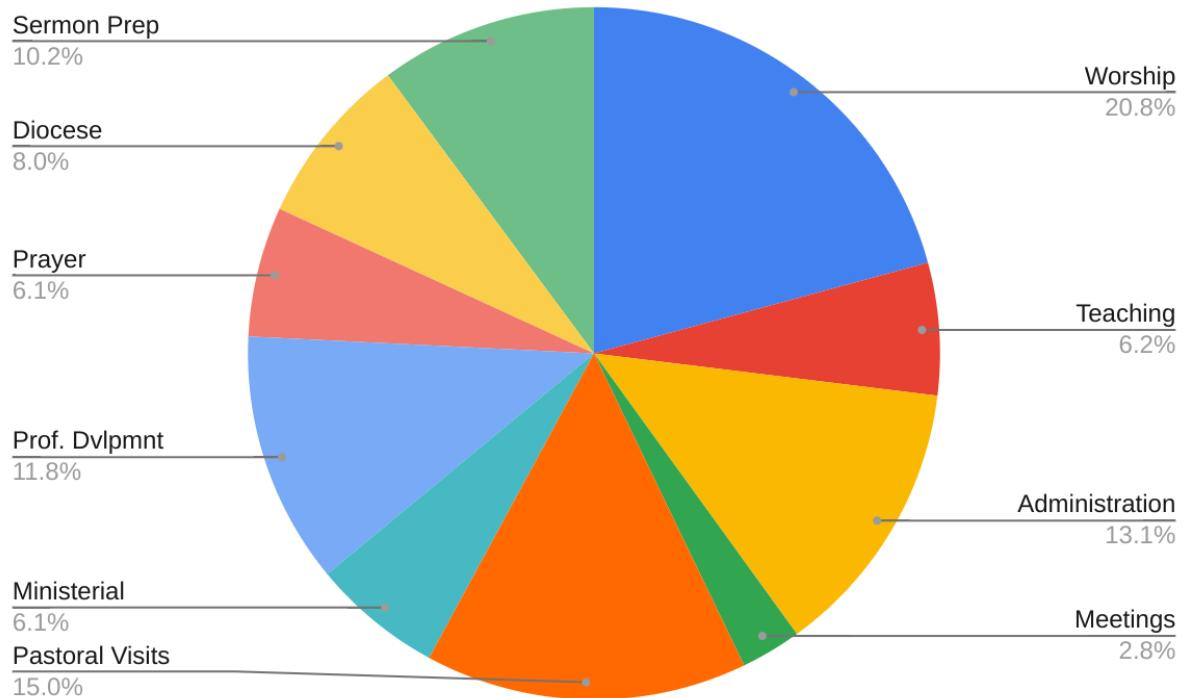


## Vestry Report 2024, Incumbent's Report

This is where I spent my time in 2023:

### 2023 Incumbent Work



I thought of turning this into a goodbye letter to you, but realised that this is an annual report--looking at the past, talking about the future. But I do want to share that when I first announced my resignation, I was shocked at how much emotion came out. I'm not exactly the "heart on his sleeve" guy but I do carry a lot of emotion inside. I work very hard at keeping that emotion tamped down and away from exposure. That's unhealthy, I know. My kids have only seen me cry one other time and that's when I delivered my father's eulogy. I wondered where all of that emotion came from. And then I reflected back.

I've intersected with you as perhaps no one else can. A stranger, invited into your lives by trust in me and my office. I am a priest. And

priests get to go to very sacred places. Both highs and lows. Births, weddings and deaths. But it is the deaths I often think of. The hospital bedsides. The blessed times when I get to sit in your living room with you, or at your kitchen table with a cup of coffee in my hand and just listen. Listen to the story of your loved one. I love those stories. After, I go home and pray and think about how that story intersects with God's love for us and I write that down and then share it on the day of the funeral. I have done that so many times. Funerals for people I've never met, funerals for people I've met a few times but also funerals for people I've grown to love as parishioners. Regarding the latter, I can usually keep it together until everything is done, I'm tidying up the church, and then leave through the Robinson St. door. I give the door a few tugs to make sure it's locked, and then begin my walk home on Robinson St. It's then that it always hits me. "Holy Cow. 'So and so' is gone...." And, making sure no one is around, I start to cry. By the time I hit Belleville Road, I've pulled myself together again, wiped away any remnants of tears and started to walk down Thomas St. and then my day continues. There's been a lot of those days. Added to that, a lot of love and grace received for me and my family from you over almost fourteen years together. A lot of intersecting with you in different ways. I guess that's where all the emotion came from on January 7 and continues to come from. Thank-you for letting me in.

This is my fourteenth, and final opportunity to lead the Vestry meeting for St. Mary Magdalene Anglican Church. Thank-you for your confidence in me, welcoming our family way back in October 2010 and now giving me such a gracious farewell. Each parish shapes me in some way and I think more than anything else, the higher sense of liturgy, the humbling reverence you give to the sacraments has been a blessing to me.

One of the highlights of my week is something that may seem simple, but is very profound and that is placing the host into your hands each Sunday and being part of the reverence you bring to the altar. One of the many beautiful things about our Anglican tradition is that when the sermon falls flat, the hymns sung off tune, each service is held up by the true presence of Jesus in the sacraments. Does it get any better?

Anyway, the Vestry meeting. What is a Vestry meeting? From the Diocese of Ontario Website, “It is a gathering of qualified persons in a congregation to review the work of the past year, to chart a course for the year or years ahead and to elect key positions. It is a way each member shares in discernment and decision-making while also facilitating mutual accountability.”

Much happened over 2023. There were two Synods, and your two delegates, Valerie Smith and Fran Goring Koch were diligent, responsible and active members of both. Susan Withers was appointed on Diocesan Council and represents our Deanery well! Our regular Synod was a great balance of business and a full day devoted to building up parish life with Bishop Susan Bell leading the latter. Michelle Hauser received the Diocesan Medal of Merit at that Synod and we are proud of her! In our electoral Synod we elected Bishop William Cliff on the first ballot and, with a bit of a bump delaying him taking office, we are grateful for his leadership beginning October 2023. We also say a fond farewell to Bishop Michael Oulton with gratitude for his twelve years in office including the challenging Covid years.

Our Harmony Lounge ministry continues to expand and be a blessing to those who take part. We saw some movement in 2023 from those who take part in the program downstairs to our worship at St. Mary’s upstairs.

Kayleigh became one of the Kathleen Kennedy scholars in music, joining our choir. We also had one of the teachers, Brock, join us for Harmony Lounge Sunday in the Fall and of course regular teacher, Joe Hauser is a regular member upstairs and helps with our Youtube ministry. I'm happy when St. Mary's can be a blessing to the community but my overarching goal is for every citizen of Napanee to participate in word and sacrament ministry, developing and deepening a relationship with Jesus. I'm grateful for the way we can facilitate that through the gift of music. And, as you know, our congregation has a rich history in music and the Church in general has a rich history developing and supporting the Arts.

I was blessed to have five students in our Confirmation program this year: Wyatt McKain, Rachel & Rebekah Clair, Gwendolyn Moulton and Lily Marriott. I actually baptised both Wyatt and Gwendolyn a few years ago! They were all keen students and it was a pleasure teaching them.

A couple clergy farewells this year. We were blessed to have a chance to say goodbye to Father David Smith as he drove through from Toronto to New Brunswick where he and family are retiring (although David will remain active as part time incumbent in his community!) David did so much for us and with us in his time with us. Thanks to Chris for organising a lovely party for David in our basement and giving us the opportunity to thank David and reconnect. That was such a happy morning and afternoon.

We said farewell to Maj (Ret). the Rev. Dave Donevan. We were grateful to have him for two years and while the distance from Kingston to Napanee was challenging, Dave served us well, pastorally, taking services when I was away, running a wonderful Contemplative group that was a blessing to those who participated. Dave's life was getting busier at home

and at work so he needed to simplify things. We wish him God's richest blessings!

Outside parish work, my appointment as Regional Dean of the Quinte Deanery reached the end of its second three year term and I was grateful to serve the people of our Deanery for two terms. This was my second opportunity to be a regional Dean, having served as the Dean of Melfort in Saskatchewan for four years. I continue to serve as Priest in Charge of the Land O Lakes parish in the Plevna area but I have two very active retired clergy that do the lion's share of work there. I continue to serve as on-call chaplain for the L & A County Hospital. I continue to do "unofficial" on-call pastoral work for Christ the King Catholic Church (Anglican Ordinariate) on Tyendinaga, visiting in the hospitals on occasion, officiating at two weddings, a funeral or two and occasionally even preaching at their services! I was present for the twentieth anniversary of their parish. I remain active on our Napanee Ministerial and active at the Diocesan level as a representative for the Quinte Deanery on Synod Council. This summer I led two sessions for the Roblin Wesleyan Church camp on the use of the Book of Common Prayer as a daily system of prayer. That was well received as non Anglicans are really intrigued with our Book of Common Prayer as a daily system of prayer.



**Active members we said farewell to in 2023** include, Mabel Hutchison. Active in so many ways on Altar Guild, cleaning the church, spearheading church dinners, ACW member, and volunteer in the community in many ways. Mabel was not afraid of hard work and helped her husband in their ownership of the Richelieu Hotel and also building houses through Richelieu homes with husband Jim!

Mabel spent her last years at Helen Henderson Place in Amherstview and will be missed!

Emmerson Dunlop was a very relational person and loved his family and would easily stop what he was doing to have a chat with you as you walked by his house.

In his last weeks, I noticed Emmerson did a lot of reminiscing about work projects locally and far away. You could tell his work was important to him. Emmerson was not only industrious, a hard worker, a man who didn't like to keep still, he was a fair and beloved foreman. And he loved helping people.

Emmerson loved working on his farm, in the earth, working with animals, and seeing things grow. Emmerson also loved music and could pick up anything with strings on it and learn it by ear. He loved bluegrass and country music. He loved to trap, to hunt and to fish.

Harriet Clarke was a very active member of our 8 AM service. Sitting in the back with husband Jack. She had a great sense of humour and with a twinkle in her eyes, she had a certain body pose that would let you know a zinger was coming. Both Harriet & Jack used to get together with Ina Martin and Doug Green (former "8 o'clockers" that have gone on to their own heavenly reward) each Wednesday for cards. Harriet leaves behind her husband Jack and two sons and families.



Doris Asselstine, a regular member here with husband Benny, at our 8 AM service, grew up on a farm in Tamworth. She enjoyed farming life and it forever shaped her but she preferred to do her hard work inside the house, helping to cook, bake and clean, over doing the outside doing chores, milking cows etc. That ability to cook and bake carried with her, her entire life and her family can attest to the fact that she was very skilled at this. Christmas and Thanksgiving and other opportunities were very important to Doris and she



looked forward to gathering with people. She fostered that wonderful sense of home for family and visitors through her skills as a homemaker and cook. That love for visiting, for social interaction was expressed even in her final year, months, weeks, as she'd stop to visit someone in the hallway of her care home.

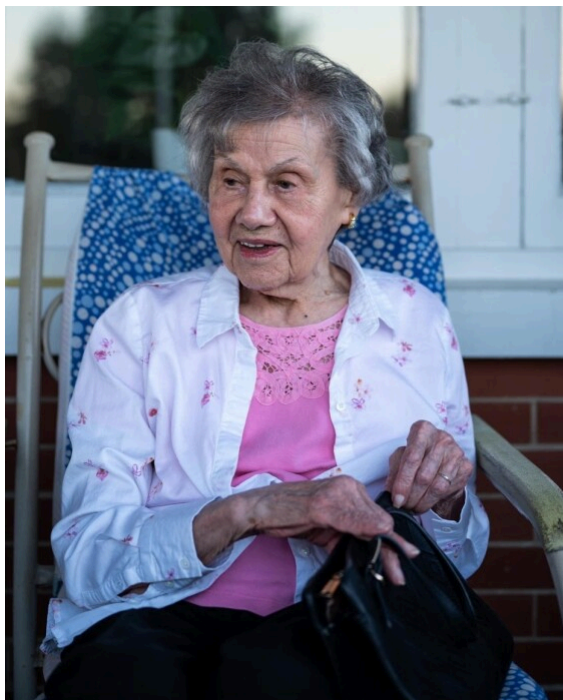
Doris loved games like crossword puzzles, solitaire. She loved music, especially country music. Doris loved to travel which included trips as far as Alaska and even Sweden. But in the end, there is no place like home.

Richard Hill did not have the easiest beginning. He began life with a blood disorder and was born quite small. But he



caught up quickly and took life by the horns. He never missed a day of school, was always reliable and a hard worker. He worked at the mushroom factory in Picton, worked for Sears, the bus plant and after retirement volunteered at the hospital in Picton. He was a devoted brother and I remember him faithfully bringing Beau to church each Sunday. He along with siblings cared for both Holly and Beau in their dying days. Richard was very sociable and liked to talk. He also loved church and this was important in giving him a sense of faith and hope about life. Richard loved road trips, fishing, gardening and volunteering wherever he was needed. He was part of a crew of three that helped maintain our church property.

Violet Young attended our 10:30 service when she could. Her joy was her family. Children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, she loved them



all. Central to Violet's gifts were acts of service and generosity. She carried money with her at all times to hand to those living on the streets of Toronto and even purchased winter coats for those less fortunate who stirred her heart. Violet was born and formed in the Depression era of southern Saskatchewan where farms literally dried up and blew away in the ongoing dust bowl. It taught her to find meaning in that which does not blow

away. Her faith was foundational to her life and she loved being in a place where she could worship her God. Nightly she was found praying on her



knees, prayer book by her side. Her regular, disciplined, practised acts of service to God in worship extended to those made in God's image and especially to the family God blessed her with. Family ties, and expressions of love too front and centre in her life. At the age of seventeen she held down a job during the day and took care of her very ill mother during the night. And Violet with her husband, have so much to be proud of in creating a home where the bonds were close and where laughter and joy were foundational. That home was the envy of friends and neighbours.

Each year we say "goodbye" to a number of saints. As each year passes by the church gets a bit more "haunted" for me as I can see them still sitting in the pews, hear a familiar laugh and the occasional ribbing. Perhaps I am too comfortable, too settled, too content. Perhaps I need a stirring up and you need a fresh pair of eyes to see the future. You are blessed with a beautiful building shaped by over 150 years of prayer. There is no place like it in Napanee or the Diocese. You are blessed with rich history and faithful leaders and some visionaries that can see forward more clearly than I can. And God has already chosen the next Incumbent of St. Mary Magdalene Napanee. It is your job and the job of our Bishop to pray for the eyes to see who that is. I will pray with you because I want nothing but the best for St. Mary Magdalene Anglican Church in Napanee, Ontario. My heart is not on my sleeve, but January 7th reminded me just how much I feel for this place, and the honour that it has been to occupy that historic pulpit, knowing about the many faithful ministers that have come before me and will follow after. A big part of my children's faith formation was at St. Mary Magdalene. Nothing is more important to any Godly parent than the faith of their children. Thank-you for loving them and being part of

that. God bless you in your love for Him and as you continue to seek to follow Him faithfully.

Pastoral Acts 2023

Baptisms: 0

Funerals: 13

Weddings: 0

Confirmations: 5-Wyatt McKain, Rachel & Rebekah Clair, Gwendolyn Moulton and Lily Marriott