



# ANNUAL REPORT 2021

## For the 2022 Annual Meeting

The Episcopal Church of St. Mary the Virgin  
2325 Union Street  
San Francisco, CA 94123

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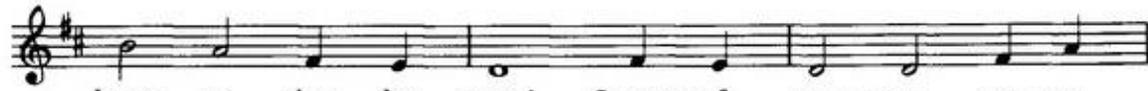
AGENDA

- 1 **Call to Order and Opening Prayer:** **The Rev. David L. Erickson, Rector**  
*Hymn #686 'Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing'*
- 2 **Remembering the Faithful Departed Parishioners:** **The Rev. David L. Erickson**
- 3 **Review Canons and Bylaws for Voting Qualifications and Establishing a Quorum:** **Arthur Perkins, Sr. Warden**
- 4 **Election by Acclamation and Introduction of Vestry Class of 2025: (*profiles in the Annual Report*)**  
Lynne Dombrowski  
Elizabeth Falcon  
Russell Fudge  
Georgia Burke Lu
- 5 **Election by Acclamation and Introduction of SF Deanery Delegation for 2022:**  
Steven Currier, convener  
Gretchen Lintner  
Rick Darwin  
Amy Nachman  
  
*Three open positions.*
- 6 **Stewardship:** **Jim Griffith, 2021 Stewardship Chair**  
  
Questions and Comments
- 7 **Finance Reports:**
  - 7 .1 2021 Financial Report John Adair, Finance Chair
  - 7 .2 2022 Budget as approved by the Vestry John Adair, Finance Chair
  - 7 .3 Legacy & Endowment Betty-Hood Gibson, Treasurer
  - 7 .4 St. Mary Magdalene Scholarship Fund Ruth Tatum, St. Mary Magdalene Scholarship Chair  
Questions and Comments
- 8 **Senior Warden's Report** **Arthur Perkins, Sr. Warden**
- 9 **Rector's Report** **The Rev. David L. Erickson, Rector**
- 10 **Closing Prayer** **The Rev. David L. Erickson, Rector**

# Hymn #686, Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing



1 Come, thou fount of ev - ery bless - ing, tune my  
 2 Here I find my great - est trea - sure; hith - er,  
 3 Oh, to grace how great a debt - or dai - ly



heart to sing thy grace! Streams of mer - cy nev - er  
 by thy help, I've come; and I hope, by thy good  
 I'm con - strained to be! Let thy good - ness, like a



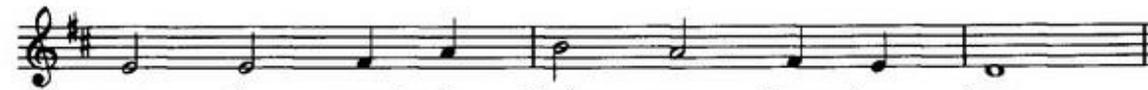
ceas - ing, call for songs of loud - est praise.  
 plea - sure, safe - ly to ar - rive at home.  
 fet - ter, bind my wan - dering heart to thee:



Teach me some me - lo - dious son - net, sung by  
 Je - sus sought me when a stran - ger wan - dering  
 prone to wan - der, Lord, I feel it, prone to



flam - ing tongues a - bove. Praise the mount! Oh, fix me  
 from the fold of God; he, to res - cue me from  
 leave the God I love; here's my heart, oh, take and



on it, mount of God's un - chang - ing love.  
 dan - ger, in - ter - posed his pre - cious blood.  
 seal it, seal it for thy courts a - bove.

Words: Robert Robinson (1735-1790), alt.

Music: Nettleton, melody from *A Repository of Sacred Music, Part II*, 1813

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# PROFILES: CLASS OF 2025 VESTRY NOMINEES



Lynne Dombrowski

Lynne was raised in Gary, Indiana. She has an undergraduate degree from Stanford University and a law degree from the University of Illinois College of Law in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois. For the last 27 years, Lynne has worked as a Deputy Attorney General for the California Department of Justice in their Civil Division, Health Quality Enforcement Section.

Lynne was raised in the Episcopal Church, which was a chosen compromise between her parents who were raised Catholic (father) and Presbyterian (mother). Lynne discovered St. Mary's shortly after moving to S.F. in 1990 and found her spiritual home.

Lynne has served two previous terms on the SMV Vestry, with the Rev. Richard Fowler and with the Rev. Dr. Jason Parkin. She has served as a volunteer Youth Group leader, was a founding member of The Boomers' house group in the 1990's, and has organized the annual Parish Retreats, pancake suppers, Progressive Dinners, along with many other SMV community events. Lynne is an alum of the Cursillo program, and a graduate of the Education for Ministry's (EFM) four-years' small group study program. Recently, Lynne was a facilitator/participant for the inaugural St. Mary's-sponsored Sacred Ground racial justice discussion series. For the last ten years, Lynne has been singing with the Parish Choir at the 11 a.m. service. You may also find her participating as the lector on Sunday mornings.



Elizabeth Falcon

Elizabeth Falcon is a CPA and the VP of Finance and Operations at The Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED) where she has worked for the last 8 years. She is deeply passionate about CAMFED's nonprofit mission to help educate and empower young women in Sub-Saharan Africa. Prior to working for CAMFED, Elizabeth worked as a public accountant in Washington, D.C., auditing nonprofit organizations. She volunteers at The Commonwealth Club of California, The Junior League of San Francisco, and City Arts and Lectures. Elizabeth is a graduate of Claremont McKenna where she received a dual major in Psychology and Economics-Accounting. She grew up in Palo Alto and was confirmed at Trinity Episcopal Church in Menlo Park. Elizabeth enjoys being with her family and spending as much time as possible outdoors in the Aptos redwoods, her favorite spot. Elizabeth has been a parishioner at SMV since 2014,

has served on the Finance Committee since 2018, and is extraordinarily grateful to be a part of the special SMV parish community.



## Russell Fudge

Russell began active church service as a youth choir member at Christ Episcopal Church in Manlius New York. He graduated from Princeton University with a degree in civil engineering in 1960 and, after working for a structural engineering firm in New York City for a year, spent two years in the Army at Fort Detrick, Maryland. He then came west to earn a graduate degree in Structural Engineering from UC Berkeley. Upon graduation in 1964 he commenced a term of over 50 years at the structural engineering firm GFDS Engineers where he became a Principal. One of his most significant achievements was as structural engineer for the Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial in Washington, DC.

Russell began attending St Mary in the late 1970's along with his son Gerard who served as an acolyte and his daughter Rachel who sang in the choir. His service at St Mary began as Sunday School teacher and moved on to lay Eucharistic minister. He served two terms on the vestry. Russell was coordinator for the lay Eucharistic visitor ministry for several years. He served on the building committee during the major renovation of the parish hall and Pixley House. Until Covid restrictions altered the program, he joined the volunteers who delivered food packages on behalf of the San Francisco Marin Food Bank.

Russell married Emily Swartz in 1967. When their son Gerard was diagnosed with hydrocephalus, Emily and Russell formed a parent support group that became the Hydrocephalus Association. Emily served as the executive director for over 20 years. Both Emily and Russell served on the board of directors and devoted a great deal of energy to its mission for many years. The Association has become an important funder of medical research directed toward finding a cure for the condition and serves the needs of those affected by the condition on an international basis. Gerard died in 1992.



## Georgia Burke Lu

My husband, David, and I joined St. Mary's in 2016. We had not been part of a church community for some time but we were drawn to St. Mary's, and decided to give it a try. It felt like home from the start and we were grateful to have so easily found a spiritual home and a loving community. David died two years ago and I have particularly felt the embrace of St. Mary's since then.

I grew up Catholic in Buffalo, went to college outside New York City, taught in Japan for two years, then worked in international trade with the Commerce Department in Washington DC. I then switched gears, went to Georgetown Law, and have spent the rest of my career as an attorney, both in Washington and, since 1991, in the Bay area. My earlier career was in private practice, but I have spent the last 15 years in health care policy advocacy with a non-profit focused on improving the lives of low-income older adults. I also served on the Board of Directors of the Legal Aid Association of California.

I have enjoyed participating in the life of St. Mary's as a reader and Eucharistic Visitor, and as part of the Adult Formation Committee. During COVID, I have particularly been grateful to be able to be part of the Food Bank ministry, which offered the opportunity to do something small, but tangible, in response to the pain of this period. I would be honored to serve on the Vestry and further deepen my ties to St. Mary's.

# 2022 SAN FRANCISCO DEANERY & DIOCESAN CONVENTION DELEGATES

1. Steven Currier, Convener
2. Gretchen Lintner
3. Rick Darwin
4. Amy Nachman

*Three open positions.*

## Remembering the Faithful Departed Parishioners of St. Mary's in 2021



*Gail Berry  
Dick Bohannon  
Richard Boyle  
Susan Crown  
Alison Fuller  
Florence Hauser  
Douglas Kramlich  
Wendy Moseley*

# STEWARDSHIP

*Jim Griffith, 2021 Stewardship Pledge Chair  
Matt Spitzer, Vestry Member*



## 2022 Annual Appeal

“And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” These words of Christ have been a constant source of strength this past year of anxiety and confusion. St. Mary’s is a place where the promise of Christ’s presence can be experienced. Whether it is in our worship, our fellowship or our service, when we come together Christ is with us as well. While this is important all the time, it has been even more so during this strange time.

As of February 8, 2022, total pledges totaled \$751,803 representing 175 pledging units. The 2022 goal is \$800,000+ with 200+ pledge units.

Annual Appeal efforts involved many. Stewardship Committee members were Donna Davidson, Jeff Landry, Ruth Tatum, John Hayashi, Art Perkins, and Christine Wardell. Ellen McLean has been invaluable during the entire effort, providing tracking and pledge commitments.

Beginning summer of '21, we developed a new SMV brochure: “And Remember, I am with you always.....” Included were testimonials from three parish families, relaying the importance of St. Mary’s in their lives and why they make a financial commitment.

The Annual Appeal six-week effort kicked-off on October 10th and ended on Sunday, November 14th. All parish members were mailed a brochure and letter, urging them to participate by making a financial pledge. Follow-up emails, phone calls, and letters were sent by Committee. Each Sunday during the campaign a “virtual” recorded message was posted to the SMV website. The testimonials were delivered by church members, telling why they give and support St. Mary’s.

Going forward, the Committee will continue to follow-up with parishioners who have historically pledged but not yet responded to the 2022 Annual Appeal as well as reaching out to members who do not regularly pledge. The effort will extend into late spring.

# FINANCE FOR 2021-2022

*John Adair, Vestry member & Finance Chair  
L&E Board, St. Mary Magdalene Scholarship Fund*

These ministries focus on carrying out the vestry's fiduciary duties to assure the prudent investment and management of our funds to support ministry and terrestrial concerns like lights, heat and insurance:

## **Legacy and Endowment Board**

This advisory committee meets quarterly to review the investment advice and returns of our financial advisors concerning endowed and vestry-directed investment accounts.

In 2021, gifts were given to St. Mary the Virgin in memory of the following people:

Florence Hauser  
Gail Berry  
Wendy Moseley

Susan Crown  
Dr. John Callander  
Betsy Hiller Shuey

## **St. Mary Magdalene Scholarship Fund and Awards 2021-2022**

The St. Mary Magdalene Scholarship Fund was created by a generous bequest of an anonymous, long-time parishioner of St. Mary the Virgin. This gift funds undergraduate college scholarships for young women from the parish. This year marks the fourth year the scholarships were awarded. Awards totaled \$44,000 and were awarded to twelve undergraduate women for the 2021- 2022 academic year. These young women have been actively involved in the life of St. Mary the Virgin and have demonstrated exceptional service, commitment and participation in our youth programs over the years. The recipients and their attending schools:

Sara Akel	California Polytechnic State University
Isabella Albert	Agnes Scott College
Elizabeth Hayashi	Macalester College
Sophia Jorgensen	Bates College
Kelly Napolitana	University of Pennsylvania
Virginia Norris	Pitzer College
Camilla Sigmund	Georgetown University
Catherine Silvestri	Cornell University
Sadie Ray Smith	Carleton College
Stella Smith	San Francisco State University
Frances Sutton	Pomona College
Charlotte Winn	University of California Los Angeles

## **Planned Gift and Bequest:**

In 2021, a Planned Gift and Bequest were made to St. Mary the Virgin:

A Planned Gift to the Colleen Skewes-Cox Memorial Fund was made by Peter Skewes-Cox.

A Bequest was made by Peter Musto.

**2021 INCOME & EXPENSE SUMMARY**  
As Approved by the Vestry on February 2, 2022

**OPERATING REVENUE**

PLEDGE INCOME	\$ 792,801
NON-PLEDGE DONATIONS:	<u>51,555</u>
TOTAL PLEDGE & NON-PLEDGE DONATIONS:	844,356
OTHER INCOME:	<u>146,577</u>
Plate offerings, prior year pledge payments, Easter and Christmas offerings, investment transfer, building use, and other income, less credit card fees.	
<b>TOTAL INCOME:</b>	<b><u>\$990,933</u></b>

**EXPENDITURES**

EDUCATION MINISTRY:	\$ 45,694
Includes church school directors' salaries and materials, nursery care, youth program, adult education, and Christian community.	
WORSHIP MINISTRY:	320,295
Includes salary and benefits for rector, associate rector, interim associate minister, assisting clergy and verger/liturgist and worship supplies.	
MUSIC MINISTRY:	155,283
Includes salary and benefits for music director, children's choir director, and section leaders, organ and piano maintenance, music scores, and other musicians.	
DIOCESAN ASSESSMENT:	166,972
PASTORAL CARE AND COMMUNITY MINISTRIES:	8,190
Includes community outreach, clergy pastoral needs and support for the diocesan deanery.*	
FINANCIAL:	53,207
Includes salary and benefits for parish accountant, payroll service fees, and audit/compliance expenses.	
OFFICE AND ADMINISTRATION:	106,468
Includes salary and benefits for parish administrator, office supplies, photo copy equipment maintenance, computer support and upgrades, postage, printing/paper, and phone/internet costs.	
BUILDINGS & GROUNDS:	141,814
Includes sexton salary and benefits, building repairs and maintenance, rectory costs, utilities, janitorial service, garden care, and general liability insurance.	
STEWARDSHIP, HOSPITALITY & MEMBERSHIP GROWTH:	<u>2,241</u>
Includes stewardship mailings, communications, coffee hour, vestry expenses, newcomers' hospitality.	
<b>TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES</b>	<b><u>\$1,000,164</u></b>
<b>TOTAL OPERATING DEFICIT</b>	<b><u>&lt;9,231&gt;</u></b>

\*Outreach contributions for Tidings of Comfort and Joy, and other outreach totaling \$23,694 are not included in this amount.

## 2022 BUDGET SUMMARY

As Approved by the Vestry on February 2, 2022

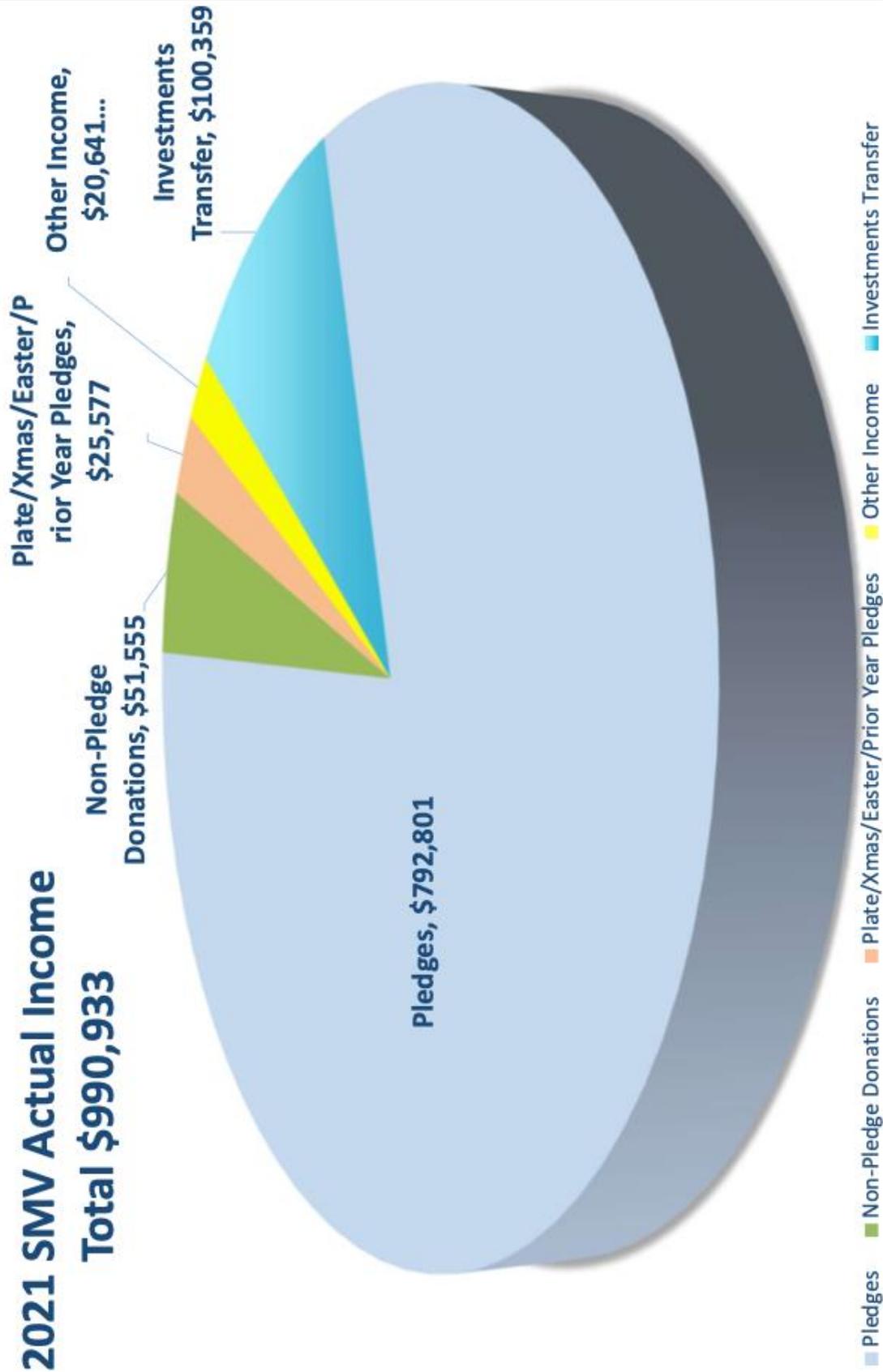
### OPERATING REVENUE

PLEDGE GOAL	\$ 800,000
NON-PLEDGE DONATIONS	<u>48,000</u>
TOTAL PLEDGE GOAL & NON-PLEDGE DONATIONS	848,000
OTHER INCOME:	<u>197,781</u>
Plate offerings, prior year pledge payments, Easter and Christmas offerings, investment transfers, building use, and other income, less credit card fees.	
<b>TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE</b>	<b><u>\$ 1,045,781</u></b>

### EXPENDITURES

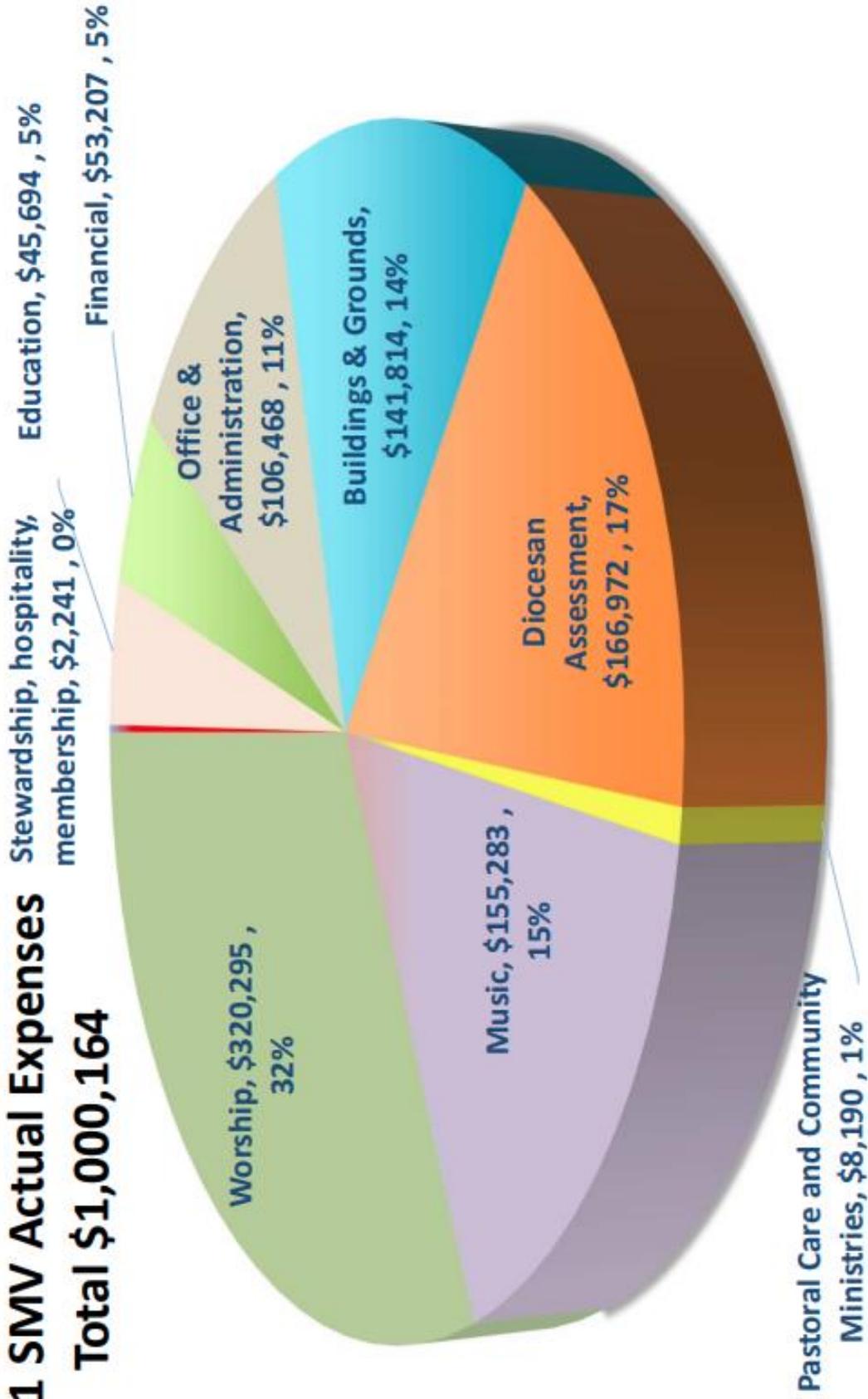
EDUCATION MINISTRY:	\$ 52,032
Includes church school directors' salaries and materials, nursery care, youth program, adult education and Christian community.	
WORSHIP MINISTRY:	365,514
Includes salary and benefits for rector, associate rector, interim associate minister, verger/liturgist, miscellaneous worship and clergy expenses-new in 2022-associate rector search expense and a partial year housing allowance.	
MUSIC MINISTRY:	181,907
Includes salary and benefits for music director, children's choir director, and section leaders, organ and piano maintenance, music scores, and other musicians.	
DIOCESAN ASSESSMENT:	176,810
PASTORAL CARE AND COMMUNITY MINISTRIES:	11,153
Includes community outreach, clergy pastoral needs and support for the diocesan deanery.	
FINANCIAL:	56,882
Includes salary and benefits for parish accountant, payroll service fees, and audit/compliance expenses.	
OFFICE AND ADMINISTRATION:	119,710
Includes salary and benefits for parish administrator, office supplies, photo copy equipment maintenance, computer support and upgrades, postage, printing/paper, and phone/internet costs.	
BUILDINGS & GROUNDS:	162,637
Includes sexton salary and benefits, building repairs and maintenance, rectory costs, utilities, janitorial service, garden care, and general liability insurance.	
STEWARDSHIP, HOSPITALITY & MEMBERSHIP GROWTH:	<u>5,500</u>
Includes stewardship mailings, communications, coffee hour, vestry expenses, newcomers' hospitality.	
<b>TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES</b>	<b><u>\$1,132,145</u></b>
<b>2022 PROJECTED NET DEFICIT</b>	<b><u>&lt;\$86,364&gt;</u></b>

# 2021 SMV Actual Income Total \$990,933

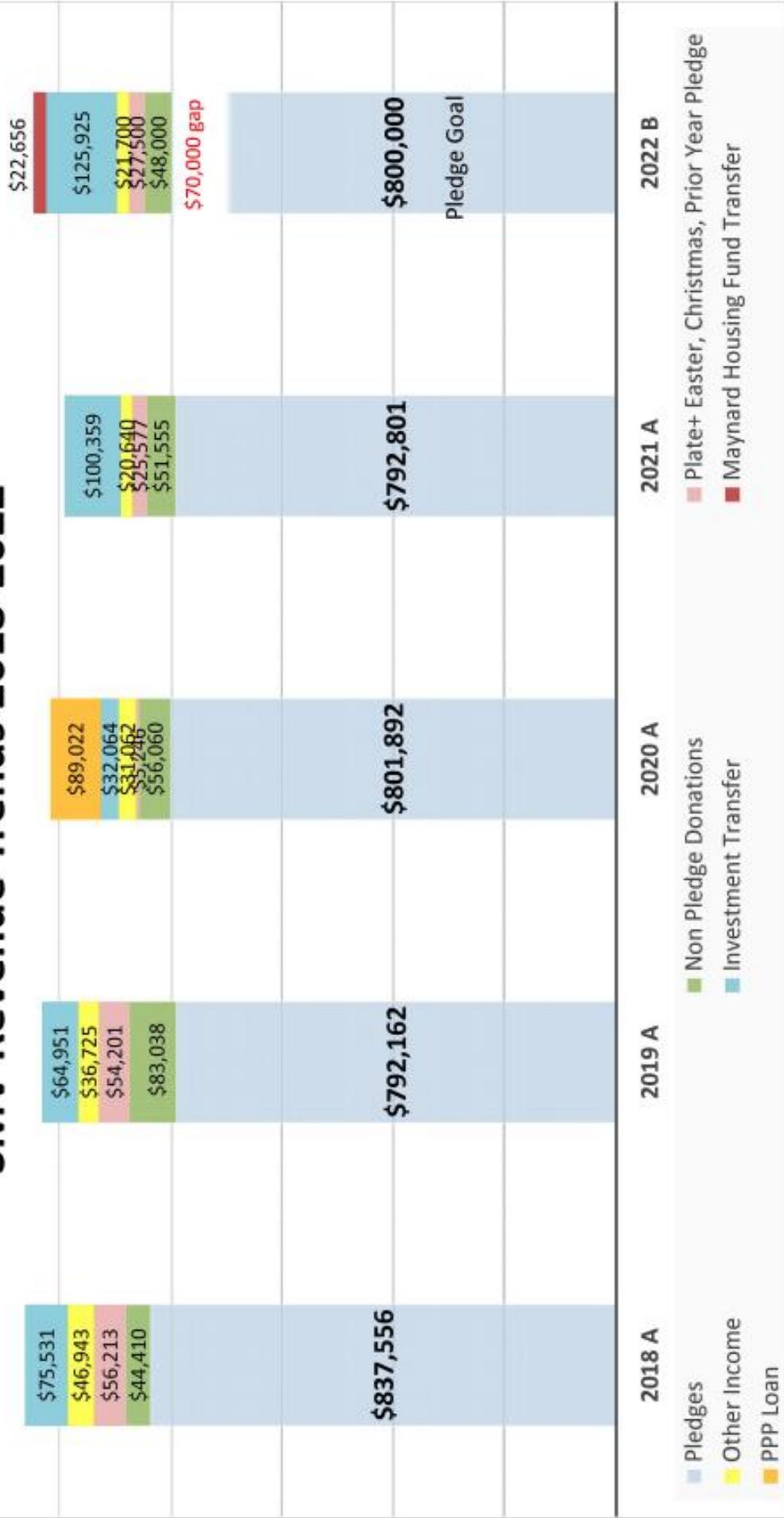


# 2021 SMV Actual Expenses

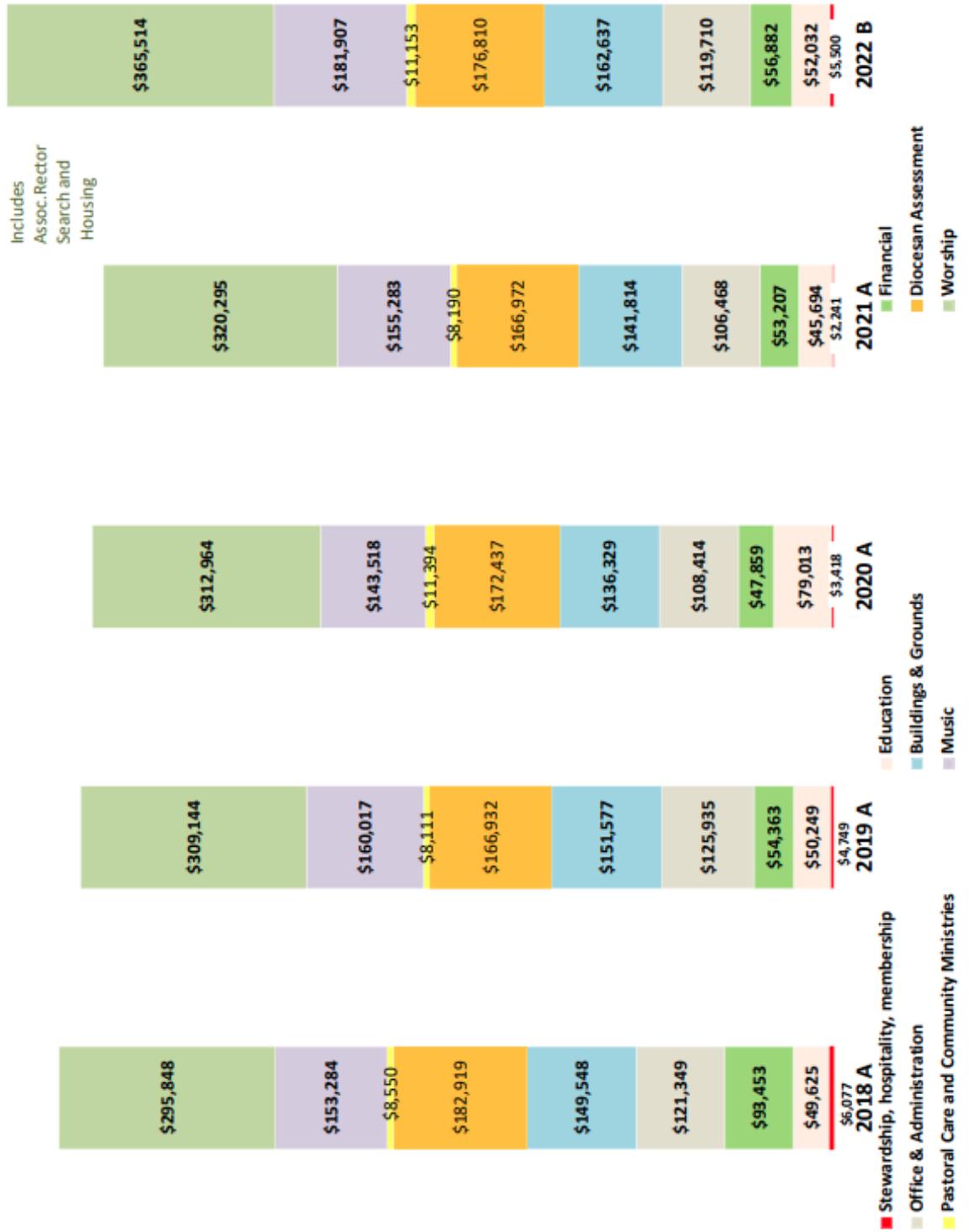
**Total \$1,000,164**



## SMV Revenue Trends 2018-2022



# SMV Expense Trends 2018-2022



# A LETTER FROM OUR SENIOR WARDEN

2021 has been another challenging year as we adapted from virtual worship and outdoor prayer groups to worship in the courtyard and then to in-person worship in the sanctuary plus virtual worship. Together, the St. Mary's community connected with its members and supported those in need. I continue to be impressed by and thankful for the St. Mary's community and its vital ministries many of which have thrived despite the challenges.

We are blessed by the ministry of the Rev. David Erickson's steady hand, good humor and spiritual nourishment this past year. Changes since our 2021 annual parish meeting include the retirement of our Associate Rector, the Rev. Marguerite Judson, and the engagement of Mike Stafford as our Interim Associate Minister to assist while we prepare and search for a new Associate Rector. We celebrate their ministries as we also celebrate and thank our wonderful staff and volunteers for their hard work and dedication.

Your Vestry has faithfully and regularly met (by Zoom) this past year. Let us also celebrate this Vestry and some of the key accomplishments from this past year:

- To attract and retain a well-qualified Associate Rector, established an associate rector housing subsidy fund out of the Maynard bequest proceeds
- To address the needs of St. Mary's Campus:
  - designated an additional \$200,000 out of the Maynard bequest proceeds to the Capital Reserve fund to be used for major maintenance, repairs and replacements to St. Mary's buildings and grounds.
  - vetted and approved contracts for major electrical maintenance, repairs and replacements at our St. Mary's Campus as well as major plumbing work needed in the sanctuary basement.
- To stay nimble in light of ever-changing pandemic best practices, continued to engage with Rev. Erickson on regathering process and protocols.
- To facilitate the preparation of the financial presentations for the Annual Parish Meeting by our Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer, amended the Parish Bylaws to move the Annual Parish Meeting to February from January.
- To reiterate St. Mary's commitment to our clergy and music director, established a sabbatical leave policy for our clergy and music director.
- Approved a budget for 2022 recognizing the transitional nature of the year and the need to invest in the return to normal and to the growth of the St. Mary's community.

As this particular Vestry comes to a close and the baton is passed to the new Vestry, I wish to express my gratitude to the 2021 Vestry members for their leadership and dedication during this challenging year.

And, as always, my thanks to the loving St. Mary's community for your continued commitment to the community of faith that is St. Mary's and to each other.

Faithfully,

Arthur Perkins  
Senior Warden

## **Class of 2022**

Cynthia Harper  
Will Long  
Arthur Perkins  
Sheila Santangelo

## **The Vestry**

### **Class of 2023**

John Adair  
Nancy Clothier  
Steven Gamboa  
Georgene Keeler



### **Class of 2024**

Ava Eichler  
Gloria Galindo  
Lauren MacDonald  
Matthew Spitzer

*Phil Albert, Recording Secretary and Clerk*

# A LETTER FROM DEACON TIM SMITH

2021 was a challenging year for me in my diaconal ministry in Jesus' name outside the walls of the church.

At the end of 2020 San Francisco was experiencing a pre-vaccine surge in infections, and the Food Bank, St. Mary's partner in delivering food to elderly and disabled individuals without means to obtain it on their own, was finding it difficult to maintain trucks to deliver food to distribution centers like St. Mary's where volunteers offloaded and then delivered food in their own vehicles to these individuals. The Food Bank restructured its program for volunteers to come to its facilities instead and pick up food which was then delivered to elderly and disabled individuals.

Because of this change in logistics and concern for infection among older volunteers, the partnership between St. Mary's and the Food Bank was changed. Under this new structure two teams of volunteers from St. Mary's including a non-parishioner from the community graciously and heroically continued to deliver food this time from Food Bank facilities to individuals in need.

Other programs like our Rise Against Hunger food-packing program and preparing and serving meals and providing fellowship with homeless individuals in partnership with the San Francisco Interfaith Council were temporarily put on hold. However, in September three teams of parishioners volunteered to pack food for individuals in need of food throughout the Bay Area as part of a national program to observe the 20th anniversary of our nation's 9/11 tragedy.

I have felt increasingly called to pastoral ministry with individuals both inside and outside of our faith community during the pandemic. It has been a difficult time for many, and I am gratified for the opportunity as a member of the clergy to share the Good News of God's unconditional love with individuals who are seeking the reassurance of that love."

The Rev. Deacon Tim Smith



## A LETTER FROM DEACON NANCY BRYAN

As a Deacon at St. Mary's Church, I reflect on many years of service as one of Mutual Ministry because practically every aspect of service involves at least two or more to serve as a team. A few examples are our Food programs, Eucharistic Visitors, Pastoral Care, Open Cathedral, to name just a few.

During this past year and a half, the COVID pandemic disabled many of these programs to be temporarily cancelled. Even though the pandemic interfered with outreach events and larger community gatherings, it did not stop the telephone, emails or Zoom communications to keep us connected. In the past year I have reached out to as many parishioners as possible to address their needs and concerns. In other ways, I have connected with old friends who have experienced illness, death of a family member, loss of a job and other life changing events.

However, all of these experiences bring us closer to each other, to God and to our boundless faith. My prayer is that we will all come together again with a renewed spirit and energy to serve our Lord with "gladness and singleness of heart"!

The Rev. Deacon Nancy Bryan



# A LETTER FROM OUR MUSIC DIRECTOR

Over the course of the last year, we have ensured the continuation of choral singing, despite the restrictions in place from the Pandemic. Our choral music resumed last spring with the staff singers in our outdoor courtyard Eucharists. Early in the summer, we had our first choir social gathering in the courtyard, which culminated in singing the Shaker hymn, "How Can I Keep from Singing." Over the summer, we returned indoors and enjoyed strong participation from the Summer Choir. Following Labor Day, we resumed in-person weekly rehearsals for the Parish Choir as well as the Children's and Youth Choirs. Throughout the fall, we had a full complement of choral services, including an offering of Faure's Requiem for the Feast of All Souls and our much-anticipated Festival of Lessons and Carols for Advent. The Parish Choir also participated in a recording project and premiere of my newly composed service of Compline, funded, in part, by a generous grant from the Association of Anglican Musicians.

The Children's and Youth Choirs participated in the popular processions for La Virgen de Guadalupe, Sankta Lucia, and the Epiphany. There have been varying Covid restrictions in place, but we have prioritized singing as much as possible.

I am very happy to report that the morale of the music department has been quite high over the last year. We did not have the opportunity to sing in-person for so long, and when we were finally able to do so, there was (and continues to be) much rejoicing. The Pandemic had made us all acutely aware of how important choral singing is (not just to the choir, but to our whole community), because its absence was a major void in our liturgies. I look forward to the year of music making which lies ahead!

In Christ,

Eric Choate  
Director of Music



# A LETTER FROM OUR RECTOR

*Jesus said, 'The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come.'*

Mark 4: 26-29

Dear Friends in Christ,

What a wonderful discipline it is for me to look back through the past year and reflect on how the Holy Spirit showed up for us and how we showed up for each other. Our last Annual Meeting was a fully virtual affair, one that we accomplished exceedingly well. It was a proud moment of our capacity and teamwork. This year, we get to gather together in person! Yes, masks are required and unfortunately due to COVID concerns we will not be having our traditional brunch together, but we get to gather in person and that is a wonderful thing.

In looking back, I am so very pleased with our parish's ability to respond to the restrictions and safety needs throughout the year. A year ago, we were offering two services virtually and two in person Morning Prayer services each Sunday. We were one of the only churches to come together and offer outdoor in-person Morning Prayer. Ash Wednesday we offered ashes in the courtyard accompanied by choir members chanting the psalms and incense being offered. This beautiful experience showed us the great gift that the courtyard is not only for fellowship, but worship as well. It was the inspiration for our five Easter Sunday services where we were allowed to join in corporate signing for the first time since the pandemic began. Those evolved into the outdoor Eucharistic services that we enjoyed throughout the Spring. Summer brought the initial hope that restrictions were over only for new variants to require us to discern and pivot once again. From there we developed the outdoor 9am intergenerational service and adult formation as well as a more traditional 11am service indoors and available streaming online.

God's creative grace flowed through us like a plant grows from the ground. Little ideas were planted and the roots of planning and preparing took invisible shape so that the experiences could sprout and grow. Before COVID, the idea of an outdoor service, an indoor service, and a streaming service would have been unimaginable to me. And yet, it became not only a reality, but a great delight and joy. I love How God can surprise us!

The strange journey is not over and our "new normal" has yet to be revealed. The "Exodus" from San Francisco proper has meant that many beloved parishioners have moved to other parts of the country. The lack of a vaccine for our youngest members still means those families need to discern their level and comfort in church participation. And as safe as they keep us, I long for the time when we don't have to wear a mask indoors!

It is an act of mature faith to acknowledge the circumstances in front of us, and to acknowledge that they are still in flux. It is also a mature act of faith to lean into, rely upon, and deeply love the mystery of God, the Love of God's Son, and the Flow of God's Spirit in our lives, leading us, sustaining us, and growing in us. God has a preferred and promised future, and God not only invites us into it, but journeys with us on our way there.

I am deeply grateful for all of you as we travel alongside each other on the way. I am especially grateful for the vestry, staff, and volunteers who come together and make St. Mary's "happen." I am also grateful for all of you who make this place of grace your spiritual home. I am grateful that we get to do this new year, together.

Gratitude and Grace, Blessing and Peace,



The Rev. David Erickson

