



VESTRY REPORT



Church of St John the
Evangelist, Elora

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Parish Register

Baptisms

Carter Earl Sisolak	Samantha Marley Appleton	Liam Richard Thomas Appleton	Dennis Malcolm Parks
June 8, 2025	June 15, 2025	June 15, 2025	September 14, 2025

Marriages

Sarah Nicole Walsh Ryan John Beatty Burley	Kailey Nicole DeBoer Carlos Roberto España
May 31, 2025	September 17, 2025

Deaths

Laurene Copp	Joyce Madelyn Pearson	Jane Elizabeth Rapp	Elizabeth Mary Knight
Nov. 15, 1931 Jan. 18, 2025	July 4, 1931 Feb. 25, 2025	May 7, 1948 February 27, 2025	October 3, 1945 March 23, 2025
Colin Fox	Michael Wilcox Rowsell	Lisa Henderson	Margaret Amelia Sealy
Nov. 20, 1938 April 5, 2025	April 20, 1964 May 20, 2025	June 14, 1965 May 27, 2025	May 25, 1938 June 26, 2025
Christine Kyle Mather	Anne Tinker	James Rutherford Guy	Marilyn Jeannette Stephenson
May 24, 1929 July 16, 2025	Nov. 7, 1950 August 21, 2025	1938 July 10, 2025	April 6, 1941 April 5, 2025
John Murray Millman	Mary Elizabeth Perrett		Susan Ruth Anderson Brown
May 31, 1942 Oct. 21, 2025	August 1, 1961 Nov. 29, 2025		Dec. 31, 1941 Dec. 18, 2025

The Rector

Coming to St. John's

There are many entry points into the life of St. John's. Some attend one of our liturgies on a Sunday morning. Others come for the Wednesday communion, Evensong, Compline or the newly formed Meditation group. Other people engage St. John's through social entry points: the Men's Dinner, the Ladies Lunch, the Circle of Friends, the Song Circle or the Croissant Crew. Other people engage St. John's through our Concert Series, the Elora Children's Choir, the Elora Singers, or the Adventure Film Festival. But the on ramp for many people to engage is online through the livestreams or our social media presence. Those two avenues become a safe, anonymous and less intimidating way to "come and see," particularly if you are new to the Anglican Church.



There is a growing population of people in Centre Wellington who do not attend any church, but they recognize that they are on a spiritual journey and have questions about God, faith, and meaning. They may not know the creeds, the scriptures or the liturgy, but they have questions.

This is one of the future arenas for the church's mission and ministry. We are called to serve the wider parish as well as all of those who show up. This includes engaging people who presently do not come, and who have no knowledge around Bible stories, but they need a safe place to engage their longings that doesn't require them to join a committee, subscribe to PAG, or get a box of Offering Envelopes in their first month.



Where we Go

Five years ago, we identified four areas of ministry that would become the priorities to take us into the 2030s: Proclaim the Love of Christ, Engage and Involve, Musical Outreach and Open Doors. This has been such a helpful framework to shape how we invest our resources.

We are living into this Mission Action Plan well.

In November we welcomed Emily Hill to our annual Parish Retreat to help us review our MAP priorities and equip us to think about what is next, particularly as we anticipate the opening of our new community reception space with accessible washrooms and commercial kitchen.

The Open Doors project is a bold commitment that demonstrates we are living in to our MAP priorities. Apart from building our church, this is the largest capital project in the history of the parish. Thank you to Colleen Murray and Peter Barr for being co-chairs of the project, and with Thomas Littlewood's capable administrative support, masterfully handling all of the regulatory approvals with the Diocese, the municipality and the Bereavement Authority of Ontario. After four years of work, it was a joy to receive episcopal permission to proceed with the Open Doors project in June, the municipal building permit in August, and BAO approval in September. Since then, the Zehr Group meets with us bi-weekly to review and address the safe delivery of the construction timeline.

Buildings become containers for ministry to happen, and this building will change who we engage with in our community and how we do our ministry. It will take a while to grow into the new space and understand how we use it.

At General Synod this year the Bishop made a motion for the national church to be intentional about adopting a theology of disability. St. John's Elora is invited to participate in a pilot study about how we engage with people who live with disability. Most often people who do not come are absent because of perceived or real barriers they encounter. It is our responsibility to help identify and remove those barriers, so people know that this is an accessible and safe place to address spiritual questions, find support in their journey, and discover a God who loves them.



I am so encouraged that this past year we welcomed seventeen new members of St. John's. These are people who have intentionally said, "This is our church, where we come for spiritual nourishment. Sign me up!"

I am also encouraged that every week there is someone who I have not met before. When we provide good liturgy and inspiring music that is grounded in the scriptures, creeds, and sacraments, along with generous hospitality and creative programming, then we are offering a gift of community in the Anglican tradition where people's spiritual lives can flourish.

The Team We Work With

It takes an enormous team of gifted and willing people to be engaged in all of this.

The members of the Altar Guild, Flower Guild, Lectors, Greeters, Livestream team, Counters and Hospitality team; and the members of our four choirs (Parish Choir, Volunteer Choir, Compline Choir and Children's Choir), and the members of our Parish Council and Corporation all work hard to make this whole enterprise happen.

Congratulations to Judy Bates who received the Florence Nightingale Award in July, and to Pat Ellis who received the Order of Niagara in November. Thank you both for modelling for us the life of service and devotion to Christ.



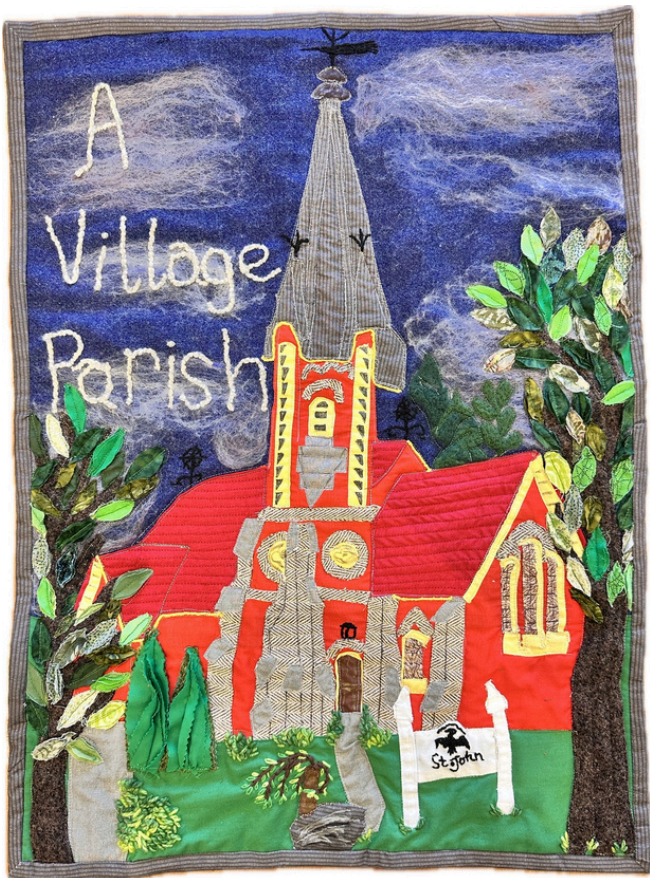
Disciples, Festivals and Celebrations

As disciples we all share a commitment and desire to grow deeper in our Christian faith. I am grateful to Fr. John Lockyer for offering a weekly Bible Study; to Jon Warland and Rev'd Greg Smith Young for offering the ten-week course called "Being With"; and for all who participated in the Lenten study series on Judy Paulsen's book, *Evangelism Ancient and New* and the two workshops called "Anglican 101." These are rich opportunities to get to know one another and grow in our commitment to follow Jesus Christ.



It is an honour to host The Elora Festival for their 46th season this year. It makes for a busy time, but few churches can boast a full church in July.

In October 2024 we launched a year of celebrating the sesquicentennial of our church building with a commemorative Evensong. The year included Patrick Murray successfully securing two pieces of music for our Parish Choir composed by Sarah Quartel and Roderick Williams. We published a long-awaited narrative history, *A Village Parish*, written by Bob Cooper, with research assistance from Susan Edwards, and editorial input from Thomas Littlewood. The Gala Dinner on October 3 marked the first service held in our building 150 years ago. It was a treat to have Bishop Susan Bell address us, the Parish Choir perform, the Elora Brewing Company provide a commemorative lager, and Maureen MacIntyre to organize a very successful Silent Auction. These were all wonderful ways to give thanks to God for 150 years of worship in our building. Take note that in 2030 we will celebrate 200 years since the parish was established.



The cover of *A Village Church* is a photograph of a quilt made for us by local textile artist Margaret Paul.

Christ Church, Drayton continues to function, with Bishop's permission, as a chapel-of-ease accountable to the corporation and vestry of St. John's Elora. A small congregation gathered every Sunday, except in August or when winter conditions prevented them, for communion. Canon Robert Hulse offers liturgical leadership, Stephen Truchan plays the organ and prepares the flowers, and Mike Hale prepares the Order of Service. St. John's oversees their bank accounts, administers expenses, provides tax receipts for donations and reviews their ministry.



Connected to the Diocese

In the life of the diocese, it was a pleasure to have a table of guests attend the Bishop's Company Dinner in May and for me to participate in the annual Clergy Conference in June where the Bishop of Wales was the guest speaker.

This year I gave up my role as Regional Dean, which I've held for four years, to accept the bishop's invitation to be the Archdeacon of Greater Wellington. Thank you to The Venerable Peter Scott, Rector of St. Mark's Orangeville, who faithfully served in this role for the past sixteen years. As archdeacon it is honour to assist the bishop in the oversight of the eleven parishes in our region, to encourage the clergy in their ministry and to sit on Synod Council.



Gifts

All of this is made possible through your commitment to support the ministry with your donations of time, talent and treasure. I am humbled by your generosity which has raised over \$1.3 million towards our Open Doors project and supported our annual operating budget. It is inspiring to see your commitment to support St John's.

The Endowment Fund is well served by the members of our Endowment Committee. With Vestry permission, while we are using some of the funds from the Endowments, particularly those earmarked for accessibility or at the discretion of the Corporation, to support the Open Doors project we are committed to preserve the base of that fund and use it wisely. In the coming years I am confident the Endowment fund will grow if you are willing to consider, as many have before us, to name St. John's in your will and make a planned gift from your estate.

Gratitude

Thank you to our wardens, Peter Barr, Jon Warland, Colleen Murray and Mark Hemingway, and to our treasurer, Andrew Hirst. We meet biweekly to oversee things and they are a wonderful team to work with. Thank you to our bookkeeper, Susan Hirst, who pays our bills, and to Linda Coultres, who manages the email distribution list, forwards voice mails, and prepares the Orders of Service.

Thank you to our staff team, Patrick Murray, Jurgen Petrenko, Thomas Littlewood and Garry Cantlon. It is such a pleasure to work with you. Your creativity and commitment to excellence in ministry is a gift to be treasured. Thank you to Kate Wright and her dedication to the ever-expanding Elora Children's Choir. This year the Wardens extended the role of Choir Manager and Music Librarian to Autumn Debassige. It is needed and right that the Wardens have increased Thomas' role to a full-time position in the new year.

It is a pleasure to serve as your Rector over the past eight years, and to have the capable and faithful support of Reverends John Lockyer and Judy Steers as honorary clergy in the parish. You all play a role to make me a more compassionate human being, more effective leader, and more faithful follower of our Lord. I thank God for all that we accomplished this past year, and I look forward with confidence and expectation to all that we commit ourselves to in the coming year.

May God bless you, sustain you and keep you.

Paul Walker+
Rector



Parish Administrator

It certainly has been a busy year. I am continually struck by how much we do at St John's, and there's always more!

One of my main areas of focus is tracking givings. This year, as you'll see in the financial statements at the back, donations to the operating budget are down over last year. There are a few reasons I can think of for this. First, we've targeted (and received) donations for the Open Doors project which are not included in the budget. We all know, too, that the price of living has increased over the last 12 months, and I think it's reasonable to think that folks have had to tighten their purse strings in the last year. But I do not see this as a 'bad news story.'

Of course, it costs money to run this operation, but money isn't how we measure the success of a Christian church. Our average weekly attendance is increased this year by 15 people over last year. We've had visitors every week, and 17 people have officially joined our numbers this year. Kate Wright has 40 kids in the Children's Choirs, and she is eagerly anticipating the new space. The meeting room in the Parish Centre is busting at the seams. Elias and Ghada come to the Parish Centre on Saturday mornings to make croissants for an ever-growing group of people who pile into the building.



A highlight of 2025 for me was our 150th Anniversary Gala. It was a pleasure to celebrate with all of you and to pay tribute to all those who have gone before us. St John's as we know it is built on the shoulders of our forebears. Bob Cooper has told some of their stories so well in *A Village Church*, and we are working hard to leave something good for the generations that come after us.

Looking into 2026, the wardens have decided to increase my hours to full-time, which is a reflection of the busyness of this parish. I am looking forward to the opening of the St John's Commons and helping the parish grow into our mission.

Respectfully submitted,
Thomas M. Littlewood

Wardens

Another very successful year come and gone for the people of St John's Elora. It has certainly been an exciting and historic year, and one full of hope for the future.

Proclaim the Love of Christ

At the heart of what we do at St John's is proclaiming the Good News of the Gospel to the community. We're fortunate at St John's to be able to do this within our charism of music, but also in the community. One of the Bishop's priorities for Niagara is adult faith formation, and to that end, Fr John Lockyer continued his Monday afternoon Bible Study this year. Jon Warland and the Rev. Greg Smith-Young also offered a program called Being With. This is a program from the UK that focuses on small groups walking alongside each other and learning and wondering together. The Rector's "Learn in Lent" series focused on Judy Paulsen's book *Evangelism: Rediscovering the God Who Calls and Sends* which offers a different take on evangelism, one that focuses on evangelism as relational instead of using high-pressure sales tactics.

Bishop Susan recognized Pat Ellis with the Order of Niagara this year in recognition of her ministry with the columbarium over the last number of years. The Bishop says that the Order of Niagara is not a volunteer service award but a way to recognize those who are Christ-like in our communities. Pat is certainly that for us. Congratulations, Pat!

Musical Outreach

One of the joys of clearly articulated goals and priorities is being able to witness them flourish. That is what has happened with our Musical Outreach at St John's. Under Kate Wright's enthusiastic direction, the Elora Children's Choir has become a real point of connection with the community. This year, Kate established a junior choir and a senior choir and has about 30 young people singing with her on Monday afternoons. Having the Children's Choir sing in some of our liturgies is a seasonal highlight.



After a long wait, we finally saw the completion of the new organ this year. This was the cumulation of about a decade of work by many members of the parish, and we are thrilled to have a new instrument to bolster our ever-growing music program.

The Elora Festival is always a highlight of the year, and as always, we were happy to be 'home base' for the Singers. This year, it was special to welcome back Andrew Henderson as the organist for three of the four Festival liturgies and as a recitalist. Andrew was the assistant organist at St John's in the mid-1990s, and he is now the Director of Music and Organist at Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York City. Andrew recorded his first CD on the organ at St John's.



150th Anniversary

Our 150th anniversary in the current church building has given us an occasion to celebrate, and the Hymn Sing we held in February was just that. The popular refrain afterwards was, "We should do this again sometime!" Tom Bell, the organist at St James' Cathedral in Toronto, was our host, and he walked us through an engaging history and stories of some of our beloved hymns. Patrick also used the 150th anniversary as an excuse to commission two new choral pieces for the Parish Choir. Sarah Quartel and Roderick Williams captured the essence (although very different essences) of Elora, St John's, and the Parish Choir. This is a wonderful way to be able to contribute to the legacy of choral music.



It's always fun to have a chance to dress up, and the anniversary gala in October provided us with just that opportunity. It was a chance to get together, celebrate our past, and envision our future. Bishop Susan imagined what a flourishing church might look like, and we were blessed, as always, with the Parish Choir. Thank you to those who worked hard to put the evening together, and a special thank you to Maureen MacIntyre who organized a wonderful silent auction. For a few years, Bob Cooper has been working on a narrative history of the parish, and it was released in Advent this year. It's fair to say that this was a labour of love for Bob. *A Village Parish* tells a series of stories about St John's throughout our past, and it was the product of dozens of interviews of parishioners past and present. Susan Edwards' archival research and knowledge rounded out the stories and made them deeply rooted in our history. The front cover is a photograph of a quilt made by Margaret Paul that now hangs in the Parish Centre.

Engage and Involve

When E&G's bakery closed, Elias was looking for a place to house his pastry oven and to continue offering baked goods to the community. So, he donated his pastry oven to St John's, and "Croissants in the Parish Centre" was born. He and Ghada come on Saturday mornings to bake croissants and other pastries, and it has become a significant piece of our weekly rhythm. Of course, Elias' pastries are unmatched, and the Parish Centre smells amazing. Another new piece of engaging the community was with the Elora Adventure Film Festival in November. Ian Evans and his team performed magic, turning the church into a full-blown cinema. There were several events at the church, which brought hundreds of people through our doors.



Open Doors

It will surprise no one that the Open Doors project was a significant focus for Corporation this year. After two successful Special Vestries, construction on the new space was begun in earnest in August. The columbarium was deconstructed in September, and it caused some unexpected difficulties. Special thank you to David Campbell, Pat Ellis, and our onsite supervisor Greg Karges for their hard work in getting this part of the project complete.

It has been gratifying to see the new space take shape and to imagine all of the activities, groups, and ministries that the space will afford us. We are very fortunate to be working with the excellent team at Zehr Group, led by Greg Karges. The construction team meets every two weeks to review plans and tackle issues, and they are respectful, helpful, and have really taken ownership of the project. It is clear from all of the activities this year that the new space is very much needed and will be well-used!



Last Words and 2026

2025 was a bright year in the life of St John's, Elora. We are grateful for your support, time, and treasure as we preach the Good News of Jesus Christ in Centre Wellington. We've certainly noticed that there are new faces in church all the time, and we encourage you to join with us in welcoming them and making them feel at home here. Just a kind "hello" and a gentle smile is all it takes.

Looking into 2026, you'll see that we have some stewardship work to do to make sure general fund donations keep pace with our expenses. So, we encourage you to prayerfully consider what you can do to support St John's as we move toward fulfilling our mission in Elora.

Respectfully submitted,

Jon Warland

Rector's Warden

Peter Barr

People's Warden

Mark Hemingway

Rector's Deputy

Colleen Murray

People's Deputy



Alongside Hope

Alongside Hope is the outreach arm of the Anglican Church of Canada, working for change in Canada and around the world towards a truly just, healthy and peaceful world.

For 65 years it was known under the name of The Primate's World Relief and Development Fund. The new name is linked to the Easter story of Emmaus: After Jesus' death and burial, his disciple walked to Emmaus, their hearts in despair and their minds empty, until Jesus walks alongside them, giving them hope and sharing life-giving food. Alongside Hope brings hope and new life to thousands of families and communities around the world. Equally significant, it offers us many and varied opportunities to be part of sharing our abundant blessings.

Here are some 2024/25 indicators of this important work:

- 53 projects in 30 countries
- 288,292 direct participants
- \$ 4.78M allocated



Alongside Hope

Anglicans and partners working for change
in Canada and around the world



In 2024, five appeals for help were launched at St. John's: at Easter, in June (for the Resilience Fund), at Thanksgiving (for solar suitcases in Mozambique and Madagascar), in November (special appeal for the Gaza hospital), and at Advent. Furthermore, the Rector encouraged us to make use of the Lenten and Advent resources for our meditation and prayers. St. John's parishioners generously gifted a total of \$ 12,950, a result for joyous thanksgiving. Thank you all.

Respectfully submitted,
Doris M'Timkulu

Editor's Note: After many years of faithful service as Alongside Hope representative both to the parish and the diocese, Doris M'Timkulu is looking to retire from the role. If you are interested in taking this on, please contact Doris and Thomas Littlewood.

Altar Guild

The Altar Guild continues to support the worship at St. John's through preparation and clean-up of Eucharist services, the maintenance of candles and accessories, laundering of worship linens and the changing of frontals.

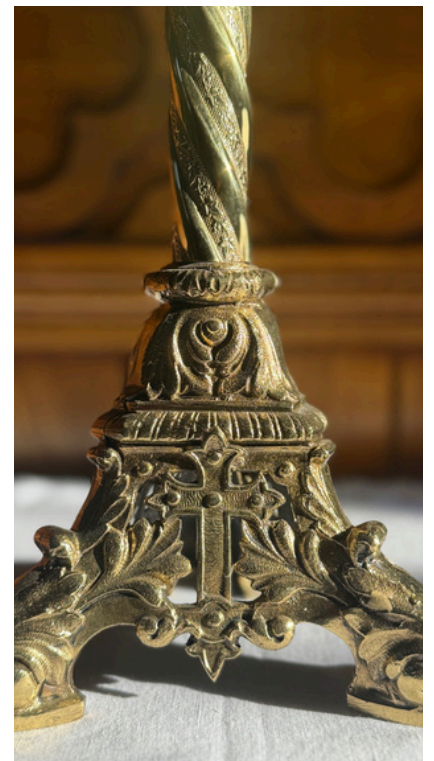
Thomas Littlewood, in the role of Sacristan, is responsible for the ordering of worship supplies including replenishing worship linens as necessary. Thomas also helps with other Altar Guild tasks on a regular basis.

We have welcomed several new members over the past year. Elaine Dightam, Erin and Michael Appleton and Marjorie Rogers are a welcome addition to the existing team of Barb Watkins, Meg Prichard, Wendy Boose and Wendy Donohue.

Pam Gradwell decided this year it was time to step back from her role convening the Altar Guild. But her much appreciated years of service to the Altar Guild are not over. Susan Hirst has replaced her, but Pam remains as a trusty deputy.

We are happy to hear from anyone interested in joining the Altar Guild.

Respectfully submitted
Susan Hirst & Pam Gradwell



Columbarium

I'd like to start by thanking Pat Ellis for her many years of service as Columbarium Administrator. Her attention to detail, compassionate nature, and organizational skills have been a blessing to the columbarium during her time as administrator. While I have taken on the reins, Pat continues to be a trusted advisor. Thank you, Pat!

The big task for the columbarium this year, of course, was obtaining final approval from the Bereavement Authority of Ontario and subsequently disinterring those in the columbarium so that it could be deconstructed. The actual disinterring was a more difficult challenge than anticipated, but thank you to Pat Ellis, David Campbell, the Rector, and Greg Karges for making it possible. Giddy's Funeral Home in Fergus has offered to keep custody of the remains until the new columbarium is ready. Many of the plaques that were on the old columbarium cracked during the removal. They are buried in the foundations of the new building, just as we are built on the foundations of those who have come before us.

The new columbarium is larger than the old one, so there are a number of spots available. If you're interested, please contact me. Several of you already have spoken to me and thank you for that. I have delayed getting back to folks until we have the changes to the columbarium done and dusted. But you are all on my list!

Respectfully submitted,
Thomas M. Littlewood



Flower Guild

Your Altar Flower Guild is a group of four interesting individuals who create lovely floral displays and have fun doing it. We take turns to prepare the floral weekly arrangements for the Altar. We gather with friends to make larger creative displays for important seasons such as Easter, Harvest and Christmas.

A request for flowers to be placed on the altar in memory of a loved one, or in celebration of an important event gives us the opportunity to include a favourite colour or certain blooms in a special arrangement. Thomas Littlewood, our Memorial Flowers coordinator passes on your requests for memorial flowers to the Altar Guild. Although \$90 - \$100 is often suggested for memorial flowers, we are happy to prepare a special display with any donation.

We are always pleased to include new members in our Altar Flowers Guild. Feel free contact me through the church office if you are interested in joining our Altar Flower Guild, or if you simply want to help from time to time. We'd love to include you in the fun!

Respectfully submitted,
Dawn McClure



Gardeners

A few of your St. John's Gardeners quietly kept order among the plants this year. Thank you to Dinah and Gordon Bristowe.

Thank you to Jon Warland and Garry Cantlon for looking after the lawns and the outdoor seasonal displays (poppies, orange sweaters), among other things.

Your help is always appreciated, especially for pruning, spring and fall cleanups. We look forward to sharing the pleasure of gardening in our churchyard with you this coming season. Feel free to contact Jon Warland or Dawn McClure if you are interested in joining us. We'd love your company. Things will look different in the gardens with Open Doors coming to life, but there will be lots to do.

Respectfully submitted,
Dawn McClure

Livestream Guild

The Livestream Team has continued to provide a number of services including the broadcast of weekly services and special services, funerals, music video recordings by the Parish Choir, as well as providing content for the Church social media feeds.

The Church YouTube channel, the means by which our church services are live streamed, now numbers almost 550 subscribers worldwide, an increase of 10% over 2024. Most subscribers are here in Canada. A typical weekly service is viewed by 50-100 people, and special services and videos often attract 100-200 viewers or more. An example was the premiere of the Choir's commissioned work "I Thank Thee God" by Sarah Quartel which garnered over 360 views.

One rule of production is that "nothing ruins good video like bad audio." The Team regularly trouble shoots issues with the production, particularly the audio. Microphones, connections and audio settings require constant monitoring and adjustment. Recent issues with internet streaming were identified in the Autumn resulting in the modem replacement and relocation of the router used to deliver the Livestream signal. These issues weren't able to be resolved until late Fall when the live-streaming of church services resumed in time for Advent.



The Team would greatly appreciate the assistance of more volunteers. If you can volunteer to assist with any of the tasks listed below, please let one of the Team know. An urgent need is for more Livestream technicians. Training will be provided.

Team Task Summary

The following is a list of tasks that are part of the Livestream Team's volunteer role:

- Preparing slides and uploading for use in Sunday Services, Special Services & Events
- Charging and preparing the devices and other hardware for the livestream
- Curating, deleting and managing files, folders, slides and videos on the Switcher Studio iPad
- Equipment setup, launching & monitoring live-streamed services
- Selecting appropriate camera angles
- Collecting and cataloguing photographs
- Sourcing content, editing text, videos and photos, content creation
- Posts to social media
- Online and in-person attendance at Team meetings
- Troubleshooting internet, audio and video issues
- Equipment evaluation, acquisition and tracking
- Channel maintenance and content uploads
- Social Media Analytics
- Scheduling
- Managing invoices for Switcher Studio and Apple iCloud services for the Treasurer

The Livestream team currently consists of (L to R, above) Gerry Hill, Rod Murray, Heather Malek, Colleen Murray and The Ven. Paul Walker. Thomas Littlewood provides support. Linda Coultres prepares the weekly Order of Service which is used to create the livestream resources. We appreciated the contributions of Jon Warland who has stepped down from the team.

Respectfully submitted,
Rod Murray

Readers Guild

Thank you so much to everyone who participated in services by volunteering to read lessons. Your collective contribution has enriched our worship experience.

Just counting the 11:00 am services plus evensongs and special festive services there are approximately 175 spots to fill in a year! I am pleased to say that from the pool of 50 readers, we have risen to the task.

I would love to expand our ranks by adding some new voices. To those of you who have never read before and feel apprehensive, I remind you that you are in a friendly and supportive community. If I have not tapped you on the shoulder yet and you would like to read, please reach out to me: patriciajreimer@gmail.com or 519-807-2614. Also, if there is a time of year or specific service that is meaningful to you, please let me know in advance and I will pencil you in.

Lessons are usually delivered electronically a few days before the service. When it's your turn, please check in with Thomas Littlewood when you arrive at church so we know you are present.

Thanks for making my job a pleasure to do by replying to me with enthusiasm and in a timely fashion.

Respectfully submitted,
Patricia Reimer

Circle of Friends

The year has passed for me with grace and faith, and St. John's has been my rock and the place where my faith is all allowed to grow. Again, the Circle of Friends group has stood by me and upheld me with their love and faith. Just to say thank you for your support does not express my appreciation. I am truly blessed to have all of you in my life.

We had six projects this year and managed somehow to do them all with everyone pulling together as a team to accomplish these goals.

Feathers for TRC Day and Orange Sweaters. Orange sweaters were displayed for Truth and Reconciliation Day in September. This display is a sacred reminder to encourage people to reflect on our history and to think on and challenge us to move forward with grace.

Poppies. The poppy display has become a tradition at St. John's as well as in Elora and Fergus. We concentrated on remedial work on the banners. A huge thank you to the ladies who helped do the remedial work on the poppies for display.

Christmas Puddings. We managed to make our puddings again this year. We changed our cooking facility back to our church kitchen as our swan song to the old kitchen. We made 110 pounds of Christmas pudding., and just about all the puddings were sold. Thank you to the ladies for helping to make the puddings and thank you to the congregation for purchasing the puddings and supporting our group. This is our fund raiser for the year. The money earned goes back into the church for special projects.



Prayer Shawls and Comfort Blankets. We continue to make shawls and comfort blankets and are now expanding into baby blankets. We also had a special Sunday where we displayed our shawls and blankets in the church, and we plan to do it again soon. If you know of anyone who needs a little comfort just drop by on a Wednesday morning to pick up one of these blessed beautiful creations or call the Church office and your request will be attended to by one of the Circle of Friends or by someone else in the church. In the Narthex you will find a basket with some shawls in it. Please take one if you need it.

Scarves and Hats. Again the knitters and crocheters who donated beautifully handmade scarves and hats to our group, thank you so much. Prior to Christmas we were able to donate them to the Food Bank. There were two large bags of hats and scarves and a conservative estimate of the number of items exceeded over 50. So, if you are a knitter or crocheter and this project appeals to you please feel free to knit and crochet these wonderful gifts.



Luncheons. As a group we decided to start up again the ladies luncheon group. We started in April and took a break for August. The luncheons are held in the Parish Centre and we have had a variety of speakers come to talk to us. Everyone has pitched in and helped with setup and cleanup, and we usually have the lunch catered. It has been a huge success, and we are looking forward to being able to use our new space when available to us.

The money we raise goes back to the church. We purchase yarn for shawls and blankets. Thank you to this wonderful group for all your efforts and I want to acknowledge and welcome the new members who have joined our little group as we try to make it a warm and welcoming place.

If you are interested in joining us on Wednesday mornings from 9:30 to 12, please leave a voicemail for me through the parish office (519-846-5911) or contact me by email at gbdunsmore@gmail.com.

Respectfully submitted,
Barb Dunsmore

Men's Dinner

2025 was a great season for the Men's Night Dinners with a wide variety of interesting speakers. As is our habit we met on the first Wednesday of each month and usually had between 25 to 30 participants. Our attendees are a mixture of parishioners and friends, some still in the workforce but many who are retired. Steve Truchan and his team continue to provide us with outstanding fare for each evening – the pies are to die for!

All men of the parish are welcome to attend – we meet on the first Wednesday of each month in Thompson Hall at 6pm for a 6:30 start – we encourage our members to invite friends and neighbours from outside of our congregation and to bring them to our meetings. The recommended payment for the meal is \$30 however all are welcome “by donation as they are able”.

Many thanks to our speakers this year: Michael Chong, Rev Paul Walker, Mike MacKay, Randall Howard, Kate Anderson, David Knight, Toni Ellis, Duncan Hossack and last but not least Ian Evans.

As ever one of the continuing challenges is finding speakers for the event – if you know of an interesting speaker or would like to present to the group, please contact me at ihornsby0@gmail.com

Respectfully submitted,
Ian Hornsby

Director of Music and Parish Choir

How else would St. John's have celebrated our 150th anniversary except with an abundance of musical blessings! As I look back on 2025, I'm thankful for so many things:

- Welcoming Elizabeth and Michael Lepock and Valerie Nunn into the Parish Choir as core members.
- Giving thanks for Rebecca McKay, Audrey Coates, and Alan Macdonald's contributions to the Parish Choir over the years as they embark on new adventures.
- Welcoming Parish Choir member Autumn Debassige into the newly-created role of Choir and Music Programs Manager to help us grow our musical offerings.
- Premiering two new choral commissions — *I Thank Thee, God* by Sarah Quartel and *Deep Calls to Deep* by Roderick Williams — as part of our 150th anniversary celebrations. (Special thanks to everyone who contributed to our fundraising campaign that made these commissions possible).
- The continuation of the Concert Series with exquisite performances by guest artists including New Orford String Quartet, Moira Smiley, and Bénédictte Lauzière, solo performances by our very own Autumn Debassige and Paul Genyk-Berezowsky, and performances by the entire choir of Bach's Cantata 23 and Duruflé's *Requiem*.
- A joyful hymn sing in celebration of St. John's 150th anniversary, led with both scholarship and charm by Tom Bell.
- The introduction of a new choral conducting workshop that welcomed working conductors from throughout Ontario and Québec to learn alongside myself, Mark Vuorinen and volunteer and professional singers for one day here in Elora.
- Furthering our commitment to musical outreach through a joint service with the choir at Church of the Incarnation, Oakville, and the continuing growth of the Compline choir.
- The completion of our organ renovation and finally getting to hear these glorious new sounds in our wonderful acoustic.



As we look ahead to 2026, I'm excited to announce that plans are underway for a new album-length recording project with the Parish Choir. I look forward to sharing more details as they evolve.

I remain deeply grateful for the time, talent, and dedication of all who enrich our shared musical life: the singers of the Parish Choir; the members of the Volunteer and Compline choirs; Jurgen, for his leadership of the volunteer choir and his collaborative spirit at the console; Kate Wright, whose energy and devotion continue to grow the Elora Children's Choir; and Stan Litch, for his thoughtful care of the Song Circle. And finally, to Paul and the wardens for their support, guidance, and belief in the vital role of music in making St. John's such a special place.

Respectfully submitted,
Patrick Murray

Elora Children's Choir

The Elora Children's Choir had a very successful season in 2025- some highlights:

- Expanded to include a choir for a younger age group- ages 4-6
- Performed at Heritage River Retirement Residence
- Held a sold out Spring Concert in the sanctuary, with a reception for families and friends
- Continued to perform at a morning service once per term, and enjoyed collaborating with the Parish Choir
- Performed as special guests at the CW Singers Christmas concert in December 2025
- Hosted family & friends for a special Christmas performance and community carol sing-along

Respectfully submitted,
Kate Wright



Song Circle

Under the generous and enthusiastic leadership of ukulele player and retired doctor, Stan Litch, this group of 8-12 takes joyful advantage of the St John's Open Doors policy to sing for the sheer love of it. For 1 1/2 hours every Friday, we gather at the Parish Centre at 10:30 to sing from a wide selection of songs carefully collected, copied and collated by Stan. These well known songs often lead to sharing stories associated with them. After our time together, we leave refreshed and uplifted.

Come join us anytime but beware, it's habit-forming.

Respectfully submitted,
Peter Scott



Volunteer Choir

St. John's Volunteer Choir is made up of enthusiastic singers who rehearse on Thursday mornings at 11:00 am. The choir provides musical leadership at 9:00 a.m. services on alternate Sundays. All are welcome, and there is no audition required to join. Rehearsals are fun and relaxed, and we always work far ahead, so missing a rehearsal is not a problem. Please speak to me to discuss the best time to start, and then enjoy the benefits of singing beautiful music, meeting new friends, and making an important contribution to choral music at St. John's.

Respectfully submitted,
Jurgen Petrenko, Volunteer Choir Director

Open Doors

In January 2025, the Open Doors project was approved with great enthusiasm by Synod Council and the Right Reverend Dr. Susan Bell.

In early spring, significant time was dedicated to submitting detailed permit drawings to the Township while simultaneously seeking final approval from the Bereavement Authority of Ontario. In addition, tenders were issued to contractors and final bids were evaluated. The Class “A” budget was presented at our fourth Special Vestry in April.

In July, we celebrated the long-awaited issuance of the building permit. Selective demolition quickly commenced, followed by site excavation. By August, the foundation and pad were poured, and the space began to take shape. September was dedicated to underground rough-ins and construction of the block wall that will serve as a hallway connecting the church to the new space.

In October, the beautiful hand-hewn posts and beams arrived from British Columbia. Excitement was palpable as the building frame was assembled. In anticipation of the first snowfall, contractors worked tirelessly throughout November and December to enclose the building with walls and a roof. Now, much of the work will move indoors.



At this time, we are pleased to report that the anticipated completion date remains June 2026.

Special thanks are due to Edward Thomas, President of SRM Architects, and his team, including Jeff Atchison, Ethan Liebster, and Mihai Tudose. We also thank Andrew Gateman of Zehr Construction, Madison Morencie, and our ever-smiling Project Site Manager, Greg Karges. To these exceptional individuals, their staff, and subcontractors, thank you for your vision, hard work, attention to detail, enthusiasm, and support throughout the past year.

The parish has been very supportive of the project, as indicated by donations and pledges totalling \$1.3M. Now is the time to begin fulfilling those pledges. Furthermore, if you have not yet indicated your financial support for this project, please consider doing so now. Our goal is \$1.5M, and every contribution helps.

Respectfully submitted,
Colleen Murray and Peter Barr
Open Doors Co-Chairs



Church of St John the Evangelist, Elora Special Vestry January 12, 2025

A special meeting of the Vestry of the Church of St John the Evangelist, Elora, having been duly called by the churchwardens met on January 12, 2025 with the Rector in the Chair.

1. Call to Order and Opening Prayer

The Rector called the meeting to order at 12:25 with a prayer.

2. Housekeeping

Eligibility to vote

Persons are eligible to vote at Vestry meetings if they are at least 16 years of age, have been baptized in a Christian tradition, have been involved in the parish for six months, and are not members of another vestry.

When a motion is on the floor, members of Vestry shall limit their comments to three minutes. When speaking to a motion, members of Vestry shall limit their comments to the motion on the floor.

The Rector appointed Thomas Littlewood as Vestry Clerk.

The following members of Vestry sent their regrets:

Clare and Anthony Johnson, Laura Robertson and Steve Hornett, Doreen Wilson, Nancy Mulholland, Leslie and Pow Lin James, Maureen and Max MacIntyre, Charlotte Logan and Jane Rapp, Pam Gradwell, Fred Thompson, Miranda Kissick, Mary Guy, Janet and David Knight.

3. Background

This is the fifth Special Vestry concerning the Open Doors project.

- i. June 15, 2021—Vestry approved a Vision for St John's which included that we are "being called to create a new accessible and welcoming place for all."
- ii. December 4, 2024—Vestry authorized the wardens to access up to \$75,000 to bring the vision of a new accessible space to tender.
- iii. June 9, 2024—Vestry approved the creation of a Community Bonds financing program to facilitate the construction phase of Open Doors.
- iv. October 6, 2024—Vestry authorized the wardens to access a further \$75,000 for the engineering and technical work required to submit the project to the township for approval.

- Colleen Murray summarized the work that has been done since the October 6, 2024 Special Vestry which includes continued work with SRM Architects; engineering contracts for sewage hookups, electrical, and HVAC; lighting and landscape designers; and continued work with the Bereavement Authority of Ontario.

- Peter Barr summarized givings patterns in 2024 and walked us through the Financial Plan for Open Doors.
 - i. At regular Vestry in February 2024, the wardens challenged Vestry to increase their givings by 15%. Vestry has responded to that challenge in spades. Our givings were up 32% in 2024, and counting some significant one-off donations, revenue increased by 42%. We welcomed 17 new members to St John's this year. Pledged monies and donations to the Open Doors project are at \$1,070,000, which represents 68 givers of approximately 168.
 - ii. The **Funding Model** that the wardens and Open Doors team have determined is
 - 1,500,000 in donations
 - 1,100,000 from endowments
 - 500,000 in grants (private foundations and government grants)
 - \$3,100,000**

St John's is fortunate to have \$5,800,000 in endowment funds, \$4.9 million of which we control. The diocese holds the funds from the sale of the former church and cemetery property at the corner of highway 7 and highway 21 in the amount of approximately \$345,000. Vestry is being asked to request that Synod Council transfer those funds to us so that they can be used for the project. There are some other monies in our endowment funds earmarked for Open Doors, and approximately \$700,000 from a 2019 bequest. As a means of having cash on hand to finance the construction period, we have established a community bonds program. This is an investment vehicle that mean we can avoid a typical construction loan from the bank at a high interest rate. The Diocese is very interested in the project and the community bonds program and have pledged to

buy a bond in the amount of \$100,000.

SRM Architects Edward Thomas and Jeff Aitcheson presented a model of the proposed addition which produced many questions from members of Vestry. The new addition will have two new washrooms one of which will be barrier free and a commercial kitchen. The project is limited by virtue of the space we have. The addition has been designed for natural light through the east window and the rest of the space. The construction calendar is approximately 12 months, and SRM is aware of our 'high seasons' of Christmas, Easter, and the Elora Festival. SRM and the Open Doors team have been working with Zehr Construction Group and we are hoping to continue with them. We will tender the project to get the best price. Peter Barr noted that Edward Thomas is a parishioner at St John's and is donating his time to us in this project. Edward Thomas was warmly applauded.

4. **MOTION:** Moved by Peter Barr and seconded by Colleen Murray THAT Vestry authorize the Wardens to submit the Open Doors project to Synod Council for their approval and upon that approval, send the project to tender. **James Prichard** clarified that \$4.9 million of the endowment funds are controlled by us, the rest by the diocese. He noted that the church relies on the Endowment fund to support operating costs, Peter Barr noted that we returned most of those monies to the Endowment fund this year because of our excellent givings patterns. James Prichard noted that he did not think we should go to tender with the current financing plan and would like another Vestry before the tender is released. **Ken Seiling** noted that he was part of a church in Elmira that was once a large growing church. They did not make the risk of using their legacy funds to prepare them for the future, and they will close in 12 months because of it. Ken Seiling noted that there are of course risks in this project, but there is greater risk if we do nothing.

Helen Kusserow asked for clarity about how current donations are used. The Rector clarified that only donations specifically marked Open Doors are used for the project.

Mark Haslett asked for clarity on the post-tender process. The Rector responded that before we award the contract, there will be another Vestry. This is not the last chance.

Hearing no other questions, the Rector called the question and the motion was CARRIED—72 yes, 1 no.

5. **MOTION:** Moved by Peter Barr, seconded by Colleen Murray THAT Vestry request Synod Council to remove the restrictions on the “Cemetery Fund” for the purposes of property renewal in the Open Doors building project at St John’s Elora. **Lorna Kearns** asked if we anticipate any difficulties with this. Peter Barr answered that we have worked with the Secretary of Synod to craft the motion and that they are on board with the project.

Alan Macdonald asked what restrictions are currently on the funds. Peter Barr answered that there are no restrictions on its use, but that the diocese controls it.

Rachel Barreca asked what impact this will have on our annual budget. Peter Barr answered that the funding model we have put together shows very little impact on the annual operating budget without the cemetery fund.

Judy Briggs asked for clarity about what the Columbarium funds are used for. The Rector answered that those funds are used only for the perpetual care and maintenance of the columbarium and for nothing else.

Hearing no other questions, the Rector called the question and the motion was CARRIED—75 yes, 0 no.

6. Next Steps

- Synod Council—January 14
- Building Permit and Tender Process—February 2025
- Special Vestry to ratify contract—Spring 2025

Doris M'Timkulu asked that at the special vestry to ratify the contract, that Vestry should be given the opportunity to vote separately on the budget.

7. Pledge Cards and Bond Subscriptions are available.

8. Upcoming Events:

- Bach Cantata—January 19 at 3:15PM - Hymn
- Sing—February 22 at 2:00PM - Annual Vestry
- February 23 at 12:30PM - Gala Dinner—
- Friday, October 3

Pat Ellis noted that she has been involved in the process surrounding the columbarium, and that she is impressed with the amount of work and care that Colleen Murray, Peter Barr, the Rector, and Thomas Littlewood have put into this project. Pat Ellis thanked them on behalf of Vestry.

Rod Murray noted that he has been a fly on the wall in the Open Doors project and is witness to the countless hours of work that Colleen Murray and Peter Barr have donated to the project.

ADJOURNMENT

Annual Vestry Meeting of Mission and Ministry
Church of St John the Evangelist, Elora Sunday,
February 23, 2025

MINUTES

The Annual Vestry Meeting of Mission and Ministry for the Church of St John the Evangelist, Elora, was held on Sunday, February 23, 2025, following Choral Mattins. The meeting began at 12:32 with the Rector in the Chair.

1. Welcome and Call to Order

The Rector called the meeting to order at 12:32.

2. Agenda

Moved by Peter Barr, seconded by Jon Warland that the Agenda be approved as circulated.
CARRIED

3. Territorial Acknowledgement

The Rector offered a territorial acknowledgement which has been written by the Truth and Reconciliation Reading Group.

4. Opening Prayer

The Rector offered an opening prayer.

5. Appointment of Vestry Clerk

The Rector appointed Thomas Littlewood as the Vestry Clerk.

6. Housekeeping and Regrets

Housekeeping:

- Comments should be restricted to the motion and topic on the floor
- Members of Vestry are eligible to vote if they are baptized, are not part of another Vestry, and have been engaged with the parish for a period of at least 6 months.

Regrets: Pat Dewar, Barb Watkins, Bob and Jane Cooper, Ted and Lisa Arnott, Max and Maureen MacIntyre, John and Diana Spearn, Jane Rapp and Charlotte Logan, Linda Coultres, Leslie and Pow Lin James, Laura Robertson, Pat Ellis, Doris M'Timkulu, Jim Wilson and Jane McKinnon Wilson, Sylvia Arthur, James and Meg Prichard, Lanny Fleming, Mark Hemingway, Judy Briggs and Goran Bengsston, Nancy Kendall, Mary and Jim Guy, Mark Izzard, Alan Macdonald

7. Adoption of Minutes: February 24, 2024; Special Vestry, June 9, 2024; Special Vestry, October 6, 2024

The Rector announced that John Spearn would like his comments at the Special Vestry held June 9, 2024, amended to the following:

“John Spearn re-stated his opinion (at Annual Vestry) that Open Doors represents too great a financial risk to the Parish based upon continuing operational deficit financing, the need for sufficient endowment capital required to support such deficits and financial uncertainties together with inadequate financial information required to make an informed decision.”

Moved by Catherine Robertson and seconded by Len Griffiths that Vestry approve the minutes of the Vestry meetings held on February 24, 2024, and October 6, 2024 as circulated and the minutes of the meeting held on June 9, 2024 as amended. CARRIED

8. Looking Back at 2024

a. Welcoming New People to St. John's in 2024

The Rector welcomed the following new people to St John's in 2024. Each one present stood and were greeted with applause and a prayer.

Greg Smith Young

David and Susan James

Sandy Reid

Marjorie and Don Rogers

Pam Stumpf

Gladys Cormier

Garry Cantlon

Margaret and Chris Johnson

Nancy Mulholland

James Appleyard and Tamara

Rebanks

Michael and Erin Appleton and

Samatha and Liam

b. Reports of Ministry in 2024

The Rector highlighted the work of Patricia Reimer in organizing readers. The Rector also highlighted the work of Portage volunteers (Peter Scott, Dave Tinker, Rod Murray, Kimberly MacGregor, John Knight, John and Barbara Hamilton, Jeff Ostic, Sharon Barrett, and Ken Ried). Portage Elora has closed as of December, and St John's has had a long association with the organization.

Pam Gradwell invited members of vestry to the altar guild meeting on March 6 and noted that the group needs new membership.

Thomas Littlewood presented givings/new membership information. The average donation was \$2,840, which is an increase of \$400, this year. We are welcoming 17 new members to St John's in 2024, and there are already more to be welcomed in 2025. The average weekly attendance is decreased by 8 (5%), but this is less than the general trend in the Anglican Church of Canada. Overall, St John's has experienced significant growth this year.

- **Moved by Barbara Peloso and seconded by Nancy Scott that the Reports of Ministry for 2024 be approved. CARRIED.**

c. Financial Statements for 2024

Treasurer Andrew Hirst presented the financial statements for 2024. There are some differences in the accounts and their presentation this year. This is due to the inclusion of Drayton, the Columbarium, and PWRDF in the 2024 accounts, and the recommendation of the auditors. These accounts now more closely resemble Generally Accepted Accounting Principles.

Our revenue in 2024 was \$44,000 over budgeted, \$88,000 increased from last year. The investment portfolio also generated a slightly higher income this year over last. The market value of investment experienced a \$400,000 positive swing in 2024.

There was an increase in salaries this year. We follow the diocesan recommended salary increases each year, and there was more time for the Parish Administrator. The choir fees are increased over last year which represents a full choir for the full year as well as some increased activities. Our internally-managed investments are at \$4.8 million, and the diocesan-managed funds are at approximately \$860,000, leaving us with an investment portfolio of \$5.68 million. Our total surplus this year, including endowment/investment gains was \$521,000.

We have \$745,000 in trust for the Open Doors project. This includes some endowment monies and donations.

We are in a very healthy position going into 2025. Lorna Kearns asked about the reduction in the number of internal trusts and the rationale behind moving toward short-term investments rather than long-term. Andrew Hirst responded that the reduction in the number of internal trusts outlined in the notes to the financial statements is a recommendation from the auditors in terms of the financial statements. The internal trusts still exist internally. The move to short-term investments is to enable us to have free cash when needed for Open Doors.

Moved by Pam Gradwell and seconded by Peter Barr that the financial statements for 2024 be approved as presented. CARRIED.

9. Looking forward to 2025

a. Budget for 2025

Andrew Hirst presented the budget for 2025.

We have projected a decrease in offerings this year. In 2024, we received some large donations at the end of the year, and we don't want to count on that in future, so the budgeted donations strip out the large donations and provide a 5% uplift over 2024 donations. There is also a budgeted line for the 150th anniversary. Salaries and benefits are higher this year, reflecting the diocesan recommendations and an increase in the parish administrator's hours. The choir fees budgeted are the base cost of our professional choirs. Any other choir activities (carolling, weddings, funerals, etc) are offset by a donation.

We are not planning any major capital expenditures this year because Open Doors will encompass some of that. The diocesan apportionment is down this year.

We are projecting a cash deficit of \$120,000 but this will be covered by the investment funds to give us a small surplus.

Moved by Lorna Kearns and seconded by Wendy Boose that the Budget for 2025 be approved. CARRIED. The Rector offered thanks to Andrew Hirst and Susan Hirst for their hard work throughout the year.

b. Appoint Auditors for 2025

Moved by Peter Barr and seconded by Anita Johnston that Vestry appoint Calibre LLP as auditors for 2025. CARRIED

c. Open Doors Update

We are working through the building permit approval stage and will soon be ready to issue documents for tender. There are 105 regular givers who have not identified their support for the Open Doors project. We know that some were waiting for the approvals, and that has been achieved, so now is the time. The project is going ahead quickly. If each remaining identifiable givers gave \$4,000 over 5 years, we would have our total and more.

The Rector offered his thanks to Peter Barr and Colleen Murray for their hard and diligent work on Vestry's behalf.

10. Leadership for 2025

a. Election of Parish Leaders by Vestry for 2025

Moved by Rod Murray and seconded by Susan Hirst that the following be elected by Vestry as Parish Leaders:

- Peter Barr—People's Warden
- Colleen Murray—Deputy Warden
- Members of Synod
 - Thomas Littlewood
 - Wendy Boose
 - Dawn McClure (Alternate)
- Members of Parish Council at Large
 - Margaret Johnson
 - Ian Hornsby
 - Barb Watkins
 - Anita Johnston
 - Drayton Representative

b. Appointments by Rector for 2025

The Rector announced the following appointments for 2025

o Jon Warland– Rector’s Warden o Mark
Hemingway–Deputy Rector’s Warden o
Members of Parish Council at Large

- Barb Dunsmore
- Pam Gradwell

c. Appointments by Corporation for 2025

Andrew Hirst–Treasurer
Property– Jon Warland
Givings Secretary–Thomas Littlewood
Parish Council Clerk–Thomas Littlewood
Bookkeeper–Susan Hirst
Columbarium–Thomas Littlewood

d. Commissioning

The Parish Leaders for 2025 were commissioned with a prayer.

11. Other Business

None

12. Gratitude

The Rector expressed his gratitude to

- Pam Gradwell, who is retiring from the Warden’s team. Pam has served for four years and helped us manage our return from the pandemic. Pam’s diligence, loyalty, and kindness has been much appreciated at Corporation.
- Pat Ellis has retired from her work as Columbarium Administrator. She has served for nine years and has been a treasure in this ministry. Pat often meets with families in grief, and she represents St John’s so well and provides care for those families.
- Fr John Lockyer whose work as an honorary assistant is much appreciated.

Susan Hirst thanked the members of the Altar Guild. As bookkeeper, Susan also thanked parish staff and volunteers who make her job easier.

Barb Dunsmore thanked the parish for their support and love over a very difficult year.

Nancy Scott thanked Jurgen Petrenko for his musical leadership and patience with the Volunteer Choir.

Patrick Murray thanked everyone in the parish who sings. Being part of such a musical community is a musician’s dream.

Anita Johnston thanked Barb Dunsmore for her leadership of the Circle of Friends during a difficult year for her.

Marcus Kramer thanked the musicians in the parish and the parish as a whole for their gifts of music. Thanks go specifically to Patrick Murray, Jurgen Petrenko, and the Parish Choir. Marcus noted that we are very fortunate to have Patrick Murray amongst us.

Gord Bristowe thanked Garry Cantlon for keeping the church and grounds in such good shape.

On behalf of the Parish, Thomas Littlewood thanked the Rector for his calm and faithful leadership among us and for shepherding us through the Vision that we have for this place. Vestry thanked the Rector with a standing ovation.

The Rector offered a closing prayer

On a motion from Thomas Littlewood, the Vestry meeting was adjourned at 1:26PM.

Church of St John the Evangelist, Elora
Special Vestry June 8, 2025

A Special Vestry of the Church of St John the Evangelist, Elora, having been duly called under the provisions of Canon 4.1.1.5 of the Diocese of Niagara, met on June 8, 2025 with the Rector in the Chair. The meeting was convened immediately following the principal service on a Sunday and was called to order at 12:18. The Rector opened with a prayer.

1. Call to Order and Opening Prayer

2. Appointment of Vestry Clerk

The Rector appointed Thomas Littlewood as Vestry Clerk.

3. Overview of Special Vestries and process to date

Colleen Murray reviewed the Special Vestries held to date on the Open Doors project.

- i. June 15, 2021—Vision for St John's
Vestry set four priorities, of which one was Open Doors
- ii. December 4, 2022—Vestry granted authorization for the Wardens to access \$75,000 to explore the project. These funds were spent on a heritage consultant and the required drawings and documentation necessary for approval from the heritage committee, the committee of adjustment, and the planning department.
- iii. June 9, 2024—Vestry authorized the Wardens to enter into a legal agreement to establish a Community Bonds program to help with the cash requirements for the construction phase of the project.
- iv. October 6, 2024—Vestry authorized the Wardens to access \$75,000 to bring the project to tender. These monies were spent on permits, engineering drawings, and other items necessary for the building permit and Bereavement Authority of Ontario permissions.
- v. January 12, 2025—**Project approval with a budget of \$3,339,000**
Subsequent approvals were granted by Synod Council (January 14, 2025) and the Bishop of Niagara (January 15, 2025).

4. Open Doors update (funding, tender, schedule)

The tenders have come in, and the Zehr group have assessed each quotation to ensure that we're getting the best for our money. The contractors have been chosen based on this consultation. The cost is **\$3,633,000**. The Canons allow us a 15% difference between the approval cost and the quotations.

We will continue fundraising. We have \$400,000 left to fundraise from the parish and we have grant applications targeted at \$500,000. Columbarium sales are expected to be \$150,000. Parishioners were asked to please indicate their financial support to the project.

We have recently begun selling bonds. The Zehr Group have been very good to work with and they are very enthusiastic about the project. Their fee would normally be ~15%, but they are only charging us 3.95%. **Len Griffiths** asked why we weren't using more of the endowment funds. Peter Barr responded that the \$1.1 million was meant to be a middle ground between using the endowment funds and preserving enough of them to support operations in the future. Len also asked about why we were capping the grants. Peter Barr responded that it wasn't a cap but a targeted figure and that many granting agencies have a cap on what they will fund and how much. **Peter Huck** asked whether one company would be doing all of the work. Peter Barr responded that the Zehr Group has subcontracted the work to specialists and that these are firm numbers. The Zehr Group will do construction management.

5. Next Steps

The next steps are to get the building permit in, final permission from the BAO, and to disinter the columbarium. There will be limited construction during the Elora Festival, and we don't expect any disruption to our liturgies. **Doris M'Timkulu** asked about the work happening in the church building itself. There will be a few areas: the Vestry, the back stairs, moving window near the pulpit, two heat pumps on the back wall and ductless vents, and a new electrical panel to feed the whole plant.

Gerry Hill asked about egress from Thompson Hall. We have had the fire marshal in, and they are ok with the plans as they are. The back stairs will be completed quickly.

Len Griffiths asked about access to the columbarium during the permission delay from the BAO. Thomas Littlewood responded that access would likely be from Smith St rather than Henderson St, and that we are working our best to limit the delay. Colleen Murray added that there will be further communication to interment rights holders about the disinterment so that they can be present.

Sharon Barrett and Helen Kusserow asked about how much more money was needed. Peter Barr responded that we need \$400,000 to reach our fundraising goal and that any overage will lessen our dependency on grants.

6. Motion: Moved by Colleen Murray and seconded by Peter Barr that Vestry receive the report of the Wardens. CARRIED unanimously.

The Open Doors team is committed to regular updates at coffee hours and other groups. The Rector expressed his gratitude, and that of the parish, to Colleen Murray, Peter Barr, Thomas Littlewood, and Pat Ellis for their tireless work on the project.

Vestry showed their appreciation with a standing ovation.

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:57 on a motion made by Mark Haslett and seconded by Catherine Robertson. The Rector closed with a prayer.

Investment Committee

Investment funds owned by St. John's started 2025 with a market value of \$5,754,000. We now hold \$6,100,000. This is after we withdrew the entire balance in the Cemetery Fund of about \$340,000 in September to provide some of the funding for the Open Doors project as agreed by Vestry. Markets had a strong year with the Toronto Index up by 28% and the broad US market (S&P 500) up by almost 18%. Dividend and interest income during the year contributed just under \$200,000.

A portion of our investment funds will be used to help pay for the largest project in St. Johns' history. It was originally planned to use \$1,450,000 as a non-refundable contribution from our investments to the Open Doors project. With the total project forecast to cost about \$3,500,000 the balance of \$2,060,000 was to come from other sources such as parishioner donations and government grants. As the year unfolded it became clear that some of the expected inflows might well not happen in the short term at least, so in consultation with the Corporation we raised another \$1,000,000 from the sale of long-term investments and are now holding \$2,300,000 in near cash and debt maturing during 2026. We could not take the risk of a major market decline intervening, so this step was taken out of an abundance of caution.

There are some costs and consequences to this. Our mandate is to hold 60% to 80% of our funds in equities. We are now well below that level, which means that our long-term investment growth could be compromised. Interest income could also be reduced if interest rates experience a significant decline.

It is hoped that any additional funds beyond the original \$1.45 million will not be permanently needed, and that the construction budget holds up. Either way, the contribution from investment funds to St. Johns' financial well-being will be reduced over the next 3 – 5 years. A good proportion our endowment funds originated from parishioner bequests, friends who are no longer with us. It would be highly desirable to re-build our investment treasure chest after the Open Doors Project is completed. The Corporation will launch a restoration campaign encouraging us all to make capital contributions and to remember St. John's in our wills.

I would like to thank the Investment Committee members, Ken Edwards and Peter Huck, for their input and support over the year, and Peter Partridge at Dominion Securities for his usual sound counsel and great management. 2026 will be an interesting and exciting year for us all!

Respectfully submitted,
James Prichard

**St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church
Financial Statements
For The Year Ended December 31 2025**

Audited Financial Statements for the Year Ended December 31 2024 are available at the back of the church and from the Parish Office.

St.John the Evangelist Anglican Church

Statement of Financial Position

December 31 2025

	Notes	2025 Total	2024 Total
Assets			
Current			
Cash at Bank		\$ 187,218	\$ 294,497
Contributions receivable		-	3,096
Govt remittances recoverable		77,455	4,984
Investments	1	1,674,999	699,438
Prepaid Expenses		3,555	5,381
		<u>\$1,943,227</u>	<u>\$1,007,396</u>
Investments	1	3,868,065	4,174,424
Diocese Fund Investments	1	574,062	866,264
Property and Equipment	2	1,550,151	258,708
Cash Surrender Value of Life Insurance		1,437	519
		<u>\$ 7,936,942</u>	<u>\$ 6,307,311</u>
Liabilities			
Current			
Accounts Payable and Accruals		\$ 265,716	\$ 77,667
Deferred contributions		28,638	20,463
		<u>\$294,354</u>	<u>\$98,130</u>
Community Bonds		181,000	-
Internal Trusts	3	2,025,491	825,381
		<u>\$2,206,491</u>	<u>\$825,381</u>
		<u>\$2,500,845</u>	<u>\$923,511</u>
Fund Balances			
Diocese Fund Investments		\$574,063	\$866,264
Endowment Fund		5,124,248	4,709,665
General Fund		(262,214)	(192,129)
		<u>\$5,436,097</u>	<u>\$5,383,800</u>
		<u>\$ 7,936,942</u>	<u>\$ 6,307,311</u>

A Hirst
Treasurer

St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church
Statement of Change in Fund Balances
For the Year Ended December 31 2025

	Di o c e s e Funds	Endowment Fund	Ge n e r a l Fund	2025 To t a l	2024 Tota l
Fund Balance beginning of year	\$ 866,264	\$ 4,709,665	\$ (192,129)	\$ 5,383,800	\$ 4,868,132
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenue over Expenses for the year	82,581	559,198	(246,535)	395,244	515,668
Transfer to Open Doors	(342,947)	-	-	(342,947)	-
Tr a n s f e r s	(31,835)	(144,615)	176,450	-	-
	(292,201)	414,583	(70,085)	52,297	515,668
Fund Balance end of year	<u>\$ 574,063</u>	<u>\$ 5,124,248</u>	<u>\$ (262,214)</u>	<u>\$ 5,436,097</u>	<u>\$ 5,383,800</u>

St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church
Statement of Operations
For the Year Ended December 31 2025

	Ge ne ral Fund	Endowment Fund	Di oc e se Funds	2025 To t al	2024 Tota l
Re ve nue					
Concert series	\$ 19,044	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 19,044	\$ 18,887
Donations	416,933	-	-	416,933	524,966
Investment income	906	195,092	31,836	227,834	230,126
Gains on sale of investments	-	454,362	37,947	492,309	127,362
Change in value of investments	-	-90,256	12,798	-77,458	260,786
Ot h er	17,595	-	-	17,595	4,569
	\$454,478	\$559,198	\$82,581	\$1,096,257	\$1,166,696
Expenses					
Amortization	\$16,651			\$16,651	\$16,606
Insurance	35,661			35,661	35,390
Interest and bank charges	1,881			1,881	3,972
Music and choir fees	188,163			188,163	171,197
Offi c e	34,703			34,703	27,625
PWRDF distributions/discretionary	20,955			20,955	28,960
Professional fees	27,752			27,752	24,137
Repairs and maintenance	10,261			10,261	12,060
Salaries and benefits	276,536			276,536	244,319
Telephone and internet	4,190			4,190	3,589
Utilities	12,581			12,581	12,779
	\$629,334	-	-	\$629,334	\$580,634
Revenue less Expenses	-\$174,856	\$559,198	\$82,581	\$466,923	\$586,062
Diocese Assessment	71,679	-	-	71,679	70,394
Surplus/(Deficit)	-\$246,535	\$559,198	\$82,581	\$395,244	\$515,668

St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church
Notes to Financial Statements
For the Year Ended December 31 2025

1 Investments

	2025		2024	
	Market	Cost	Market	Cost
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Endowment fund				
Current				
Fixed Income	1,674,999	1,664,639	699,438	693,207
Long Term				
Fixed Income	523,693	513,312	713,708	703,136
Preferred Shares	124,132	115,110	192,276	174,098
Common Shares	1,865,377	1,284,392	2,093,530	1,535,188
Mutual Funds	963,242	961,875	592,251	591,440
Foreign Securities	391,621	331,705	582,659	420,822
	3,868,065	3,206,394	4,174,424	3,424,684
Total Endowment Fund (excluding cash)	5,543,064	4,871,033	\$ 4,873,862	\$ 4,117,891
Diocese of Niagara Funds	574,062	356,146	866,264	661,146
Total Investments (excluding cash)	\$ 6,117,126	\$ 5,227,179	\$ 5,740,126	\$ 4,779,037

2 Property and Equipment

	2025		2024	
	Cost	Accumulated Amortization	Net Book Value	Net Book Value
Land	40,000	-	40,000	40,000
Building	217,403	130,031	87,372	80,697
Construction in progress	1,365,614	-	1,365,614	73,441
Equipment	86,344	33,143	53,201	58,907
Website	6,662	2,698	3,964	5,663
	\$1,716,023	\$165,872	\$1,550,151	\$258,708

3 Internal Trusts

	Opening Balance	Donations/Transfers	Closing Balance
Capital Restoration	23,306	3,325	26,631
Open Doors	744,681	1,196,785	1,941,466
Parish Centre	41,598	0	41,598
Organ Fund	15,796	0	15,796
	\$825,381	\$1,200,110	\$2,025,491

Budget
St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church
For the Year Ended December 31 2026

	2025 Budget	2025 Actual	2026 Budget
	(General Fund only)	(General Fund only)	
Income			
Offer i n gs	333,500	301,119	340,000
Choir donations	100,000	106,402	115,000
Music outreach – concerts/commissions	20,000	19,044	8,000
- children's choir	5,000	9,412	5,000
- other	0	4,938	2,000
Facility Use Fees	5,500	4,454	7,000
150th Anniversary	20,000	9,109	0
Total Income	<u>484,000</u>	<u>454,478</u>	<u>477,000</u>
 Salaries Benefits Stipends			
Rector	122,631	120,795	125,000
Rector Emeritus-Drayton/Outreach	8,200	8,184	8,100
Other Clergy/Honorariums	1,500	3,431	3,000
Director of Music Ministry	56,354	55,889	58,000
Or gan i st	37,364	35,088	37,364
Administrative assistant	44,000	51,172	72,000
Choir fees	127,700	141,834	125,000
Music outreach	14,000	24,138	8,000
Children's Choir and other	2,000	8,715	7,000
Total Salaries/Benefits/Stipends	<u>413,749</u>	<u>449,246</u>	<u>443,464</u>
 Property Expense			
Capital Expense	19,100	16,651	15,000
Caretaking	12,500	13,492	18,000
Maintenance & Repair	8,100	8,640	4,000
Security	1,980	1,621	2,000
Utilities	13,700	12,581	15,000
Total Property Expenses	<u>55,380</u>	<u>52,985</u>	<u>54,000</u>

Operating Expenses

Advertising	500	1,364	1,500
Legal Fees	0	0	500
Bookkeeping Fee	8,400	8,520	10,000
Audit	8,750	19,232	15,000
Bank Charges	1,700	1,881	1,800
Community Bond interest	-	-	3,500
Church Supplies	8,700	10,317	12,000
Copier Lease & Supplies	7,800	8,025	10,000
Fl owers	3,500	5,121	5,000
Insurance and Life Insurance	23,950	35,661	35,000
Organ Maintenance	500	0	500
Mu si c	2,100	598	1,500
P o st age	720	426	500
Telephone & Internet	2,820	3,153	3,200
Software subscriptions	840	1,037	1,000
Misc and Contingency	5,800	9,715	5,000
Parish Retreat	1,600	1,099	1,500
Total Operating Expenses	<u>77,680</u>	<u>106,149</u>	<u>107,500</u>
Diocese Assessment DMM	58,451	71,679	80,000
PWRDF/Discretionary	<u>0</u>	<u>20,955</u>	<u>0</u>
Total Expenses	<u>605,260</u>	<u>701,014</u>	<u>684,964</u>
Net Operating Balance	(121,260)	(246,536)	(207,964)
Investment Fund Income Withdrawals	105,000	144,615	195,000
Cemetery Fund Withdrawals	4,042	18,191	0
Rectory Fund Withdrawals	<u>13,644</u>	<u>13,644</u>	<u>13,644</u>
Total Other Income	<u>122,686</u>	<u>176,450</u>	<u>208,644</u>
Net Income (loss) for the period	<u>1,426</u>	<u>(70,086)</u>	<u>680</u>