

St. John's Episcopal Church

Hamlin, Pennsylvania

2022-2023 ANNUAL REPORT

For General Meeting May 21, 2023



2022-2023 St. John's Officers, Vestry and Staff:

Priest-in-Charge	The Rev'd. Ronald Royce Miller, Ph.D.	rrmjas@ptd.net	570-676-9671
Dir. of Music Ministries	Kathleen Hayes	hayeskath@verizon.net	917-723-4215
Asst. Dir of Music	Cheryl Cooper	ccooper.pa@gmail.com	570-503-7021
Office Manager	Joan S Griffin	grifjoan@alum.mit.edu	973-223-0723

Vestry:

Sr. Warden: James Griffin (2023) (Appointed annually)	jgriffin@newcenturyeducation.org	201-953-0598
Jr. Warden: Paul Ratcliffe (2023) (Appointed annually)	pd_ratcliffe@msn.com	973-309-4040
Sandy Toy (2024)	sandraty@echoes.net	570-689-2441
Peter Eddins (2024)	petereddins@gmail.com	570-877-0421
Ray Evans (2023)	raymondevans12792@gmail.com	646-240-7770
Edith Otway (2025)	ebo127@aol.com	570-689-2074
Pat Ware (2025)	pware10427@aol.com	570-698-6976

Financial/Giving Secretary: Sandy Toy	sandraty@echoes.net	570-689-2441
Treasurer: Cheryl Cooper	ccooper.pa@gmail.com	570-503-7021
Clerk of the Vestry: Christine Crossley	christine.e.crossley@gmail.com	908-500-7312
Zoom Host: Joan Griffin	grifjoan@alum.mit.edu	973-223-0723
Parish Admin. Ass't: René Cullen	saintjohnshamlinpa@gmail.com	570-689-9260

The Rt. Rev'd. Kevin D. Nichols, Bishop
The Rev'd. Ronald Royce Miller, Ph.D., Priest-in-Charge
James Griffin, Senior Warden
Paul Ratcliffe, Junior Warden
Kathleen Hayes, Director of Music Ministries
Cheryl Cooper, Assistant Director of Music Ministries
Joan Griffin, Zoom Host

René Cullen, Office Administrator

Physical Address: 564 Easton Turnpike, Hamlin PA

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 118, Hamlin, PA 18427

Sunday Worship Service: Zoom and in Person at 10AM:

Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday, Friday: 10AM-3PM

Telephone: (570) 689-9260 **Email:** saintjohnshamlinpa@gmail.com

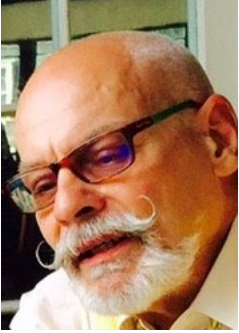
Website: saintjohnhamlin.org

**St. John's Mission is to Welcome All People
to Embody the Love of Christ**

Make Peace: Remember the Poor

The Mission of St. John's Church

† Welcome All People to Embody the Love of Christ †



FROM OUR PRIEST-IN-CHARGE:

My dear people,

We celebrate yet another year of growth and delight in the 175-year history of St. John's as the church of Christ expressed in our congregation here in Hamlin.

Apart from all the statistics examined in meetings such as this, my job, in part, is to make a "spiritual assessment." And that assessment is this: "alive, healthy, thriving, self-starting, and planning for a great future."

As your priest-in-charge for more than a decade and a half, I believe I am able to say with informed confidence that Christ can be seen incarnated here among us as we work together to seek justice, love, mercy, and walk humbly with God. A part of our justice-seeking has led us to fly a multi-color flag in front of our church which makes an unequivocal statement that ALL who would worship God with us in peace are genuinely and sincerely WELCOME at St. John's. A part of our loving mercy is expressed in our on-going and ever-more-vigorous participation in local food banks and holiday giving to support local school children. Special thanks to our Pastoral Care Committee, convened and led by Chris Crossley, for keeping us active and on the look-out for other appropriate way for us to express God's love to those in need. The Pastoral Care Committee is also on top of keeping in touch with those among us in special need during illnesses and hospitalizations. They also have enlivened our prayer life by keeping the Prayers of the People current, inclusive, and relevant. Coordinating coffee hour seems to be in their bailiwick as well.

Our treasurer Cheryl Cooper and our finance people, count the offerings, make the deposits, pay the bills, keep us current in all things financial, take our responsibility to the Diocese of Bethlehem seriously and report our financial situation faithfully, transparently, and regularly throughout the year. They are incomparably faithful and honest. All of this happens because **YOU ARE** the CHURCH! And what the church needs is here because YOU are here. Bless you all in your financial faithfulness which did not flag during the pandemic!

Under the capable leadership of our Junior Warden, Paul Ratcliffe, the buildings (and there are several: the church, the train station, the Thrift Shoppe, the Rectory) and grounds (which includes Salem Cemetery down the road) are kept in immaculate condition. There's hardly a day that Paul is not on campus, and something isn't being taken care of. Paul says little and does much! His quiet service keeps us physically looking good. Marianne Berryman does the heavy lifting inside the church coordinating the Altar Guild and managing the rotation for all who prepare the altar, fill, and clean the sacred vessels and linen, as well as lay out the appropriate vestments for each mass all year long.

Inside and upstairs Kathleen Hayes, when here, and Cheryl Cooper, when Kathleen is not here, keep us singing with a joyful noise unto the Lord. Recently, Katie Pettinato has learned how to operate the "juke box" and contributes musically from the gallery as her brother Joey 'plays' Sanctus bells for the mass at the altar.

Our extraordinary Sr. Warden, Jim Griffin, continues to provide the Vestry and congregation with his inimitable kind, generous and visionary leadership which keeps us always focused on where we are going and how we are going to get there. The easy gentility with which he manages the Vestry meetings and organizes the 'nuts and bolts' of our organization is nothing other than absolutely "classy!" He has guided us through

staffing challenges, kept our vision for property development alive, and always, always been conscious and encouraging of the uniquely open and inclusive nature of St. John's. He's the best.

Under Jim's leadership, our Vestry continues to serve faithfully and happily. Always concerned with the common weal of our life together, your Vestry does the work of the congregation on a regular every-month basis between annual meetings. Everyone is welcome to attend Vestry meetings and encouraged to bring any concerns to your leadership.

And, of course, it's no secret that behind every Jim Griffin is a Joan. Need I say more? Where there is a need for a helping hand, a vacuum in staffing, a committee, a technological application or solution to a glitch, there is Joan! What a team they make; and how St. John's benefits from Joan's work with Jim. We're looking for a suitable title for Joan but there's hardly one that would describe her fully! Bless you both.

Pat Ware single-handedly corners as many folks as possible to help her at the Thrift Shoppe which she has kept functioning, current, jovial, and productive. The shop serves not only folks in need but other bargain hunters as well. The incalculable value of the Thrift Shoppe is that it is a place where loving community continues at St. John's beyond the altar and Sunday morning coffee hour. The Thrift Shoppe does a wonderful job of keeping St. John's present in our neighborhood and expresses our intention to help and serve those around us. Pat makes sure that when there is a local disaster she is in contact with the afflicted and throws the doors open for the afflicted to take anything they need. We also retain a contributory relationship with the Salvation Army. A collateral benefit of the Thrift Shoppe is that we often learn a lot about our neighbors from those who visit the shop as well. Thanks Pat!

We are happy to welcome René Cullen to the staff as our Parish Secretary. She brings a pleasant and able presence to our office. We hope to welcome her officially some Sunday soon, at mass and coffee hour.

Now, if I were to mention the name of every committee member and everyone who is important to the life of St. John's, I would have to add yours! Seriously! As you know, we firmly believe at St. John's that: "If you walk in the door, you're a member." And that is a happy truth. Every member makes a difference in the Body of Christ and that means YOU. And that's why it is so important for us to understand the Church as something other than a 'charity' which we support from outside. It might be for some, but it is not that for us. We take the INCARNATION of Christ and the RESURRECTION of Christ in The Body absolutely seriously and from the inside out. We believe our God is encountered in the stranger and the vulnerable; and God is also encountered by them in us. That belief comes to us from the record of the disciples breaking bread with a stranger on the road to Emaus.

So, let us continue our life together for yet another year as we break bread at every mass and every meal in every home and with everyone we know and love as well as with every stranger we meet and "thereby encounter angels unawares" and Immanuel: God with us!

This past year, we lit the Paschal Candle in celebration of the **BAPTISMS** of **Madilyn Rose Dowdell** on the 11th of September 2022, **Wyatt Thomas Mannheimer** on the 18th of October 2022, and **Mia Krishna Grunion** on the 29th of January 2023. I add a personal note of sincere gratitude to Carole Phillips who manages all the Christian education and data gathering for all the young folks who come our way for baptism and Sunday School. Well done, good and faithful servant.

We also lit the Paschal Candle to celebrate our "sure and certain hope" of the Resurrection at **FUNERALS** of **John R. Otway** on the 10th of March 2022, **James Hannah** on the 8th of October 2022, and **Richard M. Ligi** on the 24th of March 2023. *Rest eternal grant them O Lord and let light perpetual shine upon them.*

In documents such as this, it is always dangerous to name names because invariably someone's name is inadvertently left out. But **your name** is NOT forgotten and never will be by our loving God. We would be

here 'til next year were I to thank each one of you for every kindness and every service and every smile which welcomes any and all who come our way. I know that you are the absolute best. God knows it too.

Thank you one and all — each and every one of you — for allowing me to continue to do what I love to do and to do it with you as your priest in this glorious Body of Christ known to us and to others as St. John's in Hamlin.

You are God's blessing to me!

Fr. Ron



FROM OUR SENIOR WARDEN:

Last year, I talked about our interest in developing a series of six professional Nursing Home buildings based on the Greenhouse homes concept. We received our feasibility study that demonstrates there is considerable demand for higher quality Sr. Nursing homes in our area. We are now looking at having the 110 acres surveyed, so we know exactly where our borders are. We also must engage consultants to help us with dealing with the waste streams. When we solve these problems, we will be able to solicit partners in developing the property.

Meanwhile, we are repairing the exterior of our beloved 1847 era church. We have repainted the wood trim to protect it from the weather. Next, we are beginning to look under the vinyl to determine what it takes to refurbish the original wood siding.

We have also started flying a combined LGBTQ+ and Black Lives Matter flag to remind people that the Episcopalian church has the largest tent, and accepts all people. The new flag hangs between the stanchions of our large sign. The flag fits perfectly above the new stone base, and above the flowers planted in the base.

Zoom services continue in the church for those who don't want to join in person due to distance, health or inclement weather. Our congregation is growing year after year. On April 30, we had more people attending than during the Easter service. We have a couple having a baby, and all are looking forward to the baby shower. We also have a child attending church school for the first time in years. We have young people helping with the ecclesiastical jukebox and learning to be Priest Servers.

I am also proud of our outreach, helping the community via two food pantries, and the thrift shop continues to support local families in need. This past year, we also supported a summer program for dyslexic students. One diagnosed dyslexic student rose from the 3rd grade reading level to reading 80 words per minute at the 7th grade level!

I especially want to thank Paul Ratcliffe for the many things that he has done to repair and maintain the church and its properties. He is truly an asset to St. John's.

Sincerely,

James Griffin



FROM OUR JR. WARDEN

Now that we have left behind “The Covid Pandemic”, let us get back to business and try to accomplish some of the goals that have been set over the past three years.

WHAT HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED:

CHURCH: Painting and repairs to the front and side walls of the church have been completed. This improved the appearance of the building along with protecting the wood trim.

GROUNDS: Had landscaper cut down all the overgrown pine bushes throughout the property. Stagg Tree Removal Co. cut down three dead trees near the rectory building and one huge dead pine tree behind the Train Station.

ROAD SIGN: The company, Creative Sign, updated our large road sign with one new face panel along with new LED lighting. With the help of Jim Griffin and Pete Eddins, a stone retaining wall was erected around the sign. Two new platforms were made and installed and topsoil was added, and the rest is history.

NOTE: There are many other items that were completed throughout the year which have been itemized in my monthly vestry reports.

OUR GROWING LIST OF GOALS TO BE PERFORMED:

1. Hot water in restrooms.
2. Repair retaining wall behind Thrift Shoppe.
3. Alarm system for all buildings.
4. Repoint Church and Parish Hall foundation walls.
5. New door for Parish Hall.
6. Recladding outside of Church building.
7. Thrift Shoppe heating system to be examined and corrected.
8. New roof is needed for storage shed.
9. Work on developing church property.

Respectfully submitted,
Paul Ratcliffe, Jr. Warden

ALTAR GUILD REPORT



Our Altar Guild members take turns on a monthly schedule to prepare the Altar for the Eucharist. This involves opening the safe, taking out the appropriate vessels and linens, and placing them in the proper places on the Altar: then taking everything down after mass, cleaning the vessels and laundering the lines.

We now have ten members, so two of us take care of the months not currently assigned. It would be ideal to have 12 members so if anyone is interested in joining us, please contact me or any Altar Guild member.

Respectively submitted,

Marianne Berryman

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY REPORT 2023

Getting back to in-person service April 2023 did not end the desire to continue to provide services by Zoom for members and we have continued to provide this service every week to those that cannot attend in person. And we even took our Zoom on the road when we provided a live stream of the Easter Vigil service from Grace Church in Honesdale. We continue to experiment with the best way to make sure everyone online can hear all parts of the service. It's still not perfect but we are trying. Services are being recorded and stored on Vimeo with the website occasionally updated to provide links to specific services. It has been a pleasure to help.



-- Joan Griffin

WELCOMING RENÉ CULLEN AS OUR NEW OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR



We are happy to welcome René Cullen to Saint John's as our new Office Administrator. René started working with us on April 10, 2023, and is quickly getting up to speed on the day to day and week to week activities of Saint John's. She is available in the office Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 10 to 3. Please stop by and introduce yourself when you are in the neighborhood.

And we wish to thank Deneen Tromba, who deftly helped us navigate the changes that resulted from returning to in-person worship after being only virtual during the pandemic. Deneen is now spending most of her time in Connecticut where she and her husband, Ed Rich, maintain their main home.

MUSIC MINISTRIES (2023)

St John's has embraced the digital music player, aka Ecclesiastical Juke Box, for use during Kathleen's seasonal absence. I am honored to have been entrusted with its operation, and have gained an appreciation for the amount of effort involved in selecting suitable hymns for each mass, which coordinate with the season and specific readings. Although it does not require the same talent as the playing of an instrument, there are definitely subtle operational points in programming the player that need to be understood to bring it to the level of "almost as good" as having a live musician. I am still learning.



We were pleased to assist Katie Pettinato in fulfilling a community service requirement for Junior National Honor Society. She learned the Sunday operation of the digital player, and was able to follow the mass, and Fr. Ron's cues, to successfully play the programmed music.

Kathleen is returning to her role as organist beginning in June, and will continue through the fall. I thank her for her guidance, and am looking forward to hearing the sounds of our organ during the summer months.

Cheryl Cooper
Primary Minister of Juke Box Ministries

PASTORAL CARE AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE (2023)

“To touch the lives of others and help to the best of our ability anyone requesting assistance.”



We invite all to participate in the care & support of St John members & friends as well as the larger community that surrounds us.

In June 2021, the Pastoral Care and Outreach Committees were combined to more efficiently support the ongoing activities of our small, but active and supportive congregation. We meet the first Saturday of every month in the Fellowship Hall, lower level of the Train Station building, and all are welcome to join us.

Current and Recent Activities:

- We review members' pastoral care needs with Fr Ron and provide support via inclusion in the weekly service, cards, visits, and personal calls. Requests for Prayer cards are available in the Sanctuary and requests can also be sent via email or a call to the office.
- Our Healing Service took place in September to honor those we, as a congregation and community, had lost in the last two years. It was a wonderful evening of music, worship and contemplation that also included a soup supper.
- There was a Fall Workday at St. John's at which time the first phase of rebuilding the flower beds and retaining walls around our main sign was accomplished. All new plants were put into the main bed and bulbs planted which graced us with blooms in time for Easter. We thank everyone that showed up and pitched in any capacity. Stay tuned for a Spring/Summer clean-up day in June focused on the next phase of the sign landscaping and general beautification of our grounds and the Memorial Garden.
- The Thrift Shoppe basement was given through sweeping, dusting, vacuuming and general cleaning.
- The Membership and Friends contact information has been updated and refreshed. If you would like to make sure you are receiving our emails and mailings, and that we know your birthdays and anniversaries, please contact the office.
- We collected school supplies for the Evergreen Elementary School near St. Johns at the start of the school year.
- We supported two families (8 children in total) for Christmas through the Monroe County Christmas Children's Bureau program.
- Many members of the congregation participated in a Reverse Advent Calendar collecting several carloads of non-perishable food for the local food pantries.
- We continue our monthly donations of \$50 each to Our Kids Food Pantry, serving the Wallenpaupack School District, and the Newfoundland Community Food Pantry. And provided additional funds at the Christmas Season and lots of Easter goodies for the food baskets sent home for the holiday.
- We are also now administering a special fund to help individuals identified by the Lake Wallenpaupack staff as needing help. For example, gift cards were provided to 5 families at Christmas time that needed extra help navigating a difficult holiday.
- And we share in the joy of our new signage out front proudly announcing that all are welcome to worship with us.

As a reminder, Saint John's does not provide food or money to any individuals as we do not have the ability ourselves to determine true need and to make selections. We, therefore, provide our funds and goods to those organizations in our community that can properly vet the recipients and to maximize the depth and breath of the support provided.

Respectfully submitted,

THRIFT SHOPPE REPORT May 2023

Our shoppe - now both up and down - is cleaner than it's been in 12 years - what a difference! Cobwebs are gone and windows sparkle. Thank you, Griffins and friends,!!



We moved all our decorating supplies to the first floor to save knees and backs from repeated trips up and down stairs.

Unfortunately, we have lost 2 of the 3 climbing roses due to weather and driveway salt. I am hoping to replace them shortly - any advice gratefully accepted.

Donations continue to arrive, and we are so grateful. We still need kid's clothing, kindergarten through high school so please put the word out to neighbors, friends, and family.

Thanks to the guys from Little Creek for always being ready, willing, and able to save our backs and knees and always with a smile.

Salvation Army is no longer doing pick-ups due to lack of staff, and we have lost a few members too so. We are asking/begging for extra hands. Just so you know:

1. Our volunteers are not required to lift and/or carry.
2. Our volunteers do not have to deal with the cash drawer.
3. Learning to sort and tag is easy, and we really do make it fun!

So, if you can spare any amount of time - please - just come! We are open a total of 12 hours per month and people can rarely come for all 12. That's fine.

In October we sent a carload of crutches, canes, and walkers to the Ukraine via the St. Vladimir Ukrainian shipment.

We were inundated with a mysterious donation of 300+ men's disposable briefs which we donated to the Julia Ribaldo Nursing Home.

We have just offered men's clothing to the Friends of the Poor Men's Clothesline in Scranton which just lost their entire inventory to a fire.

We donated several bedside commodes to the Honesdale Senior Center. They will continue to be available to all Wayne County residents.

And last, but not least, we continue to have a steady flow of our loyal customers and always a few new ones who find the Shoppe organized, clean and always fun to visit.

Many thanks for your continued support and God Bless

Pat and All the Staff

ANNUAL TREASURER'S REPORT

Attached



COMMISSIONING NEW PARISH LEADERS:

The newly elected and appointed leaders gather before the assembly and are joined by the incumbent members of the Vestry.

Senior Warden: On behalf of the congregation of St. John's, Hamlin, Pennsylvania, I present:

[Names of the duly elected members of the Vestry are read], as members of the Vestry of this congregation.

Celebrant: Have these leaders been elected by the congregation or appointed by the vestry in accordance with the bylaws of our congregation?

Senior Warden: They have.

Celebrant: (to the new leaders) Do you commit yourselves to carry out the responsibilities of the office to which you have been appointed?

Leaders: I do.

Celebrant: Do you reaffirm your commitment to follow Christ and to serve this congregation in his name?

Leaders: I do.

Celebrant: (to the congregation) Will you do all in your power to support these leaders with your prayers, your honest yet gracious communication with them, and your willingness to help them carry out Christ's ministry in this church as we work together to welcome all people to embody the love of Christ?

Congregation: We will.

Celebrant: In the name of this congregation I commission you for this work, and pledge you our prayers, encouragement, and support. May the Holy Spirit guide and strengthen you, that in this, and in all things, you may do God's will in the service of the kingdom of Christ. Amen.

Let us pray. Almighty God, look with favor upon these persons who have now reaffirmed their commitment to follow Christ and to serve in his name. Give them courage, patience, and vision; and strengthen us all in our Christian vocation of witness to the world, and of service to others; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen