

OUTERMOST VOICE

ST. MARY OF THE HARBOR

WHERE THE LAND, THE SEA, AND THE SACRED MEET

Homecoming



Sunday, May 16 will mark a homecoming for parishioners when we return to worship services **inside the church**. Please be advised that COVID mitigation protocols will remain in place for the time being, including wearing masks while inside the church and reduced seating capacity. Preregistration will be required. The link to preregister will be sent out via a parish-wide email on Tuesday, May 11th. The link will be posted as well on the church's website at www.stmaryoftheharbor.org. You can also call the office at 508-487-2622 to preregister.



From Exile to Easter

The past year has been a surreal experience for everyone. That is especially true for faith communities like St. Mary of the Harbor who out of necessity, have had to adapt to COVID mitigation restrictions involving group gatherings. The challenge for us has been to come up with innovative ways to retain a sense of communion without being together in person.

With vaccination efforts well under way in Massachusetts and with a limited rolling back of restrictions, we will soon return to in person Sunday worship services, albeit with limits on the number of attendees, at least for the time being.

While this is welcome news, we should not look at the past year simply as a deadly aberration. To do so would

Treasurer's Report



For the first quarter ending March 31, 2021 we saw a decrease in pledge and plate revenue of \$6,970 compared to the previous year resulting in a deficit. Total operating expenses dropped as well by \$1,895.

Last year, the church received a \$28,852 Payroll Protection Act loan from the federal government to help pay salaries, benefits and other operating expenses. This loan was critical to the church's cash flow in 2020 and the amount was carried as a liability on the church's books until recently when we received notification that the loan has been forgiven. Additional good news arrived shortly afterward that St. Mary's was approved for a second PPP loan to help fund the church's recurring operating expenses in 2021.

While the funds from the PPP loan provide a limited cushion for a while, the church depends on pledge bequests still needs to

squander an opportunity to identify what we have learned as a congregation and how we might apply the lessons we have learned going forward.

In a sense, we are at a point not unlike what the disciples experienced following Jesus' death. Traumatized by events, the lure to return to the familiarity of their past lives was strong. Scripture says that Peter and his companions went back to fishing. And that would have been the end of the story except for one thing: Easter.

Jesus' resurrection challenged his disciples to look at life anew. As we emerge from COVID exile, my hope is that we will do the same as a congregation. The question is, are we willing to expand our vision of the future and refocus our efforts on connecting rather than simply regathering.



Regathering Team Update

St. Mary's Regathering Team met to discuss the future of in person worship services. Given the high vaccination rates on the Outer Cape, the consensus was that people now feel safe enough to attend Sunday worship services indoors again, while following COVID safety protocols established last year by the team in consultation with the diocesan office.

The church's two annual fundraisers and the future use of the parish hall by local community groups was also discussed. While no decisions were made, it was agreed that the chair persons of the Annual Summer Fair and the Art & Spirit Event would need to consider if and how the fundraisers could take place safely, using the Regathering Team as an advisory resource.

Treasurer's report continued

payments from parishioners as well as gifts and bequests. We also rely on our two annual fundraisers which may or may not take place this year.

We are grateful for your financial support. Your generosity makes it possible to continue the mission and ministry of love at St. Mary of the Harbor.

Mike Sutula, Treasurer

Easter Sunday 2021 at St. Mary of the Harbor

Easter was celebrated outdoors this year. Parishioners and visitors gathered in the churchyard and while the temperature was on the cool side, the sun warmed spirits and hearts alike. Easter flowers were graciously provided by John Carroll and John Loftin.



Live from Provincetown



Thanks to the generosity of parishioners and a \$2000 diocesan grant, St. Mary of the Harbor now livestreams our Sunday worship services via the church's YouTube channel.

Look for the online link that is sent weekly in the parish-wide Constant Contact email on Sunday mornings.

A link can also be found on the church's website at www.stmaryoftheharbor.org

Seeking a Volunteer

Food 4 Kids is the summer lunch and snack program serving children from Harwich through Provincetown. The program is sponsored by Church of the Holy Spirit and receives funds from state and federal programs, the towns it serves, churches, non-profits and foundations.

As Provincetown is the largest site we serve , we are seeking a **Provincetown resident** to serve on our steering committee which meets remotely by zoom the 2nd Tuesday of the month from 4-5:30 pm for 6-7 months a year. If you are interested or would like more information about this volunteer opportunity, please call Page McMahan 508-255-0831.

Annual Housing Walk with Love

While this may be my 19th consecutive year walking in a fundraiser for Homeless Prevention Council, it is HPC's *30th Anniversary* serving our most vulnerable neighbors. Since COVID-19 changed all of our lives beginning in March 2020, HPC has seen a 35% increase in client numbers. Even with these added challenges, the commitment of the caseworkers at Homeless Prevention Council never wavers. They are the "first-responders" when it comes to critical housing needs. And to provide the necessary services, they need our help badly, and now more than ever.

Though walkers this year are being offered a choice of either a "virtual" or in person event, as always I'll be pulling on my sneakers. Great weather would be wonderful. But however pleasant a day June 12th may be for the walkers, it most likely will not be as pleasant for our

continued from page 4

neighbors at risk of becoming homeless, or for those who are already experiencing homelessness. Their worries are overwhelming.

I understand that many of us are struggling due to lost income right now, and that fears for the future are high. But we can still help. As I say to you every year, no donation is too small (or too great!). So please give once again, as generously as you possibly can. Here are two ways to support HPC by supporting this walk:

*Make your check payable to "HPC" and drop it in the mail to:
Khristine Hopkins, 18 Alden Street, Provincetown MA 02657*

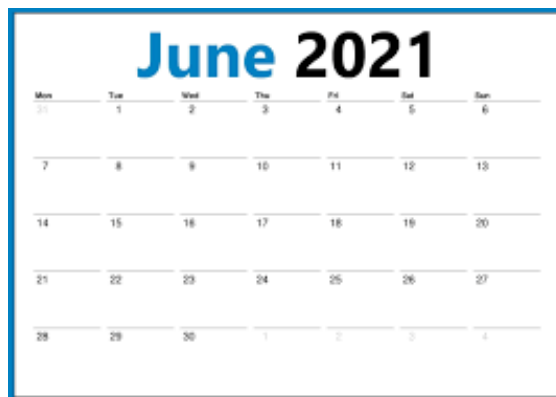
If you prefer to give online with either a credit or debit card, here is the link on the HPC website to my "team." <https://www.classy.org/team/355840>

Thank you, as always, for spreading your love and your generosity. On behalf of Homeless Prevention Council, I am so grateful!

Love,

Khristine Hopkins

Annual Parish Meeting



Mark your calendars! This year's annual meeting is scheduled for **June 27 at 11:30 a.m.** The plan is to meet in person and via zoom for those who prefer to attend remotely. More information will be sent to parishioners as the date of the meeting draws near.

Directory Assistance



Please don't forget to email us at smothoffice@gmail.com or call the church office at 508-487-2622 if there is a change to your address or phone number.

Church directories are available to parishioners upon request.

Diocesan and National Church News Sources

Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts news link:

<https://www.diomass.org/news-pubs/diocesan-news>

Episcopal Church News Service link: <https://www.episcopalnewsservice.org>