

Newsletter

ST. MARY OF THE HILLS EPISCOPAL CHURCH



PENTECOST

Dear Friends,

This is the first newsletter produced in the season some church folk have termed, 'COVID-tide.' The season in which we find ourselves is unlike anything in our lifetimes, a global pandemic that has forced physical distancing and separation, further exposed existing inequalities, and challenged the very fabric of our common life. These are challenging days.

Yet, all the more, I continue to be inspired by the ways in which the mission of God and the ministry of the Church persist. Since the suspension of public worship in mid-March, we have discovered new ways to engage worship, study, and community together. New relationships are being formed in our community, that expanding the reach of Christ's hands at work among the hungry and homeless, the sick and the suffering, the lonely and the forgotten.

The mission of God and the ministry of the Church are not diminished. They are alive and well, responding faithfully to a shaken and uncertain world.

As I've shared with many of you, there is a prayer that I have been saying almost daily since this season was thrust upon us. A hidden gem of our *Book of Common Prayer*, these words are located in the rites for the Ministration to the Sick. Intended for use by one who is ill, this prayer for the morning feels appropriate for any time, but especially for our present moment.

This is another day, O Lord. I know not what it will bring forth, but make me ready, Lord, for whatever it may be. If I am to stand up, help me to stand bravely. If I am to sit still, help me to sit quietly. If I am to lie low, help me to do it patiently. And if I am to do nothing, let me do it gallantly. Make these words more than words, and give me the Spirit of Jesus. Amen.

At this time, we do not know when 'normal' will return, and whatever normal emerges will, no doubt, be different from what we knew before, shaped by the experiences of these months. So, then, let us pray for today, for the wisdom and courage to be who God made us to be and to follow in the way God calls us to live, ever with the Spirit of Jesus.

I am praying for you.

Faithfully,

Ad. J. H. +

THE CELEBRATION OF A NEW MINISTRY FOR THE REVEREND ANDREW HEGE



Dear Friends,

On Wednesday, June 17th, at 6 p.m., St. Mary of the Hills Episcopal Church was blessed with one of the most beautiful worship services in our history. Just ten people participated and attended in person, and the service was shared with the wider community via videoconferencing. This Celebration of New Ministry of the Reverend Andrew J. Hege was presided over by The Rt. Reverend José A. McLoughlin, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Western North Carolina, and Brian Cole, Bishop of East Tennessee, delivered the sermon. Bishop Cole was Rector at Good Shepherd in Lexington, Kentucky, during the time that Fr. Andrew was Associate Rector there before being called to St. Mary's. Many of you were able to experience this deeply spiritual and joyous occasion through your computers and TV sets from home. That evening we celebrated the new ministry of our already much beloved new rector, Fr. Andrew, whose ministry at St. Mary's began just a little more than a year ago on June 5, 2019. If you have not had an opportunity to be part of this stirring and uplifting service or would like to experience it again, it is still available on YouTube and can be accessed by searching "St. Mary of the Hills Episcopal Church Blowing Rock NC."

Thanks to the creativity and organization of Sue Sweeting, Andrew and Amanda and Eleanor were surprised at the end of the service by a colorful parade of some 40 parishioners' cars circling around Chestnut and Main with balloons and noise makers and a cacophony of honking horns. Afterwards the ten participants in the service moved to the parish hall for a carefully social-distanced dinner planned and orchestrated by Loy McGill, Radie Armstrong, and Susie Greene. A magnificent celebratory cake from JoAnn Hallmark topped off the meal.

We send our warmest congratulations to Andrew and his family at this joyous milestone, along with our fervent wishes for a continually noble and distinguished career in the service of our Lord. What a blessing Andrew has been and will continue to be to the people of St. Mary's.

Faithfully yours,
Chip Myers, Sr. Warden



Tour of Homes Blowing Rock Gala – Moving Forward Cautiously

Although the Tour of Homes was postponed until next year, our Executive committee has been busy planning and hoping that a *SAFE* Gala can be held on Thursday, September 24th at the Blowing Rock Country Club from 5:30 until 8:00 pm. Plans include a live auction, dancing (at an appropriate distance) and music provided by The Lucky Strikes Orchestra.

The committee has been thrilled with our response to date as sponsorship opportunities have been actively pursued only the last couple of weeks. More than \$50,000 has already been raised for community organizations which has been the catalyst for the committee to move forward as these organizations need our support more than ever.

An enormous amount of time has been spent with Club Management and others to discuss how other events are being held safely that are in compliance with State and Diocese guidelines and that others feel comfortable attending. We can have up to 88 guests on the main floor of the club with required social distancing. Masks must be worn at all times except when guests are seated at their table. Upon arrival, guests are escorted to their assigned table and all food and beverages are served by staff. Further, larger tables are used to seat fewer guests at a safe distance from others.

As you know, The Tour of Homes Blowing Rock and Gala supports area organizations and 100% of money raised is given back to our community. Through a grant process, proceeds help feed the hungry, clothe those in need, provide shelter, offer educational resources, fund safe havens for battered women, support the Latino population, promote continual learning and more. Today, organizations are experiencing tremendous strain as they respond to the needs of our community during the Covid-19 crisis and will, in all likelihood, continue to struggle to meet demands due to economic hardships affecting populations served. Last year, \$85,620 was given back to our community.

In light of the uncertainty this year, Evites will be sent approximately one month ahead of the Gala since space will be limited. Also, the committee was thrilled to receive a grant from the Diocese to produce a virtual tour featuring one of the most beautiful homes in Blowing Rock and our committee is deeply grateful to the homeowners for their generous spirit in opening their home to us. All costs involved with filming, editing and creating the access to the virtual tour are covered by this grant. We are in the process of final editing and hope this will inspire viewers to donate to our outreach program.

It is critical that we raise as much as possible and we hope you will consider being a donor in some way. Please mail your check to the church office or call to make a contribution through a credit card.

Our executive committee has spent an enormous amount of time on this and have an incredible desire to move forward with raising as much as possible in this difficult year. Special thanks go to Bishop Gary and Judy Gloster, Chip and Garland Myers, E.B. Springs, Mike Austell, Loy McGill, Ron Armstrong, Suzanne Miller for their work and the leadership of our Chair, Joellyn Gibbons and Father Andrew.

Your support is needed more than ever – we're counting on you to make hope your promise today!

OUTREACH AT ST. MARY OF THE HILLS



The Outreach Committee continues to address the needs of the people in our community locally and in distant places by following the promises we made at our baptism. Every time we renew these vows in worship. “We will, with God’s help, seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbor as we love ourselves. We will, with God’s help, strive for justice and peace among all people, by respecting the dignity of every human being.”

During this current siege of the Corona virus we have been meeting via zoom seeking to help to keep others and ourselves safe, as well as responding to the urgent needs it has created for many. In 2020, we have contributed \$22,750.00 to the following agencies:

Back 2 School Festival	Hospitality House
Blowing Rock C.A.R.E.S.	Hunger and Health Coalition
Casting Bread	Navajo Water Project
Compassion International Medical Needs	Rise Against Hunger
Farm C.A.F.E.	Who Needs A Change
Habitat for Humanity	

These agencies have worked hard to adjust to the crisis facing their constituents and have altered their mode of operation to ensure health and safety for their workers, volunteers, as well as their clients. It is an honor to serve these organizations that work tirelessly so that others will be served.

There is another virus that has come to worldwide attention and to us since the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis. Racism. In reaction to this virus we have shared readings, meditations, ideas, thoughts and our feelings about what we can do and say. We have prayed. How can we reach out to those who have suffered? We have agreed that one important thing is to listen and hear the stories of those who suffer from the sin of racism. We have planned a meeting of the Outreach Committee with an African American woman from our community who has experienced discrimination of a particular nature for over two years. She will share with us her story. In listening and honoring, we hope to broaden our understanding of racism so that we might care and make a difference. We also want to offer our learning’s to the congregation. Together we can move toward wholeness and be a people of God that loves all of the children of the earth and is pained by our divisions and the hurt that we may cause.

Outreach Committee

Mike Austell, Lynn Coulthard, Gary & Judy Gloster, Susie Greene, Andrew & Amanda Hege, Torre Hinnant, Olivia Knight, Loy McGill, Susie Morgan, Chip Myers, Carmen & Patty Patella, Patti Turner and Sue Wilders

BREAD OF LIFE REPORT FOR PARISH ~ JULY 2020



Six teams of men and women from St. Mary's and the Blowing Rock community provide the evening meal one night per month (per team) for residents and neighbors of the Hospitality House in Boone.

The mission of Hospitality House is to rebuild lives and to strengthen the community by providing a safe, nurturing, healthy environment in which individuals and families experiencing homelessness and poverty-related crises are equipped to become self-sufficient and productive.

It serves as the only 24 hour shelter servicing Watauga and six other neighboring counties.

In the past twelve months, members of the Bread of Life teams have prepared and served approximately 6000 meals to the men, women and children at this facility. Some people who no longer live at Hospitality House come back on the nights that a team from St. Mary's is serving because of the good food and the warm smiles. For the past few months, due to the COVID outbreak, the teams have contracted out to local restaurants to prepare and deliver the evening meals. Despite the pandemic, the residents and neighbors continue to come to be fed.

All involved in this outreach program feel that they take home much more than they give. We all look forward to the day we can prepare and serve dinners again in the kitchen of Hospitality House.

Susie Morgan, Chair, Bread of Life

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## FROM OUR MUSIC DIRECTOR JIM BUMGARDNER

The bonds forged between members of a choir can be remarkably powerful. 50-year-old bits and pieces of information about atoms zip through my mind—something about covalent bonding and shared electrons. Particles of very existence being shared one atom with another, one choir member with another.

Though we are presently unable to gather in our beautiful and beloved home at St Mary of the Hills, we have managed to come together safely to sing in an adopted space, a remarkable industrial cathedral of sorts. Thanks to the efforts of a couple of entrepreneurial choir members who scouted the land for a safe place for the choir to convene, we are now rehearsing regularly at our Covid Cathedral, level 3 of the new parking deck on Stadium Drive in Boone. The acoustical environment rivals that of Ely Cathedral's Lady Chapel, aside from the frequent beeping, whirring, humming, and crashing of ongoing construction mere yards away. The construction workers don't seem to mind us being there, though it's become evident that they can talk and laugh more loudly than we can sing. But we are invading their space, after all, and they have treated us with tolerance and kindness.

All this goes to say that the Choir of St Mary of the Hills is alive and well and thriving in whatever ways we can manage during these difficult times. We yearn for the time when we can return home to our space and to our people, but in the meantime, we sing.

Keep singing. Always keep singing.

Jim

*(See photos on next page.)*

The choir practicing at a parking deck during the time of Covid-19.



## Lodging Options: Small Groups & Individuals

*The Valle Crucis Conference Center is now offering affordable options for family groups and individuals. Let us know how we can make your dream mountain retreat happen!*

### Farm House

5-bedroom house with a stunning view  
*\$200/night*



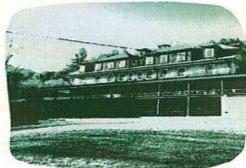
### Mission House

Gorgeous 9-bedroom house for two or three families  
*\$400/night*



### Rooms in the Inn

Our historic lodge offers 20 bedrooms with private bathrooms  
*\$60/night per room*



### Hermitages

Our Hermitages are just right for individual and couple retreats  
*\$50-75/night*



### Meals

Our Dining Hall can provide to-go meals or dining in, depending on the size of your group – or you now have the option to prepare your own meals in some lodging.



### Co-working

Come use our well-appointed meeting space to get your work done in peace.  
*\$20/day suggested donation*



### How to Book

Call our office at (828) 963-4453 or email [info@vccconferences.org](mailto:info@vccconferences.org) to book your retreat now.



## UPCOMING EVENT

SAVE THE DATE

Tour of Homes – Blowing Rock

# Opening Doors Gala

Thursday, September 24, 2020

5:30 pm – 8:00 pm

Blowing Rock Country Club

Sponsored by St. Mary of the Hills

NC Covid 19 protocols will be in place for your safety



## August Birthdays and Anniversaries

### Birthdays

- 1 Kay Schieren, Billy Tessien, Tommy Tessien
- 2 Leslie Billingsley
- 3 Wyn Riebel
- 4 Bill Devereux, Sally Page
- 6 Marla MacKenzie, Will Merrill, Larry Watson
- 7 Chuck Ball
- 8 Linda Stone
- 9 Betsy Williams
- 10 Holly Carter, Olivia Rickenbaker
- 11 Crawford Cleveland, Jack White
- 12 Gale Buchanan, Alex Lawler, Bill Pearson, Katy Thompson
- 13 Dan Donahue
- 15 Heather Cameron, Pat Fountain
- 16 Dale Sandusky, Cynthia Tessien
- 19 Dick Craver, JoAnn Hallmark, Jane Milner, Elizabeth Purcell, Ham Wilson
- 20 Christine Thacker, Talton Gibson
- 21 Kate Cone, Claudia Heath
- 23 Jennifer Riebel, Susan Schilson
- 24 Kay Donahue, Tom Veale
- 25 Patty Dyer
- 26 John Anders Rundell

- 28 Lennon Redford
- 29 Ben Galke, Richard Moore
- 31 Virginia Dulaney

### Anniversaries

- 1 John and Cecilia Grasinger  
John and Luella Rundell
- 2 Jerry and Genie Starnes
- 4 Frank and Meg Fary  
Alex and JoAnn Hallmark  
Ralph and Linda Norman
- 6 Frank and Annie Hellen Thomas
- 7 Bob and Charlene Barham
- 8 Carmen and Patty Patella
- 9 Jimmy and Ellen Godwin
- 11 Bill and Joellyn Gibbons
- 12 Dave and Nell Kline  
George and Barbara Ball
- 18 Roy and Nedra McCraw
- 20 John and Ruth Fitzgibbons
- 30 Ed and Beverly McCauley

**Staff**

The Rev. Andrew J. Hege, Rector

The Rev. Samuel V. Tallman, Priest Associate

The Rt. Rev. J. Gary Gloster, Assisting Clergy

Dr. James Bumgardner, Director of Music

Greta Wilson, Parish Administrator

Joe Raulerson, Financial Secretary

Bill Stroh, Sexton

Nursery Attendants: Alex Scheurer, Chloe Shaut, Megan Redford

**Vestry**

| 2020                    | 2021                      | 2022                   |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Crawford Cleveland      | Gigi Poole                | Doug Galke             |
| Bill Furr               | Sterling Hutcheson        | Lisa Kaufamnn          |
| Jane Milner             | E.B. Springs              | Roy McCraw             |
| Chip Myers, Sr. Warden  | Jim West                  | Tim Silver, Jr. Warden |
| Amanda White, Treasurer | Elizabeth Sudderth, Clerk |                        |

**The Newsletter**

This publication is for you, about you, and by you. If you have news to share, please submit it to Greta Wilson in the office on or before the 15th of each month. We want to hear from you.

*The mission of the people of our church is to grow spiritually in Christ through worship, stewardship, study, service, and fellowship.*

Website: [www.stmaryofthehills.org](http://www.stmaryofthehills.org).com

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ST. MARY OF THE HILLS  
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