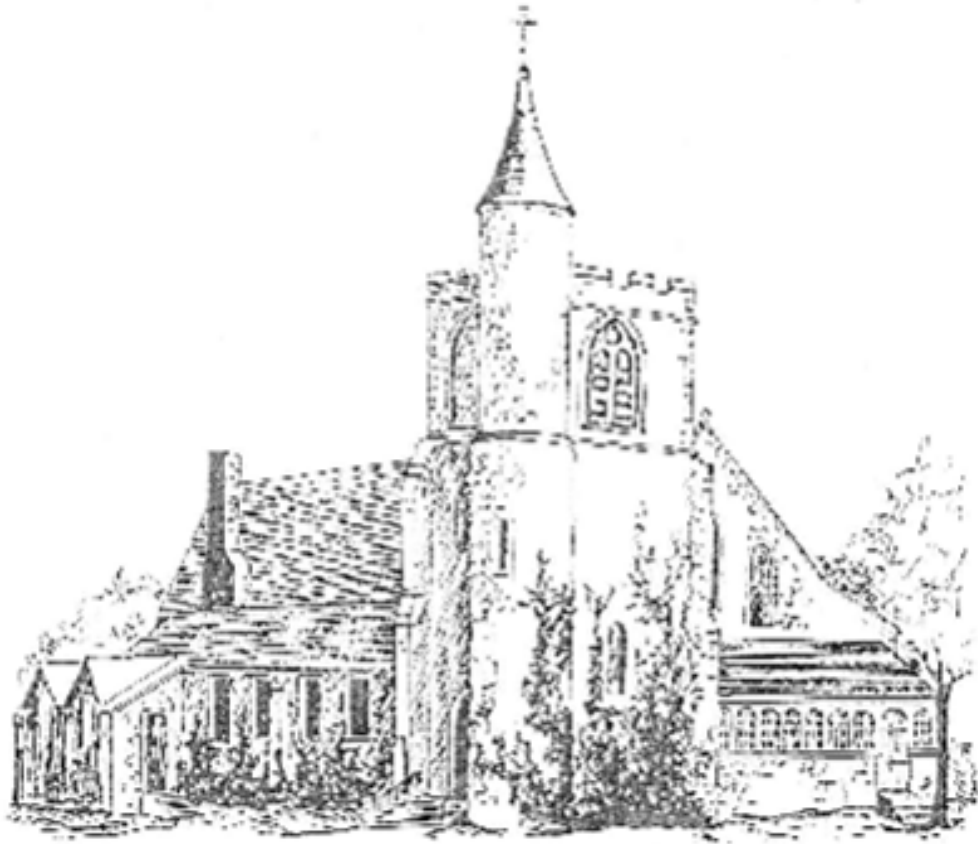


# *Annual Report for the Year 2014*



*Presented at  
The Annual Meeting  
January 25, 2015  
St. Thomas' Episcopal Church  
5 Hale ~ Street Dover, NH*

# St. Thomas' Episcopal Church

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## Sunday Service Schedule

(unless otherwise announced):

8 am, Holy Eucharist Rite I or II

8:30-10:00 am, Breakfast Café

9:30 am, Church School

10 am, Holy Eucharist Rite I or II with choir

The Rt. Rev. A. Rob Hirschfeld, *Bishop*  
The Rev. Gail Avery, *Interim Rector*  
The Rev. David Holroyd, *Interim Associate*  
The Rev. Dick Siener, *Interim Consultant*  
Jerry Costanza, *Financial Bookkeeper*  
Kathy Fink, *Director of Music*  
Roland Girard, *Sexton*

## The Vestry

Officers: Chris Wyskiel, *Senior Warden*  
Allen Laughlin, *Junior Warden*  
Allan Krans, *Clerk*  
Kevin Gorham, *Treasurer*

2015: William Hunt, Elaine Sylvester, Tim Constantine

2016: Valerie Smith, William Dudley, Margie Ford

2017: Margaret Miller, Marcela Rhodus, Chris Turner

## Convocation & Convention Delegates

Kitty Cornwell, Nancy Hunt,  
Judi Turner, Rob Sylvester  
Alternate: Joe Marquette, Margie Ford

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# CLERGY REPORTS

## *Report of the Interim Rector*

“My whispered prayers for 2015 are for St. Thomas’ and its fulfillment of its challenges to be a robust example in our walk with Christ.”

—a parishioner’s prayer for St. Thomas’ Parish

Emmaus Sunday in May, a clergy team began at St. Thomas’<sup>1</sup> affectionately known as The Dream Team. However, The Rev. David Holroyd was quick to point out that clergy ‘come and go’ and the real dream team are the parishioners of St. Thomas’.

He’s right. In this annual report, I am excited to say that the above prayer is being answered because of the work you all have done for St. Thomas over these last eight months. And you continue to be a robust example in our walk with Christ.

As many of you know, our journey from Emmaus back to Jerusalem hasn’t been an easy one. Nor has it been as quick as Cleopas and his companion who immediately left for Jerusalem after breaking bread with our Lord. But in the grand scheme of things, our return has happened quickly.

Thinking back to those followers of Jesus who un-expectantly met Jesus on the road, I am convinced that God startles us to change our path. But first he has to get our attention. And he did.

By August, most of the parish was reeling with the stark reality that things would not be smoothing out soon. Nor would things return to what they had been. Our office manager found fulltime employment, bank statements hadn’t been reconciled since 2013, security of our premises was almost non-existent, the Reach-Out Committee experienced a void in leadership which led to its dissolve, and it was questionable if we would have a Sunday school program this year.

We needed volunteers. We needed a bookkeeper and an office manager, new committee chairs for many of our ministries, someone knowledgeable about Microsoft Publisher to publish the Bridge, a Safe Church officer, a new website, a Facebook administrator, a current parishioner list with correct information—the list was overwhelming.

What started as a 30 hour a week interim quickly turned into 60 hours. I told the Vestry that things are pretty dire when the new kid on the block is looked upon as being the ‘expert’.

But in spite of all this, our Sunday morning worship was amazing.

In the summer, we participated in a beautiful Renewal of Marriage Vows ceremony for Jeff and Betty Naddau who are not church members but chose St. Thomas’ because they were married at St. Thomas’ 40 years ago by The Rev. Blankenship. When Nancy Hunt and I gave communion to a relative who was wheelchair bound, an entire row of visitors wanted communion after a child boldly open his hand to receive. God was certainly at work there...

I loved the services where Paul and Valerie Smith gathered two of their musician friends and led us in song. Our gifted music director was away, yet familiar Blue Grass tunes caused our bodies to sway in a different way. A couple of Sundays we had no music and

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<sup>1</sup> The Rev. Gail Avery/Interim Rector, The Rev. David Holroyd/Interim Pastoral Associate, and the Rev. Dick Siener/Interim Consultant.

there was always a brave soul who came forward to lead us. Truly, our hearts were on fire as we belted out our favorite hymns. And we were so moved that Sunday Rob Sylvester led us in prayer.

Thank you all for stepping-in in new and exciting ways.

Within a month's time, Kathy Koson offered to help with the Bridge, Kathleen Ford with our Sunday Bulletins, Nancy Stafford Parson and Phil Swan offered to volunteer in the office. Jerry Costanza sent me his resume offering to be our bookkeeper...Patty Laughlin offered to go through our files—re-evaluating our operational systems, which turned into an interim office manager position.

Property Committee took off with enthusiasm—replacing our roof, receiving an LCHIP grant to help pay for it, rekeying our buildings, installing the new DFK stove. Heat is now in the sacristy and the choir porch. New tables and chairs, and the Gatehouse stain glass window scheduled for repair this spring were fully funded by caring members.

Judi Turner gave our Sunday School a new look and we now have 11 children enrolled in Sunday school. Patty Laughlin has organized office volunteers and our office is now open 4 days a week 9am-2pm. Thank you Fran and Nancy. And then we have faithful volunteers who never missed a beat—like our choir, café, altar guild, Nancy and Claire who label and mail the Bridge.

The Harvest Fair came together without a hitch. And our Vestry, Wardens, Clerk and Treasurer patiently and faithfully stayed the course. Thank you Chris Wyskiel, Allen Laughlin, Alan Krans, Kevin Gorham, Tim Constantine, Elaine Sylvester, Bill Hunt, Valerie Smith, Bill Dudley, Margie Ford, Margaret Miller, and Chris Turner. Much of our success is because of you.

Week after week, the parish comes together to be fed and nurtured by Christ's body and each other but our partaking of Christ doesn't keep us located in Emmaus. Jesus points us to ministries that will strengthen us. For Cleopas and his companion, that meant leaving their homes and traveling back to Jerusalem. For us it means turning our focus to the greater community of Dover.

During a recent Seacoast Convocation, I could convey the good work that you all are doing...how our parish works ecumenically in ministries like Dover Friendly Kitchen, Dover Cooperative Ministries, the Food Pantry, the Shower program for homeless people to bath at the city pool, 68 hours of hunger, Dover Share—a local program to help those who don't qualify for Medicaid. Any time we live out the Gospel in a larger context, the fruit of the Spirit manifests.

There is also a strong interfaith community here in Dover and St. Thomas' plays a vital part contributing to that community, which is very moving to witness, and supports that we are an essential contributor to the emotional, physical and spiritual well being of the Greater Dover area and would be sorely missed if we weren't here.

St. Thomas' is the *dream team* because of your willingness to extend beyond yourselves and our task this coming year is to own it, develop it, and strengthen it.

O Jesus, please continue to show us the way. May our walk with you boldly take us out of our comfort zones, nudging (even hurling) us beyond ourselves, so the fruits of your spirit shall manifest. Amen

Faithfully submitted,

Gail Avery

## ***Report of the Interim Associate***

It was an exciting new venture to formally join the interim staff of St. Thomas' on May 1, 2014. After Susan's departure in March, I actually began my ministry here by being on pastoral call during the month of April while services were being led by diocesan staff and parish lay readers. During that time I made a number of hospital visits.

Most of my time here has involved pastoral visits in homes, assisted living communities, and hospitals. I have been to Dana Farber in Boston, Spaulding Rehab in Salem, Lahey Clinic in Burlington, Portsmouth Hospital, Northeast Rehab at Pease, St Ann's Rehab in Dover, and of course, Wentworth Douglas. Some of our members now reside in assisted living communities that have taken me to Langdon Place, Bellamy Fields, and Spruce Wood (Durham). Most home visits have taken place in Dover, Somersworth, and Rochester. I am getting to know the local area quite well! More importantly, I have been building some pastoral relationships with some truly wonderful people. As is often the case in pastoral care giving, the personal contacts often result in receiving as much joy and satisfaction as I give.

In addition to my pastoral care responsibility, some of my quarter time ministry involves regular attendance at most weekly staff and monthly Vestry meetings, contributing monthly articles for the Bridge, as well as time to meet with Gail Avery and Dick Siener as part of the interim team. Of course, I tried to be as available as possible for liturgical celebrations on some Sundays as well as Christmas morning. Both Dick and I want to be available so that Gail can have her Sundays off and also some well-deserved preaching breaks. Between my time here and also at Christ Church, Exeter, boredom in retirement has not been a problem!

In August of this past year several members of St. Thomas' joined with Christ Church, Exeter, for a Sunday trip to a Fishercats game in Manchester. I have been organizing this annual event since 2010. A joint choir sang the National Anthem before the game and I was invited to throw out a ceremonial first pitch. Prior to boarding to bus in Exeter, we all enjoyed a courtyard tailgate party at Christ Church. Please plan to join us this year and save the date of July 19. The choirs will sing the anthem again and I will throw out another first pitch. To add a bit a luster to the game, the Fishercats will be playing the Portland Seadogs who are the affiliate of the Red Sox. Check out your Red Sox of the future!

I am honored and excited to play a role during this time of transition at St. Thomas' as we prepare for the days that lie ahead. In May I mentioned how impressed I was at the way in which members of the parish responded on the day of Bob Whitings funeral service. It is a testimony to the potential of this community of faith. I was again moved at the number of parishioners who were present when I was privileged to dedicate a tree and a marker here in Dover to honor Bob this past November.

I look forward to being with you during this interim for as long as it may take. Let me conclude by saying how blessed we are to have Gail Avery as our Interim Rector!

Faithfully submitted,

The Rev. Dr. David D. Holroyd

# VESTRY REPORTS

## *Senior Warden Report*

Starting my fifth year as Senior Warden, I author another annual report trying again to give visionary perspective of St. Thomas' future. My rear view mirror look at 2014 is not without angst. But my forward looking view is filled with confident hope for St. Thomas'. This is in large part because of a consensus building belief that as a Parish, we have turned a corner ... for the good.

2014 was a rough ride for many. But it's over. It's behind us. For the many who weathered it, for those who left for a while but are back, for those who may still stay away but for whom we hope (and pray) for your return, and for those who are new and drawn to all the good that St. Thomas' is ... 2015 should be a good year to roll up our collective sleeves and get to work ... and to do all such good works as God has prepared for us to walk in.

We haven't turned the corner financially. With my 2012, 2013 and 2014 annual reports, I provided a transparent, summary macro view of St. Thomas' financial health and future sustainability. I repeatedly characterized our finances as a revenue problem.

A year ago, we anticipated a deficit on the order of \$30,000 for 2014. We ended the year with at least as bleak a bottom line. We necessarily liquidated principal of our endowment for operations (as well as for a new organ and to pay for half of the cost of our new Hale House roof). As I write, Vestry works on a budget for 2015 that does not look much better. We will necessarily tap our endowment's principal again in 2015 to makes ends meet. By how much is still uncertain, as is next year's pledge income. In a year of some turmoil, pledge income decreased more than expected in 2014. Investment income decreased some also. But at least pledges look to be on an uptick for 2015. It is very good news that so far, more than half of those renewing their pledges also increased them. We still just need more pledging members.

With Gail Avery and our financial secretary, I recently met with the Rev. Canon Kevin Nichols in Concord to discuss St. Thomas' plan to apply to and meet with the Diocesan Mission Resource Committee for some temporary Fair Share payment relief. Leadership will make application and meet with the committee in February. Many at the Diocese have been more than helpful partners of St. Thomas' during a difficult 2014. It is amazing they are receptive to help us still more. But with some measure of confident expectation, Bishop Rob and others see (and don't just hope for) St. Thomas' becoming an even more vibrant and financially sustainable parish than we have been. Concord is a part of the consensus thinking that we've turned a corner.

Getting to know our Bishop during many meetings this past year has been one of the best byproducts of the past year's events. In Rob Hirschfeld, we have an amazing shepherd. I encourage any of you not yet reading his blog at [www.nhepiscopal.org](http://www.nhepiscopal.org) to do so, and explore with him his ideas of "Tending the Vine."

Back to the corner we've turned. We are getting our physical house in order. With a partial dedicated bequest, a few additional major donations, as well as a committed trickle of small gifts but over a sustained period of giving, we have enough money on hand to soon pay off (with the Diocese matching dedicated gifts) our outstanding Diocesan Advance Fund heating plant/greening project promissory note obligation.

In cooperation with Dover Cooperative Ministries/Dover Friendly Kitchen, a new stove (purchased with Friendly Kitchen funds) was installed in our kitchen for joint use/maintenance by Friendly Kitchen and St. Thomas'.

Catalyzed by the palpable positive energy that filled Ervin Hall last January when and where we met for Annual Meeting, the many users of Ervin Hall (our own many events, AA, Friendly Kitchen, and others) now enjoy those new, white, comfortable and safe table and chairs so many of you generously funded separate from pledges.

Spear-headed by our Junior Warden, Allen Laughlin, our “many doors” were re-keyed this fall and our “many users” agreed to a new written key/lock up policy to improve general security for our facilities’ many users.

Our Property Committee continues to develop a much needed inventory/manual for long term repair and maintenance of our faculties. The new roof needed for Hale House (completed late in the fall) was happily half funded by a Gail Avery inspired and Vestry endorsed application to the N.H. Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP). Our successful LCHIP grant saved St. Thomas’ almost \$9,000!

Our getting our house in order is important for our eventual call of a new Rector. No one wants to come to a Parish full of facilities’ problems.

Vestry’s corner turned is that it’s stronger than ever. The need for extra meetings with honest, frank and necessary discussions amazingly strengthened bonds among Vestry members. All have come to know and respect our interim clergy team. All have voice; differing opinions are shared and considered. All have been willing to stay on and serve extra terms for the good of St. Thomas’ rather than look to shed a busy, if not sometimes messy, commitment. New leaders have surfaced with a desire to join Vestry. Fresh ideas and energy are welcome. So strengthened, Vestry is now eager to define, then tackle those issues to make St. Thomas’ a better church. It is a privilege to know and serve with my fellow Vestry members.

Our clergy team is committed to helping St. Thomas’ get beyond just turning the corner. We’re fortunate to have their collective experience, insight and desire to help us get our house in order, define a “downtown church” mission and figure out how to best staff a sustainable future. Vestry may explore pooling needed secular services with other area churches hoping together we can somehow get more bang for our buck. But the consensus of Vestry, our interim clergy team as well as Diocesan leaders is that now is not the time to abandon a commitment to full time rector leadership.

Personally, I am usually suspect of “God will provide” comments. No one can just sit back and expect all will be well. But the hard work well done of 2014 has rewarded us with a corner turned. The hard work of 2015 will reap rewards not now really known, but hopefully much further down the path of bettering St. Thomas’.

Faithfully submitted,

Chris Wyskiel



## ***Junior Warden Report***

The primary role of the Junior Warden is that of “overseer of the Church Property”. These duties include assisting and supporting the Rector, being a liaison between the Vestry and the Property Committee, and assist the Treasurer and Budget Committee with long term planning for facility expenses.

We are blessed at St. Thomas to have a beautiful church and an abundance of facilities for our ministries. We are even more blessed by the people of St Thomas’.

Our Property Committee members and other volunteers do an amazing job maintaining our buildings and grounds, helping with repair and safety projects and supporting the varied uses of our facilities. Despite limiting our Sexton to just a few weekly hours, he keeps our facilities clean and ready for all events throughout the week, not just for Sunday morning services.

It is important to remember that our facilities are not new. The church itself is over 125 years old; the Hale House is over 200 years old and has been moved from its original location. Ervin Hall is over 60 years old, although it was renovated in the mid-1980’s. Our buildings require a lot of attention to remain in working order. Our limited treasure must be balanced with maintenance needs, not desires, so that the ministries of St Thomas’ and other community organizations have the facilities they need to do God’s work.

To date our projects have been reactionary. Although it is difficult in our deficit budget situation, our goal should be to transition to being more proactive in our facility maintenance and preservation. This past year included several “must do” projects: Hale House roof, Bridge gatehouse window, heating plant adjustments and “life/safety” projects.

Replacement of the Hale House roof was the largest, single project St Thomas’ has done in quite some time. The roof was last replaced in 1980, when Hall Brothers, Inc. put a “25 year” roof on (industry standard at the time). This time, Hall Brothers won the contract again and installed a “50 year” roof. Total cost of the project was approximately \$18,000. St Thomas’ was blessed to be the recipient of a grant from the New Hampshire Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP), which covers up to 50% of our project costs (~\$9,000). Knowledge of the LCHIP grant and completion of the application are credited to Rev. Gail and Allan Krans. Ideally, we should start planning now to replace the roof on the Hale House in 2064 by setting aside incremental funds each year.

Another “must do” project is repair of the Gatehouse Window. This was started in the fall and will be finished this spring. This project is a little “trickier” as there are some unknown factors that could be very costly; i.e. damage to the wall we are unable to see at this point. Fellow parishioner Phil Kendrick designed the bridge and gatehouse and is sharing his knowledge and expertise so repairs can be accomplished as efficiently as possible.

There are many other places on the Hale House, church and bridge where trim work needs to be replaced so that we don’t incur additional damage and expense. This is on the project list for 2015. Proactively, painting and repairing trim work should be a regular task scheduled and budgeted for every 5 years.

Outstanding items with our heating plant replacement were also on our “must do” list in 2014. All the major components of the system are in place now, but operation is not ideal. We will continue to work with vendors to optimize the operation of our systems. We will also be looking at better and more flexible controls like upgrading to a system that can be remotely controlled and monitored.

Being in the house of God should bring a feeling of safety and security. We want that feeling to be shared with all who use our buildings. This year we upgraded an electric panel in the Hale House, upgraded fire extinguishers, replaced some emergency lighting, and re-keyed all our doors. Additionally, we also have parishioners who come by in the middle of the night to check and make sure the doors are closed and locked, and we do random “walk thru” checks as well. Our proactive plan is to update/upgrade our locks with an electronic key system that will allow more flexibility, accountability and security.

Looking forward, we hope to get to a place where we are improving and enhancing our facilities and not just focusing on projects that keep them from getting worse. But right now, given our budget deficit, we will continue to focus on projects that address safety and security, functional repairs, and those that have the potential to generate revenue.

Our facilities serve as a vehicle to help do God’s work. St Thomas’ is not just a place of worship, it is also a place the Dover community uses to care for, feed and help others. As part of our mission to serve God and help others, we need to proactively care for and maintain the facilities that help do that.

Last year, I ended my Annual Report noting how the tables and chairs needed to be replaced. Thanks to the grace and generosity of our parishioners, that need was quickly fulfilled. I hope that next year I have the opportunity to highlight another round of charitable projects complete, and not just the essential ones. We already have individual parishioners who have stepped up to help in areas they are passionate about.

The successes of this past year’s projects as well as the involvement of groups (Property Committee) and individuals making these things happen demonstrate the vibrant nature of our parish and our understanding of the importance and hope we provide to the community.

Faithfully submitted,

Allen Laughlin

## ***Treasurer’s Report***

See Appendix documents:

Year End Statement  
Trust Fund Status  
2015 Budget

# ACTS REPORTS

## Altar Guild

The Altar Guild consists of 5 groups that rotate duties on a monthly basis. Ideally, each group would have at least 5 members. There are currently 15 active members. The Directress leads a “Newcomers’ Group” to train new volunteers. Newcomers’ months will be January, June and November in 2014. Members of all ages and genders are welcome to ‘give us a try’ without feeling they are committing to long term service! There are also several members referred to as ‘Floaters’ who can’t commit to regular duties but are available to fill in when needed, and also accomplish tasks such as ironing and repairing the altar linens.

May found the group gathered once again at Dover’s Fish Shanty for our annual dinner. The Rev. Gail Avery and member emeritus Lois Martin joined us as guests of honor.

At the church work days held during the year our focus was on the interior of the church and sacristy. Members spent time organizing the storage spaces, sorting linens and other items, and sprucing up the sanctuary. Woodwork throughout the nave and sanctuary was washed, brass and silver were polished and damaged items sent for repair or retired from service.

Weddings, funerals and baptisms are special occasions in the life of the church. Altar Guild members work behind the scenes all year to assist parishioners and non-members through these life transitions. The High and Side Altars are prepared for Communion, candles are filled with oil, hangings are changed with the seasons, linens are cleaned and pressed, flowers are delivered to shut-ins, the sacristy and sanctuary are dusted and de-cluttered. The HOLLY AND THE IVY service held on Dec. 13th was a delightful change from previous years, allowing more people to participate in ‘greening’ the church.

The Guild meets in its entirety twice a year, in February and October, to plan for upcoming seasons. An Altar Guild member attends each Worship Committee meeting as well to keep us ‘in the loop’ with special plans.

Tom Massingham and Garrison Hill Florist continue to provide beautiful flowers and other plants during the Easter, Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany seasons.

Serving during 2014 were:

Kitty Cornwell	Pat Davis	Nat Peters	Marci Novak
Directress	Assistant Directress	Treasurer	Secretary

Clair Gleeson, Gwen Klevitch, Nancy Levesque, Mary McKenney, Evelyn Mamigonian, Lois Martin, Bea Mayrand, June Meserve, Marci Novak, Susan Powell\*, Mary Schwarzer Hampton, Elaine Sylvester, Sally Thorn, Judi Turner\*, Fran Whiting

\*Floater

Respectfully submitted,  
Kitty Cornwell

## Craft Group

The craft group had a busy year preparing for the 2014 Harvest Fair and thanks to the dedicated crafters the outcome was very successful. The group meets weekly, at 7PM on Mondays, starting in late January and continuing until the fair. We then take a welcomed break over the holidays and start fresh again the following January.

We are fortunate to have a wonderful space for our meetings and for storage of our considerable supplies, many donated by parishioners. Our designated area is on the 2nd floor of the Hale House – the door on the left at the top of the stairs. There are 6-7 regulars and we are always looking for new folks to join us. Our biggest challenge each year is finding projects that we hope will appeal to the buying public and we welcome any and all suggestions.

While the mission of the group is to use our time and talents for the benefit of our parish, we feel the friendship and support we share truly benefits us as well. It is often reported, by other groups meeting on a Monday evening, that a good deal of noise (mostly laughter) can be heard coming from the craft room. Perhaps you'll consider checking us out.

Respectfully submitted,  
Georgia Campbell

## **Harvest Fair**

This year's harvest fair was a wonderfully successful event. Financially the Fair made about \$5,500. This money helps our Church in many ways. This year the fair committee also voted to donate \$500.00 of the proceeds to the Share Fund of Dover that directly helps families in need. We received a very gracious thank you note in return. The committee felt that our fair is supported by many in the community so it is important to give back to that community.

Although the fair was successful financially, more importantly, it was a wonderful example of how the St. Thomas parishioners can come together and create an inviting, friendly and profitable experience for everyone involved. There are so many people to thank for the success of the fair the list is too long to put here. The Fair is an opportunity for many of us to come together for a single purpose in large and small ways. It is the committee's hope that next year's fair will be an event for even more of our Church family. Everyone is welcome at fair committee meetings. Watch for meeting dates and join the committee to see how you can be part of this amazing event.

Respectfully submitted,  
The Fair Committee

## **Hospitality**

The Hospitality Committee is an informal group of dedicated parishioners whose primary function at present is to coordinate and provide receptions after funeral or memorial services and other events as needed. This opportunity is offered by our priests when they are preparing the services. The reception is then planned with the family or friends of the deceased so that we are able to provide a function as they desire. We also offer suggestions and guidance if needed. If you have interested in the Hospitality Committee please connect with Nancy Hunt or Fran Whiting.

Respectfully submitted,  
Fran Whiting

## **Office Volunteers**

Parish Office volunteers provide a presence at the church for the parish and community and support the Rector and office manager with administrative tasks. Office volunteers are very generous with their time and talents. In addition to the scheduling flexibility the volunteers allow we've found that the tasks they do on behalf of the parish save us considerable effort and expense.

Some office volunteers provide office hours coverage: greeting visitor and vendors, answering calls, sorting mail, taking care of filing, preparing bulletins and providing history and perspective to the office manager and Rector. Many thanks to Nancy Stafford Parsons, Fran Whiting and Allen Laughlin for taking regular shifts in the office this fall.

Other volunteers have taken on independent tasks. For example the Bridge would not be created or published without the dedicated service of Kathy Koson and it wouldn't be delivered without our bulk mailing experts Nancy Levesque and Claire Gleeson.

There are many office projects and tasks, large and small, ongoing or one time, during office hours or on your own time, that could benefit from a parishioners attention. If you'd be interested in helping please contact the office.

### **Prayer Shawl Ministry/Knitting Group**

Though the St. Thomas' Knitting Group has not met as a group, several parishioners continue to create beautiful shawls and donate them to the church. Prayer shawls are given to friends and strangers in hopes of providing comfort in a time of need, or as a reminder of special blessings. Donations in the form of yarn and needles kept the crafters well supplied. Shawls are available at no charge to anyone. Finished shawls are kept in the Parish Office, printed cards with a prayer are available, and the shawls will be blessed by Rev. Avery on request. The original shawl pattern (knit or crochet) may be found at [www.shawlministry.org](http://www.shawlministry.org) or ask Kitty Cornwell for a copy.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kitty Cornwell

### **Property Committee**

#### **Duty**

The property committee shall supervise the maintenance, repair, and improvement of the congregation's real properties.

#### **Members**

Allen L. (Jr. Warden), Patty L. (chair), Don M., Hank F., Harold C., Bill H., Bill D. Mary-Jo D., Bob C., Michael B.

#### **Volunteer Hours and In Kind Donations (for the 7 months documented)**

Volunteer Hours: 251 (does NOT include workday hours by non committee volunteers)  
In-Kind Donations: \$529.45

#### **Financial Review**

The property committee monitors several church accounts: building supplies (janitorial), insurance, waste disposal, utilities and repair & maintenance. Monitoring is for the purpose of finding opportunities for savings. As the church is currently operating at a deficit we have limited ourselves to fixing issues that would cause more work or expense later if not corrected and only those expenses directly approved by the vestry.

<b>Category</b>	<b>Account</b>	<b>Amount*</b>
Facilities Operations		
	Inspections, Licenses, Permits	\$1,685.85
	Insurance	\$6,554.29
	Janitorial Supplies	\$3,571.90
	Parking Lot Plowing, Etc.	\$3,448.58
	Security Alarms	\$1,246.00
	Waste Disposal	\$3,626.07

		<b>\$20,132.69</b>
Repair & Maintenance		
	Garden Maintenance	\$281.32
	Major Repairs	
	Hale House roof	\$16,600.00
	Re-keying	\$1,840.00
	Repair & Maintenance	\$3,777.24
		<b>\$22,498.56</b>
Utilities		
	Electricity	\$6,873.10
	Natural Gas	\$11,536.00
	Propane	\$1,541.49
	Water/Sewer	\$1,693.47
		\$21,644.06
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>\$64,275.31</b>

\*These figures differ from those in the official financial report as some items were re-categorized based on specific knowledge of the expenses.

### 2014 Highlights/Accomplishments

- Hale House roof and LCHIP grant
- Facilitated Dover Friendly Kitchen stove replacement and gas hookup
- Ervin Hall tables and chairs
- Water leak – repair of running toilets
- Pursuit of outstanding items with heating plant upgrade; installation of electric heat in sacristy and choir porch
- Kitchen ceiling tiles replaced with donated restaurant grade tiles
- New Hale House electrical panel that meets code and new emergency backup lights
- Gatehouse window contractor selected and window secured
- Facilities rekeying
- Hale House and Church basement French drains cleared
- First annual Property walkthrough
- Successful parish workdays (see October Bridge article for details)

### Repair & Maintenance tasks completed are many, so here are just a few:

- |   |                                       |                                    |
|---|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ▪ parking lot striping                                | ▪ phone/security system               | ▪ weed gardens                     |
| ▪ check fire codes                                    | trouble shooting                      | ▪ clean woodwork                   |
| ▪ fire inspections                                    | ▪ mold treatments                     | ▪ repair railings                  |
| ▪ altar step reflectors                               | ▪ sump-pump repairs                   | ▪ re-hang doors                    |
| ▪ snow removal contract                               | ▪ painting                            | ▪ plant bulbs                      |
| ▪ light for sacristy stairs                           | ▪ choir room shades                   | ▪ create family pew                |
| ▪ replace kitchen sink drain                          | ▪ fire extinguisher replacements      | ▪ reprogram thermostats            |
| ▪ dishwasher repair                                   | ▪ shovel                              | ▪ parking lot posts                |
| ▪ Kitchen fire suppression maintenance and inspection | ▪ prune                               | ▪ replace light blubs              |
| ▪ parish hall lift adjustments                        | ▪ mow                                 | ▪ shovel and sweep alley           |
| ▪ insurance inspection                                | ▪ change air filters                  | ▪ remove debris from basements     |
|   | ▪ install and remove air conditioners | ▪ meet vendors for quotes and jobs |
|   | ▪ re-paint light poles                |                                    |

### Looking Forward

### **Operations**

- Continue maintenance tasks & parish workdays (May 16 and Sept 26)
- Document committee roles & responsibilities
- Create a buildings and grounds operations manual to include a schedule of maintenance tasks
- Create a list of preferred vendors for repair & maintenance tasks
- Conduct second annual Facilities walk-through
- Recruit additional committee members

### **Planned Projects**

- Remove rotting storage rooms from the Hale House basement
- Complete repair of the Gatehouse Window
- Clean out the attic and 3rd floor of the Hale House

### **Potential projects (if funding becomes available)**

Replace Lexan window covers on stained glass windows	~\$4,300
Paint church floor	~\$1000 + volunteer labor
Refinish/replace Ervin Hall floor	\$11-13,000
Replace Ervin Hall entrance tile	~\$2,500
Replace shed	~\$3,000
Replace floor in Sacristy	parishioner sponsored
Rehabilitate 2nd & 3rd floor rental space in the Hale House	~\$50,000
Purchase floor bunisher	~\$1,300
Renovate the kitchen	quotes needed
Repair/replace and paint trim work on the Hale House	quotes needed
Repair/replace and paint trim work on the Church	quotes needed

The property committee members are a dedicated, talented and generous group who work behind the scenes to maintain St. Thomas' facilities. I'm blessed to be able to learn from them and help shepherd them in the work of the committee.

Respectfully submitted,  
Patty Laughlin,  
Chair, Property Committee

### **Safety Ministry**

A safety team is a new ministry that is being developed. The team will focus on the safety and security of our facilities and the people and groups who use them. They will partner with the Rector(s), parish staff, Jr. Warden, Property Committee and Safe Church Minister to document our policies and procedures regarding safety. They will assess and address safety issues, our disaster preparedness and response and will make recommendations for changes and improvements. They may also sponsor safety training for our parish and community. Ideas for training include fire safety (inc. using extinguishers), CPR and first aid, personal and home safety, and emergency planning and preparedness. If this is a ministry that you have a passion for please talk to Rob Sylvester or Allen Laughlin.

### **Stewardship Committee**

The Stewardship Committee is looking towards a year of refocusing efforts towards looking at all areas of how we utilize our Time, Talents and Treasures both within our church and outside in our community at large.

We were thankful for the time and service provided to us by John Symington, who as the previous chair of the committee, led efforts including a Lenten program on looking at how we utilize and care for our natural resources.

With the help of the Vestry, Genesis dinners were held and the Annual Appeal was done. And the results of that are still coming in.

We also held joint meetings with the Connections and Reach Out Committees over the summer as these all are a part of how we use our talents in outreach and welcoming.

In 2015, we hopefully can increase the number of people willing to work on stewardship. An area of great potential may be to look at the gifts God has given to each of us as members of this parish and to categorize them in hopes that we can look at ways in which we can address the many needs of our church and our community. Another part is looking at how we can go forward and look at ways to cover the financial needs of our parish.

One of the ways we can give glory to God is to be effective stewards of what he has given to us. We ask you join us in helping to do just that.

Faithfully submitted,  
Rob Sylvester

### **Worship Team: Lectors & Eucharistic Ministers, Acolytes and Ushers**

The worship committee has been in place for almost 6 years now. Leading this ministry is my favorite thing to do and I believe the most important thing I do for the St. Thomas Community. The worship committee continues to accomplish what we set out to do.

We meet routinely to participate in the planning of key liturgical seasons (typically February, May, August and November). We reflect back on those seasons, documenting what went well and what did not. We keep our eyes and ears open for your advice about what might work or not and advise our clergy of it.

In this past year our experience, notes and knowledge really helped our new clergy team acclimate. Reverend Gail directs the liturgical scene of course, that's her primary responsibility. The committee does a great job providing Gail with what we've done and suggestions for change; from that collaboration we plan our worship services.

We try to have representation from all of the organizations connected to our services: the Altar Guild, Lectors, Ushers, Sunday school, Choir, Vestry and Parishioners. If you'd like to participate, we'd be happy to hear from you. Give me a call at 370-0688 or email me at [daddeonh@gmail.com](mailto:daddeonh@gmail.com)

Beyond the worship committee St Thomas' is blessed with a group of dedicated, talented and friendly folks who contribute to the overall worship experience. Our ushers who greet you, our lectors who work to help you hear the WORD, our acolytes who take great pride in being a torch bearer or a server and our Lay Eucharistic ministers (LEMs) who reverently assist delivering the sacrament of His Body and Blood. Like many things in life you may not notice these folks when they are there and doing a good job. But, you definitely notice when they are not there. So thank you to all our ushers, acolytes, lectors and LEMs. We greatly appreciate your service to St Thomas and our Lord and Savior.

Peace and blessings to you all,  
Kevin M. Gorham



# CONNECTIONS REPORTS

## Breakfast Café

The Breakfast Café entered its eleventh year in September. Café still serves a full breakfast menu plus a weekly special. Muffins, scones and some of the breads are made from scratch! Café produces wholesome food with a no tax no tip format. Proceeds benefit St. Thomas' general fund. The Café also sponsors an Afternoon Tea in the spring (April 18, 2015) and a raffle at Christmas time.

The volunteer Café welcomed new team members this year: Nancy Coleman, Bonnie Hartford, Kevin Gorham and Fran Whiting. Returning members are: Tim Constantine, Patty Laughlin, Thomas Stafford, Peg Warner, Allen Laughlin, Deb Rice, Robyn Britton and Nancy Stafford-Parsons. All of their hard work and creations are so appreciated.

Thanks also for the generosity of donations or "in-kind" contributions by the Meserve's, Laughlin's, Tim Constantine and Nancy Coleman.

We look forward to serving our Church and her people in 2015. Café is a good "pivot" to bring 8 O'clockers to join 10 O'clockers and to welcome newcomers to the mix. Please invite your family, friends and neighbors to join you for breakfast.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Nancy Stafford Parsons  
Café Mistress

## Communications & Technology

There is loose mix of individuals helping and advising St. Thomas' on how to better leverage technology for internal and external parish communications as well as improving our communications in general. Potential areas of improvement include updated e-mail lists and electronic messages/newsletters, publishing public service announcements about our events in community newspapers, websites and radio, and leveraging Dover Chamber of Commerce resources and opportunities.

Bridget Jameson, our new volunteer web and Facebook 'expert', provided the update below:

In late September 2014, the stdover.org website was updated, utilizing a more user-friendly approach with information targeted at people who were unfamiliar with St. Thomas, The Episcopal Church, and even "Church" in general. We put focus on the "Safe Church" symbol, ensuring people were aware that we're all-welcoming. The Bridge is posted to the website monthly and the church calendar is also made available there.

Our website has seen a major upward trend in both average page views and daily visits which means the site is being utilized with increasing frequency.

### Stats for the Website

#### *Average Daily Page Views*

May 2014: 52

October 2014: 83

January 2015: 89

#### *Average Daily Visits (individual people visiting the site)*

May 2014: 22

October 2014: 37

January 2015: 45

There has been a push for more Facebook activity, as well. When The Bridge goes up on the website, there is a post on Facebook linking to it. The Café menu is posted regularly and news and photos are shared as well.

Our Facebook page has 186 Likes and 271 Visits

#### Stats for Facebook

May 2014- highest number of people reached was 36

October 2014-highest number of people reached was 210

December 2014-highest number of people reached was 71

It's important to note that the St. Thomas' Facebook page doesn't function exactly like a personal page. It can be difficult to 'reach' people without paid posts or targeted advertising. A paid post in July 2014 reached 1,916 people.

If you have a Facebook page and want to insure that you see St. Thomas' posts be sure to Like and Comment on our posts regularly.

## **Connections**

We would like you to know, The Connections Committee has returned with renewed interest, energy and committed to the future of St. Thomas'. We hope you feel the same way!

Due to open spots on other committees, we had a few combined committee meetings to be able to better serve the needs of our parish and our community at large with the current group that have offered to help.

Things that were discussed are: how can we connect as a church community? How can we reach those who are unchurched? What opportunities are there on the outside of our walls to help? And most importantly how can we better connect with you and what can St. Thomas' offer you to grow in your spiritual journey?

Beginning this past September we began gathering information from all who attend our church so we will know how many we are, who we are, and how we can better serve you! By doing this, we began updating our out-dated parish directory. If you have not heard, seen, or know of this information sheet please call the office, and one will be sent to you.

Another new gathering of information we created has been for new people visiting St. Thomas'. A sheet asking for their demographics, along with how they heard about our parish and any information they are interested in. With the start of the New Year, we'd like to "drop by" their home with a homemade loaf of bread. That is something we did a while ago and would like to do that again in the near future.

Is there anyone new in church or in the parish hall that you don't recognize? Why not join us in introducing yourself to them and inviting them to sit with you, or join you in coffee hour or for breakfast?! This might be a good time to ask you to wear your name tag!!! Parishioners may know your name, or perhaps may have a senior moment and forget. If you're in need of a name tag please let the office know!

We also asked you about the gifts and talents God has given you! These gifts were shared with the committees of interest. There are many opportunities available to volunteer! Some of which are in need right now! Many of you have stepped up to help, Thank You!!!

The beginning of 2015 will be centered around new and exciting adventures and opportunities to come together...watch the Bridge for details!

Our parish cannot run itself. Many hands make light work!

Faithfully submitted,  
Elaine Sylvester

Below is an update on some of the ways we support the community 'outside of our walls' by Marci Novak, Adrienne Mallinson and Mary-Jo Dudley:

In Lent parishioners were asked to donate personal care items for those in need who come to the Food Pantry as these items are not covered by food stamps and the need is great. Since then, the congregation has been asked to continue bringing in both food and personal care products as the need for these items continues.

A Showers for the Homeless program was started in the spring by Dover Cooperative Ministries Council and parishioners of St. Thomas' have been very generous in continuing to provide towels and travel-size toiletries that are bagged up for the homeless to use at the city indoor pool next to the Children's Museum.

In November our church took part in the ChIPs gift program that provides Christmas presents to Children of Incarcerated Parents.

For Advent, many generous gifts and gift cards were purchased for five children in the Juvenile Justice System and six DCYF children for Operation Santa. Over \$1000 in gifts and gift cards were donated by St. Thomas' kind people!

We also have a team that serves meals monthly for the Dover Friendly Kitchen. To join them the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month contact Fran Whiting.

### **Hannaford Card Program**

In the second quarter of 2014, we began a fund raising program with the purchase of Hannaford Gift cards. Parishioner bought cards in value from \$50 to \$500, and Hannaford rewarded St. Thomas' with Bonus cards at 5% of total purchase. Nineteen parishioners have participated and St. Thomas' has sold \$506 worth of bonus cards. This profit helps St. Thomas' with our many financial obligations. Some of these bonus cards have been bought and then given to Rev. Gail to use for food insecure citizens of Dover. Thank you all for your support, and let's surpass the goal in 2015.

Respectfully submitted,  
Bill Dudley

### **Pastoral Care**

This has been a transitional year for the Pastoral Care team. In January 2014, Deb Rice stepped down from a leadership position on this team. In April 2014, the Rev. David Holroyd took charge overseeing the pastoral care needs of the parish. This important ministry provides comfort and assistance to individuals and families in this parish. Typically, pastoral care area leaders arrange meals, rides to appointments, send greeting cards or check in with a friendly phone call. Rev. David has been making home visits and hospital visits providing emotional and spiritual support. Communion is offered for parishioners unable to make it to church.

One major highlight of this past year was a seminar at Wentworth-Douglas Hospital in late October attended by Deb Rice, Margie Ford and David Holroyd. The seminar on memory loss in the aging process was sponsored by the pastoral care department of the hospital.

Deb Rice will be assisting Reverend David in the coming year with pastoral care requests.

Respectfully submitted,  
Reverend David Holroyd & Deborah Rice

**Safe Passage**



# **REVELATIONS REPORTS**

## **Children and Youth Ministries**

I started with the children's program in August with a discussion about using the wealth of story materials we have for the Montessori style program we have done in past years. This program style allows for meaningful sessions with an age range of age, 3yrs- 6th grade, and can accommodate a growing/ changing number of children. We titled the program, starting in September, "A Shepherd's Tale". We are primarily using the stories from the Following Jesus, by Sonja Stewart with the idea that it provides a good basic set of stories to children who are new to the program.

We have been continually growing and adding children to this "drop-in" program. We have 8 regular Storytellers and Doorpersons. Each person is usually only scheduled for one Sunday a month, which seems to fit schedules so that worship and personal commitments can still be accommodated. The program can grow by the addition of using the Godly Play stories and moving to a larger classroom that is currently available. My hope is that we can offer an in-house or regional workshop for our storytellers/doorpersons so that we can effectively continue to use the resources we currently have, in a meaningful way. We have added enrichment activities and we coordinate with the worship schedule when possible.

This fall particularly, there is a distinct lack of activities or program offering for students in Middle and High School. This group of students is often busy with a variety of other activities related to school or personal interest. I was clear with current clergy that my intention was to build a program with the younger children. If we know there are interested students (and their parents) in this age bracket, I would be happy to facilitate a discussion (with clergy) about some programs or youth opportunities at a parish, regional or diocesan level. This is always a struggling age bracket (due to many demands on time) but I think the parish should try to address the needs of the youth to foster a deeper understanding of their faith in relation to this time of growth. Likewise, if anyone feels compelled to work with this age bracket, please speak with me or one of our clergy to discuss some possibilities for the future.

Respectfully submitted,  
Judi Turner

## **Safe Church**

St. Thomas' is in need of a Safe Church Minister to coordinate and administer this training program for our parish.

Any individual working with children, adults or seniors on behalf of the church, whether at the church facilities or another location, needs to be safe church trained. Training is valid for 3 years and then needs to be renewed.

We currently have 17 parishioners and staff who are safe church trained and many more should have the training.

Safe Church message from the Bishop:

"We often forget that the Church has an amplifying, magnifying, and intensifying effect on word, gesture, and touch. Human interactions that take place in a church building or in the context of a church activity have an increased capacity to heal and inspire, or to harm and confuse. We can leave it to the religious anthropologist and sociologist to explain, but the more experience we have in the spiritual community, the more we can attest to the power that accrues to verbal and physical exchanges that happen in Church. A

compliment or a criticism spoken during a worship service, coffee hour, Sunday School, Youth Group or Vestry carries with it a more powerful energy because it is spoken in the presumed Presence of the Holy One.

It is within this understanding and sacred sensitivity that I invite you to participate in our Diocesan Safe Church Training. The persons who show up in the Christian community do not arrive by accident. Holy Scripture tells us that they are led to us by the Spirit, and we are called by the same Spirit to receive them as beholders of God's image, God's very presence (see Genesis 18, Matthew 25, Hebrews 13). Safe Church Training, therefore, is not merely an exercise required by the institutional bureaucracy, mandated by our insurance providers. Much more than that, I urge you to enter into these sessions with a contemplative attitude of openness by which we learn again how to be holy in our interactions with each other and with those, both young and old, who come seeking and expecting holiness in our congregations."

The Rt. Rev. A. Robert Hirschfeld  
Bishop

# STAFF REPORTS

## Financial Manager

At the end of August, I rejoined St. Thomas' to provide bookkeeping and day-to-day financial management services. I am thankful to those who asked me to consider returning in this capacity. It has been a true joy to be back among so many treasured friends.

Coming in the door there was a great deal of cleaning up that needed to be done. Several months of bank statements needed to be reconciled, we were being hit with late fees because of vendors not being paid in a timely manner, a number of accounting entries had been recorded in wrong accounts, and staff turnover had exasperated the day-to-day situation.

I am happy to report, that as of year-end the bank accounts are up to date and reconciled to the penny, our vendors are being paid in a timely manner eliminating late fees, our accounting is back on track, and we have a much better handle on activities, such as the Hannaford Gift Program. While there is still work to be done and refinements that will occur over the next year, it is wonderful to feel we have "turned the corner".

Respectfully submitted,  
Jerry Costanza

## Music Program

We have had an exciting year with some fresh faces and new events! We kicked off 2014 with the installation of our new digital organ. The new organ being placed in the pews allows me to see and hear what's going on and it sounds terrific. The new technology allows for the future addition of ranks of pipes if the church community decides to go in that direction.

Also in January, we had our annual concert by my choir, The Fourth Street Jazz. The concert helped raise money for the organ and brought new faces in performance including my father, my son and my nephew as well as many new folks in the audience.

For Easter week we had a string ensemble with us on Palm Sunday and a trumpet for Easter morning. Live musicians always add to the power of the music ministry. In June, we had another concert by the Fourth Street Jazz Choir.

This fall we welcomed back Ted Kontos to the choir and more recently our newest member, Cate. Thorne and Margaret's sons Josh and Elias joined their lovely voices with us for Christmas Eve. The Smith family and Adrienne Mallinson also shared their musical gifts with us on Christmas Eve. But perhaps my favorite event of the year was the "Hanging of the Green" service in December. It brought together the choir and the congregation for a lovely service with beautiful music and the greening of the church by all. I hope to bring this back next season! Peace.

Peace,  
Kathy Fink  
Music Director

## **Parish Administrator**

2014 was a year change and learning in the office. I am the third person with the title of Parish Administrator but it's not the same role as it was 12 months ago. And I hope, after my tenure, it continues to evolve to support St. Thomas' missions and ministries.

In late September, when I could see my work schedule lightening up for the season, I volunteered to help do some organizing in the parish office. It started with me telling Rev. Gail that I'd had my eye on a file cabinet drawer that said Property Committee on it and wanted to get acquainted with its contents.

After seeing first hand some of the administrative challenges of supporting our parish, I recognized that the long term needs likely would be different from what the office staff were doing currently. I suggested to Rev. Gail that an interim administrator might give them time to redefine the role based on needed skills and capabilities. It would also allow time to document and/or invent our processes and procedures so that expectations for the role could be better defined. In my past corporate roles we affectionately referred to this kind of an exercise as "changing the wheels on the bus" but you have to do it while the bus is moving.

Parish Administrators are not supposed to be parishioners, but I had the time and the right skills and my term is self limited by my 'real' job. I was hired temporarily with the support of the Diocese and the Vestry. To help manage any confidentiality concerns Karen has stayed on to handle the day to day financials in support of Jerry which she can juggle with her full-time job.

My first two major accomplishments were getting Rev. Gail's computer to 'talk' to the office copier/printer and finding a reliable workaround for said printer when it doesn't want to print to ledger paper (The Bridge and the bulletins are printed on ledger paper.) We have an updated phone messaging system, a retention policy for our financial documents, we are set up to do most of our ordering online now. Our facilities use agreements are up to date, with updated forms, and we have e-mail addresses and mail slots for all of our tenants. We have one truckload less of old documents and outdated forms and catalogs in the office closets. All our critical and historical parish log books now fit in the fireproof file cabinet. Our church database has been updated with the most current information we have from parishioners and we can now sort address labels by bulk mail zip code groupings. We have a Google calendar that is viewable from our website, electronic files for intercessions, alter flowers, and LEM licenses, a return address stamp and an outside mailbox. We validated that having a bulk mail license is cost effective and that printing the Bridge and bulletins in house is significantly cheaper than outsourcing, as long as we have our fabulous volunteers.

There are all kinds of opportunities to streamline and improve our processes and systems for the benefit of the parish. And I hope more of our parishioners will take an active role in helping make that happen, whether it is taking on a task, making a suggestion or just asking, or answering, the question "Why do we do that?"

Potential projects we've already identified for this coming years include:

- Transition to a new computer and upgrade beyond XP
- Enable remote access for e-mail and other church systems
- Create an electronic list of our preferred and secondary vendors for all our regular needs, from where we get palms and communion wafers to plumbing and HVAC
- Document wedding and funeral service offerings for posting on the website
- Create check lists for wedding and funeral services and templates for bulletins
- Document facilities use information and rates for the website



- Document a process/procedure for inclement weather cancellations
- Partner with Financial manager to create process for invoicing our tenants
- Organize and catalog our historical documents

During the first quarter of 2015 we will be undergoing the hiring process for a new Parish "Office Manager". If you would like to see the new job description or be part of the hiring team please let Rev. Gail and/or the office know.

In the last three months I have learned more about the Episcopal Church than I had in my 45 years as a cradle and confirmed Episcopalian. I have also learned volumes more than I expected about St. Thomas' and even the Dover community. I have been blessed to get to know the clergy and staff in a way I never would have otherwise and I have been able to connect with many more parishioners too.

Many thanks for your patience and support as I delved into this role. And thank you in advance for your patience and the role you will play in educating and coaching our new staff member.

Respectfully submitted,  
Patty Laughlin