

St. John In The Wilderness Anglican Church



Bright's Grove, ON

Report to the 167th Annual Meeting

February 4, 2024

For the year ending

December 31, 2023

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The Diocese of Huron ~ The Anglican Church Of Canada
The Right Reverend Todd Townshend, Th.D., Bishop of Huron

January 5, 2024

Greetings, siblings in Christ, I pray that you will be blessed as you prepare for your annual meetings of Vestry.

The primary work of an annual church meeting is to build up the work of the church for the sake of the world around us. Our constant goal is to deeply understand what being church is, and needs to be, for this time and place. It is time to assess the resources you have and the mission in which you participate.

Now concerning spiritual resources, I do not want you to be uninformed. Collectively, we have been given every spiritual gift that we need to faithfully live our lives as disciples of Christ and communities of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, who blows where it wills, willed to blow around in our lives. This is an awesome thing – because when the Holy Spirit comes, when the Holy Spirit of God says, “those people, I’m going to bless those people”, it is done for a purpose.

Nobody comes into contact with the Holy Spirit and remains still. They get blessed, and they must become a blessing. We have a word for this blessing-activity. Mission. The Holy Spirit has a mission for us together, and for each of us individually.

Most of us at one time or another wonder, “what on earth am I here for?” What is the meaning of my life? What is it that God created me to do? In Christian life we learn to start with God in order to answer this. We try to know what God’s mission is before trying to figure out your own. You were made for a mission, or many of them. God is at work in the church and the world, God is at work in your life. Sometimes subtly, sometimes overwhelmingly, God is preparing you, and gifting you, and gathering you together, activating something in each of us that we offer through the church.

What is your mission? How is it specific to you? How is it shared through the church? How is it changing? In one meeting of Vestry, we can only begin to name it and ask for it.

If you have not done so already, pray today that God will lead you to at least one part of your 2024 mission. God has given these spiritual gifts in the Diocese of Huron so that the triune God’s glory may be revealed; and so that Christ’s disciples may believe in him and live in him. That is our deepest blessing, thanks be to God!

Peace in Christ,

+ *Todd Townshend*

The Rt. Rev. Todd Townshend, Bishop of Huron

St. John in the Wilderness Anglican Church

VESTRY MEETING

February 4, 2024

AGENDA

1. Welcome and Opening Prayer
2. Election of Vestry Clerk
3. Adoption of Agenda
4. Minutes of Previous Vestry Meeting
5. Business Arising from the Minutes
6. Acceptance of 2023 Reports (excluding Warden's, Treasurers', and Nominating)
7. Wardens' Report
8. Treasurers' Report
9. 2024 Budget
10. Nominating Committee Report
11. Election of Scrutineers (if needed)
12. Election of 2024 Officers and Council
13. New Business
14. Closing Comments
15. Adjournment

St. John-in-the-Wilderness Anglican Church

VESTRY MEETING

February 5, 2023

Attendance: Deb Walker, Peter Langille, Eve Morgan, Duncan Mann, Nancy Mann, Sandra Lamoureux, Nicole Grieve, Amanda Longmoore, Betty Johnson, Leslie Grieve, Janie Gallie, Jim Gallie, Mike Moloney, Bob Halliday, Susan Halliday, Brenden Fraser, Aruna Anderson, Brent Anderson, Brian Bradford, Ingrid Schmid, Mavis Schmid, Ann Hitchins, J Brian Fogg, Bob Clingersmith, Brenda Clingersmith, Jean Dennis, Pat Poland, Doug Winch, Charlene Adams, Dave Hains, Norma Hains, Shalleen Hunt, *Jim Foubister, Marie Foubister, Edna Braithwaite.*

1. Welcome and Opening Prayer

Reverend Amanda Longmoore welcomed everyone, both those in the parish hall and those attending via zoom, then opened the vestry meeting with a prayer.

2. Election of Vestry Clerk

Sandra Lamoureux was acclaimed as Vestry Clerk for the February 5, 2023 Vestry Meeting.

3. Adoption of Agenda

Mavis Schmid moved that the agenda be accepted. Seconded by Leslie Grieve. Carried.

4. Minutes of 2022 Annual Vestry Meeting

The Chair asked if there were any errors or omissions regarding the 2022 Minutes. There being none, Jim Foubister moved that the minutes of the January 2022 Vestry be approved. Seconded by Brian Bradford. Carried.

5. Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the Minutes.

6. Acceptance of Reports

Warden Deb Walker complimented those who submitted reports saying that they were “informative” and a “joy to read”.

Brenden Fraser moved that the reports be accepted as submitted. Seconded by Dave Hains. Carried.

7. Wardens' Report

Warden Peter Langille spoke first, thanking everyone for being supportive during this transitional year from Zoom to in-person worship. Further, he thanked those who were involved with the physical maintenance of the church exterior and interior.

Warden Deb Walker said it was a "privilege to be a warden". The church/congregation got a lot done over the year but there is still a significant amount to do inside and outside.

Increasing givings needs to be a focus this year. She concluded by saying "I love this church community and I hope you do too".

Deb Walker moved that the Wardens' Report be accepted. Seconded by Ingrid Schmid. Carried.

8. Treasurer's Report

Deputy Treasurer Brian Fogg spoke on the report. In 2022, the parish met the budgeted "givings" amount; however, expenditures went up resulting in an operating deficit which was covered by existing cash reserves. Money received from memorial donations during the year has been invested in GIC's to earn some interest.

There being no questions regarding the Treasurer's Report, Brian Fogg moved that the report be accepted. Seconded by Maggie Brownridge. Carried.

9. 2023 Budget Report

Deputy Treasurer Brian Fogg spoke on the 2023 budget. Operating costs have increased i.e. hydro alone increased 37%. Insurance premiums, due at the end of February, are currently unknown so a guestimate of \$6,000 was budgeted. Once the actual premium is known the plan is to pay the insurance on time. Our apportionment will not be paid in the first quarter, rather its payment will be spread over the last three quarters of the year.

Revenue from givings has been declining. COVID relief money has been discontinued (\$4,000). As a result, \$21,000 more in contributions is needed to achieve a balanced budget. Outreach will be maintained.

Brian concluded by asking people to contribute more to the extent of their ability. He also thanked out-going Treasurer Dave Hains for his contribution over many years.

The Chair called for questions.

Bob Clingersmith asked if the Diocese controlled who we could get insurance from. Amanda explained they do and that is because the Diocese owns the building, plus there is only one company willing to insure churches in Canada.

Bob Halliday asked if we need to cool down the building? Brian responded that the thermostat is programmed. Deb Walker said that the temperature of the church needs to be maintained at or below 74 degrees Fahrenheit through the summer to mitigate mold and mildew.

Doug Winch mentioned we should thank Amanda for being a part-time/full-time minister although not officially a full-time minister until recently.

Jim Foubister felt that the real issue behind the lack of revenue is the lack of new parishioners. It is an elderly congregation. Amanda responded that council is aware of this issue. Deb acknowledged this but also commented that data suggests remaining individual contributions/givings are not increasing with inflation costs for example and hoped that those who could would look at what more they would give.

Brian Fogg moved the adoption of the 2023 budget. Seconded by Ann Hitchins. Carried.

Peter Langille thanked Dave Hains for the incredible work he has done for the church over the years as Treasurer. He then welcomed new treasurer, Brenden Fraser, and thanked him for taking on the position. Amanda noted that this position is appointed which is why it does not show on the Slate of Officers.

10. Nominating Committee Report/ Slate of Officers

CANDIDATE SLATE OF OFFICERS FOR 2023 PARISH COUNCIL

Vestry Clerk	SANDRA LAMOUREUX	
Warden	DEB WALKER (Appointed by Rector)	
Warden	PETER LANGILLE	
Deputy Warden	INGRID SCHMID	
Deputy Warden	BRIAN BRADFORD (Appointed by Rector)	
Deputy Warden Emeritus (voting)	BRENT ANDERSON (Appointed by Rector, position non-	
Treasurer	BRENDEN FRASER (Appointed by Wardens)	
Deputy Treasurer	BRIAN FOGG (Appointed by Wardens)	
Envelope Secretary	SANDRA LAMOUREUX (Not on Council)	
Lay Delegate to Synod	SANDRA FRASER	
Alternate Delegate to Synod	NICOLE GRIEVE	
Regular Council Members	<u>ELECTED</u>	<u>APPOINTED</u>
	DAVE HAINS	BRENDEN FRASER
	BRENT ANDERSON	BRIAN FOGG
	SUSAN HALLIDAY MIKE MOLONEY	
	LESLIE GRIEVE	
AFP Representative	SANDRA FRASER	
PWRDF Representative	SANDRA FRASER	

Deb Walker thanked outgoing members of council for their hard work: Janice McAlpine, Shirley MacKenzie, Ken Walker and Lanna Iacobelli.

11. Election of Scrutineers

Not required.

12. Election of 2023 Officers and Council

Chair Amanda Longmoore read the Slate of Officers and asked if there were any nominations from the floor. There being none she declared the Slate of Officers acclaimed.

13. New Business

Chair Amanda Longmoore noted that new business is often difficult to deal with at Vestry and encouraged everyone not to wait for the next vestry meeting to voice concerns but to speak to members of council as the issues arise.

Bob Halliday asked about the roof issue. Deb Walker responded that the lifespan of a steel roof is 30-50 years and that this roof was installed 30 years ago. Bob then mentioned that he maintains his steel roof with a special coating. Jim Foubister also heard about maintenance available for steel roofs. Peter, Amanda, and Deb said we had not thought about maintenance, but this is something we would consider.

Susan Halliday mentioned that the storm windows on either side of the parish hall door do not close, resulting in possible heat loss.

Brian Bradford asked how many people belong to the parish? Approximately 90 people, per Deb and Amanda.

Bob Clingersmith asked if there was a fundraising schedule for the year. He felt those activities would draw in members of the community who might then become new parishioners. Peter agreed and thanked Doug Winch for organizing the presentation by Mike Smalls which attracted 50+ people on a snowy day.

14. Closing Comments

Chair Amanda Longmoore thanked everyone for attending the Vestry Meeting, those who prepared reports and the outgoing and incoming council members. She offered words of encouragement saying that the people of St. John-in-the Wilderness were good people in a good place and we will deal with the issues.

15. Adjournment

Chair Amanda Longmoore called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Moved by Ingrid Schmid. The meeting concluded with all saying The Grace.

16. Corrections to attendance presented on February 4, 2024 were made in *italics*.

RECTOR'S CHARGE TO VESTRY 2024

*Let streams of living justice flow down upon the earth;
give freedom's light to captives, let all the poor have worth.
The hungry's hands are pleading, the workers claim their rights,
the mourners long for laughter, the blinded seek for sight.
Make liberty a beacon, strike down the iron power;
abolish ancient vengeance: proclaim your people's hour.*

*For healing of the nations, for peace that will not end,
for love that makes us lovers, God grant us grace to mend.
Weave our varied gifts together; knit our lives as they are spun;
on your loom of time enroll us til our thread of life is run.
O great Weaver of our fabric, bind church and world in one;
dye our texture with your radiance, light our colours with your sun.*

*Your city's built to music; we are the stones you seek;
your harmony is language: we are the words you speak.
Our faith we find in service, our hope in other's dreams,
our love in hand of neighbour: our homeland brightly gleams.
Inscribe our hearts with justice; your way - the path untried;
your truth - the heart of stranger; your life - the Crucified.*

Each year, as I sit down to write my thoughts for our Vestry report, I look back at what I've written in past years. If I'm honest, this is mostly so I don't repeat myself. But more than that, it helps me see patterns. One pattern I've noticed is that I seem to like to begin by quoting a hymn or song. This is my third year with you and my third charge to Vestry, and I seem to have unintentionally created a tradition!

This past October I went to Niagara Falls for our annual diocesan clergy conference. One of the hymns we sang is the hymn I've quoted above, #575 in our blue Common Praise book (sung to the same tune as "I Vow to Thee, My Country"). I knew the hymn, but for whatever reason the words really struck me this time, and I was left thinking about it, well, for months now.

From time to time someone asks me how, at my age (I'm 45), I can live and work in the Church and not be worried or discouraged all the time when it seems like the institution is struggling, when attendance or finances or other challenges appear front and centre. Every time I'm asked this question I try to answer as honestly as I can. Of course there are moments when I'm concerned about something, and times when I feel discouraged by some particular thing. But overall, that's not how I walk through my days. Instead, I go through my days with hope. The Church is different from when I was ordained 20 years ago, and it will be different if I retire 20 years from now. Many things are beyond my control, and I can't see into the future. I don't believe my hope is naive; I believe it's grounded in my faith. The Church is the Body of Christ, people following the way of Jesus. My hope in this also finds expression in this hymn I've shared. These three verses express the hope I carry for our world, for the wider Church, and for us here in our piece of the Diocese of Huron at St. John in the Wilderness.

Take a moment to go back and re-read the words to this hymn.

I think it's the imagery that I find most striking, and what caught my attention last October. We have the image of God as a weaver and a knitter (something that many of us can easily imagine) with our lives as the materials brought together into fabric. We have the image of music (something important to many of us as well) where God invites us to become part of the song of God's Kingdom. Themes of justice and freedom, healing, peace, love, community. The desire for God to transform our world (verse 1), and the prayer for God to join us together (verse 2) so we can be empowered to work for that transformation in our community and beyond (verse 3).

This is the hope I have for our world. This is the hope I have for the Church, and for our parish.

I know I'm not the only person who carries this hope. I've found it in conversations with colleagues, in people in the diocese and other parishes in my work as Regional Dean. I encounter it often in our parish. I see it in conversations, in the work of the Church, in the things we are already doing, and in the new, creative ideas that pop up. I hear it in conversations at coffee hour on Sundays and at ACW meetings, in our weekly Study Group and at meetings of Parish Council, and in so many other places that I won't even try to list them all.

The pages that follow serve as a summary of what has happened in our parish over the past year, but they're also more than that. These reports show how we have been woven together into God's fabric, and tell the stories of our being part of God's song. They are a testimony of the ways in which hope is at work in our parish, of how we work to love one another and love our neighbour, of our faith in the promise of God's Kingdom, and of our desire to work toward that promise.

As we continue into this new year, my prayer for us is that 2024 will be filled with moments of hope, and that we can catch a glimpse of even some of the things this hymn speaks about; of God at work in ourselves, our parish, our community, and our world.

Grace and peace,

The Rev'd Amanda Longmoore

Rector

OUTREACH

Outreach, the work and sometimes education of our parish in our community and beyond, is central to who we are. In 2023 our Council reviewed our outreach document and agreed it reflects our philosophy and approach well; it is called “Approach to Outreach – St. John in the Wilderness, Bright’s Grove”. It provides outreach criteria, a pragmatic description of our approach and some examples and is available upon request.

In total, our financial contribution toward this work has been \$10,590 for 2023. This money has been shared among the following groups:

- Inn of the Good Shepherd \$2,200
- Women’s Interval Home \$2,200
- Alzheimer Society Sarnia \$2,200
- St. Clair Child & Youth \$2,200
- Sponsored Child in Ethiopia \$ 600
- February Blahs \$ 840
- Community Support \$ 350

We had no children attend Huron Church camp, so directed funds for this to other items above.

All through various group reports you will see the outreach work of each of the groups in the parish as well – beyond the financial contributions above. Even fundraisers become outreach work as the wider community comes together in meaningful ways with a common goal and we often help folk along the way, be it via distributing a little honey to a folk in need or sending extra food from the Triathlon to the Huron House Boys Home.

We purchase, knit, crochet, and sew prayer shawls, hats, mitts, scarfs, blankets, quilts and more for people in our community and beyond, bringing them, as best we can, warmth and love. Parishioners supported 2 local families at Christmas. Our honeybees brought many of our neighbours together, contributing to a sense of community and well-being. Support of Inn of the Good Shepherd both financially, and with our labour and donations of groceries and clothes throughout the year as described in The Inn Vestry report involves 35+ parishioners and 600+ of hours of work important to people in need of help in our community. As a parish we try to focus on a few needs that we can work together to meaningfully address as a group – a key part of our parish’s identity.

With thanks for your generosity of time, talent, and treasure,

Amanda Longmoore, Brenden Fraser, Deb Walker and Peter Langille

2023 Statistical Report

Baptisms - 1

Jillian Janice Jeffrey - October 29, 2023

Weddings - 1

Gregory Andrews and Matthew King - September 9, 2023

Funerals - 5

Daphne Morgan - May 13, 2023

John "Bo" Cowan - June 7, 2023

Richard Gough - November 12, 2023

Audrey Hughes - November 18, 2023

Bill Dennis - December 29, 2023

Confirmations - 0

Average Sunday attendance - 42

Average weekly attendance (Sept - June) - 44

Christmas Attendance - 110

(Christmas Eve 7pm & 10pm, Christmas Day 10am)

Easter Attendance - 42

Pentecost Sunday - 51

2nd Sunday of September - 55

Nursing Home Attendance (Afton, Vision, and Landmark) – 33 people per month (average).

Respectfully submitted,
The Rev'd Amanda Longmoore
Rector

WARDENS

For the first time in several years, 2023 felt more like a normal year. Services returned to what we were used to before the pandemic, use of the hall is on the upswing and we have been happy to welcome a number of new parishioners.

It's also been a busy year on the property front. Early in the year, we decided the volume of work deserved a separate committee to address and monitor projects. It will also allow the Executive and Council to be focussed on other items. Congratulations and thanks to Brian Bradford who has taken the lead on that committee. His report will fill in the details. Among the highlights is the full, deep clean of the building to take the mouldy smell out after limited use during the pandemic and the agreement to get the large south side window cover replaced.

We are a step closer to being able to host a movie night at the church. A new, very slick, screen has been installed in the sanctuary. You may not even have noticed it because of how cleverly it's been mounted. We are now in the process of finding a projector that will integrate with our sound system or possibly updating the system. In any event we will install speakers at the rear of the church to help people at the back to hear better.

We have seen an uptick in givings this year. The Treasurer's Report will bring you the details, but while there has been an improvement we are still behind our budgeted amount. We would ask you to consider increasing your envelope or online givings this year if you are able. As you're aware, the cost to operate the church has not declined, but is higher than last year.

Overall, it has been a positive year. Both of us are appreciative of the support we have received from parishioners. We thank you for that.

Respectfully submitted,
Wardens,

Deb Walker and Peter Langille

TREASURERS REPORT 2024

The 2023 overall operating revenue increased 7.1% compared to 2022 due the efforts our parishioners from donations through envelopes, E-Transfers and pre-authorized payments. Above plan investment income and hall donations also contributed to the gain. Other revenues were above plan with fundraising and memorial donations significantly contributing to our cash positions during the year.

Operating expenses were above plan with higher energy costs and insurance fees as well as increased salary and benefit charges compared to 2022.

Our bank balance at year end was lower than 2022 but still favourable and able to support community outreach initiatives and capital commitments for on-going church upgrades undertaken by the Property Committee and church members. The cash requirements for the capital upgrades were supported by a memorial donation which did not involve the use of church operating funds raised by parishioners.

Overall, 2023 was a very good year for the parish. The future and its trying economic conditions are an ever present concern. As we move forward there are a number of challenges we face with higher energy costs, an increased apportionment assessment and insurance rates remaining high. The need is there to maintain our momentum of continuous growth in operating revenues to meet our future needs and community commitments.

Thanks goes out to all parishioners for their support and efforts to maintain and upgrade our church and its environments. Special appreciation to those who assisted in the support of the financial aspects of the parish such as the counters, depositors, Heather and Sandra L.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenden Fraser and Brian Fogg

ACW

It is my great privilege to serve as ACW President. I am so thrilled with the work, friendships and joy this group provides. We've had a busy year, ACW Sunday, two soup and sandwich luncheons, the return of pancake supper, several "socials", and to end the year a Christmas Party that included three other local parishes.

The ACW serves in so many capacities I'll just highlight a few. We provide birthday cakes each month to the boys home, support several local agencies, provide luncheons after a funeral or memorial service and coordinate the giving of Feb. Blah Packages.

It was my privilege to deliver a trunk load of Christmas gifts to the Woman's Interval Home, women supporting women! My thanks to Dianne Funnell who serves as treasurer and to Maggie Brownridge who serves as secretary for our group, and to all the dedicated members of the ACW.

Respectfully submitted,
Leslie Grieve, President

ACW Financial Report 2023

Chequing Account December 31st 2022. 2396.19

Bequests and Donations for 2023

Pancake Supper. 843.35

Soup and Sandwich-April. 234.00

Sub lunch. 97.25

ACW Thank Offering. 474.00

Soup and Sandwich. 300.00

Total. 1948.60

Disbursements for 2023

Pastor-Lunch -Dec. 26.58

Donation- Inn of Good Shepard. 200.00

Expense pancake supper. 70.00

Expense pancake supper. 74.60

Pastor-Lunch-April. 18.00

Donation-Inn of Good Shepard. 200.00

ACW Thank Offering. 400.00

Gift cards -Inn of Good Shepard 300.00

Flowers. 50.00

ACW Foundation Membership Fee. 100.00

Miscellaneous (service fees). 29.25

Total. 1468.43

Balance 2023. 2876.36

Market Value of Short Term Investment December 2023
was not available in time for vestry report

Market Value of Short Term Investment
December 2022. 4252.71

Prepared by Dianne Funnell
Reviewed by Brendan Fraser 1/7/24

COUNTERS

For many years Mavis Schmid has served as the Counting Co-ordinator. She managed the Counting Team who, working in pairs, are responsible for weekly bank deposits of the contributions from parishioners, fundraisers, and donations. Throughout COVID, when we were not able to function as normal, Mavis ensured that deposits continued to be completed monthly. In 2023 Mavis stepped down from her position and we thank her for all her efforts over the years. Note: On occasion she is still called upon for her skills in opening the safe!

2023 saw a return to normal operations and the Counting Team was re-established. Previous counters graciously agreed to continue in their role and we welcomed new volunteers. Currently our awesome Team includes Duncan Mann, Brent Anderson, Karen Wilson, Haley Walker, Mike Moloney and Sandra Lamoureux.

If you enjoy math or balancing a cheque book this might be a role for you!

Respectfully submitted,
Ingrid Schmid
Counting Co-ordinator

CHOIR

The choir at St. John in the Wilderness is a dedicated group of individuals that gather Sunday mornings to sing the praises of our Lord.

Anyone in the congregation is welcome to join and sing in the choir, and we are always looking for new members.

As always, a big thanks goes out to our organist Susan; her talents at the keyboard enhance worship greatly!

Respectfully submitted,
Brenden Fraser

ALTAR GUILD

Members: Mavis Schmid, Leslie Chekan, Ann Hitchins

A special thank you to Lyn Kidd for many years working hard for the Altar Guild and especially her work arranging for flowers for the church.

And a thank you to Sandra Fraser for always having supplies ordered when necessary. The Altar Guild look after the Altar area and set the Altar for each Eucharist service. Silver and brass get polished, supplies get ordered, linens get cleaned and replaced when needed and the church gets decorated for special occasions.

We would like new members to join the group. If interested speak to an Altar Guild member or Rev. Amanda

Respectfully submitted,
Ann Hitchins,

GREETERS & SIDESPEOPLE

Thank you for all who greet each Sunday. We now have 10 who participate, therefore we greet only once every 10 weeks. If anyone new is interested in helping, please contact me.

Respectfully submitted,
Jane Gallie

INN OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Feeding some of Sarnia's hungry on the first Saturday evening of each month is one of our primary outreach programs at St. John in the Wilderness.

Over the year this involves about 35 parishioners and friends. We purchase and cook food and serve it; between servers and cooks we put in about 50 hours of volunteer time each month or 600 hours per year. Our parish people are an integral part in The Inn's mission to provide services with dignity to local people who need food, shelter, and other essentials.

We continue to have new cooks and new servers join our team, particularly as new parishioners join us, or veterans of our parish look for a new way to support folk in a way that is both fun and meaningful. Cooks, if you save your receipts for food contributed, you may submit them directly to The Inn of the Good Shepherd at year end for a tax receipt.

For those folks interested in cooking and/or serving the Saturday meal, please contact Deb Walker; we share good fun fellowship while helping others.

Throughout the year parishioners place food and other goods in a basket in the church foyer and we drop these off at The Inn bi-weekly; Shalleen Hunt organizes this. Parishioners have donated 2 bags per week to The Inn.

We also contributed clothing to The Inn's Warm & Fuzzy campaign in December; thanks to Nancy Mann for leading this and the many contributions from our parishioners.

We contributed funds as well, as indicated in the Outreach and Treasurer's Vestry reports.

Yours in Christ,
Deb Walker

LAY ADMINISTRATORS

The Lay Administrators job is to help the minister at communion time to serve the sacraments. This year we were offered both bread and wine with modification of you choosing to receive the wine. The volunteers this year were Mavis, Sandra, Duncan, Nancy, and Brian. Thanks to all who helped. If you would like to help please let me know.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Mann

LICENSED LAY READERS

The Lay Readers for St. John in the Wilderness Church 2023 are Sandra Fraser and Nicole Grieve.

The Lay Readers continue to lead Morning Prayer when required and assist The Reverend Amanda+, Sundays on a rotating basis

We appreciate the congregation's support and encouragement as we continue to serve God and the Parish.

Respectfully submitted,
Sandra Fraser

READERS/INTERCESSORS

2023 has been a wonderful year. We have had new people join our list of readers and intercessors, and everyone does a fantastic job!

I am so very thankful to everyone who has volunteered their time to offer our readings and prayers each week.

If you wish to be part of this ministry, please let me know.

Respectfully submitted,
Nicole Grieve

COFFEE HOUR

Volunteers from St John's have been baking lots of treats, and they are in our kitchen freezer. This enables us to make coffee hour easier, so that a snack is ready to go, in case volunteers would like that option.

We have also hosted for a few events during our 10:30 service, including our visit from Bishop Todd. I have heard from many people about how much they enjoy fellowship after church. I would like to say a big THANK YOU to all of you who make this happen. Thank you for making baked goods, thank you for packaging them up for the freezer, thank you for bringing in crackers and cheese trays, fruit and veggie trays, and all kinds of wonderful things to eat while we brew coffee and tea after church, and thank you for volunteering your time to host such wonderful fellowship.

If you would like to volunteer for coffee hour, there is a sign up sheet in the hall. If you have any questions, please let me know.

Respectfully submitted,
Nicole Grieve

2023 BLUEWATER TRIATHLON

This year was the 40th anniversary of the Bluewater Triathlon and the 27th year St John in the Wilderness has graciously hosted the event. The race raised \$19,500 for the church this year.

The event was very successful. We had a record-setting 345 athletes in the adult race, only 5 athletes away from a sold-out event. The Ironkid was sold-out at 125 kids, as is customary. The weather led us to prayers late into Friday night, but we woke up on Saturday morning to a beautiful, calm lake.

Our event was featured as the “local community race of the year” by Triathlon Ontario magazine. A copy of the article is posted on the bulletin board at the church.

Extra thank you to Dave Hains for many years of service as our “race day logistics” leader on the event committee – he has retired and Ashton Parsons, a local athlete and long-time volunteer, has taken his place. Also thank you to Nancy Mann, Ingrid Schmid, Mike Moloney, Shirley Mackenzie, Bruce Grieve & family, the Polands, Terry Linseman, Gord Pellerin, and every single one of our volunteers (everyone at the church!!) who help make this day a success.

Please mark your calendars for July 20 & July 21, 2024 – we will need your help again this year in supporting this beautiful community outreach program and fundraiser!

Respectfully submitted,
Haley Walker

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

I think we should all be pleased with the church’s environmental efforts in 2023. Steps such as the drainage improvements and lawn restoration make our grounds more appealing for us as a place of beauty and meditation and for those who admire it in the neighbourhood. If more of these ‘spiritual’ types would come through the door it would be nice.

The pollinator garden is self-perpetuating, the bee yard and leaf mulching are all part of a low carbon footprint. Old prayer and hymn books that were no longer in use were reverently composted, rather than burned. Our building air quality has been improved with diligent use of dehumidifiers that gather the extra moisture in the building. The sanctuary dehumidifier has been automated to drain via the sacristy furnace condensate drain to our sump pump area and there are plans to do a similar project with the hall dehumidifier before spring of 2024.

We could perhaps think of bi-weekly lawn cutting to reduce our energy use further.

In 2024, the replacement of the hall windows and installation of the garden shed are projects to come. The property committee deserves our thanks.

Now maybe it is the time to say that the building is pretty good and we could embrace the first ‘R’ that is Reduce. With this in mind, we should not look around for things that are imperfect and be happy with what we have.

Respectfully submitted, *Bob & Susan Halliday*

PASTORAL CARE TEAM

Our Pastoral Care Team of 2023 consisted of The Reverend Amanda Longmoore+, Sandy Dawson, Sandra Fraser, Nancy Mann, and Ann Toth.

We are pleased that our Eucharist services held at Afton Park Place and Vision Nursing Home have been able to start-up again after suspending due to Covid. Home pastoral visits have also resumed.

This very important ministry continues to reach out to our community's needs.

Respectfully submitted,
Sandra Fraser

PRAYER SHAWL GROUP

The Prayer Shawl group has now reconvened to meeting in the church hall, Wednesday afternoons from 1p.m. to 3 p.m., except on the first Wednesday of the month.

The members are pleased to be meeting again in person and gladly welcome newcomers. If you do not knit or crochet, we will be happy to provide instructions. Once completed, the shawls are blessed during a Sunday service and then displayed in the parish hall, ready to extend God's love and comfort to anyone in need.

We do not sell or charge for our shawls but will accept financial or wool donations gratefully to help with the cost of this outreach ministry.

I would like to thank all the members who donated yarn and their time to create these warm prayer-filled Shawls. The "Thank You" cards received by the group are confirmation of the value of this ministry to recipients.

Respectfully submitted,
Sandra Fraser

PRAYER CHAIN GROUP

The Prayer Chain Group was formed in 2009 by Rev. Jenny.

Current members are: Maggie Brownridge, coordinator, Rev'd Amanda Longmoore, Charlene Adams, Judith Bond, Sandra Fraser, Nancy Mann, Fran Taylor, Doug Winch, Jean Dennis, Brenda Clingersmith, Leslie Grieve and Nicole Grieve. If you would like to become a member of the group please see Maggie.

We accept prayer requests for both church members and for non-members. Information is confidential and shared only with Prayer Chain members. In any one month we have 30 or so people on the Prayer Chain.

As coordinator I convey prayer requests to the group members by email. Every month I obtain updated information on people who were placed on the list 3 months previously and ask if they would like to remain in our prayers. I then share that information with all the Prayer Chain Group members.

In 2023 we received 38 requests for prayers. We pray for these people and their families in our daily prayers.

Respectfully submitted,
Maggie Brownridge

FUNDSCRIP

St John in the Wilderness had another successful year fundraising through the Fundscrip program.

During 2023, parishioners continued to order directly on-line except for during December. A parish wide purchase was made for Christmas and cards were purchased for two Christmas Families, supported by the church.

If you have not participated in this cost-free fund raiser that assists our outreach program, I suggest that you give it a try. If you would like any further information on how to get involved, please contact your wardens.

On behalf of the church, thank you to everyone that participated in 2023.

Respectfully submitted,
Sandra Fraser

SERVERS

Servers started serving again in the summer of 2023 (we kicked off our post-covid start up with happy dances and other such fun in our heads). A sincere thank you to our servers who helped us through the services: Maggie Brownridge, Mavis Schmid, Sandra Lamoureux, and Lyn Kidd. Please join us in welcoming Karen Wilson to our team in 2024.

We are always looking for more servers, please contact Amanda or myself if you want to serve.

Respectfully submitted, *Brenda Clingersmith*

LITTLE LIBRARY

I just wanted to give everyone an update on our church's Lending Library.

We have a very good supply of Adult Fiction and Non-Fiction Books plus Juvenile Fiction and Children's Books.

The general public has been making good use of our Little Lending Library.

And I have had such positive feedback from various friends and neighbours regarding not only the good selection to choose from, but also the very tranquil area that has been provided to just sit quietly and either read for a while or rest for a few minutes in the shade on a hot day.

I also would like to thank Brian Bradford for kindly agreeing to assist me during these past six weeks when I was unable to look after the library.

I really look forward to being able to sort through all of the most recent donations and select new books to refill the shelves.

Thank you so much for this opportunity to volunteer my services to the church, doing something I have always loved doing.

Respectfully submitted,
Jean O'Neil

OUT OF THE COLD QUILTERS

Quilting started again in the fall. Before Christmas we set up one quilt – Ann & Carol helped put the fabric squares in place. The quilt top should be in the frame in February.

The donations of fabric and the quilting supplies remain at the church in the storage cupboard. The hand quilting boards are hanging in the storage area.

Respectfully submitted,
Shalleen Hunt

FEBRUARY BLAH PACKAGES

Our ACW sends out care packages each February to students in post secondary education that are affiliated with our church. February can be a difficult time of year for students and we want to encourage these young adults.

Each gift contains two gift cards, school supplies, treats and a hand written note.

Thank you to all who help in this endeavour! Please keep these students in your prayers.

Respectfully submitted,
Leslie Grieve

BEEKEEPING

This was the third year of beekeeping at St John in the Wilderness Church.

One of our two hives survived the winter. We created a “split” from the surviving hive to repopulate back to two hives, and it was a success! We had two booming hives for most of the year. Some folks may remember we had a particularly mean hive last year...this hive seemed to have smartened up over the winter, and they were rather pleasant this year!

The ACW ladies graciously hosted another VBS beekeeping camp this year, which was sold out with 15 kids in attendance. It was a fantastic day full of crafts, snacks, games, and bees...thank you VBS & Leslie Grieve for taking the lead! And...no bee stings this year!!!!

Our annual honey sale was on Sept 18th this year. We sold out of honey yet again and Haley & Doug both donated their personal honey sales as well, totaling \$2,236. Thank you St John in the Wilderness and our bees!

Respectfully submitted,
Haley Walker

TECHNOLOGY

There has been quite a bit of work done with technology in our building in 2023. With the purchase and setup of a new laptop in April to facilitate the treasurer’s work to the August installation of a permanent Projector Screen in the Church. We finished off the year with a new electronic Church Bell (Speakers) installed in November. These speakers work with any Bluetooth device like a phone, tablets etc. We have been currently playing royalty free church bells sounds (MP3) for many of our services. As you may know we need to maintain a computer network, phone system and working printer/copier. The printer/copier uses approximately \$600 worth of imaging units and toner supplies per year.

With the Church Hall being recently painted in 2023 the hall east wall has been purposely kept clear to be used as a projector screen/wall. A future technology purchase will be a computer projector that will be used for presentations / vestry meetings and other special events like movie night; at the same time, we are investigating an upgrade to our sound system such that people at the back of the church may hear better.

Respectfully submitted,
Mike Moloney

PROPERTY COMMITTEE

This is a new committee the church established in early 2023.

The committee is made up of Brian Fogg, Deb Walker, Brent Anderson, Peter Langille, and chairman Brian Bradford. We have assistance from Doug Winch, Gord Mackenzie, Mike Moloney and one of our neighbours quite often on non-routine project work. Up till now, property maintenance has been done by individuals and the church council or church executive. By establishing this committee, we are making maintenance more of a priority, better organized; being timely on repairs and keeping the hall and church in very good condition. In particular, we have focused on our post-Covid refurbishment project. The maintenance of the social hall and the church is, of course always ongoing. Some items are routine such as grass cutting leaf removal, watering the gardens, bee maintenance, weekly cleaning of hall and church, updating the church lawn sign, shopping for supplies, garbage and blue box being put out weekly etc. There are other items that are done but not mentioned here. All the routine items are done by church members, many of whom are not mentioned here – Thank you all!

The committee focuses on any maintenance item - large, small, one time or routine. We have a “to-do“ list that is updated regularly at our monthly meeting (we meet through the summer to take advantage of the warm weather to get more done).

Some of the projects accomplished are cleaning of the church walls, painting/refurbishment of the social hall, new vents in the crawl space of the hall and church, planting grass on the drainage trench, renewing the gardens in front of church and hall, improving the dial on church safe (easier to open), sorting documents in church safe, reorganizing the bookshelf at rear of church, adding an electronic church bell, and a thorough cleaning of social hall floor a couple of times per year using a good liquid cleaner.

Some items to be done in 2024 are installation of new windows (south end of social hall, sacristy office, and a window on the outside of south church stained glass window), upgrading the electrical outlets in the kitchen (to eliminate the tripping of breakers), planting of grass seed on north end of sump pump drainage trench, put in drains for dehumidifiers to drain by themselves (so the tanks do not need to be emptied by a person 2x a day), clean and wax hall floor, add a speaker at rear of church to help people hear better, and shampoo the red carpet in church. There are other items to be done this year. That’s why as mentioned we keep up updating our list Maintenance is on-going.

Every church member wants a safe, clean, and up-to-date building to worship and socialize in. That previous sentence is the goal and the raison d’être of this new committee.

Respectfully submitted,
Brian Bradford

SUNDAY SCHOOL AND VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

We feel very blessed to have the children we have attend our Sunday School; however, attendance has not recovered from Covid. We averaged 1.2 children per Sunday, with the two Carroll girls accounting for 31% of attendance (great to see you girls), and three Grade 5 girls from Bright's Grove public accounting for 31% of attendance.

Twelve children from 6 families in our congregation accounted for 59% of attendance. Seven children from 6 visiting families outside of our parish accounted from 41% of attendance. The 3 Grade 5 girls attended 6 Sundays between April 15 and June 25. They came, full of questions, because when they asked their questions about this thing called Christianity of their teacher, he suggested they come ask us. It was a wonderful time. Christmas Eve's pajama mass was attended by 9 children, a few in pajamas, with some adults joining in the pajama fun. The second most attended Sunday was Easter, with 5 children.

Leslie Grieve and Haley Walker led a buzzing VBS morning Bee camp in early August, with about 12 children attending, many from outside of our congregation. Thanks to all the volunteers supporting this - Nancy's bee-autiful crafts, Sandra F and Jane's sweet food, and Nicole's hive of organization...plus parents and others who provided much needed hands and care.

We continue to use a web-based curriculum called Sermons4kids (www.sermons4kids.com), augmenting it as we choose.

Leslie Grieve and Deb Walker co-lead Sunday School, with Carolyn, Lanna, and Evan Iacobelli, Nicole Grieve, Peter, Eve, Morgan, and Perrin Langille being back up teachers should we need them. Sunday School is a very meaningful and fun way to engage with kids.

Spending in 2023 was about \$500 – which was donated without tax receipts. There was no curriculum cost, funds were used for printing, snacks/cakes, and craft supplies. Spending for 2024 is expected to be about the same.

Respectfully submitted with a twinkle in our eyes and hope,

Deb Walker & Leslie Grieve

St. John in the Wilderness Vestry Meeting
Sunday, February 4, 2024
CANDIDATE SLATE OF OFFICERS FOR 2024 PARISH COUNCIL

Vestry Clerk	Karen Wilson (Not on Council)
Warden	DEB WALKER
Warden	PETER LANGILLE (Appointed by Rector)
Deputy Warden	INGRID SCHMID (Appointed by Rector)
Deputy Warden	BRIAN BRADFORD
Deputy Warden Emeritus	BRENT ANDERSON (Appointed by Rector, position non-voting)
Treasurer	BRENDEN FRASER (Position Appointed by Wardens)
Deputy Treasurer	BRIAN FOGG (Position Appointed by Wardens)
Envelope Secretary	SANDRA LAMOUREUX (Not on Council)
Lay Delegate to Synod	SANDRA FRASER
Alternate Delegate to Synod	NICOLE GRIEVE

Regular Council Members	<u>ELECTED</u>	<u>APPOINTED</u>
	BRENDEN FRASER	BRENT ANDERSON
	BRIAN FOGG	SUSAN HALLIDAY
	MIKE MOLONEY	LESLIE GRIEVE

Anglican Fellowship of Prayer Representative	SANDRA FRASER
The Primate’s World Relief Development Fund Representative	SANDRA FRASER

NOMINTIONS FROM THE FLOOR (CALL THREE TIMES)

Lay Delegate to Synod	_____
Alternate Delegate to Synod	_____
Council Member	_____

**RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE: DEB WALKER, PETER LANGILLE, AND
THE REV AMANDA LONGMOORE.**