



ST. MARTIN'S
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

2023 Annual Report

January 28, 2024

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Annual Meeting Agenda

January 28, 2024

- Opening Prayer and Necrology
- Welcome
- Approval of Minutes
- Warden's Report
- Treasurer's Report
- Thanking Departing Vestry Members
- Presentation and Election of Vestry
- Closing Remarks

Minutes - Annual Meeting, January 29, 2023

Vestry Officers Present:

The Rev. Mark Sutherland, Rector
The Rev. Linda Mackie Griggs, Assisting Priest
Cathy Bodner, Senior Warden
Debby Boedeker, Clerk

Staff Present:

Susan Esposito
Christian Tulungen

The meeting was convened by the Reverend Linda Mackie Griggs at approximately 11:40 a.m. 70 parish members were present in the Great Hall.

Opening Prayer: The Rev. Linda

Necrology: parish members who died in 2022 (The Rev. Linda):

Frank Durand
Paul DelCioppio
Candace Guberman

Welcome: The Reverend Mark Sutherland began by thanking Helen Anthony, Donna Huntley, and Mary Jane Pagan for providing refreshments at the meeting, as well as Gail Hamel and Jennifer Kiddie for working in the kitchen. He noted that Hospitality chair Linda Brookhart is at home with her husband David, who is ill with Covid. The Treasurer, David Whitman, is also ill. In addition, Financial Administrator Melinda DelCioppio and Junior Warden Amy Stewart were out of town. He then introduced Cathy Bodner, Senior Warden, to chair the meeting.

Approval of Minutes from the Annual Meeting held on January 30, 2022 (Cathy Bodner) It was proposed by Susan Allen, seconded by Helen Anthony, and unanimously VOTED: to accept the Minutes as submitted.

Treasurer's Report (presented by Chris Dennis, in lieu of David Whitman, who was ill; several corrections were supplied on Feb. 2 by Melinda DelCioppio.) Chris noted that the purpose of providing the Financial Report at the Annual Meeting is to present the details of last year's budget (2022), estimated and actual, and to publish the anticipated budget for 2023, which was approved by the vestry in December 2022. The 2023 budget is based on the estimated giving parishioners have planned and other estimated income sources (both totaling \$625,163). The anticipated expenses for 2023 are \$625,060 plus capital expenses. (Details of the 2022 and estimated 2023 budgets are provided in the extensive financial section of the 2022 annual report.) The annual and capital budgets support four general areas:

1. People (staff salaries – the largest component)
2. Operations (including utilities, costs of the goods and services we use, cleaning and upkeep, etc).
3. Buildings and grounds (over \$175,000 in 2022 was spent on repairs and renovations to the building, new security and communications systems (which are outside the operating budget and rely on monies from the Capital Campaign and endowment).
4. Philanthropy and outreach (which includes our \$84k apportionment to the diocese, and our Vestry-approved \$5,500 "local, small grants program," headed by Jennifer Kiddie)

The parish received about \$1.8 million in commitments from the capital campaign and all but \$120,000 has been collected, well before the Sept. 2023 deadline. This generosity of the parish has allowed us to create a special building fund to relieve the operating budget and provide for expected and unexpected renovations, and also a special giving fund to support outreach and philanthropy on a larger scale. The total endowment is currently \$2,558,763, proceeds from which help support the annual operating budget and capital outlays. With annual pledging units steady, and contributed dollar amounts and gifts coming out actually ahead of the last several years, the financial health of the parish is quite good and encouraging in the face of post-pandemic and inflationary headwinds.

Chris thanked the financial team -- David Whitman (Treasurer), Melinda DelCioppio (Financial Administrator), and Fla Lewis (Chair of the Finance Committee) -- and the entire parish for their exceptional generosity and support.

Warden's Report (Cathy Bodner): Cathy reviewed the parish events that took place in 2022 with a PowerPoint program that highlighted activities month by month. These included the relaxing of Covid-caused restrictions, beginning with resumption of in-person services in January. In September we celebrated Homecoming and Mission Sunday, providing information and sign-ups for committees and activities. Many physical improvements were made throughout the year (with thanks to David Brookhart and the Tool Team), in particular the installation of air-conditioning in the Parish House, major renovation of the office, repairs to the west wall, and new wiring. December saw a very successful Community Carol Sing and a live Christmas pageant. Cathy thanked departing Vestry members Jude Kostas, Ann Pellegrino, and Amy Stewart.

Approval of Vestry Officers and New Members (Cathy Bodner)

Officers:

Cathy Bodner (1 year remaining): Senior Warden
Sheila Hogeboom (1 year term): Junior Warden
Treasurer (1 year term): David Whitman
Clerk (1 year term): Debby Boedeker

Vestry Members (Class of 2026):

Patrick Hawkins
Susan Kostas
Brian Robert

Diocesan Convention Delegates:

Mary Jane Pagan (alternate: Steve McAleer)

It was proposed by Susan Allen, seconded by Beth Toolan, and unanimously VOTED: To approve the proposed Vestry candidates.

Closing Remarks: The Reverend Mark mentioned the handsome certificate that the parish received from the Rhode Island Secretary of State on the 125th anniversary of its founding. He thanked Cathy Bodner for her service as Senior Warden, and the other Vestry officers and members for their contributions to the parish.

After a closing prayer, The Reverend Mark adjourned the meeting at approximately 12:20 p.m.

Rector's Introduction to the Annual Report

In 2023 we enjoyed a fruitful year despite facing some strong headwinds. Being the custodians of an historic church building continues to remind me of John Donne's words in his *Hymn to God the Father*:

When thou hast done, thou hast not done, for [there is] more!

And indeed in 2023, there has been more work to be done, some of it foreseen and greatly welcomed, and some an unpleasant surprise. But to sum up at the outset of this report I would say that 2023 has been a year of solid achievement particularly in the key ministries of Philanthropy/Outreach and property maintenance. In fact, this unusual pairing reveals two of our key priorities – reaching out in service to make a real difference for good in the world around us while maintaining our historic buildings for the future.

In this year's Annual Report, to give a clearer sense of how our ministries cohere together, we've grouped the presentation of ministry reports in categories:

- Philanthropy/Outreach
- Portal Ministries
- Formation
- Parish Life
- Worship Life
- Facilities and Finance

In 2023, all our ministries have continued to reveal an energy for engagement among our members. I have an overall sense that in some areas of ministry endeavor 2023 has seen us break new ground:

- In the area of Philanthropy – I want to note the development of a cohesive application, quality assessment, and award making process for the distribution of funds from the Outreach Endowment. Under Philanthropy, the organization of and volunteer commitment to the Epiphany Soup Kitchen deserves special mention – especially in advertising materials and progress reporting through a regular newsletter.
- In Portal ministries, the 20-30's group has gained real traction in attracting, holding, and strengthening the contribution of this demographic to wider parish life.
- In Adult formation, the Tuesday evening Lent Program attracted record signup and attendance retention, and the Act Three Sunday morning seminars addressing the issues facing many of us in the third act of life have been wildly successful.
- In Parish life, hospitality pioneered a highly successful approach to the St Martin's Parish Feast by having Amos House cater the meal.
- In Worship life, the music ministry continued to refine the particular character of our worship experience, while the tech desk continued to grow in experience and expertise in presenting our worship to a wider participation.

Challenges ahead

We continue to maintain our historic buildings for the benefit of both present and future generations. However, I do foresee a time when the demands of this may outstrip the relative size and financial resources of our community. Early indications from the return of members' estimates of giving information for 2024, show a continued fall in the number pledging units if

not – at least for the time being - the actual dollar value of the pledges. This reflects the wider demographic trend of a marked shift in societal valuing of institutional life. Good causes continue to excite support but the commitment to the institutions that gather and hold community together is weakening. This is evidenced in the impact of modern life on levels of volunteering and post pandemic patterns of less regular Sunday worship observance. Yet, through energy and attention to our web communication, social networking, and livestreaming of services we are continually increasing the size of our footprint. The result is that new people are finding us online and seeking us out in real time by coming through our doors on a Sunday morning for our particular blend of traditional worship and radical theological messaging.

An encouraging sign in 2024 is that the average age of the Vestry will be younger than in 2023 – bucking wider social trends. New energetic senior lay leadership is another indication of our becoming a more magnetic and proactive community. The divine synchronicity in God's providence ensures that those meeting the challenges of the coming year will be the right people, possessing the right skills stepping forward at the opportune time.

In the face of real-world challenges, strengthened by grace, we endeavor to become better fit for the purposes God calls us to fulfill. In my Christmas Eve sermon, I reflected that no matter how dark things may appear, darkness not only has no power to extinguish the divine light – but provides the fuel for the light to burn even brighter. At the beginning of 2024, we should take heart! Because the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness will never, ever overcome it, we have work to do, and that work is to align ourselves with the divine purpose of the world's healing.

We align with the divine dream of the world's restoration when we cherish the light burning deep within each one of us – and by sharing that light with one another through collective action and concentrating the light to grow ever brighter. In doing so we will continue to give a good account of the hope that propels us forward.

*O God of unchangeable power and eternal light: Look favorably on your whole Church, that wonderful and sacred mystery; by the effectual working of your providence, carry out in tranquility the plan of salvation; **let the whole world see and know that things which were being cast down are being raised up, and things which had grown old are being made new, and that all things are being brought to their perfection by him through whom all things were made, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.** (Pg. 540 BCP)*

Mark+, January 2024

Warden's Report

I've had the great fortune of working with a truly supportive Vestry, especially our Junior Warden Sheila Hooageboom. For this I will be eternally grateful. The Outreach and Philanthropy Committee has done a remarkable job of codifying our program and identifying recipients of grants. The Thrifty Goose continues to serve the greater community, as well as to generate income for our programs. Our partnership with Temple Beth El grew as we worked together with refugee resettlement and shared worship. And I must mention the work of Hugh and Bonnie Gorman, who researched, authored, and continue to work on an Emergency Response Protocol to safeguard the congregation and all who make use of our facilities. I also must thank the staff of St. Martin's church. We are so blessed to have this team to support us.

Our Annual Meeting in **January** saw the election of Sheila Hooageboom as Jr. Warden, with Debby Boedeker and David Whitman remaining as Clerk and Treasurer, respectively. Joining us on the vestry were Susan Kostas, Patrick Hawkins, David Barrall and Beth Toolan. Epiphany Game Night brought the adults together with the children for a fun evening. And the adults proved to be very good at sharing!

The Vestry Retreat in **February** provided an introduction of new members and veterans. It was a meaningful opportunity for all members to bond and to offer their talents to the important work of this essential group. Under the leadership of Chris Dennis and Sheila, a working group was established to implement our refined outreach and philanthropy program, to include stewardship and gratitude. The organ is in need of significant repair. Vestry members attended an informative "Lead and Learn" program offered by the diocese. And the Pancake Supper fed our bellies and souls!

March offered two Lenten programs. Linda Griggs' lunchtime book club focused on Rachel Held Evans' "Inspired", bringing clarity to all participants on our thoughts about the bible as we discussed our experiences growing up as Christians. "Another Story Must Begin", by Jonathan Meyer, guided discussion as we focused on "Les Miserables", under the leadership of Mark+. Our weekly suppers, catered by Amos House were delicious!

Joshua's Bible Study program began in **April**. We are all so grateful to them for sharing his knowledge and inspiration. St. Martin's parishioners made a 50 day commitment to support the cause of the American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem in their effort to support families in the West Bank and Gaza who have children with disabilities. The Vestry adopted the Outreach and Philanthropy Plan, so thoughtfully developed and written by the working group. Sheila led our efforts to formalize our partnership with Temple Beth El to help in the resettlement of displaced families.

In **May**, David Brookhart led the vestry on a detailed "grand tour" of our building. It was an eye-opener indeed! We are stewards of a truly significant facility, and we were all impressed with the importance of its maintenance. It's time to raise funds to repair the organ!

Sheila planned the first meeting of committee chairs in **June**. We came together to share our mission statements and to coordinate our scheduling, communication, collaboration and feedback. Our community members are doing such important work! Bonnie and Hugh Gorman generously agreed to work with Cathy and Sheila on guidelines for dealing with critical situations in the church building and on the grounds, including medical emergencies and active threat situations. And the bad news: The leaded windows in the lower sacristy need work!

More bad news in **July**. Storm damage! Thankfully, we have David Brookhart to oversee this work.

August was typically quiet. Time to catch our collective breath and to see to the work on the building. The Tool Team did not get much time off, as they worked on painting and electricity, and investigating problems with the foundation.

Homecoming in **September** brought the ice cream truck back. What a great way to gather back together! Our annual Mission Sunday was replaced with Mission Sundays (plural). With a limited number of presentations per week, each committee was able to reach more people with more information about their focus. Kudos to the staff of St. Martin's church for facilitating these events!

Lt. Potter of the Providence Police Department led the first step of the Emergency Preparedness plan in **October** with instruction in responding to active threat situations. After a tour of the building, he was able to tailor his presentation to the particular needs and threats to our community in our space. In attendance were our ushers, vestry embers, and staff. Linda+ blessed the animals. I have not heard of any conflict between cats, dogs, etc. (St. Francis was clearly present!) The Estate Sale netted a significant addition to our cash flow. Our thanks to all who worked for weeks to pull this off. And the repaired Sacristy Windows were installed!

The Feast of St. Martin in **November** was catered by Amos House. In a change from the past, pot luck was limited to the desert course provided by the hospitality bakers. Kathryn and Linda+ began *Act III*, addressing the needs of all of us as we prepare for the later phases of life. Work continued on the west wall. And the organ still needs repair! The interfaith Thanksgiving service held At Temple Beth El was particularly meaningful this year.

Our hearts were open again in **December**, thanks to the annual efforts of Karen Ng. Gifts were supplied to 51 children in the care of the Department of Children, Youth, and Family. Gabe Alfieri and John Brooks led us in a community carol sing again, and goodies were enjoyed by all! Linda+ celebrated the annual Blue Christmas service. The *Grace Note Singers* and the *Providence Threshold Singers* joined us for this important event. On Christmas Eve two services were offered. An intergenerational celebration came into the twenty-first century with the use of our tech team in the afternoon. In the evening, our traditional "Midnight Mass" included the voices of our excellent choir with the added beauty of Cheryl Bischoff on the oboe. What would December be with a good storm? So we had one, complete with leaks in the walls. David Brookhart is the blessing who always sees to these repairs.

All things considered, we've had a good year here at St. Martin's. We welcomed Kaley Casenhiser from Yale University, who will be working on theology and ecology in her internship here. The Thrifty Goose continues to do well – the best in the state according to the Rhode Island Magazine! Our emergency operations plan is nearing completion. Outreach and Philanthropy have increased support to those in need. Sheila and Patrick have begun to study the potential uses of our facilities for service to the community, as well as for income for the parish. I leave the leadership of the Vestry in the capable hands of Sheila Hoozeboom and Brian Robert, with confidence and my gratitude. With their dedication and energy, I know we will all see great things in the future of St. Martin's Church.

Respectfully submitted,
Catherine Bodner, Senior Warden

Outreach

The term “outreach” covers a broad range of activity and authorized spending in support of our obligation to help our neighbors, highlighted, for example, in Jesus’s parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37). In the parlance of St. Martin’s budgeting, “outreach” can refer variously to: the annual, operating budget line item (about \$5,500), separate from special funds; the rector’s annual emergency fund (\$7,000), to assist those with urgent financial needs; the diocesan apportionment in 2023 (\$77,829); individual parishioner’s contributions to the Episcopal Charities (not part of the St. Martin’s budget process); and “pass through” funds where parishioners give donations to St. Martin’s that are earmarked for particular groups or events.

Thanks to the community’s generosity and foresight in its recent, successful capital campaign, St. Martin’s now also has a special “endowed” fund of about \$248,289, proceeds from which are designated annually by the vestry for outreach support. The Outreach and Philanthropy Committee (OPC) oversees grant approvals for both the operating budget line (\$5,500 in 2023) and the vestry-approved, annual “draw” from the new outreach, endowed fund (\$14,000 in 2023).

Separately, parishioners also contribute to the diocesan Episcopal Charities of RI (ECRI). St. Martin’s parishioners gave, in aggregate, \$13,000 in 2023. These contributions are yet another important feature of outreach giving and distribution. The diocese oversees grants from donations to ECRI, which generally require that grantees have a connection with at least one church community in the diocese. Two ECRI grantees, Hope Clinic/Clinica Esperanza and the Epiphany Soup Kitchen are associated with St. Martin’s.

Clearly, there are many other kinds of outreach that include, for example: volunteer efforts of time, such as staffing the soup kitchen; the Thrifty Goose; annual collections of clothing and other goods; the youth services Christmas drive; the knitting/prayer shawl ministry; the estate sale, and many others. These are all important in the life of St. Martin’s and constitute a larger understanding of “outreach.”

Outreach and Philanthropy Committee

Committee Members:

Chris Dennis, co-convener
Sheila Hoogeboom, co-convener
Jennifer Kiddie
Susan Kostas
Carol Landau
Bob Saik
Beth Toolan
Sammi Tulungen

Acting on the recommendations from the Outreach Planning document from 2022 (and detailed in the 2022 Annual Report), the vestry formally established OPC as a vestry committee and asked the newly constituted OPC to consider helpful organizational rules of the road that might guide decision-making about grants--and to implement procedures for awarding grants, for streamlining communications to grantees and for making regular reports to the vestry on expenditures and outreach matters. The vestry also asked OPC to make grants across the

calendar year rather than awarding most grants at the end of the year, a request that OPC was able to meet in its 2023 awards.

In 2019-21 donations or grants from the annual budget line item (\$5,500 per year) included about ten grants per year at an average of \$583.00 per grant. In these years individual grants ranged from \$250 to \$1,000.

For 2023, the vestry approved both the \$5,500 operating budget line item and a \$14,000 draw from the endowed outreach fund for a total of \$19,500. OPC was, consequently, able to increase grants and awards significantly, making a total of thirteen grant awards, including to both local and international organizations. The areas of grant awards included funds to address homelessness, food insecurity, support of disabled children in the Diocese of Jerusalem, health of women and support of new mothers. OPC also worked to streamline the grant-request process, to invite grant requests and to keep grant paperwork to a minimum, an effort noted especially by several of our awardees. OPC also worked with the Church Office staff to provide timely information, grant confirmation letters and checks to awardees.

OPC Grant Awards this year:

- CLOAK 2022 clothing expenses (\$1811)
- Princess Basra Program for Disabled Children and their Parents--Diocese of Jerusalem (\$2,000)
- Clothing charges for the men of Harrington Hall-- (\$1,650)
- Epiphany Soup Kitchen food and supplies (\$1,000)
- Epiphany Soup Kitchen equipment purchase and repair (\$3,000)
- City Meal Site, Tuesday Meals (\$1,000)
- Crossroads-Housing Problem Solving Program (\$1839)
- Rhode Island Food Bank—Summer Food Program for Youth (\$1,000)
- Open Doors transitional housing project (\$2,000)
- Clinica Esperanza (\$1,000)
- Diocese of Jerusalem- Al Ali Hospital Gaza (\$2,000)
- Women's Health & Education Fund of RI (WHEF-RI) (\$600)
- Doulas Conectadas of RI (\$600)

Looking Ahead to 2024: Our hope is to do more communicating about OPC's work and about awarded grants in 2024, and the office has volunteered to help us get the word out, especially for example, in the Thursday E-News and in other ways. OPC feels that its charge includes considering with the parish new ways to think about outreach and philanthropy, and we hope to work with the parish leadership and clergy to consider how best to make progress in this area.

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Dennis, Convener

“Our Hearts Are Open” Advent Project (DCYF)

The St. Martin's “Our Hearts Are Open” Advent Project fulfilled its mission in 2023 by completing the holiday wish lists of 53 children associated with the RI Department of Children, Youth and Families. We had close to 100 mostly St. Martin's parishioners sign up to shop, wrap, and deliver presents. We delivered 5 car loads of Christmas presents 6 days before Christmas to the DCYF's main office in downtown Providence. Our DCYF contact informed us that St. Martin's helps the largest number of children during the holiday season. Thanks to everyone for their enthusiasm and support.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Ng

Epiphany Soup Kitchen

The Epiphany Soup Kitchen (ESK) is a non-profit organization in Providence, RI that started at our namesake, the now closed South Providence Epiphany Episcopal Church. ESK was later rescued in 1981 by St. Martin's parishioners, Elke Moonan and Gail Peet, and St. Stephen's parishioner, Bruce Lennihan, when it was at risk of closing down due to lack of volunteers. When the Bishop closed and sold the church in 1988, ESK moved to Grace Episcopal Church in downtown Providence. In 2009, we moved to St. Stephen's Episcopal Church where we are currently located.

Our organization feeds a hot meal to people in need every Saturday afternoon. We reopened for in-person dining in September 2022 after being take-out only throughout the pandemic, and we have been open every Saturday since then, including holidays and days with inclement weather. 2023 was a year of tremendous growth in numbers for ESK as we recovered from the pandemic and built back up with renewed energy. We served over 1300 meals throughout the year, averaging around 26 guests per week. We also welcomed about a hundred new volunteers from various parishes and schools in the community.

Through a grant from the Rhode Island Foundation, we were able to provide fresh fruits and vegetables that our guests would not likely find at food pantries. With the grant money, we also began celebrating guests' birthdays each month with a special cupcake and candle for each of them to make a wish on. Lastly, we ran clothing and toiletry drives throughout the year to help supplement other basic needs our guests may have. We gained a lovely new Resource Drive Coordinator who has been heading these efforts.

In May of 2023, we were awarded “Best of the Best” by the RI Food Bank and worked with a professional graphic designer (who is also one of our volunteers) to design new flyers and business cards. If you are on our email list, you may have noticed that ESK has also begun publishing regular newsletters to keep volunteers informed and inspired.

In June of 2023, we were awarded a \$4,500 “Agency Capacity Grant” for capital improvement. A team of volunteers, comprised entirely of St. Martin's parishioners, worked hard to buy kitchen supplies to replace outdated equipment in the fall. They then met multiple times over the winter to clean and reorganize the kitchen. While improvements are never ending, we are proud of the work we have done over the past year. We look forward to continuing to grow our ministry in 2024.

Lastly, we are so grateful to our friends on the St. Martin's Outreach and Philanthropy Committee (OPC), the Episcopal Charities Grants, and several other individuals for donations and grants we received. These were all put towards our general operations, including paying our chef and purchasing other supplies needed to serve our guests.

Longtime board member and former kitchen manager, Gail Peet, passed away on June 7th of this year. She was 83 years old. We honor Gail's legacy by continuing to run the Epiphany Soup Kitchen as she would. Elke and Bruce remain on the Board along with Mary Blake, Elizabeth Blake, and Karen Ng who is currently on leave.

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Blake, ESK Volunteer Coordinator

The Cloak

Harrington Hall: We provide 40 sets of underwear, pairs of socks, and razors each month, and as much weather appropriate clothing as possible from parish donations (direct & through The Goose), St. Martin's Coat Drive, and the annual Winter clothing bin at Wayland Square Starbucks. We thank Paul Bergeron for his ongoing service of deliveries to Harrington, and for his help in collecting donations from parishioners.

Camp Street Ministries: We give bags of donated clothing for men, women and children each week or two throughout the year. At Christmas time we always have new hats, scarves, gloves to offer thanks to the Starbucks community donations. We thank Richard Burling and Paul Bergeron for help in transportation.

Nathan Bishop Middle School: For the second year we held a back-to-school drive for kids in need of school supplies, clothing and grooming products. We help stock The Caring Closet from which teachers provide for kids affected by poverty. Thanks to monetary donations we are able to supplement during the school year. We thank the Belmonts for transporting donations.

The Salvation Army Store on Pitman Street: We pass along donated towels, bedding, housewares, books and small furniture for their sale in support of recovery programs. The store is a place for those of lesser means to shop with dignity. We thank Richard Burling and Jill & Denny Scott for help in transport.

The Rhode Island Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals: They have recently moved to a beautiful, enlarged facility, where we deliver bedding, leashes, toys and food in support of their community adoption program. Families of less means may take what they need for their pets, whose spaying, neutering and shot fees are waived. We thank Kevin Cunningham for his help in transport.

Savers: Materials not used by The Thrifty Goose or Cloak are delivered to Savers which gives some proceeds to the Boys and Girls Club. We thank David Ely and Daniel Sheldon for weekly deliveries. The Goose and Cloak participate each Spring in gathering clothing for our ministries from The Wheeler School at the end of their sale. Meg Lo Presti and I thank our new volunteers, Bonnie Gorman and Gail Hamel, for their help in sorting the donations.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Jane Pagan

Episcopal Charities

Beginning in the early 1950s, St. Martin's has been one of the founders of Episcopal Charities of RI (Charities) and continues to be an active church participant in the fund raising activities of Charities. In recent years Charities stated focus is supporting organizations which "serve children and seniors at risk." For 2023 approximately \$13,000 was raised from St. Martin's for Charities (including \$4,100 for Charities Now, a program started in 2020 during the Covid Pandemic to disburse funds quickly throughout the year). This compares to an estimated \$18,000 donated from St. Martin's during 2022 (including around \$4,000 for Charities Now). Similarly, state-wide fund raising for Episcopal Charities in 2023 was down approximately 15% from 2022. This decline has been attributed to the negative impact of inflation and economic uncertainty. RI Episcopal parishes have been increasingly conducting their own outreach and fundraising to support their local charities rather than rely entirely on Episcopal Charities.

Respectfully submitted,
Stevens McAleer

AWE - All Welcome Resettlement

St. Martin's continues to work with Temple Beth-El to serve new immigrants through Dorcas International Institute. This was a quiet year for our efforts to resettle new immigrants moving to RI. The team completed the refugee resettlement in 2022 and currently new immigrants do not have "refugee" status which would come with certain benefits and funding. Temple Beth-El and St. Martin Leadership Team toured the Dorcas International facilities located in Providence in September and we set up 2 apartments in one building on Branch Ave in August with 9 volunteers (5 from St. Martin's). Plans for 2024 are in the works to continue to help resettle immigrants if possible.

Sheila Hoogeboom, St. Martin's Liaison to AWE

Portal Ministries

Hospitality

Hospitality and welcoming parishioners have gone hand in hand at St. Martin's since its inception. Before Covid we were lucky enough to have a committee of 20 members. Since Covid our committee has been small, but mighty.

Ongoing is our Coffee Hour after the 10:00 AM service on Sundays. Sign-ups started slowly, yet we now have only a few open dates left to fill in each of the coming months. Thanks to all who have provided Coffee Hour treats so far. They've been lovely. If you haven't volunteered yet, please feel free to do so. There's a simple hand-out attached to the calendar sign-up page that explains what to bring. It's an easy and wonderful way to celebrate our church community.

In November the Hospitality Committee took on the role of planning for and decorating the Great Hall for our St. Martin's Feast Day and Evensong. This year the Coq Au Vin dinner and trimmings were catered by Amos House. Members of the committee provided platters of cookies for dessert. It was a very enjoyable and successful evening of delicious food and camaraderie. Thanks so much to Hospitality co-chair Donna Huntley, Pat Whitman, Mary Jane Pagan, Gail Hamel, Rebecca Kidwell, Ellen Patterson and Jennifer Kiddie for their untiring diligence and talents.

In December we hosted a Christmas Tea after our Community Carol Sing. Huge thanks to all who contributed cookies for the occasion. We thought we would run out of serving trays and serving room because there were so many delicious choices! Another fun and entertaining afternoon of church community celebration. Thanks again to Donna Huntley, Pat Whitman, Mary Jane Pagan, Piya Sarawgi, Rebecca Kidwell and Ellen Patterson for their ongoing efforts.

As the year moves through winter toward Spring, the Hospitality team looks forward to helping in any way we can.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Brookhart
Donna Huntley
Co-Chairs

20's/30's Group

This year the 20's/30's group at St. Martin's significantly changed our approach and harvested some hopeful first fruits. In the beginning of the year, we encouraged our members to participate with the SMEC community in a more integrated way, especially by attending the Lenten study led by Father Mark and greeting members of other generations at coffee hour. Over the summer, as expected, activity slowed, but picked up again in the autumn. New members came in from several directions, including other local churches, out of state church shoppers, and even some of Joshua's TikTok followers. It seems clear that the millennial and z generations are beginning to see the value in a theologically traditional, radically welcoming faith.

These new participants brought an enthusiasm, initiative, and religiosity we may have been missing from our peers in the past, which makes us hopeful that the 20's/30s group will continue on a trajectory of self-starting, regular fellowship. Our activities this year included social hangouts, whether in the comfort of our own homes, at a nightclub for karaoke, or at Grace Church for a concert featuring one of our members. In an exciting shift this year, we also met for worship, including the 20's/30's-hosted Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe in the chapel. We gathered several times for Evening Prayer in our living rooms, and for the new college ministry masses at St. Stephen's in an effort to nourish budding inter-ecclesiastical relationships. 20's/30's participation in the annual DCYF Christmas project was also strong this year, and we completed the shopping for unclaimed recipients.

Our plan for next year is to continue our casual approach to regular social gatherings, but to offer more in the way of peer-led worship and cooperation with other churches. Our members feel right at home at St. Martin's, but have expressed a desire for connection with the larger Diocese.

Respectfully submitted,
Joshua Maria Garcia
Olivia Stine

Meditation

We met for the seventh year as a group open to all regardless of religious belief or prior experience. Our weekly attendance ranges from four to 14. We break for summer months of July and August and for Holidays. Our home of several years is now permanently in the Fireplace Room on the third floor.

Meditation varies in style and content depending on the week's leader. We always sit in silence on cushions or chairs, or lying on a mat covered with a blanket. We usually walk. We always reflect quietly on readings or prompts. We often relax deeply through guided body meditation or "Yoga Nidra." In nice weather we may walk in silence to the Memorial Garden. There is always time for sharing experiences before we close.

We were led this year by Fr. Mark, Prof. Brad Marston, Joshua Maria Garcia and myself. Joshua joined us this year in our rotating leadership roles, while Prof. Marston resigned after his election as President of the American Physical Society. He contributed greatly to the welcoming and peaceful spirit of the group. We will miss him and look forward to welcoming him back as an occasional group member.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Jane Pagan

Gander Writers' Group

We met at 1pm the first Monday of each month in the Stearns Room. We submitted short pieces of writing - essays, short fiction, memoirs, etc. - to be read and discussed by the group. At present we have six members, and new members are always welcome to join. Contact the Parish Office if interested.

Respectfully submitted,
David Ely

Gander Lunch Group

How can we serve? Is it enough to come together every six weeks or so to enjoy a catered lunch in the Great Hall and share topics of interest as they emerge during our time together? The conversations we have are often illuminating and cover a wide range of concerns: social, religious, political, economic, outreach, and/or response to particular needs. What is important is the building of relationships that contribute to our church community as we are all "busy about God."

We have about two dozen names on our lunch list. There is always room for more, so we invite anyone interested to contact the church office or the undersigned for information and dates. We look forward to our time together.

Respectfully submitted,
David Ames+

Gander Book Group

St Martin's Gander (Men's) Reading Group, organized in 2019, now meets every 6 weeks or so, taking off the summer months. We resumed meeting in person Spring 2022 with our "volunteer" hosts and attendees numbering between 10 and 12 people. Our group mutually agrees on our forward schedule and readings (ranging from biography, history, novels, poetry, or topical articles of interest such as AI). We are exploring several plays by acclaimed playwright August Wilson with Brian Robert as our host. Anyone interested in learning more about our Gander Group, we would love to hear from you.

Respectfully submitted,
Stevens McAleer

Knitting Ministry

In 2023 the Knitting Ministry, now in its tenth year, continued to meet in person throughout the year, including during the Summer. Our group of dedicated knitters and crocheters produced many beautiful prayer shawls which were distributed to those in need of comfort. We also gave small blankets to newly christened babies. The prayer shawls were blessed at the altar during a Sunday service.

Respectfully submitted,
Natasha Lofgren, Chair

Women's Spirituality Group

The Women's Spirituality Group is a lay-led gateway ministry of St. Martin's Church which completed its eighth year in 2023. We welcome women of all ages and faiths and those who identify as female. We encourage members to bring friends, and welcome members from outside the parish. Within WSG, women form lasting intergenerational relationships in a warm social atmosphere with spiritual nourishment in an inclusive, cohesive, caring and supportive whole. At each monthly meeting, after a meet and greet rich with potluck food and drink, we have a circle of introduction, and then member-presented spiritually nourishing programs. All gatherings are free of charge. Come and see!

Happily in 2023, we met regularly, mostly in the Stearns Room, and, in May and December, back at Susan Allen's house. We have enjoyed programs on Epiphany and the Natural World, inspired by *An Advent Book of Days: Meeting the Characters of Christmas* by Gregory Kenneth Cameron, where we followed the paths of the three Wise Men, priests or Kings, from the East to Bethlehem (Mary Jane Pagan), and Imbolc, Lent and Lectio Divina (Susan Allen) in February and March, as well as several members joining our Temple Bethel sisters at their Women's Community Seder next door (Sheila Hoogeboom). In April we explored Hive Christianity, an innovative feminist spiritual movement within the Episcopal Church, led by The Rev. Dr. Hillary Raining, a 4th-generation beekeeper, yoga instructor, meditator, and Yale PhD of Irish and Ojibway (Chippewa) descent and thus deeply knowledgeable in Celtic Christianity and native American spiritual practices (Jane Dennison). In May Joseleyne Slade shared her life journey after which we honored her with a surprise 96th birthday party. June brought a return to the Allen house for a garden party. In September we met twice, first celebrating the life of Ann Coburn, a pioneer priest in the Episcopal Church and the first woman rector at St. Martin's and passionate advocate for the Palestinian people (Maurine Tobin), next celebrating God and the Holy Spirit in nature through "Wild Worship," a Creation Care program at Swan Point Cemetery (Yale intern Kaley Casenhiser, Norman McLeod, and Kathryn Barr). Some joined Province 1 Indigenous People's Justice Network Zoom Book Study Series in examining our understanding and preconceived notions about settler/indigenous peoples' relationships in 17th-century New England and today, a process that continued until early January 2024. We did not meet in October as I was on pilgrimage in Ireland. In November and December we read and discussed *All Creation Waits* by Gayle Boss about how wild animals prepare for winter (Susan Allen).

I am happy to report that each meeting has included first timers and has been warmly appreciated by all attendees. As leader, I send a recap of each meeting to all women of St. Martin's and members at large so that even those who do not attend can feel a part of the group and learn from the content shared. I also send notices of programs of interest in the wider community to the group which are gratefully received. I actively solicit ideas and recruit presenters for future programs.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Allen

Christian Formation

Children's Formation

KidZone Church School continued in 2023 with lectionary-based lessons January through June. Beginning in September, the children used lessons based on the Abundant Life Garden Project®, Creation care, and the book, All Creation Waits by Gayle Boss. The routine established in 2022 continued whereby children move through a variety of activities including coloring, reading, listening, praying, singing, dancing, and creating.

While the in-person KidZone attendance hovers between 3 and 5 students, and we would love to have more children, we are delighted to share lessons about God's Creation with any children who step through the doors. To keep the community aware of the children, Kathryn and Linda send emails to the families and volunteers, post on social media, display slides in the Atrium, and report in enews.

We are thankful to the families who prioritize Sunday morning worship and learning and to those who have assisted in KidZone including Cathy Bodner, Tim Edgar, Meg LoPresti, Sheila Hoogeboom, Penny Seacord, and Donna Huntley.

In other KidZone news, the season of Advent began with the annual Advent wreath-making session during coffee hour. This year a number of families and individuals participated in making at least 15 wreaths—we actually ran out of supplies! And on the second Sunday of Advent, in honor of his feast day, KidZone received a visit from St. Nicholas, who told stories, brought small treats, and then participated in Eucharist with the children. Thanks to David Brookhart for making St. Nicholas' visit possible...

Christmas Eve Service: This year we decided to forego the traditional Christmas Pageant and instead present a reading of the children's story, *The Christmas Miracle of Jonathan Toomey*, by Susan Wojciechowski. In a first for St. Martin's, the story was accompanied by a slideshow (created by David Brookhart) of the beautiful illustrations by P.J. Lynch. Since the story was about a woodcarver and his creation of figures for a nativity scene, the children in the congregation were invited to bring our nativity figures to the altar for the blessing of the creche.

A number of people asked why we weren't having a pageant this year. For the past several years we have struggled mightily to find enough families with children who are able and willing to plan ahead in order to help with and participate in the pageant. While we often do have a number of children at the 4:00 service on Christmas Eve who are visiting with relatives, that's not enough lead time to cast, costume and rehearse a pageant. Hence this year we tried something different. We will continue to explore ways in which we can include young ones in our Christmas Eve 4:00 service, and when we have enough people willing and able to help and participate we hope to bring the pageant back.

We are excited about 2024, and we are thankful for the kids and adults who make KidZone a special time.

Adult Formation

Wednesday Zoom Book Study

2023 continued our popular Wednesday noon book group that met in Lent and during the Summer and Fall, led by Linda Griggs+ and Kathryn Barr. In Lent the group discussed Rachel Held Evans' *Inspired: Slaying Giants, Walking on Water, and Loving the Bible Again*. In June, continuing the one-chapter-per-week tradition of the "Slowest Book Group in the World", we discussed Katherine May's *Enchantment* from June to October. Plans are already underway for the next selections, and we look forward to our 2024 zoom gatherings.

Lent Program

Our popular Tuesday evening Lenten dinner series focused on the theological themes of the film, *Les Misérables* and was led by Mark Sutherland+. A simple supper catered by Amos House was followed by viewing sections of the film, background on the story, and discussion. About 25-30 attended each week.

In addition to the Lent series, the church was open at scheduled times in order for people to take a self-guided audio journey with the Stations of the Cross.

Act 3

In September, LIFE: Act 3, a series of seminars focused on the last third of a person's life was launched by Kathryn Barr, Linda Griggs+, and Mark Sutherland+. Meeting monthly on Sundays after Coffee Hour, the topics have included green burial and other out-of-the box options after death, brain resilience, and the importance of facing death in order to live in the present. Approximately thirty-five people have attended each seminar. Additionally, an occasional newsletter is sent to the participants of Act 3 with resources and news of interest. After a December and January break, the seminars will resume in February.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathryn Barr
The Rev. Linda Griggs

Pastoral Care

The Pastoral Care Ministry is responsible for two functions: Eucharistic Visitors, who take Communion to people who are not able to attend church; and healing liturgies, which include a monthly Healing Eucharist and the annual Blue Christmas Service.

Our number of Eucharistic Visitors has still not rebounded from pre-COVID days, but we do have a regular need for visits, which have usually been covered by clergy. We would like to increase the number of Visitors in order to offer this ministry more widely. Potential Visitors, after discussion with clergy, would apply for licensing with the Diocese and need to receive Safe Church certification. If you feel called to this ministry, please contact Linda+ or Mark+.

Our Healing Eucharist takes place at 5:30 p.m. on the third Tuesday of each month during the program year. A combination of flyers, word-of-mouth and parish-wide communication, and presence on social media is a valuable factor in steady attendance; we have a number of “regulars”, but each service includes new people, some of whom are not members of the parish, which speaks well for our ability to reach beyond the church walls. The short liturgy, which includes intercessory prayer and laying-on-of-hands and anointing, is a time to bring concerns for the self, loved ones, or the world, and lay those burdens at God’s feet, resting in God’s presence. Attendance has ranged from 6 to 16 people.

An offshoot of the Healing Service is the annual Blue Christmas service on the 21st of December, now in its 9th year. This service, “for the sorrowful in a time of joy” takes place on the shortest day and the longest night of the year; a time when those who struggle during the holiday season may find solace and hope in the fact that, after the darkest night, the light begins to return as Earth turns toward Spring. Blue Christmas is a service of prayer and candle-lighting accompanied by quiet music, this year provided by Tom Barr on piano and the combined voices of the Providence Threshold Singers and the Grace Notes Singers. This year we added a new component to the candle-lighting; in recognition of the pain and trauma of wars in Ukraine and in Israel/Gaza we lit a Candle for Peace and passed its flame through the congregation so that each person could carry their own candle for peace out into the world.

Blue Christmas was available both in person (72 people) and on livestream (14 views) again this year, reaching one person as far away as Florida. Again this year I noticed that many of the people present were new to me—another very good sign that we are reaching beyond our walls.

A few days after the service I received a card from one of the people who attended: “Dear Mark and Linda--Many thanks for the deeply meaningful Blue Christmas service yesterday, attended by 4 generations of our family. My sister-in-law was singing in the Grace Notes Singers. My mother-in-law...and I attended 2 yrs. ago when she had first lost her husband of 60+ years. Yesterday, a cousin drove...from CT as she has recently moved to retirement community there...Thanks for the light you both helped shine in a way that did not minimize realities of these days.”

Many thanks to everyone who has assisted with Blue Christmas, Healing Eucharist, and pastoral visiting in the past year. As shown in the note above, we may never know how what we do can bring healing and comfort to another.

Respectfully submitted,
The Rev. Linda Griggs

Worship Life

Music

Music at St. Martin's continued to evolve in 2023 as we conquered obstacles and explored new ways of enhancing worship through music. We spent most of the year without a tenor section leader and battling the ongoing decline of the organ. Now that we have a regular service contract and schedule for the organ, the hope is that any *avoidable* further decline in the condition of the instrument is being stemmed. At least it is being seen and maintained regularly now (thank you, John!).

Our Adult Choir continues to be a small but mighty group of more or less committed parishioners led by our intrepid section leaders, Lori, Amanda & Glenn. In the fall, we finally found not one but two new tenors who are currently co-leading our tenor section and sharing solo opportunities, as well as allowing the St. Martin's Chapel Consort to expand its repertoire into 5- and 6-part works. Gavin Gallooly is a music major at Rhode Island College and Thomas Seeger is a music major at Brown. Though both are relatively inexperienced, with the ongoing scheduling conflicts of college students, together they are covering our needs well so far.

Sadly, the St. Martin's Young Person's Choir (formerly the Kids Choir) never picked up steam again after the pandemic. Despite our best efforts, the final count was 4 children and, since they were sibling pairs, household illness or family schedule conflicts often took out half the choir at once. In the end, it proved impossible to maintain a functioning choir under such circumstances.

Similarly, the decision was made to cancel monthly Evensong due to consistently low attendance. The funds saved there have been put to good use elsewhere, such as our Holy Week and Easter program, which seemed especially well received in 2023. A new Passion setting and the beautiful addition of strings made the Good Friday service exceptionally evocative and moving. We have continued our annual tradition of full choral Evensong for the Feast of St. Martin in November.

The judicious use of prerecorded backtracks has allowed us to make good use of our sanctuary sound system to offer relatively authentic sounding sacred jazz anthems on occasion. Additionally, in the summer, we continued to experiment with new musical sounds such as banjo and guitar. Finally, Advent and Christmas 2023 were full of music, including our Community Carol Sing, two Christmas Eve services, and Christmas Lessons & Carols.

Respectfully submitted this 28th day of January 2024,
Gabe Alfieri, Director of Music

Altar Guild

The role of the Altar Guild member is to assist the clergy in preparation for the Holy Eucharist – whose purpose is to prepare the altar and sanctuary for the liturgy before and after each service. We care for the vessels, linens, and other sacred items used in the worship—a vital and rewarding worship ministry at St. Martin's.

Three members joined the Altar Guild in 2023: Kaley Casenhiser, Donna Huntley, and Mandy Whiteleather. Other faithful members include Bernadine Cunnigen, Carol Morton, Margaret Noel, Ann & Frank Pellegrino, Arlene Walker, and me. Thank you to Frank Pellegrino for assisting me in preparing the Sanctuary and the Nave for Easter and Christmas.

Preserving and maintaining our sacred vessels are essential for St. Martin's liturgical worship. We had three vessels, Chalice, Ciborium, and Ewer, restored in 2023. The complete restoration was through the generosity of Jane Taylor. Thank you, Jane, for your continued support of the Altar Guild.

Becoming an Altar Guild member is a small commitment—approximately 45 minutes once a month. We welcome new members to participate in this meaningful ministry.

Respectfully submitted,
Paul Bergeron, Sacristan

Tech Team

This year the Tech Team, which manages the YouTube livestream of our services, gradually underwent a transition in leadership. Ian Tulungen, the spearhead of our initial setup with David Brookhart, moves onto the next phase of his career, while Ali Rei, a senior in Anthropology at Rhode Island College, steps up into the role. We continue to be assisted by Claire, Erin, Joshua, and David, taking turns on the cameras and audio.

In the current year, the Tech Team looks to actively recruit and train, improving our flexibility and the quality of our work. We are especially thinking about how to better communicate the program of our services to folks following along at home and how to capture audio in additional parts of the nave, especially during processions.

St. Martin's investment in Tech Team continues to provide access to worship for a broad audience, including our nearly three hundred online subscribers. We well exceed five hundred views per month, reaching as many people online as we do in person, and showing the value of preserving the recordings of our services. With online religious communities growing, St. Martin's is uniquely positioned to provide the broader Body of Christ with quality, community worship. In the coming year, we should be on the lookout for new ways to draw in those who find our content online, including them in our community in increasingly meaningful ways.

Respectfully submitted,
Joshua Maria Garcia

Facilities and Finance

Building and Grounds

We were pleased to welcome part-time sexton Daniel Sheldon to our team. Daniel brings wonderful experience and enthusiasm to us. Daniel works every Thursday and as needed. You'll recognize him by his beard, smiling face, and his name isn't "David".

There's never a dull moment in a 107-year-old church. Yes. That's right. St. Martin's cornerstone was set in 1916. Most of 2023 was spent "finishing 2022" repair projects that were initiated as part of our Capital Campaign. Preparing to heat our church and its meeting and administrative spaces has been a big focus for 2023. We have many successes. And, some additional work to do. Some projects from our optimistic projections are still pending completion.

Lower Sacristy leaded-glass windows. As you entered the atrium entry during the past months you likely saw the temporary windows and worker bees. They are finally gone and new leaded windows again grace our historically registered building. There's just a bit of touch-up "sealing" to take place. Once the windows are again weathertight we will finalize the refurbishment of the Lower Sacristy. We'll replaster the wall behind the entry door, permanently attach the new counters, and then paint the whole room.

In the Spring we will also turn our attention to the **inside of the West wall and the entry**. We'll repair, replaster, and repaint. Because stone acts as a slow sponge we will use a special water permeable paint that passes water through the membrane where it can dry without damaging the wall.

Cleaning, fixing, and preventive maintenance are increasingly important in our aging building. We have developed schedules for projects, inspections, and regular maintenance requirements. Keeping up day-to-day helps us prevent the bigger "Oh, no. It's broken" moments that are such a challenge physically and financially.

The most exciting project going on right now is **refurbishing the kitchen**. This project is driven by the need to upgrade our facilities to better serve St. Martin's and our community. Our friends, and outreach partner, at OpenDoors RI will be using our certified commercial kitchen three days a week to prepare meals for their two new housing facilities. We have installed a new range. We will add additional storage, paint and redo the heating in the kitchen. This project is made possible by generous St. Martin's donors.

We will add **air conditioning to the Washburn room**. This room houses our Sunday nursery school and weekday Mother's Morning Out.

Additional projects in the works: We plan to improve drainage in the bell tower and add a waterproof cover to the floor of the Carillon Room. We are also studying options for adding air conditioning to the Sanctuary.

As our monthly energy bills continue to rise, we **increase our efforts to be more efficient when heating and cooling our facilities**. While this continues to be a challenge, we are applying both manual and automatic methods to keep everyone comfortable year-round.

Respectfully submitted,
David Brookhart, Peter Lofgren, and Brian Robert

Finance

2023 was financially about as worry-free a year as I can recall in my 20+ years heading the Finance Committee. Things went according to plan, amazingly enough. (I recall a comment my doctor made years ago: “If you want to make God laugh, tell him your plans.” Well, this time plans worked!)

On the revenue side, pledges, by far the most important component, came in in a timely fashion and very close, if not a little better, to target. Yet again, the Thrift Shop shone. The COVID epidemic was in abeyance for most of 2023, so we were able to rent out space in our building to everyone from babysitters to concertgoers to brides and grooms to recovering substance abusers. The estate sale was held in the fall from which St. Martin’s netted a five-figure profit.

And so on. My sincere thanks to those, mentioned and unmentioned, who made the revenue side of our income statement so strong in 2023. (We’re going to need you again in 2024!)

On the expense side, our clergy and staff have a lifetime tradition of penny-pinching upon which they drew again in 2023. We did not get enough rain in 2023 for the roof of our church to collapse (Hallelujah!), and though that big old building ALWAYS needs plenty of maintenance—thanks to David Brookhart and his crew for doing it—no major repair tasks presented themselves. We were able to upgrade our sanctuary sound equipment to broadcast Sunday services on the World Wide Web without having to burden the budget with unanticipated expenses. We simply asked those who attend virtually to toss a little something in the hat, and *PRESTO*, online worship worthy of prime time.

2022 was a bear market year in the financial markets, and though St. Martin’s endowment did not suffer as much as the broad market, we incurred some damage. 2023 saw us bounce back, with the value of our investments increasing by more than \$450,000. Damage undone. As most of you know, the endowment is of particular interest to me as I believe to achieve long-range financial viability, St. Martin’s needs a substantial “savings account” to get us through the ongoing sea-change in the way places of worship finance themselves. Strong pledges and careful expense management mean less of the job must be done by the endowment, which in turn means our investments compound when the investment climate is propitious. We’re on our way with this one, but we have a way to go.

2024 is shaping up satisfactorily, very much in line with 2023, with one obvious problem. The dollar amount pledged is about what we hoped for—similar to 2023—but the number of people pledging has broken to a new low. In other words, parishioners are doing an admirable job of upping their pledges to meet our challenges, but there are fewer parishioners. Know anyone looking for a church?

Thanks again for a successful year on the financial front in 2023.

Respectfully submitted,
Fla Lewis

Memorial and Endowment Report

Memorial Funds

During the year funds were received in memory of Lois and Preston Atwood, Paul DelCioppio, Candace Guberman, Jo Burke and Gail Peet. The funds were added to the General Memorial Fund as no special allocations were requested.

Monies were used from the Doeblner Doherty Fund to pay for special musicians at Easter. Organ tuning/repair and purchasing a memorial garden plaque were also paid for from their respective funds.

Endowment Funds

In response to a request from the Planned Giving Committee in 2018 for additions to the endowment, a few parishioners are donating on a regular basis; weekly or quarterly. These additions in 2023 totaled \$450.

Just over \$15,000 was transferred out of the Endowment (Endowed Pledge and Investment Income accounts) to supplement the operating budget. The Outreach report details the monies taken from that fund over the year for grants to our community.

In March 2015, the Endowed Pledge Fund (\$45,947) was transferred to the Rhode Island Foundation. The Foundation pays a dividend of 4½ percent of the balance over the preceding 16 quarters. A \$2,324 grant was issued in December. Annual earnings figures won't be available until next month.

Capital Campaign

The Capital Campaign officially closed at the end of 2023. Thank you to all for continuing to honor your pledges. There remains a small balance of just over \$23,000 in unpaid pledges. We anticipate approximately \$17,500 of that is collectable. It is a tribute to all that we collected over 98% of what was pledged back during the pandemic. Thank you!

Line of Credit

The Parish has no outstanding debt.

The Thrifty Goose

The Thrifty Goose had another strong year in 2023 with plentiful donations, repeat and new customers, and consistent financial success. The shop continues to draw new customers each week and also enjoys a loyal customer base.

This year we were joined by Kevin, our “book guy,” who revamped the book area and created order where there formerly was none. His efforts have directly increased sales of books in the last half of the year. He also helps ring up sales when the shop is extra busy or we are down a volunteer.

On that note, in December Cynthia Renehan gave her notice. Her merchandising and sales contributions to the shop and the estate sale cannot be overstated, and we will really miss her and her exceptional talents. Additionally, I stepped down as manager of the Thrifty Goose at the end of 2023. I will continue to assist with sorting and pricing but will no longer work in the shop.

Jennifer Kiddie continues to be the backbone of the Goose. She is the most optimistic person I know, and her enthusiasm makes her a favorite of Goose customers. Bridgette Hubbard continues to price for the shop which really helps us to efficiently get donations out on the floor for sale. Many thanks to Jen and Bridgette for their ongoing work! Thank you also to Mary Jane Pagan and Ellen Patterson who both worked in the shop during the year filling in for someone who was ill or away.

We continue to benefit from Amy Fuller’s photography and Facebook postings as well as Brigit’s Instagram posts throughout the year. Thank you to Amy and Brigit for handling our primary social media presence. Thanks also to Kathryn Barr who posted about the Goose on the church’s Instagram account numerous times throughout the year.

Looking to 2024, the Goose has donations and customers and the potential for another great year. We’re just missing one thing... Volunteers!! If you can spare four hours on a Wednesday or Saturday once a month (or more), enjoy people and supporting the church, reach out to Susan Esposito or Jennifer Kiddye for more information

Respectfully submitted,
Heather Post Tingle

Estate Sale

The Estate Sale is organized to raise funds for the parish and support the ongoing work of the very popular Thrifty Goose. This year we had thirty volunteers as part of a major effort to increase awareness in the community about the Estate Sale in hopes of increasing net profits by 20%. Katherine Barr led the way on this effort and total sales were higher.

Staff of Thrifty Goose (Jennifer Kiddie, Cynthia Renehan, Heather Tingle), Sextons David and Daniel, Susan Esposito and David Brookhart worked tirelessly for weeks to pull this off this beautiful affair. Parishioners and friends of St. Martin’s came from far and wide to bring beautiful items for us to sell. No matter what funds were raised everyone should be very proud.

After expenses we raised **\$12,421** and exceeded our goal of a 20% increase from 2022.

Thanks to all,
Sheila Hoogeboom, Volunteer Coordinator

Memorial Garden

The Memorial Garden, which is located behind the church, has a carefully planned pattern of mature bushes and perennial plants, with stone planters for annual arrangements. It is set around a hardscape of bluestone and brick which is set in a cruciform pattern. The garden requires maintenance to retain its beauty and health.

At the end of April each year there is a garden cleanup. We rake out the leaves, sweep the hardscape, weed, fertilize, prune, and mulch. If the weather is warm enough, we plant annuals in the planters, and sometimes add more annuals along the borders of the garden. If perennials or bushes need replacement, it is done at this time also. This work takes several man-hours, depending on how many volunteers we have to help.

For the rest of the spring, summer, and into the autumn our main job is to weed, prune, and fertilize the garden. An irrigation system has been installed, which makes maintenance much easier. Sweeping needs to be done at least weekly.

At the end of October there is usually another garden cleanup, mainly to rake out the early leaves that have fallen, to clean out the planters and remove the annuals that were planted in the spring, and to do a final sweep.

The garden crew consists of MJ Pagan and myself, with the help of volunteers for the spring and fall cleanup.

Respectfully submitted,
Meg LoPresti

Emergency Response

The emergency response ad hoc committee was charged with creating an emergency response plan for St. Martin's. The committee has completed a plan that will be submitted to the Vestry for approval. It includes an "Emergency Response Summary Sheet" for ushers, the leaders of events and meetings, and others in positions of leadership. The committee members included Hugh Gorman (chair), Sheila Hoozeboom, Cathy Bodner, Bonnie Gorman, Susan Esposito, and David Brookhart.

Respectfully submitted,
Hugh Gorman

Vestry Nominations

Officers

Senior Warden: Sheila Hoogeboom

Junior Warden: Brian Robert

Treasurer: David Whitman

Clerk: Mandy Whiteleather

Class of 2025

David Barrall

Claire Kokoska (filling a vacancy)

Beth Toolan

Class of 2026

Susan Kostas

Patrick Hawkins

Sammi Tulungen (filling a vacancy)

Class of 2027

Donna Huntley

Richard Gruber

Anthony Cottone

Nominating Committee

David Whitman

Chris Dennis

Cathy Bodner

Sheila Hoogeboom

Vestry Bios

Mandy Whiteleather: Mandy discovered the Episcopal church in 2003 through family friends who knew of her interest in choral music. Even though she was reared as a Quaker, Mandy found that the Episcopal church's traditional music and rites led to fulfilling worship. Mandy was a choir member at St. Thomas in Coral Gables, and here at St. Martin's, she's joined altar guild and prayer shawl knitters.

A native North Carolinian, Mandy moved frequently as her family followed her father's career in newspapers, eventually settling in Providence when Mandy was in the 8th grade. Mandy returned to UNC-Chapel Hill to study English literature, which allowed for a varied career in government and community college as an English teacher, corporate trainer, and event planner.

In 2021, Mandy came home to Rhode Island to help care for her mother and work for LIUNA, the Laborers' Union with offices here in Providence. Her discovery of the church came too late to help slog through *Paradise Lost*. Mandy has no interest in attempting to reread Milton. Instead, she looks forward to thought-provoking sermons and increasing her own voluntarism and attachment to the St. Martin's community.

Tony Cottone: Tony has been an active member of St. Martin's since 1999. He has served as a member of a rector search committee and as a church school instructor, and also has been active in adult formation. Tony has been practicing law since 1985 with private firms in New York City and Providence, has served as Deputy City Solicitor and Chief of Litigation for the City of Providence, and presently is Chief Legal Counsel for the R.I. Department of Education. He lives in Portsmouth with his wife, Emily Sack, attends church every Sunday with his daughter, Katie, and has three other adult children, James, Sarah and William, and a grandson, Jasper.

Sammi Tulungen: Sammi Tulungen joined the St. Martin's community upon moving to Providence in 2018, but as the oldest granddaughter of BG and Raya Goff she had visited many times before. Sammi has been a founding Member of the 30-30's Group and an active member of the Outreach & Philanthropy Committee. She works as a children's librarian at the Community Libraries of Providence.

Rich Gruber: Rich Gruber was raised in Milwaukee, WI. There he met his wife of forty years, Jane Gruber. Jane was originally from Tiverton, RI and always wanted to return to New England. They did so in 1984 and raised two sons, Steve and Rob in Lincoln, RI. Their sons now reside in Los Angeles and New Jersey. Rich Graduated from the University of Wisconsin with a Marketing degree and has been employed in the Plumbing and Heating industry for forty plus years., He is currently National Sales Manager for AquaMotion, Inc. in Warwick, RI. Rich has been a member of St. Martins since 2006 with a brief move to Massachusetts. Rich and Jane rejoined St. Martin's this past fall.

Claire Kokoska: Originally from Connecticut, Claire made her way to Rhode Island about six years ago after time in Upstate New York earning her B.A. in Philosophy, followed by a stint in Wisconsin and then Chicago. Now living on the West End of Providence, Claire works with public sector entities to develop renewable energy and efficiency projects in New England. In her spare time, she enjoys tennis, golf, and volunteering for a network of girls' schools in Rwanda. Introduced to St. Martin's in 2021, Claire has been an enthusiastic congregant and participant in the Women's Spirituality Group and the 20s-30s group.