

**St. Martha's Episcopal Church
Annual Meeting
November 10, 2024**



**ST. MARTHA'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
ANNUAL MEETING
Sunday, November 10, 2024**

AGENDA

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Opening Prayer** **Rev. Ria**
3. **Establishment of Voting Quorum** **John Short**
4. **Approval of 2023 Annual Meeting Minutes** **John Short**
5. **Election of three new Vestry Members.
Report of Nominating Committee and Election;
and electing two delegates and two alternates
to the 2025 Diocesan Convention** **Sandy Roberts**
6. **Rector's Report** **Rev. Ria**
7. **Senior Warden's Report** **John Short**
8. **Treasurer's and Finance/2025 Budget** **Ron Kerchner/
Dave Moore**
9. **Stewardship Report** **Bill Freund**
10. **Old Business/Other**
11. **Parish Announcements (The Vestry will convene for a brief meeting
immediately following the close of the Annual Meeting.)**
12. **Closing Prayer** **Rev. Ria**

Draft Minutes
St. Martha's Episcopal Church
Bethany Beach, Delaware
Annual Meeting Draft Minutes
November 19, 2023

Quorum. Secretary John Short noted that a quorum was present.

Opening Prayer. Rev. Ria began the meeting with a prayer.

Call to Order. Secretary John Short called the meeting to order.

Approval of the Minutes. The Minutes from the 2022 Annual Meeting were approved.

Election of New Vestry Members. After the nominations committee presented the nominees for the new Vestry, and on a motion by Tempe Steen and a second from Tina Edgar, the Vestry elected by acclamation Pat Leskowitz, Frank Marchand, and Marianne Pena as the new Vestry members.

Election of delegates and alternates to the 2024 Diocesan Convention. Caryn Cleveland-Short and Wendy Ray were elected as delegates to the 2024 Diocesan Convention. Bud Palmer was elected alternate.

Rector's Report. Rev. Ria referred members of the congregation to her written report.

Senior Warden's Report. Senior Warden Mary Davis had provided a written report.

Finance Committee, Treasurer's Report and Budget.

Ron Kerchner, treasurer, reported that that church has healthy balances in our accounts. He also reported that \$100,000 has been deposited into a money market account and noted that the church's return on investment for the Master Fund A has been 8% and 4% for the Lighthipe Trust. He noted that the 2023 plate and pledges were \$68,000 ahead of last year at this time and were \$21,000 ahead of what has been budgeted.

The Treasurer reposted the balances of the church's accounts as follows:

PNC Bank

Operating Account	\$ 79,865
Rector's Discretionary Account	2,843
Restricted Account	55,439
Mission Account	97,216
Total	\$235,363

Master Fund A	Unrestricted	Lighthipe Trust
Beginning Balance 9/30/22	550,101	3,849,959
Balance as of 8/31/23	592,438	4,008,674
Percent change	+7.7%	4.1%

Finance Committee Report.

Finance Committee Chair Dave Moore noted that the use of an approved internal audit system had saved the church approximately \$20,000.

Approval of the 2024 Operating Budget. Dave presented the church's 2024 budget which had been approved by the Vestry and which was approved by the congregation.

Dave reviewed the 2024 church budget that had been approved by the Vestry. He distributed and reviewed pie charts that demonstrated the sources and amounts of income as well as the categories and amounts of anticipated expenditures for 2024.

Stewardship Report. Bill Freund gave the Stewardship Report and provided an update on the number of pledges and the amount that had been pledged. He reported that in 2022 the church received 109 pledges totaling \$219,000, which were the highest ever recorded. As of the date of the Annual Meeting, the Stewardship Committee received 88 pledges for a total of \$199,000. He also noted the importance of the pledges to the operation of the church and to the ability of St. Martha's to provide good works in the community. He thanked the congregation for their pledges and their generosity.

Special Vestry Meeting. A special meeting of the new Vestry will be held immediately following the Annual Meeting. The Vestry will include new members Pat Leskowitz, Frank Marchand and Marianne Pena, with continuing members Tim Lush, John Short, Rick Legeer, Sandy Roberts, Al Thomas, and Dave Moore.

Adjournment and Concluding Prayer. The meeting was adjourned and ended with a prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

John Short, Vestry Secretary

List of 2023 Annual Meeting Participants

Barbara Reardon	Joe Reardon	John Grannis
Deb Milstead Grannis	Temple Steen	Gayle Fontaine
Rick Fontaine	Diane Gray	Rebecca Nichols
Lorraine Thomas	Al Thomas	Carl Long
Sandy Roberts	Tim Lush	Steve Leskowitz
Pat Leskowitz	Gari Lewis	Jean Bell
Frank Bell	Ron Steen	Clem Edgar
Janet Parsons	Tina Edgar	Eric E. West
Melanie Lincoln	Cynthia Gooch Copley West	Bill Ziegler
Jackie Limroth	Dominic Thompson	Kathleen Thompson
Caryn Cleveland-Short	Kathy Trzaskos	Nancy Rojewski
Anna Mae Buhl	Mary Thompson	David Kemper
Rose Walker	Diane Burlew	Harry Burlew
Beth Maurer	Trish Mahon	Wendy Ray
Elaine Smith	Dale Smith	Carolyn Smith
John Smith	Rev. Victoria Pretti	John Short
John Short	Rick Legeer	Josie Legeer
Don Clarke	Patty Yergey	Bill Gay
Diana Ziegler	Steve Hawald	James Trzaskos
Hank Rojewski	Russ Mullen	Helene Smith
Keith Smith	Dave Moore	Lani Moore
Bill Freund	Alice Anne Freund	

*I thank my God every time I remember you.
In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of
your partnership in the gospel, from the first day until now.
- Philippians 3: 3-5*

RECTOR'S REPORT

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

This is now the beginning of our fourth year together as Priest and People of God at St. Martha's in Bethany Beach. My work and ministry with and among you continues to be the highlight of the many years I have served in ordained parish ministry, and I consider it a blessing and a joyful privilege to love and serve Christ together with all of you. And I am very happy to tell you that we have surely done some wonderful work and ministry together in this past year.

St. Martha's continues to experience the blessing of a modest growth in numbers and membership. Our Average Sunday Attendance (ASA) numbers for these past years are as follows:

2021 75
2022 122
2023 147
2024 158

While these numbers are by no means breaking any records, they are still pretty amazing since we live in a time and place in which most churches are experiencing exactly the opposite. I am very grateful to God for our continuing success. And what that says to me is that we must be doing a pretty great job of living the gospel together!

Sacramentally, we have celebrated the lives of five dear souls: Robert Poetsch, Bill Roberts, Wally Watson, Michael Hurley and Arline Bucci. We have joyfully blessed the marriage of Loanne Pope and Alynada Pondes. And we have lovingly baptized Charlotte Rosemarie Casale.

Once again, this year, we have celebrated many “special” Sundays, so many in fact that nearly every Sunday seems special (which, indeed, it is!). During the past twelve months, we have celebrated a New Members Sunday, a Quilts of Valor Sunday, two Brick Blessing Sundays, Mothers’ and Fathers’ Day Sundays, Pet Blessing Sunday, Peace Pole Dedication Sunday, Remembrance Sunday and, of course, Holy Week, Palm Sunday, Easter, and Christmas Eve services. We welcomed our Bishop for his annual visitation in mid-September. And we welcomed people from all walks of life to join us during “tourist season” here at the beach.

There were some brand-new additions as well. We had our first “Blue Christmas” service last December. It was a lovely, and very well received, so that will no doubt become a new tradition here at St. Martha’s.

We have launched a new Healing Prayer Ministry, with trained ministers now available during Communion at most Sunday services to offer brief private prayers with those who want them. I am deeply grateful to our Healing Prayer Ministry team for their compassionate desire to serve us in this beautiful way.

We have also launched a new Church School, which is small but mighty and offers our youngest members some age-appropriate faith formation during the ten o’clock Sunday Service. I am so very grateful to Deacon Chris and to all the Church School volunteers for getting this initiative off the ground in fine fashion.

And, speaking of Deacon Christ ... how lucky are we to have her with us?! She has continued to grow her ministry in the fertile ground of St. Martha’s, and we are very fortunate and grateful to have her living her diaconal ministry among us.

All our ministry teams continue with their amazing work. I am particularly thankful for the liturgical team, aka Worship Committee, for their work in helping to provide beautiful and meaningful liturgical experiences for us all. I am also particularly grateful to those who assist me with pastoral care.

This is a busy little church and its needs are far beyond the ability of just one or two people. I am so grateful that you all take such good care of each other.

The Outreach Committee and the Becoming Beloved Community Committee are an amazing combination of deeply committed and prayerful people whose ministry it is to keep us “walking the walk” of compassion and justice for all. I am in awe of the work they do on our behalf.

The Vestry, Finance Committee and Stewardship Committee keep things running smoothly behind the scenes. Their work is vital to the success of this parish, and we have an amazing team of highly talented people who do the work of administering this church with me.

And, of course, nothing could happen here without our small but very excellent staff. Jaclyn and Dave are so very good at what they do, and they are also two of the nicest people on earth. We are all so fortunate and deeply grateful for their work and ministry.

St. Martha’s is the rare kind of parish in which there are far, far too many people to mention that give, and love, and serve, and bless us all with their prayers and service to Christ. I am honored to be here with you, and I look forward to whatever God has in store for us in these upcoming years together. Onward and upward, People of God!

Peace, love and prayers,

Ria+

The Reverend Victoria Pretti, Rector

SENIOR WARDEN REPORT- John Short

Being part of the Vestry and serving as Senior Warden over the past year has been an especially rewarding experience for me. Vestry members give their time, expertise and judgment to provide St. Martha's with forward-thinking, optimistic leadership, for which, I am sure, we are all very grateful.

As part of the last Rector's search in 2020, we worked with the Holy Cow! organization to survey the congregation and provide us with an analysis of their responses. I will always remember that the survey found St. Martha's to be a congregation of individuals and families who are energetic "doers" and who are committed to working on the ministries of our church. That energy has been more than evident in the past year. Our committees have been very active and have accomplished a great deal for our church and for the community. Just a quick look at the church calendar demonstrates the vibrancy of our congregation, not to mention the committee reports that are included in this Annual Report. In addition, one note from the Holy Cow! analysis has continued to resonate with me: "For many the Gospel is understood as an instrument with the power to transform, not simply comfort." Here at St. Martha's, we are all about transformation, individually as a group, and in our larger community.

Thanks to the congregation for your strong support for St. Martha's and our ministries, and special thanks to Rev. Ria for her constant message of love and joy that has brought us new members and has uplifted our Sunday services to reflect our commitment to the Gospel.

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS REPORT – Nov. 2023 to Oct. 2024

Sandy Roberts (Liaison to Vestry)

TEAM MEMBERS

Jim Karns (Chair)	John McElvey (Co-chair)	
Jennifer Bush	Mike Dunevant	Meg Robertie
Jack Smith	Paul Thompson	Fran Karns

2024 was a relatively quiet year for Buildings and Grounds with no major capital projects undertaken or major repairs needed, just ongoing maintenance and checks.

HVAC - Arctic conducted semi-annual inspections and made repairs replacing several start run capacitors and exhaust pipe on HVAC unit.

Crawl space - Brasures conducted semi-annual checks and replaced batteries in monitors. Temperature and humidity readings have been in the normal range all year. Sump pumps worked properly.

Electrical and Kitchen appliances - Arctic electrician converted all inside and outside fluorescent fixtures to LED. He also repaired track lighting in the sanctuary. Jim and Mike installed additional track fixture for bell choir.

Fire Systems & Extinguishers - B&G Fire Equipment checked and re-certified all fire extinguishers.

Plumbing - Jim repaired leaks in Ladies bathroom.

Building Exterior - Schuyler cleaned out gutters and installed gutter guards. Jim and John installed Memorial bricks. Jim replaced several outdoor trash cans and reconfigured trash can enclosure.

Brasures sprayed for pests and performed termite inspection.

Building interior - Jim replaced chair rail in the parish hall to prevent tables from damaging the walls. Jim removed altar railings to enable installation of new carpet.

B & G CONTINUED....

To support the hanging of the Justice quilt for the Becoming Beloved Community Committee, Jim moved the crawl space monitor. Jim hung the Framed Justice quilt and patched and painted holes. Keith Smith refinished cabinet placed beneath the Justice quilt which now houses excess books and other items out of sight. Clem ordered and hung bulletin board in the parish hall to display activities of the Becoming Beloved Community Committee.

Jim assisted Mac Goekler in installing the Peace Pole at the corner by the bike rack that Mac donated to St. Martha's.

Security Instruments inspected and tested all smoke detectors and alarms systems.

Jim installed doorstops to most interior doors. Jim removed the non-working door mechanism in the foyer, had a machine shop repair it and re-installed it. Jim worked on other door latches and planned sticking doors.

Jim secured the organ bench seat risers with L brackets.

Landscaping - Bethany Blooms performed fall, 2023 cleanup, and salted, walks, landings and steps. In the spring, they performed cleanup and mulching, mowed lawns and fertilized and sprayed for weeds. They removed the stump of an old holly bush Jim cut down.

Rowe Property Maintenance tested and adjusted irrigation. They replaced several broken sprinkler heads.

Jim planted donated oak leaf hydrangeas and replaced a dying rose bush as well as digging up spreading cannas to share with parishioners. Jennifer and Meg kept the grounds free of weeds, planted dozens of flowers they donated, and trimmed dead plants, pruned bushes and blew off debris.

Submitted by Jim Karns

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee Members:

David Moore, Chairman; Phil Fleming, Wincy Jackson, Ron Kerchner, Treasurer; Michael Dunevant, Beth Maurer and Lanny Moore, Deposit Coordinators; Charles Tylander Asst. Treasurer

Purpose:

The Finance Committee prepares the Annual Operating, Mission, and Capital Expenditures (Cap Ex) Budget proposal to the Vestry for its approval. The Committee seeks input from the various committees/groups to meet the physical needs and the program requirements of St. Martha's Mission Statement. In July, the Committee does an in-depth first half Operating, Mission, and Cap Ex Budget review, making proposed changes to the Vestry if needed.

Finance meets monthly during the year to review the Nilsson accounting firm St. Martha's financial reports and make recommendations to the Vestry regarding the parish's income and expenses. Finance also reviews the Diocese Master Fund A investment monthly reports for all St. Martha's Unrestricted and restricted accounts.

The Finance Committee prepares and reviews the Policies & Procedures for conducting St. Martha's financial affairs. These documents are sent to the Vestry for approval or revision. Finance follows the procedures as found in the "Manual of Business Methods" as developed by the National Episcopal Church. The Annual Parochial Report Financial section is prepared by the Finance Committee for Vestry approval.

The Committee has the task of scheduling the annual review of the parish's financial records. The financial review for calendar year 2023 was conducted by an Internal Financial Review Team (IFRT) (Wincy Jackson, Carl Long, and Beth Maurer) per vestry and diocese approval. The IFRT saves St. Martha's approximately \$20,000 annually in external audits fees. When this internal financial review was completed in June, the Finance Committee reviewed the report from the IFRT and made recommendations to the Vestry as needed. As required by diocesan canon, the written financial review report with supporting documentation was submitted to the diocesan office and accepted.

Accomplishments:

- Approved recommended service for the church's handbells at a cost of \$3,900
- Approved purchase and installation of equipment and software from Mid-South Audio to facilitate hybrid meetings in the parish hall at a cost not to exceed \$1,300.00.
- The Credit Card process was updated to provide the monthly credit card transactions in the first week of the following month.
- The 2024 Operating and Mission Budget was reviewed in July with no changes.
- A Reserve Study Contract was completed in 2023 confirming a \$25K annual contribution going forward.
- Funds of \$10,000 for the Scholarship Committee to support planned programming were proposed and approved by Vestry.
- A separate St. Martha's laptop for the Asst. Treasurer to ensure cybersecurity to St. Martha's cloud.

TREASURER REPORT

1. Balances in our accounts are healthy (as of September 30, 2024)

PNC

Operating Account \$	80,000
Rector's Discretionary Account	3268
Restricted Account	53,862
Mission Account	53,862
Total	161,168

Master Fund A	Unrestricted	Lighthipe Trust
Balance (Aug. 31, 2023)	607,121	4,116,204
Current balance (Sep 30, 2024)	720,039	4,607,247
Percent change	+18.5%	+11.9%

Master Fund A increases exceed general stock market

2. Comparison of Plate and Pledge (2022 vs 2023 vs 2024)

	<u>Plate</u>	<u>Pledge</u>
2022	\$43,014	\$142,584 (end Oct)
2023	\$46,043	\$207,658 (end Oct)
2024	\$63,576	\$152,555 (end Sep)

3. 2024 Actual v Operating Budget (end Sep 2024)

	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Pro-rated Budget</u>
Plate	\$63,576	\$33,750
Pledge	\$152,555	\$170,250
Total 12K ahead of budget		
Total Expenses	\$273,645	\$274,082

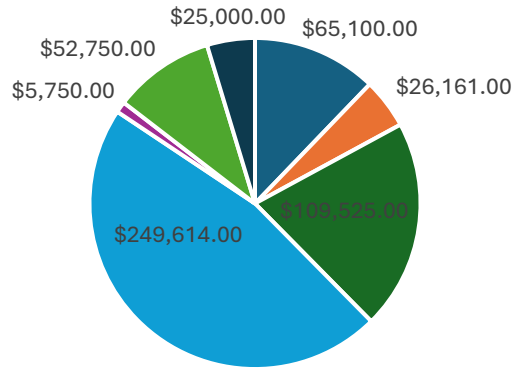
Expenses on track

4. 14K balance in restricted/memorial account. Worship Committee considering several purchases.

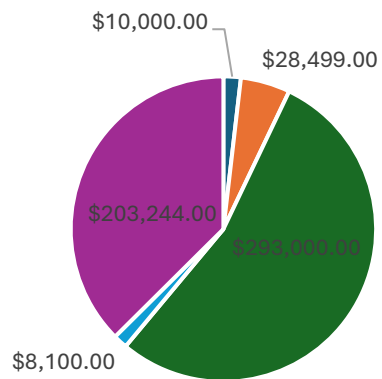
\$100K put into CD and money market account at Raymond James – short term, low risk investments until we determine need for these funds.

Charles (Ty) Tylander is now Assistant Treasurer and has helped significantly.

Expenses



■ Administration ■ Property ■ Outreach ■ Staff ■ Liturgy ■ Diocese ■ Reserve



■ Fundraiser ■ Building Use ■ Congregation
 ■ Mission Fund Support ■ Investment gain

WORSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

Under the direction and guidance of The Reverend Victoria Pretti, Rector, the worship committee consisting of Nancy Rojewski (leader), Deacon Chris Miller-Marcin, Beth Maurer, Marianne Pena (greeters), Sandy Roberts, Diane Gay & Carolyn Smith (altar guild), Alice Ann Freund, Pat Long (flowers), and Dave Kemper (music), met in January, April, September and November. The committee reviews the church calendar and discusses worship offerings based on the liturgical seasons. We look at the “nuts and bolts” of things. We review and discuss upcoming worship opportunities and share information to ensure that worship goes smoothly.

In 2023 we had our regularly scheduled Sunday service at 8:00 and 10:00. We continued with Ash Wednesday service, a mid-eastern potluck meal and Maundy Thursday service of foot washing and communion in the parish hall, the blessing of the animals service, the candle lighting service for All Saints Day (Remembrance Sunday), Good Friday, Palm Sunday, Easter (8:00, 9:30, 11:30), and Christmas Eve (5:00). A Blue Christmas service was added. The Healing Prayer ministry was initiated and made available each Sunday during communion time to pray with individuals. The 10:00 Sunday service continues to be available through YouTube. A new baptismal font was made and blessed. New carpet on the altar platform was installed and a new lectern is forth coming. Deacon Chris and parishioners began a church school.

The committee continues to creatively look at ways to enhance our worship experience and help ensure that St. Martha’s is a welcoming, loving community in which to worship.

OUTREACH COMMITTEE: Co-Chairs: Fran & John McElvey

PROJECTS 2024:

MISSION: The Outreach Committee of St. Martha's Church shall display the love of Christ by sharing our resources with others to help improve the quality of life for those in need in our community.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Susan Callahan, Bill Gay, Florence and Steve Hawald, Fran Karns, Gayle Fontaine, Pat Leskowitz, Josie Legeer, Fran and John McElvey, Carol Miles, Caryn Cleveland-Short, Dale Smith, Dominic Thompson and Mary Thompson

ANGEL TREE: The Outreach Committee ask parishioners to buy gifts of clothing, art supplies, or a toy for a child from Phillip Showell, John Clayton, or Selbyville Middle School. Parishioners choose an Angel or Snow Buddy from our Christmas tree. School, gender, grade, and sizes will be on the cutout. Monetary donations are accepted if the parishioner would prefer an Outreach member to shop.

BACKPACK AND SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE: Parishioners donated \$2720 for backpacks and school supplies. Outreach delivered 24 backpacks and school supplies, including headsets, tissues, and Clorox wipes, to Phillip Showell and John Clayton Elementary schools. We also delivered 12 backpacks and needed school supplies to Selbyville Middle School, as well as socks, underwear, sweatshirts, pants, shirts, to students in need at SMS. \$118.64 in toiletries were also donated to the nurse's office.

BETHANY BEACH VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPT AND BETHANY BEACH POLICE DEPT: St. Martha's church appreciates the services of our local police and fire departments. Outreach donated \$500 to each department in 2024.

CAMP ARROWHEAD: Outreach donated \$10,500 toward scholarships for students to go to camp this summer. 14 students were able to attend with scholarship support from St. Martha's. Three students were Nanticoke students.

CLOTHING OUR KIDS: \$2000 was donated to this local organization which provides clothing to children in need in Sussex County. The organization gives the clothes to school counselors and nurses to be distributed as needed.

CODE-PURPLE SHELTER: St. Martha's Outreach donated \$1500 to support the homeless shelter in Georgetown through Love Inc./Code Purple.

CROP HUNGER WALK: St. Martha's Episcopal Church is one of several churches in the Ministerium to participate yearly in the Crop Hunger Walk. St. Martha's Church donated \$1,175 to Church World Service for the Crop Hunger Walk. \$1,000 came from the Outreach budget. Area food pantries receive 25% of the donations from the Crop Walk and the rest of the donations support just and sustainable responses to hunger, poverty, displacement, and disaster globally through Church World Service (CWS).

DELAWARE HOSPICE: A donation of \$1000 was made to Hospice of Delaware which provides comfort and care to the terminally ill and their families.

DIAPER DRIVE: St Martha's congregation donated \$535 toward diapers and personal items. Outreach purchased and delivered the diapers to IRSD Pantry and Union Wesley UM Pantry.

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S NUTRITION:

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: This donation goes into a fund controlled by the school cafeteria staff and is coordinated by the school counselor. All students can access the money if needed. It is also a way to provide healthy food for children who receive reduced or free lunch. Phillip Showell and John Clayton both received \$600 from Outreach in 2024 for their Food for Thought programs.

WHITE BAG LUNCHESES: Outreach donated \$850 for the food program at Community Lutheran Church and \$139 for the white bags. This program provides bag lunches to food insecure students during summer vacation. One weekday, food is packed at Community Lutheran Church and taken to the Frankford Library where parents and students pick up the food. Food is delivered every weekday by different organizations. St. Martha's Outreach provides white bags and St. Martha's sketchers decorate the bags with artwork that appeals to the students.

FOOD PANTRIES: Outreach donates to four food pantries each month: Indian River School District (IRSD) Pantry receives \$500 in \$25 Food Lion gift cards and St. Vincent de Paul at Guadeloupe receives \$300 in Food Lion gift cards. Community Lutheran Food Pantry (CLFP) and Union Wesley UM Church Pantry receive checks for \$500 to purchase food each month for their pantries. \$400 is built into the budget for emergency

pantry needs. The total amount of money that St. Martha's church donates to food pantries is \$22,000 a year.

WINTER MEAL PROGRAM: St. Martha's Outreach participates with other churches in the Ministerium to provide meals for those in need from November until March. The meals are handed out at the Frankford Fire Department. St. Martha's Outreach takes water, snacks, and fruit to Mariners the second Tuesday of the month for about 50 people. The water, fruit, and snacks along with soup prepared at Mariners make a nourishing meal. Funds come out of the Outreach Emergency fund.

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY: Habitat preserves homeownership and neighborhoods by building and repairing homes in partnership with people in need of decent, affordable housing in Sussex County. Outreach donated \$2000 to Habitat in 2024. Outreach also donates Welcome Baskets with cleaning supplies to new homeowners. Many of St. Martha's Parishioners have attended the Habitat Home Dedication Ceremonies and presented the baskets. The cost of each basket is about This year Outreach purchased 9 welcome baskets for \$1606.92.

HOME OF THE BRAVE: Outreach donated \$1000 to The Home of the Brave Foundation, Inc. in 2024. This program provides targeted assistance regarding housing and counseling for homeless women veterans and their children.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT COMMITTEE – BILL GAY



St. Martha's church hosted the 17th Annual Picnic on June 25. There were over 140 students from 23 different countries who attended. More than a dozen Community Partners and scores of generous businesses donated food. It was perfect weather for the event!

We hope the picnic food, swag, games, bike repairs, and a warm inclusive welcome will make memories that will inspire these Students to join us in efforts to create world peace as they become future leaders in their countries. And our volunteers certainly acquired some "feel good" memories, too, such as, the student who explained that he wasn't able to go to a school that taught English, so he taught himself English by watching YouTube. And the frantic business calling to say they were rushing over with a huge donation of "mac and cheese," but it would only be five trays because a tray fell in their driveway. Exhausted volunteers smiled as they watched students riding their bikes home at dusk with bags of extra food to share with roommates who had to work and missed the picnic.

MILFORD HOUSING DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION: Strives to provide decent, safe, and affordable housing solutions to people of modest means. Outreach donated \$2000 to MHDC in 2024.

FAMILY PROMISE: Outreach donated \$6000 to Family Promise in 2024. Family Promise helps families experiencing homelessness and low-income families achieve sustainable independence through a community-based response.

OPERATION SEAS THE DAY: Outreach donated \$1000 in 2024. During this week, Bethany Beach hosts soldiers and their immediate families for a well-deserved week of rest and relaxation as they stay in homes/condos donated by local homeowners.

SOUTH COASTAL VILLAGE VOLUNTEERS: Outreach donated \$1000 to SCVV in 2024. SCVV coordinates volunteers to assist members with services such as transportation to various appointments and shopping, home visits, telephone check-ins, running errands, technology support and small household tasks. Currently SCVV serves residents within the ZIP codes of Bethany Beach, Millville, Ocean View and South Bethany.

QUILTS OF VALOR: St. Martha's Stitchers and Sketchers

In 2024, the Stitchers made progress on several Quilts of Valor but did not award any. In the spring, two Stitchers attended a panel on homelessness put on by the Becoming Beloved Community. A counselor at Selbyville Middle School spoke of the dire situation her displaced students and their families are in. In response, the Stitchers donated 25 quilts last spring to the counselor to distribute to these families. Another 20 quilts are being finished and will be donated by the end of 2024. The Counselor reports that her students are thrilled to receive these quilts. The quilts are going to families who may have housing but very little else who may not have adequate heat as well as to displaced families.

Two other quilts are being donated to Family Promise and to the Sons and Daughters of Italy-Ocean City to use as fundraisers in support of their charities. The Stitchers have also been busy making baptism quilts for our newest parishioners.

Materials and labor are estimated at \$600 per quilt.

SOUTHEAST SUSSEX MINISTERIUM (SESM): Outreach donated \$6000 in 2024 to the Ministerium to help people in Sussex County who need assistance with their rent, utilities, and/or medical needs. The Pyle Center meets with people in need and then refers them to the Ministerium for their emergency needs.

STOCKLEY CENTER-The Episcopal Churchwomen of Delaware ministry is to provide birthday cards and Walmart gift cards to disabled residents at the Stockley Center. St. Martha's Outreach provides \$25 gift cards to Walmart and birthday cards for four residents with December and January birthdays. Outreach also contributed \$215.30 worth of needed toiletries for residence.

THANKSGIVING DINNERS: Parishioners provided Thanksgiving meals of specific food items to 30 needy families from John M. Clayton Elementary, Phillip C. Showell Elementary, and Selbyville Middle School. Outreach also included a \$30 Food Lion gift card in each bag for turkeys.

THE WAY HOME: This facility in Millsboro provides inmates released from the Sussex County Detention Center a temporary residence, guidance, and support as they transition back into the local community. Outreach donates \$16,000 yearly to The Way Home. An additional \$68.20 in donations of toiletries and clothing were also given to TWH.

EMERGENCY FUNDS:

- In collaboration with Mariner's Bethel and other churches from the Ministerium, St. Martha's Outreach donated snacks, water, and fruit for 50 people once a month from November to March for a Winter Meal Program. The meals are given out at the Frankford Fire Department on Tuesday evenings. \$88.68 was used for these snacks.
- Outreach also donated \$250 for snacks for Selbyville Library summer program.
- Outreach donated \$1000 to Contractors For A Cause which helps families stay in their homes by providing ramps and fixing homes.
- Stockley Center donations for toiletries, birthday cards, and gift cards for 4 residents. \$215.30 came out of Miscellaneous Funds.
- The Way Home toiletries for \$68.20 also came out of Miscellaneous funds.
- The Crop Walk donation from Outreach was \$1,000.

- Outreach also donated \$1,200 to Higher Ground Outreach, Inc. which provides meals, clothing, and daytime shelter to the homeless in Georgetown. They requested help for rent on their building until their grant came through.
- Outreach donated \$393.46 to help a family in dire need with utilities.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

COMMUNICATION: Outreach informs the congregation in several ways. There is a section for Outreach news in the Wednesday Information emails and announcements are often made on Sunday at the church service and special events are in the bulletin. Outreach displays are also on the walls in the Parish Hall.

SCHOOL COUNSELORS: Counselors have kept Outreach members informed when there is a special need at the schools. Counselors also provide Outreach with “names” of the families who need Thanksgiving Meals and Angel Tree gifts.

MENTORS: Several parishioners, including some Outreach volunteers, mentor in local schools.

The Outreach Committee thanks the people of St. Martha’s who have given so generously of their time, money and donated goods in support of the above charities and thus truly reflect, “Love God, Love your Neighbor, Change the World”.

MUSIC REPORT – DAVE KEMPER

As I complete my 12th year as Director of Music at St. Martha's, I reflect on the many changes that have taken place during this time. I also think about everything that has remained constant. The people of St. Martha's remain warm, loving, and welcoming. Each guest musician that visits the church comments about this and is anxious to return. This makes it much easier to plan for, and schedule, additional performers to visit St. Martha's. For this, I am very thankful!

The following musicians performed at St. Martha's during 2024. Many additional performances are planned for 2025!

Cape Henlopen Brass Quartet	From Celtic to Classical
Capitol Ringers	Kristen Toedtman
Cellofest Recital	Alicia Mickenberg
Maya Belardo	Ken Dougherty

Several guest singers also enriched our worship experience.

I continue to be deeply grateful for the dedication of each choir member. They unselfishly give of their time and talents to enrich the worship service with beautiful music. The adult choir sings a weekly anthem 11 months out of the year, and the bell choir shares their music at 8 services throughout the year. The musicians include:

Dianne Burlew (choir)	Fran McElvey (handbells)
Mimi Dupont (choir, handbells)	John McElvey (handbells)
Clem Edgar (choir, handbells)	Rebecca Nichols (handbells)
Alice Anne Freund (handbells)	Cheryl Powell (handbells)
Cindy Kane (choir, handbells)	Hank Rojewski (choir)
Carl Long (choir)	Nancy Rojewski (choir)
Fran Marta (handbells)	Carol Ryan (choir, handbells)
Edwina Martens (choir, handbells)	Carolyn Smith (handbells)
Beth Maurer (choir, handbells)	Cynthia Theoharis (handbells)
Jan Parsons (choir, handbells)	Anne James (Choir)

I encourage you to “**Thank a Choir Member**” for their commitment to St. Martha's music program. Please consider joining us!

And finally, I would like to thank each member of St. Martha's. I am very blessed to be able to serve as your Director of Music. I am also very fortunate to have the support of Ria and the members of the church vestry. I look forward to an exciting 2025! Make a joyful noise!

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT REPORT – JACLYN HICKMAN

This September I celebrated my 7th Anniversary at St. Martha's. and I continue to feel truly blessed to serve in such a warm and supportive environment. I am grateful every day for the chance to witness and contribute, even in a small way, to all the good that is nurtured within these walls and shared with the larger community.

One notable change this year was our adjustment to office hours. We are now open Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 8 am to 2 pm. This shift has not impacted the way we operate otherwise. I check both voicemail and email first thing on Tuesday mornings and respond to any questions or requests promptly. Please feel free to communicate in either manner during or after office hours and I assure you a timely reply. I appreciate everyone's cooperation and understanding as we adapted to this new schedule.

2024 was an exciting and busy year for events at St. Martha's! The robust event calendar meant a heightened focus on promotional and advertising efforts, particularly for events hosted by the Adult Education and Community Events Committee as well as Becoming Beloved Community. These events provided opportunities for engagement and outreach within the community, reinforcing our mission to be a welcoming and inclusive space.

To support this, I explored and experimented with new ways to reach our audience. While some approaches worked better than others, these efforts provided valuable insights that will guide our communication strategies moving forward. I find this part of my role especially rewarding and am always eager to contribute to broadening our reach and impact.

With the increase in activities, it's more important than ever to coordinate effectively. I'd like to remind everyone to check with the office before scheduling events to avoid conflicts and to help me keep our congregation

well-informed. I prepare the weekly bulletin inserts early in the week and send out the Wednesday emails soon after. Timely updates and clear communication from all involved are essential for ensuring that our community receives accurate and comprehensive information.

I remain deeply thankful for the trust and opportunity to serve this faith community. Thank you again for your continued support, kindness, and collaboration. I look forward to another year filled with new experiences, growth, and shared blessings.

HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE

The Hospitality Committee hosts service and social events for our parish family and community throughout the year.

We try to have at least one event a month.

Some of our events are:

- Game Nights when all get together with some snacks for a fun evening with games in which all can participate.
- Bake sales for all. Members of the church show their best baking skills with wonderful cakes, cookies, brownies, etc.
- Picnics in the summer.
- Christmas luncheon
- Cinco de Mayo dinners. A theme dinner for this year.
- Themed dinners, receptions, and meals for visiting speakers and artist

ADULT EDUCATION & COMMUNITY EVENTS COMMITTEE

The Adult Education/Community Event committee is engaged in providing informative and educational events for the Parish and for the greater community. Educational events focus on our faith and the church, while community functions are open to the public.

Our recent efforts have included:

- a talk by DE state senator Sarah McBride on her legislative efforts as a trans person
- tours of the Delaware Botanic Gardens
- a presentation on Antisemitism
- safety presentation by the Bethany police
- informative meeting with the South Coastal Village Volunteers
- a visit to the Harriet Tubman Center in Cambridge MD
- presentation on saving and expanding bay oysters
- monthly hybrid book club
- an annual Christmas movie
- multiple musical events including a Philadelphia gospel chorus, a folk/bluegrass presentation, and a youth choral recital
- a play reading of “The Diary of Anne Frank”

New events planned for 2025 include a talk on the African American history of our region, a play reading of “Inherit The Wind” and increased coordination with the Parish’s Becoming Beloved Community committee. Many of our previous efforts will be repeated as well. The committee interfaces with other Parish committees on events of mutual interest and effort, including the Becoming Beloved committee, the men’s breakfast group and the music department.

We are actively exploring new Parish and community wide efforts. We believe that resources are available internally and externally to enhance St. Martha’s Parish education efforts and provide events of interest to the community. The committee is an engaged and energetic group; we welcome participation, both event specific and general. To learn more about the committee contact Rick Legeer at 301-758-7539 or rlegeer@gmail.com.

ALTAR GUILD REPORT

Committee Chairs: Diane Gay & Carolyn Smith

The Altar Guild at St. Martha's is a behind-the-scenes ministry that falls under the auspices of the Worship Committee. Members serve under the direction of the Rector. At the present time there are 19 members on the Altar Guild who are asked to volunteer for at least one service each month. Working in teams of two the members have been responsible for the following:

- Preparing the Altar and the Credence Table for Sunday and also for weddings, funerals and baptisms and other special services.
- Ensuring that the altar, lectern and banner hangings are dressed in the proper liturgical color for each service.
- Clearing and cleaning up after each service.
- Washing and promptly returning linens that were used during the services.
- Providing proper care of linens, candles and any other material used in the worship services.
- Preparing travel kits for Eucharistic ministers who take the sacraments to parishioners who are unable to attend church.
- Ordering new linens, wine, wafers and other supplies as needed.

New members are always welcome!

FLOWER GUILD

Chairpersons: Alice Anne Freund and Pat Long

Purpose: The Flower Guild seeks to praise God through the medium of flowers and other decorations each Sunday, at Easter and Christmas, and on special occasions

Activities for 2024: During this past year, the Flower Guild has enjoyed outstanding flower arrangements from Bethany Florist for our weekly Sunday services as well as for several extra services. Our Christmas arrangement incorporated poinsettias as well as cyclamen, peace lilies, and some unusual poinsettias. We also had a lovely small Christmas tree for Blue Christmas. It was adorned with tiny lights and blue ribbons to remember those whom we had lost. At Easter, we created a spring garden with a great variety of plants - tulips, azaleas, daffodils, peace lilies, calla lilies, hyacinths, begonias, mums, and sunflowers. We used one subdued

arrangement of dried plants and sea life for the Sundays of Lent. We will continue this practice next year. Flowers, and cookies, were given to honor congregants on Mother's Day, Father's Day, and on Sundays when we recognized Newcomers.

We have a new sign up sheet for 2025. This enables congregants to designate a Sunday for remembering a loved one or event with flowers for the altar. The sign-up sheet is located in the Parish Hall.

We are trying a new idea this year. Under the auspice of Many Hands Make Light Work, we have divided the tasks of the Flower Guild with different people assuming the responsibility for a particular task. Examples are Greening of the Church for Christmas, creating a display at the altar and in the narthex for Christmas, Newcomers and Mothers Day and Fathers Day, creating an altar and narthex display for Easter. Etc.

New members are always welcome. Contact Alice Anne Freund 301-229-0799 or aafreund@verizon.net.

BECOMING BELOVED COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

The Becoming Beloved Community Committee has been very active in the 2024 calendar year, planning, offering and sponsoring programming related to our mission: to highlight issues related to marginalized people through sharing knowledge, fostering understanding and empathy, and taking direct action to promote social justice.

For January, the Committee sponsored a program on Fair Trade and the importance of economic justice and paying people a living wage for products that are imported into this country. Our February programs consisted of the placement and blessing of St. Martha's Justice Quilt that had been displayed at the Diocesan Convention, and a commemoration of Absalom Jones Day, with these events occurring on Sunday, February 13, 2024. Another very successful program consisted of a dramatic reading of "The Diary of Anne Frank," which was co-sponsored by the Adult Education and Community Events Committee. The Hispanic American Association of Delaware's Ballet Mexico Lindo dance performance, featuring both children and adults, was the final program in February.

A panel discussion on “Homelessness and the Lack of Affordable Housing in Southern Delaware was the BBC Committee’s program for March. The panelists included representative from the Family Promise of Southern Delaware, a state senator, representatives from the Indian River School District, a volunteer and interpreter from Habitat for Humanity in Sussex County, and a representative of the Springboard Collaborative and the pallet village concept of transitional housing.

The months of April through August were devoted to discussions related to social justice issues and planning for future programming.

In conjunction with Music Director Dave Kemper’s summer music series the Committee co-sponsored a performance by Ms. Maya Belardo, an African American jazz vocalist, and her band in September. BBC and the Adult Education committees also sponsored a viewing/discussion of the documentary film, “God & Country. In September. October events included the installation, dedication and blessing of St. Martha’s Peace Pole.

The Committee will highlight Native American Heritage Month with written inserts and other sharing of information with the congregation in November. A final planned event for the year will be a dramatic reading of the play “Inherit the Wind” in November.

Programming and activities related to Black History and American Indian history is well underway for the 2025 calendar year.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Chairperson – Clem Edgar

Participating Members – Barbara Goebel, Tempe Steen, Carl Long, Mtr Ria

Purpose or Goal of Ministry – To help ensure open communication between staff and Vestry; to avoid misunderstandings; to maintain fair and objective personnel procedures. To that end, the committee reviews and recommends policies and carries out its responsibilities under the policies as provided.

A regular annual meeting of the Committee has been established for mid-fall to allow review of the Performance Appraisals.

Activities and Accomplishments – The Personnel Committee will be assisting the Rector with performance reviews of the staff (Director of Music and Parish Administrator) for 2024. The Personnel Committee continues to provide guidance to the Rector and Vestry as requested.

The committee also recommends staff salary adjustments to the Vestry as necessary. Compensation addendums for 2025 will be prepared by the Finance Committee, reviewed by the Personnel Committee and forwarded to the Diocese at the appropriate time.

Plans/Visions for 2025 – Continue to oversee staff personnel and modify policies and procedures as necessary. Tempe Steen and Barbara Goebel have both requested to be replaced on the committee. The committee is searching for a few new members.

ST. MARTHA’S LIGHTHIPE SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

St Martha’s Lighthipe Scholarship Program Charter

VISION: To provide a life-changing opportunity for local students who would otherwise likely not attend a public four-year university or two-year college.

Section 1. Mission Statement:

The mission of the St. Martha's Lighthipe Scholarship (**SMLS**) is to provide a life-changing opportunity for local graduating academic-ready students who would otherwise likely not attend a local university or professional higher education program in the **Indian River High School (IRHS) District Area**, Sussex County, Delaware.

Section 2. Goals:

1. Empower Access to Higher Education

a. Objective: Break down barriers hindering local students from pursuing higher ed.

b. Approach: Provide crucial financial support and mentorship.

2. Foster Academic Achievement

a. Objective: Facilitate academic excellence.

b. Approach: Offer scholarships, resources, and support to help students reach their full potential.

3. Nurture Community Leadership

a. Objective: Inspire recipients to become successful local professionals.

b. Approach: Provide guidance and opportunities for impactful community contributions.

These goals guide the operations and activities of the SMLS, ensuring the mission is effectively realized, and the Mary's Lighthipe Trust restricted funds support community educational needs and opportunities for local students' future success.

A. Committee Members:

Steve Hawald-Chair, Wincy Jackson-Treasurer, David Moore-Finance/Vestry POC, Ron Pena, John Robbert, and Tempe Steen-Secretary.

Welcome Our New Volunteers: Susan Callahan, Marcia Goodman, Dana Schaefer, & Babette Thorson!

B. Non-Profit Regional College Portfolio Focus For Sussex Co Talent Needs

- **Beebe School of Nursing – Professional Diploma and UD BS in Nursing at Lewes**
- **Delaware Technical and CC – Georgetown/Owens - AA, AS, BA, BS Degrees**
- **Delaware State U - Georgetown Owens and Dover – BA, BS Degrees**
- **Salisbury U-Sussex Co Partnership-instate tuition – Salisbury, MD – AA, AS, BA, BS Degrees**
- **U of Delaware – Lewes for BS Nursing and Newark for BA, BS Degrees**

C. Startup Committee Accomplishments

- 1) *Comprehensive Charter and Governance Program Plan is completed to ensure success*
- 2) *Monthly Meetings, Budget Review/Reporting and Decision-making offers Volunteers' Insights and Ideas to take action and make a difference to our students*

- 3) *Comprehensive Marketing Outreach Plans for IRHS, Sussex Co Local Churches, Regional Colleges, Foundations, and others governmental nonprofit outreach efforts are up and running*
- 4) *All IRHS Student applicant critical websites are tested and will be operational in 2025*
- 5) *Access Secure Application Processing Site is up at Chesapeake Legal Council (CLC)*
- 6) *Appreciate Marketing and Website Hosting Sponsor – Chesapeake Legal Council (CLC)*
- 7) *Increased committee for more members to support expanding student outreach efforts!*

We're truly grateful for the incredible support in launching the St. Martha's Lighthipe Scholarship Program, providing need-based scholarships for IRHS students. Thanks to our dedicated volunteers and community support, this exciting initiative is now underway. New volunteers are always welcome to join!

TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

Members: Jaclyn Hickman, Clem Edgar, Dave Kemper, Tim Lush

This past year, St. Martha's continued to make strategic investments in technology to enhance operational efficiency and communication. Key updates included the purchase of an additional laptop for the Assistant Treasurer, the addition of a camera with a wireless speakerphone for Zoom meetings, and an upgrade to the sound projection system in the parish hall with a new wireless handheld microphone.

A significant change was our transition from Mediacom to Comcast for internet and phone services, aimed at better supporting the bandwidth requirements for live streaming our services. This switch has already shown positive results, particularly in improving the quality and reliability of our YouTube broadcasts.

Looking ahead, we do not anticipate any major technological upgrades for the upcoming year. Our focus will remain on maintaining and servicing existing equipment to ensure smooth operations.

We always welcome new members to the committee and encourage any feedback or suggestions on how we can continue to improve our technological efforts.

BOOK SALES – Bill Ziegler

Thanks to everyone who volunteered and provided the physical labor to set-up, work on the sale day, and take down this event.

Your continued support makes this event possible. We earn over \$5000 each year at no cost!

Sale results for 2024

Projected for 2025

Sale	Date	Actual	Date	Projected
Christmas	12/19/23	\$755.00	12/14/24	\$700.00
Memorial	5/25/24	\$1755.00	5/24/25	\$1700.00
4 th of July	7/6/24	\$1422.00	7/5/25	\$1600.00
Labor Day	8/31/24	\$1471.00	8/30/25	\$1500.00
		<hr/>		
		\$5403.00		\$5500.00

Notes:

Sales are for the fiscal year, December through September.

We should continue to run a color ad in the Coastal Point for all four sales.

There are no expenses anticipated for crates and additional tables.

CARD MINISTRY

We currently have 14 members who are sending cards of caring and support on a monthly basis to 24 parishioners who are home bound or experiencing serious health problems, loss of a spouse, etc. Each member also has one acute month during the year where they send a card to any parishioner who is having surgery or a sudden emergency.

During 2024, we will have sent more than 320 cards of support, birthdays, holidays, etc.

In addition, we will be providing 40 packets of Christmas cards to the Veterans Home in Milford, so that Veterans there will have cards to send to family and friends.