



the episcopal church of st john the baptist

2017 annual meeting agenda and reports

november 5, 2017

Agenda for the Annual Meeting:

1. Opening Prayer:

Gracious God, be present with those who take counsel for this parish family. Inspire us to seek first your honor and glory. Guide us to perceive what is right, and grant us courage to pursue and accomplish it; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

2. A Prayer for the Departed of the Congregation since our last Annual Meeting:

O God of grace and glory, we remember before you this day our sisters and brothers who have died in the last year:

Pattie Prehn (11/10/16)
Virginia Sammon (12/12/16)
Mary Jane Vullings (3/24/17)
Donald Prehn (8/28/17)
Catherine Meurette (9/25/17)

We thank you for giving them to us, their family and friends, to know and to love as a companion on our earthly pilgrimage. In your boundless compassion, console those who mourn. Give us faith to see in death the gate of eternal life, so that in quiet confidence we may continue our course on earth, until, by your call, we are reunited with those who have gone before; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

3. Elections & Recognition of those Vestry Members Rotating Off This Year:

- Senior Warden: Lisa Alexander
- Junior Warden: Erik Evenson
both wardens have served 3 consecutive 1-year terms and are ineligible to run for another term
- Vestry elected in 2014 and rotating off: Laura Martens, Marsha Meurette, Chandra Witter (not eligible for re-election)

Needed to be elected:

- Senior Warden to a one-year term: Vickie Richmond-Hawkins
- Junior Warden to a one-year term: Steve Miller
- Three vestry members to three-year terms:
 - Nominated: Tom Gallant, Brad Bollmann, Julie Bliss
- One vestry member to a two-year term:
 - Nominated: Tyler McCormack
- Three delegates to Annual Convention to 2018
 - Nominated: Lisa Alexander, Ron Alexander, Dixie Wilhite

4. Awarding of St John’s Cross for 2017

Those members who have received the St. John’s Cross in the Past:

Elizabeth Smith	Charlotte Webb	Julie Burgess
Ray Carlson	David Gajda	Dale Burgess
Ruth Carlson	Jane Gajda	Vickie Richmond-Hawkins
Shelley Miller	Ruth Schuette	Pat Evenson
Larry Raymond	Doug Aziz	Ginny Fowle
Jeff Buchholz	Claire Aziz	
Josephine Stone	Don Prehn	
Duane Vetter	Ron Alexander	
Sara Vetter	Lisa Alexander	
Bob Reid	Dottie Rathjen	
Elie Reid	Cyndi Strampe	
Patti Prehn	Russell Jacobus	
Jim LaPointe		
Mel Neuman		

5. Reports

a. Rectors Report

b. Senior Warden

2017 was a year that St John's continued to write our stories. Our story took on depth and grew. We knew that we were a church that was part of a greater community and this year we explored in greater depth what that meant. We are a church of mission, and we devoted a great deal of effort to define what that meant. The mission team was formed, and they are leading the parish into a reflection of being in mission with the community and what that may mean for the parish. The work has just begun, and the journey may take us to places we have only imagined. We continue to embrace the projects of mission that have become a part of who St, John's has become. We provide a monthly luncheon for our neighbors, we support social justice and advocacy groups in the community, we collaborate with downtown churches to provide interfaith opportunities within the community. We have joined our voices with others in the community with the Unity project to identify ways to make Wausau a more welcoming community.

We are a vital part of the Diocese of Fond du Lac. As part of the relationship, St John's has hosted Diocesan events such as the pre-convention meeting and a workshop on Congregational Vitality put on by the CCV. Additionally, the vestry met with representatives from the CCV and shared our plan for maintaining the vitality of the church. Members of the church attended the spring conference in Waupaca put on by the CCV on becoming a church of Mercy and Delight. There are members of our parish that represent St. John's on Diocesan committees. St John's is also actively involved in the Cursillo movement within the Diocese. We have a presence in downtown area. We open the church during special events like the arts weekend in the fall and first Thursday's in the summer. The courtyard is a gem in the downtown area and is available as a place for lunch at the tables, a quick rest on the brick wall, or even a backdrop for local photographers looking for the perfect place to capture that senior portrait. We cherish the chapel and have struggled with how that fits into the mission of St John's. We opened the chapel 24 hours a day for many years and welcomed the community to use the it as a place for private reflection and prayer. It has become increasingly difficult to trust that the chapel can be open 24 hours and maintain the solemnity of the space and safety of those who are seeking a place of peace and solitude. As a result, we are maintaining daytime hours in the chapel and locking it at night. ~**Lisa Alexander**

c. Junior Warden

Good Morning and God Bless! The lord is wonderful and alive in the people buildings and grounds of St John's. As your Junior Warden my report to you offers a snap shot of what we have been doing to tend to the buildings and grounds of our beloved parish.

First let's focus on the organ restoration. As you all know our organ has been in need of repair and updating. We have contracted with Rob Hoppe to restore, and rebuild the organ. This process is slowly moving forward.

We did various updates to the courtyard this year to repair tiles near the columbarium lighting at the doorways. Our Building and grounds are a gorgeous representation of the love of Jesus Christ and updating the outside of the buildings reflects this love to the community at large.

We have also received bids and have successfully employed a new company for snow removal for this winter. This should reduce costs and improve the quality of the work. We have had an infestation issue of mice. We have signed a contract to remove and ensure they will not return. We have also proceeded with a bat removal contract.

We continue to make improvements and repairs to our building and grounds to honor all of you the community and Jesus Christ our lord and savior.

Thank you all for taking the time to review this report. It has been a great honor being your Junior Warden. As my term comes to an end I want to send my heartfelt thanks to all of you for your support.

Gods Peace, **Erik Evenson**

d. Minister of Mission

Friends of St. John's

At the beginning of the calendar year, this congregation began an experiment. We have stepped out in faith to dig more deeply and intentionally into our call to mission. In many ways, this first year has been about assessing where we are as a congregation and learning about the changing nature of the world in order to simply take a few baby steps along the way.

So far, those baby steps have led to the building of the little prayer house and library for our courtyard, to an increase in food given to the pantries in town

(including a fresh food drive), to furthering our connection to our outreach lunch community through the simple act of asking for their prayers, and to acts of neighborliness to the physical neighbors near us in the downtown. We hope to build on all of these activities in the year ahead.

Behind the scenes, the Mission Team has been reading about and discussing the changing nature of society as well as reflecting on the Wausau area in particular. As we've gotten to know one another, we've been reflecting on our own spiritual journeys and praying that we would be led to see more clearly our mission in this community.

In the new year, we would like to widen the circle of that conversation and invite you into learning opportunities along with us. It will soon be time for us to turn baby steps into toddler-like "play." The analogy is more than appropriate because the process will be one of discovery, of trying things out and learning as we continue to grow. And the point is not so much to reach any particular destination, but to become more fully the people God made us to be in this particular time and place.

Thank you for giving us the time and space to begin this process. We look forward to further exploration and engagement in the new church year!

-The Mission Team

e. Financial Report

Account	2016 (through 10/31)	2017(through 9/30)
Checking Account	61,459.69	15,144.15
Discretionary Fund	1,556.41	945.57
Special Events Account	1,125.54	1,130.64
Youth Fund	4,462.64	4,395.60
Scholarship Fund	2,648.84	2,652.57
Memorial Fund	11,270.42	12,966.36
Endowment Fund	1,135,741.75	1,246,951.35

	2016 (through 10/31)	2017 (through 9/30)
Pledged Income	123,000.93 (72.8% of budget for year)	123,807.23 (75.8%)
Non Pledged Income	28,249.99 (156.9% of budget)	17,992.42 (72%)
Rector Rental	4,570.00 (91.4% of budget)	0
TOTAL INCOME	155,820.92 (81.2% of budget)	141,799.85 (75.3%)

Category	2016 (through 10/31)	2017 (through 9/30)
Administration	5,039.95 (94.2 % of annual budget)	4004.13 (74.2)
Facility Operations	19,674.49 (67.6 % of annual budget)	23,384.63 (79%)
Personnel: Salary and Benefits	113,379.35 (84.1% of annual budget)	106,787.02 (79.6)
Programs	21,230.88 (82.9% of annual budget)	17,685.97 (71.2%)
TOTAL EXPENSES	160,931.18 (82.6% of annual budget)	151,850.76 (78.3)
INCOME VS EXPENSES	-5,110.96	-10,051.11

f. Pledges as of October 18

- Returning: \$82,102
- Returning #: 23 (40 last year)
- Pledges Lost #: 3
- Lost Pledges: \$11,500
- New Pledges: \$10, 200
- New Pledges #: 4
- Total Pledges to Date: \$92,302

g. Financial Reports: Organ Restoration

- Amount Pledged: \$15,900
- Amount Received: \$22,670
- Total Amount Expended to Date: \$60,968
- Expected Completion Date: December 23, 2017

h. Altar Guild

Something special is coming to you soon! For the Advent season, Father David uses vestments of a special blue—but the set has not been complete. It upsets the guild members because the altar isn't as proper as it should be (maybe you never

noticed?). Now you will see a lectern hanging, a veil, and a burse blending with the proper dress for the Advent season!

Our guild members are signing on for the months of 2018. We could use several more volunteers to complete the calendar. Talk to me about it.

~**Ruth Schuette**

i. Communications/Website

- Weekly communications via email (Mail Chimp): **Wednesday eVoice** that includes a midweek message and the ministry volunteers for the upcoming Sunday. **Friday eVoice** with a Mission Moment update. **Saturday eVoice** which consists of the Sunday bulletin.
- Printed Sunday bulletin: includes weekly calendar, ministry volunteers for upcoming Sunday, announcements, etc. We currently have three shut-ins that receive the bulletin via U.S. Mail.
- Website: Updated at least once a week.
- Special Announcement emails (Mail Chimp)
- Facebook: Updated as needed. Midweek messages posted on Facebook along with special activities or announcements, photos of events, etc.

j. Building and Grounds – see Jr Warden’s Report

k. Building Usage

We have several different groups using our building on a regular basis. These groups include The Boy Scouts, SMART Recovery and Addiction Groups, and three new community choirs. We have also had parish members request the use of Memorial Hall for family get-togethers/parties or musical recitals.

l. Courtyard and Gardens

A successful season of gardening in our courtyard. Annuals were planted in spring. An area of grass was removed and replaced with perennials. The planters above the columbarium were moved and a flowering bush added between them. Additional stepping stones created by some families were also added. Perennials were added along the side of the chapel. Many faithful volunteers took turns watering, weeding and mowing. The courtyard is used daily by many who continually give compliments about how welcoming it is. The addition of bottled water has added to this as well. Greens will replace flowers for the winter season. Donations toward courtyard plantings are always appreciated. Thank you!

~**Claire Aziz**

m. Deanery

n. ECW Report

St. John's Episcopal Church Women (ECW) includes all the women of our church and Episcopal churches everywhere. The purpose of ECW is to provide fellowship, work, study, prayer and service throughout the year.

Highlights of our April 26, 2017 Spring Dinner and Meeting:

- 222 boxes of cookies were sold generating \$3,710.00
- St. Martha's Guild was reviewed. The women agreed and voted to dissolve St. Martha's Guild and monies will be absorbed into the ECW checking account.
- The U.T.O. drive started on Easter and ended on Pentecost.
- Our guest speaker was Pastor Sue Kruger. She shared her experiences as a chaplain at Good Samaritan Hospital in Merrill, as a clinical pastoral educator, and the Circles of Light discernment process.
- Father David shared his thoughts about ECW. He had suggestions for our continued focus and the important role we play as a St. John's ministry.

On June 12th and 14th women were invited to four focus sessions to share their ideas for women's ministry in the areas of community, spirituality & prayer, receptions, and kitchen/Memorial Hall. All four meetings were well attended. Some ideas were implemented this summer such as:

- "Prayer, Spiritual Growth, and Coffee"
- Deep cleaning of the kitchen
- Planning a Quiet Day with Father David on a Saturday or evening

Highlights of our October 18, 2017 Fall Dinner and Meeting:

- Cookie baking will begin in November - the schedule and more information will be in the weekly bulletins.
- There will be a U.T.O. drive this fall.
- Alter Guild is running smoothly. Volunteers are always welcome to join.
- Father David talked about the role of ECW. Many women's groups are dissolving around the country and yet our ECW at St. John's is going strong. We should continue to work together with the church, vestry, children, the mission team and at the same time, maintain our group focus and vision. Results of our four focus groups from June were discussed and ranked according to importance for our upcoming year.

The ministries of caring continue throughout the year. They are:

- Receptions (funerals, Bishop’s visitation, church functions, etc.) continue. Thanks to members of ECW for coordinating and organizing volunteers to plan, set-up, prepare food, and clean up.
- Members of ECW have been busy knitting prayer squares which are blessed by the priest. A prayer square is a tangible reminder of God’s unconditional love and peace that can be carried in your pocket, purse, or on a keychain.
- Prayer shawls are available for people needing soft comfort in times of need. Shawls are knitted with quiet prayer and blessed before given to those in need. We pray for the shawl to bring warmth and surround the person with love and healing.
- Quiet Day – Monday of Holy Week

Cash balance on January 1, 2017	\$5,022.05
Income	<u>+ 2, 073.71</u>
	Total \$7,095.76
Less expenses	<u>- 3,510.70</u>
Cash balance on October 18, 2017	\$3,585.06

**Respectfully submitted,
Shelley Miller ECW President**

o. NAOMI (North Central Area Congregations Organized to Make an Impact)

p. Outreach Luncheon

q. Adult Study

r. Church School

s. Reports from Parish Members (“In the past year, where have you seen or experienced mission at St. John’s?”)

Ron Alexander: I want to start with my Wednesday mornings at St. John’s: 9:00 Cursillo Grouping and 10:00 Book Study. Very spiritual routines for me! Our Cursillo group has added a couple new members and we continue to grow in trust and support. The book study has introduced me to a variety of topics

pertinent to my faith journey and the rich discussions, offering various viewpoints, fosters reflection and learning. In particular, a memory from the Jonathan Sachs book that we read sticks out: “act from abundance rather than scarcity” ...this helps me to connect with my spiritual gifts on a regular basis! I continue to be active in NAOMI, now as the treasurer. We sure appreciate the office space provided by St. John’s and the frequent use of space for meetings! We continue to advocate for criminal justice reform, public transit expansion, poverty awareness with provision of regular poverty simulation activities; and have emphasized local racial equity through involvement with the Unity Project, People for the Power of Love, Towards One Wausau, and being co-sponsor off the Unity Concert on the 400 Block this past August.

We are the recent recipients of a \$15,000 grant from the Mary Alphonse Bradley Fund to help build power in the Latino Community around the Ladysmith area. It has also been very exciting to be a member of St. John’s Mission Team...we have had lively discussions, with “out of the box” ideas, trying to find where God is in our community.

With Lisa, I have been able to bring communion to several members unable to get to church regularly...very fulfilling!
So God is good!!

Chandra Witter: “Lessons from St. John’s Outreach Luncheon”

I often come away with an insight or two into human nature with every Outreach Luncheon. Small things, generally, but one instance stands out humbling me, yet today.

On one particular Saturday morning while I was in the kitchen a guest asked me if he could help me set up, as he had come early. I gave him the several items that regularly get set out on the long banquet table nearest the kitchen. This is the table where we set out plates, cups, napkins and hors d’oeuvres for our guests to help themselves to before the meal is served. There really is no right way to set these items out. People throughout human history have figured out how to serve themselves no matter how the table is set, yet, after this person set these simple items out on the table I, for whatever reason, decided to rearrange them as they have always been arranged; small plates and napkins on the right, hors d’oeuvres in the center and drinks with glassware on the left. This was a completely unconscious decision on my part. I was only managing an event, a knee jerk reaction, something I do on a daily basis in my job.

However, after another guest saw this, he quickly pointed out my error. Not the person who set out the items, but another guest saw this transaction between myself, and a guest we invited to our table. He said, “You know, when you correct things that someone has voluntarily helped you with, you demean them and hurt them and they might never come back. These people have enough to deal with without you pointing out how they have done something wrong.”

Strong, strong words to someone who genuinely cares for the people I serve once a month, but important words, nonetheless. I tell my employees that there is never just one way to do things and that all opinions will be valued, but now I ask myself, do I really value all humans equally? Do I really love my neighbor as myself? I have thought of this event so many times over the last couple of years. This guest has not returned to our luncheon. I know nothing of him but will remember him forever.

Mission work is never done and for this, I am grateful. Mission keeps us on our toes and makes us better humans in ways we could not have planned.

Marilyn Klutterman: I volunteer for most of the outreach luncheons. At the lunch there is a guest that comes most months. He is the type of person that can be difficult to be around. I will refer to him as Henry.

The mission team has placed a basket, paper and pencils for prayers that our guests would like us to pray for. Several guests use this opportunity. As the lunch was winding down one Saturday, Henry came to me and wanted me to read his prayer. It was about a friend’s wife who had stage four cancer. I told him I would keep them in my prayers as well. The next month, again after lunch and clean-up had begun, Henry came to me with his prayer. This time he told me about his friend’s inability to cry for his wife. He didn’t want to seem weak when she needed him to be strong.

Henry then shared with me his response to his friend. He said, “When you hold someone and cry with them, your tears are holy water, they are baptizing and sharing the love of god.” I just stood there with tears in my eyes. How beautiful. Henry touched me to my very core. This from the man I had such a hard time being around 2 months ago.

Now every month I ask Henry about his friend. We have a nice talk and he writes another prayer. I experienced mission with Henry. I listened while he taught. Henry is one of the gifts we are given when we reach out and listen.

Sue & Don Weinkauff: We think the “Mission” of taking care of “Downtown” people has been a good thing. The “Outreach” meal has been wonderful. We also like the plan of having Joe Thompson being in charge of Mission is a good thing WE have some wonderful younger families right now.

Pamela Glennon: The Outreach Luncheons – Feeding people’s bodies and souls. We provide for physical needs as well as show God’s love through shared conversation, caring, and prayer.

Anonymous: Anytime in the past 1-2 years when there has been conflict, tragedy, joy, pain – St. John’s is the place I know I want to share these events with. The atmosphere of joy, acceptance, inclusiveness is palpable and I cannot go very long without it.

Anonymous: Watching the little ones grow and interacting with them. Part of our mission is to family, and opportunity is being made on a monthly basis in a special time for them and us “olders” to mingle. ~**Anonymous**

Brenda Herman: This is all fine but what about what St. John’s is really about. A church home to nurture – the faith of the members and others and above all the message of the gospel should be a part of the Mission. The church should offer an open feeling to one and all. We should not forget the spiritual needs of our congregations in an effort to do good in the community. Prayers.

Beth: “The mission of St. John’s is to restore all people to God and each other in Christ.” I am not a member of St. John’s but a by-chance visitor. When I attended church at St. John’s on 9.10/17, an insert in the bulletin asked how St. John’s is fulfilling their mission. Here is what I have noticed as an outsider peering in: I first happened upon St. John’s last summer during a courtyard music performance during a downtown “First Thursday” evening. I was delighted to see and hear people gathering in the courtyard to enjoy music together. It was clear to my friend and me that we (and any others) were welcome to join in and enjoy the gathering. We did, and I thank you.

I was again drawn in to the courtyard this summer when I happened to park near the courtyard on my way to La Prima Deli. On the stone wall of the courtyard, I noticed a bin of bottled water. On the ground, was a bowl of water for passing dogs. Water for those who may need it. Something so very simple, but so very profound. Water...something we all need to survive...something we all likely take for granted. A life-giving source being freely offered for whomever is in need. Two Sunday afternoons, I came to the courtyard oasis with my dog, who had been confined to a puppy mill the first six years of her life. She enjoys the freedom of the fresh air and soft grass, and the comforting embrace of the stone walls of the courtyard wall. I noticed (to my great delight) a tiny library on a pole. Its gray white-washed finish, shake roof, river stones, rusted hinges and door closure perfectly blended with the stone exterior of the church. The library's books and opportunity to make prayer requests were further invitations for non-intrusive connection. The wind chime in the archway provided an addition to welcome. A sign invited the public to join their Tuesday noon brat fry. While not necessarily an essential, lifegiving source, grilled sausages do have their appeal. Like frankincense and myrrh, the scent of bratwurst is a welcome comfort that no Wisconsinite can easily resist. I returned to the courtyard for two bratwurst Tuesdays, once with a friend and once alone. My friend and I asked Father if we could peek inside the church. We loved the wooden beams, the wooden floor and the stained-glass windows. It felt like a welcoming place.

I read on St. John's Facebook page about the chapel, open to the public for quiet reflection and prayer any time of the day (and previously all night). I was very touched that a church would freely open its doors and welcome anyone and everyone into this sacred space. Throughout my life, I have worked with people living in the margins...on the fringes of life. I know that those in greatest need...those who may be suffering the greatest of hurts, are often hesitant or resistant (for a variety of reasons) to attend church in a formal manner. To know that there is a downtown church that opens its doors, welcomes unconditionally, offers comfort and refuge without judgment, with heartfelt love and compassion, with no need to be pushy nor preachy...that is a true gift from God. Love thy neighbor. That is living out the mission of Christ. Your courtyard and chapel alone speak volumes. The non-intrusive, inclusive nature of the courtyard and open chapel invite those who may otherwise not seek refuge to inch closer. Perhaps some may inch close enough to be restored and resting under His wing. Thank you for this ministry that you freely provide.

Kristen Thompson: The last year has been a good one for the kids of St. John's. A main aspect of our mission for education is to make our church a place where kids want to be. I think the smiling faces we see show that we have succeeded!

Whether playing games at Growing Together Potlucks or sharing "highs and lows" during Church School, the kids are blossoming through their time at St. John's. We have provided them opportunities for fellowship, learning Bible stories, playing games, and even some community service projects.

The majority of these have been done through the lens of our larger church family, as we hope to teach the children that faith is a lifelong journey. This is why it is so wonderful when people of all ages join us on our adventures! If you haven't had a chance to join us yet, we encourage you to give it a try. The kids will be glad to have you!

Theresa Ambord: For me, it's what I perceive as little things but others view as bigger things! For example, the complimentary bottles of water, the dog dish, the brat fry, the little free library. All of these things involve our courtyard and the welcoming feeling we want to give to those in our community. I don't think of it as a big deal to offer the water, for both humans and dogs, but the feedback we get from others is so positive! I once had a "visitor" of our courtyard ask me if the water was really "free" and when I told her yes, she responded by saying we are the only place downtown who offers this and how nice it is. I love the brat fries in August. It's fun to sit in the office and watch the people who all come together for this fun event. This includes of course, the volunteers who run the brat fry, moms (and dads!) with small children, business men and women and also those in our community who are there because they are in need of a meal. We welcome everyone. This last year we decided on a free will offering instead of charging as we have done in past years because we did not want to discourage someone from coming because they couldn't afford it. Finally, the little free library! I have added books to the library and it's a good feeling when I look and see they are no longer in there because I know someone else is enjoying them.

Anonymous:

S – Simple

T – Timely

J – Joyful

O – Opportunities

H – Honoring

N – Neighbors

S – in Service

Ramert & Ruth Carlson” Thanks be to God for David & Marilyn for all their love to our parish.

Welcoming people from downtown walking & inviting them to the chapel and courtyard. The bottles of water on the courtyard stone fence offers living water now & through Christ forever. We feel the peace in church makes parishioners and guests feel welcome. St. John’s is a wonderful downtown church. Keep up the good work.

Anonymous: While hosting the outreach luncheons is surely a visible sign of fulfilling our mission at St. John’s, I believe keeping the chapel open despite several setbacks is a daily sign of the mission. Having our house of prayer and respite accessible as much as possible reveals to the community what we are about.

Ginny Fowle: My Story about what St. John's has been for me personally this year begins when I was honored unsuspectingly, the St. John's Cross. The moment and the day I was called up to receive this gift, was emotional. I felt there were so many who would be so deserving of such a gift. I was not sure what I had done to deserve the honor. I was very happy, and decided that for me, it was a gift to wear and show proudly, and worn as a reminder that I could be doing more. Giving of myself, my time, and talents for the greater cause. I give thanks to St. John's for being such an important part of my life and my family's life. Submitted with appreciation and love,

Steve & Shelley Miller: In the past year, there have been numerous examples of mission at St. John's. For us, what stands out would include things that take place in the courtyard, the chapel, and the way we take care of families at funerals. Having experienced the last brat cookout of the year, it was apparent that we “reached” a cross-section of our downtown and community friends. It

was eye-opening to see St. John's members cooking and providing a free lunch to anyone who came to eat. More important than the food was the outreach to multiple generations of residents. As we packed up the canopy and put everything away for the season, it was satisfying to know that, as a parish family, "the church" reached other families in our community. Additionally, the courtyard provides water, a place for people to sit, eat, read, pray and enjoy the beauty of our grounds. The small library has had a positive impact as well. The chapel is used by members of the church and by the community. It provides a place for rest, reflection, prayer, and shelter. While we may have struggled with some events that have taken place in the chapel, our resolve to keep it open has been strong and we believe that light will overtake the darkness. For anyone attending a funeral at St. John's, it is known that Father David and our parishioners provide bereaved families support with the funeral. None of this would be possible without the help of volunteers who do their part to bring a reception together. This is a blessing to families in a time of sorrow. As a parish family, it seems that we are making progress in answering the call to reach out to our neighbors. We believe that St. John's demonstrates what a human community looks like in Wausau. We are living the vision of mission.

Lisa Alexander: My years on the vestry are coming to an end, and with that I have had to seek new opportunities to remain involved with the church. A new ministry was quietly started and has touched people across the country in a prayerful way. My passion and mission has become the humble prayer square. The tiny knit square is a powerful reminder to those who carry one that God is with them and is always there to help them with their struggles and celebrate their blessings. Members of the parish have sent the squares to friends and family, prayer squares are in the prayer box in the courtyard, and I sent one to each of the veterans on the Honor Flight in September. I find knitting the prayer squares to be contemplative as I pray for the possible recipient and ask God to bless the work and reach out to the one who receives the blessing. I can knit these in the middle of celebrations at church or in the middle of the night when sleep is hard to come. Knitting centers me and brings me as much joy and peace as the square brings to those who receive the prayer square. To date I have knit over 300 squares, I may have to find other places to leave the squares! But I encourage you all to take a square to a friend or for yourself to remind you of the power of God's love.

Joe Thompson: As I've reflected on where I have seen St. John's living into its mission, several stories of actively doing mission come to mind, but the one moment that keeps sticking out for me has to do with our mission to simply be present in the downtown and the real challenges that come with that presence.

As many know, we have faced some issues in keeping the chapel open. Due to safety concerns, we have even begun to lock those doors overnight. Still, issues arise. A couple of months ago, someone defecated on the floor of the chapel behind the altar. This was a problem. It was disgusting and needed to be cleaned up, but it was also a slap in the face. It was a direct affront to our mission of presence. I know that it angered Father David, and rightfully so—not only was he involved in the clean-up, but he is deeply passionate about the mission of that place. Yet, the very next Sunday, the readings included the story of Peter asking Jesus how many times we ought to forgive one another. As you know, Jesus' response is basically to never limit forgiveness and its power to restore. Father David brought the point home beautifully that day. And although he didn't talk directly about what had happened in the chapel earlier in the week, he did talk about what it means to truly practice forgiveness.

For me, sitting in the pew that morning, that sermon and that worship service came to symbolize how our mission is lived out. It's not always about doing (although it will be about that too), but is often about being truly present. This means it will involve risk and vulnerability and the practice of forgiveness. And as a community, we fulfill that mission whenever we can live into that vision of being God's people for the world.

Claire Aziz: Our Outreach luncheons are one of the things that fulfill our mission at St. John's. It has been going on for many years and the folks attending have become a "family". One gal reads a poem she has written. Some help with clean up. They are open to using the recently added prayer basket and are appreciative of our monthly give aways. It also brings parishioners together to work, for fellowship, establish new friendships as well as sharing their talents through donations.

Marsha Meurette: As you might imagine, the foremost defining moment of this year in my life was the passing of my mom. The loss of anyone you're close too is always difficult, but I think a parent even more so. There is no escaping the heartache and grieving, but comfort can be found in many places. And for me and my family, there just wasn't a better place to feel that comfort, and to see

it spring into action, than St. John's. Her service was a true celebration of life thanks to everyone from Fr. David, to ECW, to the helpers behind the scenes, to those who could attend, those that sent cards and all who kept us in their thoughts and prayers. But it's also because of all the members over the years past and present that give of themselves in different but equally important ways to keep this a welcoming place to be for all to help grow their faith. And because that occurs not from a top down sort of hierarchy, but more like that giving emanates from various points on a star structure, which collectively make that star shine. I feel so fortunate that this place at which my mother felt so at home, prepared her well for that inevitable transition. She regarded it not with fear, but with very calm anticipation, as it should be. So I give thanks to all for your part in maintaining St. John's as a welcoming and comforting home for all, in any stage of their journeys. My faith and pride in the foundation of St. John's was really solidified and I look forward to maintaining that, as well as new ways we can keep that solid, and keep the star shining brightly.

5. Presentation of Parish Statistics

Average Sunday Attendance (through October 15):

2017 – 70.9

2016 – 71.6

Non-Sunday Attendance for Services (through October 15):

2017 – 74

2016 – 90

New members over the past year:

- Sue and David Greene
- John Palmer
- Rhonda Woolridge
- Jim and Joan Hannes (returning)

Baptisms in the past year:

- Oliver Benjamin Feidt

Weddings in the past year:

- Bob Berres and Amy Kimmes

6. Other Business

- **UTO**
- **Annual Convention Report**
- **Voices**
- **It's Moving Time**
- **Cookie Dates**

November 18th – baking

December 2nd – baking & decorating

December 3rd – decorating

December 4th - packing

December 5th – pickup cookies

- **Christmas 2017**

Both the Fourth Sunday of Advent and Christmas Eve are on Sunday this year. Therefore, our schedule will be as follows:

Sunday, December 17: Church Decoration following the 10 am Eucharist.

Saturday, December 23: Advent 4 Eucharist at 5 pm

Sunday, December 24: Advent 4 Eucharist at 9 am

Sunday, December 24: Christmas Eve Family Eucharist at 4 pm

Sunday, December 24: Christmas Eve Choral Eucharist at 10:30 pm

7. Blessing and Adjourn

A Prayer for Mission

O God, you have made of one blood all the peoples of the earth, and sent your blessed Son to preach peace to those who are far off and to those who are near: Grant that people everywhere may seek after you and find you; bring the nations into your fold; pour out your Spirit upon all flesh; and hasten the coming of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord