

# St. Aidan's Episcopal Church Annual Report

## **Rector's Report: Moving From Maintenance to Mission**

The Spirit has been at work over the last 12 months here at St. Aidan's. I am excited by what I have seen happen here and the new ideas that are bubbling up from all over the place. When people visit our parish on a Sunday, they speak of the energy they feel when they enter the building. A healthy parish has a balanced focus on both issues of maintenance and mission.

Maintenance is not just the physical plant, but on those issues necessary to keep the building open, paying bills and keeping a sound operation. Mission is all about why we are here. Mission is about making disciples, who make disciples.

### **Maintenance**

We have made great strides in taking care of a variety of issues regarding our physical plant. I am extremely grateful to all who have given time, effort and money to accomplish a great deal this year. The painting project on the outside of the church is done for the most part.

We have a few places where siding still needs to be replaced, but for the most part we are looking very good. A large amount of the interior has been painted with donated work from both Servpro of Virginia Beach (Simeone family) and Tim Rue's painting company. Justin Rice and the Property Committee have all done a wonderful job and deserve our thanks as well.

By the time you read this we should have our new phone system in place. Thank you to South Bay Communications, Lynn and Sonny Meadows and our office angels, Carole Crouse, Alice Meinicke and Lucille Siteman (along with their husbands) for donations that completely covered the equipment and the installation.

I believe that our Cottage Meetings for Stewardship were a great success. This year saw quite a few new and increased pledges thanks in part to

a matching gift. As you will see in the financial reports, we ended in the black for the first time in three years.

During that time we had to borrow from our reserves. The surplus of about \$3500 allows us to begin to repay the money we borrowed from those accounts. Our reserves are in money that has been designated for specific purposes, but that we have not yet spent. We must, over the next four to five years, make a conscious effort to rebuild these accounts.

This is very important for the fiscal health of our parish. Our new budget sets aside about \$10,000, however our copy machine is not going to last the year so some of that will be needed to address that issue. Budgeting a surplus also allows us some buffer in these times of an uncertain economy.

More important than additional money was the beginning of a new dialogue about the church and our direction. This method of open conversation with small groups is very helpful to our growth as parish community. I plan to continue this type of meeting to both gather and share information. This change moves us forward in an important transition.

### **Mission**

2009 is the year we turned the corner in the transition process and began work towards a stronger focus on Mission. How many of you realize the shift in our Parish Life activities?

These are now more than just Saturday socials. Many of our "socials" picked up a mission theme over the past year with a social planned around our many Outreach programs.

Do you remember the social with Ima Helper? Then there was the November social that raised money for our youth mission trip. This is the first mission trip for our youth during my tenure. This planning continues for next year with

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## **Rector's Report** *(Continued)*

the Operation Smile social in February and other events that pick up this theme.

The Vestry spent a great deal of time discussing how we live as a parish. We set aside 45 minutes or more of each vestry meeting to dealing with issues other than nuts and bolts. Your vestry has been reading a book entitled "*Changing the Conversation*" by Anthony Robinson. One of the areas covered in this book is what leadership looks like in today's church. We made a conscious effort to bring some new people on to the vestry and I was delighted that 8 people offered their names for the election. At the same time I am conscious that there is a great institutional memory that is important to this parish. All of these voices will be critical in the coming year as we move forward in becoming the parish God is calling us to be.

One of the ways we will move forward in this process is to involve a much wider group than the vestry in these discussions. One way to do this would be to have a series of sessions where the rest of you read *Changing the Conversation* and join me in conversation about the various chapters. This book discussion would take about 6 sessions. If you are interested in joining me in this discussion, please let me know and I will work out a format for this to happen.

The important change in the role of the vestry is

that they are not just leaders in the temporal sense, but in a spiritual sense. We are moving ahead with asking and seeking answers to the very critical question of why are we here. Why does St. Aidan's exist? The world of the church has radically changed.

Over the past year, your vestry has spent a great deal of time looking at these many complex cultural issues that we face in a post-Christian age. How we fit into the changing world of Christianity is essential for our health as the Body of Christ.

The vestry has begun this conversation and in the coming months all of you will be part of this conversation. Whether this will take the form of a traditional Strategic Planning process or something different is an issue the new vestry will look at over the early months of 2010.

The future looks bright for St. Aidan's. I believe that we are moving in the right direction to adapt the parish to the realities of today's world and to ultimately live into the Great Commission of Matthew to "*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.*"

## **Pastoral Care**

The Pastoral Care Commission provides a ministry of lay and ordained caregivers to respond to the needs of the parishioners. In 2009, the associates conducted the following: Visitation in homes, hospitals, nursing and rehab facilities; made phone calls and mailed cards; delivered Sunday altar flowers; prepared for funeral receptions; and arranged food delivery to parishioners who were ill or recovering from surgery.

At Christmas we visited with shut-ins and delivered poinsettias. In the past the associates acted as advocates for parishioners who don't have family in the area; maintained vigils or relieved caregivers with those who are in long-term hospitalization and established long-term relationships with those in need.

We are primarily caregivers; however, we have made referrals or recommended appropriate community resources for those with needs beyond our capability. The members of the Pastoral Care Commission count on you, the parishioners, to let us know who needs our services.

Pastoral Care Associates: Gwen Daniels, Peggy Fanney, Jessie Greene, Ed Smith, Connie Williams and Sue Wells. The Assistants: Serge Demchuk, Marijane Harrison, Sharon Metz, and Dianne Sheard.

## Outreach

During the Cottage Meeting process we emphasized the monetary side of our Outreach ministry, and if you attended one of the meetings you know that we only dedicate a very small portion of our budget to Outreach. What we didn't talk about was all the things we do as a parish outside of that budget, so here are a few ways we help the community "off the books"...

- We work cooperatively with a group of six Little Neck Churches to do a regular blood drive. In the last year, we've collected between 450 and 500 pints of blood. See Sharon Metz or Geoffrey Rice if you'd like to donate.
- Our Shawl Ministry knits every week. They average 20 to 25 shawls a year. Each shawl takes 15 to 20 hours of knitting and \$15 to \$20 in materials. Sarah Seeley helps organize this effort.
- Needy families are sent to us a couple times a year by Social Services for food. In November of 2009, we helped feed 38 people in 16 families. See Mary Ann Russell if you would like to help.
- For our Holiday Ministry in 2009, we took care of two families and provided food for Thanksgiving and Christmas. We also provide Christmas presents for five foster children, five intellectually disabled adults and two single mothers with two children each. Mary Ann Russell coordinates this ministry as well.
- We have been a proud sponsor of the Mission of the Holy Spirit for many years. We provide food for their dinner on the second Sunday of every month. On a typical Sunday, we feed between 45 and 60 children and adults. It takes a volunteer crew of four to five people to prepare and serve the food. Mary Lou Miller oversees our efforts at the Mission and can always use more volunteers.
- The Episcopal Church Women (ECW) under Nancy Smith is spearheading a drive to reestablish the United Thank Offering (UTO) Appeal at St. Aidan's. The UTO collects money for three years and then distributes it at General Convention. At the last convention, the UTO distributed over seven million dollars.
- Through Faith Works, a local organization dedicated to helping needy home-owners maintain their houses, we have helped over 12 families over the last year doing everything from fixing handicap ramps to replacing showers to completely rebuilding a fire-damaged home. Fred Parkinson helps coordinate our efforts here.

These are just a sampling of the ways St. Aidan's helps people with our hands, not just our wallets. Please consider getting involved in one of our many outreach efforts and making a difference in the community today by putting the gospel into practice.

Fred Parkinson  
Outreach Chair

## Godly Play

Godly Play has two separate groups with their own storytellers and doorpersons. Peggy Fanney and Susan Masulonis alternate weeks as storyteller and doorperson for pre-K through first Grade. Marijane Harrison and Edie Barnett are our faithful subs. Second through fourth grade storytellers/doorpersons are Barry Higginbotham, Martha King, and David Crouse. Andy Fischer assists with the older group.

We now have several people who have attended training for Godly Play, and we are adding new stories with new figures and materials. Bob Byng and Fred Olds continue to be very gracious in providing new

wooden figures. Members of the craft group have also added to our altar cloths and other materials. In addition, there have been some generous donations to Godly Play through Gifts and Memorials.

What is all of this providing for our children? One five year old said to his mother at the altar rail one Sunday: "Mom, *this is* the Feast!" Also, during Advent, when we are all on the way to Bethlehem, the children initiated the connection, over and over, that we celebrate the give of Jesus as a baby, Jesus lived, Jesus dies and Jesus lives today as he stretches out his arms in love to us all. They get it.

Peggy Fanney

## 4th, 5th & 6th Grade

Children in this age range are learning using the "Living the Good News Intermediate Curriculum" which focuses on the Gospel and stories of Jesus. The children in this group are inquisitive and charming. Their knowledge of the Gospel has been enhanced by the arrival of Mae Peele who together with Lynn Meadows helps them delve into the words of Jesus. These St. Aidanites have also been very pleased by the introduction of a weekly snack.

Lynn Meadows

## J2A program

The kids in Rite 13 have been busy their second year in the program focusing on exploring their relationship with God and how that relationship is apparent in their everyday lives. They plan to complete the Star Wars movie series evaluating the characters in relation to the principles of Christianity.

The J2A group discusses their daily struggles as teenagers and how life as a follower of Jesus impacts their choices and decisions. They also evaluate ways they can be involved in outreach activities and programs.

The YAC group has been discussing the meaning of some rituals, customs and symbolism in the Episcopal church as they prepare to be Young Adults in Church. They are learning about how Communion is prepared and removed and about the Sacraments.

The two latter groups are continuing to raise funds to provide transportation and team build for their Mission Trip this summer to Hurricane, West Virginia with the Reach Work Camp Agency. After a successful talent show/silent auction fundraiser event, the group will now host four Lenten dinners at St. Aidan's and participate in some social activities to design t-shirts for their trip and get to know their chaperones.

## Parish Life

Let me first thank everyone who contributed, in so many ways, to the success of the events we all enjoyed throughout 2009. From that Congregational Dinner last February when we first met Ima Helper and saw our “newlyweds” faces turn red, to the Newcomer’s Reception and Family Social in May, to the Progressive Pool Party and Dinner in July and September, to the outstanding fundraising Talent Show and Silent Auction in November, to last month’s Home Mass, memories were made for those who attended.

And what about the Family Retreat in July, the Fall Fair in October, and the Women’s Retreat in November? Don’t these traditions fall under the “umbrella” that is Parish Life at St. Aidan’s?

One of our goals for this New Year is to better define just that. We’ve gone into each of the past two years with an idea or two, and somehow people take charge and make it all happen. That’s part of the beauty of our congregation. But it should (*hate that word!*) be better organized... and better defined.

If you are interested in helping us make that happen, please make yourself known to me. Call me at 427-7575 or email [dr Ritter@cox.net](mailto:dr Ritter@cox.net), and share your ideas and/or your willingness to work with us. Thank you.

Blessings,  
Don Ritter

## Visitor Ministry

The Visitor Ministry exists to provide a warm welcome to visitors and return visitors, to act as an ongoing personal contact and source of information about parish life, and to foster the growth of membership in the parish. The Ministry is also responsible for recording visitor information and sharing that information with key persons in the parish.

Weekly greeters and ushers at both services identify and act as initial points of contact for visitors to the parish to ensure that visitors are warmly greeted both before and after the service. All parishioners are essentially greeters, and the people of St. Aidan’s have always provided a warm welcome for the stranger in our midst. The Rector also provides a personal welcome to visitors after the service.

Homemade bread with a pre-printed card from the people of the parish is taken early in the week, and a letter of welcome is sent from the office. An effort is made to greet return visitors by name, to introduce them to other parishioners and to include them in parish activities.

Visitors who return for several weeks become “newcomers” and are then the responsibility of the newcomer ministry. “Membership” in the parish is thus inclusive of all persons who choose

to worship with us on a regular basis.

From December 2008 until December 2009, we welcomed 31 total visitor “units” of which 52 percent (16) became members. A family or a group that attends together is counted as a unit.

### 2009 Visitors Who Became Newcomers:

- Mary Kate Clark and daughter Madison
- Jim Clark
- Steven Dougherty
- Joan Shoemaker
- Melanie Smith,
- Violet Waldecker
- Denise Smith
- Mae Peele
- Nancy and Bill Moore
- Ginger and Shannon Gray and children
- Amanda and Michael Canonica and son Caleb
- Carrie and Jay Schifrin
- Barbara and Don Soder
- Cathy and Kevin Bonner and children Justin, Katie and Matthew
- Philippa Harrap and sons David and Mark
- Neil and Sarelle Holliday and two children
- Ashleigh Ford and son Henry
- Diane Gregoria
- Pam Butler

## Music Program

Music is alive and well at St. Aidan's with 50-55 dedicated children, teens and adults serving God and the congregation in four active choirs. All four choirs rehearse, weekly, from September through June. Jamie Dougherty leads both vocal choirs and Kari Jacobs leads both handbell choirs. Jamie plays the organ and administers the rest of the music program.

**Senior Choir:** leads music at all 10:30 services (Sept. – June) with the exception of 8<sup>th</sup> Sundays of the month when Jr. Choir sings. Additionally, they sing on Thanksgiving Eve, Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, and 2-3 summer Sundays. Presents pre-service concert at 11:00 Christmas Eve service and Lenten Evensong service.

**Bells of St. Aidan's:** offers music at 10:30 service, once each month, with largest contribution at Lessons and Carols service.

**Joyful Bells:** membership includes 6 youth in grades 7-12. Offers music once each month on the third Sunday.

**Junior Choir:** membership includes 12 children in grades 2-6. Leads the music once each month, at 10:30 service. Presents pre-service concert at 5:00 Christmas Eve service. Children are offered experiences in choral music, hymn singing, and accompanying with Orff instruments.

## Acolytes

Jamie Dougherty administers the Acolyte Program at St. Aidan's. Justin Rice trained the acolytes. Geoffrey Rice and Dennis Farrell sometimes assist with training. Nancy Newhams assisted with correspondence and scheduling for 8:15 services.

Currently, 21 children/youth in grades 4-12 serve as candle bearers, crucifers and servers.

## Music Highlights and accomplishments:

January 2009—Senior Choir and Bells of St. Aidan's prepared for semi-annual Little Neck Choir Festival

Joyful Bells prepared unpitched percussion accompaniment for Massed Bell piece

Members of both vocal choirs participated in the massed choir for the Bishop's consecration in Williamsburg in February.

Bells of St. Aidan's participation in annual Area III Bell Conference

Bells of St. Aidan's/Joyful Bells' performance at First Colonial Inn (Senior Citizens)

Senior Choir's performance at Atlantic Shores Retirement Community

Participation of the Joyful Bells in Area III Youth Bell festival in Richmond

Most serve, in their age appropriate position, once each month. Two adults, Dennis Farrell and Geoffrey Rice serve at the 8:15 services.

Parents are, again, asked to step up to the plate to supervise their candle bearing children before and during the services. Each Sunday, a parent is scheduled to make sure all assigned acolytes are dressed and ready for duty, enabling me to focus on my music responsibilities.

## Hopes and dreams

Parents/guardians of acolytes will continue to take responsibility for their child's presence at church when they are scheduled to serve or find a suitable substitute. Additional adults will volunteer to serve at the 8:15 services, relieving Dennis and Geoffrey. Someone, with acolyte experience, will take over the training of acolytes.

## **Additional Music Offerings and Accomplishments**

- Guest musicians (harp, flute, vocal solos, etc.) added musical variety at summer services.
- Guest musicians (harp, cello, violin) hired to enrich music at Christmas Eve services.
- Bruce Stewart, from Center for Spiritual Enlightenment, enhanced music (August) with percussion, guitar and movement
- Junior Choir members (ala Bruce Stewart) use percussion instruments/movement to accompany hymns, throughout year
- Guitar ministry flourishes with two competent guitarists accompanying songbook songs 2-3 Sundays each month
- Jamie provided leadership for Bible School music: grade level classes, (included singing and Orff/Unpitched instrument playing), performance for parents
- Jamie attended sessions at Va. Wesleyan Church Music Conference.

## **Music Program Goals for 2010**

- Joyful Bells — Increase membership amongst our youth.
- Bells of St. Aidan's — Continue attendance at Area 111 Bell Conference
- Junior Choir — Increase membership amongst our children
- Other — Seek out and utilize youth instrumentalists, from the parish, to add variety to our choir and congregational music (Do you know any candidates?)
- Continue to expand our hymn repertoire by introducing new hymns
- Purchase congregational copies of supplemental hymn sources such as “Wonder Love and Praise.”

I would like to encourage all families of school age children to support our vocal and bell choirs. Membership has dropped substantially, in the last two years. Participation in church music programs instills, in children, a love and identification with the great music of our church. Those that sing and ring together tend to stick together, promoting greater enthusiasm, now and in the future, for attendance at church.

Respectfully Submitted in Christ,  
Jamie Dougherty, Director of Music

## **Bell Choirs of St Aidan's**

Both choirs had a busy year....The adults worked on music for festival which was in Richmond. We had six ringers go and stay up there and had a wonderful time. The Bells of St Aidan's played every month in church and did a couple of combined pieces with the vocal choir. They also played for the opening ceremony for Relay for Life. We played about 25 minutes of music for that. We are already working on music for this years festival which is in Hampton, and I am happy to say we have 10 ringers going this year!! We did a Christmas concert for First Colonial Inn again this year and played for almost an hour. That is always a great time for both choirs. This January is also the year for the Little Neck festival, which we will be playing for.

The Joyful Bells had a great year as well. They played about every month for church and worked hard learning music for the youth festival. This was the first year our youth went to an event like this and it was a great experience for them. It was in Richmond and we hope to make it an annual event. They also played for the First Colonial concert and this year will also be involved in the Little Neck Festival. They are playing the percussion parts for our piece.

We look forward to this year and hope to get in a few fundraisers to help offset the cost for festivals.

Kari Jacobs

## 2009 End of Year Budget Report

	<u>Jan - Dec 09</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>% of Budget</u>
<b>Ordinary Income/Expense</b>			
<b>Total Income</b>	284,839.42	292,633.00	97.34%
<b>Expense</b>			
<b>Total EDUCATION</b>	1,692.88	2,200.00	76.95%
<b>Total PARISH LIFE</b>	2,116.84	2,400.00	88.2%
<b>Total LITURGY</b>	3,477.85	3,900.00	89.18%
<b>Total ADMIN &amp; PASTORAL</b>	11,987.36	15,130.00	79.23%
<b>Total OUTREACH</b>	26,180.65	27,519.00	95.14%
<b>Total PHYSICAL PLANT</b>	<u>58,860.03</u>	<u>60,181.00</u>	<u>97.81%</u>
<b>Total PAYROLL EXPENSES</b>	<u>177,280.96</u>	<u>177,303.00</u>	<u>99.99%</u>
<b>Total Expense</b>	<u>281,596.57</u>	<u>288,633.00</u>	<u>97.56%</u>
<b>Net Ordinary Income</b>	<u>3,242.85</u>	<u>4,000.00</u>	<u>81.07%</u>
<b>Net Income</b>	<u><b>3,242.85</b></u>	<u><b>4,000.00</b></u>	<u><b>81.07%</b></u>

## Property and Grounds

The property and grounds commission has been particularly busy and St. Aidan's has been spoiled having both a retired Sr. Warden and an unemployed Jr. Warden who were available practically anytime. Over the last 12 months, a termite infestation was eradicated and new termite coverage is in place, a new lawn management company was hired and we finally have not had any complaints about the grounds, new emergency exit lights were installed, the flagpole light was replaced and looks great at night, the walkway to the columbarium was relayed, the majority of the siding has been repaired and painted, but there is still about 25% left to finish,

the outside and inside of the building has been painted, the walkway to the outdoor chapel was replaced and over 150 bags of mulch were spread. In addition, we planted new bushes around the power companies converter box and we had an arborist come and inspect every one of our trees and although there are about 15 trees that need to be taken down to save the others, our "Sacred Tree" in the back is in good health and only needs a little extra nourishment this spring to help it heal from the termite infestation that it had. Of course all of that didn't include all of the work Dennis does. We would like to thank all of those who donated either financially or

with a donation of time, but in particular we would like to thank Bob and Beth Simeone and the contributions from Servpro of Virginia Beach, Mike Canonica and the contributions from Pinnacle Contracting, and Tim Rue and the contributions from Timothy's Painting Inc. As I said before St. Aidan's has been spoiled this past year, but with both a gainfully employed Jr. Warden and Sr. Warden this year, the congregation is going to have to become more actively involved and volunteer to help with our regular maintenance and surprise repairs.

Justin Rice  
2009 Jr. Warden