

St. John's, Wilson

How does your church engage with the local neighborhood, the civic life of your community, or diocesan and/or Episcopal Church-wide initiatives?

St. John's is a small dynamic parish in a rural area, first organized in 1929. We shared a priest with St. Andrew's, Burt, off and on since 1949, and in 2007 we entered into a covenant relationship with them—one of the first such covenants in the Diocese. We no longer share a priest, but the roots of our relationship are deep and we still share outreach ministries (our Moms Group, their Thrift Shop). Currently a retired priest serves as our steady supply, and we are glad to say we have been seeing some growth in our attendance numbers and our stewardship. We usually see 20-25 people at our Sunday morning service—and we all stay after the service to enjoy lively fellowship and great eats! This year we have a balanced budget and are able to pay our full fair share of the Diocesan Budget.

Most of us live in or near Wilson, and we are very involved in community activities. For example, we started the local food pantry (serving 60-70 families) under the Rev. Judith Lee; its administrator, treasurer, and weekly shopper are still members of St. John's, and the congregation donates food throughout the year. St. John's Moms group meets twice a



month, drawing mothers from as far away as Lockport; mothers have a program while their pre-school children enjoy our play area, snack time and story time. In 2015, we planted "Nick's Garden" in memory of one of our teenagers; the community is welcome to pick the flowers and vegetables, whatever we have growing there. We also collect school supplies for the local school and Christmas gifts for local families in need. We offer special worship services to the community in the gazebo behind the Village Hall, for example a 9/11 Community Remembrance Service, and Animal Blessing on October 4. We are holding a free-will offering rummage sale this year. AA meets in our Parish Hall weekly, and our kitchen is often rented out to various crafters/cooks.

Our building is in pretty good shape. The parish hall was built in 1954; a ramp built in 2000 made the church handicap accessible; in 2003 we excavated beneath the church to build a big bright Sunday School room with a large window for emergency egress. In 2007, we completed a Memorial Garden near the entrance of the church.

