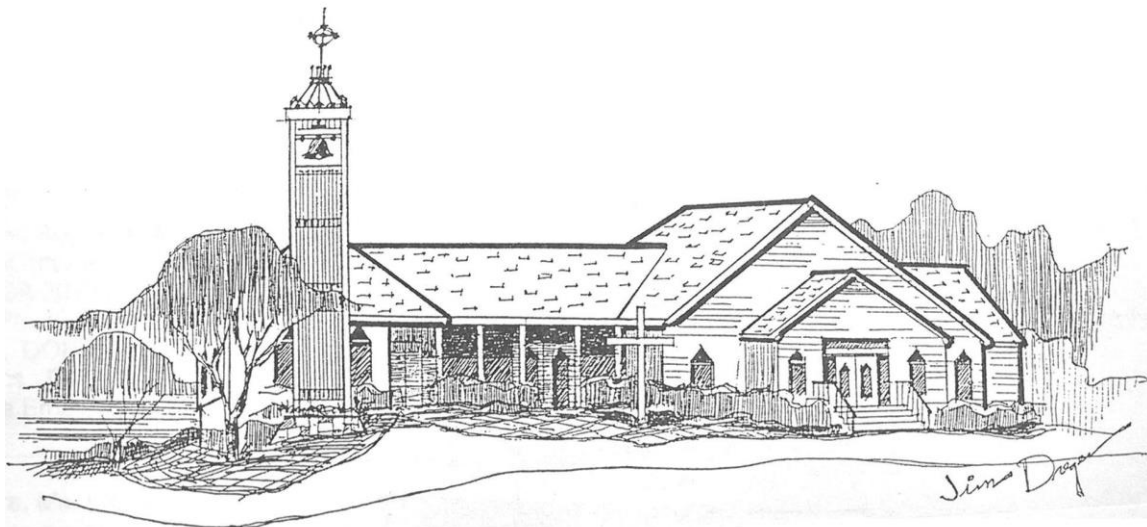


# The Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit

*"A community of faith seeking to love and serve in the Spirit of Jesus Christ."*

## ANNUAL PARISH MEETING - MINISTRY REPORTS

January 14, 2024



The Right Reverend Robert C. Wright, Bishop

The Reverend Brandon Thomas Mazingo, Rector

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Reflecting on another year at ECOHS means another opportunity to be filled with amazement and gratitude. There is such a palpable energy here in the life of our parish, and it is clear that the Holy Spirit is moving within us mightily. The love which binds us together radiates out from all that we do, and serves as a beacon in our community. Many have been brought to our church because of that love, and have found a home here.

And we see that love expressing itself in many different ways. Everyone I have spoken to about this place says that it feels like a family. And, given the strong, growing fellowship in groups like Beloved Sisters, Men's Breakfast, and Friday Night Fun Night, it is easy to see why. This year also saw the continued return of our Camp Mikell parish weekend, the Red Door Festival, the Fish Fry, Kite Day, Lenten evening series, Advent evening, and the start of a new tradition in the 12<sup>th</sup> Night celebration.

The year began by showing us just how close and friendly we could be by shoe-horning our burgeoning worship services into the old worship space: the Parish Hall "Octagon." It was a wonderful, intimate reminder of just how large our family has grown, and how richly we have been blessed. Between the pandemic and the flood, we have seen just how resilient we are, and how dedicated we are to God and God's community. Indeed, we never missed a beat of our worship and service to God as our spaces were repaired.

We expressed thanksgiving for this growth, blessing, and resiliency by having a wildly successful Capital Campaign. We came together, rededicating ourselves to the life and wellbeing of this church, both for the current generation and the generations to come. We raised enough money to completely pay off the mortgage in only three years!

Speaking of present and future of our church, this year also saw multiple baptisms, and a continued increase in membership across all demographics, especially in younger families and children. The preschool continued to grow in size, leading to the hiring of two new teachers, as well as a new volunteer teacher. The Vacation Bible School, Thanksgiving program, and Christmas pageant saw the sanctuary packed with joyous children.

After seeing us through the pandemic and flood, playing and directing in distinctly less-than-ideal scenarios, our wonderful, intrepid, beloved Tom Elston resigned from his position. This led us to a brand new blessing in the form of Nancy Smith, who has become our Director of Music. Since her arrival, we have seen a wonderful development of our music program, with a new vocal choir, a re-invigorated bell choir, and deeply beautiful musical offerings at the Advent Evensong and Christmas Eve service.

This year also saw the installation of Martha Wayt's Labyrinth on our campus, ensuring that her deep spirituality will continue to bless our community for generations to come. Many have since walked the pathways it offers, seeking God, and have been found by him.

We look forward to a new year with even more growth and excitement! 2024 marks the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of God's call to us at this parish, and we will rejoice and give thanks through numerous celebrations, concerts, fellowship opportunities, a parish homecoming, several additions to our parish campus, new outreach opportunities, and even a book commemorating the rich history of God's blessings here at the Church of the Holy Spirit.

Indeed, may the Holy Spirit continue to move mightily within us, and may we have the grace and wisdom to follow where she leads!

Brandon Thomas Mozingo+  
Rector, The Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit  
Cumming, GA

### **Senior Warden 's Report**

**Janet McDermott**

I will always remember 2023 with a sense of gratitude. When I was asked by Father Brandon to be Senior Warden, I was given the opportunity to serve this parish, which I believe to be God's purpose for me. To serve to the best of my ability. It was with great expectation that I accepted this challenge. The love and support I received from my fellow vestry members and my brothers and sisters of the parish was overwhelming. I thank each and every one of you. As we begin our fiftieth year there is great anticipation for what is ahead for Holy Spirit. We have survived a pandemic and many changes and continue to grow. Life is change, and there will always be change. There is a palpable love within these walls. The SPIRIT is working through each and every one of us. This is what gives us the strength to carry on and do God's work in this world. I pray we continue on our path to do His will and persevere throughout 2024. Thank you for allowing me to serve as your Senior Warden in 2023.

### **Junior Warden's Report/Buildings & Grounds**

**Jay Franklin**

This past year has been a challenging but very successful one for our campus. It started with recovery from the five breaks in our fire sprinkler lines that occurred on Christmas day 2022. I was able to assemble a special task force consisting of Beth Jones, Dane Bohnstedt and Bob Hitch to quickly move forward with decisions on repairs and replacement once the team from North Metro Mitigation Service finished their work. Damaged areas included the parish hall floor and ceiling, nave flooring, narthex floor and ceiling, downstairs rear entrance area, plus the preschool office, kitchen and storage room. I can't say enough about how quickly North Metro responded to get the water removed after they were notified by our insurance carrier. Then our contractor teams from Milestone Homes, Gainesville Flooring and GH Home Improvements (Hector Garcia) sprang into action as we made decisions on the repairs and flooring replacement. We shifted church services back and forth from the nave to the parish hall as the work progressed. We set a goal of having everything repaired and all areas back in service by Palm Sunday...and we made it!

However, the work on our campus didn't stop after the flood recovery. Early in the year we contracted with Beyond Landscaping to replace the crumbling wooden retaining wall around the picnic pavilion with a new one made of textured concrete blocks. Hernaldo Conchola and his crew did a beautiful job with the wall and replaced some rotted roof supports in the process. Many thanks to Building and Grounds Chair Chad Cartwright for connecting us with Hernaldo. We also were able to bore in a new electrical cable to get power restored to the gazebo and picnic pavilion. Then later in the year we were offered the opportunity to relocate Martha Wayt's labyrinth from Seven Branches Farm to our property. Another special committee was formed including Beth Jones, Joanie Anderton, Julia Ford, Donna Kukarola and Putnam Smith to review bids and work with the Wayt family to finalize a legal release agreement. In the end, we again chose Beyond Landscaping to perform the work of removing all the labyrinth stones at Seven Branches and using them along with new fill dirt and gravel to reconstruct the

labyrinth on our property. There will be additional finishes and landscaping added to the labyrinth in 2024, but the basics are now in place and the dedication happened on November 19<sup>th</sup>.

The maintenance of our grounds also took a big step forward in 2023. We continue to have a Holy Mower group consisting of four teams of two people that handle the weekly mowing from April through September. We have now added the contract services of Sarah Witt to help maintain all the garden areas on our campus. She spends a few hours each week concentrating on the memorial garden in front, the side and rear gardens and the meditation garden area. This has made a big difference in the appearance of our grounds. We were also able to accomplish some key maintenance tasks during a spring parish workday. We will again plan to have some parish work days as we move through 2024. Thanks to all that have stepped up and helped keep our buildings and grounds maintained and beautiful.

**Finance Committee**

**Putnam Smith, Vestry Liaison**

The Finance Committee is a standing committee of the Parish that supervises the financial affairs of the parish. We are primarily responsible for preparing and monitoring an annual expense budget in conjunction with the Treasurer, for evaluating the annual audit and assessing the financial condition and future needs of the parish, and we make periodic recommendations to the Vestry. It is the Treasurer, however, who has custody and directs the investment and manner of payment of moneys administered by the parish, and we refer you to his report for a discussion of its revenues and expenses for the year ended December 31, 2023.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact our community. While pandemic restrictions have been relaxed and did not significantly influence our activities in 2023, the pandemic has had lasting effects on church attendance that seem to be reflected in a continuing decline in our current revenues. Looking back over the past three years, the downward trend in our pledge income and corresponding increases in our operating losses and reductions in our cash balances are apparent:

Year	Operating Loss	Annual Pledges	Year End Cash on Hand
2021	(\$ 24,618)	\$ 402,673	\$ 337,291
2022	(\$ 42,667)	\$ 330,882	\$ 293,690
2023	(\$ 60,507)	\$ 343,553	\$ 561,974

We ended the year with a considerable deficit.

**Stewardship Report**

**Melinda Carey, Vestry Liaison**

2024 Stewardship Pledge Income (as of December 2023)

TOTAL PLEDGE from 2023/24 Campaign remaining 302,514 TOTAL

NEW PLEDGES 2024 28,992

TOTAL INCREASED 2024 \$9,336

Total Pledged Income for 2024 340,842

Total Household Pledging Households from 1st Campaign: 71 Total

New pledges 11 TOTAL 2024 PLEDGING HOUSEHOLDS 82

Total number Increased pledges for 2024: 6 households

Approximately 15 households are regular plate contributors and do not formally pledge. The most current directory shows a total of 142 households. Between the pledging members and regular givers we have 97 households contributing.

ECOHS is a generous and responsive congregation. This generosity is something to be acknowledged and celebrated. The task going forward is to offer programs and worship that is attractive to new individuals and families. I believe that ECOHS has a great attraction for many individuals of all ages and families seeking a church with a theology and teachings of a loving God. A church where everyone is welcome. How do we spread the Good News?

Melinda Carey, Stewardship Chair

Committee Members: Tom and Ginger Smith, Bob Hitch, Janet Pfaff, Janet McDermott (Ray Williams, Treasurer, The Rev. Brandon Mazingo, Rector)

## **Communications and Evangelism**

## **Dee Rausin, Vestry Liaison**

Communication and evangelism are integral to living into and sharing the love of God. Within our parish and community, ECOHS continues to look for ways to do this, and communicating within our church family with information about ministries, events, needs, and opportunities to participate and serve benefits established members, newcomers, and visitors. Towards this purpose, our church has embraced changes and made improvements that enhance communication for our members and are extending into our outreach as well.

Key components of this include updated printed materials and technology. In the Parish Hall, printed brochures describe many of the church ministries and the contact person(s) for these. Information packets about the Capital Campaign are available. Family Directories are updated frequently. Guidelines for walking the recently installed Labyrinth are located on the information table as well. Digital communication tools include the Sign-Up Genius emails for church events. The Weekly Dove newsletter has an updated format that includes extensive information for each week's services, events, announcements, and ministry schedules. The insert in the Sunday service bulletin has been updated also. The installation of monitors in the Parish Hall, front hallway, and the lower entrance area provides announcements about current programs, opportunities, and upcoming events. There is a Facebook page @ Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit, and the church website online at [www.ecohs.net](http://www.ecohs.net).

As we look ahead to the celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this church, we also consider how communication and evangelism have been an important part of our church's presence in this community over time. A part of this has been and continues to be the personal contact and involvement of our parishioners with our community of family and friends. Our Parish ministries have been an essential influence in our evangelism of communicating a welcoming spirit with each other and our neighbors. As events like Friday Night Fun Night, VBS, Beloved Sisters, and the Christmas Pageant (as examples) draw others in through invitations from members, these become opportunities for each of us to also share the hospitality of God's love.

What a year we have had with Children's Christian Ed. We are so thankful for the families that share their children with us and help us learn about God and his everlasting love. Weekly Sunday School, Advent Evenings, Lenten programs, Parish weekend, Monthly Family Fun nights, Children's Chapel and Vacation Bible School are some of the events we look forward to throughout the year. These are some of the ways we reach out to our families and help to engage them and worship with them. Part of Children's Christian Ed is listening to families and trying to meet them where they are. Church and Christian Ed have changed since the pandemic. We want to be open to listening to the families and learning and growing in our love and knowledge of God together and in new and different ways.

**Music Ministry****Nancy Smith, Minister of Music**

It has been an honor and great joy to be called as the Minister of Music at Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit, to work with Father Brandon and our awesome staff, and all of our very talented musicians. Many thanks to Jeff Daniel for his help getting me acclimated in Episcopal music and acquainting me with the music files.

**Our Parish Choir** began rehearsals with me at the end of September to be ready for our 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday together on Oct. 1. We have done much together in a short span of time. As well as presenting appropriate and lovely weekly choral offerings and music for All Souls on November 2, we enjoyed joining with the St. Clare Singers and men from St. Luke's in Dahlonga, and Good Shepherd in Cumming to present beautiful choral pieces for our Advent Evensong on Sunday December 10 at 6 P.M. This was a well-attended evening, and we look forward to several more Evensong opportunities in 2024. The Parish Choir also offered prelude music for the Christmas Eve Service at 8 P.M., joined by the St. Dunstan's Ringers.

**The St. Dunstan's Ringers** began rehearsals on October 11, and have graced the parish with heavenly ringing on Sunday, Nov. 19; for our Advent Evensong on December 10; and Christmas Eve prelude for the 8 P.M. Service. This dedicated group meets every Wednesday at 5:45 to rehearse. Their time and talents are so appreciated! We look forward to great rings from them in 2024!

**The St. Clare Singer's Women's Choir** (formerly known as the Evangeline Singers from St. Luke the Evangelist Catholic Church) is composed of women from Cumming, Dahlonga, Dawsonville, Alpharetta, Gainesville and Big Canoe. We have been singing together for over 12 years. Our mission is to bring music and joy where it is needed most. We sing many times a year at Assisted Living Facilities in Cumming, Dawsonville and Dahlonga, as well as presenting seasonal programs at other churches. We also supported the All Soul's Service and Advent Evensong, joining with the Parish Choir to present beautiful music. We look forward to many more collaborations in 2024. I think we have a Medieval Advent Evensong in the offing!

**Music Planning** for all of our choirs takes place on a weekly basis. My church hours are Sunday, Monday, Tuesday (organ practice day), Wednesday morning, Wednesday evening rehearsals, Thursday morning rehearsals. I am here as needed for funerals and weddings. With joy, I look forward to all of the musical possibilities the New Year will bring us! May God continue to bless our singers, ringers, and plans as together we serve and glorify him with music. May all of our music rise to the heavenly spheres!

Nancy Smith, Minister of Music

It has been an honor and privilege to be on your vestry and be the liaison for Outreach these past three years. ECOHS continued to do what we do best, opening our hearts to the community, spreading God's love and understanding. A big Thank you(!) to all that participate and make these ministries possible – which really is everyone. Here is a brief update on the ministries for 2023:

**Family Promise**

This is a ministry that we have been participating in for 7 years. It is part of a larger Family Promise organization of Forsyth County that partners with churches in helping homeless families. The goal is for families to achieve sustainable independence. Present count of homeless children in Forsyth County is 574. A staggering number for such a wealthy community.

ECOHS is a host church of Family Promise participating in their Residential Program. We provide sleeping accommodations in our church, meals, hospitality for one week, four times a year.

In 2023 we served 15 families, comprising of 19 adults and 27 children. Our schedule for 2024 begins the week of January 21. Volunteers have an opportunity to provide needed items, prepare and serve meals, and sleep at the church. Anyone seeking more information on the program, or would like to become an active volunteer, please contact Midge Printz, ECOHS Coordinator at [printzmidge@gmail.com](mailto:printzmidge@gmail.com) or 407-399-4698.

**In Stitches Ministry:**

In Stitches – we continue on the same as last year.....We meet every Wednesday morning from 9:30 to 12 in the Parish Hall. Busy year making....Blankets for Northside Main Campus NICU. Blankets, bibs, bears, burp cloths for Jasper Crisis Pregnancy Centre and North Georgia Family Partner Lap Blankets, scarves and hats for North Georgia Hospice. Seat Belt covers, scarves, hats, fingerless gloves for Atlanta Cancer Care located at Northside Forsyth Hospital Prayer Shawls for our congregation and friends of the church. Small Prayer Cloths for Newcomers to the church.

Everyone welcome whether you are an avid knitter or crocheter or would like to learn....

Contact name: Ro Woodhead 404-435-2311 or [nickwoodhead@hotmail.com](mailto:nickwoodhead@hotmail.com)

**Backpacks of Love:**

Serving children & families facing severe food insecurity by providing non-perishable food items. On the second Sunday of every month, we hold an in-gathering of non-perishable food items that is then delivered to the Backpacks of Love distribution center the next morning. Backpacks of Love then makes deliveries to local schools for the children to take home.

For 2023: 225 children served in Forsyth and Fulton County schools every other week during the school year.

**The Pantry:**

The Pantry operates out of Wendy's Place on the last Saturday of every month from 8-9. On this fourth Saturday volunteers greet members of our community and fill their requests for either baby or adult diapers. In addition to diapers, each family receives a bag containing toilet paper, laundry detergent, wipes and feminine pads. 2023 saw an increase in requests for adult diapers and bed pads. This



Ministry meets a need in our community by serving the needs of both families with babies, toddlers, and families with older relatives. It is open to all in need.

Through the generosity of our parish and with over 720 volunteer hours, we served 552 people in 2023. Fifteen families were newcomers to our Outreach Ministry.

For more information contact Fiona Norris 678-591-8325 or Sue Ellen Williams 770-337-9156.

### **Angel Tree:**

We provide Christmas gifts for children in the foster care system. This is possibly the only gifts they are given each year. In 2023, we provided 2 (plus 2 more added at the last minute) children. They were given an amazing Christmas through the generosity of our church.

How it works- there will a sign up genius list plus name tags on our traditional tree in the parish hall. Chose a gift, purchase it, return to the church on the assigned date UNWRAPPED,

On a side note— this is my 10th year facilitating this ministry, it was a pleasure (joy) but it is my final. Relax- I have a replacement in training.

Carol Franklin

### **Wendy's Bears**

This is a collection of new or gently used stuffed animals (doesn't have to be bears!) to give to children, that through no fault of their own, find themselves spending time in the Forsyth County judicial system. This year we provided over 250 stuffed animal friends. There is a donation bin in the Parish Hall, they are delivered throughout the year to CASA (Court Appointment Special Advocates for Children) who then distribute to the children that find themselves in the judicial system. More info? Donna Kukarola, [dwkuk@bellsouth.net](mailto:dwkuk@bellsouth.net) or 678 617 9349.

### **Ad Hoc**

We also provided school supplies for children in the foster care system or under CASA prior to the 2023 school year. And there are some other areas that may be of interest to expand our outreach, visiting local nursing homes, having interfaith events are just a few.

### **Honduras Mission**

### **Jay Franklin & Amy Hill, Team Leaders**

In 2023 we had another small but mighty team of seven people that went to Honduras in support of the LAMB Institute. All team members were either parishioners of ECOHS or friends...plus Fr. Brandon. This trip was all adults, but we got lots of help from the children and youth at Casa Hogar (children's home). Our task was to repaint the former school building inside and out as it is being converted into mostly administration space. Even with our small team, we were able to finish the bulk of the painting.

It was wonderful to see the children we have come to know and love once again as we share Christ's light with them. We provided a cookout for the children at Casa Hogar and had a special dinner with the transition youth. We went shopping for our next fundraiser at a new

location in the village of Ojojona because a landslide had partially closed the road to the Valley of the Angels. We spent time at the Joy Bi-lingual Academy where the children put on a performance for us. This trip we took down pajamas and socks for the children, youth and staff. Our field day with the kids was a great time enjoyed by all, with hair chalk probably being the favorite activity. All the missionaries got new hair dos with color provided by the kids! Please come to see photos and hear about our trip at the fundraiser dinner for the 2024 trip that will be held the evening of February 24<sup>th</sup>. We are planning on a larger, and hopefully more intergenerational, team in 2024.

### **Parish Life**

**Janet McDermott, Vestry Liaison**

As we enter into our 50th year, Holy Spirit is more vibrant than ever. This Christmas Season was especially full of life and spiritual energy! With the addition of our new Music Director, Nancy Smith, our church was filled with beautiful music and worship. We are blessed with the addition of the St. Claire Singers and St. Dunstan Handbells to our wonderful choir. Our Holy Spirit family has many wonderful activities and traditions throughout the year and, as always, we came together as a community and family. We look ahead to this new year with great expectations, a year with endless possibilities. We move forward as always, but with a new exuberance for what the future holds for us. We continue to be Jesus's hands and feet, doing His work, joining together in worship and fellowship. Thank you Holy Spirit! Thank you for giving us the Lifeforce to carry on God's work in the holy community

### **Pastoral Support**

**Jeri Ellis, Vestry Liaison**

Perhaps one of the most active groups in our church is the Intercessors Prayer group. Anyone can be included to offer prayers for the needs of our parishioners and those for whom they request such care. Julie Wilson leads the collection of requests. Information about where to send a request is in the weekly bulletin or the Dove newsletter. A small group of people meet regularly as the Pastoral Support team where we maintain prayerful attention for those in need, including prayers for those who have died over the last year and their families. There is an active response to the needs for prayer, pastoral visits, meals, and anything that might ease a recovery or a particularly trying time. Father Brandon has recently provided training to those in our group who wish to offer communion as Lay Eucharist Ministers when making pastoral visits. Licenses have been registered with the diocese for those individuals. Many pastoral visits occur without any such license because we have such a bonded loving parish. This also is the group that lovingly lifts and cares for the women of our church through the Women's Prayer Brunch, Advent quiet day, and other opportunities for prayerful worship. We all have much to be thankful for as the people of this team actively serve as the hands and feet of Christ in caring and praying for our parish members and those they love. I am so honored to be a part of this ministry.

### **Preschool Annual Report**

**Julie Wilson, Preschool Director**

Another year seems to be flying by. We are so thankful for our church's involvement and commitment to our preschool. We are thankful for the healthy, fun year we are having with children who enjoy learning and are excited by preschool! As many of you know, our preschool is one of the primary outreach ministries of our church. It is our goal to be active and contributing members of our community through the way we embrace and welcome a diverse and growing number of children. We recognize that preschool is a luxury, and although a

luxury, preschool provides an important stepping stone for school readiness and a child's early learning success. We raised our rates this past year after not having raised them since prior to the pandemic. You may be aware that we have a scholarship fund available for those that have the desire for their child to attend preschool but lack the financial resources. Our church has generously provided the primary support needed to offset the pandemic expenses such as offering smaller class sizes for children's safety, providing snacks and supplies and helping us adjust to have the best safety practices in place. Being in a relationship with each family in the preschool helps us to know each child, their strengths and their challenges. We are growing and thankful that our best source of advertising seems to be word of mouth. Many of our families have introduced their neighbors to our preschool and we see our enrollment growing and reflecting their positive experiences. If you have any questions please don't hesitate to call or email. We are looking forward to a great year! Our goal is to focus on preparing the whole child for kindergarten in a gentle, loving and confidence building environment and hope that you and your children will be a part of our community.

### **Youth Ministry**

**Shannon David, Youth Minister**

As always, we have a strong but tiny group of dedicated youth who attend Sunday School, act as acolytes, and assist with the broadcast of our weekly worship. They meet socially or for service about once a month, and are very visible helpers at such events as the Red Door Festival, VBS, and the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper. We are always looking for adults to help with education and recreation, so if you have any interest in getting to know these amazing kids you are always welcome. They really are amazing, and it is a pleasure to get to work with them!