



ST. MARY OF THE HILLS EPISCOPAL CHURCH BLOWING ROCK, NORTH CAROLINA DEC. 22, 2024 ADVENT IV

WELCOME TO ST. MARY OF THE HILLS

Connection Card in the pew rack so that we might connect with you further. More information about our parish is available online at www.stmaryofthehills.org. Members of our Vestry (elected lay leadership) are identified by name tags with yellow lanyards. Seek them out for details about our congregation's life and ministry.

PARISH ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHRISTIAN FORMATION TODAY – All are welcome. Formation for children and adults begins at 9 am upstairs.

- **Adults:** From 9:10 am to 10 am Sunday in the Barrett Room, we conclude our four-week Adult Forum on "Angels: Bridging Heaven and Earth" led by the Rev. Torrence Harman. The final session focuses on "Contemporary Images and Stories of Angels Among Us."
- **Children:** At 9 am in the St. Luke room, elementary-age children finish up the Advent series and learn about the Prophets, Holy Family, Shepherds, Magi and Christmas. All are welcome!

CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE – More details available at <https://www.stmaryofthehills.org/christmas>.

- **5 pm Christmas Eve:** The service includes Holy Eucharist as well as a children's pageant. If your children would like to participate in the pageant, please arrive in the Parish Hall at 4:15 pm to help children get into costume.
- **10 pm Christmas Eve:** we have Holy Eucharist, a sung service, with incense. Musical prelude begins at 9:45 pm.
- **11 am Christmas Day:** We have Holy Eucharist with Carols of the Season.

HOLIDAY OFFICE CLOSURES – The Parish Office will be closed on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, as well as New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. Please note that staff may be working different hours during these holiday weeks as they mark the holiday season with family and travel. Michael Marshall will be available in the Parish Office on Monday, Dec. 30, to answer any questions about end-of-year giving. If you or a loved one are experiencing a pastoral emergency (hospitalization, death, arrest, mental health crisis), please contact Fr. Andrew directly (336.848.4052).

VESTRY HIGHLIGHTS – The Vestry met on Tuesday, Dec. 17, for their regular monthly meeting. Every Vestry meeting opens with a time of devotion and prayer and includes reports from the Rector and Wardens, along with a monthly report from the Treasurer. Below are some highlights of other actions taken this month –

- Heard updates related to Annual Giving and adopted a 2025 Operating Budget.
- Received and reviewed the Audit of the 2023 Fiscal Year.
- Elected Officers for 2025 – Mike Austell (Senior Warden), Marshall Culp (Junior Warden), Amanda White (Treasurer), and Elizabeth Sudderth (Clerk)
- Approved allocations from the Outreach Committee responding to Hurricane Helene, totaling more than \$6000 to support the work of Episcopal Relief and Development.

YEAR-END GIVING 2024 – As a reminder, all financial gifts must be received or post-marked by Dec. 31 to appear on a 2024 Giving Statement. If you have questions, please contact Michael Marshall (michael@stmaryofthehills.org) in the parish office. Also, it's not too late to submit a pledge for 2025! If you've not yet done so, kindly complete a pledge card online via our website (www.stmaryofthehills.org) or take one via the pew racks and return it via the offering plate on Sunday morning.

THE FEAST OF THE HOLY NAME – Wednesday, Jan. 1, is the Feast of the Holy Name, recalling the naming of our Lord as instructed by the angel before his birth. Holy Eucharist will be offered in the Church at noon.

THE EPIPHANY – Following the 12 days of Christmas, we celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany, recalling the journey of the Magi to visit the infant Christ and bearing their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Holy Eucharist will be offered on Monday, Jan. 6, at noon in observance of this festival day.

PARISH PRAYER LIST

For the Church: Sean, our Presiding Bishop; José our Bishop; Andrew, Sam and Gary, our clergy; for our Vestry and staff; for all the people of this parish

In our Parish Prayer Cycle, we remember this week:

12/22: Ron Tharpe

12/23: Frank & Annie Hellen Thomas

12/24: Jamie & Emily Thomas

12/25: John Thompson & Lee Rocamora

12/26: John & Patti Turner

12/27: Darlene Van Dyke

12/28: Wayne Vason & Lee Harper

In the Diocesan Cycle of Prayer: Diocese of Costa Rica

For our nation and those in positions of public trust: Joseph, our President; Donald our President-Elect; Roy, our Governor; Josh, our Governor-Elect; all those who hold elected office; and for those who offered themselves for election this year

For all who suffer from war throughout the world and especially for the people of Ukraine and Russia, the Korean peninsula, Yemen, Ethiopia, the Sudan, Israel and Palestine

For all affected by natural disaster, especially those impacted by Hurricanes Helene and Milton

For healing: Dale, Bill & Jorgann Rogers, Jeff Hedden, Christine, John, Ann Greene, Bob Barham, Clare, Bill Tessien, Emily R., Evie, Lucy A., Chris M., Mary M., John Bagg, Todd R., Bob Finney, Sandie, Ann, Conrad Jones, Bill Tubly, John, Belinda, Helen Wells, Taylor Wells, Corinne Allen, Lena, Jennifer, Tony, Ben, Suzie W., Lynn Turnbow, Grace, Bobbie, Tom, John Horne, Joe Dyer

****Please note that the names on this list will remain for four weeks, unless the office is notified that the person(s) needs to remain on the list for a longer period of time.****

For those who have died: Cindy, Bill, Ann

For those with other concerns: Pat, Marcy, Cindy

For those traveling this week: Sherrill, Jenny, Liv and Sam Hayes; Gray & Gracie; Taylor; Mike & Sarah

For safe pregnancy and delivery: Caitlyn, Mary Ella, Bre Lawler, Emma Unkovic, Elizabeth, Chelsea

For those celebrating a birthday:

12/22: Robert Kling

12/23: Maureen Justice

12/25: Megan Lawler Redford, Randy Ouzts

12/26: Marjory Holder, Duncan McGill

12/27: John Carlson

Celebrating an anniversary:

12/22: Rick & Beth Lawler

12/28: Bill & Owene Courtney