



**Outreach Report**  
St. John's Annual Meeting  
April 18th, 2021

St. John's Outreach and its community partners have faced new challenges and opportunities this year, and we have responded faithfully and creatively. Despite lock-downs and restrictions on in-person community service, we have managed to find ways to do meaningful work during the Covid-19 pandemic.

In 2020 we distributed almost \$84,000 in funding to designated Outreach ministries, complemented by substantial in-kind donations and volunteer support. Total Outreach expenditures were greater than usual due to extra income from Covid relief donations and a budget surplus carried over from the previous year which we felt was important to put to use. Our budget for 2021 is projected to be substantially less, closer to \$65,000.

The Vestry has made a sustained commitment to Outreach by building it into the Church's operating budget, enabling us to focus on our work together rather than on fundraising. This is an important statement of our values as a congregation, a declaration that Outreach is central to our ministry and identity. St. Matthias is an exception for now — they will continue to do supplemental fundraising since their needs are greater than what our budget can reasonably accommodate.

Here is a snapshot of some of the work St. John's supported in 2020/21:

— We provided funding and volunteers to help **Community Solidarity**, a longtime partner that serves fresh, nutritious food to thousands of people each week across Long Island. They have been doing very effective work throughout the pandemic, meeting the surge in demand with well thought out safety protocols and expanded food sourcing.

— **Housing Help** has been one of our key partners this year, helping coordinate food distributions in Huntington Station and beyond, as well as providing legal aid and financial counseling to renters and home owners struggling to meet their obligations during the pandemic. Through Housing Help, we have provided funding for hot meals from local restaurants, distributed donations from our spring and summer food drives, and offered volunteers to help at food distributions. We have helped deliver groceries, gift cards and pizzas directly to housebound families. We also participated in Housing Help's summer book drive to help underserved remote learners keep up with their summer reading.

— We supported **Gerald J. Ryan Outreach Center** with funding and clothing donations from our fall warm clothing drive. Wyandanch was very hard hit by the pandemic, and Ryan Outreach has experienced a huge increase in demand for their social services and food pantry provisions. They have had to restrict their hours and some programs due to volunteer shortages and safety concerns, but have managed to stay open through most of the pandemic, providing everything from food to diapers to clothing.

— **Community Food Council, TriCYA, and St. George's Hempstead**, were all forced to close their food pantries during the early parts of the pandemic. Once they were able to re-open safely, they faced



overwhelming demand. All have had to overcome volunteer shortages and make adjustments to their operations in order to create safe environments for their staff and clients. We have supported all three organizations with funding, as well as food donations. CFC continues to be the recipient of our weekly Blue Bag food collections.

— **Eastern Farm Workers** has been a lifeline for farm workers on the east end of Long Island, many of whom live in camps or sub-par housing. EFW offers legal, financial, medical and food aid, as well as clothing and transportation (including giving donated bicycles to some of the workers). Our financial support continues to be essential to their operation.

— **Family Service League** is one of our longtime partners, and we support three of their programs with annual grants. FSL was forced to close its **Lockwood Preschool** and **Manor Field After School** programs this year, but offered remote counseling and enrichment opportunities to the families and children they serve. They are will be returning to in-person programming soon. **HIHI** had to totally reconfigure it's program model because of Covid, moving to a single site shelter format. There were many challenges, but they were nevertheless able to serve an increased census of homeless men every night during this cold and snowy winter.

— **YFCA of OB/EN** has been an anchor in the Oyster Bay community throughout the pandemic, providing support of all kinds to families struggling with food insufficiency and financial distress. We provided financial support and participated in their Christmas Adopt-a-Family program.

— **St. John's Day Camp** was able to operate this past summer in a new location with limited numbers and a carefully organized program. It was very successful (and amazingly there were no Covid cases). It will be operating in-person again this summer in a similar format. The camp is one of our core ministries, a longstanding partnership with the Town of Huntington that provides summer enrichment for the children of low-income families. We will be offering a more in-depth presentation about the Camp at a special Coffee Hour on May 2nd.

— Despite travel restrictions, the **St. Matthias Fellowship** has stayed in regular telephone and email contact with our partner school in Haiti. St. John's provided funding for teacher salaries, a school lunch program, and material for school uniforms (which St. Matthias families sewed themselves). The SMF Committee also hosted a virtual fete in April that raised close to \$10,000 (net). It was a wonderfully up-lifting and educational event for the St. John's congregation, and will be the primary source of funding for the school in the coming year (combined with an annual grant from Outreach). This year marks the 10th anniversary of our partnership with St. Matthias, and we hope to offer the congregation a 10-year overview of this ministry later this year. The St. Matthias Committee is also strategic planning process to guide us in the years ahead.

Throughout this pandemic, St. John's parishioners have continued to ask, "What can I do to help"? The heart of this congregation beats strong, and Outreach has provided opportunities for us to work together to do effective work in real time as needs have become apparent.



In 2021, we will continue to look for opportunities where St. John's can make an impact. Our community partners are truly grateful for our support, financial and otherwise. They have persevered, and they count on us to be by their side.

In the coming year, Outreach's goals are to:

- use our funds strategically where they can make the biggest difference
- engage parishioners in direct community service (when it is safe to do so)
- communicate regularly with the St. John's congregation and invite participation at all levels of ministry
- engender a sense that every parishioner is a member of Outreach and can help shape its contours
- expand participation and build leadership within each ministry
- build meaningful and mutually supportive relationships with our community partners
- focus on work that increases agency and capacity and leads towards positive, lasting change in underserved communities.

We hope you will join us!

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Swiggett, St. John's Outreach Chair

Outreach Steering Committee:

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