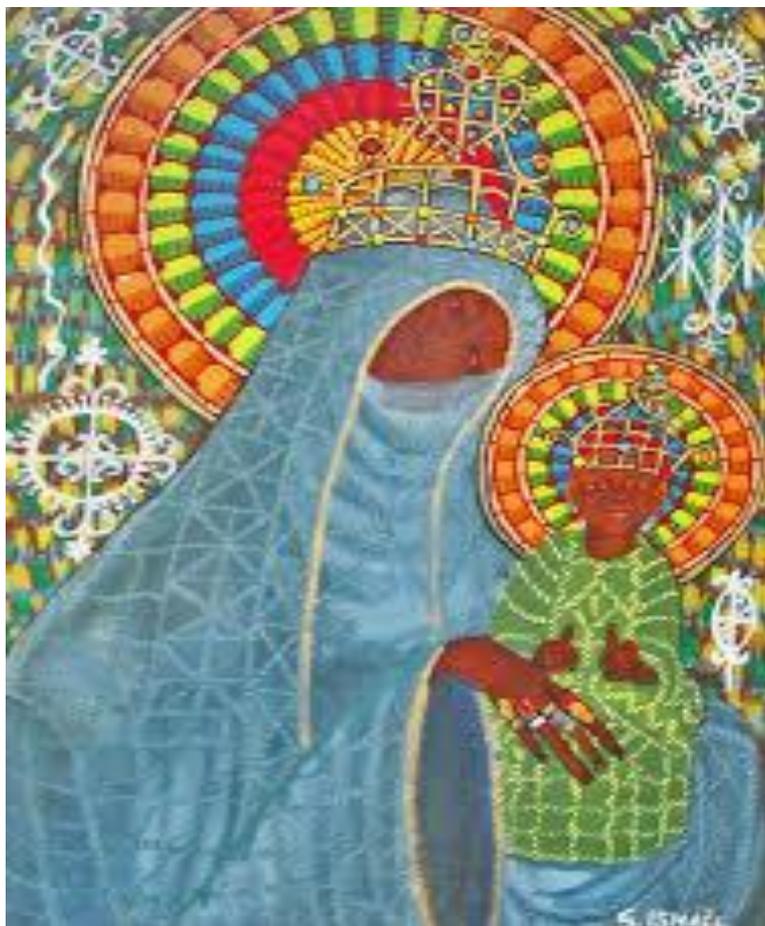


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~ THE PARISH QUARTERLY ~

Fall 2022



St. Mary of the Hills Episcopal Church

Blowing Rock, North Carolina

MORE THAN ENOUGH

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'MORE THAN ENOUGH'

As temperatures in the High Country turn cooler, days draw shorter, and the leaves begin to show hints of color, I am mindful of all the life that the spring and summer months have held for us as a people of faith at St. Mary of the Hills.

Lindsey Herring joined our staff as Christian Formation Coordinator and is already about the work of breathing new life in our programs of life-long discipleship, particularly among our youngest parishioners.

Work is underway on a new play space that will welcome children and their families, from this parish and our wider communities, to experience the love of Christ on these sacred grounds at St. Mary's.

The Tour of Homes returned to its familiar in-person format to immense success, welcoming more than a thousand people to some of Blowing Rock's finest homes while also raising more than \$85,000 to support non-profit partners across the High Country.

A new program of planned giving, 'Sustaining Grace,' kicked off, to cultivate a deeper awareness, appreciation, and attention to the significance of including this parish in estate plans, to further our mission and ministry for generations to come.

In a time when many are pessimistic about the future of the church, and about institutions more

broadly, I am more hopeful than ever about our common life in this community of faith and beyond.

Indeed, this congregation has been blessed by God's superabundance, more than enough.

'More Than Enough.'

This is an image we see often in scripture. In Exodus, God's people wandering in the wilderness receive more than enough manna to sustain them in their journey. In the Gospels, when Jesus' disciples grow worrisome at the hunger of the crowds, the loaves and fish multiply and there is more than enough for all (so much so that they are instructed to gather up leftovers). In Revelation, John's vision of the new Jerusalem is one of lavish extravagance, an image of more than enough awaiting at the culmination of all things, the making new of creation.

As we think about our vocation at St. Mary of the Hills, here and now, we'll be using this phrase - more than enough - to think about our own financial stewardship in the days and weeks ahead, as we look toward a season of reflecting on our annual giving and the receiving of pledges for 2023.

Through the mercy of God, there is more than enough, for this day and for all the life we are called into as Jesus' disciples in this congregation. There is more than enough.

Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Andrew +". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Faithfully,".

Lifelong Learning & Love

“We humbly beseech thee O’ Lord.” We say these words countless times over the course of the liturgical year. At no point does God reject our common prayers of supplication. He hears them. He sees us. He forgives us. He reaches into the core of our being, individually and communally, to continue the lifelong process of renewal and rebirth that is our life in Christ. God gives us *more than enough*. There is more than enough love to go around. Always.

We grow into that love, each and every day. It’s a continual process that is never-ending, despite what we may think or feel at any given moment. And it’s just one component of Christian formation. It begins at birth and follows us to the grave. Spiritual development and discernment are just a part of our faith, steps on the journey to living a life replete with faith, hope and love. As disciples of Christ, we are called to act in love, to live prayerful lives. Through lifelong formation, we find ourselves with no shortage of opportunities to enrich our spiritual lives, cultivate deeper meaning and essentially grow with God. We see new ways to strengthen our relationships with God, we feel the Holy Spirit at work within us, we feel his presence more fully. Imagine living a life without such a thing!

We’ve started a new season of Christian formation here at St. Mary of the Hills, and I can’t wait to see what God has in store for us. Sharing God’s love in new and marvelous ways with you all is truly a blessing of the greatest magnitude. Children join us each and every Sunday for Godly

Play as we explore the mysteries of faith together. It's a beautiful thing. We'll continue expanding opportunities to engage with new prayer practices, and increase our formation offerings for every age and stage of life. Just as God gives us more than enough, over the course of our lives, we can never have enough spiritual nourishment. Let's take that to heart as we move into the season of Advent together.

If you'd like to discuss any ideas you might have about Christian formation at St. Mary of the Hills, please reach out to me at: formation@stmaryofthehills.org. I'd love to hear more from you.

God's Deep Peace,

Lindsey Herring
Formation Coordinator

Choir News

Choral singing is alive and well at St Mary of the Hills! Following a long period of necessary Covid restrictions and precautions, we are now able to gather in person as a whole and, with reasonable safety, sing the liturgies of the Church. We have rearranged our seating arrangement and the organ console has moved out from underneath the organ case. This re-arrangement of people and instruments helps us to meet the challenges of housing a full choir, a grand piano, and an organ console and case within a small space; we are able to see and hear more easily, which we hope will allow us to make our singing and leadership more enjoyable and more effective.

We are delighted to welcome Gabe Esperanza as our newest choral scholar. Gabe joins our already-illustrious crew of staff singers—Sofi Rohlman, Kathryn Santiago, Jacob Smith, and Thomas McNeil (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass, respectively)—and will be our sole tenor scholar once Jacob moves in January to Nashville to further pursue his career. Please reach out to these lovely, faithful people at Coffee Minute and make them feel welcome.

Evensong returns on 6 November, to celebrate the Feast of All Souls. Joby Bell will be the organist, and the choir will sing music of Howells, Duruflé, Philip Radcliffe, and others. Evensong is the liturgy through which our choir was forged, and we are looking forward to getting back to our roots to sing some of the world's most beautiful choral music. (How fortunate are we that there is

more beautiful choral music in our tradition than we could possibly sing in an entire lifetime!)

Finally, the choir is seeking another bass or two—Thomas and Buddy hold down the fort admirably, though carrying an entire voice part against the rest of a mighty choir is an exhausting order for only two singers. If you are interested in exploring the possibility of singing in the choir, please contact me (jmzdrl@gmail.com) or speak with a choir member. Basic requirements for success in the choir are a good ear, a workable voice, a positive and collegial attitude, an eagerness to learn, and a desire to make beautiful music to the best of our abilities. Don't be shy.

Keep singing.

Jim Bumgardner
Choirmaster, Organist and Director of Music

From the Senior Warden

As Fr. Andrew notes, the theme for this year's season of stewardship is "More than Enough." And as Senior Warden, I know that the people of this parish have offered its lay leadership more than enough support over the last year. Lots of members have given generously of their time and talent. I have been especially thankful for the service of the vestry. They have worked tirelessly to move the parish toward the goals outlined several years ago in our Holy Conversations. Sometimes progress is slow, and we do not always agree about how to proceed. Unexpected obstacles pop up without warning (failing refrigerators and dishwashers leap to mind) but with God's help and in the spirit of Christian fellowship, we have always found a way forward.

In the end, though, the vestry (and its Senior Warden) rely on your continued generosity. That can take many forms. Recently in the Rector's Forum, we have been talking about stewardship as "more than money," focusing on issues like creation care and the challenges of living out Jesus's teachings in a secular society. Those are difficult tasks, and no one has all the answers. As you think about stewardship and the challenges of Jesus's words, I urge each of you to consider the ways in which you can help provide "more than enough" to keep us moving forward. On behalf of the vestry, I promise that we will be good stewards of those resources and put them to use doing God's work in this parish and the wider community.

With Gratitude, Tim Silver, Senior Warden

'Family'

I have always thought of the church community as one big extended family. The church community are people with whom you share the good times, the not so good times, the people to whom we give words of encouragement to, and from whom we received words of encouragement. It is community where we laugh, pray, cry, and shared experiences, food, and fellowship. It is a community where many different talents came together to accomplish projects (i.e., Godly Play, Tour of Homes, outreach, etc.).

The church building itself is the "home" where the family meets to pray (ECW), worship, laugh, hug, work, and participate (men's breakfast). The building only exists to support the family in everything that the family does. To that end, the church building is like your individual home – it needs care, maintenance, cleaning, and "sprucing up" on a regular basis.

With the departure of Billy, our long-time sexton, we will have a gap between what the building needs and the care it receives. To shrink this gap the building needs a few hours of your time and talent. Specifically, we could use some extra resources to help keep the grounds looking beautiful. A group of "weekly weeders" to help dispose of weeds in the flower beds would be most helpful. Between 1 April and 1 November a team of 2 people working two hours a week would make a big difference in keeping the weeds under control and the landscape looking inviting to visitors. A group of 8 to 10 family members

would mean only 2 hours a month per person. A small amount of time that will return major dividends. Likewise, the kitchen could use 1-2 parishioners a week working only 1-2 hours to keep the kitchen clean and ready to support the needs of the parish. If we had 8 people, then each person would only need to contribute an hour or so each month.

If you are interested in helping your “family home” then please contact the Junior Warden at 904-540-0652 or at finneyb1@mac.com. Have a blessed day.

Bob Finney
Jr. Warden

Tour of Homes Blowing Rock

In 2023, the Tour of Homes Blowing Rock will celebrate sixty-five years – sixty-three in person and two virtually during the COVID pandemic. Why has this event existed for so many years? Why have people opened their homes for so many years? Where does the money from this event go? Why do people volunteer their time, money, and expertise year after year? The simple answer to all these questions is kindness, generosity of spirit, and willingness to work hard for the greater needs of the community.

In 1958, the first Tour looked very different from the way it looks today. The majority of the attendees at this first Tour were females attired in heels, hats, and gloves. One home was on the Tour and a tea followed. Probably less than one hundred women attended and the money raised benefitted the Episcopal Church Women.

Over the ensuing years, several hundred homes have been featured; many, many miles have been driven; many thousands of cakes and cookies have been baked; thousands of flower arrangements have been made; and over a million dollars has been donated to the community. Also members of the larger Blowing Rock community have given tirelessly of their time to make the Tour a success because the congregation of St. Mary's could not have an event of this size without the help of local residents serving as hosts/hostesses, flower designers, drivers, bakers, tickets sellers, and folks to attend.

The sixty-fourth Tour of Homes Blowing Rock brought back in person Tour day. Thirteen hundred patrons enjoyed not only the lovely homes but the beauty of the High Country, the lovely weather, great food, and great comradery. Charitable groups in the High Country benefitted as well from this event with \$86,250 going to these groups. All in attendance are looking forward to July 28, 2023 – the sixty-fifth Tour of Homes Blowing Rock. Hope to see you there!!!!

Susie Greene
Co-chair of the Tour of Homes



MORE THAN ENOUGH

Conjuring Momentum in Slowness

Due to the pandemic, I think I have a better appreciation for time— how long things take to grow, to be of excellent quality, how much sweeter the satisfaction is after waiting a long while. How much more abundance I notice and enjoy when I commit to being present in the slowness of my timeline. Patience has been key to my enjoyment of time; life looks far more interesting when I take my time to notice every angle and perspective I have access to. There's so much to pay attention to!

We live deceptively linear lives while nature all around us runs on cyclical time: the moon waxes and wanes, seasons return. Every day, there is movement and change. The young shoots of a plant always seem to burst out of nowhere, but of course, it's been growing, very slowly, over time. A true group effort of various chemical factors came together to bring a small shoot to fruition. Tiny, tiny cells are working hard to sustain life, constantly in motion, without us even noticing.

Even when my life feels dull and unfulfilling, there is momentum in the slowness if I take the time to notice it because I am always growing, changing my mind, and learning new information

throughout the year. Noticing, keeping vigilant, all of these awareness themes that began in the Advent season will come full circle at the end of the liturgical calendar, relevant as ever, ready to renew itself again in preparation for 2023.

All year we have pushed ourselves to return awareness to our *enough-ness*, which is directly tied to how we hold better relationships with ourselves, each other, and our world. Attention to our boundaries and capacities, the abundance in our connections and communities, allowing for multiple kinds of space, restoring our faith in one another, communicating better... all of it requires time. Believing that there is *more than enough* in all of those experiences require patience. It's that kind of awareness that signals us to prune, to water, to repot the whole plant altogether to nurture more growth and abundance in our lives. And to know when to leave it alone to enjoy the progress. As we continue to think about sustainable giving as well as being, let us remember that *we are what we sow*.

Our Stewardship is importantly relational and active. And thought the fruits of our labor in bettering ourselves and investing in community and the earth will often go unnoticed or unrewarded, we must trust the slow timing with all that goes into good work.

Elise Mills is a writer and musician from San Francisco, and a member of the staff at The Episcopal Network for Stewardship. She looks forward to taking afternoon naps with her cat. She is a member of Holy Innocents, San Francisco.



THE EPISCOPAL NETWORK FOR STEWARDSHIP



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