

OUTERMOST VOICE

ST. MARY OF THE HARBOR

WHERE THE LAND, THE SEA, AND THE SACRED MEET

Vestry News



August to October

Received report regarding in person gatherings for worship during October.

Authorized the Junior Warden to identify contractors and solicit cost estimates for the replacement of deteriorating and missing cedar shingles on the rectory's exterior.

Designated this year's Thanksgiving offering to fund the purchase and installation of a livestream video system for the church.



Endurance

St. Mary of the Harbor celebrated Holy Eucharist in the churchyard after a six month hiatus from in person church gatherings. During October, between 43 and 48 people came together each Sunday for worship. It was a welcomed change amidst a pandemic that has disrupted every facet of life.

Since mid-March, St. Mary of the Harbor has been and continues to adapt to this reality. In the first week of November when eleven COVID-19 cases were confirmed on the Outer Cape (Eastham, Wellfleet, Truro & Provincetown), we suspended in person gatherings again, including the cancellation of the annual S-4 Memorial Service and the Thanksgiving Day worship service.

Looking ahead, the resumption of in person worship

Treasurer's Report



The financial impact of COVID-19 has spared no one, including the church. All things considered, St. Mary of the Harbor is weathering the pandemic as well as we can. At the end of October, we recorded a year-to-date deficit of \$5,135 which was an improvement from the previous month's recorded deficit.

For the same period ending October 31, 2020, pledge and Plate revenues are ahead by \$2682 compared to last year, while seasonal offerings are down \$13,314 and fund raising revenues are down by \$18,877. Total revenues for the year are down by \$18,753. Operating expenses are down as well by \$2,314

In addition to recurring operating expenses, we have accumulated \$4,000 in unpaid outreach obligations and \$12,638 in unpaid diocesan assessments that are due by year's end.



services will depend on the active presence of COVID-19 in our communities. In the meantime, online services will continue.

A decision regarding in person Christmas services this year will be made and communicated to parishioners a few days before December 25th. If we are unable to regather as a congregation for Christmas, Holy Eucharist will be made available at the church for individual households by appointment on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

Even for the most resilient among us, these are hard times. And yet, the church endures. With the patience of Job, the perseverance of Joseph and the faith of Paul, the lives of God's people are a testament to the truth that hardship does not define us. The endurance of our love does.

Terry+



If you haven't already done so, please make your 2021 pledge. Doing so will help us to develop the church's annual budget and plan accordingly.

As always, we are grateful for the many expressions of love offered through your financial support. Your offerings make it possible for St. Mary of the Harbor to continue the good work to which our church has been called.

Mike Sutila, Treasurer



A Letter from the Bishops of the Dioceses of Massachusetts and Western Massachusetts

Nov. 19, 2020

Dear People of the Dioceses of Massachusetts and Western Massachusetts,

Our first word to you is one of deep gratitude. In the past eight months our churches have responded to the challenges of this pandemic with commitment and creativity. You have found new ways to worship, continued to provide life-sustaining ministry in your communities, and remained in supportive fellowship with one another. Despite widely shared anxiety and fatigue, you have nonetheless remained faithful to the core identity of the church. We are grateful beyond measure. God bless you.

Our second word to you is one of grave concern and utmost caution. Over the past several weeks, the spread of the coronavirus has increased dramatically in the Commonwealth. Infection levels have returned to levels not seen since spring. On Nov. 2, Governor Baker issued revised [measures](#), imposing stricter controls on gatherings in both private and public settings. As we move into colder weather and flu season, we believe that clear and present risks in our communities demand a similar response from people of faith to help protect ourselves and one another. Jesus' Law of Love simply must be our foremost and abiding concern.

While religious and political organizations are exempt from many state guidelines, such exemptions place concern for First Amendment legal challenges ahead of concern for the health and well-being of God's people. As your bishops, we are convinced that **Jesus' commandment to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:39) must be the overriding factor in our decisions**, even when this requires accepting limits to our own freedoms. Indeed, St. Paul insisted on this priority. "'All things are lawful,' but not all things are beneficial Do not seek your own advantage, but that of the other." (I Corinthians 10:23-24) For this reason, where state standards for places of worship are more permissive

than those for other gathering places, we expect our churches to adhere to the more limited standards provided for other public venues.

One of our **consulting medical professionals** has observed poignantly, "The infectious disease epidemiologist in me wants everyone to just stay home. The harm reductionist in me wants to meet people where they are and make them as safe as they can be. The Christian in me sees suffering from these practices and wants to comfort them. I don't know how to be all three at the same time." As your bishops, we share that tension, desiring to care for the health of all our people and our neighbors, even while providing the spiritual and pastoral care which nurtures and sustains us. We know that our clergy, lay leaders, and all faithful Episcopalians share these same concerns.

The guidelines below represent our hope that renewed restrictions, while causing short-term disappointment, will help us all traverse the coming months in greater health and with genuine care for one another, as Jesus has commanded.

We know and grieve that the timing of these restrictions means that Advent and Christmas simply will not be observed with many of our cherished traditions this year. Instead it will be a year for small, quiet, contemplative possibilities--perhaps not unlike the lonely stable in Bethlehem shared by that little family at the Incarnation, where Christ first came to meet all our hopes and fears.

Yours in Christ,

The Rt. Rev. Douglas J. Fisher, Bishop Diocesan, Diocese of Western Massachusetts
The Rt. Rev. Alan M. Gates, Bishop Diocesan, Diocese of Massachusetts
The Rt. Rev. Gayle E. Harris, Bishop Suffragan, Diocese of Massachusetts

A Twofer

The church doesn't stop growing because of a pandemic. Quinn Edith Loughran and her sister Sylvia Rose became the newest members of Christ's church when they were baptized at St. Mary of the Harbor on September 6. Proud parents Chelsea and Kristen presented their daughters for baptism as grandparents and godparents safely participated online via Zoom.



Work in Progress at Eden by the Sea

Florida residents and garden volunteers John Garisto and his friend reclaimed the churchyard's sidewalk leading to the parish hall during a summer-long project. It was but one area of the church grounds where they weeded and edged planting beds, relocated sod, and pruned overgrown plants.



You can anticipate a surprise of color next Spring. Dozens of bulbs were planted in the churchyard and the perimiter beds.

Church Office News

We are sorry to share that Penny Silvia will be leaving St. Mary's at the end of this year to devote more time to her family. Penny has served admirably as the church's office manager since her arrival in the late summer of 2018. In that time, she has been a resource to our parishioners and a great help to the rector.

Solar Update

St. Mary of the Harbor produces more solar power than we use. The net difference is paid to the church by our electricity provider. From November 2019 through November 2020, St. Mary of the Harbor has received \$1825 in payments from EverSource. When you add YTD cost savings of \$1,462 from the church's reduced heating oil usage, the net effect to the bottom line is \$3,287.

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>