

# St. John In The Wilderness Anglican Church



Photograph by Jayne Primeau

## Bright's Grove, ON

**Report to the 168<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting**

**February 2, 2025**

**For the year ending**

**December 31, 2024**

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

January 2025

Dear friends in Christ,

I give thanks to God for you and pray for you every day, and wish you every blessing as you prepare for your annual meetings of Vestry.

It is an uncertain time, to say the least. Many continue to feel anxious about the future—and we should, in some ways. At the same time, our Christian faith compels us to center our lives in Christ and to live and act according to the way of his kingdom and his reign. This reign is real—and it is not out somewhere out in the future. It is now. This means that there will be a necessary weeping, confession, and acts of resistance until the fullness of time.

We also know this: God the Creator of the universe has a great dream, a plan, a design for the whole creation. It is the reconciliation of all things in Christ. This is the sure “end”, or outcome, of all that is. Our individual and communal speech and acts, done in faith, are signs to the world of this great truth, above all truths. Thanks be to God.

The primary work of an annual church meeting is to build up the witnessing 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.

Our Diocesan Plan is entitled “Turning to Grace” because that is what we do. In everything, we turn to God, find grace, and recognize that “it” is more than we need, more that we asked for, or even imagined. I encourage you to find ways in which your life together is aligned to the elements of this promise and/or to be challenged by it. I pray that you will continue to find hope, peace, strength, and encouragement in the face of Christ our Lord.

I am not just thanking God for you and praying for you, I am cheering for you. The world needs what we do—and you have been faithfully doing ministry in your community for a long time. May the Holy Spirit deliver you from all that draws you from the love of God, may the Holy Spirit fill you with the divine, life-giving Spirit, and may the Holy Spirit send you into the world in witness to the love of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Peace in Christ,

+ Todd

# *St. John in the Wilderness Anglican Church*

VESTRY MEETING  
February 2, 2025

## **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 2024 Reports (excluding Warden's, Treasurers', and Nominating)
7. Wardens' Report
8. Treasurers' Report
9. 2025 Budget
10. Nominating Committee Report
11. Election of Scrutineers (if needed)
12. Election of 2025 Officers and Council
13. New Business
14. Closing Comments
15. Adjournment

# St. John in the Wilderness Vestry Report

February 4, 2024

ATTENDANCE: Deb Walker, Leslie Grieve, Nicole Grieve, Brian Bradford, Nancy Mann, Duncan Mann, Maggie Brownridge, Sandy Dawson, Mavis Schmid, Jim Foubister, Marie Foubister, Kathy Foubister, Carol Ryan, Sandra Fraser, Bob Halliday, Susan Halliday, Brent Anderson, Edna Braithwaite, Jim Gallie, Jane Gallie, Ingrid Schmid, Karen Wilson, Denise Hillary, Ann Hitchins, Brenden Fraser, Pat Poland, Don Poland, Mike Moloney, Sean McCormack, Sam Thomas, Amanda Longmoore, Ruth Pedlar, Brian Fogg, Eve Morgan, Peter Langille, Jean Dennis.

## 1. WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER

Reverend Amanda welcomed all to the meeting and reminded everyone to make sure they signed the attendance sheet. Archdeacon Sam Thomas opened Vestry with a prayer.

## 2. ELECTION OF VESTRY CLERK

Karen Wilson was acclaimed as Vestry clerk.

## 3. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Nicole Grieve moved that the agenda be accepted. Seconded by Jim Foubister. Carried.

## 4. MINUTES OF 2023 VESTRY MEETING

It was noted that Jim Foubister, Marie Foubister and Edna Braithwaite were at Vestry but not listed in attendance. Leslie Grieve moved that the names be added, and the minutes be accepted. Seconded by Carol Ryan. Carried

## 5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

No new business.

## 6. ACCEPTANCE OF REPORTS

Peter thanked everyone for getting the reports in and for their quality of work. Mavis Schmid moved to accept the reports. Seconded by Ann Hitchins. Carried

## 7. WARDENS' REPORT

Peter thanked the congregation for their ongoing dedication and support and remarked on how everyone is willing to pitch in when needed. We have created a wonderful Church community and are all in this together.

Deb agreed with Peter's comments and thanked Brian Bradford for his excellent Property report, remarking that previously the content of this report would have been in the Wardens' report

Brenden thanked Deb and Peter for their continued work and dedication to the church.

Duncan Mann moved to accept the Wardens' report. Seconded by Mike Moloney. Carried.

## 8. TREASURERS' REPORT

Brian Fogg noted that the givings have gone up for a 7% increase in revenue. Thanks to everyone for their contributions.

Operating costs are up i.e.: electricity 1%, water 12% and gas 27%.

We are doing well but need to do a little better. Memorial donations were a blessing as they allowed for some needed upgrades.

Looked into applying for rebates, not available to non-profit organizations.

Brian thanked the Property Committee for contributing much of the manpower for upgrades which is a great help in keeping costs down.

Jim Foubister asked if we had paid our Apportionment to the Diocese and Brian advised we are up to date on all the Diocesan bills. We are in an operating deficit, but our cash flow is good.

Brian Fogg moved that we accept the Treasurers Report. Seconded by Ingrid Schmid. Carried.

## 9. BUDGET REPORT

Brenden Fraser gave thanks for the increase in givings. We will maintain the target for givings from 2023.

Operating expenses vs revenue resulted in a \$9000 deficit. Apportionment is expected to rise significantly, we have no control over that. Church expenses are expected to rise, think "cost of living", ballpark \$14,000. Outreach will remain at approximately \$10,000.

Colour coding on report; Red for Short Term Expenses ie: office expenses, bills (regular "home" recurring output). Green is Outreach, helping others in the community, education of parishioners. Blue is saving for Long Term Expenses ie: roof repair, window replacement etc.

Brenden shared that we have a short term cashable GIC at 4.5% and a non-cashable at 5.65% however we don't want to dip into these as they are investments needed for long term.

Peter thanked Brenden and Brian for their reports and noted that the budget does not allow for much wiggle room.

Deb reiterated that we need to strengthen givings for short term cash flow and don't forget to specify "St John in the Wilderness" if you are thinking of memorial donations, so it comes directly to the church.

Amanda thanked Dave Hains for his many years of service as a Treasurer as well as a Council member. Dave stepped down as Treasurer in 2022 and he stepped down as a Council member in January 2024.

Brenden moved that we accept the Budget Report. Seconded by Marie Foubister. Carried.

## 10. NOMINATING COMMITTEE/SLATE OF OFFICE

Vestry Clerk	<b>Karen Wilson</b> (not on Council)
Warden	<b>PETER LANGILLE</b> (appointed by Rector)
Warden	<b>DEB WALKER</b>
Deputy Warden	<b>BRIAN BRADFORD</b> (appointed by Rector)
Deputy Warden	<b>INGRID SCHMID</b>
Deputy Warden Emeritus	<b>BRENT ANDERSON</b> (appointed by Rector, position non-voting)
Treasurer	<b>BRENDEN FRASER</b> (appointed by wardens)
Deputy Treasurer	<b>BRIAN FOGG</b> (appointed by wardens)
Envelope Secretary	<b>SANDRA LAMOUREUX</b> (not on Council)
Lay Delegate to Synod	<b>SANDRA FRASER</b>
Alternate Lay Delegate to Synod	<b>NICOLE GRIEVE</b>

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

Anglican Fellowship of Prayer (AFP) Representative – **SANDRA FRASER**

The Primate's World Relief  
Development Fund (PWRDF) Representative – **SANDRA FRASER**

Eve Morgan moved to accept the Slate of Officers for 2024. Seconded by Jane Gallie. Carried.

## 11. ELECTION OF SCRUTINEERS

Not required.

## 12. ELECTION OF 2024 SLATE OF OFFICE AND COUNCIL

Amanda asked if there were any nominations from the floor. As there were none, the names as presented on the Slate were elected by acclamation.



### 13. NEW BUSINESS

Amanda reminded the congregation that new business can be brought forward at any time during the year as all are able to attend the monthly council meetings.

Nancy Mann inquired about the church bell. Mike Moloney explained it comes through a blue tooth speaker outside the church. A few people have the program on their phones however a button could be installed inside the church if needed.

### 14. CLOSING COMMENTS

Amanda thanked everyone for letting their names stand and reminded us we are all welcome at council meetings. She spoke of how special and welcoming this parish is and her joy at being our rector. Jim Foubister commented “settle in Amanda you’re not going anywhere”.

Archdeacon Sam Thomas then spoke of our joyful church community and the optimism we bring. He also spoke of how lucky we are to have Amanda leading us (this was met with a long round of applause). He encouraged us to continue to support each other and share our thoughts and feelings so we are all on the same page. He will talk with the Bishop as to how strong we are in our faith and leadership. He asked us to keep each other in prayer and announced he will be done in July as our Archdeacon.

### 15. ADJOURNMENT

Sandra Fraser moved that the meeting be adjourned. All were in agreement.

## **RECTOR'S CHARGE TO VESTRY 2025**

*The love of Jesus calls us our joyous praise to sing;  
our deeply felt thanksgivings we now together bring,  
for all God's many blessings, unasked yet still received,  
and for the generations who faithfully believed.*

*The love of Jesus calls us, that we may always be  
companions on a journey, where all the world may see  
that serving Christ is freedom which time does not destroy;  
where Christ's command is duty, and every duty joy.*

*The love of Jesus calls us to go where he would go,  
to challenge all that limits, to change, to learn, to grow,  
to know that Christ has freed us, that prisons are no more;  
for those who seek his kingdom, Christ opens every door.*

*The love of Jesus calls us in swiftly changing days,  
to be God's co-creators in new and wondrous ways;  
that God with men and women may so transform the earth,  
that love and peace and justice may give God's kingdom birth.*

Many times in the past 4 years, and even more often this year since I've become an archdeacon, I've had people from other parishes ask me which parish I serve. When I tell them I'm at St. John in the Wilderness they often ask me follow-up questions, usually some version of "what is your parish like?", and "do you like it there?" Because I answer these questions so often for other people, I wanted to take some time in my charge to vestry this year to share with you the answers I give to others, using the 4 verses of the above hymn, "The Love of Jesus Calls Us".

### **Verse #1: Gathering in Thanksgiving**

Any time you gather, whether for a celebration or even something difficult, there is such a sense of thanksgiving and togetherness. Sunday mornings are the highlight of my week, coming together and sharing in worship with you. I particularly love the time before we officially begin, the conversations and laughter that I can hear from the hall... and some weeks before the 8:30 service, all the way from my office! There is a sense of joy in this place even as you carry your own burdens. The groups in our parish that gather, whether for work or for social connection or a bit of both, offer other times to be together. And I can't forget shared food -- coffee hour, parish meals, funeral receptions, or a simple pot of tea and some cookies at a meeting. Eating together, or preparing food for others, brings you together in thanksgiving.

### **Verse #2: Walking Together**

I am continually struck by the level of care you have for one another. I have seen you gather around people to share in something they're celebrating. I've also seen you offer support to people who are struggling. Being able to do that as a community is a real gift, especially helping to carry one another's joys and burdens in a way that is truly genuine. I've seen you encourage one another, point out gifts you see in each other, and offer practical help with tasks when needed. You take walking together very seriously, and that is amazing to see.

### **Verse #3: Following Jesus**

Gathering and walking together implies we're going somewhere. Following Jesus sometimes feels like an easy stroll, and other times feels more like climbing a mountain. We are called to go where Jesus would go. We are called to love God (which sounds pretty simple) and love our neighbour (which is much more complicated). At the bottom of each email I send is a quotation from an unknown author: "You will never look into the eyes of someone God does not love." I believe this with all my heart, and I have seen times when I know you believe this too. You have shared significant faith moments and experiences with me, and with one another. I always appreciate your willingness to answer my sermon questions, some of which can be quite personal, sharing your responses not only with me but with each other as well. I also appreciate the questions that many of you ask me at different times in conversation. You are a community with a strong shared faith, a desire to learn and grow, and a deep love of God.

### **Verse #4: Co-creating with God**

For me, being God's co-creators means we plant seeds. Following Jesus means we help to create God's vision for God's creation. I've spoken about this a couple of times in the past year; it's impossible for any one of us on our own to change the world. We can often feel overwhelmed by what's happening around us, whether in our families and communities or around the globe. It's easy to feel helpless when faced with so much that seems so wrong. Together as a parish I have seen you plant seeds and make the world a better place right here and right now. I have seen you plant seeds of love as you care for one another. I have seen you plant seeds of kindness and compassion and justice in how you treat others. I have seen you plant seeds of joy and peace in so many ways. This all happens in the things you say and do, the way you love God and love your neighbour.

The purpose of a "charge" like this one is not only to name what is already happening, but also to place a challenge or task in front of you. The simplest way I can do this is to encourage you to keep doing what you're doing, and grow in that. Think hard about what it means to love your neighbour, and how you might live that. Ask questions, be curious, seek to learn and grow in faith. Work to welcome and include everyone who might walk through the doors of the church.

Spend time in prayer, find ways to connect with God, and if you don't feel you know how to do that, just ask! Continue walking together in love, keep reaching out into the community, challenge your assumptions about people you don't know... and people you do know. Be the Church at its best, building up the Kingdom of God in this place. And know that no matter what, God walks with you in every moment of every day.

So that's my answer when people ask me, "what is your parish like?". And, for the record, when people ask me "do you like it there?", my answer is a very clear YES! It's always been a privilege to serve as your rector, and I am so grateful for this parish and each of you. As we look ahead into 2025 and beyond, my prayer for you is that you can see yourselves as I see you. I pray that you know you are called by name, created in the image of God, and deeply loved. I pray you recognize the gift of gathering in thanksgiving, and you see the loving and caring community that is formed when you walk together. I pray that your love for Jesus continues to grow as you "go where he would go", and that you continue planting seeds of kindness, justice, peace, compassion, joy, and love wherever and whenever you are able. I pray the same for me, with God's help.

Grace and peace,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Amanda".

*The Ven. 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”. In 2024 we looked at this document at times to help guide our thinking. 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 \$10,158 for 2024. 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 Africa \$ 600
- February Blahs and Community Support \$ 758

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, 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, Brian Fogg, Deb Walker and Peter Langille*

## 2024 Statistical Report

### **Baptisms - 3**

Hattie Virginia Van Gaver - July 14, 2024  
Bryson Eugene Lloyd Hodges - August 4, 2024  
Melinda-Rose Sharon Hodges - August 4, 2024

### **Weddings - 2**

Kristopher Mueller and Marian Deeton - July 6, 2024  
Monica Mayer and Calista Bannister - September 14, 2024

### **Funerals - 6**

Jim Rowe - February 2, 2024  
Connie Kennedy - April 5, 2024  
Charlene Adams - April 29, 2024  
Brenda Clingersmith - May 4, 2024  
Jeanne Rounthwaite - June 14, 2024  
Pam Hill - September 29, 2024

### **Confirmations - 0**

### **Average Sunday Attendance - 46**

### **Average weekly Attendance (Sept - June) - 48**

**Christmas Attendance - 161**                      (*Christmas Eve 7pm & 10pm, Christmas Day 10am*)

**Easter Attendance - 70**

**Pentecost Sunday - 55**

**2nd Sunday of September - 56**

**Nursing Home Attendance (Afton and Vision) – 32 people per month (average).**

Respectfully submitted,

*The Rev'd Amanda Longmoore*  
Rector

## WARDENS' REPORT

We have seen a lot of positives in 2024, and we are thankful and optimistic. As Wardens it has been rewarding to see our parish grow some over the past year. It has very much been a joy to see a number of new faces as well as some returning ones.

We also say heartfelt prayers for parishes who are saying farewell to their buildings. We know it has been a challenging and emotional journey, and we wish all of them prayers for a future within the church.

We thank you for the growth of our Altar Guild, Choir, and teams of Servers, Inn of the Good Shepherd volunteers, Readers and Intercessors, Pastoral Care givers, and Coffee Hour contributors. All were blessed with new folk joining the ranks of our beloved veterans – a year of some rejuvenation. You all help make St. John in the Wilderness a wonderful Christian family.

Our Sunday School continues to look to recover post-Covid; and we just may be seeing more children – we sure hope for this in 2025 and feel blessed for the kids we have.

We have been blessed with a compassionate, bright, energetic, and experienced Rector in our journey – blessings Amanda – and thank you for your engagement with the parish, its organizations, and for your leadership.

We offer heartfelt thanks to the individuals and groups who have worked so hard to keep our budget in a positive place. Between Triathlon, Honey, Plants, Baking, Fundscrip, Pancake Tuesday dinner, and Soup and Sandwich; parishioners raised money to support our outreach and help us maintain financial balance while lovingly engaging our community – well done!

We must continue to aim for a balanced operating budget. It is within sight, and we believe with a little more work from all we can reach that objective. Thank you all for your continued vital personal givings. We encourage you to bring your friends to church, we love to share our community and God's love and wisdom - we need to grow a little to do so sustainably.

Our Property Committee may have the longest report here and we thank Brian Bradford for leading the charge on that front. From a property perspective we believe we can finally declare recovery and rejuvenation from Covid. Annual and other maintenance items, of course, will continue, and we welcome volunteers who will help. Going forward we have fewer projects, and they are targeted more at parishioner/community engagement (sound and video management – fun things).

Overall, it has been a positive year. We thank you for that.

Respectfully submitted,

*Deb Walker and Peter Langille*

Wardens

## TREASURERS' REPORT 2025

Givings revenue for 2024 increased 5.2% compared to 2023 with the efforts our parishioners from donations through envelopes, E Transfers and pre-authorized payments. Above plan Open Revenue, Investment Income and Hall Donations contributed to the Operating Revenue gain. We were above our planned budget forecast Total Operating Revenues with the cashing of a GIC in October.

Our cash positions was enhanced by the contribution of Fundraising well above plan and Memorial Donations throughout the year.

Operating expenses were above plan by 3.4% with higher energy costs, apportionment, insurance fees as well as increased salary and benefit charges compared to 2023.

Our bank balance at year end was higher than 2023 that enabled us to support community Outreach initiatives and Capital commitments as well as on-going church upgrades undertaken by the Building Committee and church members. The cash requirements for the capital upgrades were supported by the Memorial Donation mentioned previously, which did not involve the use of church Operating Revenues raised by parishioners.

Overall 2024 was a very good year for the parish. As we move forward there are a number of challenges we face with higher energy costs, increased apportionment assessment and insurance rates. We need to maintain our momentum of continuous growth in Operating Revenues compared to Operating Expenses to be a sustainable parish in our community.

Thank you to all parishioners for their support and efforts to maintain and upgrade our church and its environs. 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,

*Brian Fogg*, Treasurer

*Aruna Anderson*, Deputy Treasurer

*Brenden Fraser*, Retired Treasurer



## ACW

We have a very active ACW group at St. John in the Wilderness. Our group meets on the first Wednesday of the month, September thru June.

For the past two years we've invited five other parishes to join us for a Christmas Party held at John's Restaurant, it's been great to have fun, celebrate the season, make new friends, and gather items for kids and women at the Women's Interval Home. We also held a spring multi-parish event with over 50 women attending; Amanda led a church service which was followed by a potluck luncheon and some games. So many commented on how much they enjoyed the day.

We organize the pancake dinner, host two soup and sandwich lunches, and this year added a Christmas bake sale.

In the fall we celebrate the work of ACW members at one of St. John in the Wilderness's Sunday services. We collect donations which we later give to the Diocese of Huron's greater ACW. We also gather and donate items such as diapers and formula to The Inn of the Good Shepherd.

It is our honor to serve a lunch after funerals; so many in our group feel it helps us with our own grief to offer comfort to the families and friends.

We were so sad this past year as we said goodbye to Charlene Adams and Brenda Clingersmith, they are deeply missed.

It is my great honor to serve as President of this group and my thanks go out to Maggie Brownridge our secretary and Dianne Funnell our treasurer for their work. My continued thanks to all in the ACW for all the work they do.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Leslie Grieve*, President

# ACW Financial Report 2024

Chequing Account December 31st 2023. 2,876.36

Bequests and Donations for 2024

Pancake Supper.	784.00
Soup and Sandwich-April.	315.00
Memorial Donations.	800.00
ACW Thank Offering.	626.00
Bake Sale.	1402.75
Soup and Sandwich-December.	350.25
Bank Interest.	0.65

Total. 4,278.65

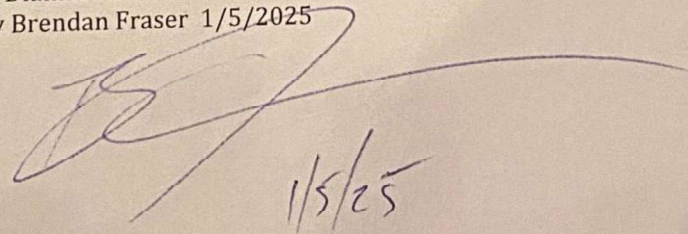
Disbursements for 2024

Expense pancake supper.	141.18
Expense pancake supper.	67.47
February blah packages.	141.19
Pastor-Lunch-April.	18.00
ACW Thank Offering.	500.00
Gift cards -Inn of Good Shepard.	200.00
Memorial Tree.	237.30
ACW Foundation Membership Fee.	250.00.
Pastor-Lunch-December.	23.57
Miscellaneous (service fees).	18.50
Total.	(1,597.21)

Balance 2024. 5,557.80

Market Value of Short Term Investment  
December 2023 4,426.33

Prepared by Dianne Funnell  
Reviewed by Brendan Fraser 1/5/2025



1/5/25

## COUNTERS

Thank you to our fantastic counting team- Duncan Mann, Mike Moloney, Brent Anderson, Haley Walker, Karen Wilson and Sandra Lamoureux.

Our Team works in pairs after each service to ensure the recording and depositing of contributions, donations and fundraising funds.

New counters are always welcome!

Respectfully submitted,  
Ingrid Schmid

## CHOIR

To the Congregation of St. John in the Wilderness,

This year, the choir at St. John in the Wilderness experienced something fantastic...growth!

With some brave new souls joining the ranks, we are singing God's praise and, hopefully, having fun doing it.

As always, I encourage anyone with a strong voice, to come join us. You do not need to know how to read music. If you would like to join but are unsure of anything, please approach me during coffee hour, or via my cell, to discuss. "My door" is always open.

519-330-4729

The choir is excited to have resumed rehearsals, but now at a different time. Our new rehearsal time is 12-12:45 on Sunday, after church. We are beginning to rehearse for Easter, so now is a great time to join up!

Lastly, and certainly most important, a tremendous thanks to our fantastic organist, Susan "The Talent" Halliday. We would not be able to do what we do, without her.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Brenden Fraser*

## **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 – and we have done this, with love, respect, and camaraderie, since about 1988 – over 35 years.

Over the year this involves about 35 parishioners and friends. We purchase and cook food and serve it; between servers, cooks, and our miscellaneous shopper 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 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 on a regular basis. Thanks to Shalleen Hunt for leading this; you can see more on this in her Food Bank report elsewhere in this Vestry document. Parishioners have donated on average 2 bags per week to The Inn in 2024 – thank you all.

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 Treasurers' Vestry reports.

Yours in Christ, *Deb Walker*

## **ALTAR GUILD**

Members: Mavis Schmid, Leslie Chekan, Ann Hitchins, Nancy Mann, Karen Wilson, Sandra Lamoureux

The Altar Guild looks after the Altar area and sets the Altar for every Eucharist service. Silver and brass get polished, supplies get ordered, linens get cleaned and replaced when necessary and the church gets decorated for special occasions.

We were very pleased to have new members Nancy, Karen and Sandra join our group this year and Mary Anderson will join us in 2025.

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*

## **LAY ADMINISTRATORS**

The Lay Administrators job is to help the minister at communion time to serve the sacraments. We now offer both bread and wine with the modification of you choosing to receive the wine. New members to the team are Dianne Funnell, Karen Wilson, Aruna Anderson, along with Brian Bradford, Sandra Fraser, Nancy and Duncan Mann. 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 2024 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. Filling in for vacation substitution is also part of the Lay Readers ministry to St John in the Wilderness Anglican Church

We appreciate the congregations support and encouragement as we continue to serve God and the Parish.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Sandra Fraser*

## **READERS/INTERCESSORS**

2024 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 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.

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 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*

## **2024 BLUEWATER TRIATHLON**

This year was the 41<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the Bluewater Triathlon and the 28<sup>th</sup> year St John in the Wilderness has hosted the event. The race raised ~\$16,500 for the church this year.

This was the first year EVER that the race was completely sold out, and it sold out two weeks before race day! The Ironkid was also sold out at 125 kids. The weather was absolutely beautiful on Saturday and Sunday, and for the second year in a row, we had a swim!

Through the weekend, we leaned on 95 volunteers to make the event a success...big thank you to everyone in the church yet again who took time out of your busy summer to bring this event to our community.

Some big "behind the scene" changes this year: we transitioned from the Running Room website to Race Roster website for registration. Race Roster is much easier for me to use, and much easier for athletes who are registering! It's a win-win! Our expenses were also quite a bit higher than previous years, and since the race sold out so early, most athletes paid an early bird price, so I am looking at restructuring the event pricing in 2025.

Please mark your calendars for July 19 & July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025...we already have 76 participants in the adult race and 97 in the kids race...we will need your help!!

Respectfully submitted,  
*Haley Walker*

## **ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

As far as the church is concerned, the environmental committee feels things are in a good state. Our front and rear gardens are really beautiful, with a minimal carbon footprint regarding care.

We thought of the environment this year when we retired a few boxes of mildewed service books. Traditionally, Anglicans reverently burn service books; our church Executive studied guidance available on this and instead we reverently composted these service books at the farm.

We should all think about how we affect the environment in our day-to-day lives. We should avoid car trips, needless plastic bags and packaging, and encourage this behaviour in others, to help preserve creation.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Bob & Susan Halliday*

## **PASTORAL CARE TEAM**

Our Pastoral Care Team of 2024 consisted of The Reverend Amanda+ Longmoore, Sandy Dawson, Sandra Fraser, Nancy Mann, and Anne Toth.

We look forward, in 2024, to our monthly Eucharist services held at Afton Park Place and Vision Nursing Home. This very important ministry continues to reach out to the spiritual needs of the elderly, in our community.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Sandra Fraser*

## **PRAYER SHAWL GROUP**

The Prayer Shawl group meets in the church hall, Wednesday afternoons from 1-3 p.m., except on the first Wednesday of the month. Although numbers are down, the members continue to enjoy the fellowship of meeting and sharing 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. This year someone has been leaving bags filled with squares enough for a full shawl in the storage room, a wonderful surprise. From all of us, thank you very much to this "knitting fairy", your work is beautiful and very much appreciated. This year at Christmas, we made a donation of shawls to the Women's Interval Home through the ACW. A tradition I hope we can continue.

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 loving 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, Judith Bond, Sandra Fraser, Nancy Mann, Fran Taylor, Doug Winch, Aruna Anderson, 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 40 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 2024 we received 39 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 2024, 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 2024. Your support is greatly appreciated.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Sandra Fraser*



## SERVERS

Our servers continue to assist at services held in the church. Carrying a cross they lead the choir and clergy in the processional and recessional hymns.

They assist the priest in setting and clearing the Altar before and after Communion, and generally ensure that the priest has everything they require. Servers wear a white robe called an Alb with a cincture in the appropriate colour for the Church season.

Thank you to our present servers: Maggie Brownridge, Karen Wilson, Sandra Lamoureux, Kathy Morris, and Kathy Foubister.

We welcome anyone who would like to join us. Please contact Rev Amanda or myself.  
Respectfully submitted, *Mavis Schmid*

## LITTLE LIBRARY

I once again would like to give everyone an update on our church's Lending Library.

Thanks to the amazing generosity of our congregation we always seem to have a nice supply of Adult Fiction, Non Fiction, Juvenile Fiction and Children's Books.

Many of my neighbours, especially the "Summer Neighbours", who return to their cottages after the long cold winter months say they really look forward to walking down to our church's Little Library. They are always pleased to see what a great selection they have to choose from.

They also love the fact that they can give back by bringing me donations from their homes to share with others

I also wanted to thank Brian Bradford for taking over the library during my illness and recovery from knee surgery. He did an amazing job. I think he even enjoys sorting through all of the donations.

Thank you again for giving me this opportunity to volunteer my services to our church, by doing something I have always loved doing, working with books and helping others by offering them books to read by their favourite Authors.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Jean O'Neil*

## **OUT OF THE COLD QUILTERS REPORT 2024**

I have had a few conversations with the Prayer Shawl Group about making charity quilts. They are aware that I am no longer able to make charity quilts. Anne & Maggie have cut quilt squares for me in the past. The Prayer Shawl members have helped organize the layout of the quilts. I sew the quilt tops at home. The Prayer Shawl group help to put the quilt in the quilt frame and I tie the quilt. The quilt that had been in the frame last winter has been tied & removed from the frame. At the moment I am hand quilting the center panel of that quilt during Prayer Shawl Meetings.

The members of the Prayer Shawl Group helped me find places for the fabric that has been donated to the church. Only cotton fabric is used to make quilts. The non cotton fabric was donated to the Mission's Thrift Store. Half of the donated cotton fabric has been given to a quilter from St. Bart's Church. This quilter makes Charity quilts. St. Michaels Catholic Church quilters took some cotton fabric for their quilt group. A small amount of fabric was donated to the Sewing Club at Brights Grove Public School. Brenda Clingersmith's family was given some quilt batting and several pieces of cotton fabric for the backs of the quilts that someone is making for them.

There are 4 quilt frame boards and 4 clamps hanging in the storage room. I am still sorting out what to do with the frame. The quilt frame belonged to Sylvia Greenaway. When Sylvia passed away, her family asked that the quilt frame remain at the church.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Shalleen Hunt*

## **MILK BAG DONATION REPORT 2024**

The ladies who make the milk bag mats thank you for continuing to support their work.

Over 120 milk bag mats made in the past year by this one group in Sarnia have been donated to various places.

Some milk bag mats stayed in Sarnia – some went to the John Howard Society; Salvation Army; River City Vineyard and 1 mat went to the Nightlight Sarnia Program (this mat is on hand if someone needs it).

Some mats were shipped to South Africa in the fall by The Rotary Club. The mats were added to the container of the donated items. The milk bag mats are used to secure and protect the items in the container. This year the Rotary Club received some pianos as part of their donations - the mats were perfect for protecting the legs of the pianos.

The milk bag mats program keeps plastic milk bags out of the landfill and provides a sleeping mat for those in need. Thank you for saving your milk bags for this program.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Shalleen Hunt*

## **FOOD BANK REPORT 2024**

During the past year I have been collecting items for the Food Bank. Our church has donated an average of 2 grocery bags of food each week for the Food Bank. You have also donated many egg cartons and coffee cans each week.

We now have regular collection dates for empty water bottles, 500 ml sour cream containers & 750 gm yogurt containers. Regular collection dates for the containers are March, June, September and December. The containers for collecting these items will be in the front entrance during these times. The food bank only needs one reusable grocery bag of each of these containers – they don't have storage space for more than that.

Thank you everyone for supporting the Food Bank.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Shalleen Hunt*

## **FEBRUARY BLAH PACKAGES**

We have a long standing tradition of sending care packages to our post secondary students attached to this Parish. February is often a difficult month so we want everyone to know we support their endeavours in prayer and by championing them.

Each package contains gift cards to Tim Hortons and McDonald's also a mix of practical and fun items. We also include a hand written note just to let them know we care. Just before they are sent Amanda blesses each recipient and the gifts.

Please keep these students in your prayers all year long.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Leslie Grieve*

## **SPONSORED CHILD**

On October 11, 2010, St. John-in-the-Wilderness became the sponsor to a 4 year old boy by the name of Jundi Abduselam. Over the years, we have received pictures and written updates as to his progress and that of his family and community of Jarso, Ethiopia. A new community to the care of World Vision, the 14 years that have passed since we began our sponsorship of Jundi have seen the healthy growth and development of not only a child, but his family and community.

Building an infrastructure where there is clean water to drink, an irrigation system for the cultivation of crops, water for cooking and physical care of the humans and animals in its midst, the community of Jarso began to take care of itself. Jundi, his siblings, and friends attended the schools that were built. They received medical care, learned to work and his family and community became self-sufficient. We met our commitment and, at 18 years of age, Jundi sends his gratitude to us for our sponsorship.

On December 18, 2024, St. John-in-the-Wilderness received news that another child needed our sponsorship. Eufrasio Benetido Lazaro is a 2 year old boy from Monapo, Mozambique. Like Jarso, Monapo is a new community needing the help that sponsorship of its children can provide. Our commitment of \$50/month will be put toward Eufrasio's care as well as the development of a clean water and irrigation system, health care, schools and other services necessary to build and sustain this child, his family, and his community.

The future of Jundi, his family and community, is bright and blessed. Our hopes and resources can now be directed toward helping Eufrasio Benetido Lazaro. Thank you for joining me in making this commitment part of our outreach to God's world.

Faithfully,  
*Anne Toth*

## **BEEKEEPING REPORT 2024**

This was the 4<sup>th</sup> year of beekeeping at St John in the Wilderness Church.

Neither hive survived the winter this year (darn!), so we brought in two new "nucs" from BLB honey in Dresden to repopulate. Both hives were very well-behaved and productive!

The weather was a little unusual this year, with colder weather earlier in the spring, and very dry weather through much of the summer. This resulted in very little honey production early in the year from the bees, but they made up for lost time in July and August! We ended up harvesting about 90 pounds of honey from the hives.

The ACW ladies hosted another very successful VBS camp, glorious snacks and crafts. Thank you VBS & Leslie Grieve! It was a fun, last minute event!

Our annual honey sale was on September 28. We sold out in a blistering 25 minutes (come early next year!). Haley & Doug both donated their personal honey sales as well, totalling \$2,444. 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 2024. With the April move of a speaker from the chancel (front of the church) to the rear of the church to allow for better audio to the purchase and setup of a new projector in December of 2024. The permanent Projector Screen in the Church was installed in 2023 and will be used with this new projector. With the Church Hall being painted in 2023 the hall east wall has been purposely kept clear to be also used with this projector. The projector will be used for presentations / meetings and other special events like movie night. The projector was purchased with memorial funds and given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Ken Walker.

On November 8, 2024 the church internet speed was increased from 20/10 Mbps to 80/30 Mbps. The newly negotiated cost for the Phone / Internet has decreased for a yearly saving of more than \$925.

A future technology addition in 2025 will be a new computer for the secretary. This is required since this computer runs Windows 10 and the end of support for the security patches is October 14, 2025. We are currently working to finish a locking storage location in the kitchen for the new projector. This will allow the projector to be stored on site. We are also looking at the feasibility of a portable raised table at the front of the church to also be used for the new projector.

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.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Mike Moloney*

## PROPERTY COMMITTEE

This is the second year for this committee. We are a sub-committee of the church's Executive. Our members include: Brent Anderson, Brian Fogg, Peter Langille, Deb Walker and me (Brian Bradford). Even though it is a relatively new committee, we have successfully accomplished quite a few projects. Some projects and tasks are small, but others are larger. Most items are done by parishioners who volunteer their time and talent.

The biggest accomplishment in 2024 was the project to upgrade **four windows** for environmental performance, aesthetics, and ease of use. The two windows at the south end of the social hall and the sacristy window were upgraded with single hung windows. The polycarbonate fixed window which protected the stained-glass windows high above the church porch was upgraded with fixed glass windows. This provides improved environmental performance, allows more sunlight in the building, shows off the stained-glass, and is a better protective layer outside for safety. It should be noted that the stained-glass windows by the altar already have an outer layer of clear glass for protection; this was done a few years ago. The funds for the four window upgrades were from a memorial fund given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Ken Walker. Moore H & Son Windows and Doors installed the windows, with parishioners doing significant preparatory and finishing work to keep costs down.

Another big accomplishment was the installation of a 10-foot x 12-foot **storage shed** on the northeast corner of the property. It rests on level patio stones and is wooden, with a steel roof. Parishioners installed shelves in it to suit our needs. A donated lawn mower, wheelbarrow and other tools are stored in it to help keep the church property looking lovely. We also store the platform used for outdoor church services in the shed. The church has needed a storage shed for a long time; it came to us via a memorial donation given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Ken Walker.

**Thanks to the many of you who do many routine maintenance tasks (often on a rotating basis), you:** clean the church weekly, mow our lawn, change the messages on our church sign and keep it clean, shop for our supplies, shovel and salt our walkways, and donate supplies (paper towels and garbage bags, for example, just keep appearing). You keep the place looking great.

**Other items** done in 2024 are below – all but the electrical circuits and furnace repair were done by parishioner volunteers:

1. Seeding of northern part of sump pump trench.
2. Drains installed for dehumidifiers to self-drain (instead of a person doing this twice a day).
3. Cleaned the outside air conditioner units for more efficiency and of course to save money.
4. The red carpet was shampooed. It was very dirty. This is going to be an annual project.
5. A speaker was moved from the church chancel to the rear of church to help parishioners hear the services better (such as myself).
6. New electrical circuits were installed in the kitchen (no more tripping breakers, especially on pancake day). This was enabled by the 2021 upgrade to 200 amps, which was done to support air conditioning of the hall.
7. The furnace for the main church area was repaired in December – going forward we will have routine maintenance done on it each fall.
8. Extended north native gardens to the west - as a memorial given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Charlene Adams.
9. All the church gardens were mulched in the late spring
10. In the fall leaves were cleaned up all around the church.
11. In the summer the north wall of the church and hall were pressure washed to remove green algae growth.

**Projects for 2025** are to put a new method of closure on the church's outdoor sign for ease of use, repair a soft spot in a small section of the storage room floor, install a cold air return into the storage room, continue to monitor the crawl space areas for integrity of our structure (particularly given the water we sustained there during Covid), and continue to look at means to enhance sound and video management in the church proper and the hall.

It was a very good idea to form a property committee. We have improved the building and the property for the parishioner and the community around us. We will continue to do this into the future. We all want a safe, properly functioning, robust building to worship God and socialize in.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Brian Bradford*

## **SUNDAY SCHOOL AND VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL**

We feel very blessed to have the children we have attend our Sunday School; and that our attendance, perhaps, may be recovering from Covid. We averaged 1.1 children per Sunday; this was true with or without July and August being included. Highest attendance occurred near Easter and Christmas. Two new families began to attend in the second half of 2024 – a joy!

Twelve children from 6 families in our congregation accounted for 60% of attendance. Nine children from five visiting families outside of our parish accounted for 40% of attendance, with two of those joining our parish by year end.

Lessons tend to focus on God's love, the philosophy of love, and wisdom – both in leadership and in following. Lessons are tailored to the ages of the children who join us on a given day. We get the kids out into our glorious yard of trees, native flowers, and lawn whenever we can. We continue to use a web-based curriculum called Sermons4kids ([www.sermons4kids.com](http://www.sermons4kids.com)), augmenting it as we choose.

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

Leslie Grieve and Haley Walker led a buzzing VBS morning Bee camp in early August, with about 15 children attending, many from outside of our congregation. Thanks to all the volunteers supporting this - Nancy's bee-autiful crafts, Sandra F's sweet food, Nicole's hive of organization, teens Ally and Lauren's buzz-of-the-party kid support...plus parents, grandparents and others who provided much needed hands and care.

Spending in 2024 was about \$500 for Sunday School and VBS – which was donated without tax receipts. There was no curriculum cost, funds were used for printing, snacks, and craft supplies. Spending for 2025 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 2, 2025**  
**CANDIDATE SLATE OF OFFICERS FOR 2025 PARISH COUNCIL**

Vestry Clerk	<b>KAREN WILSON</b> (Not on Council)
Warden	<b>DEB WALKER</b>
Warden	<b>PETER LANGILLE</b> (Appointed by Rector)
Deputy Warden	<b>MIKE MOLONEY</b> (Appointed by Rector)
Deputy Warden	<b>BRIAN BRADFORD</b>
Deputy Warden Emeritus	<b>BRENT ANDERSON</b> (Appointed by Rector, position non- voting)
Treasurer	<b>BRIAN FOGG</b> (Position Appointed by Wardens)
Deputy Treasurer	<b>ARUNA ANDERSON</b> (Position Appointed by Wardens)
Envelope Secretary	<b>SANDRA LAMOUREUX</b> (Not on Council)
Lay Delegate to Synod	<b>SANDRA FRASER</b>
Alternate Delegate to Synod	<b>NICOLE GRIEVE</b>

Regular Council Members	<u>ELECTED</u>	<u>APPOINTED</u>
	<b>BRENDEN FRASER</b>	<b>SANDY DAWSON</b>
	<b>BRIAN FOGG</b>	<b>SUSAN HALLIDAY</b>
	<b>INGRID SCHMID</b>	<b>LESLIE GRIEVE</b>
	<b>BRENT ANDERSON</b>	<b>KATHY MORRIS</b>

Anglican Fellowship of Prayer Representative **KATHY MORRIS**

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.**