

Rector's Report for May, June, July, August, & September 2019
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Once again, I am way behind on writing my Rector's Reports. My last one was written in May for February, March and April. This report will cover May through September.

Since it has been consistently difficult for me to find the time to sit down and write a report each month, I've decided that going forward, **I will make reports to the Vestry three times a year: once in late spring, after Easter, once in the fall after the summer, and once at the end of the fall.** My next report will be at year-end, as we prepare the Annual Report. Most of the things I write about in my reports are not time-sensitive or news to anyone (they've been included in other liaison reports and/or publicized while they're happening through eNews, etc), so I see the purpose of my report as more reflective and archival.

ADMINISTRATION / OPERATIONS / BIG PICTURE

After attending the **stewardship** conference at the end of April, I assisted Karen Greenleaf in reviving the stewardship committee at St. John's. The group began to meet over the summer and established a purpose as a year-round ministry that encourages the parish to think about how they use their gifts to serve God. The committee's focus is much broader than the fall pledge drive, emphasizing that stewardship is a whole-life issue that is relevant year-round. The committee began to include Minutes for Ministry and commissioning of various leaders in the parish during the Offertory time of the worship service, to emphasize that our time and talents are also our offerings to God, not just the money we put in the plate each week.

In May & June, we concluded our **parish-wide discernment process** with a vision and direction for our next 3-5 years. (The Vestry formally adopted that vision at the August Vestry meeting.) The major areas of focus were **formation, pastoral care**, and being a **"dynamic serving presence in the community" (outreach)**. We also affirmed the need for **"life-giving spaces to enable God's mission" (expansion of the physical plant)** and for an **"abundance of resources and support"** to enable and support those other areas of focus.

June was a big month for staffing news. **Lisa Freeman** began work as **Community Youth Coordinator**, I conducted an annual performance review with our **bookkeeper, Eileen Begley** and I brought a **volunteer sexton, Matt McCabe**, onto our staff. (I worked out an arrangement with the McCabe family, who had come to us by way of the AFC's Safe Spaces parking program, whereby Matt will serve as the parish's sexton in exchange for the parish providing him and his family a free place to live (in their RV trailer on the church campus). His wife Patricia also helps with many of his tasks, but for clarity's sake, we designed Matt as the official sexton. The McCabes are no longer officially in the Safe Spaces program since they now have a direct arrangement with St. John's.) Weekly staff meetings have continued to increase camaraderie and communication among the staff and help our new staff members integrate into the team.

In July, I had my annual performance review with the wardens. (And then left for three weeks of vacation!) By September, I had written preliminary drafts of goals for the 2019-20 program year, based on the areas of focus determined by the parish in the discernment process, but had not yet finalized those goals (which, according to my Letter of Agreement, were supposed to be done in June).

We celebrated the end of our discernment process and the **130th anniversary of the founding of the parish** in style on June 23, with the Rev. Canon Jesus Reyes presiding and Joanna Shreve, diocesan consultant who was with us to kick off the discernment process, also speaking to us. We had a picnic lunch outside after the service with fun and fellowship, including a St. John's trivia game.

Over the summer, I worked with Annie Henry to design a **new logo for St. John's**, based on the bell tower, which is a consistent visual image associated with St. John's at both the old location in Capitola and the new location in Aptos. The "Reaching Hearts, Giving Voice" working group from the discernment process, which is concerned with publicity and visibility of St. John's in the community, commissioned St. John's t-shirts with the new logo for all to wear for a beach clean up the day after Labor Day at Seacliff State Beach.

In September, I began holding "**open office hours**" at The Farm Bakery & Café in Aptos from 3-5 p.m. on Tuesday afternoons. This is a time when parishioners can drop in to discuss things with me without an appointment.

WORSHIP

On June 9, **Bishop Mary made her last formal visitation to St. John's**. We had two youth confirmations, four adults received into the Episcopal Church, and one adult who made a reaffirmation of faith.

Andrew Carter held "**summer choir**" sessions several times over the summer, where anyone could show up at 9:30 on Sunday morning and learn a piece to sing as the offertory anthem that Sunday. A small group gathered each time (around 5 people), and although there was some overlap with the regular choir members, there were also some people who participated over the summer who do not normally sing in the choir. This was in line with the types of things we asked Andy to do when we hired him – to find ways to engage more people in the congregation (in addition to the choir) in the music ministries of the parish.

After the success of the Wednesday night Taize services during Lent, we decided to try holding **monthly Taize services during the summer**. These were lightly attended and the decision was made to stop holding them when the fall began, with the possibility of bringing them back weekly during Advent.

The Worship Committee has continued to meet on a monthly basis and is working on planning a **special service for All Saints Sunday this year**. Several members of the Alternative Service Planning Team worked with me to plan an **intergenerational St. Francis Day service** for

October 6, during which we focused on Franciscan themes of creation, peace, and poverty/humility rather than having the service be just about blessing of the animals. The blessing for parishioners' animals took place after the service on the back deck, and then we offered **animal blessings “to go” down at Seacliff Beach**, wearing our purple St. John's t-shirts. (The original plan was to do them at the park across the street, but there weren't many people there, so we went down to the beach instead.) The animal blessings “to go” was a joint effort of the Alternative Service Planning Team and the Worship Without Walls group from the parish discernment process.

In August, several people from the Worship Committee and Architecture & Space Use Committee and I **set a “default” arrangement of chairs, altar, ambo, flowers, and piano for Sunday worship**. After moving things around over the past year and settling the new chairs into place, we finally have an arrangement that will be the standard going forward. Win Fernald made a diagram of the arrangement so that outside groups using the space will have something to refer to when re-setting the space after an event.

FORMATION

In June, we held an action planning workshop as a final step in the parish-wide discernment process, where working groups in each of the areas of our vision plan came up with a set of goals to accomplish within the first year, and placed these on a timeline by quarter. I was in the Formation working group, and one of our goals was to **engage more adults in formation**. We attempted to do this by bringing formation into the Sunday service through a **study of Jeremiah** this fall and an **instructed Eucharist**. We also began offering **adult formation classes during the 9:15 hour** (the time slot in which the parish-wide discernment program was held last year.)

In terms of our children's ministries, we once again offered **programs and activities for children during the summer**. Alliee DeArmond arranged a series called “Behind the Scenes at St. John's,” in which the children were given a look at some of the many different ministries St. John's parishioners participate in, including the altar guild, flower arranging, hospitality, the Helpful Shop, and music ministries. The activities were appreciated by all ages of children who attended.

In September, I met individually with each family to ask about their wants and needs with regards to children's formation and what kind of frequency was reasonable to ask them to commit to meet. They agreed that once per month was a reasonable commitment to ask, so we have moved the **children's formation classes to once a month on Sunday afternoons**. The classes will meet on the 2nd Sunday of the month from 3-4 p.m. **On Sunday mornings, we have begun offering children's church** for any children who are at the 10:30 service. They leave the service at the same time they used to leave for Sunday School, but instead of doing an instructional class separated by age group, children of all ages are together for a children's version of what the adults are doing in worship during the time they are absent (hearing the scriptures, saying prayers, confessing sins, sharing the peace). The children return to the service after the Peace.

PASTORAL CARE

Over the past several months, Win Fernald has continued to hold meetings of the Pastoral Care Committee. The group is still assessing the best way to move forward with providing pastoral care to the parish. One idea is to have volunteers come to the office to do pastoral tasks like making phone calls, sending cards, and the like. The Rev. Mary Lou McKenney volunteered to coordinate our **Lay Eucharistic Visitor ministry** and began training new LEVs as well as updating certifications on existing ones. We have had two deaths in the parish since my last report: Lois Calkins on August 28 (service will be Nov. 9) and Joan Nelson on September 9 (Joan chose not to have a memorial service).

OUTREACH

My primary work in terms of outreach over the past several months has been bringing Lisa Freeman on board to start our community youth program. The time and energy involved in orienting her to the parish and working out details of the program's relationship with the parish and where programming would be held has occupied a great deal of my time since June. Once the program is up and running (hopefully by the first of the year), I expect to spend much less time working directly with this ministry.

This summer, St. John's once again marched in the **Aptos 4th of July parade**, thanks to the dedication and organizing skills of Larry Moorman.

I have not done much work outside the parish since my last report. I hope to get more involved with COPA in the upcoming year, but have not so far been able to make the time for that. I have asked Lisa Freeman to coordinate re-organizing a CORE team at St. John's. (Since much of what Lisa will be doing with the youth is community organizing work, it made sense to have her be our COPA contact person from St. John's.)

Respectfully submitted,
Mother Tracy+