

Rector's Report for Annual Meeting, January 26, 2025

Beloved Members of St. Martin's,

Last year, 2024, was a year of many changes both for myself and for St. Martin's. Throughout these changes we have supported each other in all manner of ways, and for that I am profoundly grateful.

In our epistle 1 Corinthians 12: 12-31a, St. Paul reminds us about the power of community and the collective sharing of gifts that together makes the community stronger. Reminding us that we became part of the Body of Christ at our baptism, he speaks of how that then joins us together in love and care for one another: "If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it." If I were to describe the greatest strength of the people of St. Martin's, it is that sense of unity that we all have for each other. We ARE one body in Christ. We are there with those who are struggling; we are there with those who rejoice. We listen to each other and care for one another—even for your priest, when I have gone through the most difficult year in my life with my two bouts with skin cancer and the deaths of my younger brother and then my mother.

We have seen several families undergo changes in their living situation this year. Some have had to move away to be near relatives after it was clear their health demanded it. Others have moved into senior living or assisted living due to a decline in health or just seeking a more streamlined lifestyle. There have been accidents and surgeries and chronic illnesses. Yet through it all, I have been assisted in providing pastoral care by a huge cloud of caring hearts, spirits, and hands, including our amazing Eucharistic visitor team of the Pattengills, the Harberts, Judi Batch and Mary Pomeroy, Bev Weaver, and Candy Tierney as well as Page Andersen. Our three different prayer ministries, led by Linda Huheey and Daryl Norman.

We also were excited for Sherry and Doug Algren as they bought a house down South. Sherry has been the heart and soul of the children's ministry for so many years, as well as a stalwart of the altar guild, always encouraging children to participate in that ministry as well. However, she has found wonderful people to help carry on that ministry, especially Lucy Pombrol and Paula Kelly, as well as Jonathan Raiche, Annie Ram, Page Andersen, Jan Guenther, and even Sherrie Algren when she is back in town. Many kudos to Denise Marsh and Becky Brewer for providing our children with quality musical instruction in the midst of choir duties. In fact, our embrace and delight in young children has been a singular feature noted by new members and visitor alike. Children of all ages enjoy the children's message each Sunday, which is delightful.

This year at our bishop's visitation, we were thrilled to see three children baptized, and seven adults received or confirmed into membership in the Episcopal Church, and we have had three other young people baptized this year, which is truly a joy to witness as we pledge to support all of these persons in our common life in Christ together. We currently have a new young adult member desiring confirmation at this time.

We also understand that we are the body of Christ, and the visible face of Christ, for the world around us. Our facility continues to provide a home for many weekly activities both within the parish and for the broader community. We host Lunch Bunch, Chair Exercises, and Bible Study on various days of the week. We are happy to host the River Blenders singing group, support groups, Scout groups and sponsor a Scout group of our own. Thanks to the leadership of the Biedermans, we continue to provide a home for blood drives, which helps save hundreds on lives. Our "First Thursday" fellowship meal once a month has a strong following month after month, come rain or come shine, and also allows us to support a local business and make ourselves present in our community in a fun way.

Feeding ministries and outreach to the community around our location is a vital part of St. Martin's mission in the world. Our Outreach committee, led by Dana Griggs and assisted by Alice McLaughlin, Anne Fischer, D'Arcy Elspeman, John Alden, Linda Biederman and Mary Edmonson, does excellent work, including Toys for Tots at Christmas and supporting a variety of ministries. Our Garden Ministry led by John Lange and assisted by Scott Pattengill, continues to provide thousands of pounds of fresh produce for the clients of Circle of Concern, and our donations of boxed and canned goods to Circle

of Concern is a consistent help to those in need in West and South County. Laundry Love continues to be a precious source of help to so many, thanks to the leadership of Anne and Jim Fischer and their stalwart crew of volunteers.

Our Blessing Box is heavily used and is organized by Kim Montgomery and a host of volunteers, including your donations throughout the year. Its companion Life Box containing Narcan and information on addiction and the scourge of overdoses that affect every community in the country keeps up a steady offering of life-saving help for those who may be overdosing, and it is supplied for free by both the Missouri Institute of Mental Health at UMSL and our parishioner Sandra Mayen of the Missouri Hope Project. Our Christmas Bazaar continues to delight members and visitors with Christmas and home accoutrements and baked goods under the capable leadership of Judi Batch, Mary Pomeroy, and many talented bakers and organizers. I also want to thank Al, Laura, and Jeremy Kelley for the incredible work beautifying our outdoor columbarium.

The Men's Group, spearheaded by Mike Kelly, is a vital support to so many activities, including our Breakfast with St. Nick and our Breakfast with the Bunny for our children, as well as the amazing work they put into the Spring Car Show and Barbecue Festival, which invites so many visitors outside the community to come learn more about our parish and have a great time looking at all makes and models of classic cars.

Our liturgical life is truly the work of a multitude. While we unfortunately had to discontinue the 8:30 am service due to so many of our previous regulars having moved away or passed on, we still continue with two weekend services, one on Saturday and one on Sunday. The altar guild, led by Barb Hankemeyer, with her assistants, Candy Tierney, the Pattengills, the Kellys, Page Andersen, and others, keeps our liturgical spaces decorated for each season. They are making sure that all is prepared for all the many elements necessary for our two weekly worship services as well as special services such as Ash Wednesday, Holy Week, the Great Vigil of Easter, Blue Christmas, and Christmas Eve. Our Compline offerings online have been expanded to twice a week, with Tom Allen providing a deeply spiritual service on Sunday nights at 8:30 and with Chelsea Brewer leading a service from the chapel after choir practice on Wednesdays. We very sadly said goodbye to Deacon Loretta Go as she was assigned by the bishop to St. Stephen's.

At long last, this year we have been blessed to have a full complement of acolytes at many of our service, with Florence Raiche and Abby Mayen being joined by Marketa Raiche and also friends of these girls who have joined in the adventure even despite not being Episcopalians! Their help and faithfulness makes my heart sing and I am sure many of our parishioners also. Our ushers, greeters, readers and chalice bearers perform a truly beautiful and necessary role in our scheduled liturgies as well as our funerals, and we are always looking for more volunteers to assist in these functions.

Our broadcast crew led by Bill Scoopmire, Jim Fischer, Derek Barkey, and Chris Marsh make it possible for homebound or traveling members and guests to worship with us as well as visitors from states as far away as Michigan and California. Bill spends approximately ten hours a week programming the software that our broadcasts use.

Our music program under the amazing Denise Marsh, assisted by her husband Chris, continues to flourish and grow, chock full of talent from our parish and drawing in new members to join the bell choir, vocal choir, and children's choir for our little ones through Children's chapel, where Denise, Becky Brewer and other volunteers teach our kids about rhythm and how to read music, a true gift not available to every child otherwise. I am always so impressed by the array of guest soloists and musicians she finds to perform special pieces that uplift the spirit.

Our communications director of Scott Scoopmire donates approximately ten hours a week to website maintenance and the Beacon, and Debra Matthews assists with the Beacon faithfully. Page Andersen and Derek and Kelley Barkey are amazing at putting together the Sunday bulletins and bulletins for special services, while I do the final editing and put together the 505 and funeral bulletins each week. A new initiative we have started at the bequest of our diocesan missionary for Latino Ministry, the Rev. Valori Sherer, is to include side-by side Spanish translations of part of our liturgy, and we have had visitors join

in. As I continue to learn Spanish, I hope that this can make some of member's families and visitors feel welcome.

Due to the fact that we are being supported by the diocese for part of my salary, we have joined in the most recent cohort of Renaissance or Requiem, and our team is composed by Daryl Norman, D'Arcy Elsperman, John Alden, Lincoln Drake, Becky Brewer and myself. We hope to use this opportunity to more fully define our particular gifts and ministry here at St. Martin's in order to help us engage and grow in faith, outreach, and vitality. All are invited to join in this very important endeavor of the life of our congregation.

As we continue to ask all members to complete a pledge of some kind for the stabilization of our finances, I give thanks to God for our fabulous treasurer, Page Andersen and assistant treasurer Becky Brewer, who both give their hearts and souls to this parish in so many ways, and to our dedicated vestry of Sr. Warden Greg Andersen, Jr. Warden Jeanne King, Chelsea Brewer, Scott Shearer, Nancy Schiebal, clerk John Limbaugh, Kim Montgomery, and our departing member Jeanne King. I give thanks for the life and discipleship of the late Kay Fletcher, who died in June after many years of faithful work at St. Martin's and in the diocese, and for Beckie Strobel who graciously filled out her remaining term and is now standing for a term on her own. I look forward to John Alden graciously offering another year of service on vestry, and for Debra Matthews who is offering herself for service on vestry. I also give great thanks to the Finance Committee led by Lincoln Drake, who also manages our facility with the help of Steve Brunkhorst and Tom Warrington, as well as to the Capital Campaign Committee, led by Steve Brunkhorst, using those funds we raised several years ago to defray so many large-ticket items including new carpet in our facility. And always, I could not imagine what St. Martin's would do without the talent of Janet Theiss who serves the role of Parish Administrator, bookkeeper, and pastoral care assistance and sage for all of us. With our paid staff being at the absolute minimum, we could not survive without the dedication of so many volunteers along with our 2.5 paid staff members.

Respectfully Submitted Mother Leslie

2025 Annual Meeting: Senior Warden Report Submitted by Greg Andersen, Senior Warden

I continue to enjoy my time on the St. Martins Vestry after serving on the Investment Committee for several years. It has been an honor to serve as the Senior Warden for a second year. I am amazed and thankful at all the efforts of so many people to ensure St. Martins operates smoothly each day. I am humbled at the efforts of our parishioners to help various people in need within our community. This report is filled with pages summarizing our members various efforts both inside and outside our church.

Our Vestry has worked diligently this year to support all of our various Ministries while balancing our income and expenses and will continue to do so in 2025. Thanks to the generosity of our members throughout the year, we only needed to transfer \$50,000 from our investment account to cover our expenses. Our investment accounts increased in value from \$364.3k to \$493.4k from January 1 to December 31, 2024. In 2025, we will continue to manage our costs thoughtfully while adding a part time sexton to aid Lincoln in managing our facilities. Additionally, we will continue to pursue our efforts to generate additional income from further utilization of our facilities. As always, we encourage our members to contribute as they are able.

I would like to thank the Vestry Members, Mother Leslie, Page Andersen and Becky Brewer for their time this year to share ideas, debate options and make the best decisions possible to support St. Martins' values. Please do not hesitate to reach out to any Vestry member to ask questions, share concerns and offer ideas.

I look forward to a blessed 2025.

Respectfully submitted,
Greg Andersen, Senior Warden