

Saint Andrew's Episcopal Church State of the Parish Report November 12, 2017

While I haven't done the research to be sure this is true, I think it is safe to assume that There has been an Annual Meeting every year since St Andrew's was founded back in 2014. That being said... welcome to the 102nd Annual Meeting of Saint Andre's Episcopal Church!

Mother Dorota and I are honored to be standing before you today as we celebrate the state of the parish!

A state of the parish report should do several things. It should honor our past, naming where we have been and the path we took to get here. It should give some assessment of where we stand in this moment, an sense of our health and vitality, as well as the areas where we might look to grow in the future. It should also look towards the future, the year to come, and cast a vision, a direction, define some goals that will guide our ministry as we move forward. This morning we are going to take undertake to do this work together. We are going to spend the next 15 to 20 minutes celebrating the moments where we, Mother Dorota and I, have found joy, been excited, felt the Holy Spirit's skirts swirling in our midst, inviting us to dance.

In his book *Wishful Thinking: A Seeker's ABC's* Frederick Buechner wrote, "The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet." By taking a look at the places where we have found joy or deep gladness we will both honor our past, find a description of our health and vitality, and see some direction for discover our vocation, the place to which God is calling us. As part of the Annual Meeting this morning everyone here today will have the opportunity to participate in this exercise. We will break up into small groups and record our answers to the question, "Where have you found joy and excitement, where have you felt the stirring of the Holy Spirit at Saint Andrew's in the last year?" Our answers to this question will help guide the Vestry when we meeting on our annual retreat in January to set goals and priorities for the coming year.

So with that I am going to turn the mic over to Mother Dorota to describe our first joy.

Joy: We're hosting a Presbyterian church!

As of October 1, Resurrection Presbyterian Church worships at St. Andrew's on Sundays at 4:00 p.m. The fact that we are sharing space with another church is very exciting, but the real joy is in the process by which this arrangement came to be. Res Pres' Founding Pastor Matt Grimsley reached out to us this summer on a Wednesday, just 24 hours after learning that the facility they had hoped to use was no longer available. Janet Hyde, Fr. Andy, and Mthr. Dorota met with Pastor Matt the following Monday, and just two days after that our Vestry enthusiastically approved the agreement. During that week, Matt said to Mthr. Dorota that he couldn't help but notice how present God was in this process. She responded, "*Surely* God is present in this process because we rarely move this swiftly!"

The reality, of course, is that this wasn't that swift of a process—St. Andrew's has been preparing to say "Yes" to something like this for a long time. When we started our building

project, we recognized that our building is meant to be a tool for ministry. At the conclusion of the building project, we dedicated the building and ourselves to God's mission, and we embarked on what we called "A Season of Holy Listening." In this period of discernment, our goal was to follow God's lead and pay attention to ways we could use our resources to be a blessing in our community. We discussed this at length at our Annual Meeting a year ago, and the Vestry continued the conversation at its retreat back in January. All along the way, we've been eager to share our space and ourselves in ways that serve God. So by the time Res Pres called, we were delighted to answer. Their community is as thrilled as we are by this arrangement, and we look forward to finding ways to come together to deepen our friendship.

Sharing space with Res Pres is just one of many ways our building is being used to serve our broader community. Next door, the Newell house is used by five Girl Scout troops and six Alcoholics Anonymous groups. Our Parish Hall hosts two contemplative dialogue groups. In our chancel, eight musicians practice playing the organ or piano on a regular basis. Four groups teach music lessons and offer recitals in our space. Multiple professional groups, including the Wisconsin Baroque Ensemble and the Madison Choral Project, rehearse and offer concerts here. Many one-off groups meet here as well, including a weaving class, Randall Elementary students, the Regent St. Co-op, the Regent Neighborhood Association, The Young Shakespeare Players, MUM's Circle of Support, and Bach Around the Clock. This is indeed an active and vibrant place!

Joy: We are expanding and growing our vision of the community

Our building has become a resource for the larger community. And so are we, the people gathered here in this building.

For the last three years the Vestry has claimed three core priorities to guide our work. One of them reads:

The Vestry, recognizing the Christian call to proclaim and share the love of God. Will work to grow – and expand our vision of community.

For the last several years we have been wrestling with the results of the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Report and the Race to Equity Report which name Dane County the worst place in the country to raise African American children. This past spring we held a class using a curriculum developed by the Wisconsin Council of Churches to learn more about the racial disparities in this state. We followed that up with a class on the history of racism led by Leanne Puglielli. Kirk and Rebecca Anderson offered a book study on Ta-Nehisi Coates' powerful book *Between the World and Me*.

Out of those conversations came the suggestion that we partner with an African American church here in Madison so that we might get to know one another better, to build relationships, and to find some common ground out of which might grow some projects that would seek to counter the racial divides in this community. At our Parish Meeting last Spring we voted to move ahead, to explore the possibility that we might enter in such a relationship.

Over the course of the summer I met several times with Pastor Joe Barring of St Paul's AME Church, and African American congregation on the East side of Madison. On September 24th five members of Saint Andrew's accompanied me to the 11 am worship service at St Paul's. Six of their members came to our All Saints Day Choral Evensong and today at 4:00 a group of us will be attending St Paul's Veteran's Day Service. We have been arranging carpools and there is plenty of room so if any of you have been thinking about going but haven't yet spoken up... there is still time to join us. To make that invitation a little sweeter I want to tell you that Rev. Marcus Allen, the Pastor at Mt. Zion Baptist Church, the place where Malik Mosgaller is now singing in the choir, will be the preacher this afternoon. It is amazing how we are connected to one another, through Christ, all across Madison!

As a postscript writing some time after the event itself I can report that there were 14 members of St Andrew's in attendance for the Veterans Day Service at St Paul's and that Tom Mosgaller, himself a veteran, was among those who got to stand in front of the congregation, introduce himself and his service, and receive a certificate from Pastor Joe.

Even now, as we work to develop this partnership with St Paul's Leanne Puglielli is leading a class called *Preparing to be Partners: Conversations about Being White*. We had 57 people, representing all of the Episcopal Churches in Madison and several other denominations, including the Methodist Bishop for this area, come to the opening night of that class when Professor Damon Sajjani kicked us off on this important and sensitive subject. We have consistently had over 20 people at subsequent classes.

Through all of this we are being formed as disciples in the most Anglican way possible... through relationship with one another and with our neighbors.

Our next four areas of joy are in areas of our mission: Growing together as the Body of Christ through worship, service, learning, and fellowship.

First, learning:

We tried something new this year with youth and adult formation: we raised the bar on participation expectations. To our surprise, you met our higher expectations with even higher enthusiasm and engagement: we had the biggest Confirmation class we've had in years! Thirteen people (five young women and eight adults) were confirmed or received into the Episcopal Church this past June.

The youth met twice a month throughout the spring semester, participated in two pilgrimages to other churches, did a service project together, and went on a retreat. The adults read four books over the course of seven classes. And the adults enjoyed the experience of exploring their faith and getting to know one another so much that they refused to disband! This group, now known as "The Class Formerly Known as Confirmation Class," meets once a month to continue reading and reflecting together.

Given the success of our formation offerings this past spring, we decided to start a new class for adults, which we're calling an Inquirer's Class. This class will not conclude with confirmation; its goal is for folks to build relationships with one another and learn about their faith from and with one another. We have nine participants in this class, and they will meet all year long, following the same book series as the previous confirmation class.

Second, Fellowship:

Another of the core priorities that has guided the Vestry over the last three years is the development, deepening, and nurture of the relationships between the members of this parish, the part of the community that exists here within these walls. How have we done?

We are growing, and growing together through Fellowship. One of the best examples of this growth is the 20s 30s group. For several months space has been at a premium in the Newell House when the 20s 30s group meets for its monthly after church brunch. A couple of weeks ago I noticed that some members of that group were standing around the perimeter of the Parish Hall looking a little unsure. It turns out that they had grown to the point (20 adults and three very small children) where there was no way they were going to fit in the Newell House. They were waiting for the crowd to thin enough that they might hold their brunch in the Parish Hall! That is a remarkable number of people, and even more remarkable in that getting married and/or having kids doesn't cause you to "age out" of the group! It is often the case with groups like this that passing life milestones like marriage and parenthood means that you no longer hold the same things in common with the group that had previously been your community. The folks who claim membership in the 20s 30s group here at St Andrew's have refused to disband or drift off with the advent of these new stages of life. The community is more important to them than the differences that might divide them. I think that's a pretty powerful statement about the vitality of the community that exists here at St Andrew's.

Another prime example is this last year's Pancake Supper. Sally Hogan and Gregg Vallee have stewarded, supervised, and promoted this event for many years. They stepped down from the role a couple of years ago and when we put out a call for help making this fellowship opportunity happen in 2016 two relatively new members of our parish stepped forward. Chris Molnar and Jeff Ocwieja agreed to coordinate what turned out to be a fabulous renaissance of a beloved parish event. To make it even sweeter... a spin off from their efforts is the resurrection of the Men's Group which showed up again to work the grills at our June Parish Picnic, held for the first time on the front lawn of the Newell House, and to set up and clean up the Pot Luck Supper at last weekend's Variety Show where twelve members of this parish took the stage before an audience of about 50 people to share their gifts and talents!

In addition to these marquee events we had a second summer picnic on the lawn in front of the church, a Summer Bike Ride, and over fifty people accompanied Mother Dorota to a mallards Game where I understand the tailgate party was so hot they melted the asphalt in the parking lot!

The Vestry set out this year to help create and to support events both large and small, groups, moments, opportunities of all sorts for people to come together and tell stories, to learn about and

get to know one another, and to recognize that we are a family, bound one to another here by the love of God. I think that we have done a pretty good job!

Third, outreach:

We are delighted that our relationship with West High School has deepened over the last year. We now have a special needs student getting job and life skills training here three days per week. He comes in with his aides and helps Dorie with tasks around the church, and their presence here is a great gift. Additionally, you all contributed very generously to the West High food pantry and to the school supply and personal essentials drive we held this fall.

Although our relationships in Jeannette, Haiti, are not new, Mother Dorota had the honor of visiting the people for whom we pray each and every Sunday. Under the leadership and wisdom of Heidi Ropa, Mother Dorota and Becca Hennen spent ten days in Haiti this fall, including five days traveling around the northern part of the country to better understand the cultural and historical side of this incredible country. Father Andy continues to serve on the Haiti Project Steering Committee, and many of you at St. Andrew's have some connection to Haiti as well. Our partnership with our friends in Jeannette is an important part of our common life here, and for that we rejoice.

Finally, worship:

We cannot discuss the state of this parish without naming how very honored we are to serve as your priests. This is a community of love and joy, and we thank God for you. We gather here every Sunday to pray, sing, and praise God together, which is only possible because of your ministry. You serve behind the scenes, setting up and cleaning up, folding bulletins, counting the offering, practicing readings, rehearsing anthems, and preparing Sunday School lessons. You serve among us on Sunday mornings as greeters, ushers, intercessors, readers, chalice bearers, acolytes, altar servers, and choir members. So many of you help make Sunday mornings happen here, and this work we do here together is a source of great joy.

Additionally, we are pleased to share the positive change to our midweek Eucharist schedule. After we put our 7am Wednesday Eucharist on hiatus for the summer, we heard from many of you that evenings were a more convenient time, so we moved the Wednesday service to 5:30 p.m. Since that change, we've had more than double the number of regular participants! And we're always eager to welcome new people to this service. It is a wonderful way to connect with other members of this community, and to pause in the middle of the week to reconnect with God. Come and see for yourselves!

And the Vestry's Third Core Priority: Stewardship

A great source of Joy for us is our corporate stewardship. In the last couple of years we have completely funded a \$1.5 million building renovation and remodel. We have secured our second full time clergy position, and this year, 2016, we have for the first time been able to operate under a truly balanced budget! We began this year projecting adequate resources to cover our projected operating costs! I can't begin to tell you what a relief it was to sit down with the Vestry to adopt a budget and have to pinch every penny that comes in to the plate! We have over the last several years, cut a lot of our ministries to the bone in our attempts to follow the Vestry's

third core priority, to be good stewards of the resources entrusted to us and to protect the fiscal stability of this parish. This year that promise was a lot easier to keep! This year promises to be even better!

Having turned this significant corner in the life of the parish we are now in a position to re-allocate resources to some of the ministries that have been working so hard to hold expenses close. Instead of looking for ways to cut we can now begin to look for ways to grow. How might we develop the Youth Program? The Children's Ministry? What will the Altar Guild do with all of their extra time if they aren't trying to patch and mend ancient linens for the altar? Even more importantly we are not in a position to shift some of our attention beyond our walls. What new ministries, what new outreach programs, what new initiatives might we explore now that we have the resources? How might we respond to the dream, the vision that God has for us here at 1833 Regent Street? What a delight to be able to ask that question!

We are growing together as the Body of Christ through worship, service, learning, and fellowship. We are working to grow and expand our vision of the community, reaching out to our neighbors to develop relationships that might have the power to reconcile a community. We are working to nurture and deepen the fellowship, the relationships that we share with one another here in this place, recognizing that we are one body bound to one another. And we are being faithful stewards of the resources that we have been given, keeping our house in good order, and protecting the fiscal stability of this community. We have to say, those are all powerful signs of a healthy and vital community!

And with that we conclude the 102nd Saint Andrew's Episcopal Church State of the Parish Report.

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church Annual Meeting Small Group Discussions November 12, 2017

Over sixty members of St. Andrew's gathered in small groups during the Annual Meeting to discuss what has brought them joy or what has excited them about St. Andrew's in the past year.

In the area of **worship**, most groups mentioned the music ministry and the preaching as exceptionally valuable aspects of St. Andrew's. Others spoke of particular events, such as the healing service, the pet blessing, the Christmas pageant, sung compline and evensong, and the use of the prayer garden for Palm Sunday and the Easter Vigil. Several groups noted how meaningful the Wednesday evening Eucharist was to them. Other sources of joy included the lovely altar flower arrangements, the high level of lay participation in worship ministries, lay involvement in music—specifically one young member of our parish who plays the organ and our member-based string ensemble, the new linens and fixed ciborium, and the great feeling of having a fuller church.

In the area of **learning**, several groups were excited about the racial reconciliation conversations and classes on white privilege we have hosted here at St. Andrew's. One group discussed how much they've enjoyed the music offerings for children, and another group shared their excitement for the Tuesday morning Women's Bible Study that includes women from outside the parish.

In the area of **fellowship**, many groups discussed the 20s/30s group and the general presence of younger parishioners as a source of joy and excitement. A few groups specifically mentioned events like the Mallards game, the variety show, foyers, Christmas caroling, and the June picnic as exciting events at St. Andrew's, while others spoke more generally about their appreciation of social events, opportunities to be with other parishioners during important life-changing transitions, and having the chance to get to know people at a deeper level. One group gave a special shout-out to pie.

In the area of **service**, groups expressed their excitement for St. Andrew's racial justice and outreach efforts, including our partnership with St. Paul's AME Church. One group spoke of their sense that whenever volunteers are needed at St. Andrew's, someone is there to help. Multiple groups mentioned our support of and trips to Haiti as a source of joy, and others celebrated our relationship to local schools, specifically West High School. One group mentioned the Nehemiah LIGHT program as something they enjoyed.

Many groups expressed joy over things related to our **building**. Quite a few groups spoke highly of the art exhibits in the Parish Hall and the landscaping and gardens outside. Others discussed the remodel, including a renovated Parish Hall and HVAC system, while others spoke of building repairs and renovations not directly related to the remodel, including the improved lighting in the nave and the plans for the Newell House basement art studio. Some groups expressed excitement about the ways our building is used by other groups, including Resurrection Presbyterian Church, Girl Scouts, AA groups, and yoga.

Several groups discussed the joys of **membership**, including how much they enjoy welcoming new people. Similarly, others spoke of their excitement over the presence of newcomers, both visitors and new members. One group mentioned how good it is that St. Andrew's has grown, and even more importantly, how great it is that there is turnover, meaning that new members are replacing old members who are no longer here or who are no longer serving as leaders in the parish. Several groups noted their joy in the involvement of young adults and families with young children.

Other sources of joy included our **finances**. Most groups named securing the Associate Rector position as a cause for celebration, and many discussed how great it is that St. Andrew's has a balanced budget, a completed capital campaign, an increase in giving, and a subsequent increase in funding for ministries that were previously underfunded.

Lastly, many groups discussed their joy for the overall **feeling** they have in being at St. Andrew's. One group simply said that they love to *be* in this space. Another group named this church as a place of comfort and a place to remember and reunite with loved ones, which makes them feel closer. Someone said St. Andrew's feels like family. One group said that all of the

ministries happening here make St. Andrew’s feel like a spiritual place, full of vitality and openness. Another group expressed their joy in the community of St. Andrew’s, particularly in the creativity within this community.

A few groups also offered us some **suggestions and hopes** moving forward. Regarding the Annual Meeting, someone asked that we send out a reminder about the Madison Marathon next year and that we offer more time to reflect before voting. Regarding life at St. Andrew’s more generally, one group noted that dinnertime activities that start at 5:00 or 5:30 p.m. seem more desirable for some parishioners. Another group wondered if we might explore ways to connect older members of the parish to younger groups. And finally, one group expressed their hope that the parish’s move from having to use funds for responding to issues (e.g. building repairs, as-we-go funding for the Associate Rector position) to thinking about new endeavors and growth is an overall trajectory forward rather than a point in time.

Notes from the September 27th Vestry meeting.

Visioning for the future: What has excited us in the last year?

Vestry Goals:

1. The Vestry, recognizing its role as stewards of the parish’s resources, will ensure and protect the financial viability of the parish.
2. The Vestry, recognizing the Christian call to proclaim and share the love of God, will work to grow—and expand—our vision of the community.
3. The Vestry, recognizing its responsibility to care for the people of St. Andrew’s, will create opportunities for growth within the community.

<i>Item</i>	<i>Associated Goal(s)</i>
20’s-30’s group: growing, barely fitting at brunch! We had 3 babies at the first brunch for the year.	2, 3
Welcoming the Presbyterians!	1, 2
Confirmed 13 people in June (5 youth, 8 adults); the adults have decided to keep meeting every month.	3
Conversations on race are ongoing	2,3
Music program is expanding, including Bach around the clock	2
Our space is now usable, becoming a resource for the community	1,2,3
Sunday services have been consistently great (preaching, choir)	2, 3
Strong results of 2016 Stewardship campaign as we grow into 2 nd full-time priest	1
“We walk out feeling happy for the week...This is home”	3

Articulate and thoughtful preachers; we look forward to sermons	2
Artwork displays in fellowship hall (community members from outside St. Andrew's have applied to display)	2,3
More variety in music offerings, including strings & the choral scholars	2,3
Camaraderie; community; welcoming	3
No more Findorff trucks!	1
Visitors have been saying how welcoming we are	2
Confident about our leadership in all the ministries	1,3