

St. Andrew's 2024 Junior Warden Report

17 November 2024

It has been my great pleasure to serve this parish for the past three years as your Jr. Warden. This has been a time of tremendous transition, from determining how to emerge from the pandemic to an era where we see greater engagement and utilization of the space. I have enjoyed the opportunity to participate and help guide how our buildings and grounds moved forward with these changes.

In this report, I will focus on what 2024 meant from a facility standpoint.

Newell House:

Without question, the largest effort that we undertook related to the use and future of the Newell House, the property to the east of our church. There are dozens of documents that can go through the history, but I want to highlight just a couple of things as it relates to this year.

We came into 2024 enthused about the possibility of reimagining that space. While the space has served some groups in the past, it is little used now and in need of some important repairs. We held visioning sessions to imagine how we wanted to utilize that space while working through the details of the process we needed to follow to achieve that vision. Ultimately, we started to align around creating an outdoor gathering space and improving accessibility into our church.

However, we ran into a roadblock. Because of the house being in a historic district, we need approval from the city to remove the house from the property. After discussions with our alderperson and the lead pastor at First Congregational Church, which has been trying to do something similar for the past 8 years, it was clear that removing the house would not occur without a long, protracted fight with the city, whose outcome was likely to be expensive and unsuccessful. We considered that our next move would be to sell the property and use the funds to support our ministries moving forward. As we considered this as our best option, we also conducted an analysis around renovating the house and turning it into a rental property. The vestry reviewed these options carefully and ultimately decided that our best course of action was to sell the property. The vote was not unanimous, but I would say that the dialogue was healthy and respectful.

Now we have formed a small committee to execute the selling of the house, which includes redividing the lot, doing a final cleanup of materials in the house and moving what we want to keep into the church, and working with the realtor (who is part of the OwnIt program) to list the house. The selling of the house will depend on when is the best time for us to put it on the market.

Many parishioners have put in numerous hours to help through this 2+ year process. I won't list them here in case I inadvertently forget someone, but I am grateful that this has been a community effort and, even though the outcome was not where we wanted to go, I am encouraged that we got to a solution that is right for us at this point in our history.

Gardens:

We were blessed to receive a generous gift from Elizabeth and Bill Kelley to improve the landscaping of the church. We used the opportunity to leverage that gift to do a significant clean-up of our gardens, which included having a day in which many parishioners came to weed the garden and get it set up for planting new perennials. We will continue the investment in these gardens into the coming year.

Repairs and updates:

Now comes the more "boring" part of the Jr. Warden's report, when I start to enumerate key repairs and maintenance issues we undertook this year. These would include:

- Replacing the air conditioning unit on the west side of the church
- Fixing the leak in the water softener and connecting the water softener to the kitchen
- We are in the process of fixing the spotlight which shines on the bishop's chair
- Minor plumbing and painting efforts

In all, we continue to ensure our building is in good working order. While we did not get all of the repairs and improvements done that we hoped for, I am confident that, with our new Junior Warden, we will continue to make this church building and grounds a welcoming place for all to be in.

Sincerely,

David Polet
Jr. Warden