

Rector's report to the Annual Meeting
of St. Peter & St. Paul, Marietta, Georgia, 11/12/2017
The Rev. Tom Pumphrey

Our Mission is Growing Disciples of Jesus Christ.

We believe that God has a vision for us as a Christian Community, empowered by the Holy Spirit, active in the Worship of God, Discipleship for all ages, Serving Christ in the world.

Dear Friends in Christ,

I would like to briefly review some of the highlights of the past year in pursuit of this mission and vision, hopefully building on the reports that you have heard from the Wardens, the Clerk, the Treasurer and the Carpenter's Work Committee. We should take a moment to thank Chuck Matheson and the Executive Team: Mike Nancarrow, Lisa Doss, JoAnn Gotschall and Tom Martin for their leadership in this important and busy year. Thanks to our candidates for Vestry: Marci Thomas, Rich Walker and Rachel Buhler. Thanks to our graduating vestry members, Mike, Lisa and Pamela Robinson. A special thanks to Tom Martin who has served as treasurer for five years. Tom was instrumental in developing better internal controls and a more open budgeting process. Thanks to the rest of the vestry: John Hooper, Bryan Selby, Roger Sherrard, Chuck Matheson and Guy Creveling, to our outgoing Youth Vestry Member Sean Doherty and our current Youth Vestry Member, Anna Trively, and to our Vestry Recorder, Katy Walker.

There are a number of things that God has accomplished in us in this past year.

As Chuck described, we rapidly moved from concept to fundraising to breaking ground on the Carpenter's Work in the last twelve months. We raised over half a million dollars in pledges, nearly \$300,000 in cash and completed phase one, all in twelve months. Thank you for the many hands involved in making these projects a success. Special thanks goes to Tony Milligan and Greg Doherty who have worked with Chuck and others on numerous projects, and juggled multiple stakeholders to successfully implement phase one.

Our Youth Ministry is thriving. In February, we hired Matt Martin as our Youth Minister, and he is doing a wonderful job growing disciples not only in our youth but in our adult leaders as well, guiding them in their ministry and building them up as a community. This is what it takes to build a ministry with a depth of leadership that will sustain itself for the long term. We are blessed to have Matt on board. It was a long wait to find you, Matt, but you have been well worth the wait!

Matt's theme this year is Diving Deeper: in Community, Communion and Commission. Matt led the 9th & 10th graders on a pilgrimage, the middle schoolers on a summer beach camp, and we're planning for a ski trip in January, and other opportunities to grow in the love of Christ.

Our adult Christian Formation continues to strengthen adults, with new Bible Studies forming, including one led by Amy Stillwell on Tuesday nights. We took a trip to Israel this past spring as well, enriching those who went, and those who have heard the good news from the Holy Land.

Our Children's Ministry continues to thrive with great adult leadership. One significant challenge we have is finding a well-qualified person to serve on staff as our Director of Children's Ministry. We have received applications, but very few have any relevant experience. The Children's Team and I discussed this, and they feel that we would be wiser to wait for the right person than to hire someone who is not qualified. So please pray for us that we might find the right person for this role soon. In the mean-time, Susan Sherrard has provided important leadership for the Children's Team, and she is keeping the Sunday School teachers supported in their roles so that everything is going smoothly. Thank you, Susan, for leading this ministry while our search continues.

We made more progress in Evangelism Initiatives with an expanded Coffee Hour ministry, a fantastic Parish Retreat in April, two parish picnics and three newcomer's dinners. We are blessed to have hired Susan Prout as our Director of Newcomer's Ministry to help us make a personal follow-up and connection with those new to our parish. Susan is making a great difference for this ministry and for the parish as a whole.

In pastoral care, we continue to stand with a strong base of lay ministry, especially with the help of Stephen Ministry. We have nine new Stephen Ministry trainees that will start their training in January, including seven men. Grief Share is now a staple of our ministry, making a difference in the wider community, since most of our participants are not members of this parish.

Our Service Ministries continue to make a difference, serving Christ in the world. This year we started hosting Family Promise, providing shelter for homeless families. One wonderful thing about this ministry is how it brings us into personal relationship with those in need. This helps us share God's grace in a personal way, and together, we learn more about each other.

Our Acolytes and choirs continue to thrive and grow, especially with our section leaders that help to support our choir as they support the rest of us in our singing. That is the choir's purpose: not to sing for us, but to help us to sing to God. When you sing, you pray twice! So sing those hymns, including the communion hymns.

After the retirement of Mitch Brown, we hired Bob Marks to serve as our Facilities Manager—please thank Bob for his service when you see him. He arrived just as the Carpenter's Work was getting underway, so he's had a lot to juggle. We also hired Kayla White to be our Administrative Assistant. Kayla brings experience in graphic design and she is behind the work you see to publish our photo directory. If you haven't sent in your photos or corrections to your information, please do so before Wednesday.

I should also thank the rest of our staff who have served diligently: Suzy Bristow, our parish administrator, Amy Pillsworth, our Financial Administrator, George our Director of Music, and especially our colleague in the clergy for nine years, Elisa Harres. You all are a blessing to this church!

Note that it is through your generosity that we have been able to do many of these ministries. For 2018, we hope that we can continue these ministries without relying on financial reserves. Many of these ministries represent investments in our future. We hope that dividends from these

ministry investments will be reflected in our pledges so that we can sustain these initiatives. If you haven't made a pledge for 2018, please do so. And please consider an increase in your pledge. We would love to balance our budget without using reserves, and there are a few needs that we would like to address. For instance, we would like to replace the metal folding chairs with something more comfortable ☺.

Most of all, we are grateful for what God is doing in this place. For instance, among our many thanksgivings, we are thankful:

- For God healing many people of their illnesses and injuries, among them, Steve Hadley
- For God supporting those who still struggle with illness one day at a time
- For God supporting those who grieve the death of loved ones
- For God providing food and shelter and support for those in need
- For God growing us in faith and devotion to our Lord
- For God calling new people to connect with us
- For God developing new leaders in this church at every level
- For God increasing our health and renewal in this parish—bringing God's grace to how we treat each other, how we talk with each other, and how we seek to build each other up.

For these and all God's many blessings, we give praise and glory to Jesus Christ whose power working in us can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine.