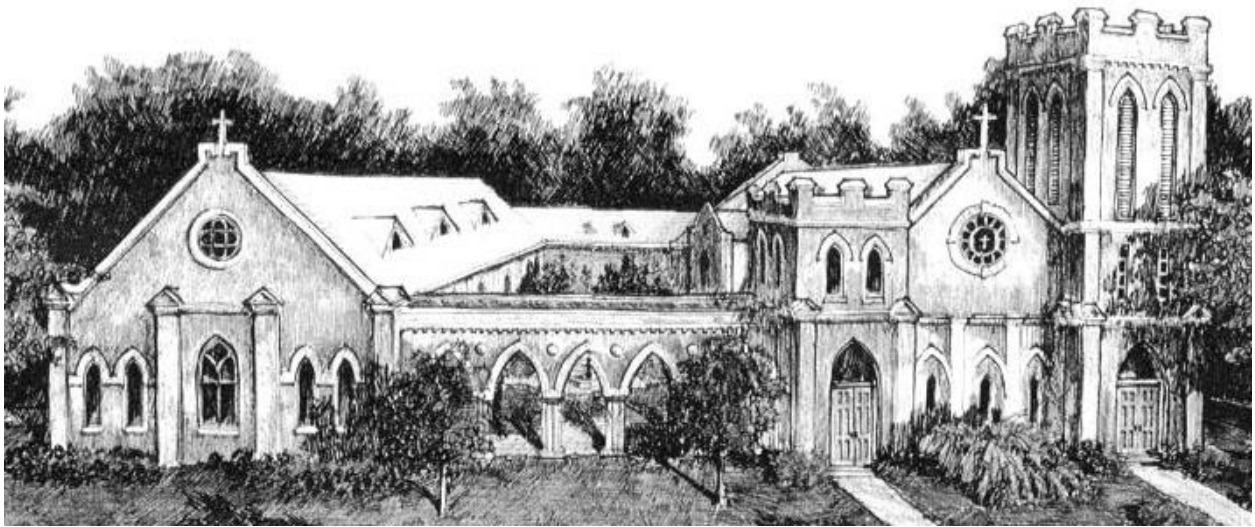


St. James Episcopal Church

Eufaula, Alabama



Annual Meeting & Report

Sunday, January 17, 2021

ST. JAMES EPISCOPAL CHURCH
ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
JANUARY 17, 2021

Agenda—

- Prayer
- Appointment of Secretary
- Election of Vestry Members
- Rector's Report
- Senior Warden's Report – Gary Jones
- Junior Warden's Report – Phil Clayton
- Financial Report – Janis Biggers
- Submitted Reports

Rector's Report – The Rev. John Coleman

Dear Parish Family:

Grace, mercy, and peace to you. What an interesting year it has been. St. James entered 2020 with a strong sense of God's love in our midst. This showed forth in our community outreach and our life in fellowship together. Our hands and feet were busy moving and planning, and then a pandemic hit. While St. James continued to progress through love and grace, things looked different. We explored new ways to worship, serve and be together. Many of these "new ways," including our Sunday virtual services, will remain when we lift the restrictions of COVID 19. Through it all, God was present, and our congregation remained faithful. It continues to be a joy and pleasure serving God with each of you.

Our ministry in and through St. James is a reaction to the love of God, most perfectly revealed in Jesus Christ. This grace explosion gives us strength as we grow in the knowledge and love of Jesus. It is also what inspires us to move out and make God known through hospitality and action. St. James is one of the most loving communities in which I have served. This is a testament to the way in which this incredible parish embraces this love.

Over the last two years St. James leadership engaged in an annual strategic planning and visioning process. We looked at our past and present as we discerned where God is calling us in the future. We accomplished many goals as a result of this process and set a general direction in all areas of ministry for the parish. It is my prayer that St. James will continue to engage such a process during the interim between my tenure and calling a new priest.

There were several ministry and service opportunities we had to "table" during the 2020 year. These will be waiting for us after the social distancing, quarantine and other impacts of the pandemic pass.

Worship & Liturgy

I will repeat what I say often and reiterate each year in these annual reports: Everything starts with worship. Our primary purpose as a church is to give God thanks through worship in the Way of Jesus. In Exodus God freed the people of Israel from the clutches of Pharaoh so they could worship. (Exod. 8:1). Our activity in other areas is important, but nothing is as important as our worship. As we worship and pray, we exchange our vision for God's vision.

We started the year with our Feast of Lights celebration and burning of the greens in a joint worship service with the First Presbyterian Church. This was a beautiful and meaningful way to celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany. We followed the worship with a chili cook-off in the parish hall at First Presbyterian.

We began 2020 with many plans to expand our services of worship. We had some unique musical offerings in the mix through services like Compline and Evening Prayer. Some of these services would have included invited guests and new partnerships in ministry. We also intended to continue our move to offering contemporary worship offerings through the "First Light" worship on the first Sunday of each month.

Unfortunately, we were unable to put many of our worship plans in motion due to the restrictions implemented due to COVID-19. The pandemic resulted in federal, state and diocesan leaders placing restrictions on public gatherings for health and safety reasons. In March, we took all worship online and suspended our in-person worship gatherings.

Our forced move to online worship was an opportunity of challenge and growth. We quickly developed an expertise in this “new” area of ministry. We took many of our Lent and all of our Holy Week services online. Our Sunday services were also broadcast via Facebook, You Tube and in our electronic publications. We explored unique ways to get our choir and other musicians involved in the service. Our online services allowed us to incorporate more people in our worship as readers and intercessors. It also dramatically expanded our reach into the community and surrounding area with hundreds of additional participants on any given Sunday.

We eventually resumed in person worship toward the latter part of the summer. Understandably, many in our parish family remained out due to safety concerns, so our in-person attendance has remained down. St. James had a very strict safety protocol in place to protect those attending, including distancing, masks and hand sanitation. Our virtual/on-line worship continued, and we successfully pivoted from a taped service to livestreaming the service. We have several parishioners trained in the livestreaming technology and plan to continue this offering even after things return to the new “normal.”

Pastoral Care:

The restrictions on in-person meetings and social distancing due to COVID 19 concerns impacted pastoral care. I had to suspend Coffice and in-person visits, including hospital visits. I continued to make calls via telephone, but it is just not the same as sitting with someone face to face.

A goal for the last year has been to start a “Care Team” to assist with parish calls, visits and pastoral care. We had approximately 10 people begin the year attending an organizational meeting. About the time we were separating into monthly teams and establishing protocol and training, the pandemic hit. It is my prayer that the Vestry will continue with the Care Team concept when all ministries resume. I believe this can be an important ministry during the interim and once St. James calls a new priest.

Education:

While the pandemic did impact our educational offerings, we did continue with some offerings. We had an online (via Zoom) class on Paul’s Letter to the Philippians in the spring. This was well attended and offered a new way to engage in Bible Study. Brad Moore led an in-person (and Zoom) class on Romans. The parish engaged in discussion and study on the racial issues impacting our world. “We Will With God’s Help: A Conversation on Race in America, the Gospel and the Church” was an online study and discussion jointly facilitated with First Presbyterian Church. The Rev. Daniell Hamby, Patricia Schiller and Brad Moore helped facilitate and plan this important conversation that spanned several months. Our intention was to conclude the online discussion with an in-person Beloved Community workshop. The Diocesan Commission on Racial Reconciliation planned to facilitate this workshop in December. We were

not able to hold this workshop due to COVID 19. This is an opportunity for the future as the Commission is ready and willing to host another workshop when things open up.

The last two years serving as your interim Rector have been a true joy. I thank you for your hospitality and love. I thank God for giving me this opportunity to serve, grow, learn and love with such an amazing group of disciples.

Thanks be to God. And thank you all.

Peace in Christ,

John

Senior Warden's Report – Gary Jones

What can I say about the year 2020 at St. James? It began like any other normal year with the end of the Christmas season and the beginning of the season of the Epiphany.

- On January 6th we joined with our First Presbyterian friends to celebrate the Feast of Lights in the nave followed by the burning of the greens and a chili cook-off in the Presbyterian parish hall. What fun we all had burning the greens for the first time in several years and joining together for fellowship.
- The 2020 Annual Meeting was held on January 12th following the 10:30 a.m. service. Reports were received from the rector, wardens, treasurer, and others who are responsible for various parish ministries. Ann Blondheim, Jan Spitzer, and Kevin Riley were selected to serve three-year terms on the vestry, and I was selected to serve out the remaining year of Ed Garrison's unexpired term.
- Following the 10:30 a.m. service on January 26th, a special meeting of current and immediate past vestry members was held. The purpose was to form a committee tasked with planning events to celebrate the 175th anniversary of the founding of St. James.
- The annual spaghetti supper was held on February 25th, and as always the sauce was the "best it's ever been". It was another time to pull together toward a common goal, share with our community and raise money for the Women of Church's charitable work.
- The new vestry gathered on Saturday, February 29th, to discuss plans for the year, elect wardens and make ministry assignments for the coming year.
- We made it through the seven Sundays after the Epiphany, Shrove Tuesday, Ash Wednesday, the first two Sundays of Lent and two Lenten lunches feeling pretty good about our shared life and ministry.

Even with the rumblings about COVID I think we were all hopeful ---- maybe we even thought - --- so far, so good!

On Wednesday, March 18th everything changed. John made the first of what would turn out to be many videos over the next months. He shared with all of us that in-person worship and other gatherings would be suspended at St. James until further notice. The hope was this would last only a few weeks ---- but we all know that ended up not being the case.

A year that started out so normally had suddenly become a very unusual year indeed!

Unusual --- YES ----- but it was not a "Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad" year!

In fact, I submit it was a year in which I feel we grew closer to God and to each other.

If we are honest, in the beginning we were fearful, anxious and felt as if we had lost control. We should have known that we would embrace our situation and pull together like we have always done when times have been uncertain in the past.

With John leading us, we embraced technology and carried on with only virtual services from March 24th through September 13th. We followed that with both in-person and live, online services from September 20th through Christmas Eve.

John inspired and encouraged us with his sermons on Sunday, Worship in the World on Wednesdays and Compline on Fridays. Members of St. James helped throughout the year by reading lessons, doing the Prayers of the People, singing, leading Compline and supporting each other. A special thanks to Daniell Hamby for giving John an occasional break by preaching and celebrating the Eucharist.

Thanks be to God for all the blessings we have experienced as a faith community over the last year, and thanks be to God for the blessings yet to come.

Sadly, John's time with us as Interim/Priest-In-Charge has come to an end, but he will be with us as a supply priest a few more times in the short term. Words are not adequate to express what a blessing having him with us for over two years has been.

I want to thank the vestry, the church staff and every member of the St. James family for your love and support. It has been my honor to serve as your Senior Warden, and I look forward to what God has in store for us in the months and years to come.

Faithfully yours,
Gary Jones, Senior Warden

Junior Warden's Report – Phil Clayton

We have achieved several successes this past year in the buildings. We completed installation of three new air conditioning and dehumidification units on the Nave and choir loft. These new units are performing well. We also installed large, low speed fans in the vaults of the ceiling in the Nave. The fans help circulate warm, dry air in the top of the Nave and create a more comfortable temperature for those sitting in the pews. We are looking in 2021 to clean up the ally north of the parish hall, install a cover over the concrete pad by the kitchen door and replace the roof on the nave and office area of the church. The new roof will be the same material as the newer parish hall room. After prayerful consideration and hard work during our capital campaign, we were able to raise pledges and contributions to substantially pay for the new roof. The new roof should stop further water intrusion and damage to our beautiful Church. There is still much work to be done in the area of routine maintenance. We will be addressing those needs as funding and resources permit.

Respectfully submitted,
Philip Clayton, Junior Warden

Financial Report – Janis Biggers

Operating Fund

In spite of the pandemic and all the changes it required to our worship services and programs, it was a positive year for St James financially. We did not collect all of our pledges for 2020, but the shortfall was overcome by receiving a PPP loan, which was forgiven, and additional donations from people worshipping with us online who do not normally attend St James. Our expenses were also reduced, with lower spending in almost all categories. We were able to fund the new HVAC units from the operating account, and end the year with a small surplus.

Capital Campaign

I am pleased to report that the Capital Campaign for the new roof raised \$160,000 in pledges, and we have received \$127,000 of that already. The money is in a money market fund awaiting the work on the roof. We expect to receive the balance of the pledges in 2021, possibly in time to completely pay for the roof from this fund. If not, we will use funds from the Maintenance Fund.

Maintenance Fund

St James has a maintenance fund, which we have accumulated over several years, and it has a current balance of \$63,644.

Stewardship

We have received 44 pledges totaling \$146,370, which is significantly less than the 66 pledges we had for 2020. We expect to have a full-time priest at some point in 2020, and it will be difficult to compensate a priest and maintain our normal programs without additional revenue.

11:32 AM

SAINT JAMES EPISCOPAL CHURCH
Budget vs. Actual

Cash Basis

January through December 2020

	Jan - Dec 20	Budget
Ordinary Income/Expense		
Income		
Operating Income		
Pledges	170,770.00	191,004.00
Misc. Oper. Income	12,780.00	1,008.00
Donations	8,367.03	5,004.00
Prior Year	3,900.00	
Plate	1,527.00	3,996.00
Total Operating Income	197,344.03	201,012.00
Designated Contributions	11,183.03	1,440.00
Contributions - Outreach	5,585.31	3,000.00
Contributions - Parish Programs	2,137.00	1,000.00
Total Income	216,249.37	206,452.00
Expense		
Personnel	72,626.54	92,376.00
Utilities & Building	63,384.32	72,154.00
Diocese Expenses	20,874.29	19,550.00
Outreach	5,838.00	10,020.00
Office Expenses	5,401.42	4,356.00
Parish Program	4,360.90	6,300.00
Non Operating-Designated	3,090.02	
Miscellaneous Expense	124.71	840.00
Total Expense	175,700.20	205,596.00
Net Ordinary Income	40,549.17	856.00
Other Income/Expense		
Other Expense		
Capital Projects - HVAC	34,155.46	
Total Other Expense	34,155.46	
Net Other Income	-34,155.46	
Net Income	<u>6,393.71</u>	<u>856.00</u>

Altar Guild – Linda Perdue

The altar guild at St. James Church is responsible for setting up for two Sunday Eucharist services as well as for special services such as; baptisms, weddings, and funerals as required. Members also care for the linens, polish the silver and brass, fill the travel Eucharist kit, and see that wine and wafers are purchased as needed. If altar flowers are not claimed a guild member takes them to a shut in.

Four teams make up the altar guild with each team serving one Sunday each month. Our team members presently include:

<u>Team One:</u>	<u>Team Two:</u>	<u>Team Three:</u>	<u>Team Four:</u>
Keitt Robertson Marilyn Weeks Verna Scroggins Jeanette Baxley	Jan Spitzer Renee Molette Stephanie Hawkins Julie Hill	Cyndie Moore Brad Moore Jo Watson Ann Bartlett	Linda Perdue Susie McCathran Diane Voors Janie King

*Joann Little maintains and fills the candles, and Margaret Russell is in charge of the altar linen.

The altar guild is a behind the scenes ministry of love. The work is not difficult but is very important! Please prayerfully consider becoming a member!

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Perdue

Acolytes – Phil Clayton

As we resume in-person services this year, we have modified Acolyte participation in the service. While still an important part of the service, social distancing does not lend itself to a full compliment of participants. We are also short acolyte participants, so Adult participation is needed to sustain the acolyte program. Adults are needed to serve as acolytes and to also encourage youth participation. Parents, thank you for your efforts; please continue to support your children’s participation in the program, a vitally important ministry for the St. James family.

Make me conscious, dear Lord, that you have called me to serve you and your people in this liturgy. May I carry out my ministry with diligence and in happy cooperation with others, and because this work demands my full attention, accept it as my prayer and grant that I may come to know and love you in this work, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Kindest regards,
Phil Clayton

ECW – Mary Jo Ridle

The ECW has continued to support financially their outreach projects and charities: Wilmer Hall, Beckwith, and Angel Project. The ECW continues also to support financially our church: cleaning, and altar supplies. Basically, whenever the church has needs, the ECW steps up and helps.

No meetings were held this year. We were able to have our spaghetti supper fund raiser on February 25. Marilyn Weeks and Cyndie Moore were our co-chairs offering their most outstanding coordination on this project. Also, the men produced a delicious sauce that was very tasty.

Hopefully we will be able to reconvene as a more vital part of St. James.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Jo Ridle, Coordinator

Choir – Daniell Hamby

We began with tremendous hope for the music ministry at St. James. We had great rehearsals, plans for a choir workshop with our United Methodist and Presbyterian colleagues and a visiting choral clinician, new music to learn. But it went the way of all flesh. From January until March the choir rehearsed, offered anthems, and supported the music in our liturgies. Our last anthem was *God So Loved the World*, the Stainer setting we love so much.

Never daunted, though, a few of our singers met during the summer and recorded hymns to for the on-line liturgies, though (with my encouragement) several of our regular singers did not participate – the risk of contracting COVID was too high.

We began gathering for worship in-person at summer's end, but with no singing. It has been a great opportunity for Paige Garrison to offer her gifts on flute and the harp. Jennifer Holtzman has been here to help on Sundays when I was absent or filling in as priest-for-the-day.

The pianos have been kept tuned, which is good for them even when we're not using them. In December, Colby Organ Company returned to tune the organ, repair problems with the reed and flute stops, remedy some sticky notes. Our new HVAC system and ceiling fans in the nave have helped the organ tremendously as temperatures are more consistent and the humidity under control.

It is anyone's guess when we'll be able to offer choral music or sing hymns in the future, but as the psalmist reminds us: our souls in silence wait.

The Choir

Sopranos:

Ann Bartlett
Lindsey Bennett
Ann Blondheim
Mary Dixon
Debbie Jones
Mary Jo Ridle

Alto:

Paige Garrison
Elizabeth Harmon
Betsy Lawrence
Ann Wilkinson

Baritone/Bass

Ed Garrison
Gary Jones
Banks Wilkinson
Alan Lindsey
Buddy Lawrence

Daniell Hamby, Organist/Choirmaster

Garden Guild – Ann Blondheim

No report.

Outreach – Brad Moore

Although Covid had a significant effect on our worship services St. James members continued to be very generous in our outreach efforts in 2020. We continued our primary ministry of feeding the hungry with our food pantry, but also supported a number of other charitable activities. Below is a description of our outreach efforts.

Outreach Committee - We have 6 members who serve on the Outreach Committee. We meet about 3 times per year and decide how to allocate the church outreach budget. The outreach budget was \$10,000 in 2020.

Food Pantry - About ten members of St. James purchase and distribute food to people in our community every Tuesday morning. We normally serve 100 families one bag of food per month; however, Covid dropped our usage to half of our normal from March till October. By the end of the year we were back up to about 60 families per month. In addition to our Tuesday family food distribution we also take bags of food to Eufaula Primary School. This food is distributed by the teachers to those children who without the weekday lunch aid program may need additional food over the weekend.

Operation Christmas Child - St. James packed 48 shoeboxes for the Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child. These boxes were loaded with toys, school supplies and hygiene items donated by us. The boxes were shipped around the world where pastors host shoebox distributions in places where they spread the Gospel and the good news of Jesus.

Christmas Angel Program - In December, St. James members generously gave over \$1300 to Family Services Barbour. This money is used for supervised shopping of deserving needy families to purchase Christmas presents they could not otherwise afford.

Communities of Transformation (COT) - St. James along with several other churches supports the Eufaula COT program. One of the primary ways our church supports COT is by having the group utilize Margaret Hall and our Sunday school classrooms for their weekly Monday meetings. Due to Covid COT meetings were suspended in March and have not yet recommenced.

Other - With reduced expenses for the Food Pantry we had additional funds to allocate donations to organizations in our community, the nation and the world. This year we gave money to:

1. Eagle Club (a local organization that helps underprivileged kids)
2. The Brotherhood (a local organization lead by Hans Rice that helps young African-Americans find purpose)
3. Wiregrass Food Bank
4. Camp Beckwith
5. Wilmer Hall
6. Save the Children - specifically to support the Beirut explosion event
7. Episcopal Relief and Development

The Outreach Committee wishes to thank all members of St. James for their support monetarily, with volunteer hours or by donation food for the pantry.

Brad Moore, Outreach Committee Chair

Parish Life – Derek Thomas and Kevin Riley

What a difference a year makes. I wish I had a long list of Parish Life events to report on like 5th Sunday Feasts, Supper Clubs, Mass in the Grass, and the list goes on. Unfortunately, due to the Covid 19 pandemic we were unable to gather together for the majority of 2020. Fortunately, we were able to hold our annual Spaghetti Supper before the pandemic hit us and a lot of us were also able to travel to Dothan in March and see John in a fantastic performance of Mama Mia. Since then, we have basically been unable to gather in person socially and although getting together virtually can be fun it's just not the same.

I am looking forward to 2021 with hopes that soon we will be able to resume our gatherings in person and our Parish Life will return to what we are all accustomed to. It's one of the many things that makes St. James great and I for one have missed it.

It has truly been an honor to serve St. James for the last 3 years as Parish Life chairman. I would like to thank everyone at St. James for all the help you've given me. There was never a lack of volunteers for help on every event we had and for that I will always be grateful. As I come off the Vestry this year, I look forward to helping with Parish Life in any way I can so don't hesitate to contact me!

Respectfully Submitted,
Derek Thomas

Worship – Susie McCathran

2020 was a year of pandemic. We began having virtual-only services at St. James in March of 2020, after the outbreak of COVID-19. All thanks and credit go to John Coleman for the high quality and success of these virtual services. By including parishioners as readers and by posting the services online, John kept us all in touch. The virtual services were enjoyed not only by our immediate parish members, but by many others who watched regularly via Facebook or the church website. In September, we were able to begin limited in-person services. We maintained social distancing by using only every other pew, and all were required to wear masks, both consistent with diocese requirements. These in-person services were still available to our "viewing audience" by live stream. Again, all thanks and credit go to John Coleman for figuring out how to accomplish the live stream, and to Brad Moore, our main camera man. While we did not sing at these services, Daniel Hamby gave us fine organ music. Communion at these services was limited to bread only, and the communion wafers were individually wrapped. The year culminated in a beautiful and well-attended Christmas Eve service (still masked and distanced). [As I write this on January 5, 2021, in-person services have again been suspended due to a surge in the virus.]

Respectfully submitted,
Susie McCathran

Youth – Sallie Garrison and Adam Reeves

This year was defined by Covid 19 like so many other things. Unfortunately, gathering was not allowed and our youth were not able to participate in activities. We were able to showcase our three Seniors in the church newsletter. Congratulations to Bailey Lawrence, Chapman Reeves and Kyle Zack who graduated this past spring.

Respectfully submitted,
Sallie Garrison

Pastoral Care—Ann Blondheim

Pastoral care took on a new meaning in 2020 with the onset of Covid-19. Many members of the congregation became infected with the virus or had immediate family members effected. This created a situation where members that would normally receive visits from the Parish Life hostesses or other members of the parish could not be visited due to the risk of contracting or spreading the virus. This applied to those effected by the virus and those sick/injured/hospitalized for other reasons. However, the ladies of the ECW did a wonderful job of organizing and delivering meals for those members. Phone calls were made and the conditions of sick parish members were reported to John Coleman by various people. This same situation applied when a parishioner or family member passed away during the year.

Christy did a wonderful job keeping the prayer board in the office up to date and those names were added to the Prayers of the People for each Sunday's service. The needs of the congregation were not met in our normal fashion but the pandemic brought a greater awareness of our concern for each other. Hopefully, we can get back to our regular visits and meal deliveries in the upcoming year.

Respectfully submitted,
Ann Blondheim

Bereavement—Debbie Jones

The Bereavement Committee was formed in June 2016 with the purpose of providing a meal/reception for the family on the day of the service. This committee is separate from the Parish Life Hostesses.

We have three different teams that rotate preparing food. The captain is in charge of organizing a meal or a reception (for up to 50 people) on the day of the service. We are looking for additional members to add to the cooking teams; **let us know if you would like to help.**

TEAM 1

*Debbie Jones
 Mitzi Clayton
 Mary Dixon
 Lauri Lawrence
 Cyndie Moore
 Holland Utley
 Marilyn Weeks

TEAM 2

* Mary Jo Ridle
 Ann Bartlett
 Lindsey Bennett
 Cally Dixon
 Sallie Garrison
 Catherine Lehman
 Kay O'Connor
 Linda Perdue

TEAM 3

* Kathy Holland
 Susan Bishop
 Ann Blondheim
 Liz Harmon
 Janie King
 JoAnn Little
 Susie McCathran
 Keitt Robertson

In addition to food teams, some parishioners help with setting up (and cleaning up) for the family meal/reception. These teams also rotate as needed. We are looking for additional members to add to the set-up teams; **let us know if you would like to help.**

TEAM 1

* Kathy Holland
 Lindsey Bennett
 Susan Bishop
 Liz Harmon
 JoAnn Little
 Rene` Molette
 Mary Jo Ridle

TEAM 2

* Susie McCathran
 Kim Blackmon
 Charlotte Booth
 Mary Dixon
 Cally Dixon
 Sherri Musgrove
 Keitt Robertson

TEAM 3

* Cyndie Moore
 Sallie Garrison
 Debbie Jones
 Janie King
 Kay O'Connor
 Marilyn Weeks

There are others who have volunteered to assist the family at home:

Sallie Garrison
 Kathy Holland

Debbie Jones
 Susie McCathran

Linda Perdue

Others make monetary contributions to support the committee. These funds are used to purchase meat and extra food. If you would like to contribute to this fund, attach a note to your contribution stating, "For deposit in the Bereavement Fund".

We appreciate everyone who supports the Bereavement Committee.

Debbie Jones, Kathy Holland, Merrill Dillon, Susie McCathran, and John Coleman

Search Committee—Diane Voors

The committee met last March to begin moving forward with our search for a new rector but had to suspend search due to the pandemic. We reconvened last fall and a ministry profile was completed by various members of the church.

Our committee will now go forward and actively begin our search for a new rector.

Diane Voors

