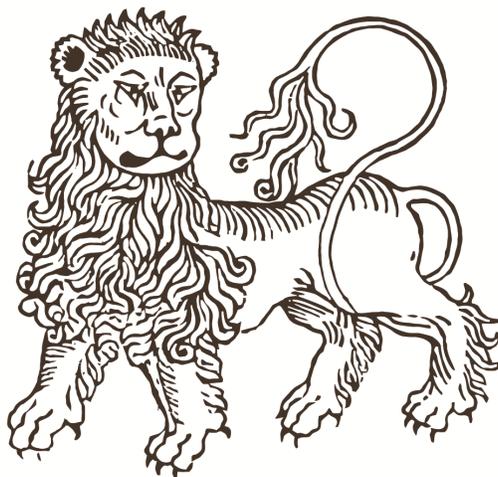


THE CHURCH OF
ST. IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH
IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

ANNUAL REPORT
2019



Prepared for the Annual Parish Meeting
26 January 2020
12:00 NOON

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ST. IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH
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RECTOR'S REPORT

I write this report in anticipation that I shall not be with you today in person at the Annual Meeting. I expect to be recovering at home from arterial surgery and to be back with you later in February. I am grateful to the Churchwardens for chairing this meeting in my place and to them, the Vestry, and my clergy colleagues for ensuring that the parish will continue to minister to our community and the larger world in my absence.

This past year, in which I began my thirteenth year as your Rector, was as eventful as any we have shared together. We launched a significant capital campaign and began to contemplate how we shall celebrate our Sesquicentennial in 2021. We had to deal with two significant “water events,” as the insurance folks call them, that caused damage in the parish house, the restoration from which saw significant improvements in the condition of our common spaces. We experienced an unexpected transition in our music department, saying farewell to James Kennerley and welcoming Richard Porterfield.

On the penultimate Sunday of the year the Rt. Rev'd Mary D. Glasspool, Assisting Bishop, made her formal Episcopal Visitation (our first in about eighteen months), confirmed five teens and two adults, and received two adults into the Episcopal Church. This was the largest group of

Confirmands in years and the first significant group of teens in over a decade. Indeed, all our teens were small children when they came to the parish and were truly raised in the faith in our community. Following her visit, Bishop Glasspool wanted me to share with you her “Profound thanks to you and the good people of St Ignatius for the warm and generous welcome you all shared with me From start to finish I felt anticipated, engaged, and allowed to be part of the larger community. Candles were lit when I arrived, and the welcome stayed throughout.” This is a tribute to our community and to the particular vision of inclusive, welcoming Anglo-Catholicism that embodies our identity.

In 2019 Mass was celebrated 179 times on Sundays and 37 times on weekdays. We baptised one adult, buried two of our number, and, as I have already shared with you confirmed seven and received two. As of this Annual Meeting, there are 259 members on our rolls, an increase of nine over last year and we can count 217 people as regular communicants and active members, about the same as last year.

In 2019 our attendance showed signs of significant improvement after six or seven years of decline. Our average Sunday attendance for the year was 86, up 2% year over year. More significant is that our average Sunday Choir Season attendance rose to 96, up 4.3%, and that our 11 AM Solemn Mass attendance was up to 63 up from 55, a 14.5% increase. The overall number was not higher because, although offset by the 11 AM Mass, we continue to see decreased numbers at our 9 AM Sunday Sung Mass. This year’s decline is attributable not to families leaving the parish, but both to a number of 9 o’clock individuals and families choosing to attend the 11 AM mass and to our not attracting new families to this service. The Wardens, Vestry, and I believe that we shall need to do some discernment around the 9 AM Mass in the coming year. We also saw a decline in Summer attendance, which is, however, likely an artefact of people’s schedules, as our attendance from September through December, especially at 11 AM was particularly strong. Holy Week attendance

was up 10% and Easter attendance was up 19%. The Blessing of the Animals in October saw a 14% increase, the highest attendance since 2015. Christmas, however, was slightly down.

On the whole, attendance figures are encouraging. We know we are attracting visitors to the City who are looking for an Anglo-Catholic worship experience in general, or who have sought us out after finding us on social media, especially Instagram, or hearing about us via word-of-mouth. We also know that newcomers who are City residents continue to check us out and, like Bishop Glasspool, find themselves warmly welcomed. Maintaining the liturgical and musical standards of our 11 AM Solemn Mass and continuing to foster a welcoming and inclusive community are working to grow our community in both numbers and vitality.

From a financial standpoint we are facing serious challenges. You will hear more about this from our Treasurer, Bill Farris, to whom I am exceedingly grateful for taking up once again the mantle of this office and providing us with such keen guidance and leadership. Our fixed costs, like property, casualty, and health insurance, Diocesan assessment, professional fees (including our annual audit), and the like keep rising; and our ageing, historic building is a challenge to maintain. At the moment we are also paying principal and interest on the loans we needed to take out to restore our heating and plumbing systems, and our Reserve Fund is dwindling. It is clear to the Vestry that our budget is a tight one, with little or no fat. The leadership understand that we do not have a spending problem, but rather an income deficiency. To address this problem from a long term perspective, and as you all know, we have embarked upon the present Capital Campaign, Saint Ignatius at 150, to raise at least \$625,000, with a challenge goal of \$750,000, to pay off our loans, refurbish our downstairs bathrooms, make other improvements, and restore monies to the Reserve Fund. This is why your participation in this effort, coupled with robust annual stewardship is so important.

Indeed, your generosity this year has been outstanding! In 2019 82 individuals and families pledged \$198,309. While this is down from 92 pledges of \$200,765 in 2018, the end results are much

better. Pledge payments were at their highest in over a decade, with \$189,759 received by year's end (95% of the amount pledged), up from \$170,488 in 2018 (84% of the amount pledged). Thank you all for your giving. This is the kind of momentum we must maintain into 2020. As of January 8, we have received 56 pledges 2020 totalling \$190,892. We still have thirty regular members who have yet to pledge and it looks likely, with your help, that we can easily break through the \$200,000 in pledge payments that has seemed to be a ceiling over the past decade. You will hear from the Stewardship Chair, Clive McKeef at this meeting who will update you with, I hope, excellent figures.

What has made such a difference in our fundraising this fall has been the tireless work of churchwarden Abigail Plumer, chair of the Capital Campaign, and of Clive himself. They have put together the finest team of fund raising canvassers we have ever seen. Since November they have been carrying out a highly effective every member canvas that has netted more than financial results. They have been able to reach into the congregation to learn more about your needs and your vision for the future of the parish. This kind of on-going conversation with the parish, begun in earnest eighteen months ago with the self-study we conducted in anticipation of the Campaign, and the feasibility study that showed us that the Campaign was possible, is essential for us to grow in ministry and vitality. I am grateful to every one of you who has participated in these efforts.

Among the things that we learnt in the course of all this discernment were what you value the most about the parish. You love our tradition of liturgy and music and you love our welcoming and inclusive community. What you want is more opportunity for fellowship with one another, more Christian formation, and to maintain the standards of our preaching, liturgy, and music. In the past year we have made strides in all these areas.

Meredith Strauss and Joshua Slater have been helping to lead and organise our community events, which have been hosted by a diverse group of parishioners. These gatherings have been opportunities for Ignatians to meet in more informal settings and deepen their connections with each other so that we can better serve the larger community. In addition to classes offered by

Deacon Kahn and Father Towner last spring, Christian Formation has been enhanced by Stephen Morris's highly popular Wednesday Bible studies and a Confirmation and Inquirer's class led by me this fall. Our Monthly Sunday evening Youth Group Program, begun in the fall of 2018, continued strong in 2019, and especially this Fall, as I have been assisted in leading the group by our talented seminarian, Mary Davenport. The Youth Group combines Eucharistic worship (Rite I Low Mass in the Lady Chapel, of course) with food and fellowship, academic learning and spiritual formation, and fun and games. Sunday School for the younger children following the 9 AM Sung Mass also continues, ably led by Meredith Strauss, when we have enough students. This will continue to be the subject of earnest discernment as we move ahead.

Our liturgies have been celebrated with the assistance of a small, but loyal and capable group of altar servers, without whom Sunday morning worship would be very challenging indeed. On Sundays our ministry of welcome has been led by our ushers and all of you who have made coffee hour possible.

As you all know, our Music program experienced an unexpected mid-year transition when James Kennerley was appointed Organist and Choirmaster of Saint Paul's Roman Catholic Parish and Choir School in Cambridge, Massachusetts. This position is a significant step for James in his career as he will have the chance to lead one of the very few professional liturgical choirs of men and boys in the Nation. James's tenure at the Church was marked by great achievements and extraordinary music and we wish him all the best in his new position.

When James announced his departure in June, giving us but a very few weeks notice, we moved quickly to ensure that we had someone in place to take up the music program come September. Josh Slater, our artist in residence, was able to cover the summer Sundays after James left, ensuring our liturgical music and he has continued to play the 9 AM mass and offer support to our other liturgies as needed, and I am grateful to him. At the same time, we learnt that most of our regular choristers had decided, prior to the announcement of any replacement for James, to accept

offers from other churches, mostly ones that paid a higher rate than we and that demanded they sing fewer pieces at each service and less difficult music, or move on for personal reasons.

With these challenges in mind, the Churchwardens and I met with a number of extremely qualified candidates and, with the advice and consent of the Wardens and Vestry, I hired Dr Richard Porterfield to take on the position of organist and choirmaster. Rick, an expert on Gregorian Chant and Medieval and Renaissance Music, is also a composer and has taught music theory and composition at Mannes College of Music, Columbia University, and other institutions. He is well known in the early music community as one of the co-founders of internationally acclaimed vocal chamber ensemble, Lionheart, who were for years in residence at Saint Ignatius and who regularly delighted audiences at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and other venues.

Given our financial challenges, as well as those of hiring a new choir, the Wardens and Vestry decided to reallocate resource so that we would have fewer singers, but pay them at a higher rate. This solution would both save us money and allow us to pay singers at a more attractive (and, quite frankly, just) rate without a loss in quality. We have worked this fall to maintain the quality of the music and grow and nurture a new choir. Lessons and Carols, the Episcopal Visitation on December 22, and Christmas Eve were marked highlights. We look forward to better and better things in 2020.

Under James, and now with Rick, we have continued to steward our concert program and our relationship with vocal chamber groups in New York City. We have been keen to shore up those connections and to grow the number of concerts we offer in the Church. These represent both a significant source of income and an important outreach and pastoral ministry to the music community of our City. A major new offering in 2019 was Saint Ignatius's presentation of its own concert, the first under our direct patronage in about a decade, thanks to the generosity of the estate of Jean Stein, a neighbour of the parish and great patron of the arts. The Stein Family gave us \$15,000 to mount a significant concert, musically directed by James Kennerley and produced by

James and Donna Breitzer, a chorister and the director of the Five Boroughs Music Festival. The event, the Jean Stein Memorial Concert, “Virtuosic Handel,” attracted the largest crowd we have had for a self-produced concert and was a real success. Such events have the possibility to enhance the reputation and visibility of the parish and our music program, as well as contribute financially to our operations. Continued Stein Concerts are under consideration at this time, with these specific goals in mind and we will let you all know what we shall be doing.

My enduring gratitude goes to my parish clergy colleagues, Father Towner, Deacon Kahn, and Father Evans. Each is a support to me personally and I rest easier knowing that they are here to engage with us deeply in the work of ministry. Each contributes from his own wealth of experience in the church and wider world and ensures that our liturgies, education programmes, and pastoral care are as excellent as they can be. During this medical leave I am extremely grateful to them, as I am also to the Wardens and Vestry.

Our Churchwardens, Abigail Plumer and Holly Hughes (who has taken the lead in our outreach ministry and other important areas) are experienced and unparalleled in their engagement with the work of the parish. I rely on them for the excellent advice and leadership that they exercise in mutual ministry with me. They, the Treasurer, and the Vestry ensure that we make wise decisions for the future health of the parish, so that we can continue our witness and ministry here on the corner of 87th Street and West End Avenue.

When she visited with the Vestry, Bishop Glasspool reminded us that the metrics we have traditionally used to gauge parish vitality are seeming of less value in a world in which it is unspeakably expensive to run a church and where people’s lives are no longer easily conformed to a pattern of Sunday morning worship. Even after we shared with her our sense of financial struggle, she reminded us that many parishes face such challenges, that it is increasingly difficult for thriving and healthy parishes to be completely self-sustaining, and that what God truly asks of us is to “do what we can with the resources we have in the time available to us.” She reflected back to us that

she found that “the sense of the presence of the Holy Spirit is palpable here” and that we were “welcoming, inclusive, absolutely!” She encouragingly said that we “are in great shape” and that we need to continue the work that we are doing, find new ways to minister to the people of our community, and not just on Sunday morning.

I want to leave you with those words of encouragement, to say that we are capable of great things and that although we need to dig deep at this moment, we have it within us to thrive for another hundred fifty years and beyond.

Faithfully yours,
Andrew C. Blume✠

The Rev'd Dr Andrew C. Blume
Rector

TREASURER'S REPORT

Financial Position:

Our congregation faces financial challenges. Our program has been stable, but expenses associated with maintaining that program have gradually risen. The principal source of funding for that program, annual giving by pledging members of the congregation, has not risen to keep pace with expenses. As a result, the Vestry has been forced to use our financial endowment at an unsustainable rate to maintain our program.

Our financial challenges have grown steeper in recent years because of needed improvements in our physical property, particularly new sidewalks required of us by the City and new heating and drainage systems required when the old systems failed. These projects were funded in part by capital fundraising and by grants from the Diocese and the Landmarks Conservancy, but most of the money to pay for them was borrowed, a total of \$365,000. At year-end 2019 the outstanding balance of those loans was \$286,000. Servicing this debt currently requires an annual outlay of about \$60,000 (of which about \$15,000 is interest), on top of our normal, recurrent operating expenses of a bit over half a million dollars. We expect to be able to repay the loans early with proceeds of the capital campaign, but that process will take time. In the meantime we must continue to service our debt.

Our 2020 budget contemplates a withdrawal of up to \$200,000 from our endowment, which currently stands at less than \$900,000. A sustainable draw would be less than \$50,000. As noted, about \$60,000 of the amount withdrawn from the endowment is needed to service debt that we hope to pay off early, but the need to draw on our endowment to cover operating expenses will continue until our income grows to cover them.

The Vestry is working to trim expenses. One manifestation of that effort you may have noticed is a reduction in the number of professional singers heard at the Solemn Mass. Realistically prospects for reducing expenses are quite limited, however; we have always run a compact operation.

The one source of income growth we can reasonably look to for financial stability is annual giving by pledging members of the congregation. That annual giving currently stands at about \$190,000, a level that has been flat in recent years. If you do the math suggested by the discussion above, you will see that to place ourselves on a fully sustainable path we need to see that giving increase over time by 50%. Such an increase will not come easily, but that is what we need to work for.

We also need to think about renewing our endowment. Bequests have been critical to the endowment in the past, and we all should be mindful of the opportunities for planned giving.

Investment Committee:

Toward the end of 2019 an Investment Committee was reconstituted to provide guidance to the Vestry concerning use of proceeds of the Capital Campaign, including early repayment of loans, and management of our endowment. Membership on the Committee includes the Churchwardens plus Jeremy Berry, Randall Kau, Scott McDermott, and Clive McKeef, with the Rector and Treasurer serving as *ex officio* members. At an initial meeting of the reconstituted committee in

December, the committee heard a report on a proposal, developed by the Wardens and the Treasurer, to draw \$50,000 from the endowment to fund our operation in the first quarter of 2020, to revisit the question of withdrawals from the endowment on a quarterly basis, and to apply initial proceeds of the Capital Campaign to repay our loans. The Committee expressed support for that proposal, given the circumstances in which we find ourselves.

Audits:

Our customary annual audits lapsed in the first half of the past decade, in part because of the expense associated with that process. In mid-2017 the Vestry retained the firm of Capin Crouse to audit our books for 2015 and 2016. That audit was not completed at the end of 2019. We hope to accomplish audits of 2017, 2018, and 2019 by the end of 2020.

Respectfully submitted,

William Farris,
Treasurer

STEWARDSHIP

For 150 years St Ignatius of Antioch has survived thanks to the sacrifice of generations who preceded us.

Like many New York congregations with a similar history, St. Ignatius has been sustained by generous benefactors and their gifts funded an endowment that has been critically important to us, but currently the ordinary running costs of the church amount to about \$1,600 a day.

The reality is that income from our endowment is not sufficient to cover our running costs, and while we have rental income from our tenant of more than 20 years, Goddard Riverside, and we have a program of professional music groups who rent our space for concerts, these revenues are also not sufficient alone.

Until recently our Reserve Fund filled an annual gap in our budget but it has recently been depleted to pay for maintenance projects that required large capital outlays such as repairs to the sewage system, sidewalk, heating system and roofing.

So in 2020, it has fallen to us to meet a generational challenge to renew our historic church property and continue the work of growing our congregation by contributing to both a capital raising campaign to restore our Reserve Fund and repay loans, as well as an annual stewardship campaign as a contribution to operating costs.

As far as the stewardship campaign is concerned, our goal is to grow our pledging to \$220,000 for 2020 and to \$240,000 by 2021.

As of January 7, 2020, St Ignatius had received 58 stewardship pledges for \$196,952 for 2020, compared to January 2019 when we had received 67 pledges for a total of \$174,228.

We have also taken advantage of the ability to make automatic payments by ACH bank debit as an efficient means of honoring our pledges regularly whether we are in church every Sunday or not. About \$4,000 per month is now being paid in direct debit via bank ACH payments and we encourage our community to sign up for this facility.

St Ignatius closed out 2019 stewardship pledging with actual receipts of \$189,759 compared to pledges of \$198,309 from 82 pledges.

The 2019 results compare favorably with 2018 when actual receipts totalled \$170,488 compared to pledges of \$200,765 from 92 pledges, and with 2017 when pledge receipts totalled \$174,468 compared to pledges of \$178,499 from 82 pledges.

Clive McKeef,
St Ignatius of Antioch, Vestry Stewardship Chair

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

A dynamic year was noted at St. Ignatius of Antioch Episcopal Church with respect to the Church property. Highlights included:

- Completion of the new heating system and controls (See HVAC, below)
- Minor repairs and cleanout of external gutters, primarily at the Northeast roofline
- A significant leak, subsequent flooding and floor replacement caused by the tower apartment water heater failure (see Apartment, below)
- Painting and other cosmetic improvements in the West End Avenue vestibule
- Major cleanout of the childcare area
- Sewage pipe repairs
- A janitor's sink overflow which affected the undercroft electrical room
- Failure and replacement of the Apartment A/C after approximately 48 years
- Change in tenancy of the tower Apartment due to the appointment of the new Music Director
- Loss of both trees on the West End side of property

Cosmetic:

The West End Avenue entrance and stairwells were painted in early Spring and the Childcare room extensively cleaned in November. Part of the stairwell had seen water damage due to the Tower Apartment water heater failure – see below.

HVAC and Plumbing:

Rand Engineering, East Coast Mechanical, and Izzo Construction primarily worked on final components of the HVAC system. Weatherproofing, exhaust pipe fireproofing, vestibule fancoils, and new controls/portal access were all finalized in 2019. Parishioners, Visitors and Staff have noted increased comfort through the early Winter of 2019-2020. Additional water issues occurred mainly in early Summer and were caused by both the janitor's sink overflowing and external groundwater prompted into electrical closet and the lower hallway by severe weather. Kitchen and electrical room mold was remediated by late August. Maxons restoration was available on an emergency basis for the June cleanout and some of the subsequent dehumidifying tasks. Minor repairs on behalf of the TOP program, especially in the Kitchen, included mold remediation and a new patio door.

Roof:

A small leak along the roofline was repaired and some leaf and construction debris cleanout was required from the gutters. These tasks were performed in March and April by Fort Cicca. The Vestry should note the two-year cycle for cleanout would require Spring 2021 attention to the gutters.

Tower Apartment:

A failure of the water heater for the apartment caused extensive damage and was repaired in January. Following this, floor replacement, replacement bookshelves, a Xerox copier replacement, and mold remediation were all required in late winter. In May it was observed that the air conditioning unit housed above the Tower bathroom had failed after several decades. Electrical upgrades were required to serve the entire apartment. The new units in both the living and bedrooms are housed in temporary window frames which require late Spring installation and then removal by a professional each September/October. Supplemental heat is provided still by small electrical wall units which are approximately 20 years old and operate on the same circuits as the new air conditioners. Smoke and CO detectors were replaced also in May 2019. The Vestry should note they should be tested annually around July 1st.

The Kennerley Family tenure ended in July, approximately 1 month after the birth of baby Noah. Dr. Richard Porterfield assumed his post later that month, after cosmetic and functional upgrades were concluded in the kitchen and elsewhere throughout the apartment.

General Operations:

Boniface Nawita continued as part-time Sexton and is a true asset to the Church, maintaining positive relations with numerous contractors and with the Goddard-Riverside staff, participants and visitors. Soup Kitchen activities on Saturdays and Mondays are also continuing under close supervision of senior Warden Holly Hughes and Volunteers. Regular 2020 meetings have been

scheduled between the B&G chair and Goddard-Riverside staff members to take care of small operational issues as they arise.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sheila J Sweeney Suarez

MUSIC

It is with joy that I report on my first three-and-a-half months as Organist and Choirmaster at St Ignatius. For a long time this church has been my spiritual home, and I am delighted that it has become my physical dwelling and the principal venue for my professional activities.

In August 2019 I accepted the call from the Rector to follow in the footsteps of James Kennerley, with whom I had worked as chorister, Associate Choirmaster, and sub-organist during his distinguished tenure here. I am grateful to James, as well to his predecessors Douglas Keilitz and the late Dr. Harold Chaney (who first hired me to sing here in the late 1980s) for the program of excellent liturgical music they have built over the years, which it is my privilege to continue.

Even before James had conducted his last service as our Organist and Choirmaster on August 18, I was busy negotiating fees and schedules for the 2019-20 season with the many ensembles that rent space here for their rehearsals and concerts. This program not only provides income for the church but also raises our profile as a leading venue for fine music, especially for the choral groups, vocal-chamber groups, and early-instrument ensembles that so delight in the rich and beautiful visual and acoustic setting of our sanctuary.

I am grateful to our Artist in Residence Joshua A. Slater for his continued work playing the 9-am service Sunday mornings while I am occupied with rehearsing the choir for the 11-am Solemn Mass, and for his willingness to stand in for me as organist as he did last week when I was out of town. Josh also accompanies the choir when we sing music that requires one person to conduct and another to play, such as we had in November for All Souls. Indeed I asked Josh to play such music for today's single 10-am service, but he had already made plans to be out of town himself.

As Organist and Choirmaster my principal duty is to provide music of choir and organ -- and sometimes additional musical forces -- for our weekly Solemn Mass and for other feasts and fasts of the liturgical year. The parish has gathered powerful resources for this purpose in the purchase and maintenance of the grand Casavant organ whose pipework sounds from its loft chamber behind the baptistry, and in the more recent purchase of the self-contained Klop chamber organ which resides in the choir-corner below. These two beautiful instruments complement each other graciously to support our Music Department's mission, which I see to be one that encompasses all periods of Christian observance, from the Middle Ages to the present day, as an audible reflection of the Communion of Saints.

James made the Casavant organ sound so good to my ears, even as recently as the 2019 Corpus Christi service in which I participated as a chorister, that it was a shock for me to discover how much needs to be done to repair and maintain that fine instrument. A portion of the Capital Campaign's request is dedicated to the important work of preserving this valuable resource of our parish life; I commend it to you.

The other principal resource of our Music Department is of course our professional choir, which performs more music on a single Sunday than many church choirs do in a month. The Rector has mentioned in his report that we decided to raise the pay for our singers -- which had been on the low end for as long as I remember -- to bring it closer to the going rate for such work. Most of our singers from last season had decided, even before James announced his departure, to move on to positions elsewhere. There were several factors at work in their several decision, but it is clear that underpaying the choir did not help to retain the excellent vocalists that we need for the repertoire and professional level we demand. Having to build a choir from the ground up this season allowed me to recalibrate its size and disposition: I continue to sing from within the choir, as James had, but the ensemble is reduced (for now at least) from eight (including the conductor) to five, sometimes six.

There were aesthetic as well as economic reasons for making the choir a vocal chamber ensemble of five soloists than the two-on-a-part chorus of eight it had been for many years: much of the repertoire we do is actually composed for one-on-a-part singing. Finally, the savings we get from having a leaner regular ensemble give us flexibility to hire additional forces when circumstances demand, without placing added pressure on the church's finances.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Porterfield
Organist and Choirmaster

FAMILY MINISTRY

We continue, as always, to welcome children of all ages to St. Ignatius, and to provide programs and opportunities that are meaningful and age-appropriate for all.

Our Sunday School meets in the playroom between the 9am and 11am Masses. This group of preschool through middle school students learns about Bible stories, liturgical practices, and the life and teachings of Jesus in an engaging and interactive manner. The overarching theme of our lessons is that *God loves us no matter what*. We emphasize serving others, loving all of God's creation, and developing a personal relationship with God.

The children and teens continue to serve at the altar as acolytes, under the patient and expert tutelage of Dr. Leanne Dodge as well as all of our clergy.

A welcome addition to our Family Ministry this year was our Youth Group for teenagers. Father Blume has been leading the Youth Group along with our seminarian Mary Davenport. The Youth Group meets monthly for Mass and conversation, and will be engaging in social programming and outreach in the coming months.

Respectfully submitted,

Meredith L. Strauss

ADULT EDUCATION

Our program in 2019 was anchored by Stephen Morris, whose popular weekly Bible Study has been meeting on Wednesdays at 11:00 AM. They have covered the Book of Ruth and are currently making their way through the Gospel according to St. Mark. Weekday Bible Study will continue for the foreseeable future.

In other news, Deacon Paul led an Epiphanytide overview and discussion of different ways to observe Lent and Fr. Towner offered an Eastertide series on the First Letter of Peter, which explored the ways in which the author constructed "Christian identity" and asked how the contours of that construction relate to being a Christian in our 21st-century reality. The Biennial Eastertide Parish Retreat at Holy Cross Monastery in 2019 took place, unseasonably, in Lent; Br. Robert led us through a wide-ranging discussion of Jesus' five statements beginning "Take heart, or "Courage" in the Gospels. The year concluded in fine style with the return of the Advent Quiet Day, held at the House of the Redeemer: Deacon Paul and Ruth Cunningham collaborated on oral and musical meditations on Jesus' threefold question to his followers concerning John the Baptist: "What did you go out to see?"

Respectfully submitted,
The Rev'd Dr Philip H. Towner
The Rev'd Paul S. Kahn

THE LEOPARDS

The Leopards, who derive their name from St. Ignatius' affectionate (?) nickname for the guards escorting him to Rome, are a group who have volunteered to assist their fellow parishioners who are temporarily inconvenienced due to medical reasons or are otherwise homebound. A Leopard can walk your dog, do some grocery shopping, escort you to a doctor's appointment, water your plants, or simply provide some company.

Fortunately for the parish at large, there was only minor demand for our services in 2019. But if you should need us, let us know! And if you would like to become a Leopard, let us know!

Respectfully submitted,
Lucy Kuemmerle
The Rev'd Paul S. Kahn

OUTREACH

Soup Kitchen:

For more than 30 years, the soup kitchen has provided nourishing take-away meals in a manner that respects the privacy and dignity of all who come to our door.

A team of volunteers prepare and serve brown-bag meals at 4pm on Saturdays; one to two volunteers serve meals at 7pm on Mondays. Our guests are primarily adults from the neighborhood, but some have come via subway from as far as the Bronx and Midtown.

It takes roughly 36 volunteers a month for the soup kitchen to operate. Volunteer Coordinator Stephen Morris is seeking two new volunteers: a regular substitute and at least one person who can commit to helping on the fourth (and occasional fifth) Monday of the month. Please contact Stephen if you would like to participate in this ministry.

In 2019, we were awarded a Basic Human Needs Grant from Episcopal Charities of \$3200. We receive canned staples through the city's Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP). These items are supplemented by donations from soup kitchen captains and supplies purchased by the church.

In 2019, the soup kitchen served 1381 guests. This is down sharply from 2018. In the early months of 2019 we saw some weeks with fewer guests, but our numbers rose again in the fall.

As we grappled with fluctuating numbers of guests, a committee met in November to determine ways to assess our community's needs and how our parish can serve them. Present for the meeting were Deacon Paul Kahn, Stephen Morris, Laurel Bishop, Nick Greendyk, Lucy Kuemmerle, Kate McEnulty, Sheila Sweeney-Suarez and myself. We are grateful to Laurel Bishop for contacting the women's shelter that our neighbors, the Church of St. Paul and St. Stephen and Congregation B'nai Jeshurun, run 5 nights a week. We are continuing to look into their needs and considering whether we can assist them in their work.

Advent Gift Drive:

During Advent, as in past years, the parish held a gift drive for the children living at Ellington House shelter in our neighborhood. The shelter staff helpfully provided us with the age and gender breakdown of the over 100 children living at Ellington House, and parishioners (and friends of the parish) responded in spades, donating new, wrapped gifts which were tagged for the intended recipient. The staff reported that each child received at least one gift and were very grateful. We were instructed to keep doing what we were doing, so we expect to continue this ministry in 2020 and beyond.

Respectfully submitted,
Holly Hughes
Meredith L. Strauss

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CLERGY

| | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| The Rev'd Dr Andrew C. Blume | <i>Rector</i> |
| The Rev'd Dr Philip H. Towner | <i>Associate Rector</i> |
| The Rev'd Paul S. Kahn | <i>Deacon</i> |
| The Rev'd John Miles Evans | <i>Honorary Associate</i> |
| Ms Mary Davenport | <i>Seminarian</i> |

VESTRY

| | |
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| Ms Abigail Franklin Plumer | <i>Churchwarden</i> |
| Ms Holly Hughes | <i>Churchwarden</i> |
| Mr William L. Farris | <i>Treasurer</i> |
| Ms Jennifer Udden | <i>Clerk</i> |
| Mr William L. Farris | Ms Kristy Milkov |
| Ms Rhiannon Knol | Mr Jeremy Berry |
| Mr Clive McKeef | Ms Sheila Sweeney-Suarez |
| Ms Cathryn Phelps | Ms Meredith C. Strauss |
| Ms Jennifer Udden | |
| | <i>Vestry</i> |

STAFF

| | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Dr Richard Porterfield | <i>Organist & Choirmaster</i> |
| Mr Joshua A. Slater | <i>Artist in Residence</i> |
| Dr Richard Porterfield | <i>Office Coordinator</i> |
| Mr Eric S Brenner | <i>Office Assistant</i> |
| Mr Boniface Nawita | <i>Sexton</i> |