

St. Mary's Episcopal Church

Stone Harbor, New Jersey

1910 - 2025



2024 ANNUAL REPORT TO THE CONGREGATION

JANUARY 19, 2025

**St. Mary's Episcopal Church
Stone Harbor, NJ**

**Annual Meeting of the Parish
January 19, 2025**

Agenda

- I. Call to Order and Opening Prayer
 - a. Appointment of Clerk
- II. Nominations and Elections
 - a. Nominations from the floor
 - b. 2025 Vestry
 - c. Delegates to Convention and Convocation
 - d. Nominations from the floor
- III. Minutes of 2024 Annual Meeting
- IV. Annual Parish Reports received
- V. Rector's Address
- VI. Senior Warden's Report
- VII. Treasurer's Report
 - a. 2025 Budget
 - b. Net Worth Over Time
 - c. 2024 Pledge Analysis
 - d. 2025 Pledges
- VIII. Closing of the polls (if needed)
- IX. Comments, questions or concerns
- X. Necrology
- XI. Closing Prayer and Benediction
- XII. Adjournment

Opening Prayer for the Annual Meeting

Let us pray:

Gracious and loving God,

We gather today as your faithful servants, united in purpose and hope, to reflect on the blessings of the past year and to seek your guidance for the path ahead. We give thanks for your Spirit, which has moved among us, igniting creativity, strengthening fellowship, and leading us into deeper service to you and our community.

We are grateful for the many gifts you have bestowed upon St. Mary's—the hands that served, the hearts that gave, and the voices that lifted prayers and songs of praise. Thank you for the ministry of our leaders, the dedication of our volunteers, and the faithful presence of all who call this church home. In every act of kindness, in every outreach endeavor, and in every moment of worship, we see your love at work.

As we begin this meeting, we lift to you the work before us. May our discussions be filled with wisdom and grace, our decisions guided by your will, and our hearts open to the leading of your Spirit. Strengthen us to embrace the opportunities and challenges of this new year with courage, compassion, and unwavering faith.

Bless our leaders, old and new, and all those who serve as stewards of your mission here at St. Mary's. Let this time of reflection and planning be an offering that honors your name and furthers your kingdom.

In the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer, we pray.
Amen.

QUALIFICATIONS OF VOTERS ACCORDING TO CANON FIFTY

SECTION 2. The persons entitled to vote at such meetings must be:

- (a) baptized,
- (b) at least sixteen years of age,
- (c) of good moral character,
- (d) adhering to The Episcopal Church and to no other religious body,
- (e) regular attendants at the services of the Church in said Parish or Mission,
and
- (f) regular contributors to the current expenses of the Parish or Mission
for six months next before the said annual meeting.

A record of the regular contributors for the support of the Parish or Mission shall be maintained by the Treasurer, with the dates of their contributions. Such records shall be sufficient evidence as to the qualification of a voter with respect to the last preceding requirement. Any voters not baptized in the Parish must have been enrolled as members in accordance with the provisions of the Canons of The Episcopal Church. Rectors, Vicars, or Wardens shall keep a list of all members of the Congregation who have been received as voters, which list shall be open to inspection by the members of the Congregation. No one shall be permitted to vote or be eligible to office in more than one Parish or Mission in this Diocese, although members of a Parish or Mission may be eligible also to vote or hold office in a Chapel.

Nominating Report
Annual Meeting January 19, 2025

Vestry of 2024

Warden: Lillian Armstrong, Class 2025

Junior Warden: Cheryl Lukens Oleferuk, Class 2026

Vestry Class 2025

Marion Myers

Lawrence Schmidt

Vestry Class 2025

Dr. Sandra Harmon-Weiss

Vestry Class 2026

Allyn Penkethman

Cathy Johnson

Treasurer: Jack Olthuis

The following candidates are placed in consideration for election of offices of this church

Warden (1 person – 2 year term)

1. Lillian Armstrong

Vestry Person (2 persons – 3 year term)

1. Kate Rodriguez

2.

Vestry Person (2 persons, unexpired term Class of 2026)

1. Dina Ziembra

2.

Delegates to Diocesan Convention (3 persons – 1 year term)

(1) Jack Olthuis

(2) Lawrence Schmidt

(3) Lillian Armstrong

Alternate Delegate to Diocesan Convention (3 persons – 1 year term)

(1) Lisa LaGreca

(2)

(3)

Delegate to Atlantic Convocation (3 persons – 1 year term)

(1) Lisa LaGreca

(2) Yvonne Olthuis

(3)

Alternate Delegate to Atlantic Convocation (3 persons – 1 year term)

(1)

(2)

(3)

Annual meeting 1/28/24

The meeting was called to order as a quorum was present. The meeting opened in prayer at 10:25AM. An ice breaker began the meeting to get everyone to open up.

-Dina Ziembra was appointed as the clerk for the meeting

Nominations

-Outgoing vestry member Bill Handley was thanked for his service to the church

-The candidates for consideration for election for offices of the vestry were presented.

There were no further nominations from the floor.

There was a motion made that the nominations for Jr Warden and Vestry members be closed. There was 2nd and the nominations for Vestry were closed.

-The candidates for consideration for election for delegates to the Diocesan Convention were presented.

There were no further nominations from the floor.

There was a motion made that the nominations be closed. There was 2nd and the nominations for delegates to the Diocesan Convention were closed.

-The candidates for consideration for election for alternate delegates to Diocesan Convention were presented.

There were no further nominations from the floor.

There was a motion made that the nominations be closed. There was 2nd and the nominations for alternate delegates to the Diocesan Convention were closed.

-The candidates for consideration for election for delegates and alternates to the Atlantic Convocation were presented.

Lillian Armstrong was nominated from the floor

Allyn Penkethman was nominated from the floor as an alternate.

There were no further nominations from the floor.

There was a motion made that the nominations be closed. There was 2nd and the nominations for delegates and alternates to the Atlantic Convocation were closed.

-A motion was made that the slate for nominees be approved as presented in the annual meeting notes. There was 2nd and the nominees were approved.

-A motion to accept the notes from last year's annual meeting. There was a motion to accept the minutes and 2nd - minutes were accepted.

-A motion was made to accept the Ministry reports from last year's annual meeting. There was a motion to accept the reports and 2nd - reports were accepted.

Sr. Warden's Report- Lillian Armstrong

Began by raising up Mo. Allison and reflecting on her time with us over the past 5 years. She thanked both Mo Allison and Lisa for the warmth, spirituality, and getting our church ready for more growth and the future.

Jack Olthus - with respect to the budget - good news is we brought in more money than expected from contributions and spent less than expected. We do take money out of our investments to make it through the year.

However, we took less this year than anticipated. We are "living according to our projections". Our pledge income for 2024 will be higher than it was for 2023.

- Julie Taylor is moving to part time. She has been an anchor and an asset to keeping our church moving forward. Her knowledge base of the church and its history is impeccable. Mo Allison thanked her for all her support, hard work, and council she has provided for her and our church.

-Motion to accept the annual meeting reports and budget -There motion was 2nd - the reports and budget were accepted.

-Mo Allison began the discussion regarding changing the service back to 10am. She will be calling parishioners to hear any concerns before she makes the final decision.

-Dina Ziembra spoke about the kitchen committee - Cindy spoke regarding the benefactor who will help with costs of the kitchen renovation. Dina agreed to be in charge of the kitchen committee Cheryl Oleferuk , Yvonne Olthius, Lisa LaGreca, Kate Rodriguez, and Serena Smith agreed to be on the committee.

A brief moment of reflection and prayer was taken to remember those who entered into eternal life this past year.

The meeting closed with prayer at 11:32AM.

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Rector's Report for 2024

"Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord." – 1 Corinthians 12:4-5

Beloved friends in Christ,

What a year it has been! As I stand here before you, my heart overflows with gratitude for the Spirit of God at work in this community. When Paul wrote to the Corinthians, reminding them that the same Spirit empowers all gifts, I imagine he could have been describing St. Mary's Episcopal Church. This year, we have witnessed firsthand the vibrant, living body of Christ at work among us.

Let me begin by acknowledging the farewells we have experienced. We said goodbye to our beloved Thrift Shop manager, who retired to Florida after years of dedicated service. We then closed the doors of our Thrift Shop over the summer, a ministry that has touched countless lives. And we mourned the loss of beloved faithful servants who have joined the heavenly chorus. These transitions have been tender and challenging, but through them, God's faithfulness has never wavered.

Even as we faced goodbyes, God brought us into a season of *welcome*. New faces have joined our pews, and new friends have become part of our extended family. We've witnessed new life in our congregation and in our church plant with a renovated kitchen and soon-to-be new stairs. This, my friends, is the work of the Spirit—the same Spirit who breathes life into dry bones and brings resurrection out of loss.

Celebrating Our Successes

What strikes me most about this year is how deeply God has embedded St. Mary's into the fabric of Stone Harbor. From attending Chamber events throughout my years here to participating in civic clubs, from praying at community gatherings to simply being present, we've become trusted leaders in this neighborhood. People turn to us for prayer, support, and even the small things, like leaving a note for a neighbor or checking on local businesses. These moments, though they may seem ordinary, are sacred. They show how much trust and love we have fostered as a church.

One story that stands out to me is when Lisa, my beloved wife, was trusted with keys to caring for a local business, or another pet-sitting when the owner was away, or even when I received a text message that a manager wasn't sure if she

locked the door or even an occasional, “Hey can you post a note for my customers that I will be late.” Or when Mary from Springer’s brought us ice cream when I couldn’t eat anything because of a bum tooth. And how about the Cookie Stroll in November? It began with Kim at Salty Paws, but it became a community-wide event where not only members from our congregation baked but *our neighbors* baked to support us as well. This is the Spirit at work, friends—drawing us closer together in love, building relationships and embedding the mission and ministry of St. Mary’s into our community.

Outreach That Changes Lives

Our outreach to the people in recovery has been transformative. Recognition from Cooper Hospital and the Board of County Commissioners is an incredible honor, but the real success is in the lives touched not only by providing the space to 12 Step groups but also by our recovery Eucharists and Al-Anon retreats. These ministries are not just about opening our doors—they are about opening our hearts and offering spiritual support to those seeking hope and healing. And each time we do, the Spirit blesses us with more growth, more connection, more life.

A Call to Leadership

This brings us to an exciting moment. God has positioned us for continued growth and transformation, but we can only answer this call together. St. Mary’s needs leaders—leaders to steward our ministries, to guide our outreach, and to continue building on the incredible foundation we’ve laid. Paul reminds us that we are one body with many parts. Your gifts, your unique talents, are vital to the life of this church.

Whether you feel called to organize, to teach, to welcome, or to pray—there is a place for you in this next chapter of St. Mary’s. God has given us the tools, the people, and the Spirit to step boldly into this new season.

A Spirit of Gratitude

As we look back on 2024, let us not forget to say thank you—to God, to one another, and to this incredible community that supports us. Thank you for showing up, for sharing your gifts, and for trusting in God’s call.

With God’s help, we’ve grown our in-person attendance to 2,823 and increased our average Sunday attendance to 54. These numbers reflect more than participation—they reflect a thriving, Spirit-filled church eager to do God’s work.

So as we look ahead to 2025, let us go with hope, excitement, and faith. Let us celebrate the Spirit's movement among us, knowing that God's work is far from finished here at St. Mary's. The best is yet to come.

Praise be to God, from whom all blessings flow!

In Christ,

The Very Rev. Allison Burns-LaGreca

St. Mary's Episcopal Church Cumulative Report 2024

	Jan	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct.	Nov.	Dec	Total
In Person Monthly Atten.	95	109	244	197	125	209	274	333	167	165	346	251	2823
YTD Atten		204	448	645	770	979	1253	1894	2061	2226	2572	2823	
Monthly ASA	24	27	49	49	31	42	68	83	34	41	87	50	
YTD ASA		26	32	36	37	36	46	61	57	56	58	54	54
Total Weekend Services	4	4	6	4	4	5	8	8	5	4	4	5	61
Weekday Holy Eucharist			2			1	1	1				1	6
House Blessings													
Reconciliation													
Burials	2		1	1			1			1		1	7
Baptisms								1					1
Marriages						1					2		3
Monthly Daily Office	16	17	14	11	18	14		16	16	13	14	10	143
Confirmed													
Received													
Pastoral Care/Visitation	15	10	8	10	8	18	20	10	6	7	9	7	128

	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>
Sundays	52	52	52
Weekdays	1	8	5
Other/Private	142	154	128
Daily Office	187	198	143
Total In-Person Attendance	2259	2471	2823
Average Sunday Attendance	43	48	54
Pledging Units	27	29	29

The Blessings of Our Liturgy

Every time we gather for worship, we are blessed to participate in the sacred rhythm of Episcopal liturgy—a rich tapestry of prayer, scripture, music, and sacrament. This beautiful expression of our faith doesn't happen in isolation. It is the fruit of many hearts and hands, each offering their unique gifts to glorify God and enrich our shared worship.

I want to take a moment to express my deepest gratitude for everyone who makes our liturgy come alive. Each one of you plays an essential role in transforming our services into a holy and joyful encounter with God.

To Fr. Glenn Matis

Thank you for for being my go to supply, your dedication to proclaiming the Gospel and presiding over the mysteries of our faith is a profound gift. Your guidance helps us draw closer to the heart of God, whether through preaching, prayer, or administering the sacraments. Your faithful service reminds us of Christ's enduring presence among us.

To the Lay Ministers

Our lay ministers are a shining example of how God calls all of us to serve.

- **Lectors**, you bring the Word of God to life, sharing sacred stories that nourish our souls.
- **Eucharistic Ministers**, your hands extend Christ's presence in the bread and wine, reminding us of the grace that sustains us.
- **Intercessors**, your heartfelt prayers lift up the needs of the church, the world, and each one of us, creating a bridge between heaven and earth.

To the Acolytes and Altar Guild

A special thank you to the **acolytes** who carry the cross, light candles, and assist in preparing the altar with reverence and care. You teach us, in your quiet service, that even the smallest actions in worship are acts of devotion. To the **altar guild**, your behind-the-scenes work ensures that every detail of our sacred space reflects the beauty and order of God's love. **(Please take notice that many of our roles overlap like the Acolyte and Eucharistic Ministers, and we ask you to consider joining our ministry if you feel so called)**

To the Curtis, Tom and Arney and all our guest Musicians

Your voices and instruments transform our prayers into song, lifting our spirits and connecting us to the divine. Whether leading a familiar hymn or sharing a sacred

anthem, your music reminds us that worship engages the whole of our being—mind, body, and soul.

To Bill Haines and all the Ushers and Greeters

Your ministry of hospitality reflects the open arms of Christ. By welcoming each person at the door, guiding them to a seat, and assisting with the logistics of worship, you create an environment of warmth and belonging. You remind us that no one is a stranger in God's house.

To Hilton Rodriguez, our Recovery community, and Seasonal family

Thank you for making Saturdays at the beach and special services like Recovery Eucharist, Healing Services, and Blue Christmas extra special and successful. It's a joy to preside over these service and to witness the Holy Spirit at work.

To the Congregation

To every worshiper, know that your presence matters. Your prayers, your voices, and your hearts joined in worship create a sacred unity that binds us as the Body of Christ. Together, we celebrate the divine mystery and encounter the living God in ways that transform us and the world around us.

A Shared Offering to God

The Episcopal liturgy is not a performance—it is a communal offering. It is the work of the people, united in love and gratitude. Each of us, whether leading or participating, contributes to the sacred act of worship. Together, we bring our joys, our sorrows, and our hopes before God, trusting in the promise of renewal and grace.

Thank you, each and every one of you, for your faithfulness, your gifts, and your willingness to serve. As we continue to worship and grow together, may we be reminded that what we create in our liturgy is more than a service; it is a reflection of God's kingdom, here and now.

If you are not already taking part in one of these vital ministries to the church, please consider offering your time and talent.

With gratitude and love,
Mo. Allison+
Rector, St. Mary's Episcopal Church

Honoring Our Vestry Members

Dear Beloved in Christ,

The vestry is one of the most vital and selfless ministries in the life of our parish. It is a calling that blends practical leadership with spiritual discernment, all in service to God's mission. Today, I want to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude to all who have answered this sacred call—those who have served in the past, those currently serving, and those who will serve in the future.

To Our Vestry Members, Past and Present

To those who have served in years gone by, thank you for laying the foundation upon which our parish stands today. Your dedication to preserving and strengthening the life of this church has shaped who we are and how we serve our community. You gave generously of your time, wisdom, and prayers to ensure that our ministries could flourish and that our resources were stewarded wisely.

To those currently serving, I see your faith in action every time you gather to discern the needs of this parish and its mission. Whether you are wrestling with budgets, maintaining our physical spaces, or envisioning the future of our ministry, your commitment is nothing short of inspiring. You have taken on the sacred responsibility of shepherding this parish through challenges and opportunities, and your leadership reflects the love of Christ in action.

To Future Vestry Members

To those who will one day serve on the vestry, I thank you in advance for your willingness to say “yes” to this call. The work of the vestry is not always glamorous, but it is always holy. It is through your leadership that this parish will continue to thrive, deepen its faith, and serve as a beacon of God's love in the world.

A Ministry Rooted in Faith

The ministry of the vestry is so much more than managing finances or overseeing property. It is a sacred trust to support the mission of the church and foster its growth in faith and service. Vestry members are called to prayerfully discern where God is leading us and to act boldly in response to that call. Through your efforts, this church has remained steadfast in its purpose, vibrant in its ministry, and hopeful in its future.

A Reflection of Christ's Leadership

In the Gospel, Jesus modeled servant leadership—leading with humility, compassion, and courage. As vestry members, you reflect that same spirit, putting the needs of others before your own and seeking always to serve the greater good. You remind us all that leadership in the church is not about power or prestige but about love and service.

A Heartfelt Thank You

To each of you—past, present, and future vestry members—thank you for your dedication, your faithfulness, and your willingness to serve. Your work often happens behind the scenes, but its impact is felt every day in the life of this parish. Through your leadership, you help create a church that is welcoming, vibrant, and deeply rooted in God's love.

May God bless you richly for the countless ways you give of yourselves to this sacred ministry. Please know that your work is appreciated, your sacrifices are honored, and your efforts are making a difference in the life of this parish and beyond.

With gratitude and love,
Mo. Allison+
Rector, St. Mary's Episcopal Church

The Gift of Hospitality

In the life of our church, there are moments when we encounter the grace of God in the simplest yet most profound ways. One of those moments is during **coffee hour**, a time of connection, fellowship, and nourishment for body and soul. This cherished gathering doesn't happen by itself—it is made possible by the generosity and care of those who embody the ministry of hospitality.

Today, we extend our deepest gratitude to all of you who have given your time, talents, and hearts to make coffee hour a warm and welcoming space for our congregation. Your gifts, particularly your baking talents and the time you have dedicated to preparing and serving, are blessings that go far beyond the table.

The Ministry of Hospitality

Hospitality is so much more than offering a cup of coffee or a sweet treat. It is an act of love that creates space for fellowship and belonging. Through your kindness

and effort, you extend the open arms of Christ to everyone who gathers, reminding us all that we are not just a congregation—we are a family.

In your willingness to bake, brew, and serve, you create a sacred space where friendships are nurtured, stories are shared, and burdens are lightened. Whether it's a delicious cookie or a simple cup of tea, these offerings are symbols of care that help us draw closer to one another and to God.

Building Fellowship

Coffee hour is often where the bonds of community are formed and strengthened. For newcomers, it's a chance to feel welcomed and to connect beyond the pews. For long-time members, it's a moment to catch up, laugh, and share life's joys and challenges. These moments may seem ordinary, but they are extraordinary in their power to unite us as the Body of Christ.

Your hospitality fosters this fellowship, creating an environment where people feel seen, heard, and valued. In this space, we are reminded that the church is not just a building or a service—it is the people gathered in love and support.

A Reflection of Christ's Love

Through your service, you reflect the love and generosity of Christ Himself, who so often shared meals and moments of connection with His disciples and with strangers. In the simple act of offering food and drink, you help us all to see Christ in one another and to experience His presence in our midst.

Your ministry of hospitality is more than just a task—it is a reflection of the kingdom of God, where all are welcomed, nourished, and loved. It is an invitation to deeper relationships, not only with each other but also with Christ, who calls us to serve one another in love.

A Heartfelt Thank You

To those who have spent hours baking treats, brewing coffee, setting up tables, and cleaning up afterward, please know that your efforts do not go unnoticed. You are ministers of grace, creating moments of joy and connection that enrich our shared life.

Thank you for your willingness to give of yourselves so generously. Your contributions make our time together not just enjoyable but meaningful. You remind us that hospitality is not simply about what we serve but about how we serve—with love, care, and a spirit of welcome.

May we continue to grow in fellowship and faith, and may the ministry of hospitality always be a reflection of the boundless love of God. Thank you for making coffee hour a place where we experience not just community, but communion with one another and with Christ.

Please consider becoming a part of this important ministry of St. Mary's.

The Heart of Outreach

As we reflect on the life and mission of our parish, our hearts are filled with gratitude for the countless ways we have embraced the ministry of outreach this year. From Strawberry Fest to Thursday on the Lawn, from our first Cookie Stroll to Recovery Services and more, each initiative has been a vibrant expression of God's love in action. Today, I want to thank each and every one of you who contributed to these efforts, whether through your time, talents, resources, or prayers.

More Than Events and Fundraisers

At first glance, outreach initiatives like these might seem like simple events or fundraisers, but they are so much more. Each gathering, each moment of service, is a sacred opportunity to connect with others, build relationships, and reflect the love of Christ in our community. Through these efforts, we have reached beyond our walls to touch lives, offering not just hospitality but also hope, joy, and a sense of belonging.

Strawberry Fest

To those who helped plan, prepare, serve, and share in the joy of this beloved tradition, thank you. Strawberry Fest is not just a celebration of summer—it is a celebration of community. By welcoming neighbors and visitors alike, we have created a space where laughter, fellowship, and generosity thrive.

Thursday on the Lawn

Thank you to Jack and Yvonne Olthuis and everyone who made our Thursday on the Lawn gatherings possible. These evenings of music, cookies, and fellowship have become a cherished tradition, drawing people together to relax, connect, and enjoy the beauty of our shared space. Your efforts have created a welcoming environment where strangers become friends and our parish shines as a beacon of warmth and hospitality.

Annual Stone Harbor Merchants Sidewalk-Sale Bake Sale

Filled with gratitude for the way we came together to make this year's Bake Sale a success. By opening our front lawn not only for our bake sale but also as a space for partnership with local businesses, we created a welcoming and vibrant presence that drew people together in fellowship.

To everyone who led, baked, and sold delicious treats, thank you for your joyful service and generosity. Your efforts not only nourished our community but also supported the ministry and mission of St. Mary's. Together, we demonstrated the love of Christ in action.

Our First Cookie Stroll

A special thank you to Kim at Salty Paws for her initiation and baking skills, and all the bakers both in our congregations and those further out in our community, organizers, and participants who brought the Cookie Stroll to life. This new initiative was about more than just delicious treats—it was about building bridges within our community. Through your creativity and hard work, you helped us engage with neighbors in a fun and meaningful way, spreading joy and connection.

St. Mary's Giving Basket

An exciting new program for our church is St. Mary's Giving Basket Outreach, a monthly opportunity for our community to make a tangible difference in the lives of those in need.

Each month, we choose an organization to focus on supporting a specific needs and/or causes.

Recovery Services

To those who support our recovery ministries, your work is a testament to the transformative power of love and compassion. By walking alongside those seeking healing and hope, you are participating in the redemptive work of Christ. Thank you for being a source of light and encouragement to so many who need it.

Live Streaming Services

A heartfelt gratitude to Lisa and her backup Yvonne for the incredible work they both do to keep our live-streaming ministry alive and thriving. Their dedication ensures that our services reach beyond the walls of St. Mary's, connecting us with members who are homebound or spending part of the year in other parts of the state.

Their efforts are a vital part of our mission to ensure everyone feels included and supported, no matter where they are. This ministry is essential to "Staying Connected," not just as a program but as a reflection of the loving community we are called to be in Christ.

Thank you for your commitment, creativity, and care in bringing our worship and message of hope into the homes and hearts of so many. You are truly a blessing to our church family.

The Power of Relationships

What makes these outreach initiatives truly impactful is the way they foster relationships. Whether it's sharing a meal, enjoying a concert, exchanging a smile, or simply being present, these moments create connections that reflect God's kingdom. They remind us that outreach is not just about what we do but about how we love. Through these efforts, we are living out the Gospel by building a community where everyone is welcomed, valued, and loved.

A Community of Faith in Action

None of this would be possible without you—the faithful people of this parish who continually say “yes” to God's call to serve. Your willingness to roll up your sleeves, share your gifts, and open your hearts has made these initiatives not only successful but transformative. Through your work, you are bringing hope, joy, and love to our community and beyond.

Looking Ahead

As we look to the future, may we continue to embrace the ministry of outreach with the same enthusiasm and dedication. These efforts are more than events—they are opportunities to embody the love of Christ and to make a real difference in the lives of those we encounter. Together, we can continue to shine as a light in the world, building relationships that reflect the boundless grace of God.

A Heartfelt Thank You to Our Kitchen Committee and Supporters

In 2024, the vision of renovating our kitchen became a reality, and with it, a world of new opportunities opened for us to deepen our outreach and extend our ministry. This milestone could not have been achieved without the passion, dedication, and support of so many who poured their hearts into this project. Today, we take a moment to thank those who made this transformation possible.

To Jamie Diller

Jamie, your generosity, leadership, and unwavering commitment to this project have been nothing short of extraordinary. Your willingness to fund, coordinate, and oversee the kitchen renovations has turned a long-held dream into a beautiful reality. You have blessed our parish with a gift that will serve not only our community but also countless others through the ministry and outreach this new space makes possible. Thank you for your vision, your hard work, and your steadfast dedication.

To Cindy O'Connor

Cindy, you have been a tireless advocate for this kitchen renovation for years, keeping the vision alive even when it seemed far off. Your persistence, faith, and hard work have been the foundation of this achievement. Thank you for your dedication and for ensuring that this project was not just completed but completed with purpose and love.

To the Kitchen Committee

To Dina Ziemba, Yvonne Olthuis, Cheryl Lukens Oleferuk, Cathy Johnson, Allyn Penkethman, and Lisa LaGreca, your collaborative spirit and hard work have been inspiring. Each of you brought your unique gifts to this project, ensuring that the result would meet our needs and reflect our shared mission. From planning and decision-making to hands-on contributions, you embodied the spirit of service and teamwork. Thank you for your willingness to invest your time and talents in this ministry.

A Shared Vision for Outreach

This new kitchen is more than just a functional space—it is a symbol of what we can accomplish together when we follow God’s call. It will allow us to expand our outreach, host gatherings, and strengthen the bonds of fellowship within our parish and beyond. Your efforts have created a space that will nourish bodies and spirits alike for years to come.

A Community of Gratitude

As we celebrate the completion of this renovation, let us remember that it is the fruit of many hearts and hands working together. Jamie, Cindy, Dina, Yvonne, Cheryl, Cathy, Allyn, Lisa, and everyone who supported this project, you have blessed us all with your love and commitment. Please know that your efforts are deeply appreciated, and your work has made a lasting impact on the life of our church and the wider community.

May this kitchen serve as a place of hospitality, fellowship, and outreach, reflecting the abundance of God's love.

Stewardship - a Year-Round Ministry

Stewardship is one of the most profound expressions of our faith, inviting us to recognize, nurture, and share the many gifts God has entrusted to us. It is more than a season or a campaign—it is a way of life, a year-round ministry that calls us to live with gratitude, generosity, and faithfulness.

Today, we express our heartfelt thanks to **Lillian Armstrong**, whose care, attention, and creativity have made our stewardship ministry this year vibrant and impactful. Through her thoughtful leadership, Lillian has helped us see stewardship not as an obligation but as an opportunity to respond to God's abundant love.

Stewardship is not confined to a single season. It is a year-round ministry that touches every aspect of our lives and our parish. Stewardship invites us to:

- **Give of Our Time:** By prioritizing worship, service, and care for one another, we dedicate our days to God's purposes.
- **Offer Our Talents:** Each of us has unique gifts to share, and stewardship calls us to use those gifts to further the work of the church and bless our community.
- **Share Our Treasure:** Through financial giving, we sustain the mission of the church, enabling us to worship, serve, and extend Christ's love beyond our walls.
- **Care for Creation:** Stewardship extends to the world around us, calling us to honor God's creation and care for the environment.

When we embrace stewardship as a year-round ministry, it becomes a spiritual practice that transforms our lives and our community. It deepens our trust in God, strengthens our relationships with one another, and equips us to be faithful stewards of God's grace.

A Community of Stewards

Stewardship is not always about numbers or programs—it is about people. It is about the countless ways we come together as a community to support, encourage, and serve one another. Stewardship is woven into the fabric of our daily lives, a reflection of our gratitude for all God has given us.

Moving Forward Together

As we move forward let us continue to embrace stewardship as a year-round ministry. Let us give joyfully, serve faithfully, and trust in the abundance of God's provision. Together, we can ensure that our parish remains a beacon of hope, love, and generosity, living out the Gospel in all that we do.

With deep gratitude for Lillian and for each of you who contribute to this sacred ministry,

The Vital Role of a Treasurer in the Episcopal Church

The role of a treasurer in the Episcopal Church is one of profound importance, blending financial stewardship with a deep commitment to the ministry and mission of the parish. The treasurer's work often happens behind the scenes, yet it serves as the foundation that allows the church to flourish and fulfill its calling. The treasurer is entrusted with overseeing the financial health of the church, a responsibility that requires both skill and faithfulness. This includes tasks such as managing the budget, tracking income and expenses, ensuring transparency, and providing financial reports to the vestry and congregation. Beyond the numbers, the treasurer plays a critical role in fostering trust, accountability, and a sense of shared responsibility among the church community.

Today, I want to take a moment to express our deepest gratitude to **Jack Olthuis**, whose dedicated time, expertise, and leadership as our treasurer have been an incredible blessing to St. Mary's. Jack, your work has gone far beyond the routine tasks of accounting—you have approached this ministry with a heart for service and a vision for the church's future.

Your Leadership and Commitment

Jack, your steadfast attention to detail, careful planning, and ability to navigate the complexities of church finances have provided a strong foundation for our parish. You have helped us to be good stewards of the resources God has entrusted to us, ensuring that our ministries are supported, our bills are paid, and our financial decisions align with our mission and values.

Your leadership has extended beyond numbers—you have been a voice of wisdom and encouragement, guiding us through challenges and helping us seize opportunities to grow in faith and service. Your thoughtful presence has been a gift to the vestry and to the entire parish.

A Ministry of Stewardship and Trust

The work of a treasurer is more than spreadsheets and balance sheets—it is a ministry of stewardship. Jack, your dedication has helped us honor our commitments to one another, to the wider church, and to our community. You have helped us build trust and transparency, reminding us that every dollar we receive and spend is part of God’s work in the world.

Looking Ahead

As we continue to grow and serve, the foundation you have laid will allow us to face the future with confidence and hope. Your tireless efforts have positioned us to expand our ministries, care for our facilities, and reach out to those in need, all while staying true to our mission as a church.

Jack, on behalf of the vestry, the parish, and all who benefit from the work of this church, thank you for your incredible commitment and leadership. Your ministry as treasurer has been a blessing to us all, and we are profoundly grateful for the gifts you have shared so generously.

May God bless you abundantly for your faithful service, and may we all continue to follow your example of dedication and stewardship as we move forward together.

With gratitude and love,
Mo. Allison+
Rector, St. Mary’s Episcopal Church

A Heartfelt Thank You to Julie: The Heartbeat of Our Church’s Ministry

Behind every well-functioning church is someone whose tireless efforts ensure that everything runs smoothly, often unnoticed by many but deeply felt by all. At St. Mary’s, that someone is **Julie**, our incredible administrator.

Julie, your dedication, hard work, and attention to detail are truly the backbone of our church’s day-to-day life. From the smallest task to the most complex projects, you approach everything with care, efficiency, and a servant’s heart. Today, we want to take a moment to express our profound gratitude for all you do to make the ministry of this parish not only possible but thriving.

Your Daily Dedication

Your role touches every corner of our church’s life. Whether it’s ordering supplies,

managing schedules, changing boards, printing bulletins, or keeping us organized, your work ensures that nothing falls through the cracks. Your dedication to even the smallest tasks reflects your love for this church and your commitment to its mission.

A Steward of Communication

In today's world, communication is vital, and you excel at it. From social media posts to newsletters and countless emails, you ensure that everyone in our community stays informed, connected, and engaged. Through your work, you keep the heartbeat of St. Mary's alive, drawing us together in fellowship and shared purpose.

The Quiet, Essential Work

Julie, you manage tasks that many of us may never see but always feel. From paying bills to organizing schedules, from updating records to coordinating countless moving pieces, your quiet, essential work makes the ministry of this parish not only possible but vibrant. Your care and attention to detail allow others to focus on worship, outreach, and community-building, knowing that the practical matters are in capable hands.

A Ministry of Faithfulness

What you do is more than administration—it is ministry. Through your dedication, you embody the servant-leadership Christ calls us to live out. Your work creates the foundation that allows us to worship, serve, and grow as a community of faith. In everything you do, you reflect God's love and grace in action.

A Grateful Community

Julie, please know how deeply appreciated you are by every single person at St. Mary's. Your efforts, your heart, and your unwavering commitment to this parish do not go unnoticed. We are blessed by your presence and your ministry, and we thank God for you every day.

On behalf of the entire parish, thank you for your hard work, your dedication, and the countless ways you support and sustain the life of this church. You are a blessing to us all, and we are grateful beyond words for all that you do.

With love and appreciation,

Mo. Allison+
Rector, St. Mary's Episcopal Church

2024 Senior Warden's Report

Good people of St. Mary's,

The Vestry met monthly, with the exception of August, throughout the year. During the first part of the year, we had numerous discussions about finding a way forward for the This n' That Thrift Shop, including trying to find a dynamic new leader when Debbie Smith retired. Despite every effort, the shop continued to be a drain on our financial resources and we acted quickly once the decision was made to close it. Many thanks to all who have supported that effort over the years. We know we made a positive impact and helped many people through that ministry.

In writing this brief report, I look back fondly on our many team efforts throughout the year, including the Strawberry Festival in June, the Bake Sale in August and the wonderful new Cookie Stroll in November. I am deeply grateful to everyone who pitched in for those events, as well as those who pitch in each and every week as greeters and ushers, altar guild members, lay readers, eucharistic ministers and counters.

2025 marks Mother Allison's fifth year at St. Mary's and what an interesting journey it has been. From the dark days of the pandemic to our return to vibrancy she has led us with grace and humor. Her report in this Annual Report is a testament to her deep commitment to every aspect of our church and I look forward to supporting her efforts in the year to come. Of course, I can't wait to see what wonders our new kitchen brings!

Perhaps I should stick to biblical quotes here, but I can't help but be reminded of this one by Margaret Mead:

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.”

We are St. Mary's. A small group of committed Episcopalians who pray together and try to make the world a better place in Jesus' name.

Amen,

Lillian Armstrong
Senior Warden

**SAINT MARY'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
2025 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
TREASURER'S REPORT**

First and as always, many thanks to Julie Taylor for doing all the real work of keeping the books, paying the bills, and producing the monthly financial reports.

THE BUDGET

Overall, 2024 proved to be a reasonable year with respect to the budget. On the income side, you will note from the attached 2024 Budget vs. Actual – 2025 Budget sheet that we exceeded our expected general contributory income by over \$10,000. This is certainly a significant move in the right direction. Unfortunately, we withdrew \$14,500 more from our investment portfolio than the 2024 budget forecasted. This larger than expected investment withdrawal was completely attributable to the losses experienced by the Thrift Shop that the church had to cover before closure, and the costs associated with having to cease operations and close it down mid-year. \$31,000 of our investment withdrawal went toward Thrift Shop expenses. Looking at the positive side of this, the church itself needed \$69,500 to make ends meet, \$16,500 less than the budget predicted. On the expense side, without the Thrift Shop issues, the church expenses came in under budget by about \$3,000. So, minus the unfortunate situation we were placed in with the Thrift Shop, the church itself did well in adhering to the budget.

As we expected during 2024, we were able to fund the church itself more from contributory than non-contributory income. As you will note in the 2025 budget, I expect this will again be the case in 2025. However, 45% of our operating funding will still come from investment withdrawals.

Our 2025 budgeted contributory income is up by almost \$22,000 over last year's budget. This is a wonderful change. Projected expenses will increase by \$25,000. Most of this expense increase is attributable to an increase in our diocesan pledge and salaries.

NET WORTH

Because we rely so heavily on our investments to meet expenses, I track our net worth very carefully as it provides an idea of our financial longevity as a Parish. As I did last year, I've included in my report a spread sheet tracking our net worth since 2020. You will note that our net worth at the end of 2024 was \$627,256. During 2024 our net worth went down by about \$45,000 despite us having withdrawn \$100,500 from our investments for general expenses and another \$17,600 for our diocesan loan: \$118,100 in total. The stock market was certainly very helpful to us again in 2024.

I should note that if any non-budget expenses arise such as major repairs or equipment needs; we fund those directly from special gifts received or our investments. As noted above, we also pay our diocesan loan from our investments. For those new to the church, we took this loan to renovate the rectory before our previous full-time rector was hired. The balance of that loan at the end of 2024 was \$57,666.

PLEDGES

Attached you will also find a sheet showing the final status of our 2024 pledges. It's very gratifying to report that over 98% of the 2024 pledge number was received. It's equally gratifying to report that we received 30 pledges for 2025, this is one more pledge than last year, and the total amount pledged was \$107,440, an increase from last year of \$18,174. If you haven't already, please consider pledging.

If you ever have any questions about our finances, please don't hesitate to ask.

Faithfully,

Jack Olthuis
Treasurer

St. Mary's Episcopal Church

Thursdays on the Lawn Report from the Coordinator

St. Mary's has been conducting Thursdays on the Lawn for over 20 years. I have been serving as the coordinator for the last 8 years. Prior to that Marion Meyers served in that capacity.

There have been mixed thoughts about the costs/benefits of this program. From my perspective I believe the program places St. Mary's "front and center" in Stone Harbor letting locals and visitors alike know that we are part of the community. It is a vehicle which provides the church an opportunity to extend a welcome to many people and to let folks know that we aren't just open on Sunday mornings.

It is quite a bit of work, finding and booking our musicians, setting up and taking down chairs, ensuring refreshments are provided and worrying about the weather! I am very grateful to those of you that have stepped up over the years to help Yvonne and me with this work.

Having said that, I have been a bit disappointed with the attendance of parishioners at the concerts. The concerts are major opportunities for our parishioners to welcome people to Stone Harbor and more importantly to St. Mary's. A few years ago, I asked Julie to make up "Welcome to Sant Mary's". nametags which I try to have any parishioner attending the concerts wear. Over the last couple years, we haven't had to use very many of those nametags. I'd very much like to see this turn around.

I have told the Vestry that I am willing to continue serving as the coordinator for this program this year but I'd very much like to move toward passing this responsibility on. Please let me or Mo. Allison know if you might be interested in doing this. Even if you are unable to take on this full responsibility, if you can help in other ways please let me know.

Hope to see you all at this summer's Thursdays on the Lawn!

Thank you,
Jack Olthuis

Lay Readers and Lay Eucharistic Ministers

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

Corinthians 3:16

Our dedicated volunteer Lay Readers/Lectors and Eucharistic Ministers of the Parish assist the clergy during our corporate worship at our regular services on Sunday mornings at 10 a.m., our Saturday evening “Worship at the Beach” summer services, and on special feasts and holy days.

Jack Olthuis, Hilton Rodriguez and Larry Schmidt continue to serve as Lay Eucharistic Ministers and Acolytes as well as Lectors/Lay Readers. William “Bill” Handley, Cathy Johnson and Sherrie Hidalgo served as Readers. Toward the end of the year, Bill suspended his lay reading ministry for personal reasons. Occasionally others assist with readings and prayers at special services.

The Rev. Jane Carol Wilson, Dcn., who officially joined our Parish Family after her ordination, assisted Mo. Allison in our liturgy and in pastoral care. Unfortunately for St. Mary’s, Jane Carol moved away this past year and is now sharing her gifts of ministry with others.

When clergy are not available, Lay Eucharistic Visitors are available take the sanctified Elements of Bread and Wine to our parish family members who are shut-in, hospitalized or otherwise unable to get to church. If you are aware of someone who cannot attend church but would welcome a visit and want to receive Communion, please inform the Rector.

We are grateful to everyone involved in this sacred ministry. They and their service continue to bless our Parish community, continuing Christian practices established millennia ago, namely, to gather together for worship, reading of scripture, prayer, and celebration of the Eucharist.

We welcome others to join us! If you feel called to any of these ministries, please contact me or Mo. Allison.

Respectfully submitted,

Lawrence Schmidt

Lay Eucharistic Minister Coordinator

Our Dearly Departed

Charles Michael Parker

Frank L. Couch, Jr.

Phyllis Joan Tilsner

Virginia Elizabeth Elkin

William Edward Spaeth, Jr.

Parke Lewis Longnecker

Janice A. Haines

Dr. Sandra Harmon-Weiss (2025)

Let us pray:

Eternal and loving God,

We come before you today with hearts full of gratitude and reverence, remembering the faithful saints who have gone before us. We honor their lives, their witness, and their love, which have shaped us and our community in countless ways.

*For those who have served this church with devotion,
For those whose kindness and generosity left a lasting impact,
For those whose quiet faithfulness was a beacon of your grace,
We give you thanks.*

As we recall their names, we celebrate the joy they brought into the world and the ways they reflected your light. We entrust their spirits to your eternal care, confident in your promise of resurrection and life everlasting.

Comfort those among us who grieve, O Lord. May the legacy of those we remember today inspire us to walk in faith, serve with love, and live with hope, just as they did. Let their example guide us as we continue our journey, ever mindful that we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses.

In your mercy, strengthen us to honor their memory by carrying forward the work of your kingdom, united in love and faith until we are reunited with them in your heavenly presence.

We pray all these things in the name of Jesus Christ, the firstborn of the dead and the source of our eternal hope.

Amen.