

A Year in Review at Saint Mary Anne's Episcopal Church, 2019

St. Paul wrote to the people of Corinth, *Therefore, my brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.* (1Corinthians 15:58). Now that the New Year has arrived, it is a good time to review our “work of the Lord” and look at our collective steadfast efforts to keep St. Mary Anne’s vibrant, equipped, and focused on our continued mission and growth as a parish.

Worship

- Our Sacramental Report for the year: 8 Baptisms; 3 marriages; 12 Funerals.
- We administered “drive-by ashes” to many on South Main St on Ash Wednesday (March 6). In addition, we held 6:30AM; 10AM; and 7:00PM Ash Wednesday Holy Eucharist services.
- We opened the church for a Lenten discipline of morning contemplative prayer Monday-Friday at 6:30AM.
- We had many opportunities to worship and pray during Holy Week including: Vesper Service, Stations of the Cross, Maundy Thursday Dinner & Table Eucharist; Night Watch; Good Friday noontime service and an evening Tenebrae Service; Easter Vigil; and 6:30, 8 and 10AM Easter morning services.
- Bishop Santosh Marray visited in June. He blessed the work and hands of worship participants: Acolytes, Choir members, Altar Guild members, Ushers, Lectors, musicians, and Eucharistic Ministers.
- We now pray for expectant babies and their families during our weekly service. Following the birth, we place a white rose on the altar in thanksgiving to God.
- Our Acolyte Ministry grew with the addition of four new acolytes; and now includes two parent/child teams.
- We celebrated St. Francis Day Blessing of the Animals on October 6 in our Parish Center.
- We celebrate monthly Eucharist services at Victoria Park Senior Apartments and Calvert Manor.
- A new altar linen and three seasonal banners, donated by parishioners, help enhance worship.
- We gathered for our Annual Thanksgiving Day service at 10AM.
- We began Advent with an Instructed Eucharist at both services.
- We held Advent Evening Prayer on Thursdays evenings at 7PM.
- We celebrated our 12-Step Recovery Service’s second anniversary in December. Held on the 2nd Sunday of the month at 6:00PM, this monthly service tries to strengthen those in recovery with the message of hope, redemption, and God’s grace. At the conclusion, we serve a light meal in the Parish Center. Attendance varies but averages 30 and peaks to 70.
- Our biennial Voices of Mary Advent presentation held during our December 15 services.
- Our Children’s Christmas Pageant enthusiastically ushered in our Christmas season (December 22)
- We had a glorious Christmas Eve with three services; 5, 8, and 11PM; and Christmas Day at 10AM.
- Our Rector Emeritus, the Rev. Dr. Samuel H. Hartman, Rector from 1990-2013, celebrated his 50th Ordination anniversary this year. He was preacher and celebrant at a combined 9AM service on December 29. A parish brunch reception, hosted by the ECW, followed in the Parish Hall.

Music

- We revitalized our music program with our new Director of Music Joel Alarcon. Joel is an accomplished violinist and pianist. His wife Ray accompanies him on the organ, piano, and with the clarinet. Joel and Ray’s musically talented teenagers often participate in our worship services too.
- Our Choir is now back from hiatus and is singing under the direction of Alex Jihang Bi our new Choir Director. Alex is an accomplished composer, pianist and organist.
- Patrick Kabanda, a past Music Director, treated us to a 45-minute evening concert on Friday, March 15. Following the concert, we had a reception and his book signing of “The Creative Wealth of Nations”.
- Guest musicians and soloists also help to enhance our worship.
- Jennifer Swoboda leads our children in song and worship at the start of church school.
- Joel has begun The St. Mary Anne’s String Studio and will begin to offer string lessons to local students.
- Joel and Alex created a Christmas CD; donation proceeds will help fund String Studio scholarships for local schoolchildren.
- The West Nottingham School Choir graced us with their presence and music talent during our Voices of Mary Presentation and 10AM worship service on December 15.

Education

- A number of instructive emails, called “Lord, teach us to Pray”, were written by the Rector.
- A newly formed Bible Study meets on the 1st and 3rd Saturday of each month; 8:30-10AM; Vestry House
- Parishioners engaged with Adult Forums during the early Coffee Hour (9:15AM). Topic discussions on the Bethlehem Star, Upper Bay Counseling Services, EfM, Five Wishes, North East Library, Reformation Sunday, and Interfaith Partners of the Chesapeake.
- A Winter Book Club learned how to “Resolve Everyday Conflict” by Peacemaker Ministries.
- We learned how to make prayer beads during an Anglican Prayer Bead workshop in May.
- We discussed Phillip Yancey’s book, “The Jesus I Never Knew”, during four Wednesday evenings in Lent.
- A large EfM class continued in September.
- Hannah Sadler, a recent high school graduate, awarded the “Dream Big” Scholarship in June.
- We started the school year right with a Backpack blessing on September 1.
- Church school is now available each Sunday from 9:45-10:30 from Sept-May; and a nursery is available on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Sundays. Patty Wood now leads the church school, and Jill Holley oversees the nursery.
- Youth Group meets once a month, and participates in Diocesan youth events too. A pool party and a bonfire, along with participation in the Annual Crop Walk, were just some of the activities enjoyed by our youth. This year, two Youth Group members traveled to Peru on a Diocesan mission trip.
- A Life Planning Seminar, sponsored by Crouch Funeral Home, featured a preplanning funeral specialist, the local Registrar of Wills, and an elder law attorney. They answered questions about funeral planning, wills, probate, etc. (Oct 23).

Mission

- Our Mission Committee identified worthwhile local, national, and international charities, and distributed monies from the Sturgeon Fund.
- Proceeds from Family Train Day went to the St. Vincent Center for Children with Disabilities in Haiti.
- Guests at our Garden Market enjoyed our “Duck Races” for Camp Care.
- Wendy Bourgault, Executive Director of Our Little Roses Foreign Mission Society, spoke at our “Mission Sunday” services (March 17).
- The Mission Committee and the ECW teamed up in April for a Queen Anne Tea (see events). Proceeds went to Our Little Rose Foreign Aid Society to benefit a Honduran orphanage for girls.
- The ECW sponsored a “Donation Only” Bake Sale for the victims of Hurricane Dorian in the Bahamas. Along with the proceeds, the ECW and the Vestry allocated additional financial assistance to the Episcopal Diocese in the Bahamas.

Outreach

- We supported the Emergency Rotating Homeless Shelter (Jan 21-Feb. 4), with use of our Parish Hall and kitchen for meals, and provided numerous volunteers to assist with meals, set-up, clean up and general overnight supervision at North East United Methodist Church’s temporary shelter.
- Donne Lewis, along with the help of over 35 volunteers, kept our Outreach Office’s Food Pantry open 134 days this year. In the past 12 months, we helped 1,072 families and 3,060 family members. We packed 5292 bags of SMA food and 1421 bags of Federal food, with 92% of our income spent on food; 5% on monetary assistance to families; 3% on supplies/misc. items.
- Our Outreach Office collaborated with other churches, NE Rotary Club, Tome School, Scouts, North East Elementary School, and Port House Grill to help our less fortunate neighbors.
- Our Outreach Offices got a much-needed facelift this summer to help brighten and organize the space for volunteers and guests alike.
- Volunteers distributed turkeys and fixings to 50 needy families for Thanksgiving and Christmas.
- Our Giving Tree Project helped 60 local schoolchildren in two area schools.
- We continue to collect gently used or new children’s books for local schoolchildren, and used eyewear for the Lion’s Club.

Pastoral

- The ECW (Episcopal Church Women) hosted a number of funeral lunches for bereaved families.
- Our Pastoral Care team visited infirmed parishioners in hospitals, homes, and long-term care communities. They provide companionship, Communion, occasional light meals, and deliver altar flowers.

Administrative & Notables

- We welcomed Ron Himmel, Dawn Rodenbaugh and Donna Harrity to our Vestry at the Annual Meeting.
- Our 12-Step Faith and Recovery Service featured on the front-page of the “Cecil Whig” in March.
- A new parish directory is almost complete, and will be available early in 2020.
- A Greeter Ministry has begun, with greeters available at the start and conclusion of each service.
- A new fire safe cabinet, gifted by a parishioner, is the safe home to our historical documents; and the library closet retrofitted with shelves to help organize years of Vestry Minute binders.
- Two Safeguarding God’s Children Workshops (April 13 & Nov 23) instructed those who work with parish children.
- We received a “Destination Spotlight” award on May 15 from The Cecil County Tourism Office for our Annual Garden Market.
- The Outreach Office received grant money for the installation of an air-conditioning system. We received \$4400.00 from Choptank Electric and \$2250.00 from the local VFW.
- Three Super Service Challenge fundraising videos (two for the Garden Market and one for Outreach) created. We received \$1.00 for every vote over 50. For the GM ones, we received \$427.00. We are still tabulating the year-end Outreach video.
- We dedicated and blessed our flagpole on Veteran’s Day.
- We began an Environmental Committee to educate and identify environmental goals for our parish.
- We installed two AED’s (automated external defibrillator) on our campus, in the event of an emergency cardiac event.

Community & Diocesan Engagement

- We participated for two weeks in the Rotating Homeless Shelter (see Outreach).
- We joined fellow parishioners and our Diocese at The Hyatt in Cambridge, MD, on March 3, as we celebrated the 150th Anniversary of our Diocese with a special Celebration Eucharist. The Right Reverend Michael B. Curry, Presiding Bishop and Primate of the Episcopal Church, celebrated and preached at the service.
- Clergy visit the Sisters of Episcopal Carmel in Rising Sun to celebrate a Eucharist service at least 3x a month.
- Fr. John offered an invocation at the groundbreaking ceremony for the new Cecil County Library.
- Our Parish Center is an active community-meeting place six days a week. Using our facilities are four support groups (2 NA, AA and AI Anon), two Scout troops, 4-H classes, a chess club, a senior group, and a civic gardening club.
- We continue to build relationships with advocates in the recovery community and two recovery homes (Dexter House and The Charlotte House). Many of those in recovery provide us with parish volunteer assistance (Garden Market, Clean-up Days, and special projects).
- We celebrate monthly worship services at two local senior communities (noted in worship section).

Events & Fellowship

- Our Annual Family Train Day (Saturday, January 5), sponsored by the Mission Committee, attracted young and young at heart to see an amazing collection of trains and lunch in our “dining car”.
- We served up food at a Spaghetti Dinner, the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, and an Italian Cooking Class, as we heartily fed parishioners for the benefit our Youth Group and two youth missionaries to Peru.
- Parishioners enjoyed fellowship with their parish family at the Annual Valentine Luncheon in our Parish Hall (Feb. 10)
- We decorated our Parish Hall for a Queen Anne Tea in early April. This new event, sponsored by the Mission Committee and ECW, featured elegantly decorated tables, a menu of tea sandwiches and sweets, and a collection of hot tea beverages.

- Our 22nd Garden Market blossomed in May as 4000+ guests visited our churchyard. For two days, vendors from the tristate area sold flowers, plants, food and crafts.
- The 2:42 Men's Group meet on the last Saturday of the month from 8-9:30AM for breakfast, conversation, and special church projects, such as the Mother's Day Breakfast. Many of the retired men also meet for a mid-week fellowship breakfast at North East Family Restaurant (Wednesdays at 9:00AM).
- The ECW sponsored our Father's Day Breakfast; gathered for the Annual ECW Potluck Picnic (June 18) and Annual Christmas Soirée (Dec. 4); and hosted Fr. Sam's 50th Ordination brunch.
- Our Annual Parish Picnic (July 28) attracted many parishioners and newcomers to enjoy fellowship, picnic food, horseshoes, and free kayaking provided by Bay Venture Outfitters.
- The North Elk Coffee House continues, after 23 years, to entertain parishioners and the local community with performers in our Parish Center (3rd Saturday; Sept-May). Proceeds benefit The Meeting Ground, a local resource center for the homeless.
- Our 4th Annual Christmas Cookie Walk (Dec.15) is a sweet tradition. Proceeds benefit The ECW's charitable projects.
- The ECW sponsored a bus trip to the Radio City Music Hall Christmas Show featuring the Rockettes (Dec. 3).
- Our 4th Annual Wreaths across America (Dec. 15) visited our churchyard. The Commander of Aberdeen Proving Ground, Major General Mitchell Kilgo, was our featured speaker. After a moving noontime tribute ceremony, we placed over 80 wreaths on veterans graves in our churchyard.

Building & Grounds

We continue our efforts to maintain our historic property and campus for future generations, and to make them more serviceable, safe and comfortable for our parishioners and guests. Monies used for these efforts do not come from pledge dollars but from a combination of preservation funds (given by our generous predecessors), generous and specially designated gifts, and grants. Thankfully, parishioners often provide much skilled volunteer labor and graciously donate items to help contain costs.

The Church & Vestry House

- New signs are on the church building entrances and the Vestry House to identify the buildings and inform the public of our service times.
- Victorian Heritage replaced and refurbished our church shutters; and repaired the church soffits.
- Jamestown Painting painted the refurbished and new shutters; and repaired exterior windowpanes by scraping, glazing and painting. They also repaired and painted the exterior doors.
- Jamestown Painting painted the interior of the church including: ceiling, walls, pew ends, windows and trim work. A generous parishioner donated approximately 80% of the cost.
- The Bell Tower tile floor and Vestry House brick flooring professionally cleaned.
- Wi-fi capability is now in the Vestry House. A new smart television, donated by a parish family, is in the Vestry House and is being used for EFM classes and meetings.
- A security camera is in place outside of the Vestry House.

Churchyard & Campus Grounds

- A professional cemetery preservationist from Mosko Cemetery Monument Services repaired and straightened a number of gravestones in June.
- Our parking lot was milled and rolled, thanks to a sizeable donation from Allan Myers Construction and the personal equipment and labor of two parishioners.
- Two large trees, diseased and damaged by storms, removed. We planted a Sycamore tree and a Honey Locust tree (donated by a parish family) as shade replacements.
- A Japanese Red Maple tree near the bell tower entrance, and rose bushes at the three-gated entrances, donated and planted in honor of deceased loved ones.
- Our Garden Committee maintained our campus flowerbeds and planters.
- Two new signs, one at each driveway entrance, identifies the churchyard, welcomes visitors, and gives some churchyard guidelines to help maintain the sacred space.
- Two church yard clean-ups (April 13 & Nov. 16) by parishioners, recovery and community members, and Scouts.

- New curbing near our Parish Center garage and in our parking lot.

Parish Center

- The third floor makeover is now complete. We painted all offices, the library, bathroom, stairwells, and hallways over the past few years.
- Historic church pictures are now framed and on display in the library.
- Tile backsplash installed behind the kitchen's triple sink.
- Security cameras and doorbells are in place at the Parish Center and Outreach entrances.
- The Outreach Office is more efficient and serviceable with the removal of a dividing wall, new floor installation, air-conditioning, paint and cabinetry. Adjacent hallways to the Outreach Office and classrooms were also painted. A volunteer parishioner workforce accomplished the majority of work.

Rectory

- Kitchen and bathroom repairs and updates included new water lines; ceiling repairs; a new sliding patio door and repairs to rotted framing; new cabinets and countertop; shower enclosure; tub enclosure; bathroom flooring, and vanities.

Sexton House

- The Sexton House, an adjacent building used for storage, was an eyesore and attracted vandals and vagrants. A parishioner power washed the roof and exterior walls, repaired windows, and painted the exterior, to discourage future destruction.
- A storm-damaged tree caused a local power outage. The large damaged tree was trimmed and branches removed.

Wharf

- Renewed lease for Bay Venture Outfitters (kayak rentals)

Help us, O Lord, to finish the good work here begun. (BCP 839)