

2024 Wye Parish Annual Report

*Old Wye Church, Wye Mills and
St. Luke's Chapel, Queenstown*



February 2, 2025

Reports of Parish Organizations and Activities since January 28, 2024

(410)827-8484
www.wyeparish.org

Parish Officers

Senior Warden Sharon Butler
Junior Warden Carol Bilek
Treasurer Jay Marchant
Registrar Phoebe Gilbert

Members of the Vestry

Mike Borland (2025)
Jim Campbell (2024)
Rick Culotta (2025)
Phoebe Gilbert (2024)
Robin Metz (2025)
George Plumbo (2026)
Tom Radcliffe (2026)
Jeff Scott (2026)

Staff

Parish Administrator Ellen Smith
Supply Priest in Charge The Rev. Betty Hudson
Curate The Rev. Charlotte Meyer
Director of Music Ministry Nancy Cook
Organist Richard Strattan
Sunday School Savannah Scott

Service Schedule:

Sundays 9:30am Holy Communion
Location alternates by month
1st Tues. 11:00am Healing/Holy Comm.
Old Wye Church
3rd Tues 11:00am Healing/Holy Comm.
St. Luke's Chapel
2nd Wed 3pm Holy Communion
Queenstown Landing
4th Wed 3pm Holy Communion
Queenstown Landing

Office Hours

Office Hours Mon-Thurs. 10 to 2
Clergy Office Hours By appointment

Parish Contact Information

Office (410)827-8484
Pastoral Emergencies (301)520-5439

Liturgical Ministries

Diocesan Convention Delegates:

Carol Bilek, Sharon Butler, Barbara Perry

Worship Leaders: Lennie Anthony, Carol Bilek, Sharon Butler, Rick Culotta

Eucharistic Ministers and Visitors: Sharon Butler, Rick Culotta

Sunday School: Savannah Scott

Acolytes: Edward Radcliffe and William Radcliffe

Ushers: Ron Dryka, Tom Radcliffe

Altar Guild: Tricia Anthony, Sharon Butler, Mary Campbell, Connie Cole,

Mary Julie, Suzanne Sheehan, Judy Webber

2024 Parish Statistics

Number of Sunday Services: 52

Number of Weekday Services: 6

Private Communion: 11

Total Active Baptized Members: 200

Communicants in Good Standing: 139

Communicants under 16: 7

Average Sunday Attendance: 30

Easter 2024 Attendance: 76

Baptisms: none

Funerals: 2

Burials: 2

Marriages: none

New Members: 5

Parish Register - 1/1/2024 to 12/31/24

Baptisms: none

Burials: Jackie Saunders

Donald Walbert

Funerals: Dr. William Wright, Jr.

Jackie Saunders

Marriages: none

Minutes of the 2024 Annual Meeting

January 28, 2024

The Wye congregation met at the Wye Parish Hall.

Report of the Nominating Committee: Jamie Goodman moved to elect nominees to the Vestry: George Plumbo, Tom Radcliff, and Jackie Saunders. Robin seconded the motion and all were in agreement.

Vestry Members approved by acclamation: Mike Borland, Sharon Butler, Jim Campbell, Rick Culotta, Phoebe Gilbert, and Robin Metz.

Diocesan Convention: A motion was made to elect as nominees to the Convention Sharon Butler, Carol Bilek, and Barbara Perry.

Treasurer's Report: Jay Marchant will deliver an electronic Financial Report for 2023. The Vestry acknowledged Jay's exceptional contributions and agreed to investigate additional support for his position, as currently, personal obligations demand his attention.

Buildings and Grounds Report: Don thanked the congregation for their support during his 6-year tenure. He also gave special thanks to Bob Wallace and acknowledged his many talents. As well, Don was pleased to turn over his position to Carol Bilek who has achieved so much during their collaboration at Old Wye.

Services Report: Rick reviewed and discussed, in detail, the results and analysis of the "Wye Parish Services Questionnaire". Copies were distributed and the results will also be displayed in "Word to the Wyes" in the following weekly issue.

Rick announced that Rev. Collins has accepted a position with another parish. Rev. Collins is well liked and all were happy to hear the good news. Rick wished him well. In the meantime, Rick will be looking for Supply Priests. Phoebe is contacting The Living Church to investigate 'Search' options with the publication.

Rick shared the following comments:

1. We will need two services in the future, in order to grow the Parish, especially when we have a new pastor
2. The responsibility for two Churches does not adversely impact our Search

3. We've recently had a loss of plate income (approximately 10%); Jim Campbell stated this is not a significant loss, but we will probably need a 20% increase in plate and pledge to afford our new pastor.

4. Broadcasting services electronically has a negative effect on spontaneity and creativity.

5. Passing the Peace is an important part of our Sunday Services; there are no rules, however we should try to limit any long conversations until the fellowship hour. We will investigate new ways to limit its timeframe.

Altar Guild Report: Jackie Saunders and Mary Campbell reported the following:

1. Two Services are no more work than one service for the Altar Guild
2. The Hanging Vestments will need to be replaced soon
3. The donated refrigerator has helped to make the floral arrangements last much longer
4. There have been many generous flower contributions (\$5K in the fund)
5. Savings Account currently stands at \$2K
6. A 36-month CD is now worth \$6K

ECW Report: Sharon thanked all who had taken part in ECW events for their grace and enthusiasm, adding that she was pleased to be part of such an exemplary group. Highlights are below.

The ECW accomplished all its goals this year including serving at the café and luncheons, helping to create crafts for the Christmas Bizarre, putting the Emporium in place, and more

A concert by The Child's Chorus of Maryland brought people in from the community

The Spiritual Support Group will continue to meet

Sharon also expressed her appreciation for all who have contributed to Haven Ministries

Senior Warden's Outgoing Report: Jamie reported the Parish is healthy and he is pleased to leave knowing the Vestry has very strong, merciful, and wise leadership. He reminded the Vestry that their goal was to keep all things running smoothly with the overall welfare of the Parish in mind.

Jamie also gave particular recognition to Rick and Sharon for their dedication, goodness and solidness of character; and for so loyally and faithfully maintaining services throughout the year.

Jamie's goals for the future include:

1. Continue our Search for a Priest-in-Charge (this category allows us options)
2. Maintain our friendship with Deacon Charlotte as she may not be available to us for ~1.5 yrs
 - a. She is a good fit for our Parish financially and stylistically
 - b. We have developed a rapport with her
 - c. Curacy is an expected process
3. Work with the Diocese to:
 - a. Negotiate to ensure that Deacon Charlotte will be ours; negotiations are ongoing
4. Above all, we should keep our options open

Senior Warden-Elect Transition Address

Sharon announced she was honored to be taking on the responsibilities ahead for the Parish. Her plan moving forward includes:

1. Work to establish Deacon Charlotte as Priest-in-Charge
2. Engage a new Director of Music
3. Keep options open
4. Share news

The meeting ended with a Prayer for God's Blessing.

Jamie moved to adjourn the meeting; Tom Seconded. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by Phoebe Gilbert

ACTION NEEDED: Acceptance of the Minutes from last year's meeting.

REPORTS FOR 2024

Report of the Nominating Committee – Tricia Anthony, Judy Barron, Sharon Butler, Phoebe Gilbert, and Jim Campbell.

Nomination to the Vestry

- Carol Bilek
- Barbara Perry
- Nominations from the floor...

ACTION NEEDED: Vote

Acclamation of Current Members: (refer to page 2 for a list current Vestry members)

ACTION NEEDED: Vote

Clergy Report – The Revs. Betty Hudson and Charlotte Meyer:

After Rev. Charlie's retirement two and half years ago, Wye Parish was deftly supported by a dedicated, steady and faithful lay team. They include Jamie Goodman, Sharon Butler, Rick Culotta, and many more. They led and successfully pastored the parish through the first stage of transition when long-time clergy departs. That stage is called grief.

In May, Rev. Betty Hudson was hired as Supply Priest in Charge. Betty brought constancy as well as liturgical and spiritual leadership. She began the second stage of transition which is assessing what remains at Wye Parish and looked to see what was possible for opening new horizons. The parish showed a true openness to significant change, including embracing contemporary liturgies approved by the Episcopal Church, moving the altars out from the wall at both churches.

In September, Rev. Charlotte Meyer was hired as Curate, confirming another significant change for Wye Parish – the parish's openness to woman clergy for the first time in over 300 years. Charlotte had a steep learning curve of all things worship and parish administration related. Betty's tutelage was, and remains crucial. Charlotte's initial assessment led her to focus on what is possible at Wye Parish. The last quarter of 2024 she focused on pastoral care, communications and outreach through social media, and learning how to approach the important questions such as who we are now, who are our neighbors, and what are we called to do?

We appreciate the support of the Vestry and the Parish as we look to continue the transition process in 2025, all the while discerning who God and the Holy Spirit are calling us to be and what our Lord, Jesus Christ has to say about how to get there.

Senior Warden's Report – Sharon Butler:

As I think back over this past year and list the many positive changes that have taken place, I feel so grateful and humbled by what the power of the Lord can do when we keep Him in the forefront of our prayers for our Church and, of course in our personal lives. Change is dictated by need, and we certainly do remember the significant needs we had last year at this time!

In January, 2024, we were still in transition in many areas of our church life. We needed a new fulltime Rector. We needed a new Choir Director. We needed a consistent Sunday school program. We needed new security and fire safety systems at both churches. These needs were and still continue to be accompanied by the ongoing needs

for building repairs, improvements and maintenance that a historic church demands – in our case, two historic churches!

Due to the consistent prayers of our Wye Parish family and the determination to keep seeking God’s will in the life of our Church, we can now recount some amazing answers to our prayers! We first welcomed Reverend Betty in May and then Reverend Charlotte in September - what lovely answers to prayer! Betty and Charlotte keep us grounded in worshipping the Lord and reflecting on His Word each week, as they bring their unique gifts and styles to their sermons and to the whole service. They also encourage us to look at new practices. For example, moving the Church altars forward to face the congregation during the Eucharist has introduced a closer connection between the Clergy and the Church family. Other Parish family connections continue with much needed and appreciated pastoral visits and phone calls.

As of September, we can add joy that boosts our Parish family hearts with the additions of our Choir Director and our Sunday school teacher. Under the capable and enthusiastic direction of Nancy Cook, our choir is back, and we are once again offering our voices to praise the Lord! Our Sunday school is back in session with the vibrant addition of Savannah Scott. Three little boys show big smiles on their faces as they anticipate Miss Savannah’s school!

Church security and fire safety remain at the top of our needs list, and we are making progress in readying the Church buildings for any necessary security installations and for final safety approval by the Fire Marshal.

The recent proposal for the possibility of renting the Wye campus Rectory has put us in contact with a real estate management agency to assess repair and upgrade needs. As of this writing, the goal of making the Rectory “rental-ready” is almost a reality.

Along with welcoming these important new areas of stewardship, for both internal and outreach ministries, we applaud the continuing success of our two long-standing, annual activities: the Christmas Bazaar, and the Books Café. Each year, increasing numbers of people come from our community and beyond to enjoy the lovely and unique qualities of our Bazaar, and at our Books Café, the offering of books for all ages at a 90% discount!

As we end our year with praise and thanksgiving for all the blessings the Lord has bestowed on us, we look forward to 2025 with prayers for continued growth and positive change.

May we always remember that we are called to be good stewards of the gifts God has given to Wye Parish and its family. Let us continue our church-wide theme of “Giving New Life to Old Traditions.” We continue our traditions of close family, close ties to our Episcopal Church and close ties to our community, while we explore new ways to be a welcoming and safe church for people of all ages looking to find God and to find hope, peace and comfort – a church to call home.

All God's blessings to our Wye Parish family!
Sharon

Junior Warden's Report – Carol Bilek:

As a Parish we are the fortunate inheritors of two historic church buildings in which to worship. We are inspired by their beauty, design and atmosphere of peace and tranquility. Their unique special features remind us of all the earlier generations of families who built these beautiful places of worship. We are the current stewards of these holy places, and bear the responsibility to maintain them so that future generations may also worship and be inspired by the Spirit of the Lord.

Over the past year or so, there have been many things that needed doing. We've improved our care of the trees and grounds that enhance our churches, including taking down a tree in front of the Georgian window at Old Wye and planting a new flowering Redbud. We've added treatments to the boxwoods and trees to keep them healthy and bug-free, and pruned some limbs that could present a risk to our Parish House. We've replaced overgrown shrubs with those that are more compact and provide color. We'll continue to plant flowers and mow the grass, adding lime, fertilizer, and weed suppressants as needed. In the spring we hope to plant a clone of the Wye Oak in the open area across the bridge. The gravel driveways at both churches have been replenished and the gravel redistributed. With the appearance of snow this winter, sidewalks have been shoveled and salted and driveways and parking areas plowed.

The windows, doors and wood trim on both churches were sanded, primed and painted. The wood frames for the stained glass windows at St. Luke's were repaired. The Rectory interior and exterior was painted and new gutters installed. The basement of the Rectory has been cleaned, painted and repaired. A bannister for the stairs to the second floor of the Rectory has been installed.

The bay window that was donated some years ago for the Parish House at Old Wye was installed and trimmed; the ladies room walls were painted.

A new pump was installed for the well at Old Wye, and various plumbing and heating lines at both churches have been inspected, repaired, and upgraded.

New emergency Exit signs have been installed in both churches, and all of the light fixtures in both churches are LED. A dimmer switch has been installed at Old Wye to control the lighting.

The cleaning contracts for both churches have been made more comprehensive in scope. The Parish Hall carpet at St. Luke's was cleaned (but due to intractable stains should probably be replaced).

Still needed to be done in the coming year:

- Repair of the stained glass window behind the altar at St. Luke's
- Rekeying of all doors with locks, including the Rectory;
- Installation of smoke detectors and security monitors in all buildings;
- Improved exterior lighting at both churches;
- Installation of a mirror above the sinks in the ladies room at Old Wye; and
- Replacement of the front storm door of the Rectory.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Bilek
Junior Warden

Treasurer's Report – Jay Marchant: (see report)

Cemetery Report – Ellen Smith

The Wye Parish Cemetery currently has 642 residents in graves and columbarium niches and only 39 available gravesites and 3 available columbarium niches. Due to limited available space, we are currently making gravesites available to members of Wye Parish parishioners only. The cost of a gravesite or columbarium niche is \$1200.00 and the cost of opening a grave or columbarium niche is an additional \$1200.00. A grave site can accommodate one casket; one casket and one cremains; or two cremains. A columbarium niche can accommodate up to two cremains. Cremains may not be scattered in the Wye Parish Cemetery or on the Wye Parish Church grounds. Copies of the cemetery regulations and fees are available from the Parish office.

Of the two funerals in 2024, only one person was buried at Old Wye Cemetery, however, a former parishioner's family chose to hold the funeral at a local Funeral home even though he was buried in Old Wye cemetery. Two gravesites were sold to parishioners.

Looking forward, Wye Parish would benefit from a cemetery committee of parishioners who would be willing to review cemetery regulations, handle questions as they arise, and consider expansion of the current cemetery. There is additional unused space in the cemetery; however, a scan of the cemetery using ground penetrating radar would be required to verify that the space is not already being occupied. There are nine persons in the Cemetery Register who do not have gravestones to mark the spaces where they are buried and whose last names do not help in locating their resting place.

Respectfully submitted,
Ellen Smith

Ministry Reports:

Altar Guild – Mary Campbell, Treasurer and Wye Parish representative and Connie Cole, St. Luke’s representative.

The Altar Guild lost its long-time leader, Jackie Saunders, this past summer. Jackie did more than just take her turn in attending to the altar for services, she made sure the two Sacristies, St. Luke’s and Old Wye, were well supplied with the Communion Sacraments and altar linens. She made larger contributions to the Altar Guild as well - such as a small refrigerator at Old Wye for keeping the altar flowers fresh and usable for more than a week. She was a thoughtful and generous leader.

We currently have seven members of the Altar Guild. There are five for SL, Connie, Trish, Mary Julie, Suzanne and Judy Webber and two for OW - Sharon and myself. OW clearly needs more members! It is not a difficult job and it is so rewarding to prepare our remarkable churches for services, to decorate them for the various Church seasons - especially Christmas - or to ready them for special events like a baptism.

As Treasurer of the Altar Guild I note that have never been informed of duties other than handling monies regarding with Altar flowers. The Altar Guild Manual suggests in its proposed form for By-laws that the AG duties include “to provide for the suitable furnishings and decorations of the altar” and to “furnish and care for the vestments of its ministers.” I can imagine some of these costs occurring as we alter the altars and their furnishings and have a new rector.

The Altar Guild has 3 Endowed Funds for Altar flowers:

- from Charles Stephens in honor of his wife,
 Roberta
- from Elmer Thompson in honor of his wife,
 Rooney
- from Jackie Saunders

Donations for Easter, Christmas and memorial flowers this year were \$1,645.00. The total amount spent on flowers was \$1,318.00.

Note: Our current flower expenses are half of what they were when having services in both churches every Sunday.

Our Queenstown Business Checking Account as of December 31, 2024 - \$6,577.71
Our Queenstown Regular Savings Account as of Decembers 31, 2024 - \$2,982.30.
Our endowed fund from Stephens is at Midshore and generated \$375.00 in 2024
Our endowed fund from Thompson is at Fidelity and generated \$500. In 2024
The Saunders endowment is a CD at Queenstown Bank for \$25k.

Book Cafe – On behalf of the Books Café Steering Committee (Mike Bilek, Chair; Jim Campbell, Don Regenhardt, members), Jim Campbell submits the following report:

In 2024 the Books Café Team organized three sales: (1) the regular (21st annual) Winter Sale at SL over five two-day Fri-Sat weekends, with food service provided by ECW; (2) a new pop-up Summer Sale at SL on two Fri-Sat weekends in June, with ECW food service; and (3) the Christmas Book Shop in the Vestry Cottage at the annual ECW Christmas Bazaar in November. All three sales were well-received, the Winter Sale drawing a large and diverse constituency from both sides of the Bay. Proceeds from the two regular sales were in line with recent experience: Winter Sale revenues are usually somewhere north of \$12K (apart from food sales) and Christmas Book Shop is in the \$750 range. The pop-up sale in June, offered for the first time as an experiment, netted about \$4K for ECW Outreach, again apart from food. In 2025 we are planning two sales (Winter and Christmas Book Shop) and are focused on (1) recruiting more volunteers to the Team and (2) finding storage/workspace for use after the Saunders Depository finally becomes unavailable.

Wye Search and Rescue Group (Adult) – Jack Gottschalk

Part of Reverend Charlie Osberger's legacy to our two churches has been the spiritual teaching and development of worshipers he so dutifully provided for. When all that began is probably beyond anyone's memory today. In more recent times, going back 15 years or so, he organized Bible studies using materials from the Kerygma study program. Kerygma is from a Greek word found in the New Testament which means "proclamation". While it focuses in some detail on the New Testament, it was also expanded to cover parts of the Old testament. The materials in this program are excellent and provide and support great discussion and understanding amongst those in search of the Word.

More recently, at the suggestion of Rev. Charlotte, our Bible discussion group decided to travel down a new road, with a different approach, by studying the psalms. As we moved forward, we determined that the weekly church Bulletin that guides us through our Sunday worship service each week could serve as an excellent guide to study scripture synchronized with schedules found in the Book of Common Prayer. One week prior to each service we read, study and discuss the Collect, the First Reading, the Psalm, the Second Reading and the Gospel. We look for important messages, themes, the broad context of featured scripture, history, individuals in the Bible - their struggles and victories, God's guiding love, light and grace and bring it all to the altar of real life, contemporary problems and questions facing us at one time or another. Together we have learned a lot and still feel there is much more to learn. We are a warm, friendly and welcoming group of loving Christians who welcome all newcomers with open arms.

Getting to know God today is really no different than it was over 2,000 years ago. Christ came amongst us to show us the Light and the Word and came with open loving arms. We can get closer to God in a number of ways like prayer, attending church, rubbing shoulders with fellow Christians and meditating on his Word. Come join us in our study and meditation group and come to deepen your knowledge of God's grace and love.

We don't have a formal name for this group, but it certainly could be called the "Wye Search and Rescue" group.

Blessings,
Jack

Christian Formation (Youth) – Savannah Scott

I want to express a heartfelt thank you to BiBi for her dedication and service to our Sunday School program. As of Sept. 8, I've assumed responsibility for the Sunday School, continuing the tradition of providing Christian formation for the children in our parish. The format consists of age-appropriate lessons following the Gospel in service, Bible stories, and activities that help instill faith values, fostering spiritual growth in a fun and engaging way. The curriculum focuses on helping the children learn about the love of God, the teachings of Jesus, and the importance of community within the church. I am committed to nurturing the next generation of believers in our parish life.

ECW – Mary Campbell and Debbie Scott

Following Sharon Butler's long and devoted leadership of the ECW through covid and beyond, during which time she served simultaneously as both President and Secretary, this September Debbie Scott and Mary Campbell were elected Co-presidents. Rhonda Corder serves as Secretary and Mary Julie, Treasurer.

The Wye Parish ECW regularly meets the first Wednesday of the month in the Old Wye Library. Beginning and ending with a prayer, the meetings are marked by a sense of purpose and good humor. The ECW primarily acts to support the Parish - particularly the Parish's outreach to the community - as well as to provide assistance in maintaining the furnishings of the Parish.

The Christmas Bazaar, now in its 60th year, and the Café part of the Books Café, now in its 22nd year, are the ECW's annual fund-raising events. Working together to produce the Bazaar, ECW members share their talents in crafting, cooking, organizing, and merchandizing. The men of the Parish join the undertaking as they help with the set up and take part in the activities of Bazaar. Both activities, the Bazaar and the Books Café, not only provide the benefits that come with working together, they are popular events with the greater community.

Other current undertakings of the ECW include replacing the worn leather upholstery on some of the antique chairs used at Old Wye. In 2023, Sharon, as acting Chair of the ECW, at the request of several parishioners undertook an initiative to explore support groups for care-givers, resulting in several meetings and establishing a relationship with the Retreat House which could be available to our Parish going forward.

Finances: 2024 - Current balance: \$13,925.28.

Income:

Bazaar	\$14,055.57
Books Café	\$6,433.87

Expenditures:

Community Outreach	\$7,200.00
Vestry	\$5,000.00
Staff Christmas	\$1,200
Rectors Discretionary	\$2,000

Music – Nancy Cook

Choral Ministry of the Vestry of Wye Parish

The choral ministry of the vestry of Wye Parish has begun anew and is in fine voice! As of October 1, 2024, when the first choir rehearsal was held at St. Luke's, after two year's absence, the dedication and musicianship of the choral members have been extraordinary. The rehearsals have been held at St. Luke's of Wednesday nights at 7:00 p.m. and usually end at 8:20 p.m. The choir also convenes at 8:45 a.m. on Sunday mornings in order to prepare for the 9:30 a.m. church service. Wye Parish is most fortunate to have Richard Strattan as the organ master, whose tasks involve accompanying the choir at rehearsals. The parish choristers include: Sharon Butler, Geri Elza, Rick Culotta, Edward Radcliffe, S.P. Sheahan, and Jamie Goodman. New choral members are always welcome!

Musically yours,

Nancy Cook, Director of Choral Ministry

Stewardship – Tom Radcliffe

My fellow Parishioners,

Happy New Year and Welcome to our annual Parish Meeting.

I am pleased to report to you progress and increases from last year to this year's Stewardship Campaign. As of this writing, Jan. 15th, 2025, we have a total of 36 individuals or families pledging for a total of \$126,000, an increase of 26.5% over last year where we had 29 individuals or families pledging for a total of \$99,600.

This year's campaign differed from previous years in the fact that we had an active Stewardship Committee consisting of Myself, Rev. Charlotte and Senior Warden Butler (Sharon), that the three of us attended a Stewardship training class and that the campaign was an active & ongoing event for the entire month of November.

Thank you all for your support not only to the Stewardship campaign, but to the mission of Old Wye Church, to each other in our congregation and to the greater community to which we serve in the name of our Lord.

Thank you,
Tom Radcliffe
Chairman, Stewardship Committee

Worship Leadership – Rick Culotta

First, I greatly thank this wonderful parish for their cooperation, support and gratitude, that was constantly there to help me and the Worship Leader Team, on our transition journey towards a new pastor. I also want to thank Sharon, Lennie and Carol for being there to keep every Sunday service moving along. There are so many details involved, making sure that our Sunday services not only take place but are well choreographed, enjoyable and run smoothly. We not only made sure that every Sunday Service took place, with or without a priest, but also made sure there was a Sermon at every service as well.

Regarding the sermons, while I am very grateful to the many supply priests, I am especially grateful to Sharon, as she by far, presented the most Worship Leader Prayer Service Sermons during this period. This was especially helpful to me, as my hands were full with my Lay Pastoral Leader duties. Sharon was my advisor, consoler and support through this whole process. She is also working hard with course work and training to become an official **Licensed Lay Preacher** for the Diocese.

Oh, thank God for Ellen Smith! We could not have accomplished this 2.5 year transition without the very competent unceasing efforts of Ellen Smith. She was my right hand and advisor through this process.

Lennie was present at almost every service, even when he was not designated as the worship leader for the service. Always helping with the many things needed to make the service run smoothly. Even though he and Tricia went through a number of obstacles, rotator cuff surgery, blot clot complications and then as automobile accident victims, it did not deter Lennie from coming back as soon as he could.

Even though Carol was very busy with her endless duties as Junior Warden and had some medical issues to recover from, she was also willing to pitch in for Sunday services, when she could. However, she is now ready to continue with her normal WL and EM duties.

There were some new ideas and changes implemented this past year and last year's Holy Week Services come to mind. The most memorable perhaps, was Maundy Thursday. We researched the methods, traditions and foods (provided by Sharon and I) of Jesus and his disciples at the Last Supper and tried to duplicate it, as best as possible. We had Rev. Spicer along with 22 people gathered around the altar for the service and everyone found it an interesting and moving experience. All even seemed to enjoy the unique food offerings as well. We ended the service with a stripping of the Altar, as the choir sang an A Capella chant. We plan on doing the same again, this Maundy Thursday as well. We had Bishop San join us, with only a couple days' notice, for a Good Friday Service of Prayers and Meditations and added a procession of the cross.

The Maundy Thursday Service was perhaps a precursor to our **Altar-rations**. With the support and wonderful letter of explanation of Rev. Betty, we moved the Altars in both churches forward, so we could celebrate in a way that is closer to the way Jesus performed the Last Super and as in early Christian times. As preferred by the Episcopal Church, the priest no longer has her or his back to the people. It was such a shocking surprise however, when we moved the altar at St. Lukes, to find a large gaping hole behind it. Thanks to Robin Metz, who recommended a new carpenter contact to Wye Parish, John Ponsini, he was able to rectify the problem with wonderful workmanship and within just a few days. We also had an issue with the Altar or the communion table at Old Wye, as it was too large to close the gate or walk around. Since the communion table at Old Wye was a 1949 reproduction, we had John Ponsini come again to the rescue and cut down the tabletop to a workable size. Now, with the help of Lynn Shand, Bishop's Shand's wife, and our Altar Guild, we just need to adjust the Altar hangings.

We not only covered Sunday services but also funerals and baptisms. Just recently, Sharon and I participated in a funeral service for Hank Whaley, at the Veterans Cemetery and Chapel in Crownsville. Rita, his wife, asked us to share a few words about him. We decided to both eulogize him with a Christian point of view. When we got there, we learned the Chaplin could not make it. Luckily, I had my prayer book along with a couple of the last funeral service bulletins. We then stepped in, I as the Officiant and Sharon as the Worship Leader, along with family contribution and songs. We felt the Holy Spirit of God was by our sides, as all went well and the family was very pleased.

Sharon and I also remember a very memorable Eucharistic Visitor Service. It was a communion visit with Charley Scheck. Even though Charlie had terminal cancer and his wife Jackie Saunders had just passed away, he was very lucid, happy and full of hope and vitality. He was very grateful for all the love, visits and communications from Rev. Charlotte and parishioners of Wye Parish and looking forward to a continued relationship with our parish. May they both rest in the arms of Christ!

We also have plans for Worship Leader outreach on Ash Wednesday, as we will be visiting various parishioners and perhaps organizations such as Haven Ministries. Also, with regards to outreach, I conducted two historic Old Wye Church Tours in colonial garb and character, for the Daughters of the American Revolution and a Senior Group from Henlopen DE.

In the Spring of 2023, the four of us completed our updated training and received renewals of our licenses. Following is information on our **Diocese of Easton Lay**

Licenses:

Worship Leader: A lay person who regularly leads public worship under the direction of the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith.

Eucharistic Minister: A lay person authorized to administer the Consecrated Elements at a Celebration of Holy Eucharist. A Eucharistic Minister should normally act under the direction of a Deacon, if any, or otherwise, the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith.

Eucharistic Visitor: A lay person authorized to take the Consecrated Elements in a timely manner following a Celebration of Holy Eucharist to members of the congregation who, by reason of illness or infirmity, were unable to be present at the Celebration. A Eucharistic Visitor should normally act under the direction of a Deacon, if any, or otherwise, the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith.

Preacher: A Lay person authorized to preach. Persons so authorized shall only preach in congregations under the direction of the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith.

Currently, all 4 of us are licensed by and under the Canons of the Diocese of Easton, as **Worship Leaders** and **Eucharistic Ministers**. Sharon and I are also additionally licensed as **Eucharistic Visitors**. Additionally, Sharon is currently working on the completion of her course work and hopefully will be licensed as a **Lay Preacher** by September of this year.

With great affection and the Love of Jesus Christ,

Rick Culotta

A Prayer by Saint Oscar Romero

It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view.

The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is even beyond our vision. We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work. Nothing we do is complete, which is a way of saying that the Kingdom always lies beyond us.

No statement says all that could be said.
No prayer fully expresses our faith.
No confession brings perfection.
No pastoral visit brings wholeness.
No program accomplishes the Church's mission.
No set of goals and objectives include everything.

This is what we are about.

We plant seeds that one day will grow.
We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise. We lay foundations that will need further development. We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that. This enables us to do something and do it very well.

It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, and opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.

We are workers, not master builders, ministers, not messiahs. We are prophets of a future not our own.

*Please take an extra booklet with you
to share with a friend.*

