



The  
Church of  
Bethesda-by-the-Sea

*Love and serve*

# 2019 ANNUAL REPORT



JANUARY 26, 2020

# From the Rector

What a popular refrain I hear dozens of times each Sunday and throughout the week: we love Bethesda. We love the music, worship, Christian education, fellowship, and so much more. Our ministries thrived in 2019, including both an adult and a youth pilgrimage, profound retreats, a glorious Christmas concert, and tremendous outreach ministries. This love makes me, like many of you, want to protect and nourish everything that is so good about Bethesda.

Unfortunately, I also see, week in and week out, quite a dissonance between our expressions of love and appreciation for our parish and our collective commitment to support and protect it. In fact, we ended 2019 with a significant operating deficit. Building expenses, insurance costs, and storm damage repair costs all pushed our expenses higher in 2019, and you will see that more clearly in this report. At the same time, while the number of pledges went up in 2019, our total annual giving rose far less than our expenses.

We need to channel the love we feel for this parish into substantive action in stewardship. In order to ensure that 2020 is not remembered as a time of shrinking ministries and deferred building maintenance, I ask your help to safeguard Bethesda today, so there is a flourishing Bethesda tomorrow.

Something must change this coming year. We have a challenge either to radically reduce our expenses to match our resources or significantly increase our annual giving. I hope that all of us will share my challenge and find a way to take it on personally, rather than hoping someone else will fix it. The time has come that we all step up, to find our own place of gratitude in our parish life and then to actually, generously support this parish out of that gratitude. We can no longer sustain a life in which the majority of us live off the largesse of the minority of faithful communicants in good standing.

Our worship, education, outreach, pastoral care, evangelism, and fellowship—indeed all our ministries—provide each of us with tremendous opportunities to grow in our faith and service. I hope that each of us will look deep within for the greatest opportunity to grow: being a communicant in good standing by making a meaningful, substantive financial commitment. When we all do this, we will not only experience even deeper gratitude, we will have the joy of being fully a part of God's work at Bethesda.

As we start a new decade, I invite you to join me in taking a step forward towards a closer relationship with God, as together we seek to address the challenges facing us today.

God bless,



The. Rev. James R. Harlan, *Rector*



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# From the Senior Warden

## Leadership and Governance Sub-Committee, Chair

I feel joy and gratitude as I report to you that 2019 has been a year of successes in our many ministries. There are so many areas in which Bethesda has done something important and good that no other institution would do, or could do, that I can't recount them all. So, I will mention just a few—not necessarily the best or the most important, just a few that come most immediately to mind.

In 2019, attendance at Sunday worship services, which is our essential mission, has increased by more than eight (8) percent over attendance in 2018, from about 22,500 to over 24,400. In an era when church membership in the U.S. is declining, Bethesda is bucking the trend in a pronounced and exemplary way. One contributor to this increase may be that our Clergy, responding to comments from parishioners, have further refined the format of 9:00 AM church services, and 9:00 AM attendance is definitely up. (Participation in adult forums also seems to be up.) Another may be that we enhanced Sunday worship for children and their "Little Way" participation on our Wednesday-night Middle Way program. But the greatest contributor has to have been our renewed focus on evangelism and particularly our Newcomers Program, which has yielded 60 new members of Bethesda's congregation this year.

(I know evangelism is a word that makes some people cringe. If the images it evokes in your mind are embarrassing or worse, here's a reminder: At Bethesda, evangelism does not mean confronting the wicked with disdain and warnings of eternal suffering, nor reciting scripture as if it were a proof, nor even telling people how they should feel about God or about anyone else. Evangelism means lowering the barriers that discourage people from joining our community. The foremost of these barriers are their feelings—fear that we will disapprove of their beliefs, anxiety that they will be embarrassed in worship because they are unfamiliar with our rituals, pessimism that time they spend at Bethesda will not yield joy, or even satisfaction, but will be time wasted. Evangelism begins with our showing strangers that we want them among us, just as they are. I'm pretty sure you are very comfortable doing that. There are many words for this. You don't have to call it as evangelism.)

But back to Bethesda's successes in 2019: Among the richest experiences that Bethesda offers are pilgrimages. In 2019, Bethesda organized two: In May, 25 parishioners made a Celtic pilgrimage to Scotland and northern England, led by the retired Bishop of Oxford, John Pritchard. And in June, 22 young people and chaperones made a Franciscan pilgrimage to Assisi, Italy. The people, young and old, who joined in these trips can speak more eloquently than I about the experience. Just ask them. What all their perspectives have in common is that these journeys show that there is a lot of common ground between spirituality and fun.

One of the best things that Bethesda does for its parishioners is to bring their talent and treasure, collectively, to bear on helping those who are most unfortunate in our community. In 2019, our mentoring program provided guidance to 20 young people. One example is a young man whom we began to mentor as a 15-year-old high school student. His mother, an immigrant from Haiti working as a cleaning lady, has raised him alone. Theirs was a hard life, made harder when they were left homeless by a fire. With Bethesda's guidance, that young man is now a junior at Vanderbilt University on a full scholarship. His life went from homeless and hopeless to promising and proud. Another important program we support is Opportunity Inc., which provides daycare and education to young children in the heart of one of West Palm Beach's poorest neighborhoods. Bethesda provides science education to Pre K and Kindergarten children. These are children who, without this early help, would likely

be left behind by public education: anxious and discouraged in school, abandoned to semi-literacy, and denied the American promise of equal opportunity for all. We should all be all thankful that the Church Mouse is so successful in raising money for our Outreach programs. I hope you are gratified knowing that you are part of the Bethesda community, which makes the world a better place in these, and numerous other, small ways. You should be.

We continue to make substantial progress toward the goals of the most recent strategic plan. The plan is broad and covers numerous aspects of Bethesda, so let me cite just a couple of milestones. One key strategic performance area is preserving and enhancing Bethesda's buildings and grounds, both as facilities for our other ministries and as ministries in themselves, providing a place of beauty and peace, to the glory of God. A key goal, now completed, has been to prepare a five-year major maintenance plan. Another strategic performance area, of course, is Outreach. A key goal in this area, also now completed, has been to develop a two-year plan to expand and improve Outreach activities and operations. These steps, being abstract, may not arouse the same warm feelings as the work in some of our ministries, but having a plan and carrying it out are vital to Bethesda's vitality and its long-term viability.

Unfortunately, not everything at Bethesda worked out in 2019 as one would wish. As the Rector has said elsewhere in Bethesda's Annual Report, this year has also brought us face to face with financial challenges. In recent years, the Annual Campaign, along with other operating revenue like wedding fees, has proved sufficient to pay for Bethesda's day-to-day operation. (Bethesda has had to look beyond its Annual Campaign, soliciting special gifts and relying on its reserves, only to fund major capital repairs and improvements.) In 2019, for the first time in many years, the Annual Campaign has proved insufficient. While the 2019 deficit is small compared to Bethesda's total financial resources, no deficit is sustainable for long.

The Vestry and the Rector are addressing this challenge forthrightly and undauntedly. Still, if we cannot enlist greater support from the Bethesda community, then fiscal responsibility will require that we cut back some of Bethesda's ministries. We remain hopeful (and prayerful) that we as a body of parishioners will rise to the challenge. That being so, it is too early to say which ministries would be cut back. But whichever ones they must be, it will make all of us unhappy.

Thus, one of Bethesda's most important strategic imperatives is to increase the fruits of our Annual Campaign, so Bethesda can continue to do all it does, and to increase our endowment funds, so as to relieve future generations of some of the burden of maintaining our facilities. In this area, the Rector and our internal Stewardship team have been working with outside advisors who are experienced, and have been successful, in helping other churches to increase financial giving. You will see the fruits of their efforts in the coming weeks and months. To me, it is a new ministry, a kind of pastoral ministry, helping people to see how they make the world a better place thru Bethesda, and helping people to find joy in giving their financial support to the Bethesda community of which we are all a part.

I feel blessed to be part of this parish and the work that we are doing. I feel blest to be served by Bethesda's clergy and staff, with their energy and dedication. I feel blest to work with Bethesda's Vestry and the many, many dedicated volunteers who give so generously of their time and talent, planning, leading, and carrying out our ministries. In these times, particularly, I thank all who support Bethesda financially, making it possible for Bethesda to serve our congregation and our neighbors in need. And I hope that this year, you will stretch a little and increase your gift.

Before closing, I'd like to say something particularly to those among you who only attend one or two worship services per year. You may not feel that you are part of Bethesda. You may feel that you are only a visitor, maybe a bit of an intruder. You may feel that you are more closely connected to another



church elsewhere. You may feel that no one really knows you when you are in church here and no one will miss you when you leave. You may feel that your brief presence here doesn't matter much to the rest of us.

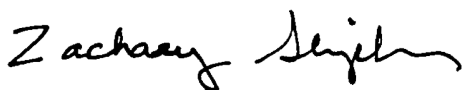
You are so wrong!

The number of people who attend Christmas and Easter services at Bethesda is many times the number who attend on an average Sunday. This means that an enormous fraction, probably a majority, of those in Church on Christmas and Easter do not attend at other times of the year. We are here for you, and all those people like you. We who attend more often find joy, or satisfaction, or contentment, or some good feeling—mild or strong—in mind or heart. We wish you could feel as we do, and maybe you do, elsewhere. In any case, it's okay with us if you want to come once or twice a year. If you feel like going to church only once a year, we want to be the church you come to. We welcome you. We are glad you join us when you do. In fact, we wish we knew you better, not so we can snare you, but because we think we would like you.

Whether or not we ever get to know you better, we need you to lend your hand to keeping Bethesda to be the church that you want to attend, whenever you want to do so. Here are some figures that are food for thought: Bethesda's annual spending is around \$3 million. The total number of attendances, that is, the number of tickets we would sell, if people had to buy tickets to come to church, is about 25 thousand. Divide one figure into the other, and you find that tickets would have to sell for about \$120 for the Bethesda to get by on ticket sales alone, about the same (in South Florida) as good tickets to an opera performance or tickets to a rock concert by a not-too-famous band. We estimate that there are about one thousand families that attend Bethesda at one time or another during a year. If our annual funding were provided only by memberships with annual dues, the dues for a family would have to be about \$3,000 per year. Of course, we aren't selling tickets or collecting dues, and even if you can't or won't make any financial commitment to Bethesda, we still want you to come to Bethesda, and we still wish we knew you better. But if you can make a meaningful gift, we will be grateful, and you will have the satisfaction of knowing that Bethesda is the way it is, and does the good things it does, because of you.

Finally, I can't help but share with everyone, both every-Sunday people and once-a-year people, something that is not in Scripture, but which I am sure is a lie that the Snake in the Garden of Eden whispered in Eve's ear: "Someone else will pay for it." This false promise has bedeviled mankind's efforts to act collectively for good, from time immemorial. And it is just as great a temptation, just as beguiling a proposition, today.

With blessings and love, and hoping you don't believe the Snake,



Zachary Shipley, *Senior Warden*



# From the Junior Warden

## Buildings and Grounds Sub-Committee, Chair

2019 has been a year of restraint and reevaluation dictated by an annual budget limited in amount and availability. Although projects have been redesigned or delayed, needed physical maintenance and basic repairs to our aging building have been addressed. Our historic structures and gracious grounds are in proper order having received conscientious care by our faithful staff and skilled leadership.

Three lightning events in the early six months caused over \$50,000 in damage. A study is under way to evaluate a lightning suppression system installation this spring. Promising results have been reported locally. The exterior façade water-proofing continues.

The Rectory has received extensive electrical rewiring and awaits a newly constructed front door with security system. The guest bathroom was given an air conditioning update and mold treatment. Garage roof replacement has been completed.

Our main interior church lighting fixtures are now equipped with LED technology, which will provide a cooler and more sensitive atmosphere. Hal Phsyer's guidance and expertise was most valuable here and with the sound system improvements.

Our grounds, fishpond, and walkways are in the excellent care of Keith and our skilled sextons. Flowering plants will be added.

Routine maintenance procedures have been evaluated.

Bethesda must receive our dedication as faithful servants and grateful members of her congregation. God's house is remarkable resource and gift of love to all. I am honored to serve and deeply appreciate the outstanding work of our general contractors, committee sextons and administrators who support this vital ministry, its education and celebrations.

Respectfully submitted,



Constance N. Purcell, *Junior Warden*



# Rector, Wardens, Officers, and Vestry

The Rev. James R. Harlan, *Rector* \*

## Wardens, Officers, and Vestry

Zachary (Zach) Shipley, *Senior Warden* \* (2022)

Constance Purcell, *Junior Warden* \* (2021)

Charles (Chuck) Hagy, Jr., *Clerk* \* (2021)

Robert (Bob) Diffenderfer, *Chancellor* \*#

Matt Lorentzen, *Treasurer* \*#

Arthur (Sandy) Burdett (2020)

Paul Coombs (2020)

Michelle Diffenderfer (2020)

Peggy Johnson (2020)

Raphael Clemente (2021)

Tanner Rose \* (2021)

Richard Crone (2022)

Becky Myers \* (2022)

Maury Wolfe (2022)

\* *Member of the Executive Committee*

# *Not on Vestry*

**Vestry term expires at the Annual Meeting of the year indicated.**



# Vestry Nominations

Nominating Task Force—Beth Cole, *Chair*

## Vestry Nominees

**Serving the Vestry Term 2020—2023**

*The Vestry presents all four nominees for Parish consideration to fill the four expiring Vestry positions.*

At their December meeting in 2015, the Vestry approved a resolution presented by their Leadership and Governance Subcommittee to amend the By-Laws. This amendment, passed unanimously by all members present (17 of 19) will reduce the size of the Vestry to 13 members (12 elected members plus the Rector). This reduction will happen by nominating and electing only four new members to the vestry each year from now on, so that, in 2016, the Vestry will be 17 members, in 2017, 15 members, in 2018 and thereafter, 13 members.

This decision came primarily out of some continuing work with a consultant to help the Vestry to work more effectively through its regular meetings, through the Executive Committee, and through its four subcommittees.



**JOHN BRIM** is Co-Chair of the Finance Subcommittee. He is a retired investment banker, having worked over 40 years in New York and London in Corporate Finance. John and his wife Elena moved full time to Palm Beach in 2015, although they have attended Bethesda since 2009. John is currently a private investor. He is a graduate of Yale University, and he received an MBA from Harvard. John and Elena have been married for over 35 years and have three young adult children, Jamie, Liz, and Sarah. John is an avid racing sailor and was a trustee of the New York Yacht Club.



**SARA GRIFFEN** has been a member of Bethesda since 2016, joining soon after she and her husband Tom moved to Florida from New York's Hudson Valley. At Bethesda, she serves as head of the Ambassador Program, co-chair of the Planned Giving Committee, steering committee member of the Flower Guild, and member of the Evangelism Committee. After graduating from Duke University, Sara held positions in banking and state government before finding her "life's work" as CEO from 1996- 2015 of The Olana Partnership, dedicated to the preservation of the 250-acre estate of the painter Frederic Church in Hudson, NY. Sara and Tom have two children, Steve and Emily, who live in Atlanta.



**JOHN SORY** was raised in Palm Beach and baptized, confirmed, and married at Bethesda. He received his BA from Vanderbilt University and MBA at Dartmouth College. John is currently the President of a national physician network based in South Florida and previously held executive positions at Pfizer in New York, and the University of Miami Health System. Returning to Palm Beach in 2010, he rejoined Bethesda where today, John is an usher, active in the Boar's Head Festival, and with his wife, June, honorary co-chairs of the 2020 Empty Bowls Committee. He also contributes time to the Venture Mentoring Team in Broward County. Altogether, John and June have five grown children – Jack, Kate, Philip, Christopher, and Will.



**KATIE WANDOFF** a member of Bethesda since 2004, has been involved in many of its ministries including Sunday School, Boar's Head, Lector, Empty Bowls, St. George's, Girls of Grace, Women at the Well, 2019 Celtic Pilgrimage and serves on the Grants Committee and the Flower Guild Steering Committee. After graduating from The University of Michigan, Katie and her husband, Rick, lived in Chicago where she worked at Sanford C. Bernstein as a Financial Advisor. While in Chicago, she volunteered and mentored a child in Big Brothers Big Sisters. Katie relocated to Palm Beach County in 1998 and was actively involved on the Parent School Council and various committees at Palm Beach Day Academy where her children, Benjamin, Abigail, and Sophia attended school.

*\* Vestry Nominees were selected by the Nominating Committee after an exhaustive review process that at times included the consideration of more than thirty-five church members. The slate of four is presented to the members at the Annual Meeting for consideration to fill the open positions. Vestry members are elected by members in good standing. Persons eligible to vote must be sixteen years of age or older, regular in attendance, and contributors of record. One-third of the vestry is elected each year for a period of no more than three years. A person is eligible for re-election after one year has elapsed. A vestry member appointed to fill an unexpired term may be elected at the end of that term to serve a full term.*

# From the Associate for Administration

**Evangelism Committee**—Beth Cole, *Chair*

**Fellowship & Hospitality Committee**

**Personnel Working Group**

**Retail Operations Working Group**—Pat Reichenbacher, *Chair*

2019 was a year of minimal change in the personnel area. At the beginning of the year we moved Ayana Pineiro into the position of Worship and Pastoral Care Coordinator. She is proving to be very valuable in this role. This move left a vacancy at the front desk. It took some time to find the right person for this. Priscilla Reynoso started at the end of September as the Rector's Assistant and Office Coordinator. She is learning the job quickly but could use our patience as she learns Bethesda's people and processes. Finally, Joann LeBarca left us in August, as she decided to move north to be closer to her grandchildren. We have not replaced her at this time.

The Evangelism Committee has made great strides in its second year on making us aware of evangelism in liturgy, prayer, and communications. We now recite as a congregation every week a welcome collect. The Ambassador Ministry, under the direction of Sara Griffen, is working at an exemplary level. The committee is working to establish a 'Welcome, Invite, Connect' program and has established a robust 'Welcome' and will work to strengthen the 'Invite' and 'Connect' areas in the next year. We had 60 new people join our parish in 2019. Finally, the Evangelism Committee took ownership of and laid the groundwork for the Spiritual Renewal program called Renewal Works that kicks off this week when we are all asked to complete an online Spiritual Life Inventory.

This year The Church Mouse has achieved higher levels of success due to our efforts to improve efficiency and productivity. We have strategically targeted timely replenishment and the selection of merchandise in order to increase sales. We maintain customer service levels by training and supporting our volunteers and staff. This helped sales at the Mouse increase 7% over the previous year to \$1,011M. In the future we will continue to build on our past success through clear communication and strong leadership.



Fred E. Staley, Jr., *Associate for Administration*





# From the Associate for Music and Liturgy

Our Sunday services continue to run smoothly. We've settled into a good pattern for our 45-minute 9:00 service, and the 8:00 and 11:00 services maintained their customary identities. There are many people—staff and volunteer, visible and invisible—who made our services run smoothly.

The Altar Guild, under the leadership of Holly Breeden and Linda Greenberg, continued work that is vital to our worship life. They dedicated many hours in preparation for all our services—not only those that we all experience on Sundays and at Christmas and Easter, but our regular weekday services, weddings, funerals, and many other services throughout the year. We continue to struggle with not enough members of the Altar Guild, so some are having to serve much more often than seems fair. Altar Guild members are invited by the Rector to serve. We are working to increase membership, so if you have interest in serving, please contact Father James.

The Flower Guild, with over one hundred members and under the direction of Maury Wolfe, continued to provide beautiful and lovingly-executed arrangements that immeasurably enhanced our services. While many particularly noticed their handiwork at Christmas and Easter, they were responsible throughout the year for exceptional arrangements in the church—not only on Sundays but also for weddings and funerals.

Our Lay Readers continued to read lessons and prayers at our Sunday services, as well as at other services, weddings, and funerals. We had a number of new readers who were trained and joined with those already serving.

We had a small but faithful group of people serving as Acolytes and Crucifers at our services. We always need more people for this important work, so, if you are interested, please contact staff member Ayana Pineiro or me.

Our usher corps was once again coordinated by Jim Goodner and led by a faithful group of head ushers. We are always in need of additional ushers, so please let Jim or me know if you are interested.

Our Vergers assisted in all areas of worship and were a great help in coordinating those worship ministries so that everything ran smoothly in our services. They also were essential in providing leadership at the training sessions for those who served in various worship capacities. We had one Verger step down, and several new Vergers were trained and joined our veterans.

We have a very dedicated, but small, group of folks who operate our sound and/or live-streaming systems during services. These positions are crucial to the smooth operation of our services. If you have interest in being trained for either of these, please contact me.

The ever-popular Boar's Head Festival is our gift to the community, as well as a way for many members of our parish family to work together on a large-scale project. The 2019 performances were well received by appreciative audiences.

The Bethesda Choir continued to provide music for our 11:00 a.m. services, and a quartet of those singers helped support the hymns and service music at our 9:00 a.m. services. Concerts and choral services during 2019 included our continuing series of First-Sunday Evensongs, each preceded by a half-hour recital. Other highlights included a Service of Advent Lessons and Carols, the annual Christmas Concert and Community Carol Sing, and a Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols.

Respectfully Submitted,



Harold E. Pysher, *Associate for Music & Liturgy*



# From the Associate for Christian Education, Pastoral Care, and Outreach

**Bethesda Cares Committee**—Michael Smyser and Suzanne Crawford, *Co-Chairs*

**Education Committee**—Lois Clemente, *Chair*

**Outreach Committee**

As ever, I am humbled to serve among the Associates and congregation of Bethesda-by-the-Sea. We are blessed with such dedicated disciples such an abundance of gifts, that the work of the Gospel is a blessing in this thin place, and Christ's love and grace are the qualities that characterize our work.

Suzanne Crawford and Michael Smyser remain co-chairs for Bethesda Cares. The Shepherd program is increasingly strong, and they do their work quietly and behind the scenes, assisting the clergy in providing care for parishioners as needed. The meal ministry continues, under the guidance of the Shepherds, as do an array of ministries created and maintained in order to care for the members of this community and beyond. The Daughters of the King has returned to Bethesda under the leadership of Georgie Skover, Suzanne Crawford, and The Rev. Cecie Titcomb, and they continue to go from strength to strength in providing a community for women of faith who are committed to praying for and building up the Kingdom of God in this place. I am grateful for all those who minister beneath the umbrella of Bethesda Cares and am humbled by their dedication to the Gospel.

The past year has been another rich and active year in Christian formation for Bethesda. Greg Knight has tirelessly led a year of activities and wonderful experiences for children and youth, assisted by a strong team of volunteers. We have maintained a full and varied schedule of Sunday morning forums for adult formation, and The Middle Way has gathered its own rhythm and remains strong and deep, feeding body, mind, and soul in the middle of our various weekly activities. The Rt. Rev. Robert C. Wright, Bishop of Atlanta, led our Lenten Retreat, where he asked us to lead like Jesus led, and Robin Bradley Hansel, Veriditas-trained labyrinth facilitator, led our Advent Retreat in December, in which she guided us in walking pilgrimages, including the canvas replica of the Chartres Cathedral labyrinth that Bethesda owns and rolled out for the retreat weekend. Lois Clemente ably chairs the Formation Committee.

Outreach at Bethesda continues in earnest. Funded by the hard work of the staff and volunteers at The Church Mouse, our outreach to the community around the corner and around the world is allocated in the three areas of education, food, and shelter, and totaled \$611K in 2019, including \$246K in grants. Feeding in February was a rousing success, raising \$82K to benefit the Palm Beach County Food Bank and gathering nearly 400 bags of non-perishables for True Fast Ministries. The mentorship program at Lake Worth High School continues to better the lives of young people, and we have added deserving students at Glades Central High School, under the leadership of Jodie Payne and Laura Schlett, for a total of 28 students in the program altogether. Bethesda generously gave \$50K toward the Bishop's Appeal for Relief after the devastation of Hurricane Dorian in the Bahamas. Our feeding ministry at St. George's Center and our volunteers at Opportunity, Inc. involve dozens of Bethesdians, and their work has been tireless and generous. Outreach, the human-to-human, practical exercise of spreading the love of Jesus, remains a priority for us at Bethesda-by-the-Sea, and I am grateful for the prayerful dedication of so many in making Jesus' love known.

I am so blessed to build the Kingdom of God in this place and ask your prayers as we continue to our ministries together.

Respectfully,



The Rev. Burl Salmon, *Associate for Christian Education, Pastoral Care, and Outreach*



# From the Curate

I've now been at Bethesda for more than a year and a half. I'm grateful to all who have helped me to grow into this wonderful and challenging vocation, and to all those who have invited me into their lives. I can't imagine a better place to start my work as a priest.

As I looked back at 2019, I reflected on the sheer number of things we do in a year. There's the regular rhythm of our life together: Sunday Eucharists and monthly Evensong, funerals and weddings, confirmations and baptisms, Sunday forums, weekday Eucharists, and Wednesday nights at Middle Way. There are the special events: the blessing of the animals, Advent and Christmas, Boar's Head, Empty Bowls, Lenten lunches, Holy Week and Easter. And there is the unexpected: hurricanes and lightning strikes and the sudden tragedies that parishioners sometimes face. And always there are people working behind the scenes to make it all possible, setting the altar, feeding the hungry, proofreading leaflets, planning events, and doing the hundreds of other things that undergird our church and our work in the community.

It's an honor to play a role in the daily life here at Bethesda. I've had at least some involvement in everything I listed above. I'm also responsible for our biweekly services at Noreen McKeen, which are small and simple, and always a joy.

As we move into 2020, I'm most excited about the 50th Anniversary of the Church Mouse, which we'll celebrate on March 14th. The Church Mouse makes possible most of the outreach work that Bethesda does, and it has been doing its work for half a century. From 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. on the 14th, we'll celebrate with food and music, activities for kids, and a few surprises. Be sure to save the date!



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Margaret McGhee". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small cross-like mark at the end.

The Rev. Margaret McGhee, *Curate*



# From the Director of Children and Youth Ministries

I was reminded at our recent baptisms on the first Sunday after the Epiphany that we are the products of a loving, life-giving God. The water that we use at baptism symbolizes that life-giving nature that we are called to. We are renewed by living water. We are sustained by living water. The water of baptism calls us to our essential character as Christians, a new creation beloved by God who seeks to serve that loveliness in others.

We have spent quite a bit of time in our Children and Youth programs this year talking about who we are as a community in relationship to the images of water that surround us. In our younger classes we have been learning more about the stories depicted on the stained glass windows on the north side of the nave like Jonah and the whale, Peter walking on water, and the disciples filling their nets with fish. Our high school youth have been working on a mission project that's all about making connections between our ministry context "by the sea" and our brothers and sisters who live on the San Antonio River, a very different "by the sea".

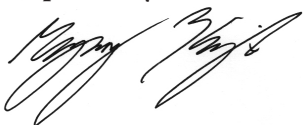
To help teach these lessons we have a great group of teachers beginning with Bobbie Martin who works with our 3 & 4 year old Pre-K Class. Our Lower Elementary (Kindergarten-2nd Grade) Class is taught by Madie Anderson. Finally, our Upper Elementary (3rd Grade-5th Grade) Class is taught by Ashley Fogwell. Our curriculum is rotation-based meaning children learn one story over the course of a month through various learning styles including art, science, cooking, and games.

In addition to our children's offerings we also feature a 6th/7th Grade Pre-Confirmation Class taught by Raphael Clemente and Kirsten Plymel that asks tough questions of faith and life. Our 8th Grade Confirmation Class, taught by Beth Cole and myself, builds off of those questions by engaging the beliefs of our young people. And our 9th-12th Grade Mission Group mentioned above is led by Cody Fogwell, Lois Clemente, and Kelly Ogiesoba. Together, this group works on seeking and serving Christ in others culminating with a summer mission trip to San Antonio, TX where they will serve at a special needs center for children, work with the parks department to beautify the headwaters of the San Antonio river, and work with homeless families looking to get back on their feet.

In addition to our Sunday offerings for children and youth we have the Little Way for Kindergarten through 5th Grade on Wednesday evenings led by our Children and Youth Ministries Coordinator, Jessica Hitchcock, where children learn more about what it means to be an active participant in the worship life of our community and our Bethesda Youth Group, a fellowship offering for our 6th through 12th graders. Together, Jessica and I also lead a children's worship time during the Liturgy of the Word at the 9:00 am worship service. And, of course, we have our traditional fun event offerings for all ages including our Christmas Pageant, Spring Carnival and Easter Egg Hunt, Mardi Gras, Trivia Night, Peanut Island Camping Trip, Vacation Bible School, and more.

It can be said that when it comes to Christian life, water is thicker than blood. That is because our unity in the loving, life-giving community of God connects us not only by this sea but by every sea.

Respectfully Submitted,



Greg Knight, *Director of Children and Youth Ministries*



# 2019 Necrology

Tamara Tula Bennatti  
Elda Mary Digiuni Chisholm  
Louise Griffin Collins  
Kenneth Avril Forde  
James Addison Garrison  
Carol Elsie Gesner  
Isabelle Johnson Channer Hill  
George Albert Kasprzyk  
Marcia Quale Chellis Kay  
John MacGregor Kindred

Michael James Lazzaro  
Kathlyn Swartz Maguire  
Samuel William Meek, Jr.  
Eleanore Jane Micelli  
Willfred Jack Noble  
Donna Sandra Browning Skeen  
Malcolm Van de Water  
John Charles Wain  
Mary R. Weinberger  
Allen West Whittemore

## 2019 Bequests

*We give thanks to God for the generosity of these beloved members of our parish family  
who this year provided for Bethesda's future life and ministry with a legacy gift:*

David Cluett and Nick Kindred

## Services for 2019

Baptisms ..... 27  
Confirmations, Receptions ..... 14  
Marriages ..... 11  
Burials ..... 21

Holy Eucharists ..... 254  
Holy Eucharists (Private) ..... 129  
Morning Prayers ..... 20  
Complines ..... 26  
Stations of the Cross, Good Friday ..... 1  
Evensongs ..... 7

### Transitions

Baptism ..... 27  
Confirmation ..... 14  
Transferred In ..... 60  
Transferred Out ..... 0  
Lost by Death ..... 20

# Finance Report

**Finance Sub-Committee:** Tanner Rose, *Chair*, and Matt Lorentzen, *Treasurer*

**Audit Sub-Committee:** Richard Crone, *Chair*

## Income Statement

2019 total operating revenue was \$3.49 million, an annual increase of \$228,000 largely due to increased restricted gifts for outreach, including Bahama relief. Annual fund campaign gifts totaled \$2.09 million, an increase of only \$40,000 and \$244,000 short of our fundraising goal.

2019 total operating expenses were \$3.66 million, an annual increase of \$280,000 including an increase of \$144,000 in outreach. Total operating expenses were \$28,000 below budget. The total net actual operating deficit was \$171,000, as compared with an operating deficit of \$46,000 in 2018.

## SUMMARY STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES Church of Bethesda-by-the-Sea - Operating Fund Period Ending December 31 (\$ thousands)

							DRAFT
REVENUE	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Unrestricted Gifts	\$ 2,063	\$ 2,001	\$ 1,865	\$ 2,070	\$ 2,228	\$ 2,225	\$ 2321
General Endowment Draw	193	231	259	266	269	278	290
Building Endowment Draw	38	76	136	118	127	146	143
Other Revenue	205	571	595	581	687	613	736
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>2,499</b>	<b>2,879</b>	<b>2,855</b>	<b>3,035</b>	<b>3,311</b>	<b>3,262</b>	<b>3490</b>
EXPENSES							
Payroll & Benefits	1,330	1,425	1,381	1,496	1,587	1,591	1728
Diocesan Assessment	284	288	312	315	273	319	347
Other Expenses	779	1,003	1,152	1,156	1,417	1,398	1,585
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>2,393</b>	<b>2,716</b>	<b>2,845</b>	<b>2,967</b>	<b>3,277</b>	<b>3,308</b>	<b>3660</b>
<b>NET OPERATING SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>-46</b>	<b>-170</b>
Prior year adjustment							188
<b>Net</b>							<b>18</b>

## Balance Sheet

Total endowment and other investment funds increased by \$1.77 million (10.3%) to \$19.05 million in 2019. Bethesda's financial position remains strong despite an unfavorable year in operations. Previous surpluses and good investment growth offset the loss. However, increased revenue will be necessary to maintain the programs and ministries in the long run.

**SUMMARY STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION**  
**Church of Bethesda-by-the-Sea - Operating & Non-Operating Funds**  
**Period Ending December 31**  
**(\$ thousands)**

		2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	DRAFT 2019
ASSETS							
Cash	\$	406	328	374	922	726	792
Other Current Assests		511	439	455	433	448	328
Restricted/Consolidated Fund		1,927	1,593	1,530	1,760	1660	1978
Common Endowment		6,791	6,498	6,659	7,636	6921	8010
Restoration & Preservation		4,380	4,094	4,118	4,168	3838	3944
Other Designated/Restricted Funds		2,922	2,934	2,987	3,688	3682	3999
Pledges Receivable - R&P		1,740	1,640	789	695		
Fixed Assets		5144	6,134	7,368	7,746	7422	6932
TOTAL ASSETS		23,821	23,660	24,280	27,048	24,697	25,983
LIABILITIES							
Payables		441	393	425	393	442	435
TOTAL LIABILITIES		441	393	425	393	442	435
CAPITAL		23,380	23,267	23,855	26,655	24,255	25,548
TOTAL LIABILITIES & CAPITAL		23,821	23,660	24,280	27,048	24,697	25,983

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 Mr. Gary Ramsay  
 Ms. Celeste Jones  
 Mr. and Mrs. Dietmar Reichenbacher  
 Lady Susan Willis Reickert and  
     Mr. Erick Reickert  
 Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Reighard  
 Lt. Col. and Mrs. Charles Reilly, Jr.  
 Mrs. Robert Rewey  
 Mr. and Mrs. Robert R. Reyers  
 Mr. and Mrs. C. Brooks Ricca, Jr.  
 Mrs. Carl H. Richter

Dr. C. Michael Ridgdill  
 Mr. and Mrs. Louis Rini  
 Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Ritman  
 Mr. and Mrs. Charles Roberts  
 Mrs. Sara Hornor and Mr. James Roberts  
 Ms. Jean S. Roberts  
 Miss. Taylor Roebuck- Hayden  
 Mr. and Mrs. Herb Roemmele  
 Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Rogers  
 Mr. and Mrs. C. Tanner Rose, Jr.  
 Mr. and Mrs. Walter M. Ross  
 Mr. and Mrs. Charles M. Royce  
 Mrs. Stanley Rumbough  
 Mrs. Kristine Runco  
 Mr. Maurizio C. Russo  
 Mr. Jack Rutherford  
 Mr. and Mrs. John C. Sallee  
 The Rev. W. Burley S. Salmon and  
     Mr. Robert C. J. Henkel  
 Ms. Denise A. Sandell  
 Mrs. Sarah Sappenfield  
 Mr. and Mrs. Jeffrey Sargeant  
 Mr. and Mrs. John D Sayer  
 Mrs. Frances Scaife  
 Mr. and Mrs. Kyle Schlett  
 Mr. and Mrs. Albert P. Loening  
 Mr. and Mrs. Paul Schorr  
 Ms. Aniko Schott  
 Ms. Marijane Schrader  
 Mr. George and Mrs. Debbie Schram  
 Mr. and Mrs. John H. Schuler  
 Mr. and Mrs. Charles Schumacher  
 Mr. and Mrs. Alan Scott  
 Mr. Donald Scott, Jr.  
 Mr. and Mrs. Donald Scott, Jr.  
 Mrs. Douglas Seaman  
 Mr. and Mrs. David K. Semadeni  
 Ms. Carol Sewell  
 Mr. and Mrs. Jonathan Shafer  
 Mrs. Jonathan Shafer  
 Ms. Carol Shannon  
 Mr. John W. Shannon  
 Dr. Arun Sharma  
 Mr. Sanjiv Sharma  
 Ms. Carol Anne Sharp



Mr. Douglas Ian Shaw  
 Mr. and Mrs. Leif Sheehan  
 Mr. and Mrs. Rob Sherwood  
 Mrs. Francis A. Shields  
 Mr. and Mrs. Zachary K. Shipley  
 Ms. Janice Shoobridge  
 Miss Clare Shore  
 Mr. and Mrs. Robert Silva  
 Mr. F. Scott Fitz Simmons  
 Ms. Cynthia Simonson  
 Mr. and Mrs. Ronald L. Skates  
 Mr. Frank Skeen  
 Mr. and Mrs. Thomas M. Skelly III  
 Ms. Georgiel Skover  
 Mrs. Frank H. Sleuman, Jr.  
 Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Smith, Jr.  
 Mr. and Mrs. Don Smith  
 Mr. and Mrs. John Smith  
 Mrs. David S. Smith  
 Mr. Michael Smyser IV and Mr. John Varga  
 Mr. Dairell Johnson Snapp  
 Dr. and Mrs. James Snyder  
 Mr. and Mrs. Paul Sober  
 Ms. Janice E. Soergel  
 Mr. and Mrs. Jared Soper  
 Mrs. Bailey Sory  
 Mr. and Mrs. John B. Sory  
 Mrs. William Soter  
 Mrs. Arlene Sparks  
 Ms. Mary Speer and Ms. Victoria Van Pelt  
 Mr. John Sperry and Mr. Patrick Workinger  
 Mr. Henry Spiller  
 Mr. Roy L Spring  
 Mrs. Peter B. Stachelberg  
 Mr. and Mrs. Charles M. Staehle  
 Mr. and Mrs. Fred E. Staley, Jr.  
 Mr. and Mrs. Christopher Lee Stanfield, Sr.  
 Mr. Michael C. Stanley  
 Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Steele, Jr.  
 Mr. Michael Steetle  
 Mrs. Andrea Steinwender  
 Mrs. John Stepan  
 Ms. Sherri Stephenson  
 Mrs. Sandra Stern  
 Ms. Arlene Stevens

Mr. Campbell Steward  
 Ms. Carol Stewart  
 Mr. Douglas A. Stockham  
 Mr. and Mrs. William E. Stout  
 Mrs. Phyllis Strain  
 Ms. Marion H. Straton  
 The Rev. Canon Dr. Gregory Straub  
 Mrs. Brenda Neubauer Straus  
 Mr. Ivars E. Strautmanis  
 Mrs. Christine S. P. Strawbridge  
 Mr. A. Michael Sullivan, Jr.  
 Mr. and Mrs. Gary Sullivan  
 Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Sullivan  
 Mrs. Ann Summers  
 Mrs. Carol Ann L. Sutton  
 Mr. and Mrs. Robert E. Swanson  
 Ms. Robin Sweet  
 Mrs. Lisa Swift  
 Mr. and Mrs. Trent Swift  
 Ms. Greta Sybert  
 Mrs. Glenn Tagatz  
 Ms. Charlot Taylor  
 Ms. Margaretta Taylor  
 Miss Mariette Taylor  
 Dr. and Mrs. Paul J. Taylor-Smith  
 Mr. Thomas Thaler  
 Mr. and Mrs. David Thayer  
 Mr. Alfred Thompson  
 Mr. and Mrs. Joe B. Thompson  
 Mr. Robert C. Thompson  
 Ms. Patricia Clary Throckmorton  
 The Rev. Dr. Cecily J. Titcomb and  
     Mr. E. Rodman Titcomb, Jr.  
 Mr. and Mrs. William H. Told, Jr.  
 Mr. and Mrs. John Trent  
 Mr. and Mrs. Robert Treuhold  
 Mr. and Mrs. Luis Treutel-Guiterrez  
 Mrs. Benita Trinkle  
 Mr. and Mrs. Timo Turkki  
 Mr. Gregory Turner  
 Mr. Robb Turner  
 Mr. and Mrs. Robert Turner, Jr.  
 Mr. and Mrs. Wallace R. Turner  
 Mr. and Mrs. William Tylander, Jr.  
 Mr. and Mrs. Michael E. Tyler



Mrs. Ava Van de Water  
Mr. and Mrs. Frederic Van der Grift  
Mr. and Mrs. Paul Van der Grift  
Mr. and Mrs. Cornelis van Hoek  
Mrs. Charles B.P. Van Pelt  
Ms. Susan Van Pelt  
Mr. and Mrs. William Van Wyk III  
Ms. Constance Vanvalkenburg  
Mr. and Mrs. Royall Victor III  
The Rev. and Mrs. Clayton Waddell  
Mrs. Yvonne Wagner  
Mr. and Mrs. William Walde  
Mrs. David Walker  
Mrs. Nancy Walker  
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Wandoff, Jr.  
Cdr. and Mrs. James G. Ward, USN (Ret.)  
Ms. Rachel Ward  
Mr. Andrew Watson  
Mrs. Susan Watts  
Mr. and Mrs. R. John Wean III  
Mr. David A. Webster  
Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Webster III  
Mrs. Flonell Wentz  
Mr. John H. Wert  
Dr. Graham Whitfield  
Mrs. Allen Whittemore  
Mrs. Beverly Wilbur  
Mr. and Mrs. William Williams  
Mr. and Mrs. George Williamson  
Mr. Peter S. Wilson  
Mr. and Mrs. Ricky Wilson  
Mr. William Wing  
Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Winseck  
Mr. and Mrs. William R. Wister  
Dr. and Mrs. Thomas Witzemberger  
Mrs. William Wolbach  
Mr. and Mrs. Peter Wolfe  
Dr. Linda Cox  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Wood  
Mr. and Mrs. Watson Wright  
Mrs. Clinton R. Wyckoff  
Mr. and Mrs. James C. Wynns  
Mr. Ivan Yager  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert E. Yaw II  
Mr. Charles O. Yoder

Ms. Diane Yost  
Mr. Mark Young  
Ms. Neely Young  
Mr. and Mrs. Philip Young  
Mr. and Mrs. Ronald F. Young  
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas E. Zacharias  
Mr. and Mrs. Michael Zingaro  
Mr. Fred Zrinscak, Jr.

# Agenda for 2019 Annual Meeting

Call to Order.....	The Rector
Opening Prayer and Necrology.....	The Rev. Margaret McGhee
Acceptance of Minutes.....	The Rector
Election of New Vestry Members.....	The Rector and Beth Cole, <i>Nominating Committee Chair</i>
Finance and Stewardship Report .....	Matt Lorentzen, <i>Chair, Finance Sub-Committee</i>
Junior Warden's Report .....	Constance N. Purcell, <i>Junior Warden</i>
Rector's Address .....	The Rev. James R. Harlan
Other Business.....	The Rector
Closing Prayer and Blessing.....	The Rev. Burl Salmon

## Tellers

Bill Cini, Marcia Cini  
Jethro Hurt, Malcolm Lax

# Minutes of the 2019 Annual Meeting

**Call to Order:** The Rev. James Harlan called the 130th annual meeting to order at 9:15 a.m., noting that there was a quorum present.

## ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

**Motion:** A motion to accept the Minutes of the 2018 Annual Meeting included in the packet for the 2019 Annual Meeting by Pat McGill second by Jim Myers. The Motion passed unanimously.

## VESTRY

**Outgoing Vestry:** Father James thanked the Outgoing Vestry members Beth Cole (Senior Warden), Kitty Lanier, Charles McGill and Jodie Payne. Zach Shipley is stepping down as Treasurer as he has been nominated to the Vestry. Thanks to Wendy Victor who has stepped down from the Vestry. Wendy's remaining term will be fulfilled by C. Tanner Rose. Ongoing Vestry members Connie Purcell, Peggy Johnson, Sandy Burnett, Paul Coombs, Raphael Clemente, Charles Hagy, Jr. and Michelle Diffenderfer.

Beth Cole presented the Nominating Committee's recommendations for Vestry.

## ELECTION OF NEW VESTRY MEMBERS

**Vestry Nominations:** Motion to Elect New Vestry Members Richard Crone, Becky Myers, Zachary Shipley and Maury Wolfe by Raphael Clemente and second by Warren Chase, the Motion was unanimously approved by the meeting attendees.

**Motion:** Beth Cole presented the nominations for delegates to the Diocesan Convention as Bill Cini, Jan Shoobridge, Michael Smyser and Sandra Coombs as Alternate. A Motion to accept the nominees by acclimation was made by Becky Myers, second Mike Victor, unanimously elected.

**Finance and Stewardship Report:** Father James gave an overall financial report that showed contributions totaled \$2.08 million. Total expenses around the same as 2017. New line items added to budget for evangelism ministry, to continue with support of Fellowship through Sunday breakfasts and Middle Way dinners and the enhancement of staff benefits to include family health coverage. 2019 budget of \$3.56 million summarized by program. 2018 Capital Expenditures included Facade Restoration, sound system, HVAC electrical feed, lighting, bell control and the Rectory Courtyard door. Presentation of the investments and endowments funds - total of \$14,705,000.

**Stewardship Report:** Paul Coombs thanked everyone who pledged and gave in 2018. In 2018 we had 528 households pledge up from 424 in 2017. Last month of 2017 had the biggest giving. In 2018 with the markets down that was not realized to same extent. Need more work in planned giving. Want to increase our budget from \$3.1 to 4 million over five years for 2019 we are at \$3.56 million. Showed the funds as they come in over a year. Reminded everyone to put pledges in at the 11:00 a.m. service and asked for everyone to increase their giving this year.

**Buildings and Grounds Report:** Father James gave an update on the projects that were completed in 2018 and those that are underway for 2019.

**Rector's Address:** Father James addressed the Meeting. He discussed the Celtic Pilgrimage and St Francis of Assisi youth pilgrimage. Discussed the criteria to be a Communicant in Good Standing. Father James Want to recognize three people who Bethesda would not be the same without. Father James then said he was presenting the Rector's Cross to these three people who know what it means to be communicants in good standing Mike and Wendy Victor and Edie Dixon. Discussed Feeding in February programs. Discussed the Church Mouse receipts of over one million dollars this past year, recognized Pat Reichenbach and Jodie Payne. Discussed Evangelism and thanked members for their support. Father James thanked Beth Cole and Connie Purcell and the members of the Vestry and Officers. Father James thanked Hal, Fred, Burl and Margaret. Father James also thanked Cecie, Elizabeth and Clay for being assisting clergy. Thanked all the Committees for their work. Father James also thanked Eli and Hannah.

**Adjournment:** The Rev. Margaret McGhee gave the closing prayer and blessing. Meeting was adjourned by Father James at 10.19 a.m.



# THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF BETHESDA-BY-THE-SEA

PALM BEACH, FLORIDA

*Bethesda's Mission is to experience the clear and strong presence of God and to understand and spread Christ's teachings through collective worship, learning, and service.*



# Clergy and Staff

## RECTOR AND ASSOCIATES

The Rev. James R. Harlan, *Rector*

Harold E. Pysher, *Associate for Music & Liturgy*

The Rev. Burl Salmon, *Associate for Christian Education, Pastoral Care, and Outreach*

Fred E. Staley, *Associate for Administration*

The Rev. Margaret E. McGhee, *Curate*

## NON-STIPENDIARY ASSISTING CLERGY

The Rev. Canon Elizabeth R. Geitz, *Assisting Priest*

The Rev. W. Frisby Hendricks III, *Assisting Priest*

The Rev. Dr. Cecily J. Titcomb, *Deacon for Spiritual Direction*

The Rev. Clayton B. Waddell, *Deacon for Port Ministry*

## STAFF

### PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Greg Knight, *Director of Children & Youth Ministries*

### COORDINATORS

Turia Roebuck-Hayden, *Outreach & Development Coordinator*

Jessica Reed Hitchcock, *Children & Youth Ministries Coordinator*

Douglas Kwoka, *Communications Coordinator*

April Lawrence, *Evangelism, Fellowship & Membership Coordinator*

Ayana Pineiro, *Worship & Pastoral Care Coordinator*

### ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Priscilla Reynoso, *Office Coordinator & Rector's Assistant*

### SEXTONS

Robert Mancuso, *Sexton for Liturgical Support*

Keith Risley, *Sexton for Grounds*

Jonathan Rivera, *Sexton for Hospitality*

William Thompson III, *Sexton for Building Preservation & Lead Sexton*

### THE CHURCH MOUSE AND THE SHOPPE STAFF

Daisy Alvarez, *General Manager for Retail Operations*

Evaristo Riestra, *General Manager of the Church Mouse*

Rosie Cartagena, *Seamstress*

Jonathan Goodine, *Receiving Specialist*



The Church of Bethesda-by-the-Sea

141 S. County Road, Palm Beach, FL 33480 | (561) 655-4554 | [bbts.org](http://bbts.org)