

The Annual Meeting *of* Saint Bernard's Episcopal Church



BERNARDSVILLE, NEW JERSEY

Sunday, January 29, 2023, on-site and via Zoom

CONTENTS

Today's Agenda.....	3
Minutes from last year's Annual Meeting for approval (2022).....	4
2022 Election Ballot.....	5

Leadership Reports

Rector's Report.....	6
Affiliation Flow Chart.....	8
Wardens' Report.....	9
Deacon Report.....	10
Music Ministry.....	11
Saint Bernard's Cemetery.....	11
Buildings & Grounds	11
Stewardship.....	12
Community & Fellowship.....	13
St. Bernard's Church 125 th Anniversary.....	14
Episcopal Community Services of the Diocese of New Jersey.....	14
Christian Formation.....	16
Cross Roads Camp and Retreat Center.....	17

Outreach Reports

Outreach Committee.....	18
Grace's Kitchen.....	19
God's Giving Garden.....	19
The Community Fund	19
Homework Help and Academic Support Program.....	20

Guilds' Reports

Altar Guild.....	20
Flower Guild.....	20
Chalicer Guild.....	21

Financials

Treasurer's Report.....	21
St. Bernard's Church Budget.....	22
St. Bernard's Cemetery Budget.....	22

Parish Register

From the 2022 Parish Register.....	23
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Agenda for 2023 Annual Meeting of St. Bernard's Episcopal Church

- **11:30 am Call to Order – Opening Prayer >**

Reports, part 1

- **11:32 am (2 min.) Rector's Welcome** (*Report in sermon*), *The Rev. Beth Rauen Sciaino*
- **11:34 am (3 min.) Wardens' Report**,
Chris Thomas and Paul Edwards, Wardens
- **11:37 am (2 min.) 2022 Annual Meeting Minutes for Approval** (see p. 4)

**Insistent God, by night and day
you summon your slumbering people:
So stir us with your voice
and enlighten our lives with your grace
that we give ourselves fully to Christ's call
to mission and ministry. Amen.**

- Revised Common Lectionary Prayers p. 56

Opening of Polls on paper or via Google form: <https://forms.gle/ZqdCKrcavV4ahfyMA>

- **11:39 am (2 min.) Nominations**

a. Warden and Vestry

For Warden – vote for one

Paul Edwards (*2nd term, for 1 year*)

For Vestry Members – vote for two

Meg McKee (*1st 3 year term*)

Michael Myers (*1 year term*)

b. Deputies and Alternate to 2023 Diocesan Convention, March 4, 2023

For the Office of Deputy to Diocesan Convention – vote for three

Jenny Moss

Carmen Paul

Chris Thomas

For Alternate to Diocesan Convention – vote for one

Michael Myers

c. Delegates to 2023 Watchung Convocation

For the Office of Delegate to the Watchung Convocation – vote for four

Greg Canose

Mary Jane Canose

Beth Gustafson

Jane Rauen

Reports, part 2

- **11:41 am (4 min.) Finance Presentation**, *Michael Myers, Treasurer*
- **11:45 am (2 min.) Stewardship Report**, *Paul Edwards, Stewardship Chair*

Affiliation focused conversation

- **11:47 am (8 min.) Reflections from Wardens and Vestry** (*Anne Fritts, Jenny Moss, and Michael Myers*) **on the Affiliation Process to date** (see p. 8 for Affiliation Flow chart from the diocese). Please note a word or phrase that captures your attention on an available post-it note – if you would like you can turn them in (not required).
- **11:55 am Breakout groups (16 min.)** In groups of 3-4 people, please invite people to share in response to question 1, then all move to share in response to question 2. (You can opt to pass.) Next, the group can choose to respond to one of the options under Question 3. Please have one person per group jot down themes on index cards or post-it notes, one for each question, to hand up to the front. If you are in the Zoom, you can post responses in the main Zoom room chat after the breakout sessions or email to priest@stbernardsnj.org to help the Vestry gather parishioner input.
 - *Question 1: What concerns you about affiliation? (4 min.) Hand in index card or post-it notes.*
 - *Question 2: What excites you the most about affiliation? (4 min.) Hand in index card or post-it notes.*
 - *Question 3: Share in response to **one** of the following interpretative questions: (8 min.)*
 - What other things do we need to consider?
 - What are the values we are holding here?
 - What possibilities lie before us?
- **12:11 pm (10 min.) Share in larger group** (*We are also capturing input via the post-it notes and index cards.*)
- **12:21 pm (2 min.) Declaration of Election and Introductions** to newly elected and continuing Wardens and Vestry
- **12:23 pm (2 min.) New Business**
- **12:25 pm Closing Prayer found on back cover & Adjournment**

ST. BERNARD'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 30, 2022, on ZOOM

1. Call to Order – Opening Prayer said together
2. Rector's Report, *The Rev. Beth Rauen Sciaino*
3. Wardens' Report, *Julia Somers and Chris Thomas, Wardens*
4. Approval of 2021 Annual Meeting Minutes
5. Nominations
 - a. Wardens: Chris Thomas (*2nd term, for 2 years*), Paul Edwards (*1st term, for 1 year*)
 - b. Vestry: *2nd term*: Linda Engleby, Taylor Hwong; *1st term*: Anne Fritts, Zach Conway
 - c. Deputies to Convention: Michael Myers, Carmen Paul, Chris Thomas
 - d. Delegates to Watchung Convention: Greg Canose, Mary Jane Canose, Beth Gustafson, Jane Rauen
6. Finance Presentation, *Michael Myers, Treasurer*
7. Stewardship Report, *Julia Somers, Stewardship Chair*
8. General Question and Answer opportunity
9. Breakout groups: Imagine you are speaking to a friend and they ask about St. Bernard's:
What story from the past two years would you share to tell the story of St. Bernard's?
10. Declaration of Election and Introductions
 - a. *Wardens elected*: Christ Thomas, Paul Edwards; *Vestry elected*: Anne Fritts, Zach Conway, Linda Engleby, Taylor Hwong
 - b. *Continuing Vestry*: Tom Brooks, Michael Myers, Mary Kempen, Sue Smith, Beth Gustafson, Jenny Moss
11. New Business
12. Closing Prayer said together and Adjournment



St. Bernard's Church

Annual Meeting Election Ballot – January 29, 2023

*We will vote on-site on paper ballots
or online via this Google form:
<https://forms.gle/ZqdCKrcavV4ahfyMA>*

For Warden – vote for one

- ☐ Paul Edwards (*2nd 1 year term*)

For Vestry Members – vote for two

- ☐ Meg McKee (*1st 3 year term*) ☐ Michael Myers (*1 year term in order to
continue serving as Treasurer*)

For the Office of Deputy to Diocesan Convention – vote for three

- ☐ Jenny Moss ☐ Chris Thomas
☐ Carmen Paul

For Alternate to Diocesan Convention – vote for one

- ☐ Michael Myers

For the Office of Delegate to the Watchung Convocation – vote for four

- ☐ Gregory Canose ☐ Beth Gustafson
☐ Mary Jane Canose ☐ Jane Rauen

Vestry members can serve two consecutive three-year terms.

Rotating off Vestry: Tom Brooks

Vestry members who are continuing:

<i>3rd year of 2nd term:</i>	<i>Mary Kempen, Sue Smith, Beth Gustafson</i>
<i>2nd year of 2nd term:</i>	<i>Linda Engleby, Taylor Hwong</i>
<i>3rd year of 1st term:</i>	<i>Jenny Moss</i>
<i>2nd year of 1st term:</i>	<i>Zach Conway, Anne Fritts</i>

Chris Thomas is in his 2nd year of a 2-year Warden term, having served a 1 year Warden term in 2021.

LEADERSHIP REPORTS

RECTOR'S REPORT – *The Rev. Beth Rauen Sciaino*

**1. I come with joy to meet my Lord,
forgiven, loved, and free,
in awe and wonder to recall
his life laid down for me.**

This hymn, written by Brian Wren in 1968, captures the ways in which the Holy Eucharist, and worship in general, unites us with God and one another, renewing us to live out God's love and compassion throughout the week. Our gratitude, wonder, and celebration shared with God on Sunday shapes how we live each day. We have been blessed to be able to continue to worship on-site and online in 2022, enriched and

encouraged by the music leadership of our Director of Music, Dr. Martin Sedek, and our faithful and fantastic choir and section leaders: Samantha Ferrara, Debi Kurisko, Devin McGuire, and Jason Robinette. Music is a pathway into our daily relationship with God: Creator, Christ, and Spirit.

As we head into our 125th Anniversary year, St. Bernard's Episcopal Church continues to take an open and creative approach to partnering and serving the people of Bernardsville and beyond. Please read further in this Annual Report to learn more about St. Bernard's hands-on outreach opportunities and the work of the Community Fund. Perhaps God is calling you to become involved in one of these areas or help us develop a new avenue to listen to and care for the broader community. Adult faith formation was another opportunity for creativity, community, and spiritual growth in 2022. Parishioner Al Hudgins continued his Bible 101 series on a monthly basis, Scripture as Art began as a way to spend time with a gospel passage and engage in a creative response, and a small group explored the first half of Marcus Borg's *The Heart of Christianity*, which provided language to better understand our faith and relationship with the Holy One.

In the fall, St. Bernard's Wardens and Vestry were invited by Bishop Chip Stokes to prayerfully consider affiliating with the Episcopal Church of St. John on the Mountain, a neighboring parish in Bernardsville. The affiliation discernment process and affiliation model are being used throughout the diocese to help congregations work collaboratively while still retaining their own

**2. I come with Christians far and near
to find, as all are fed,
the new community of love
in Christ's communion bread.**

identities, buildings, budgets, and Vestry leadership. Affiliations are three-year commitments, during which the cost and time of a clergy team is shared between two congregations, and opportunities for collaborative mission and ministry are explored by parish leadership. Even if this discernment process does not result in an affiliation between the two parishes, I hope that it will build increased collaboration to further strengthen the Episcopal Church's presence in and commitment to serving the people of our parishes, Bernardsville, and the Somerset Hills. Not only is this affiliation an opportunity to partner together with God's mission and ministry, but both parishes have deficit budgets for 2023. Affiliating would help each parish reduce their deficit by jointly covering the cost of the clergy team.

As the bishop reminded our Vestries, clergy and buildings are usually the top congregational expenses. St. Bernard's is fortunate to have a new Parish House (built in 2018), a renovated church (in 2008 following the fire in 2004), and

**3. As Christ breaks bread and bids us share,
each proud division ends.
The love that made us makes us one,
and strangers now are friends.**

amazing volunteer expertise and labor provided by our Buildings and Grounds team of Tom Brooks and Taylor Hwong. We are grateful for their attention to the parish campus and service on Vestry, which Tom will be rotating off, yet staying involved in Buildings and Grounds. Having sold the rectory in 2019 and kept the proceeds for the

housing needs of future clergy, the Cemetery Cottage is our only remaining un-renovated building, although the tenant will be upgrading the kitchen this year. The process of prayerfully considering and discerning an affiliation requires flexibility and creative out-of-the-box thinking and a willingness to experiment and provide feedback and input with love. Some of us are not fond of even thinking about change and yet we can all trust that God is working in our midst, active and alive in the parishes of St. Bernard's and St. John on the Mountain. God's purpose and mission for the Church continues: "to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ" through the power of the Holy Spirit (An

Outline of the Faith, BCP p. 855). In part due to the adaptability and resilience following the church fire in 2004, the people of St. Bernard's had an easier time adapting and responding to the unprecedented shutdown in 2020 in comparison to communities unused to adversity and change. Thank you for exercising the same resourcefulness and openness yet again as we discern affiliation. I continue to be thrilled to serve God, the Church, and all God's people through parish ministry at St. Bernard's.

On June 14, 2022, we rejoiced in the ordination of the Reverend Danielle D. Baker to the priesthood in the Diocese of Newark. Our former seminarian from 2019-2021, Rev. Danielle is now the part-time Priest-in-Charge of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Morris Plains, NJ. Thank you for the support and encouragement you have given Rev. Danielle on her journey toward ordination. We are now partnering with Rev. Danielle and St. Paul's in our Zoom Evening Prayer services held on Wednesdays at 5:30 pm weekly during Advent and Lent and bi-weekly the rest of the program year. Parishioners of St. John on the Mountain have joined us in this midweek opportunity for prayer.

I concluded four years of service on the diocesan Board of Missions in December of 2022. I continue to be active in the Coaching Network and Coaches Assisting Parents, and offer coaching to parishioners and community members. I serve on the diocesan Reparations Commission on the History and Research working group and as secretary. Next week will be my final leadership retreat at Cross Roads in the Shape of Leadership 2 program having done the first iteration in 2015. I will attend a week-long CREDO conference in June in NH, the gold standard of clergy wellness programs. I originally intended to participate in April 2020. Offered and subsidized by the Church Pension Group, CREDO aids individual clergy in areas of Spiritual, Vocational, Financial, and Physical/Psychological health.

**4. And thus with joy we meet our Lord.
His presence, always near,
is in such friendship better known:
we see and praise him here.**

In addition to thanking and celebrating St. Bernard's Director of Music, Dr. Martin Sedek, I would like to express my gratitude to St. Bernard's Parish Administrator, Alison Davidson. We are also blessed to work with an excellent Bookkeeper, Karen Buchanan. At the end of October, we welcomed the Reverend Deacon Karen Burke Lewis to St. Bernard's. Deacon Karen's primary ministry is as a palliative care chaplain, please read her informative report. She brings many gifts and introduces us to the order of vocational deacon. "A deacon is a baptized person called and empowered by God and the Church to be a model of Christ's servant ministry for all people. As agents of God's compassion and reconciling grace, deacons are missionaries to the world and messengers to the Church of the world's need, hopes, and concerns. In the Church, deacons call forth, empower, and inspire the baptized to respond to those needs" (*Association of Episcopal Deacons*).

Thank you to our Wardens, Chris Thomas and Paul Edwards, for their dedication and leadership. Chris led Morning Prayer three times in 2022. Two of these Sundays allowed me the opportunity to be with a friend in Boston whose cancer returned, and treatment begun again, as well as preach at her ordination, which was an immeasurable gift to us both.

**5. Together met, together bound,
we'll go our different ways
and as his people in the world
we'll live and speak his praise.**

Thank you to the Vestry: Tom Brooks, Zach Conway, Linda Engleby, Anne Fritts, Beth Gustafson, Taylor Hwong, Mary Kempen, Jenny Moss, Michael Myers, Sue Smith. Many thanks to Linda Engleby for your service as Clerk and Michael Myers as Treasurer. Having concluded two terms on Vestry, Michael is willing to run for a one-year term to continue the good work he has done these past two years as Treasurer. We thank

John Smith, volunteer Cemetery Manager, for his great care of this important community resource.

I'm grateful to Anne Fritts and Denise Thomas who are heading up our 125th Anniversary Committee. We hope that you will find a way to assist with and participate in the four planned events, all of which seek to welcome and engage the broader community in St. Bernard's anniversary celebration. More details can be found under 125th Anniversary. Together as the Christian community of St. Bernard's, may our Savior Christ lead us into becoming the Beloved Community – a shared and sacred reality that is loving, life-giving, and liberating for all.

Beth

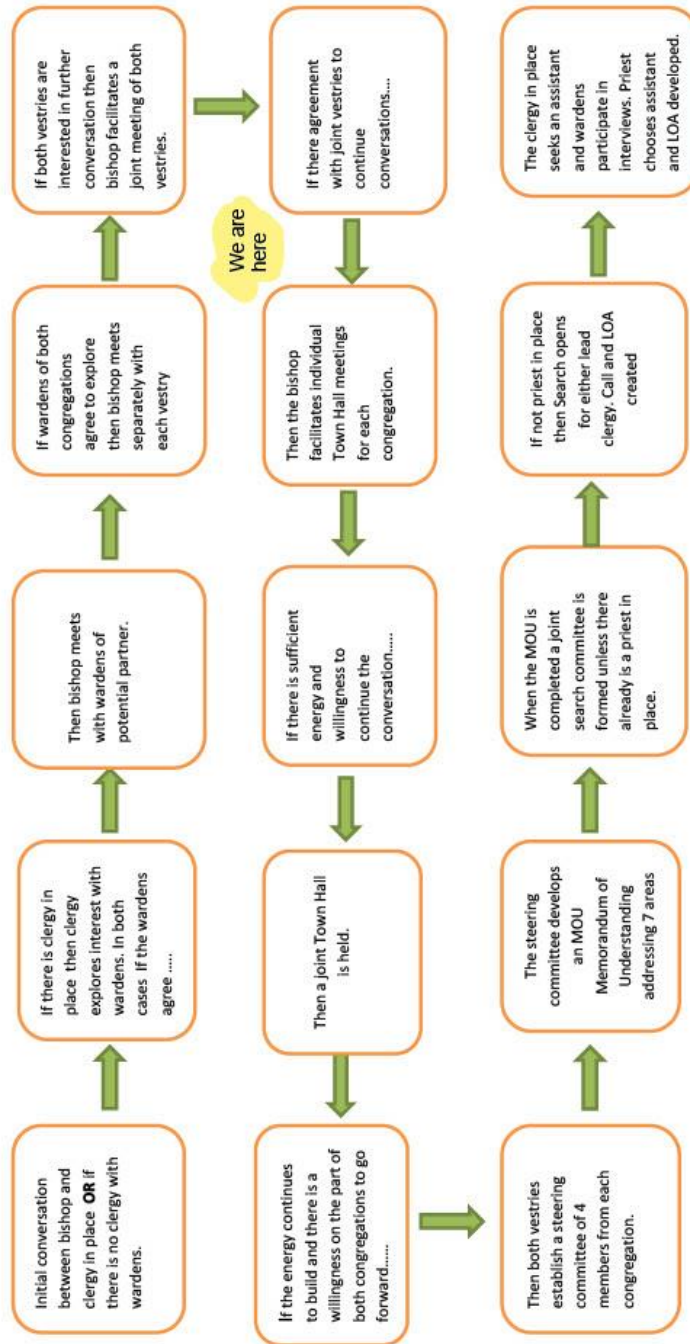
The Rev. Beth Rauen Sciaino, Rector

AFFILIATION FLOW CHART

Affiliation Process: A Series of Good Conversations

The conversations are begun and lead by The Bishop with Chief Operating Officer and Canon to the Ordinary/Transition Officer

Conversations can be suspended at any time temporarily or permanently. Affiliations are not mergers! In an affiliation each congregation maintains their identity, culture, ministries, wardens-vestries, buildings, boilers, budgets.



WARDENS' REPORT – *Christopher Thomas, Paul Edwards*

For St. Bernard's Church, 2022 was another extraordinary year. After 2 years, we were finally able to return to in person services on a regular basis, although continued to supplement that with our online congregation. Through it all, the St Bernard's family continued to support our community and each other.

Despite the challenges, outreach has continued as a top priority for parishioners who gave much of their time and talent to serving the needs of our community. Cathy Ferrara's enthusiasm and guidance are a beautiful thing, and God's Giving Garden's produced over 5000 pounds of food for the Food Bank. In addition, the Homework Helpers, under the leadership of Cindy McWilliams was able to restart after a two-year absence. Under Mindy Kirby's and Mary Kempen's leadership, we continued to support the Food Bank Network of Somerset County with semi-annual ham and turkey collection. Fellowship also returned, with regular coffee hours returning in September and a wonderful Christmas brunch managed by Denise Thomas, Jenny Moss, and Michelle Esposito-Edwards.

Please take the time to read each outreach group's report to see how much good is still being done by St. Bernard's Church. If you don't already participate, as they become available we hope you will take advantage of opportunities to be of service to the community.

We continue to struggle with a financial deficit – our 2023 budget will be no different. Unfortunately, due to the volatility in the stock market, our overall investment balances were reduced in addition to the amount we withdrew to fund our deficit. In 2023, we will continue to pledge 10% of our budget to the Diocese of New Jersey. We are most grateful to Michael Myers for continuing in the Treasurer's role for the parish and for the reports he has developed to support our ongoing finances, as well as budget preparation, ably supported by a Finance Committee.

In late 2022, the vestry and wardens were approached by St. John on the Mountain, to consider an affiliation between the two parishes. This arrangement would involve sharing of clergy, and would provide cost savings for both parishes, as they struggle with financial concerns. It would also allow sharing of ministry resources between to the two parishes, and allow us to find other "out of the box" opportunities to service the community and our congregations, better. Although there are clearly important financial advantages to be gained for both parishes, this opportunity to maximize and share resources has the potential to create not only stronger individual parishes, but Episcopal worship across Bernardsville and beyond. This affiliation follows a process led by diocesan staff, and both vestries have voted to continue investigation of this relationship into 2023, (see Affiliation Flow Chart on p.8).

In 2022, we welcomed Deacon Karen Lewis to St Bernard's, to assist Pastor Beth in worship and other activities. This was also the second year Dr. Martin Sedek led the music program and our choral section leaders provided wonderful musical leadership and offerings. Alison Davidson continued to serve and help the congregation continue to worship together on-site and online through Zoom in spiritually rewarding and meaningful ways. We are again extremely grateful to John Smith, our extraordinary voluntary Cemetery Manager, who spent many 40-hour weeks cataloguing, computerizing and mapping the cemetery, and to the great team of Taylor Hwong and Tom Brooks, who took over Building and Grounds.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your wardens in 2022. It is our hope and prayer that 2023 will bring all of you, your loved ones, and the communities you serve good health, great blessings, and many opportunities.

YEARLY SUMMARY

In the beginning of 2022, I was still serving as a deacon at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Gladstone, where I had been appointed for four years. I was experiencing great fatigue due to personal health issues as well as overall exhaustion from working in a hospital throughout the pandemic. My role as a deacon was, in my opinion, misunderstood causing difficulty maintaining boundaries or allowing any time for self-care. After consulting with the Archdeacons in the diocese who encouraged me to write a letter to Bishop Stokes requesting some time off, I was granted a six-month medical leave. During this time, I continued working full-time in the hospital but used my weekends and evenings to rest and reflect. I made the heartbreaking decision to not return to St. Luke's, where I had been a member for many years prior to my ordination to the diaconate. I began worshipping at St. Bernard's in the summer and Pastor Beth welcomed me and offered guidance to me during a difficult transition. Ultimately, Bishop Stokes reassigned me to serve as a deacon to the parish of St. Bernard's. I began my duties on October 23, 2022.

SECULAR EMPLOYMENT

PALLIATIVE CARE CHAPLAIN AT CHILTON MEDICAL CENTER IN POMPTON PLAINS

I serve as the Board-Certified Palliative Care Chaplain at Chilton Medical Center in Pompton Plains. This is a full-time position where I am contracted for the hours of 7 am-3 pm, Monday through Friday. I work on a team that is comprised of two Advanced Nurse Practitioners, a Medical Social Worker, and myself. As their chaplain, I am responsible for providing a specialist level of expertise in assessing the spiritual and existential needs of patients and families and the delivery of interventions, including active listening, pastoral counseling, crisis mediation, education, prayer and support. I am an active member of the ethics committee. I also provide supportive services for staff through debriefings after traumatic events as well as one on one counseling and assistance with the moral injury and compassion fatigue. In addition, I am responsible for creating education events that help to inform the staff of the role of the chaplain and spiritual care in the healthcare setting. This year I have co-led three education events: Spiritual and Emotional Distress in Long Term Stay or Complex Patients, The Chaplain and Social Worker's Role in Suicide Prevention, and Identifying Patients for Transitions of Care and Reducing Readmissions. I also provide bereavement services to the families of patients who have died.

As a Board-Certified Chaplain, I am responsible for completing fifty continuing education units per year. This past year, I was able to attend the Annual Conference hosted by the ACPE and APC. The title of the conference was Freedom, Wonder, and Liberation: Anti-bias Practices of Spiritual Care and Education. I was also able to engage in many webinars, lectures, and symposiums. It is my hope that next year I can complete the Essentials of Palliative Care Chaplaincy, which is an eight-week long instruction course. This could aid in my desire to become an Advanced Practice Chaplain with Board-Certification in Hospice and Palliative Care.

DIACONAL DIOCESAN ACTIVITIES

I attended Deacon Day in April which was held at the Cathedral in Trenton. Many deacons from the diocese were present and we engaged in discussions, had lunch, met with Bishop Stokes, and worshipped together. Attendance at Deacon Day fulfills every deacon's responsibility to meet with the bishop at least one time during the year. I also attended the Deacon's Retreat in October. The retreat was held at St. Marguerite's and the event was titled: Nurturing the Deacon's Soul. It was organized by The Rev. Theodore A. Foley, Archdeacon of the Diocese of New Jersey, and was led by The Rev. Dr. Maria B. Sanzo. I found both events helpful in connecting with other deacons and forming friendships and support systems.

REFLECTIONS

I have overcome many difficulties in the past few years and I am still healing from the events at St. Luke's. However, my calling to the dying continues to be at the forefront. It is my hope that my presence at St. Bernard's will be a blessing to the congregation, but I also pray the congregation will validate my calling and empower me to continue. I am so grateful and honored to be among you.

MUSIC MINISTRY – *Dr. Martin Sedek, Music Director*

The St. Bernard's music program has enjoyed a distinct feeling of "back to normal" this year! With masks being optional and our choir back to its regular schedule, I think we've all breathed a sigh of relief at the progress we've made as a community and as a church family, and are enjoying the full benefit of our extremely capable choir as they enrich our worship each Sunday morning.

We continue to be fortunate to host our professional section leaders: Samantha, Devin, Jason, and Debi. All members of the music program, both artistic and administrative, have been instrumental in allowing us to continue having our worship lifted even higher by music. We invested substantial funds and effort into improving our audio-visual delivery over Zoom, especially so that those joining us remotely can also enjoy the beautiful music as much as possible; we see each Sunday how many people join us over Zoom and are their presence is felt with us in the church, and so investing in improving the quality of our virtual delivery was time and money very well spent.

St. Bernard's is now also starting to come back to life a bit as a venue for performances. My professional vocal collective Vocola delighted audiences in December, we hosted an organ recital and a student film, and my wife Eileen has presented two of her studio recitals in our beautiful space, with a third around the corner.

We continue our mission of raising funds for our crucial music program with both annual appeals and special appeals for occasions that arise. The continued generosity of members of our St. Bernard's family has allowed us to continue creating music at a high artistic level for the benefit of all, and I trust that we will continue in this spirit in the year to come.

SAINT BERNARD'S CEMETERY – *John Smith*

For 2022 the cemetery had 20 burials, the average over the past 7 years is 15 burials per year. For 2022 the cemetery had 18 plot sales, the average over the past 7 years is 8 lot sales per year. We believe that COVID-19 was an influence in the increased plot sales. For 2022, the cemetery had 9 foundation sales, the average over the past 7-years is 8 foundations per year.

Thanks to Mayor Mary Jane Canose for once again organizing St. Bernard's Cemetery participation in the Wreaths Across America program. Our Honored Veteran this year was Charlie Ashmun, former Treasurer of St. Bernard's Church. Thanks to the many volunteers, more than 90 Veterans' graves received a Wreath to thank them for their service to our country.

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS – *Tom Brooks, Taylor Hwong*

The past year witnessed the return to "normal" following COVID. Church services continued to be mixed in-person/Zoom, with more parishioners returning as COVID-related cases decreased; use of the Parish House increased as coffee hour, tutoring and other activities resumed.

Overall, maintenance and repair costs were fairly-well contained during the year. Several circumstances helped mitigate expenses, including The Heritage at Claremont Condo board's continued provision of grounds maintenance and snow removal, and the reduced number of mature trees on our property which reduced the need for arborist services and gutter cleaning. On the other hand, we resumed shrub maintenance and had to replace blighted boxwoods. We also renewed our annual HVAC contract with A.J. Celiano, although at an increased cost.

Several important activities by the "Buildings and Grounds" included:

- Conducting monthly tests of emergency escape signs/lighting in both the Church and Parish House to satisfy fire code requirements.
- Working with Celiano and the fire inspector to identify and conduct fire damper tests (required biennially) to satisfy code requirements.

- Working with the insurance adjusters and NGC Development to identify why several façade pieces fell off the Parish House; although the damage has been rectified, preventative steps (e.g., caulking, strapping) may need to be taken to prevent similar problems from occurring in the future.
- Working with the Bernardsville Office of Emergency Management to determine how a generator might be connected to the Parish House if needed in an emergency.
- Making adjustments to programmed lighting options in the Church to make it easier to switch between various lighting requirements.
- Repairing the faulty hot water tank in the Parish House.
- Helping to erect and later to uninstall the scaffolding needed to reach the organ ranks at the rear of the church for maintenance.
- Coordinating the removal/rebuild of a leaking HVAC circulation pump in the church – an expensive but necessary expenditure to ensure heat during the winter months.

Work in the coming year will include reviewing major B&G contracts to determine savings opportunities; performing monthly tests to ensure compliance with fire codes; providing support as needed for special 125th Anniversary activities.

STEWARDSHIP – *Paul Edwards*

Being asked to take on responsibility for leading our Stewardship program from Julia Somers was the very definition of “big shoes to fill,” given the immense work that Julia did to maintain our focus on Stewardship through the challenges of the pandemic with no on-site worship. Our success this Stewardship season is in no small part down to the strong foundation that Julia and her predecessors left me to build on.

As we have now entered into our 125th anniversary year, it will surely be a year of celebration for the wonderful work and legacy that those who came before us have done to establish such a beautiful place of worship, playing such an important role in the lives of many in the Bernardsville and Somerset Hills community. However, our celebrations will also be forward-looking, an opportunity to think about, and plan for, what we can and should leave as our legacy for generations of worshippers in the next 125 years.

St. Bernard’s future, and our ability to maintain and grow our outreach and positive influence in the community, is reliant on a strong and sustainable financial foundation. Only by having the confidence of knowing we have financial pledges for the year ahead can we have the ability to plan for and provide the wonderful worship and facilities that many of us see and enjoy throughout the year. As we all know, very little comes for free these days, so your financial pledges and support are not just greatly appreciated, they are essential if we are going to be able to pass on a successful and preferably thriving church to future generations.

This year, we also spoke about pledging of “time & talents.” Many thanks to those of you who completed our Time & Talent sheet, and we will look to follow up on your replies and suggestions. The incredible talents that we have access to in this congregation, in so many forms, and the amount of precious time I see members of St. Bernard’s investing into the work of the church and associated outreach is like nothing I have seen before. I believe it is what sets us apart from many other churches, and please be assured this is not taken for granted.

Thank you again to those of you who shared your own experiences during our Stewardship season, and I hope you enjoyed hearing the perspective from members of our wider community for whom the work of St. Bernard’s means so much: Megan McDowell of Heartworks, Bernardsville Police Chief and Office of Emergency Management Coordinator Kevin Valentine, and Pastor Dan Fenco of Camino de Fe Lutheran Church. These stories both inspire and reflect our larger community, letting us find valuable fellowship.

Despite the very challenging financial times we are living in, and the additional pressures we are all experiencing on our wallets and purses, I am humbled to be able to report that although the number of individuals and families pledging has

declined this year (in part due to a number of long-standing members of our church moving away from the area), the value of pledges has continued to increase, resulting in us exceeding \$160,000 for the first time in recent years. Clearly, if we can also increase the numbers willing to make a financial commitment through making a pledge, no matter what the value, this will help achieve what we want and need to even more.

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
# of Pledges	45	49	50	49	44
Amt. Pledged	163,256	157,403	157,141	145,485	132,780
Total Pledge/plate	169,000	166,595	171,820	152,441	144,000

If you still haven't pledged for 2023, or are new to our church and community and wish to learn more about our Stewardship, please reach out to me at paul.edwards0966@gmail.com and I will be very happy to help answer your questions. Equally, if you know of family or friends who you think would be interested in making a financial commitment to St. Bernard's, please encourage them to contact me.

We will also continue to look at additional ways to help raise finances for St. Bernard's and our community outreach activities, and later this year as part of our 125th anniversary we will launch a Planned Giving program that will allow anyone to bequeath a legacy or bequest to St. Bernard's as part of any estate planning. More to come!

Finally, thank you to all who have participated in this year's Stewardship program, and to all of you who have helped and partnered with me as I have had the privilege to lead this successful effort.

COMMUNITY & FELLOWSHIP

Gathering and getting to know each other and what's happening in each other's lives is an important aspect of parish life. We found ways to do this online during the pandemic and then found our way back into in-person opportunities in 2022. Occasional coffee hours were held in the first half of the year, including on Palm Sunday, as we tested the waters and people's comfort levels with resuming in-person refreshments.

On June 26, we celebrated graduations in the parish and among grandchildren of parishioners during worship and in a slideshow. That same Sunday, St. Bernard's celebrated Camp Sunday as we prayed for Cross Roads Camp and Retreat Center and Camp Arcadia, a girls' camp in Maine led by Anne Fritts' family for four generations, along with all campers and camp staff.

Pastor Beth served as the officiant at Gill St Bernard's School's graduation in June, during which two parishioners were graduated: Anthony Curialle and J. W. Gustafson. St. Bernard's second and long-time rector, the Rev. Thomas Conover, founded the St. Bernard's School for boys in 1900 which merged with The Gill School for girls in 1972.

Regular weekly coffee hour resumed in September, providing an opportunity for parishioners and visitors alike to connect on Sundays. The Blessing of the Animals was held on Oct. 2 as a part of the celebration of the Feast of St. Francis. Dogs attended in person and a range of pets were featured and blessed during the slide show. A social dinner was held at Bistro Seven Three in Bernardsville in late October, organized by Paul Edwards and Michele Esposito-Edwards in response to parishioner interest. Volunteers helped Green the church for Christmas and the Fritts family decorated with poinsettias in late December. Denise Thomas, Michele Esposito-Edwards, and Jenny Moses hosted a festive and fun Advent Brunch on Dec. 18 following worship, with caroling led by Samantha Ferrara and Devin McGuire.

As we look ahead to this year's 125th Anniversary of St. Bernard's Episcopal Church, we will have more opportunities for fellowship events to which we can invite and welcome friends, family, and neighbors.

ST. BERNARD'S CHURCH 125TH ANNIVERSARY



In 2023, St. Bernard's Episcopal Church celebrates 125 years of worship, faith formation, and service to the community in Bernardsville. Currently the 125th Anniversary Committee planning anniversary events consists of Anne Fritts, Denise Thomas, and Pastor Beth. More are welcome to join! We began with asking local graphic designer Victor Hunt to design an anniversary logo for St. Bernard's and incorporate the decorative iron cross on top of St. Bernard's bell tower (Anne's great idea!). This logo was first shared with the parish on Christmas Eve 2022. We plan on creating various items with the anniversary logo this year, plenty of which will be free. We would like to hold four anniversary events this year, and there are many ways to get involved to help celebrate St. Bernard's. We hope to hold a concert, historical talk, service of thanksgiving for community volunteers and professionals, and movie afternoon/night at the local movie theater in Bernardsville. If you'd like to be involved in planning an event, designing promotional materials, spreading the word in the broader community, helping with a related reception in the Parish Hall, or serving as a greeter – please feel free to reach out to the committee. We are just working on scheduling events now and will have more details in the near future. We hope that these will be free events, likely with the opportunity to give a free-will offering to the Community Fund of St. Bernard's Church for those who want to donate. We hope that celebrating our history as a parish that tends the community and thanks the Lord for God's active presence in our lives will encourage St. Bernard's Episcopal Church for many years to come.

EPISCOPAL COMMUNITY SERVICES OF THE DIOCESE OF NEW JERSEY (ECS–NJ)

We Are Stronger Together



Episcopal Community Services of NJ is a diocesan initiative begun in late 2020 to “focus on proactively addressing human needs and relentlessly working against both social and racial injustice.”

“ECS–NJ fulfills its mission mandate by:

- Raising funds across the diocese.
 - Networking and building meaningful relationships between our congregations.
 - Giving grants to churches of the Diocese to help to expand existing ministries, or to encourage exciting new initiatives.
- Advocating for the reform of social structures and systems, which are unjust, and fail to respect the dignity of every human being.”

There are two grant cycles per year. “The ECS-NJ grants are designed to expand existing charity and justice ministries of congregations in the Diocese and make new ones possible. Projects should address one or more of the following objectives:

- To meet human need in underserved and marginalized communities, especially communities of color
- To engage, collaborate, and partner with other organizations, including faith-based, secular, community, governmental, etc.
- To encourage advocacy for issue relating to social justice, including spearheading new advocacy effort.”

St. Bernard's is honored to be one of 24 founding congregations of Episcopal Community Services of NJ. Thus far, St. Bernard's has contributed \$6,750 toward our \$10,000, three-year commitment as a founding congregation, primarily through our Outreach budget line. Your individual donations to ECS-NJ can also help us reach our \$10,000 goal. By supporting ECS-NJ with budgeted funds, our Outreach budget line has a much greater impact helping communities throughout the lower two thirds of NJ. We plan on holding a fun, fellowship-based fundraiser for ECS in 2023. Each year,

congregations throughout the diocese celebrate ECS-NJ Sunday in early May to highlight the importance ways we are partnering with God and serving God's people throughout NJ through this initiative.

We are looking for a parishioner who is excited about the work ECS-NJ is doing throughout the diocese and can serve as St. Bernard's ECS champion. An ECS champion will

- “serve as a liaison to the vestry
- be the “human face” of ECS-NJ in your congregation
- share ECS-NJ messages and events
- communicate your congregation's needs/wants with ECS-NJ
- attend biannual briefings with the Bishop and ECS-NJ leadership”

Please speak with a Warden or Pastor Beth if you are interested in trying on this role. ECS-NJ invites people to become friends of ECS-NJ to commit to praying regularly for this vital ministry, donating when able, and receiving updates.

<https://dioceseofnj.org/ecs-friend/> . In 2022, almost \$200,000 was distributed in ECS-NJ grants to support efforts in 16 congregations (see below). Congregations can also receive assistance with their grant applications, which will benefit them when applying for grants from other sources. Online resources can be found on the diocesan website:

<https://dioceseofnj.org/ecs>. There is also a link to donate and to the YouTube Playlist which has recordings of ECS-NJ summits and informational meetings on topics.

Spring 2022 ECS-NJ grants

#	Congregation	County	Project receiving ECS grant	Summary	Amount
1	Christ Church, Toms River	Ocean	Community Outreach to the Homeless	Hire Outreach coordinator to work with trained teams to engage with people	\$15,000
2	St. Mark's, Plainfield	Union	The Out of the Box Club: A Math & Science Club to Develop STEM Skills Using Experiential Learning	Partnering with Plainfield Grassroots Community Development Corporation to promote the love of math and science to elementary and middle school students	\$8,000
3	St. Peter's, Freehold	Monmouth	Community Housing Clearinghouse	A founding partner of the Emergency Housing and Advocacy Program. Part-time housing assistance manager to help get clients into the workforce and connect with safety service providers.	\$15,000
4	St. Paul's, Camden	Camden	Feed My Sheep	Expansion of food ministry providing breakfast and dinner every Sunday and lunch on Fridays.	\$15,000
5	St. Mary's, Stone Harbor	Cape May	Branches After School Instruction and Inspirational Care	After school program for low-income families in an intergenerational environment.	10,000
6	St. James, Bradley Beach	Monmouth	Fresh is Best	Fresh fruits and vegetables for 800 families served monthly by the Bradley Food Pantry.	\$8,000
7	Holy Trinity, South River	Middlesex	Casa Amistad (Friendship House)	Redevelopment of rectory as a center for Latino ministry, bringing Spanish and English ministry together.	\$15,000
8	Trinity, Asbury Park	Monmouth	Trinity Radical Well-being Program	Wrap-around services for people at risk in the community, including financial literacy training, job search counseling, community building exercise classes, and recovery resources.	\$15,000
9	Trinity Cathedral, Trenton	Mercer	ServSafe and Life Skills for Ex-Offenders	Ex-offender rehabilitation and mentoring working with houses of worship and Fathers to Men. ServSafe courses held at Mercer County Community College helps prepare for employment in hospitality.	\$10,000
Total					\$111,000

Fall 2022 ECS-NJ grant recipients

#	Congregation	County	Project receiving ECS grant	Summary	Amount
1	Grace Church, Plainfield	Union	Plainfield Community Outreach Language Learning Center	Bring together English and Spanish speakers.	\$15,000
2	St. Barnabas-by-the-Sea, Villas	Cape May	Saint Barnabas Cares—Meeting Changing Needs in Our Community	Creatively expand thrift store and food pantry offerings in the community.	\$8,000
3	St. Elizabeth's, Elizabeth	Union	ServSafe Food Handler program	Prepare people through online courses to qualify for jobs in the food services industry.	\$15,000
4	St. James, Eatontown	Monmouth	SJE Medical Equipment Ministry	Along with partner organizations, accept and redistribute gently used medical equipment.	\$9,000
5	St. Mary's, Burlington	Burlington	Ladle of Love	Expanding food pantry ministry including with dairy and meat.	\$8,330
6	St. Mary's, Pleasantville	Atlantic	Community Development and Outreach	Reboot English as a Second Language and Homework Help programs.	\$15,000
7	St. Peter's, Clarksboro	Gloucester	St. Peter's Community Food Pantry	Opening up a food pantry and distribution ministry, after the closure of one at a neighboring church.	\$15,000
Total					\$85,330

CHRISTIAN FORMATION – *The Rev. Beth Rauen Sciaino*

St. Bernard's offered a range of formation opportunities in 2022. Bible 101 resumed monthly on Sundays via Zoom, led by Al Hudgins. The classes remain available on St. Bernard's website: <https://www.stbernardsnj.org/bible-101>, including the first 4 classes from 2021.

Session #5 (Feb. 13) – “Stones from the River”

Session #6 (Mar. 13) – “The Dark Night of the Soul”

Session #7 (Apr. 3) – “The Method, the Message, and the Mystery”

Session #8 (May 1) – “When Morning Gilds the Skies”

Session #9 (Oct. 9) – “The Bible House”

Session #10 (Nov. 13) – “The Long and the Short of It”

Session #11 (Dec. 11) – “Chronological Christmas”

We also offered Scripture as Art on 5 Sundays in 2022: Feb. 27, Mar. 27, Apr. 24, Sept. 25, and Oct. 30. Three to four weeks in advance a Scripture passage was emailed and posted and people were invited to listen and read the passage and respond creatively. A range of creative expression engaging the passage was shared during our time on Zoom – including collage, painting, word play, math word problem, poetry, song, crafting, and more.

Zoom Evening Prayer continued on Wednesdays at 5:30 pm, meeting weekly during Lent and Advent, and every other week during the rest of the program year, with a break over the summer. Each week we learn about a saint of the church and the Scripture reading reflected the saint's life. The bulletin and an insert for the saint can be found on our website. In the fall, we moved the liturgy onto slides for all to more easily follow along and invited St. Paul's, Morris Plains, and St. John on the Mountain to participate. Rev. Danielle helps lead the service with Pastor Beth. All are welcome to join us, including listening in while commuting or walking the dog.

During Lent 2022, resources from A Sanctified Art were distributed on the theme of Full to the Brim: An Expansive Lent. Parishioners were encouraged to participate in Lent Madness, learning about saints of the Church as they compete for the Golden Halo. You can subscribe for daily emails and/or vote each day on the website: <https://www.lentmadness.org/>. Prior winners: José Hernández (2022), Absalom Jones (2021), Harriet Tubman (2020), Martha of Bethany (2019), Anna Alexander (2018), Florence Nightingale (2017), Dietrich Bonhoeffer (2016), Francis of Assisi (2015), Charles Wesley (2014), Frances Perkins (2013), Mary Magdalene (2012), C. S. Lewis (2011), and George Herbert (2010).

We continued holding in-person JOY! services for families with young children on the 3rd Sunday of the month at 9 am in the Parish Hall or outside. This 20-minute informal worship experience engage children and their parents in song, Bible story, prayer, and faith conversation. We hope to return to worshipping in the church soon for the JOY! service, as long as it doesn't conflict with choir rehearsal. Lenten and Advent resources for families with children and youth were distributed. Elementary and middle school parishioners were welcomed to participate occasionally during worship as acolytes. Pastor Beth engaged children in an interactive sermon during the 4 pm Christmas Eve service.

In 2022, we shared Ash Wednesday with St. Mark's, Basking Ridge and St. John on the Mountain. Services were held at 9 am (St. Mark's), 12 pm (St. Bernard's), and 7 pm (St. John). Our preacher was the Rev. Canon Dr. Rob Droste, Canon for Congregational Development and Mission, Diocese of NJ. During Holy Week, we observed the following services on-site and online: Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday Holy Eucharist in the evening, Good Friday at noon, as well as celebrated Easter Sunday in two services (9 am and 11 am).

On July 3, St. Bernard's, St. Mark's, St. John on the Mountain, and St. Luke's, Gladstone, worshipped together in an outdoor Eucharist under the tent at Moorland Farms in Far Hills with a combined choir, brass sextet, and Bishop Chip Stokes celebrating and preaching. This service was also streamed online. This tradition was resumed in 2021.

In the fall, a small group of parishioners read the first half of the book *The Heart of Christianity: Rediscovering a Life of Faith* by Marcus Borg and reflected on it during six Zoom sessions on Thursday nights, facilitated by Pastor Beth using a leader's guide for the book. The second half will be explored in 2023.

Advent Wreath Making was held in the Parish Hall, on Nov. 20, including a version for young kids following the JOY! service. St. Bernard's hosted the joint Blue Christmas Service on Thursday, Dec. 22, with St. Mark's and St. John on the Mountain. The choir lead the music beautifully for this meditative service. The Blue Christmas service is designed to be beneficial and uplifting for those of us who are experiencing sorrow, loss, or grief during the festive season. We continue to welcome all to attend. It was a blessing to celebrate Christmas Eve and Day on-site and online this past year.

CROSS ROADS CAMP AND RETREAT CENTER, PORT MURRAY, NJ

The Rev. Beth Rauen Sciaino

In 2022, Cross Roads Camp and Retreat Center successfully hosted guest retreats and held youth retreats, the annual women's retreat, plus 4 weeks of summer Youth Camp and a week (and weekend!) of Family Camp. Pastor Beth and her son attended Family Camp. Youth and Family Camp continued to be subsidized for all campers, now with a tiered pricing system so that those who can afford to do so can help cover the cost of others. Cross Roads continued to experience reduced income from retreats and other contracts in 2022. Pastor Beth is the chair of Cross Roads Development Council.

In October, parishioners were key to helping Pastor Beth raise \$1,381.66 in the Rally for Cross Roads 5K Walk/Run. Beth also participated in two retreats with the Shape of Leadership 2 leadership program hosted at Cross Roads. Cross Roads continues to be a meaningful place to connect with nature, God, and build community. As well as to get away for rest, renewal, disconnection from our electronic life. It's a wonderful environment for immersion in our Christian faith, lived out over meals, singing, and outdoor fun. Contributions to Cross Roads Annual Fund for annual recurring needs are welcome at any time, www.crossroadsretreat.com. Thank you for supporting Cross Roads, our Episcopal/Lutheran camp and retreat center in NJ.

Outreach Reports

OUTREACH COMMITTEE – Sue Smith

St. Bernard's always excels itself in outreach and service to the community and this year was no exception. Below is a list of outreach activities that we participated in throughout the year. We are always looking for new outreach opportunities and volunteers to help out, **so if you have a new idea or would like to participate in any Outreach Program, please speak to Pastor Beth, 908-766-0602.**

Month	Outreach Activity
January	Sock collection – new socks, were collected for those in need. St. John on the Mountain helped this year.
February	Our successful Homework Help Program reconvened after a break through the pandemic. They meet on Tuesdays & Wednesday from 3-5 pm, volunteers are welcome. See Homework Help report for details.
March	St. Mark's invited us to participate with other churches in a Creative Can Collection Event . Parishioners were asked to create sculptures with cans and submit photos of their sculptures. St. Bernard's won awards for the "Most Imaginative" and "Best Castle". St. Bernard's collected 214 lbs. of food which was donated to the food banks as did neighboring churches.
March & April	Parishioners were invited to attend Reparations Commission Webinars .
April & Nov.	Our traditional Turkey, Chicken and Ham Collections were held for Easter and Thanksgiving.
May	In May we launched our Feeding America Backpack Program and Food Bank Network of Somerset County Drive placing a recycling bin outside the church for anyone to donate non-perishable foods, at any time. The food is then delivered to the Food Bank. On May 8 we celebrated ECS-NJ Sunday during our Sunday service.
May through November	God's Giving Garden produced 5115 lbs. of harvest to be delivered to various food banks and institutions. They also held a very successful Honey Sale . This money goes back into the Garden for next year's supplies. The Garden Blessing was held on May 22.
July, October	Zufall Health Dental Van visited Bernardsville and to give treatment to students who could not afford usual dental treatment and St. Bernard's Community Fund helped with the cost.
2022	Parishioners were invited to support victims of Hurricane Ian, and also people in war torn Ukraine through Episcopal Relief & Development .
October	Our annual Stewardship Campaign was launched and this year outside speakers connected with our community engagement were invited to speak or write a reflection. Pastor Beth participated in the annual Rally For Cross Roads Retreat & Camp Center , raising \$1,381 for Camp with your generous support.
November	Thanksgiving Food Drive – a few creative parishioners beautifully decorated our altar with food (fresh fruits & vegetable, pumpkins, a cornucopia etc.) then invited parishioners to bring non-perishable food items on the day of the service. The food was donated to the Somerset County Food Bank.
December	St. Bernard's Cemetery participated in Wreaths Across America for the 2 nd year.

GRACE'S KITCHEN – *John Smith*

Grace's Kitchen has served more than 210,000 meals to the homeless and hungry in Plainfield since 1994. From the very beginning, volunteers from St. Bernard's Church helped prepare and serve those meals. Unfortunately, COVID-19 made it impossible to have large gatherings indoors for a "sit down" meal and volunteers were not needed. A limited kitchen staff has prepared bag lunches and distributed them outside of Grace Church. Unfortunately, Grace Church can no longer support the cost of repairing and maintaining their building and the church will be sold. The Congregation will merge with St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Plainfield. The soup kitchen cannot continue at St. Mark's, so leaders from the Plainfield Community Outreach program are currently searching for a suitable site in Plainfield for the soup kitchen operation. At this time, it is not anticipated that volunteers will be required for the program going forward.

GOD'S GIVING GARDEN – *Cathy Ferrara*

It was truly a banner year at God's Giving Garden. We flew past our 'reach goal' of 3000lbs, and our final total was 5,115 lbs. of fresh vegetables and herbs donated to the hungry of Somerset County. Our donations were once again split between the Food Bank Network of Somerset County, the Veterans at Lyons VA, and the God's Co-op Pantry, Bernardsville.

Three new beds added at the end of last year were helpful in having such a huge harvest, as was the weather. All the long hot days combined with our irrigation system, allowed the 4 beds of tomatoes to go above and beyond! Other big producers this year were green beans, butternut squash, zucchini and yellow summer squash. A 'fan favorite', (because the plant and blossoms are so beautiful) Okra, grew to over 7 feet tall! Having our own Apiary to provide pollinators surely helps. Selling the delicious honey allows us to improve and maintain the garden beds and the fencing to protect the vegetables from the deer that roam the grounds.

This summer we were blessed with a group of volunteers from the churches and the community who made the commitment to help. Whether it be 3 times a week, once a month or anywhere in between, every single volunteer hour made a difference. Volunteers are needed to plant, weed and harvest, as well as to transport the harvest to the various agencies. Please note there is always help loading and unloading when delivering. Please join us next year as we continue this important mission.

THE COMMUNITY FUND – *Sue Smith & Pastor Beth*

The Community Fund of St. Bernard's Episcopal Church was active in community again this year. The Community Fund stepped into action when Latino middle and high school students needed assistance accessing doctor's appointments to be cleared to return to school in January during the Omicron surge. The school district requirement was difficult to manage for students without health insurance or a regular pediatrician. Pastor Dan Fenco of Camino de Fe Lutheran Church (which meets at St. Bernard's) and Pastor Beth coordinated with a local doctor's office in Bernardsville, Sinatra and Peng Pediatrics, which generously reduced the cost and made time for student appointments, often with a bilingual pediatrician. The cost of the 14 doctor's visits was funded through the Community Fund, helping 14 students return to school after COVID exposure or quarantine.

In 2022, Pastor Beth and the Community Fund also worked with the school district and Pastor Dan to enlist the dental van from Zufall Health in Somerville to come to Bernardsville twice to provide cleanings and X-rays for 17 elementary school students who do not have dental insurance or access to biannual cleanings. The Community Fund paid a portion of the cost for each child, which was already federally subsidized. The Community Fund also covered the food costs for spring and fall barbecues that connect Latino parents and elementary school students with school district and community resources. ShopRite gift cards were also purchased for distribution.

The mission of the Community Fund is simply to provide emergency financial assistance in the greater Somerset Hills area. The grants—up to \$3,000—are given on a one-time basis for a specific need. The Community Fund receive grant requests from credible sponsors such as clergy, schools, social workers, nonprofits, and police on behalf of an individual

or family. All of the grant applications are confidential. The Fund expects its grants to be a component of a larger partnership of assistance. In 2022, the Community Fund also assisted seven local families with one-time grants including paying one month of rent or mortgage, health insurance, or major car repair.

You can help this outreach program to our neighbors in need by sending contributions to the Community Fund of St. Bernard's Church to the parish office at 88 Claremont Road, Bernardsville, NJ 07924. Many community members and parishioners donated in 2020 and 2021 to help us ensure our neighbors were fed through the Pop-Up Food Pantry, a collaborative community effort hosted in St. Bernard's Parish Hall from April-Oct. 2020. We now seek to replenish the Community Fund to continue partnering with organizations like Heartworks and the Somerset Hills School District to help our neighbors in need.

As the fund continues its work in the community, we look forward to receiving more grant applications and donations. If any parishioners know of situations where the Community Fund could help or if you have questions about the Community Fund of St. Bernard's Church, please contact the Fund Administrator, Sue Smith, at 908-953-0301, Treasurer, Mindy Kirby, at 908-766-0084, or the Rev. Beth Rauen Sciaino at 908-766-0602.

HOMEWORK HELP AND ACADEMIC SUPPORT – *Cindy McWilliams*

Homework Helpers, our tutoring program run with the Somerset Hills YMCA, reopened March 2022. We have enjoyed in person learning with students grades 3-8, providing homework help, practice in basic skills, and a healthy snack. Our tutors, ages 14 -74+ years old, welcome the young students Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 3:00-5:00 in our parish hall. We are working hard to help our tutees make up for time lost in the classroom due to the pandemic. 2023 has been our most challenging year finding enough adult and teen tutors to ideally provide one on one help. We have capped the number of students we help to 13 (about half our regular number) until we can find more tutors. We are blessed to have such a lovely place for Homework Helpers to meet. We are blessed with smiles and thanks from our tutees and their incredibly grateful families.

Guilds' Reports

ALTAR GUILD – *Sue Smith*

The Altar Guild at St. Bernard's is responsible for preparing the altar for services every Sunday and for all ceremonies performed in the church. The members are also responsible for the care and cleaning of the sacred articles used during the services. We are actively seeking additional members, we currently have only four.

We invite all parishioners to consider assisting once a month in this vital service to the Parish. Membership is open to all, male, female, and any age. The current guild members are Mary Kempen, Betsy Klausing, Valerie McEntee, and Sue Smith. If interested, call Mary Kempen at 908-766-3632 or Sue Smith at 908-953-0301 for additional information.

FLOWER GUILD

The Flower Guild at St. Bernard's arranges for flowers to be on the altar at Christmas, Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday. Flowers are usually purchased for the altar from September through June for all in-person services and greens adorn the altar during Lent and the summer months. The church was "greened" for Christmas with beautiful poinsettias and wreaths. If a parishioner wishes to donate flowers in honor of their family or friends or in memory of a deceased loved one, please contact our Parish Administrator. A dedication will be included in the service bulletin for the chosen Sunday of your dedication. The suggested donation for flowers is \$75. Carmen Paul kindly delivers the flowers to the VA hospital to be enjoyed by patients and staff.

If interested in helping or being on the guild, call the Parish Office at 908-766-0602 for additional information.

CHALICIST GUILD – *Mary Kempen*

In 2022, St. Bernard's Church returned to Communion wine from the silver chalice. Parishioners, if they wanted, could sip from the silver chalice. This was in addition to the use of a ceramic cup for intinction. Chalicists come up from their pews to assist the priest at the time of Communion and then return to their pews after Communion is over. There is no need to vest. The chalicists are Mary Jane Canose, Mary Kempen, and Denise Thomas. We would welcome any interested parties – men or women – who would like to be a part of the Eucharist celebration.

Financials

TREASURER'S REPORT– *Michael Myers*

Summary of 2022 results vs. 2022 budget

Church: Our operating budget was about \$280 thousand—roughly 1/3 for clergy, 1/3 for administration and upkeep, and 1/3 for everything else (see table on next page). We end up covering only about two thirds from our annual donations and our strategy for covering the other 1/3 is to pull cash from investments. We finished the year better than budget by about \$3.6K (1.2%)—spending was very close to budget despite high inflation rates and we received slightly better than expected pledge and plate. The market downturn (19.4% in the S&P500 index in 2022) combined with operational requirements to negatively impact our investment portfolio, and total investments dropped 22% (\$275K) from \$1.2 million to \$954 thousand. Continued reliance on our investments to the degree currently necessary will not be possible for very much longer.

Cemetery: The cemetery budget tries to balance income from lot sales, burial fees, and cottage rental with burial costs, and property upkeep. The number of lot sales and burials any given year tend to fluctuate. We ended with a much higher number of lot sales this year than normal possibly due to a post-Covid interest in planning ahead.

- Revenue was favorable by \$62K due primarily due to the higher than normal lot sales.
- The drought in July and August led to less mowings and lower upkeep expenses

Looking Forward for 2023

Church: We look to continue support for our ministry and those who depend on us.

- Pledges continue to inch up, we budgeted \$160K for 2023 vs \$155K received in 2022. Every dollar counts both big and small thank you all!! If you haven't yet pledged, please see Paul Edwards!
- Total spending budget is \$292K, up only 4% vs prior year.
- Increases in pledging and the administrative fee charged to the cemetery will allow us to reduce amount needed to return from investment vs. 2022.

Cemetery: We anticipate using some of 2022's extra income on overdue maintenance items.

- We project revenues in line with the average of the last four years.
- We will increase the administration fee paid to the church for managing the cemetery.
- We anticipate other expenses to be about the same as 2022, except for catching up on tree trimming, road gravel and cottage lead paint remediation.

BUDGETS– Michael Myers

CHURCH BUDGET

Annual Report - St. Bernard's Episcopal Church 2015 Actual - 2023 Budget: Annual Operating Plan - Summary										
CATEGORY DESCRIPTION	2015 Actual	2016 Actual	2017 Actual	2018 Actual	2019 Actual	2020 Actual	2021 Actual	2022 Actual	2023 Budget	% of Budget
REVENUE										
PLEDGES/PLATE OFF.	\$143,707	\$132,227	\$137,767	\$143,312	\$148,337	\$152,441	\$171,820	\$166,594	\$169,000	58%
GIFTS AND DONATIONS	\$0	\$3,440	\$14,928	\$16,291	\$3,995	\$4,523	\$9,898	\$3,170	\$1,000	0%
OTHER INCOME	\$72,241	\$61,255	\$58,945	\$41,679	\$37,679	\$13,572	\$37,979	\$17,126	\$28,500	10%
Total Income from Operations	\$215,948	\$196,922	\$211,639	\$201,282	\$190,011	\$170,536	\$219,697	\$186,891	\$198,500	71%
EXPENSE										
CLERGY	\$50,828	\$80,628	\$81,064	\$88,541	\$83,352	\$95,977	\$91,930	\$98,379	\$104,327	36%
INSURANCE	\$44,356	\$33,349	\$31,791	\$27,598	\$24,600	\$25,736	\$27,144	\$28,684	\$29,399	10%
CHRISTIAN EDUCATE	\$151	\$1,437	\$578	\$1,528	\$168	\$1,766	\$1,707	\$1,046	\$2,600	1%
MUSIC PROGRAM COST	\$37,991	\$38,523	\$38,741	\$38,898	\$40,175	\$36,732	\$36,457	\$39,782	\$42,576	14.6%
Less: Music Restricted Gifts	(\$9,534)	(\$10,225)	(\$10,930)	(\$12,635)	(\$14,005)	(\$10,630)	(\$9,780)	(\$11,450)	(\$10,000)	-3.4%
MUSIC EXPENSE TO OPERATING	\$28,457	\$28,298	\$27,811	\$26,263	\$26,170	\$26,102	\$26,677	\$28,332	\$32,576	11%
ALTAR SUPPLIES	\$3,038	\$2,942	\$1,707	\$4,093	\$5,526	\$1,920	\$2,873	\$3,585	\$2,450	1%
PARISH LIFE & MISSION	\$10,600	\$13,397	\$12,728	\$16,006	\$19,864	\$23,492	\$26,313	\$25,543	\$29,337	10%
ADMINISTRATION	\$81,749	\$45,207	\$35,639	\$48,633	\$59,129	\$47,967	\$59,053	\$64,426	\$62,430	21%
PROPERTY UPKEEP	\$91,080	\$63,786	\$69,756	\$53,077	\$62,285	\$30,774	\$28,940	\$29,696	\$29,180	10%
Total Church Operating Expense	\$310,259	\$269,044	\$261,073	\$265,739	\$281,094	\$253,734	\$264,637	\$279,690	\$292,298	100%
Investment Return to Operating					\$ 76,000	\$ 30,000	\$65,000	\$100,000	\$80,000	27%
NET INCOME-(LOSS) Church	(\$94,311)	(\$72,122)	(\$49,434)	(\$64,457)	(\$15,083)	(\$53,198)	\$20,060	\$7,201	(\$13,798)	-5%

CEMETERY BUDGET

Annual Report - St. Bernard's Cemetery 2015 Actual - 2023 Budget: Annual Operating Plan - Summary										
CATEGORY DESCRIPTION	2015 Actual	2016 Actual	2017 Actual	2018 Actual	2019 Actual	2020 Actual	2021 Actual	2022 Actual	2023 Budget	% of Budget
REVENUE										
INVESTMENT INCOME	\$1,608	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$6,548	\$10,000	8%
COTTAGE RENTAL	\$18,300	\$18,300	\$16,775	\$18,050	\$16,000	\$19,200	\$19,200	\$19,200	\$19,200	16%
MISC DONATIONS	\$0	\$292	\$300	\$1,905	\$80	\$10,900	\$0	\$0	\$0	0%
LOT SALES & SERVICES	\$25,976	\$40,222	\$36,070	\$37,078	\$50,796	\$51,894	\$58,808	\$104,296	\$57,000	48%
Total Income from Operations	\$45,884	\$58,814	\$53,145	\$57,033	\$66,876	\$81,994	\$78,008	\$130,044	\$86,200	73%
EXPENSE										
ADMINISTRATION	\$56,350	\$8,189	\$12,173	\$12,275	\$12,100	\$12,599	\$18,949	\$23,685	\$29,790	25%
PROPERTY UPKEEP	\$33,537	\$24,421	\$29,802	\$37,578	\$34,910	\$40,894	\$38,090	\$23,606	\$80,599	68%
CEMETERY SALE EXPENSES	\$13,850	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0%
CEMETERY SERVICES EXPENSE	\$4,397	\$15,259	\$3,351	\$4,552	\$7,361	\$8,575	\$8,887	\$6,965	\$8,000	7%
Total Cemetery Operating Exp	\$108,134	\$47,869	\$45,326	\$54,405	\$54,371	\$62,068	\$65,926	\$54,256	\$118,389	100%
NET OPERATING INC/LOSS	(\$62,250)	\$10,945	\$7,819	\$2,628	\$12,505	\$19,926	\$12,082	\$75,788	(\$32,189)	-27%

FROM THE PARISH REGISTER

The Parish Register of St. Bernard's Episcopal Church indicates 88 active households, as compared with 88 in the previous year. If you became a member of St. Bernard's Church and have not requested a letter of transfer from your previous congregation, please speak to our Parish Administrator, Alison Davidson, who can assist in officially transferring your membership to St. Bernard's. If you would like to be Received into the Episcopal Church, or Confirmed, please speak with Pastor Beth.

✦ 2022 Official Acts

Baptisms	3
Confirmed	0
Received	0
Marriages	2
Funerals/Committal Services	5

✦ 2022 Worship Services

Total Number of Services	95
Eucharistic Services	48
Daily Office:	
Sunday Morning Prayer	9
Evening Prayer	24
Private/Home Communion	0
Other	14

Included in the Other category this year are the Good Friday liturgy, Blue Christmas service, JOY! services and Pastoral services (Funerals or Committals, Holy Matrimony) that were not a Eucharistic service or Daily Office.

A version of the Lord's Prayer by Jim Cotter

**Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,
Source of all that is and that shall be,
Father and Mother of us all,
Loving God, in whom is heaven:
The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!
The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!
Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom
sustain our hope and come on earth.
With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.
From trials too great to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.
For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and for ever. Amen.**

-- found in *A New Zealand Prayer Book* p. 181



Clergy and Staff

The Rev. Beth Rauen Sciaino, *Rector*
Dr. Martin Sedek, *Music Director*
The Rev. Karen Burke Lewis, *Deacon*
Alison Davidson, *Parish Administrator*

Wardens and Vestry

Christopher Thomas, Paul Edwards, *Wardens*
Michael Myers, *Treasurer*; Linda Engleby, *Clerk*
Thomas Brooks, Zach Conway,
Linda Engleby, Anne Fritts, Beth Gustafson,
Taylor Hwong, Mary Kempen, Jennifer Moss,
Michael Myers, Sue Smith

ST. BERNARD'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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