

# St. John's Episcopal Church Oakland



2023 Annual Meeting  
January 21, 2024 - 10:30 a.m.

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## St. John's 2023 Annual Meeting Agenda

January 21, 2024

- 10:00 am Church Begins
- 10:30 am Church Ends - Break for Coffee
- 10:45 am Opening Prayers – The Rev. Scott Denman
- 10:50 am In Memoriam: Remembering those we lost in 2023  
Judith Fleming, The Rev. Sallie Shippen, The Rev. Dwayne Sisson, Barbara Sloane
- 10:55 am Call to Order – Pat Harden, Sr. Warden
- 11:00 am Voting
- Approve Minutes of 2022 Annual Meeting
  - Elect Deanery Delegates: Lilah Greene, David Mundy, Alexandra Slatoff, Greg Slatoff, and alternates: the Rev. Dr. Fran Toy, Ken Fuller
  - Elect New Vestry Members: Steve Baronian, Jen Howard-Lukens, Nancy Lehrkind, Linda Williams (Class of 2024)
- 11:05 am Outgoing Vestry Members, Class of 2021 – Resolutions – The Rev. Scott Denman  
Pat Harden, Julie Knell, Kirby Marion, Lara Pierpoint
- 11:25 am Financial Report – Michael Daly
- 11:35 am Special Announcement – The Rev. Scott Denman
- 11:40 am Blessing – The Rev. Kathleen Moore  
Closing Video
- 11:45 am Meeting Adjourned – Senior Warden

## St. John's 2022 Annual Meeting Minutes

January 29, 2023, 10:30 a.m.

**Opening Prayer** – Fr. Scott Denman led the opening prayer.

**In Memoriam** – We viewed a slide show, remembering those we lost last year: Willow Rountree, Ted Milhous, Geoff Machin, Frank Sterling and Peter Freeman.

**Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order by Judy Kridle, Senior Warden, at 10:54 a.m.

**Voting** – A quorum was confirmed, and voting proceeded on the following items:

- On a motion duly made by Kathy Araujo and seconded, the minutes of the 2021 Annual Meeting were approved by acclamation.
- On a motion duly made by The Rev. Dr. Fran Toy and seconded by Ian Storrar, the election of the Deanery delegates was approved by acclamation. The slate of delegates is Greg Slatoff, Alexandra Slatoff, Lilah Greene, and David Mundy.
- On a motion duly made by Ian Storrar and seconded by Molly Marion, the new Vestry members, Class of 2023, were approved by acclamation. Approved for 3-year terms were Michael Daly, Sarah Jones, and Gene Williams.

**Outgoing Vestry Members and Resolutions** – Fr. Scott bestowed the title of “Saint of St. John’s” on the outgoing Vestry members. They are Andrew Gustafson, who also worked with Ministry Architects on the search for a new Youth and Education minister, serves on the Finance Committee, was Chaplain of the Vestry and kept Pizza Club running during the transition from Kellor Smith to Lori Robinson; Bonnie Moran who also serves on the Flower Guild and VISION, served on the Campus Committee, is a member of the Choir and is a Money Counter; and Mary Lim-Lampe who is Executive Director of Genesis.

**Announcement of Senior Warden and Comments** – Fr. Scott expressed his appreciation for Judy Kridle who stepped into the Senior Warden position without having served on the Vestry previously. Now she will step down as Senior Warden and step up to chair the Steering Committee for the Master Facilities Plan. Pat Harden who served as People’s Warden this past year will become the new Senior Warden. The vestry gavel was passed from Judy to Pat, and Fr. Scott presented Judy with a sledgehammer. Fr. Scott also thanked Laurie Bennett, Jim MacIlvaine, and all who helped with the lunch preparations for today. He also thanked Carolyn George for moving from the Deanery to a position on the Executive Council of the Diocese.

**Financial Report** -- Andrew Gustafson gave a PowerPoint presentation with preliminary numbers for 2022. The year ended with a solid operating budget surplus, and we are positioned well for 2023. There will be a Financial Review session on a Sunday after services, with the date TBD, to examine the final 2022 results in detail as well as the direction for the 2023 budget. All are welcome to attend.

- **Income** - Pledge income declined slightly but pledge fulfillment exceeded actual pledges for the second year in a row. Our combined rental income (Residential & Church rentals) grew +10.9%, largely on the strength of the preschool (“PILM” aka Pride in Learning Montessori) rentals of church property and the return, after the pandemic, of two of our traditional Church space renters, Music Together, and Alcoholics Anonymous.

- **Expenses** – As in 2021, we continued addressing many deferred maintenance projects in the church and our residential properties.

**Recognitions: Campus Committee** – Fr. Scott made a slide show to showcase the many wonderful projects that the Campus Committee undertook in the past few years: painting the church, restoring the playground, installing a split rail fence, new mailboxes and signage along Gouldin Road, fire prevention management, doing plantings and installing railings and fencing by the parking lot, doing cleanup and renovations at St. John’s House, and other projects. The Campus Committee members were Steve Baronian, Katie Kroger, Laura Kroger, Karen Medford, Bonnie and Jerry Moran, and Ian Storrar. Fr. Scott presented each member with a Home Depot nail bag and gift certificate. Fr. Scott also announced a \$1,000 grant from his Discretionary Fund in the committee’s honor towards purchasing a tree to replace the vine maple that died and/or to repair the fountain in the Meditation Garden.

**Blessing** – The Rev. Dr. Fran Toy gave the blessing.

**Meeting Adjourned** -- The meeting was adjourned at 11:25 a.m. by Pat Harden, the new Senior Warden.

Respectfully submitted by Tina Popenuck, Clerk of the Vestry

## **VESTRY**

St. John's is blessed to have talented and energetic parishioners serve on the 2023 Vestry. Here are the members, term start dates, and email contact information.

Michael Daly (class of 2023) [mdalylaw@gmail.com](mailto:mdalylaw@gmail.com)

Pat Harden (class of 2021) [patharden1230@gmail.com](mailto:patharden1230@gmail.com)

Sarah Jones (class of 2023) [sarajones@sonic.net](mailto:sarajones@sonic.net)

Julie Knell (class of 2021) [jbknell@mac.com](mailto:jbknell@mac.com)

Judy Kridle (class of 2022) [judykridle@gmail.com](mailto:judykridle@gmail.com)

Ann Lester (class of 2022) [ann.lester@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ann.lester@sbcglobal.net)

Ed Likely (class of 2022) [elikely@gmail.com](mailto:elikely@gmail.com)

Kirby Marion (class of 2021) [kirby.e.marion@gmail.com](mailto:kirby.e.marion@gmail.com)

Anne Meyer (class of 2022) [anne.meyer5023@gmail.com](mailto:anne.meyer5023@gmail.com)

Lara Pierpoint (class of 2021) [lara.pierpoint@gmail.com](mailto:lara.pierpoint@gmail.com)

Gene Williams (class of 2023) [gwillia1@aol.com](mailto:gwillia1@aol.com)

Clerk of the Vestry - Tina Popenuck [tinapop@earthlink.net](mailto:tinapop@earthlink.net)

## **New Vestry Candidates – Class of 2024**

### **Stephen Baronian**



Stephen is an Oakland native who has lived the majority of his life in close proximity to his childhood home. Stephen was awarded an MTS degree from the Jesuit School of Theology, Berkeley, in 2018. This marked a career turning point and a long-awaited opportunity to become a chaplain. Raised in the Armenian Orthodox Church, he and his family joined St. John's in 2013 and are active members. Stephen and his wife, Nancy Roscelli, have one daughter, Frances, who studies English Literature at SFSU.

Stephen thrives in the outdoors and especially enjoys reading, road cycling, and spending time at home. He is a proficient (some say gifted) napper and periodically undertakes art projects.

### **Jen Howard-Lukens**



Jen came to the St. John's community 10-15 years ago through music and mindfulness. She discovered St John's while attending Music Together classes with her children in the Fischer Room and, after class, finding a quiet moment in the meditation garden. Her children, Jaden (15) and Keller (11), still sing in the Fischer Room with Ben every Tuesday, and Jen now offers a mindfulness and meditation group for youth.

Jen lives in Montclair with her husband Trevor and their two sons, dog, cat, and gecko. She works as a Clinical Psychologist in private practice in Oakland. Her professional roots are in juvenile justice and family therapy and she worked with children and families in the non-profit sector for 15+ years.

Jen continues to specialize in trauma, anxiety, relationships, and grief and loss. Jen is interested in serving on the Vestry to help St. John's continue to find creative ways to bring youth and families together in love and mindfulness.

### **Nancy Lehrkind**



Tom and I have been members of St. John's for about 40 years now, happily raising three children in this vital faith community. We are both retired attorneys and I still maintain an active practice in the East Bay as a real estate broker. During our many St. John's years, Tom served on the Vestry, and he and I ran a PEP Training Class (Parent Effectiveness Training) for parents of young children; together with the Felders, Millers, & talented others, we led a Canning & Jamming program every Friday night for a year! I sang in the choir for 10 years, taught Sunday School for 6, was in charge of Tenant properties (reporting to the Vestry)

for 2, ran two Auctions, and worked on the first-ever Comfirmitzvah Class with other epic parents of that year. My goal is to help re-vitalize some of those activities, reaching out to the wider Montclair community for more participants, and adding a theatre component to our St. John's life as well.

### **Linda Williams**



Given that I have not long been a member of St. John's, I am humbled by the opportunity to serve on the Vestry and pray that what I lack in years I will make up in enthusiasm.

The Episcopal Church of my childhood was rich and formative, as was attending the Catholic Church with my beloved Irish Catholic grandmother. During college at UC Berkeley I 'went east,' exploring Buddhism and attending the Berkeley Vedanta Society where I met my Bengali husband. Through contemplative practice in Vedanta, Buddhism, and Christianity, I came to believe in the truth of all faith traditions whose mystics, free of

dogma, speak the same language of love. Several years ago, I returned to the Episcopal Church, my forever spiritual home.

Though my marriage ended, I am blessed by my 28-year-old daughter, Marie, living and working as a potter in Santa Barbara. With graduate degrees in Public Health and in City and Regional Planning, my career zig-zagged through health care legislation, program development, contract negotiations, and health compliance. I am impassioned by the right to universal health care, the rights of immigrants, the undocumented, and trafficking victims, and anti-death penalty work.

Happily retired, I am (slowly) writing The Great American Novel as well as a memoir of my immersion into Indian history and culture. My dog Marley and I frequent the vast expanse of the East Bay hills that surround a beautiful and buoyant church called St. John's.

### **Deanery Candidates**

St. John's 2023 Deanery slate has six delegates (four lay, two ordained). The number of delegates is based on parish active members. Deanery responsibilities include attending quarterly Deanery meetings, the annual Diocesan Convention in October, and participating in the community of St. John's. Each delegate serves for one year and may be re-elected in subsequent years. The Deanery provides an opportunity to engage in fellowship with other churches in the Diocese and discuss both practical and philosophical issues of concern to St. John's and our fellow communities of faith. These discussions and proposals for action are then reported to each respective congregation.

### **Delegates**

Lilah Greene [greentiem@comcast.net](mailto:greentiem@comcast.net)

David Mundy [dchmundy@gmail.com](mailto:dchmundy@gmail.com)

Alexandra Slatoff [aslatoff@yahoo.com](mailto:aslatoff@yahoo.com)

Greg Slatoff [goslatoff@yahoo.com](mailto:goslatoff@yahoo.com)

Alternate Delegate: Ken Fuller [thunder572002@yahoo.com](mailto:thunder572002@yahoo.com)

Alternate Delegate: The Rev. Dr. Fran Toy [frantoy@att.net](mailto:frantoy@att.net)

### **DIOCESAN CONVENTION**

Carolyn George [cgeorge207@yahoo.com](mailto:cgeorge207@yahoo.com)

This link includes a summary of the 2023 Diocese of California Convention held in October to elect a new Bishop: <https://www.stjohnsoakland.org/blog/diocese-of-california-elects-the-rev-austin-k-rios-as-its-ninth-bishop>



## Senior Warden's Letter

Pat Harden [patharden1230@gmail.com](mailto:patharden1230@gmail.com)

2023 was an intense year of rebuilding community for St. John's as we gradually emerged from the worst impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. This rebuilding began at the vestry level, where I sought to build a deeper sense of community among those who give so generously of their time and talents by serving on the Vestry. Above and beyond the vital oversight role of the Vestry, we focused on opportunities for fellowship, visibility, and relationship-building. My goal was for the Vestry to function as a cohesive team of leaders, where all have a voice and the opportunity to share their unique talents and gifts with St. John's.

The Vestry's most significant achievement this past year was the hiring of our Associate Rector, **The Rev. Kathleen Moore**. At a time when there is a nationwide shortage of priests, we were incredibly fortunate to have Kathleen answer our call. She literally answered a phone call from **Rev. Scott** as we began the formal search process. Kathleen was always Scott's first choice for the job, and in a miracle of synchronicity, our timelines matched up. Kathleen joined us on November 1 and we are ecstatic to have her on board. She will expand our focus on community building, both within the congregation and in the broader community.

The Vestry devoted considerable time throughout the year to overseeing the church's finances, which are managed by our capable Finance Team with **Jim Hasler** as chief budget guru. Once again **Lilah Greene** brought her exceptional financial skills to lead the stewardship effort that funds St. John's operations. **Judy Kridle** expertly chaired the Steering Committee established to manage The Gateway Project, while **Julie Knell** chaired the Capital Campaign to fund this mission-critical project to create safer and more accessible entrances and exits to the church. Both Judy and Julie invested immense time and energy to making The Gateway Project a reality that will benefit St. John's for generations to come. They deserve our deepest gratitude.

Other accomplishments this past year include a revision of the bylaws, completed by the Governance Committee under **Judy Kridle's** leadership and including **Michael Daly, Julie Knell,** and **Anne Meyer**. The Personnel Committee, which I chaired, including **Molly Marion** and **Kerry Friedrichs**, developed the job description for our Associate, and **Laurie Bennett** led the search process to bring Kathleen on board. **Kerry Friedrichs** is contributing her expertise as a labor lawyer to update our employee handbook, a wonderful gift to St. John's!

**Sarah Jones**, our People's Warden, spearheaded the Vestry's role in creating and staffing the "friend-raising" event that was part of our "fund-raising" auction in August. Working alongside co-chairs of the online auction **Kathy Araujo** and **Laurie Bennett**, vestry members organized the set up and cleanup, and provided and served beverages to accompany yummy Mexican food from **Turo's Taco Truck**. This successful event raised \$25,000 and brought parishioners together for an afternoon of fun and community.

We were blessed to have **Anne Meyer** serve as our Vestry Chaplain. Her opening and closing prayers brought inspiration and a pervasive spiritual presence to the business at hand. **Sarah Jones's** amazing communications skills corralled the myriad documents that required our consideration at meetings. **Judy Kridle** continued to support the Vestry Leadership Team through her participation in weekly warden/rector meetings, giving generously of her time and

expertise. We are grateful to **Lara Pierpoint** and her family and **Anne Meyer** for hosting vestry events at their homes this past year.

In closing, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to **the entire Vestry** for their leadership and support this past year. And a huge thank you to our own **Rev. Scott Denman** for his many creative contributions, empowering leadership, and the rich spiritual gifts he brings to St. John's every day. It's been my privilege to serve this beloved community as your Senior Warden for 2023!

## **Rector's Letter**

The Rev. Scott Denman [rector@stjohnsoakland.org](mailto:rector@stjohnsoakland.org)

Dear Friends,

St. John's is poised for growth. I have never felt so excited about the future of our ministries than I do now. For one thing, the pandemic taught us that St. John's can weather anything. We did not just survive; we kept the faith and became stronger by staying true to our vision.

What is that vision? To "manifest God's love through invitation, inclusion, faith, and action." In 2018 we created a 5-year strategic plan that would pro-actively guide us. We were determined to stop acting like the 90% of mainline congregations in decline and begin acting like the 10% who were growing. We chose to be like the faithful stewards in Jesus' parable who invested their talents, not like the fearful steward who buried his. We set out to invest in our future. And we are being true to our strategic plan which called for deepening our connections to the community by enhancing our staff team and making our facility safer and more inviting. The challenge we embraced was to build bridges of all kinds to the broader community.

This work, at times, has been stressful as we continue to meet the financial commitment required to support our spiritual commitment. But one thing we learned in the planning process was that it's more costly to avoid faith than to live by it. To put it another way, we are putting our money where our mouth is. We want to grow, and we will with your help.

I want to personally thank you for your commitment to build our staff team. It is already paying off as our numbers continue to increase. With full-time staff members focusing on youth and families and congregational development, the future is looking bright. A great big round of applause for Lilah Greene for another amazing year leading our stewardship effort! She continues to remind us that money follows vision, not vice versa. And, to use her beehive metaphor, our staff team is buzzing. Kathleen, Lori, Ben, Siv, and I share a common vision to empower this community and get our unique message out into the world. And what can be said about Kathy Araujo? As our volunteer staff member, she continues to jump right in and pick up many of the administrative details necessary to support the staff. I couldn't be happier with this amazing team!

As we seek to be spiritually invitational and inclusive, we are also investing in making our campus reflect this vision. We are (to use biblical language) taking the bushel off our light as we create a beautifully inviting and practical connection with the hundreds of families who travel down Thornhill Drive each day.

The support for The Gateway Project has been nothing less than inspirational. I want to thank the Steering Committee, the hardest working committee of this kind I have ever had the privilege to be part of. Judy Kridle stepped down as Senior Warden so she could lead this effort. This is not her first rodeo, having successfully led Good Shepherd Episcopal Church in Berkeley through a project of their own. Pat Harden courageously stepped up to be Senior Warden while also serving on this committee. Her political expertise has been especially appreciated as she has effectively functioned as our liaison with the political arm of the City of Oakland. Jerry Moran's knowledge

of this project is encyclopedic. His documented encounters with the Building and Planning Department could fill a library. Bob Davidson's experience as an architect has been crucial as he and Jerry continue to meet with both our architect and contractor, pouring over hundreds of details. And this is not Debi Stebbins's first rodeo either as she successfully led us through our renovation effort after the infamous sewage flood caused by the city's negligence. Her project management skills continue to astound us all. Ed Likely, a relatively new member of St. John's, courageously jumped right into the middle of this effort, interfacing with the diocese and banks about our financing options for this project. And last, but certainly not least, Julie Knell not only functions as a member of this committee but also stepped up to chair our Capital Campaign committee. Because of her leadership we are very close to reaching our financial goal. What a team! I am honored and profoundly grateful to work with them.

It's time to build new bridges to our community in every way possible and, because of your generous help and with God's astounding grace, we are making this happen.

Gratefully and expectantly,

Scott+

## Associate Rector's Letter

The Rev. Kathleen Moore [kathleen@stjohnsoakland.org](mailto:kathleen@stjohnsoakland.org)

Oh, what a first two-and-a-half months it has been! I want to thank each one of you for welcoming me so warmly back to St. John's since I started on November 1. It was instantly apparent that my memories of how special this place is are accurate. I am so grateful I get to serve alongside you at this place and in this time.

By the end of this month, I will have met one-on-one with more than 50 of you, and had other meetings with many more! If I have not yet gotten the chance to meet with *you*, please email me to set up a time.

What is apparent from these meetings is that you care deeply for St. John's and its future. And, you want *other* people to have the gifts St. John's has given you. Those gifts include but are not limited to: a true sense of belonging, knowing people are ready to show up with casseroles and more when times get tough, opportunities to serve members of the wider Oakland community and to show up for justice, a sense of playfulness, fun, and intellectual curiosity in worship, being held in prayer and holding others in prayer, opportunities for quiet and contemplation, yearly family traditions, a rich choir experience, intergenerational friendship, the gift of community and a discerning faith life for your children, and the assurance of God's ever-present love.

Through these conversations, I have come to believe that St. John's has unique "super powers" that are the reason we find ourselves stronger than many other faith communities coming out of the pandemic, and position us to strengthen and grow as a community. In February, I will use what I have learned to plan my year ahead focusing on congregational development.

In November, I began serving as the Welcoming Ministry Catalyst. A December meeting of our greeters and ushers was energizing. In advance of Christmas services, we created special badges for greeters and ushers to wear so that it is clear to visitors there is someone here ready to orient you and answer any questions. We also introduced an option for visitors to use a QR code at the welcome table which leads to an online form in case that is easier than signing the physical book. And we have renewed energy around coffee hour, which is a wonderful way to welcome visitors and have a chance to get to know them. If *you* would like to bring goodies for coffee hour or are interested in serving on a new Welcoming Committee, email me! I look forward to convening this new committee in 2024.

Some of you may have noticed that we *do* have new faces showing up. I have been particularly inspired by the way Lori Robinson has welcomed our youngest newcomers. When a family walks through our doors for the first time, we are ready to welcome their children, and that is no small thing.

The faith of the people of St. John's is so deep and inspiring to me. It is a faith of questioning, openness, tolerance, discernment, joy, and hope. I can't wait to see us share that faith with more and more new friends in 2024.

## VESTRY REPORTS

The 2019 Vestry re-wrote the St. John's by-laws to form seven standing committees deemed necessary to conduct the business of the church: **Stewardship, Personnel, Communication, Finance, Investment, Endowment, and Buildings & Grounds**. The committee chairs work closely with the Ministry Catalysts whose knowledge of St. John's unique culture helps groups within the church thrive while realizing St. John's unifying mission of Invitation, Inclusion, Faith, and Action. These are the vital links between the many groups within St. John's, helping them to communicate and connect with other groups, so that the whole is greater than the sum of the individual parts.

### Stewardship

Lilah Greene [greentiem@comcast.net](mailto:greentiem@comcast.net)

Our annual Church Operating Budget (COB) stewardship campaign this year used the analogy of tending to a beehive. Viewing the benefits of being part of St. John's community as honey and noting the devoted busy work of dedicated community members supporting the valued staff, we asked members to support the church. We asked our membership to Bee Generous.

The Finance Committee asked us to use \$600,000 as the target for our COB campaign. As of this moment, the in-house pledges total just under \$450,000 (75% of our goal committed by 78% of those asked). We are not there yet, but the commitment to Stewardship is a commitment to the year-round effort to take care of our church home, and we will be busy bees working to close the gap.

We know the value of this community, and we also know that the world is in such a place of pain, perhaps focusing on the sweetness of honey was not helpful in assuaging the grief we are all feeling. Perhaps we need to remember that honey is also used to dress wounds; and indeed, St. John's is also a place one comes to for strength in times of trials and woundedness.

Armed with this new message – honey for the sweetness and for healing woundedness – we will continue to reach out to our members, active and orbiting, and remain confident that our community will step up as required to support our treasured staff and spiritual operations.

### Personnel

Molly Marion [molly.marion@gmail.com](mailto:molly.marion@gmail.com)

The Personnel Committee is responsible for recommending to the Rector and Vestry policies and expectations related to: recommendations on hiring, the creation of job descriptions, performance feedback practices (including the annual performance review), salary administration practices, benefits, professional development, leave and sabbatical taking, equal employment opportunity compliance, professional misconduct, conflicts of interest, record keeping, and any other miscellaneous employment policies.

The Personnel Committee has been extremely busy this year supporting Scott and the small but mighty staff of St. John's. Our own committee saw some transition as Laurie Bennett decided to

focus in other areas, Kathy Araujo stepped down, and Judy Kridle moved into another capacity within the Vestry and Steering Committee. We were lucky to have Pat Harden remain as our vestry liaison and we welcomed Kerry Freidrichs, an attorney specialized in Wage-Hour Law. We now have a licensed attorney in our midst! Continued thanks go to Molly Marion (People Operations/HR professional) and Scott Denman for their faithful service. We are also excited to report that, thanks to Kerry's support, St. John's has entered into a pro bono agreement with her firm, Seyfarth Shaw LLP, for legal services. This will allow us access to employment attorneys in the event something comes up that might require extra guidance.

Much of Personnel's work is confidential, but the committee is grateful to the staff and parishioners who help in the discernment and the hiring processes for our staff. In 2023 we had hoped to deliver an updated Employee Handbook to St. John's employees, however, this has been pushed to early 2024.

Our greatest accomplishment in 2023 was the hiring and onboarding of Kathleen Moore as Associate Rector! Kathleen joined us November 1, 2023, and we could not be more thrilled with her addition to the St. John's family. Having Kathleen join was truly the Holy Spirit in action. If you don't know the story, ask Kathleen—it's a good one!

### **Communication**

Laurie Bennett [lebennett1950z@gmail.com](mailto:lebennett1950z@gmail.com)

(with help from Siv Ricketts and Sarah Jones)

In multiple ways we strive to keep everyone informed. Siv Ricketts is our experienced Parish Administrator who coordinates St. John's communications. Email her if you have an event to publicize: [admin@stjohnsoakland.org](mailto:admin@stjohnsoakland.org)

**Friday Email** – Weekly Friday emails give the service times, faith formation offerings, and news of parish events. Email your announcement to Siv by 10am Wednesdays. If you aren't receiving the Friday email, we may not have your correct information; please fill out the form on the website - <https://www.stjohnsoakland.org/contact>

**Website** – Check St. John's website often for current information, including sermons you may have missed: <https://www.stjohnsoakland.org>

**Seasonal Newsletter: *The Mouse*** – Articles and photos appear in *The Mouse* prior to Lent (Feb), end of the school year (May), beginning of the school year (Aug), and Advent (Nov). The Annual Report, published in January, is an expanded version of *The Mouse* for Annual Meeting reference. A link to the current issue of *The Mouse* is included in every Friday email and articles are posted on St. John's website under the News tab. Contact Siv or Laurie Bennett if you have articles or photos.

**Social Media** – Beginning in May, Siv took over posting to social media from St. John's previous contractor. She posts seven to ten times each week, and we encourage you to follow along and share posts to your own accounts to get the word out about all the great things happening at St. John's.

St. John's has both Facebook and Instagram as well as Nextdoor. Sylvia Ahearn also posts to her neighborhood Nextdoor, a wonderful model of a simple way you can spread the good news about events at St. John's. Past sermons and services are available on our YouTube channel.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/stjohnsoakland>

Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/stjohns\\_oakland](https://www.instagram.com/stjohns_oakland)

Nextdoor: <https://nextdoor.com/pages/st-johns-episcopal-church-3>

YouTube: <https://youtube.com/stjohnsoakland>

**External Communication** – Our goal is to make St. John's better known in the community, another kind of Gateway Project. We do this through participating in the Montclair Stroll in December, placing posters in Montclair Village businesses, and through ads in the *Piedmont Post*. Events we promote include labyrinth walks, Easter week, the Blessing of the Animals, Blue Christmas, and Christmas services. Future plans may include hosting book signings and Lenten Suppers with other local faith communities.

## **Finance**

Jim Hasler, Finance Ministry Catalyst [jim.hasler@mac.com](mailto:jim.hasler@mac.com)

As we completed our first full-year (in recent memory) with a full-time Director of Children and Youth Ministry programs, and added an Associate Rector in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, I am happy to report that we delivered solid financial results for 2023. While we are still finalizing results for 2023, I can reasonably predict that we delivered an operating budget surplus for the third consecutive year and improved our working capital.

Closing 2023 with solid results was an important objective as we begin 2024 supporting both new full-time staff positions. This reflects a strategic focus on strengthening and building our congregation—and relies on the continued financial support of the congregation.

### **Highlighted Positive Factors:**

Pledge Revenue – While total Pledge Revenue declined modestly versus 2022, we maintained historic high levels of support and results were in line with the budget.

Church Operating Expense – Operating Expenses declined -7% in an inflationary environment, driven by reductions in one-time expenditures associated with Growth Initiatives.

Net Rental Income – Combined rental income (Residential & Church) grew +10% on the growth of Montessori School rentals and residential properties being fully-leased throughout the year. Net results were also aided by a significant reduction in maintenance expenses.

### **Highlighted Negative Factors:**

Retreat Expense – The operating budget needed to absorb deficits from Parish and Vestry retreats, associated with higher expenses at The Bishop's Ranch and lower than budgeted participation rates. We will be modifying our budget approach to these retreats in 2024 to improve forecast accuracy.



Utility Expense – Rate increases, combined with a cold winter, led to significant variances in utility expense. Additionally, increased rental of church space required us to fully heat a greater percentage of our space during the course of a week.

### **Looking Forward:**

2024 is shaping up to be a difficult budget year for St. John's. While we anticipated the impact of full staffing and continued (but moderating) inflation, the uncertainty about the final results of our Pledge Campaign brings new challenges. We are currently at roughly 75% of goal, and 81% of last year's Pledge budget.

I am happy that we are continuing efforts to expand our stewardship results as we have seen so much forward momentum in our programs and participation this year. We will work closely with the Vestry to help guide priorities and budget choices and maintain a strong financial base for our St. John's community.

**Thank You:** I say this and mean this every year—thank you to everyone participating in our Money Ministries and Finance Committee. In particular, special thanks to Kathy Araujo who practically lives in our offices and Lilah Greene who brings accounting knowledge and discipline to our efforts.

**Coming Soon:** For those who would like to better understand our finances, we will also be scheduling a Financial Review session, exploring the final 2023 results in detail, as well as direction for the 2024 budget. I encourage you to participate in this deeper dive.

### **Endowment**

Karen Medford [kjmed12@gmail.com](mailto:kjmed12@gmail.com)

Both the stock and bond markets had a good year in 2023 after a dismal 2022. The S&P 500 index was up 24.2% and the aggregate bond index increased 5.65%. The St. John's endowment had similar returns, increasing 20.4% overall.

This coming year may not be as good a year for the markets as 2023 but the endowment should continue to perform in line with the broad market indices. The endowment funds are currently allocated across two broad-based mutual funds with 73% of the total funds in stocks and 27% in bonds, roughly in line with the investment policy guidelines of two-thirds stocks and one-third bonds. There were no new contributions to the endowment in 2023.

This year's committee priorities will be to update the endowment policy and guidelines and cease reinvesting dividends so that a cash position can build up overtime. This will enable the endowment to distribute some of its income to support initiatives within St. John's.

After many years on the committee, Tim Johnson has resigned, and we are currently looking for an additional member to join the committee. If you're interested in serving St. John's in this capacity, please contact Jim Hasler, Susan Pierpoint, or myself. The committee meets quarterly. Additionally, please contact me if you would like to learn more about our endowment or include the endowment in your estate or gift planning.

## **Buildings & Grounds**

Tina Popenuck [tinapop8@gmail.com](mailto:tinapop8@gmail.com)

Since forming early in 2023, the Facilities Team has been busy taking care of tasks around St. John's campus, both scheduled and unscheduled, large and small, including the following:

- Numerous plumbing issues, like replacing toilets and fixing leaks
- Coordinating the parking lot repaving
- Replacing electrical fixtures, lights, and locks
- Cleaning solar panels and gutters on the roof
- Pothole repair at the driveway exit
- Tree removal near the Rectory
- Reorganizing the promotional banners for easy installation and storage
- Christmas lights were installed and our sign cleaned and lit for the holiday season
- Coordinating repair of the back stairwell
- Major reorganization and cleaning of upstairs rooms to make way for PILM rental and to welcome Kathleen on staff
- Extensive research for new door closures
- Installing a new church sign on Thornhill (check out the church birdhouse on the back!)
- Contracting with Orkin to deal with a rat issue & with All-Ways Green Ops to rat-proof the kitchen and do a deep clean in advance of Advent Night.

## **Landscape Committee**

Katie Kroger [katiekroger@gmail.com](mailto:katiekroger@gmail.com)

The Landscape Committee is responsible for the beautification of the Meditation Garden, patio, and other landscaped areas. The committee met for seasonal work days as needed throughout the year. Volunteers weeded and pruned the meditation garden, enclosed garden, and patio beds.

## **The Gateway Project**

Judy Kridle, Gateway Project Steering Committee Chair [judykridle@gmail.com](mailto:judykridle@gmail.com)

As Steering Committee Chair, I am delighted to report that The Gateway Project envisioned by faithful parishioners of St. John's 20+ years ago is getting closer and closer to becoming a reality. St. John's is blessed with a beautiful campus that has a treacherously steep entrance and exit, making our property much less accessible, inviting, and safe than is optimal for parishioners and the broader community. The Gateway Project addresses these long-held concerns by creating a new, two-way entrance or "gateway" to our church campus

In 2023, the Steering Committee met weekly to oversee and manage all aspects of the project, with the goal of beginning construction in 2024. Serving on this committee, which reports to the Vestry, were Bob Davidson, The Rev. Scott Denman, Pat Harden, Julie Knell, Judy Kridle, Ed Likely, Jerry Moran, and Debi Stebbins. Among the accomplishments of this past year are

updates to our construction plans and drawings, a detailed timeline and budget, and progress on the regulatory approvals required to proceed.

Dan Wetherell of Ratcliff Architects, whose firm worked with the Steering Committee to develop the facilities master plan for St. John in 2021 and 2022, generously donated his time to the weekly Steering Committee meetings held in 2023. He worked diligently to ensure that our project entitlements remained alive and that the City of Oakland's review and approval of our multiple permit applications was progressing. The committee also oversaw studies of how to finance the project and managed the work of various project consultants such as our civil engineer, structural engineer, architect, landscape designer, environmental consultant, and lobbyist.

A capital campaign to raise \$2.5 million of the project's \$3.5 million dollar estimated price tag was launched in September 2023. The first phase of the capital campaign succeeded in raising over \$1.7 million. In November 2023, a subcommittee of the Steering Committee was formed. Dubbed the "Financial Pathways Committee," its task is to develop a strategic financing plan to ensure that funds from the capital campaign and other sources, such as the sale of St. John's residential property or a loan, are available when needed to pay preconstruction and construction project costs.

The General Contractor for the project, Oliver & Company, Inc., began soliciting bids from subcontractors in early January 2024, a process that will take several weeks. The next step will be for St. John's to enter into a construction contract with Oliver, which the Steering Committee expects to take to the Vestry for approval in March 2024. As soon as the construction contract is signed, Oliver will place the order for the prefabricated concrete bridge. It will take at least three months for the precast concrete to be poured, tested, cured, and delivered to the project site. Installation of the bridge over Temescal Creek is slated for July 2024.

Meanwhile, members of the Steering Committee are preparing to interview candidates for the position of Construction Manager. The person in this role will act as "owner's representative" on the project, representing St. John's interests and ensuring that construction is proceeding on schedule and on budget.

We recognize that there have been setbacks along the way to making the long-held vision of The Gateway Project a reality. However, we are well on our way to realizing this dream for St. John's. A huge thank you to all who have supported, and continue to support, the project spiritually, financially, and in myriad ways with their time, talents, prayers, checkbooks, and experience. I am grateful to you beyond words.

## **MINISTRY CATALYST REPORTS**

“Ministry Catalyst” is the name for the dynamic parish members who contribute their expertise, historical knowledge, and enthusiasm as resources for St. John’s program ministries and groups. The name reflects the proactive communication role these leaders play at St. John’s. The goal of the Catalysts is to support their specific groups and to help find more ways for them to connect with the St. John’s family. They meet once a month to coordinate events and stimulate parish life through Invitation, Inclusion, Faith, and Action.

### **Faith Formation**

Anne Meyer [anne.meyer5023@gmail.com](mailto:anne.meyer5023@gmail.com)

St. John’s focus on faith formation and spiritual practices is intensifying through small groups. The Mindfulness Room (formerly the Rector’s Study) and the Meditation Garden are peaceful venues for a growing number of small group offerings. These supplement our corporate worship and give us opportunities to explore new spiritual practices. All the groups welcome everyone on a drop-in basis. Please join us.

- Centering Prayer meets second and fourth Saturdays at 11:30am. Bring a lunch if you wish.
- Mindfulness Meditation meets Wednesdays at 8am.
- The outdoor labyrinth is always available during daylight hours. Anne Meyer led guided walks on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, All Saints’ Day, and the summer and winter solstices.

There is a small evening mindfulness group. Contact Anne Meyer if you are interested as the schedule is fluid.

In 2024 a Faith Formation committee comprised of Tim Hart, The Rev. Kathleen Moore, and Anne Meyer will organize opportunities to explore other denominations and faith practices. Contact any of them if you wish to be part of the planning.

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

Lilah Greene, EfM Mentor [greentiem@comcast.net](mailto:greentiem@comcast.net)

EfM is a unique four-year distance-learning certificate program in theological education at The University of the South (University of Sewanee, Tennessee) based upon small group study and practice. The year follows a traditional academic calendar (September-June) of 36 weeks.

As participants, our goal is to read and learn about the scriptures, to learn the history and origins of our traditions and, from that learning, to understand our personal spiritual story and our own core beliefs—to build a spiritual autobiography and foundation of faith. The group this year is an intimate, dedicated group of five, four from St. John’s and one from the Church of the Resurrection in Pleasant Hill. Fundamental to the program is having participants at different years of study, and we are fortunate to have two in Year One, two in Year Two, and one in Year

Four. Each group is assigned readings unique to their year and participants report to the group their thoughts and observations about their reading at weekly meetings.

Each week, in turn, a participant will choose a topic and lead a guided conversation called Theological Reflection (TR). Together the class ‘unpacks’ the theological implications of the selected topic and constructs a closing prayer based upon the TR to carry the implications of the conversation in our hearts throughout the week.

Participants meet weekly via Zoom. We have found that meeting this way has not hindered our discussions and ability to feel connected. Rather, Zoom has allowed an efficiency, eliminating the additional stress of commuting and preparing meals, and reducing the time required to just two hours each week. I hope you will consider participating in EfM beginning in September of 2024.

## **IN-REACH**

### **Casserole Brigade**

Nancy Walker [nanwalker@sbcglobal.net](mailto:nanwalker@sbcglobal.net)

The Casserole Brigade is a group of people who serve as stand-by cooks or takeout aficionados. They provide food for parishioners who need meals following health issues, the birth of a baby, or other life-altering events. Some families have requested dinners for one or two nights, while others require a more long-term commitment. In addition to the meals, the company provided when dropping off a dinner is greatly appreciated.

Nancy Walker leads the Casserole Brigade. Most meal requests are funneled through clergy or other parishioners who are aware of someone needing assistance. Please contact me if you become aware of a person or family who may need help from the Casserole Brigade.

In 2023, meals were provided for five different individuals or families.

### **Women’s Retreat**

Sarah Jones, retreat planner 2020-2024 [sarahcjones@sonic.net](mailto:sarahcjones@sonic.net)

Held March 3-5 at The Bishop’s Ranch, the 2023 Women’s Retreat was led by the wonderful Rev. Liz Tichenor, author of *The Night Lake: A Young Priest Maps the Topography of Grief*. Rector of the Church of the Resurrection Pleasant Hill, The Rev. Tichenor led retreatants in addressing loss and grief over our weekend, themed “Returning Light: Finding Grace After Loss.” Thirty-four women from St. John’s and beyond—including a mother and daughter from Florida—gathered for reflections on loss, as well as in hiking, fellowship, art, massages, and of course, enjoying great Ranch food. Five came up for Saturday only. (Several others had planned to attend, but had to cancel due to COVID-19.) It was unusually chilly.

We look forward to welcoming back former parishioner and author/teacher Marilyn McEntyre to lead our next retreat on mindfulness. Mark your calendar for March 1-3; more information coming soon.

I have been attending St. John's women's retreats for 23 years, and have missed only one, I think. They are always, *always* remarkable in myriad ways, and are especially important to developing and deepening friendships. Please consider joining us this year!

### **Men's Group**

Bob Davidson [davidson.robertc@gmail.com](mailto:davidson.robertc@gmail.com)

Ken Fuller [thunder572002@yahoo.com](mailto:thunder572002@yahoo.com)

St. John's Men's Group met twice for dinner in early 2023. They also sponsored the Peter Freeman ice cream social on July 16. There was no men's retreat in 2023.

On December 12 we had our annual Christmas/Holiday dinner with 30 men attending. The meal included prime rib, Yorkshire pudding, and multiple homemade salads, vegetable dishes, and desserts. We concluded the evening with a gag-gift exchange and compline. The men gathered also donated \$356 to Mission for the Homeless (<https://www.missionforthehomeless.org/>).

### **Softball Team**

Sarah Jones [sarahcjones@sonic.net](mailto:sarahcjones@sonic.net)

The St. John's Saints & Sinners softball team had a fantastic season with six wins, three losses, and one tie, clinching the Piedmont Rec Department's Adult Softball Championship for the first time in our 25+ year history. Parishioners Randy Levandowski, Christy Ambrose, Marc Newman, Abbigail and Sereno Brown, Ian Storrar, Bryan Farley, and Luis Salcedo, not to mention yours truly (Sarah Jones), came together with other members of the community to form a team with solid defense and strong offensive play. We suffered minimal injuries and had a wonderful time.





## ACTION/JUSTICE

### Genesis

Mary Lim [gamaliel.genesisca@gmail.com](mailto:gamaliel.genesisca@gmail.com)

*We need, in every community, a group of angelic troublemakers.* -Bayard Rustin, an African-American leader in social movements for civil rights, socialism, nonviolence, and gay rights.

2023 brought a David vs Goliath fight, an expansion of our youth internship, and training lots of people to get ready for 2024.

You might remember that in 2023 we were facing a “David vs. Goliath” fight on the California State Budget. Despite impending budget shortfalls and a negative impact on vulnerable Californians, highway funding got a significant amount (several *billion*) while the Governor proposed a \$2 billion cut to public transit. Fortunately, Genesis had organized for this moment with a Transit Equity Day online rally with 65 participants, a follow up phone bank training with 34 participants, and 8 initial meetings with elected officials in Sacramento.

Because of these actions, the California Legislature reversed the cuts. Marjorie Alvord, one of the members of the Genesis Disability Transit Justice Task Force, stated, “I hope that we can advocate for excess federal highway funds to be used to fund transit operations, maybe even reducing fares. I believe far too much existing revenue is allocated to highway expansion.”

Here are the numbers:

- \$1.1 billion for transit operations (so called cap-and-trade funds)
- \$4 billion flexible for transit operations and capital spending (so called Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program funds)

This work doesn’t happen in a vacuum. Genesis leadership trained 787 people on how to engage with elected officials, how to tell our stories in a powerful way, and how to analyze who does what in the way of decision making. Please email us if you would like to get on the list for our next local training.

Finally, many Genesis supporters are part of our “angelic troublemakers” described by Bayard Rustin, because of our work with youth interns. Genesis had a cohort of seven college and high school level youth interns this year. This summer we engaged two youth from Fremont, an important and strategic focus of our work to impact Alameda County.



## **VISION**

Jerry & Bonnie Moran [bjmoran26@gmail.com](mailto:bjmoran26@gmail.com)

Sallie Sadler [sallie.sadler.phd@gmail.com](mailto:sallie.sadler.phd@gmail.com)

The VISION (Volunteers in Support of Oakland's Needs) program had a busy and productive year. During 2023, more than 50 St. John's families contributed to the bag lunch program. The Food Bank provided about 25,000 pounds of food. More than 13,000 bag meals were delivered to the Oakland homeless community. The VISION/Warmth effort provided coats, jackets, hats, shoes and socks for Vinnie Pannizzo's Mission For the Homeless (<https://www.missionforthehomeless.org/>). The program gratefully received grants from the Deanery and the Diocese this past year.

It was a special pleasure to welcome "Pastor" Vinnie to St. John's on Sunday, December 10. He was warmly received by the many parishioners who heard him speak after the 10am service. Many thanks to Sara Evinger, Sylvia Ahern, Laurie Bennett and Ray Riess who organized a Holiday Bazaar and donated the proceeds to Vinnie and his organization.

A special thanks to Sallie Sadler who will be moving to South Carolina. She was a "founding member" of VISION in June of 2020 and the creator of the VISION/Warmth effort.



## **Friends of Ruwenzori**

Anne Meyer [anne.meyer5023@gmail.com](mailto:anne.meyer5023@gmail.com)

We express profound gratitude for our enduring partnership with KIDA (Kitojo Integrated Development Action) in Uganda (<https://kidauganda.org/>). Despite the ongoing challenge of rising inflation affecting local Ugandans, KIDA's commitment to its vision, "Empowered people taking care of their lives," perseveres through the dedicated efforts of the local staff.

KIDA continues to expand and bolster the well-being of its community despite adversities. They recently acquired new land to relocate the vocational school next door and off the hospital campus, and substantial progress has been achieved in the construction process. Thirty vocational students have recently graduated equipped with carpentry, bricklaying, hairdressing, and tailoring skills. These graduates represent a path toward breaking the cycle of poverty for their families.



The hospital remains a focal point of the community, offering vital care to children battling malaria, supporting new mothers seeking immunizations for their babies, and ensuring safe deliveries. The campus bustles with families providing care to in-patients and often with the more than 100 children participating in the Orphans and Vulnerable Children program (OVC), either collecting essential supplies or offering their assistance as volunteers.

We remain immensely grateful to our generous St. John's donors for their unwavering support. Your contributions go beyond financial aid; your prayers are invaluable as Friends of Ruwenzori endeavors to achieve its mission of "Investing in healthcare and education to foster economic self-reliance for rural Ugandans." For more information, visit our website: [www.friendsofruwenzori.org](http://www.friendsofruwenzori.org)

## **Worship**

Molly Marion [molly.marion@gmail.com](mailto:molly.marion@gmail.com)

Worship continues to sail smoothly each week, all year. Across so many areas we've added new voices, altar guild members, ushers, etc. The 7:45am service continues to get volunteer readers and for 10am, I put out the call every few months to wrangle schedules and herd felines in order to get a full complement of readers and, re-introduced earlier this year, *cup bearers*, every Sunday. Sharing the common cup has added to the richness of the service and we are lucky to have it back. All this is not as easy as it sounds and I am grateful for all the willing participants and their flexibility. I love seeing faces from the congregation jump up for their assignments and enjoy the smiles and sense of pride felt by those participating.

Lori Robinson has continued to lead the charge with our intergenerational Sundays which has included CnC youth as they learn more about liturgical tradition and take an active part in the service. The intergenerational service continues to highlight the youth choir, caters to families with young children, and has the coolest hand/body movements for the Lord's Prayer. We are always looking for youth to help with this service (or any service, for that matter) as readers, so please contact Lori or me if you, or your youth, are interested.

Microphone management has gotten better; however, readers need to remember to speak directly and clearly into the lectern microphone. We will focus more on this in 2024!

With the addition of the most wonderful and talented Rev. Kathleen Moore, I hope to expand upon ideas to hear more of our people's voices within worship, use alternative prayers, and expand our liturgical minds even just a little bit. I am grateful for diverse voices and the willingness to serve within our community. If you are not a lay reader, cup bearer, usher, crucifer, or member of one of the guilds (altar, flower, and bread bakers) and would like to be, please contact me.

## **STAFF REPORTS**

### **Children & Youth Ministry**

Lori Robinson, Director of Children & Youth Ministry [lori@stjohnsoakland.org](mailto:lori@stjohnsoakland.org)

Nothing makes me happier than when children and youth gather and 2023 was full of such memorable moments. In addition to our regular programs of weekly children's worship and monthly intergenerational worship, Pizza Club, and Youth Group, below are some of the 2023 highlights.

#### **Alameda Deanery Youth Group**

Youth leaders from the Alameda Deanery meet monthly to plan three free, fun, and formative opportunities for youth per year. We pool our collective creativity and resources as we work together to provide these events. Each time we meet, we open with an activity designed to help us get to know each other so that we can work more effectively as a team. We share about what's happening at our individual churches and encourage each other. In 2023, Deanery events in which St. John's youth participated included:

MLK Overnight: Youth gathered at St. Paul's Oakland to learn more about Dr. King's legacy of advocacy for racial justice and to clean up trash around Lake Merrit. We played games, watched the movie *Selma*, slept in St. Paul's sanctuary, and made brown bag lunches to hand out to anyone who wanted one as we walked around the lake.

Kayaking Trip: We spent a beautiful day kayaking on the San Francisco Bay and picking up trash on the beach. St. John's paid for kayak rentals and the youth leaders and kids are very grateful to St. John's for its support of this event.

#### **Confirmation**

St. John's came together for a big celebration Welcome Back BBQ to kick off the program year and witness eight youth commit themselves to the 2023-2024 Confirm Not Conform (CnC) program.

In addition to regular class sessions, CnC participants spent a weekend at The Bishop's Ranch exploring how ritual informs faith and learning about the rituals of other faith traditions. The weekend included a Halloween party where we consumed copious amounts of candy and soda pop as we played a murder mystery game.

#### **New Youth Mindfulness Group**

In a conversation with The Rev. Scott Denman, Ashley Hendrickson and Jen Howard, both experienced meditation practitioners and parents of youth at St. John's, floated the idea of a St. John's youth mindfulness group.

The result of that conversation is St. John's new youth mindfulness program which launched last fall. There are two groups (4-6 grades and 7-12 grades) which meet on Tuesdays under Jen Howard's leadership with support from Scott and me. The group explores different types of meditation each week as we slow down and pay attention to ourselves and the world around us.

**Thank you!**

Thank you to those who support our children and youth programs with their time as volunteers. Thank you to those who support children and youth financially with your pledges. And a big thank you to all of our children, youth, and families for being part of the St. John's family.



## Music

Dr. Ben Riggs, Minister of Music [ben@stjohnsoakland.org](mailto:ben@stjohnsoakland.org)

It has been my honor to serve the congregation of St. John's Episcopal Church since August 2018.



The St. John’s music program had its strongest season in 2023 since returning to in-person worship following our time apart during the global pandemic. This was the first year we began to sing with optional face coverings, much to the relief of many members of the choir program.

The fall season brought several changes to the music program. The Chancel Choir successfully began rehearsing on Sunday mornings (rather than Thursday evenings) with periodic Saturday rehearsal intensives. This schedule change made it possible for two new members to participate, Andrew Gustafson and Kathy Araujo. Former youth choir member Olivia Friedrichs also sings with the Chancel Choir when her busy high school schedule permits.

Our Youth Choirs continue to rehearse on Tuesday evenings, but are now held concurrently with other Youth programs – Pizza Club, Youth Group Hangout, and Youth Mindfulness. This new schedule remains under evaluation, but has so far been quite engaging and successful.

Christmas Eve services were very well attended and featured outstanding music by our Youth Choirs, Chancel Choir, and guest string quartet. The new service time of 7:00 p.m. received positive feedback from choir members and congregants.

**YOUTH CHOIR 2023:**

Olivia Friedrichs  
 Kezia Sharnoff  
 Abi Ambrose  
 Harper Newman  
 Jameson Peake-McQueen  
 Sinead Peake-McQueen  
 Jaden Lukens  
 Keller Lukens  
 Jesse O’Dowd  
 Jimmy O’Dowd  
 Theresa Boozarpour

Ellery Streight Jenkins  
 Sam Streight Jenkins  
 Julia Storrar

**CHANCEL CHOIR  
 2023:**

Sopranos & Altos  
 Cheryl Keller  
 Sarah Blain  
 Sylvia Ahern  
 Sara Evinger  
 Bonnie Moran

Susan Merrill  
 Linda Long  
 Carrie Leadingham  
 Kathie Heller  
 Olivia Friedrichs

Tenors & Basses  
 Sigmund Seigel  
 Jim Hasler  
 Nancy Swearengen  
 Kathy Araujo  
 Andrew Gustafson  
 Bob Kridle

