situation.

EPF developed a proposal for a parish policy stating that firearms are not allowed on the St. Augustine’s premises. The proposal did not require a posting of signs on outward facing doors. The policy was presented to the Vestry. Two EPF members spoke in person to our state legislators in support of legislation to prohibit the production and sale of assault weapons and two other gun regulation bills. The bills are now law.

Future goals: St. Augustine’s Episcopal Peace Fellowship (EPF) will continue to Pray, Study and Act for gun violence prevention. EPF will continue to urge the Vestry to adopt a parish policy that prohibits firearms on St. Augustine’s premises.

Our EPF Chapter will continue to sponsor a community Martin Luther King event to honor those who advocated in the 1960s for racial justice and call for a contemporary racial reckoning by European Americans.

EPF chapter will act on peace and justice issues as they arise. St. Augustine’s EPF advocacy for peace and justice will continue to serve as effective community outreach for St. Augustine’s. There are many individuals in our Whidbey community who, while they are spiritual, are critical of a lack of witness and action by organized religion in the area of peace and justice. Many individuals fitting this description have attended the community events sponsored by the St. Augustine’s Episcopal Peace Fellowship and left with a different attitude toward organized religion.

Submitted by Dick Hall,
St. Augustine Episcopal Peace Fellowship facilitator

GREENING COMMITTEE

Mission Statement: “As members of the Body of Christ we acknowledge and embrace the divine call to be stewards of God’s creation. It is our sacred responsibility to respect, preserve and protect all living things on this fragile Earth, our island home.”

Key Accomplishments In 2023:

Congregational & Community Support

- Worked with Rev. Jenny to develop an Earth Day liturgy.
- Created a Narthex Display highlighting the Whidbey Camano Land Trust.
- Hosted an environmental documentary film screening.
- Met with the Multi-Faith Program Manager from Earth Ministry.
- Collected and hauled church recyclables & maintained the church compost bins.
- Maintained the Meditation trail.
- Conducted a trash pickup & noxious weed removal event on Honeymoon Bay Road in October.

Faithful Advocacy

- Visited our District 10 Representatives in Olympia to lobby for environmental legislation.
- Provided information on local, state, national and global environmental issues with in-depth articles for “The Light”.
- Participated with the Greening Congregations Collaborative of Whidbey Island (gccwhidbey.weebly.com), on events which promote environmental awareness & advocacy.
- Established a dedicated electronic mailing list to share time-sensitive updates from local and national groups on environmental issues. (greennewsfromcelia@gmail.com)

Goals for 2024

- Increase the number of Green News mailing list subscribers.
- Increase participation in Greening Committee sponsored activities & work parties.
- Lobby our legislators in-person on environmental priorities.
- Develop a 2024 Earth Day program focused on regenerative agriculture.
- Sponsor a 9-week small group program on Creation Care developed by the Episcopal Church.
- Increase the number of documentary film screenings.

The Greening Committee (Celia Metz, Ted Brookes, Brian Reid, Dick Hall & Kathryn Beaumont) appreciates the participation and support of our St. A’s brothers and sisters on Committee activities, joyfully demonstrating their commitment to being a Greening Congregation!

Submitted by: Celia Metz, Chair

GREETERS

The members of the Greeters participated in a Training on February 26th for the Welcome Team of which they one of the three members. The training involved duties of each of the three team members (Greeters, Ushers, and Welcome Table) and how they integrate to produce the welcome which all parishioners and visitors experience as they come into St. Augustine’s. In addition, they were shown safety aspects such as where the fire extinguishers first aid, and AED (automated external defibrillator) are located.

Thank you to all those who have been a part of the Greeters Team. I look forward to welcoming new people to serve as greeters and updating the Welcome Team Handbook in 2024.

Submitted by:

Brian Reid, Co-Ordinator Greeters

HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE

Committee members: Gail Corell, Susan Sandri, Bev Babson, Ash Bystrom, Trevor Arnold.
Established. 2022.

Mission Statement. To support Saint Augustine's in the Woods core values of community by providing a welcoming space and opportunities for gathering and lingering in joyful fellowship with grace and love.

Highlights from 2023. What an exciting 2023, but very sadly starting with a Celebration of Life reception for our dear and beloved Rob Anderson 01/28/23 in Campbell Hall and then a week later celebrating St. A's commercial kitchen permanent food service license. This had been years in the making and we finally did it! Sadly, the Island County Public Health Dept. rebuked this license as of 01/01/2024 due to not having a commercial six ring stove top range and oven with an adequate ventilation hood and for not having a commercial spec refrigerator.

We were all completely overjoyed with our brand-new Rector Jenny's Celebration of a New Ministry party 02/19/23. The Hospitality Committee along with the Transition Committee- Susan, Bert and Mary Ann, Bill, Carole, Wendy Joan J, Kate and our cowboy boot wearing angel, Molly, incorporated three themes into this party. Mardi Gras, Valentine's Day and Saint Lucia. We celebrated with a multiple toppings pancake bar and pancake races with two teams. Team St. A's and team St. Stephen's. What fun we had with much jocularity.

April 2nd, we celebrated thirty wonderful years of the Sophia Singer's singing. What a joy they bring to our hearts and spirit and ears. Thank you because we are so blessed by you.

April 16th, we all got to enjoy Jenny's surprise Birthday Celebration **AND** we celebrated our incredibly awesome and talented, new Musical Director, Henry Lebedinsky.

Mid-June, Ashley formatted a survey to find out what the parishioners liked about the 10.30 service coffee hour, to see how we could improve it. Consecutively, Diane, graciously volunteered at the beginning of the year to become the coffee hour host scheduler and coordinator in order to take this immense task off Molly's hands. The transition went smoothly. Kudos to Molly for doing the scheduling for so many years.

July 29th, we had lovely and beautiful, short memorial service for Ron Childers and Richard Proctor with a coffee, tea and cookies reception that followed in Campbell Hall.

August 22nd, our fun annual Parish Picnic. The Vestry coordinated with us to provide once again, another fun day with an abundance of food and desserts, games, laughter and yes, once again, the Lord works in mysterious ways, SUNSHINE. Thank you to our brilliant and wonderful grill chef's Kevin and Marv and thank you again Gretha and Diane for opening up your beautiful home and gardens to your St. A's family. We had the highest attendance ever!

In the Fall, the committee coordinated the food receptions with the Whidbey Island Music Festival who held several incredible concerts in Campbell Hall. Thank you, Henry.

Ongoing projects 2024. We continue to work on making coffee hour teams instead of having two hosts who do all the work. We have a sign-up sheet located in Campbell Hall between the coffee presses and the water pitchers and include.

Host 1 and Host 2.

Set up crew

Bring a dish or plate of something person. This includes any of your leftovers from home.

Bussing table person/people.

The clean team 1, 2 and if possible 3. Duties include dry mopping the floor of Campbell Hall, emptying the trash, emptying the compost, washing the dishes, putting dishes away and having fun.

This appears to be working well with parishioners, happily and gladly stepping in to help. Thank you all so much. We really do appreciate all that you do.

(continued)

One final item to mention is that a lot of you have been asking when the festive Parish Dinner will start up again. There is an ongoing conversation currently about starting a Parish Luncheon in Campbell Hall instead, due to the fact that a lot of our parishioners no longer like driving at night- time. TBD so please let us know your thoughts and wishes.

Submitted by Gail Corell
Hospitality Committee Chair.

MISSION SUNDAY OFFERING

Synopsis

The total amount dispersed to the twelve MSO recipients in 2023 was \$14240. This amount reflects the combined total of parishioner donations and parish matching funds. The Mission Sunday Offering is our shared ministry reflecting our unifying values of compassion, commitment, reverence and reconciliation. Our ongoing support of the MSO has changed the lives of our neighbors on Whidbey Island and beyond. As our parish continues to grow and add new parishioners, the promise and potential of the Mission Sunday Offering will continue to develop and expand. The MSO remains a vigorous and essential ministry at St. Augustine's.

Delineation of factors for choosing MSOs

- What is the impact the donation will have on the MSO organization?
- What is the geographic area covered by the organization?-Does the potential MSO get other contributions from St. Augustine's such as in-kind donations?
- Does it duplicate other services on the island?
- How much support does it receive from other sources?

The MSO recipients for 2024

January: Friends of Friends

February: Episcopal Relief & Development

March: Helping Hand

April: The Hub Youth Central

May: South Whidbey Homeless Coalition

June: Whidbey Veterans Resource Center

July: Good Cheer Food Bank

August: Readiness to Learn Whidbey

September: Gifts from the Heart Food Bank

October: Hearts & Hammers of South Whidbey Island 2/3, Central Whidbey Hearts & Hammers 1/3

November: Island Senior Resources Nutrition Program

December: Whidbey Island Nourishes

We are still looking for someone to be responsible for Episcopal Relief & Development. Any interested parishioners please speak with the MSO Chair about the committee you would like to host.

Respectfully,
Brian Reid, Chair Mission Sunday Offering

MISSIONER FOR MUSIC

It has been an honor and pleasure to serve St. Augustine's since March 2023, and my sincere thanks to Rev. Jenny and the Vestry for calling me into mutual ministry with this congregation and this community. Thank you to David Locke for his years of dedicated service and thanks to Janet Holland, Kathryn Rickert, Erin Howard, the Sophia Singers, and each and every one who shared their time and talent during the interim. These past ten months have been a time not only of transition but of discernment, as we all are still coping with many of the effects of the pandemic and its exacerbation of pre-existing trends in ministry. I have felt a surge in energy and excitement about what the future may bring, not just about returning to how things used to be. Some of those bright spots have included:

- the return of our parish choir in October, offering an opportunity for all who love to sing to come together in community and offer their gifts in worship, leading congregational song and offering music from across the ages, with a special focus on works by historically underrepresented composers, and offering music from chant to Gospel to choral traditions from across the world
- monthly SummerSings, an opportunity for the choir-curious to come together, share a meal, and join in learning and singing together, and for those who love to sing to invite their friends for a fun, no-strings-attached musical gathering
- the selection and purchase of a beautiful and historic Chickering grand piano for Campbell Hall, wholly made possible by generous contributions from our parishioners, and a dedicatory recital featuring Tekla Cunningham and myself to celebrate its arrival
- the renewal and expansion of our partnership with Tekla Cunningham and the Whidbey Island Music Festival, bringing the return of both the summer festival and year-round concerts, including October's sold-out Bach Festival (the first in a new tradition!) and *two* standing-room-only performances of A Celtic Christmas with The Beggar Boys. All of these events have brought together longtime parishioners as well as people coming into relationship with our parish for the first time. Special thanks to Sara Ann and Merrick Lockwood, Melisa Doss, Susan Sandri, Carole Hansen, Frank Shirbroun, and the entire hospitality team for their crucial work in creating a welcoming and inviting experience for each and every one who entered our doors, and for Kathryn Beaumont and Molly Felder for their work in helping to publicize these events so that we can cast a wider net of welcome to our greater community
- a summer organ recital presented by the Whidbey Island Music Festival which filled the Sanctuary and brought in a number of people for whom it was their first exposure to the pipe organ

It is my hope that 2024 will continue the energy and hope that 2023 has brought, as we continue to work together to create more opportunities for evangelism and community-building through music and the liturgical arts.

Respectfully submitted,
Henry Lebedinsky

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

During 2023, Brad Portin digitized all the Policies & Procedures (P&Ps) and uploaded them to the Vestry folder in the cloud. With the help of our Chancellor, Laura Valente, we are in the process of updating several older P&Ps. We have three new P&PS: Policies and Procedures for the Nominating Committee, Website Policies and Procedures, and Policies and Procedures for Public Event Safety and Security. All P&Ps will be posted on our website in due course.

Respectfully submitted,
Frank Shirbroun, Senior Warden

SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

The Bert Johnson Memorial Scholarship was established in 1999 as a way to recognize young members of St. Augustine's and of the Whidbey Island community who have demonstrated service to God by making significant and meaningful contributions of their time and talent. Through the granting of scholarships St. Augustine's Parish provides support for the individual growth and education of the recipients and honors their contributions to the betterment of our community and our world.

In August of 2023 high school graduates Matthias Pierson, Morgan Batchelor, and Lucas Taksony each received \$2000 to help them in their continuing education. Matthias is attending Whitworth University in Spokane, Morgan is a freshman at Central Washington University in Ellensburg, and Lucas is at Washington State University in Pullman. During Christmas break we received word that all three students are thriving at their respective colleges!

Since 1999 a total of \$80,000 has been awarded to nineteen deserving local high school graduates, with funding coming primarily from the Parish Endowment Fund. We are blessed and fortunate to be able to make a small difference in the lives and the education of these young people. Previous scholarship recipients are Jennifer Johnson, Jessica Johnson, Daniel Sandri, Matt Idso, Max Corell, Katie Reid, Emily Anderson, Patsy Colton, Hannah McConnaughey, Christopher Anderson, Emily Reid, Sarah Parker, Haley McConnaughey, Alyssa Ludtke, Grafton Grimm, and Megan Parker.

Candidates for future scholarships may be nominated in writing by any member of St. Augustine's or an application may be submitted by the candidate. Nominations and/or applications must be received by the Scholarship Committee no later than April 10 in order to be considered for fall funding. For more information contact a Scholarship Committee member or the church office.

As always, our heartfelt thanks go to our dearly departed Ray Haman, who initiated the scholarship program in 1999 and who served as the committee chair until 2016.

Respectfully submitted by the Scholarship Committee,
Joan Johnson, Sue Idso, and Elaine Ludtke

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

The Saint Augustine's-in-the-Woods 2024 Stewardship Campaign theme was **“Sharing the Joy.”** Like our 2023 Stewardship Campaign, we did not utilize the Diocese-suggested stewardship theme but instead, our Stewardship Committee adopted a campaign theme that reflected the noticeable sense of joy within our parish. Our total 2024 pledges of **\$321,146** demonstrates that this stewardship theme resonated with our parishioners, whose generosity exceeded 2023 total pledges by **\$59,474** (23%), a very impressive increase when considering that 2023 total pledges (\$261,672) were already a 13.5% increase over 2022 total pledges (\$250,396).

A closer look at our 2024 pledge results supports the conclusion that our parish pledge base is growing in both size and generosity. The ninety-six (96) total pledging units for 2024 represents an increase of thirteen (13) pledging units from last year's total pledging units of 83, a 16% increase. In addition, our 2024 average (mean) pledge increased by 6% when compared to 2023. Just over 56% of parishioners who pledged for 2023 increased their individual pledge amount for 2024, while only 8% decreased their pledge amount, surprising figures considering the inflation parishioners experienced in 2023. Consistent with the Parish's increased service attendance, we welcomed eighteen (18) new pledging units for 2024 (there were twelve new pledging units for 2023).

Like our 2023 Stewardship Campaign, all pledge packets were mailed to parishioners at the start of our 2024 Stewardship Campaign with stamped return envelopes (postage was donated). We again had a second mailing of pledge packets to parishioners who had yet to return a pledge card and once again, this second mailing resulted in additional pledges.

As in prior years, the 2024 Stewardship Campaign kicked off in October with a stewardship theme sermon by the Rector, followed a week later by a stewardship homily given by the Stewardship Committee Chair. Another week later, the Rector's Warden presented a stewardship homily, followed a week later by a Stewardship Committee member giving the final stewardship homily for the 2024 pledge campaign. Pledge Angel once again made an appearance during the 2024 pledge campaign.

Despite the success of the 2024 Stewardship Campaign, the 2024 parish budget anticipates a deficit. From the Stewardship Chair's perspective, the solution to our parish deficits is to continue to grow our parish, which will result in an increased pledge base. We are a warm, joyous, and welcoming parish community with beautiful parish facilities. Given these attributes, we can be confident that this growth will occur.

Saint Augustine's 2024 Stewardship Campaign Committee
Meade Brown Jr.- Chair, Bev Babson, Barry Haworth, Bernie Barker, Ron McKinnell, Bonnie Kodis, Brad Portin

TRANSITION COMMITTEE (ad hoc)

Annual / Final Report ...with from Susan Sandri, Transition Committee chairperson

This committee was commissioned for one year to aid our new in Rector establishing her ministry among us . *It has been a great joy* to help in welcoming Reverend Jenny into this fellowship. The committee advised Reverend Jenny during the year on current policies and procedures, and on "how has this been done in the past" type of questions. We helped as we were able with new ideas she wished to try, with connections to resources in the community, and with general Whidbey orientation. Our main work, however, focused on two things.

The Celebration Conversation 'coffees'

Our committee's main work over the year focused on organizing and managing the schedule and processes for the Celebration Conversation 'coffees' with Reverend Jenny. Nineteen of these 'meet and greet' events were held, usually two per month. Most were neighborhood gatherings of 8-ish people. Two additional events were postponed several times and not accomplished by the end of the year (one in central Coupeville; one for folks who needed a weekend timeframe). In my last discussion with her, Jenny was thinking that perhaps we could produce a few more opportunities after services on specified Sundays -- for those who still wish to attend one of these events. The good news is that there now seems to be MORE need for *newcomer* meetings!

Each of these 'coffees' yielded ideas which were captured for Jenny by scribes from our committee. Conversation topics at the coffees included:

- What of value have you found here at St. A's? What has kept you coming?
- Name something that excites and motivates you about St. A.'s / what are you drawn to at this time?

Jenny seemed pleased with these events in general, and the notes will be a resource for her. Our gratitude is extended to all 19 hosts/hostesses!

Rector's Office Furniture

This project is still in progress. Some of our initial attempts at furnishings for Jenny aren't working well for her. We have procured a locking file cabinet and low bookcases that please her, as well as a rolling, standing-height desk. The large bookcases built by Burt Johnson aren't quite right, because Jenny needs more wall space. We've talked about finding rolling conference room chairs and possibly an adjustable height table which could be at either writing or 'coffee table' levels. Other issues not yet solved include aural privacy and horizontal space for papers and paperwork.

Active committee members: Carol Anderson, Wendy Close, Susan Sandri, Kate Scott

TRASH & TREASURE

The Trash & Treasure sale was not held in 2023. The sale returns on APRIL 20th, 2024! Please join us for this fun and important community outreach fundraiser. Contact Susan Sandri for more information.

ZOOM INSTRUCTIONS

Below is the zoom link for the Annual Meeting:

<https://bit.ly/3OiuBYE>

Or point your phone camera at the QR code below.



When you join the meeting, you will first be in a waiting room. Please be patient while we get each person entered. If you have any problems, please call the office: 360-331-4887. We must 'see' the faces of those attending on the screen. We will count "present" all those who are joining, in-person and via zoom.

During the Annual Meeting:

We will have the computer and microphone set up in Campbell Hall, where the meeting is taking place. If you have difficulty hearing, please let us know via the chat feature. If you have questions to pose during the Annual Meeting, please use the chat feature, as well. The chat feature is at the bottom of the Zoom screen and will be monitored and brought to the attention of the one chairing the meeting. Through this hybrid format (in-person and via zoom), we hope to make the meeting as easy as possible for *all* to participate.

For your planning purposes, we anticipate a one hour meeting.

Thank you.

ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP

a) All persons who have received the Sacrament of Holy Baptism with water in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, whether in this Church or in another Christian Church, and whose Baptisms have been duly recorded in this Church, are members thereof. *National Canon 17, Sec 1 (a).*

b) There are three categories of membership:

1. **COMMUNICANTS:** A Communicant is a baptized person who is faithful in corporate worship and has received the Sacrament of Holy Communion at St. Augustine's in-the Woods at least three times during the preceding 12 months (unless good cause prevented. (It is expected that all adult members of this Church, after appropriate instruction, will have made a mature public affirmation of their faith and commitment to the responsibilities of their baptism and will have been confirmed or received by a Bishop of this Church or by a Bishop of a Church in communion with this Church (See: *National Canons, Title I, Canon 17, Section 1 (c).*) Communicants 16 years of age and older are to be considered adult Communicants.

2. **COMMUNICANTS IN GOOD STANDING:** A Communicant in Good Standing is a Communicant who is a recorded contributor to the support of the Church with money or with personal service, as determined by the rector or vicar of the congregation. *Diocesan Canon 20, Sec 1 and 2.*

3. **MEMBERS IN GOOD STANDING** of St. Augustine's are those baptized persons who have affiliated themselves with St. Augustine's in-the-Woods Episcopal Parish through faithful and regular attendance at worship for at least the preceding year, who have participated fully in the common life of the congregation, whose names have been recorded in the parish office, and whose manner of engagement with this parish matches the canonical definition of Communicant in Good Standing, but who have not been confirmed or received by a Bishop of this Church or by a Bishop of a Church in communion with this Church (See: *National Canons, Title I, Canon 17, Section 1 (c).*)

ARTICLE IV - MEETINGS

Section 1. Annual Parish Meetings. At any time between the annual meeting of Diocesan Convention and the last day of February following, after due notice publicly given at Divine Service on the two Sundays next preceding, there shall be held an Annual Meeting of the Parish for election of Vestry members, and for the transaction of such business as may properly come before the meeting. *Diocesan Canon 9 Sec 1 a.*

Section 2. Special Parish Meetings. Special meetings of the Parish may be called by the Rector, or by the Vestry if there is no Rector, and shall be called by the Rector upon written request signed by a majority of the Vestry. Notice of any special meeting of the Parish shall be given at two regularly scheduled worship services, including the Sunday next preceding the day appointed for the special meeting. The notice shall state the purpose of the special meeting. *Diocesan Canon 9, Sec 1b.*

Section 3. Parish Meetings Presider and Clerk. At all Parish meetings, the Rector (if there be none, a Warden) shall preside, unless the Rector delegates this responsibility to a Warden. The Clerk of the Vestry shall act as the Clerk of the meeting. *Diocesan Canon 9, Sec 1c.*

a) Entitlement to Vote at Parish Meetings. Adult Communicants in Good Standing in the Parish alone shall choose by vote the Vestry members to serve for three years and until the election of their successors. *Diocesan Canon 9, Sec 2 b.*

b) Quorum for Parish Meetings. A quorum at a Parish meeting shall consist of thirty (30) Communicants in Good Standing of the Parish. Once a member is represented for any purpose at a meeting, the member is deemed present for quorum purposes for the remainder of the meeting and for any adjournment of that meeting unless a new record date is or is required to be set for that adjourned meeting. RCW 24.03A.440 (3).



**Reverence ~ Community ~ Compassion ~ Commitment ~ Reconciliation*

**We are an inclusive, reconciling and greening congregation serving Whidbey Island, part of the Episcopal Diocese of Olympia, which encompasses all of Western Washington, from the Cascades to the Pacific Ocean.*

**At St. Augustine's in-the-Woods, our mission is to worship God, witnessing to Jesus Christ by serving the church, parish, community and world in which we live, through the power of the Holy Spirit.*