

# 2020 CHARGE CONFERENCE REPORT

## From the Church Council

### WORSHIP MINISTRIES

Co-ordinated by the Worship Committee, the many members who participate in the various aspects of worship services at St. Andrew By-The-Sea are dedicated to providing a meaningful worship experience for the congregation and visitors. Normally, this would involve musicians, ushers, greeters, lay readers, communion servers, sound controllers, acolytes, altar guild, children's message presenters, pew supplies, name tags, communion setup, and flower arrangers. Many of these activities are continuing even during the pandemic hiatus as live streaming is still supported by music, altar preparation, children's messages, and especially, the technology aspect of delivering online worship. The Hilton Head and Bluffton locations work together but customize plans to meet the unique needs of each congregation. Planning for holiday services and the weekly Healing and Wholeness service will resume as soon as it is possible to meet safely in person.

### MUSIC MINISTRIES

The Chancel Choir, Adult Handbell Choir, Women's Ensemble and Men's Ensemble continue to bring seasonally appropriate anthems to the worship services here at St. Andrew By-The-Sea, Pope Avenue Campus. In addition, our own handbell duo of Gloria LaCoe and Christie Leininger contribute to our weekly worship services on occasion. Debby Graves continues to provide musical leadership at the organ bench each Sunday as well as directing the Men's Ensemble. Debby presented a recital program sponsored by the local AGO chapter in January and in February our Adult Handbell Choir members participated in a bell choir festival hosted by St. Luke's Church, HHI.

At Pope Avenue we have been joined on multiple occasions by various instrumentalists, typically two Sundays a month from September to March, including: string quartet, brass, vibes and others. We are fortunate to have Lucy Scandrett as a member of St. Andrew who is willing to share her skills as a professional harpist on a regular basis, as well as flautist Julia Buzzard who is a regular attendee and participant who offers her musical talents as well.

In Bluffton, Wayne Altman continues as the Bluffton Music Director providing musical leadership with a wide variety of contemporary and traditional Christian musical offerings each Sunday.

Christmas Eve saw St. Andrew celebrating worship on Pope Ave. at our 4:30 – family service with Christmas Pageant; 7:00 – candlelight communion service; and 9:30 – traditional candlelight service. Bluffton continued their tradition with their outdoor Christmas Eve Under the Stars service.

The third week of March worship services at both campuses changed dramatically when we were instructed by the Bishop to cease all in-person activities, including worship, due to the COVID-19 epidemic. We began to broadcast online worship services from Pope Ave. on March 22, literally days after the installation of the technical equipment and services needed to do so were installed. God does provide.

With an online only worship presence possible, we have continually worked to improve and better our format, technical presentation and content at the Pope Ave. campus. We have been offering an abbreviated service, approximately 45-50 minutes and broadcast over multiple media platforms at 9:00am and 11:15am on Sunday mornings. We have continued to have guest musicians as well as Debby Graves and Tim Reynolds offering musical selections each week.

In addition to online worship services, we have offered a 30-minute program of hymn singing entitled *Hymns @ Noon* on periodic Friday afternoons starting in June. These programs consist of appropriate readings and hymns performed by members of the Chancel Choir along with Debby and Tim. The hymns to be sung have been sent to the congregation via the all-church email blast on Thursdays and are also available on the various online platforms on which the program is broadcast. Many people, members and non-members alike, have expressed their appreciation for the opportunity of singing some of their favorite hymns from home during this time of no corporate singing. Drive-in communion services at both campuses have been offered starting in June, both with a music component. In August, the Director of Music provided a program/discussion about hymns for Fellowship Friends.

The Altar Guild diligently continues to prepare the sanctuary for worship services each week.

With the decision to remain with an online presence only until the end of 2020, plans are being developed to help us celebrate Consecration Sunday as well as the Sundays of Advent and Christmas in meaningful and creative ways. The Covid-19 epidemic has certainly given us new challenges in how we worship, communicate and continue to minister to our congregation, and we continue to strive to meet the challenges each week.

## **CHRISTIAN EDUCATION – HILTON HEAD CAMPUS**

### **CHILDREN'S MINISTRY**

Continuation of weekly Deep Blue One-Room Sunday School was led by Children's Coordinator, Alice Frawley, September through February. Beginning in March, Children's Ministries were led by Director of Christian Education, Connie Borgianini. Other traditional events took place through the end of 2019, including Trunk or Treat, Celebration of the Nativity (dinner, music, and display of creches), and our "pop up" Christmas Eve Pageant (including children of congregation and visiting children).

During this long season of Covid-19, many ministries were modified and continued. Weekly mailings, emails and Deep Blue video links for weekly lessons were provided, allowing families to engage in Sunday School learning on their own schedule while at home. In August, many of our children participated in Artful Angels by creating original art postcards and sending them to shut-ins and those needing to self-isolate as precautionary measures associated with Covid-19.

This month we've started Celebrate Wonder Zoom Together online gatherings on Sunday mornings, which were kicked-off with a Paint Along earlier this month to introduce this new curriculum to our children and their families, and to generate excitement while allowing our children to re-connect with their St. Andrew friends.

### **SUNDAY SCHOOL ADULTS**

Five classes met weekly through early March, then groups modified to meet virtually early April. By August three classes were meeting via Zoom weekly. Our Parenting Class has evolved into Family Sunday School with the start of Celebrate Wonder virtual gatherings beginning this month.

Several of our on-going small groups transitioned to online meetings as well. Weekly: Thursday Men's devotional – this group not only has continued throughout the summer but has grown in size. Fellowship Friends – has gone from monthly meetings to weekly online meetings with very consistent attendance. Many women that could not attend on-site meetings can now participate on a regular basis. Two women's small groups have transitioned to online gatherings: Soul Tending continues to meet monthly; Lowcountry Lydias now meets every two weeks.

Three short-term online studies have taken place this spring/summer: *Unafraid – Living with Courage and Hope in Uncertain Times*, *Every Step a Prayer – Walking as Spiritual Practice*, and *James for Everyone*. Again, participants from various locations across the region and country has been able to participate. Our current study, *Journey Through the Psalms* is being led by Rev. Frank Lybrand. The focus of this study provides a much-needed foundation of faith during these continually challenging times.

While nurturing our faith in person is greatly missed, God continues to bless us in many ways in the midst it all. Having the ability to connect while in isolation is vital for many of our members as precautions for so many are still needed. In addition, online learning has allowed for many of our part-time members, former members, and travelers to participate in growing in their faith regardless of their location. We are grateful to lean into our faith throughout the pandemic.

## **HILTON HEAD CAMPUS YOUTH MINISTRY**

It has been a pleasure to be a part of the Youth Ministry program at the Hilton Head campus. Over the last year, we have enjoyed leading a number of activities that have included both the youth of St. Andrew as well as the youth from our surrounding community.

The fall of 2019 proved to be a busy and exciting time. Our local Youth Group, which had grown throughout the previous summer, continued with a core group of kids as the school year started. In addition to meeting every week, we organized additional activities for the kids in the spirit of fun, fellowship, and community service.

Activities included a bike trip to explore Pinckney Island in the beginning of September; trunk decorating and handing out candy at the Trunk or Treat event for the community in October; creating a Fishing Booth and volunteering at the

Kids' Carnival at the Fall Festival in November; baking Christmas cookies to contribute to the Fellowship Dinner in December; attending a weekend retreat at the SCMYP's Revolution in January.

In addition to the Youth Group activities and responsibilities, the extensive planning and training for the 2019-2020 Upward Basketball season began in September 2019. Registration for the program opened October 1, player evaluations were conducted in November, coaches were recruited, teams and leagues were created, uniforms ordered and dispensed, the coaches meeting was completed, and practices began by mid- December. As of the second week of January, the eight-week Upward Basketball season was underway with the season ending the first week in March 2020.

By the third week of March, we were "re-modeling" the Youth Group experience due to Covid-19. Despite the social distancing, we have continued to connect with our youth and their families through weekly devotionals, Zoom game nights, and emails. As members of the St. Andrew staff, we have also been involved in several cupcake, cookie, and brownie drives to support all the essential staff and healthcare workers at Hilton Head Hospital.

## **RELATIONAL MINISTRIES**

Relational Ministries has included numerous committees that are designed to serve our congregation. We have committee chairs actively involved in guest service, membership, attendance, coffee hour, name tags and special meals. We use InFellowship, our website, and email to communicate with members about church activities, programs, mission projects and service opportunities. We follow up with our visitors and potential church members by adding them to a mailing list for our monthly Fisherman newsletter when requested. We offer affiliate and associate memberships to temporary residents. We introduce new members by including their pictures in the monthly newsletter and encourage them to complete a Living It Commitment Card. This commitment is the important vow we make to Christ Jesus and is the heart of service and gifts that we offer to and through our congregation that casts a broad net of ministry throughout the Lowcountry of South Carolina.

We have been challenged since March in fulfilling these commitments. However, we have been able to navigate a path for our long-time visitors who have decided to join our church to be welcomed in person on the live stream videos. Hopefully, this will allow our membership to be able to recognize them when we can meet again in the new year. We know that we are reaching new potential members through our online service because of conversations at the drive-thru communion services. We believe that personal communication is important as we are not able to meet and have attempted to contact each member by telephone. We believe that our church is not just a building, but the body of Christ!

## **MISSION AND OUTREACH**

Mission and Outreach continues to inspire our Christian faith community to share God's grace with the world. We serve a vital role in the overall ministry at St. Andrew By-The-Sea United Methodist Church. On behalf of the church, the Mission Committee is involved with at least 21 different programs. These mission efforts are based at both campuses of St. Andrew and in the mission field outside the community and beyond.

Our church mission projects are supported with people and funding, as tangible expressions of our commitment. Financial contributions were offered to eight local agencies who submitted a request for monetary assistance. These grants totaled \$19,300. Just as needed and greatly appreciated is the active participation of church members as volunteers in programs—Bluffton Self Help, Deep Well, and the Thanksgiving Dinner. Our church members donate canned goods and other foods, provided \$16,009 in monetary support and volunteered their resources of time and talent to plan and carry out this work.

Three international missionaries received funding to support their work abroad. Bill Lovelace coordinates immigration efforts in Norway. Sara Flores works in church development and community ministries in Ecuador. Rhett Thompson is pastor of Evangelical Methodist Church of Panama City and coordinates the church's efforts to reach out to the surrounding low-income neighborhood through a day care program and other projects. We invested \$8,750 in our missionaries.

Now in its fifth year, and recently with two partner churches - All Saints Episcopal Church, Mt. Pleasant Presbyterian Church - the Bridge Builders group continues to grow in numbers and awareness of the complexity of many racial issues. In November Bridge Builders hosted a book discussion of *America's Original Sin: Racism, White Privilege, and the Bridge to a New America* presented by Calvin Lamar. In February, 120 people heard Speaker Dr. Patricia Felton-Montgomery

present and answer questions on Rosa Parks. In August, the Dr. Julius Scott Lecture Series hosted a Zoom panel discussion with over 200 registered participants, titled, "Seeking Common Ground." The panel featured Rev. Dr. Peter Wherry, Rev. Dr. Rodney Sadler, Dr. Gloria Holmes, and Rev. Daniel Burbage. It is estimated that this webinar was viewed by 300 participants.

Academic Scholarships were awarded to six recipients for the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester of 2020 for \$1000 each. Six scholarships were awarded for the first semester of 2020/21 in the amount of \$11,000, with another \$5,000 promised for the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester for 2020/21.

Unfortunately, Covid-19 has impacted other mission efforts. Some of our larger and long-standing programs are on hold. They include the Fall Festival, the Community Thanksgiving Dinner in its normal form, Upward Basketball, and Family Promise on-site support. Christmas Grace will go forward in a very modified format because the poorest families in our community have an even greater need for help this year. Soup Kitchen and Back Pack Buddies continued in modified form. Watch for more about the Thanksgiving Dinner concepts.

Whether new or older programs, whether at Pope Avenue or the Bluffton campus or beyond, the mission of the Mission and Outreach Committee, *to inspire our Christian faith community to share God's grace with the world*, continues to be a vital part of our church.

## **TRUSTEES**

The year 2020 was a year of regular maintenance with only a couple of larger repairs.

Significant projects in 2020 include:

- Replaced a mini-split AC unit in the Music Room
- Repaired an AC unit for the Sanctuary
- Power washed and painted exterior of the buildings as needed
- Cleaned carpet in the Celebration Center gym and steam cleaned the kitchen, restrooms, and entryway tile
- Cleaned carpet in the Narthex and Admin Bldg. offices.
- Planted spring flowers and added fresh pine straw
- Cleaned Sanctuary windows
- Repaired and painted a number of areas on all buildings damaged from water leaks during rainy season including the roof
- Contracted for a new cloud-based phone system replacing an aging, barely functioning system
- Replaced dry actuator device for the fire suppression system Celebration Center
- Reviewed and updated Trustee policies and procedures including the Disaster Plan and Procedures
- Finalized an easement agreement with neighboring property
- Made modifications to the Sanctuary to accommodate cameras and recording equipment
- Cleaned and sanitized the duct work of the Sanctuary
- Upgraded to cellular callers for our fire systems in all buildings
- Extensive research by ad hoc committee was conducted to determine how to sanitize and clean the buildings for Covid-19 when in-person gatherings resume
- Normal Fire suppression and equipment inspections were performed
- Began inquiry with an architect to explore adding a handicapped elevator and porte-cochère to the Sanctuary building - in process
- Tree trimming and removal
- Repaired storm faults to fire panel in Celebration Center

## **CHILDREN/YOUTH AND BLUFFTON FAMILIES**

What an unusual year it has been! We began the year strong engaging our families through a variety of ministries. We offered Wednesday night Worship, where families would share a meal, sing and then split into two groups. Parents would stay in our worship space and our children would split out and do activities together. We also had a great time offering "First Friday's" through March. This is a ministry that we have consistently done for the last 4 years and is a favorite of our families. It is an opportunity for our children to gather on Friday nights, share a meal and have fun, while their parents have a night out!

We also started 2020 out with an awesome sermon series where we featured small restaurant businesses throughout Bluffton and served their food after worship. This was a great way to support our community while fellowshiping as a faith family.

While the course of ministry quickly changed, our family ministry changed as well. We remained in contact with our families through regular phone calls, emails and delivered packages. The first event that was canceled was our annual Easter Egg Hunt. As an alternative, we had a team of people deliver and hide individual eggs at our families' houses as a complete surprise. We also started doing Drive Thru Communion, a Back To School Blessing Parade, and Music in our Parking Lot, all while social distancing.

Most recently we delivered yard signs all over Bluffton to remind children and youth that we would be praying for them as they start back to a different kind of school this year. Although it has been disappointing not being able to gather how we are used to, I believe that God is working in our midst and guiding us to new and creative ways to do His work – it is exciting!

### **ENDOWMENT FUND**

The Endowment Committee had limited activity this year, partly because grant decisions were not needed since most earnings for the Fund went to fulfill the \$100,000 pledge to the church's last capital campaign and partly because Covid-19 restrictions on meetings were imposed. There was a leadership change mid-year due to the death of the committee's chairman. One grant in the amount of \$15,000 was made to make improvements to the church's livestream capabilities at both campuses.

The occurrence of new contributions to the Fund and substantial earnings on investments combined to grow the balance to more than \$913,000. Members and friends of St. Andrew By-The-Sea church are urged to consider a gift to the Endowment Fund, where the principal always remains intact and only the earnings are disbursed for special church needs on a grant basis.

### **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

- The Finance Committee began the year with a review of 2019 results both revenue and expenses.
- The Finance Committee studied budget projections and estimated revenues for 2020.
- The Finance Committee considered multiple possible paths for the budget for 2020.
- Based on the Finance Committee's review of budget projections, a special task force was created to consider budget/operating options at the start of the year.
- The Finance Committee recommended a budget to Church Council that was subsequently adopted.
- As part of the recommendations from the budget, the Finance Committee continued to monitor revenues and even recommended a temporary hold on apportionments pending revenue collections. This temporary hold was "caught up" through July, and more will be considered in the September meeting with an eye toward at least 2019 level apportionments for the full year– even in a pandemic.
- The Finance Committee recommended communication with the congregation about the state of finances and the importance of continued faithful giving during the pandemic. The Communications were made, and the congregation responded positively.
- The Finance Committee reviewed collections monthly and compared to budget expectations – whether in a meeting setting or just a review of the monthly financials.
- Reviewed spending monthly and compared to budget expectations – whether in a meeting setting or just a review of the monthly financials.
- Finance recommended to pursue PPP loan with possible forgiveness through the federal stimulus program. This loan was ultimately approved and funded during 2020.
- Worked with Staff Pastor Parish Relations Committee to keep staffing as stable as possible during the pandemic.
- The Finance Committee looks to continue to monitor the budget to the end of the year.
- The Finance Committee looks to start considering budget implications for 2021.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE MINISTRIES**

We were just launching the Living It Campaign when the pandemic forced us to stop all in-person activities, meetings, and services. At that time, not knowing how long we would be closed, we decided to postpone everything until people were able to volunteer and serve in person. Unfortunately, that has turned out to be longer than expected. We hope to restart the Living It Campaign in the spring of 2021 with renewed enthusiasm to serve since we have been apart so long.

## **STAFF/PASTOR PARISH RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

Just like every other aspect of our church's operations, the Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Committee (SPPRC), has been challenged by the six-month-long and still emerging Covid-19 situation. Our Pastors and staff have discovered new and innovative ways of fulfilling the various ministries of the church, much of which is now being done remotely.

There has been no turnover in any of the full time positions in nearly two years and we were fortunate to qualify for and receive a forgivable loan through the Paycheck Protection Program provisions of the CARES Act passed by Congress to keep everyone on through the uncertainty of the pandemic. One part time position, Executive Assistant to the Senior Pastor, has been filled by Phyllis Brodie for the past 2 years and Phyllis has decided to "retire" this year. Most of her duties were centered around communications and livestream management, so as of this writing, we are trying to hire a Communications and Technology Specialist(s) on a part-time basis to perform those functions. We wish Phyllis all the best as she transitions to a well-deserved retirement after more than 25 years with St. Andrew.

We are blessed to have such a dedicated, talented, and committed group of people engaged in God's work at SABTS church. We ask for your prayers of support and encouragement as they continue their amazing work.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

Communications are always an important aspect of church life, but little did we know at our last Charge Conference how much communication would change and how critical technical communication strategies would be in 2020. The St. Andrew staff and members of Church Council have done an outstanding job of trying to navigate the pandemic by maintaining communications in a variety of ways.

Church ads, Facebook and the website required quick updates to indicate our on-line only presence for worship. It was a blessing (dare we say miracle) that a special gift had allowed us to begin streaming Bluffton Worship over a year before the pandemic and just a couple of weeks before at the Hilton Head Campus. Numbers just on the website on Aug 30 showed viewers in three countries and 21 states! Livestreaming has been our lifeline to the congregation, but has also meant more investment of time and talent to best utilize and maximize the opportunity.

To that end, great thanks is due to our AV and worship teams at both campuses for the extraordinary commitment they have made to be present when others were safely at home. Countless hours have been put into planning ahead for visual presentations while distancing worship participants. Work behind the scenes also still includes creation of appealing graphics, bulletin production, scheduling participants and special music, announcements, Zoom invitations, closed captioning, testing and tweaking sound systems, and finally embedding video into the website, Facebook and YouTube.

Livestreams have also provided opportunities for our pastors and leadership to "check in" in a broad-based way. A new FM transmission system has meant folks could take communion in their cars and still hear a message. A gift provided the church with a pro Zoom account to allow committees and other programs to meet virtually beyond 40 minutes.

We have also moved from a weekly blast on Thursdays to three blasts per week with the addition of the wonderful meditations by Rev. Frank Lybrand and a Sunday worship reminder. The Bluffton Campus sends special emails to their regular attendees with their campus' upcoming Wednesday study, Sunday worship, or event details. While we know improvements must still be made, we have done our best to communicate on newer platforms like Facebook as well as use old stand-bys such as the telephone to talk with members or send mailed letters or newsletters delivered by the USPS.

One communication tool was arranged for by the admin staff during the past year but has yet to be fully finalized and unveiled. Be watching for our own church app to be launched in the near future.

Submitted by Sarah R. Coffin  
Church Council Chair