

## 2017 – The Vicar’s Annual Report

*Christ be our light – shine in our hearts, shine through the darkness  
Christ be our light – shine in your church, gathered today!*

Our annual meeting – and the writing of our reports – tend to fall in the season of Epiphany, which focuses our worship on themes of light and answering the call of Jesus into discipleship. Seeking the light of Christ, tending the flame within us, and sending the light of love into the world is what we are about as Christians and as the church of St. John’s, whatever the season.

Our worship life shapes our community life – in and for worship, we gather each week and mark the changes of seasons and the changes of our life and ministry. This year, our worship gave us the chance to celebrate the Children of God, as our youngest members led us in worship in May. In worship, we welcomed **Pam Blumhardt and Mike & Cindy Karapas** into our active membership, as well as baptizing Annabelle Rhoades. Our worship life connects us to those beyond our walls as well – we gathered in Lansing to witness **Amy Leuchtmann**’s confirmation, and welcomed Bishop Wendell & Karlah Gibbs on our official visitation from the Bishop. We worshipped God with our local neighbors of the Clinton Ministerial Association to observe Good Friday and Thanksgiving, and to celebrate the Fall Festival. “In the beauty of holiness” – as the psalm says – our worship was blessed by our occasional choir organized by **Darel Stevens**, and by our steadfast bell choir under the director of **Steve Leuchtmann**.

It is also through our worship that we gather to give thanks for lives that have been “changed, not ended” as we commend our beloved to the eternal rest of God. The worship services surrounding the deaths of *Ruth Crosby, Jo Lancaster, Roger Proctor and Lillian Ensign* were a loving way to remember the light of each of these wonderful people. I am grateful to our community, especially **Rosemary Niblack and Janet Fry** for helping us host luncheons that offer a moment of light in a time of darkness.

We are called, each of us, to tend the light of Christ that shines within us. One way we do that is through our continued study and growth in understanding our faith and our God. Over the last school year, we tackled the “Bible in a Year,” reading most of the Bible of the course of ten months, and gathering to learn and discuss what we found in the sacred stories of our tradition, as our church school led by **Brenda Squier** did the same. In Lent we explored the Episcopal tradition, and in Advent we explored the Christmas story through art in a program called “*A Thrill of Hope*.”

Of course, the more we worship and learn, the more we are motivated to fulfill our calling as light in the world: to give generously and serve others in the name of God’s love. And so, throughout 2017, St. John’s showed up with gifts and talents and time to support:

- Monthly food pantry donations (delivered on our behalf by **Jerry Shaefer & Darel Stevens**)
- Lunches at the Clinton Senior Center on fifth Thursdays (organized by **Shirley Campbell**)
- Lenawee Great Start diaper drive in May
- September Meals on Wheels (organized by our **Episcopal Church Women**)

- Back-to-school Supplies donation (organized by our **Episcopal Church Women**)
- Cards for Veterans at Easter, Veterans Day and Christmas (organized by our **ECW**)
- Purses of presents for guests at Catherine Cobb (packed by our **youth group**)
- Angel Tree Gifts for families at Christmas (organized by Mary Houghton for **ECW**)

Our light is brightest when we shine together, but I would like to particularly thank our Bishop's Committee and wardens **Kathy Stevens** and **Mike Maylone** for their dedicated work to our life together. Finally, please join me in giving thanks to God for the wonderful energy and gifts offered to all of us by the staff of St. John's: to **Darel Stevens**, for his music and creativity; to **Terry Sosko**, for her insight and careful keeping of our finances; to **Beth Ann Leuchtmann**, for her care and organization; and to **Brenda Squier**, for her passion for passing on our faith to our youngest members – I am so grateful for all they do.

The coming year will present us with more changes – some we will embrace, and some will bring us grief. But in all these things, we walk as people of hope- as the people who find light in the darkness, and the people who shine that same light. We are people of the light of Christ, and it is my honor to be part of this ministry with you.

With peace and blessings,  
The Rev. Susie Shaefer  
Vicar of St. John's Church