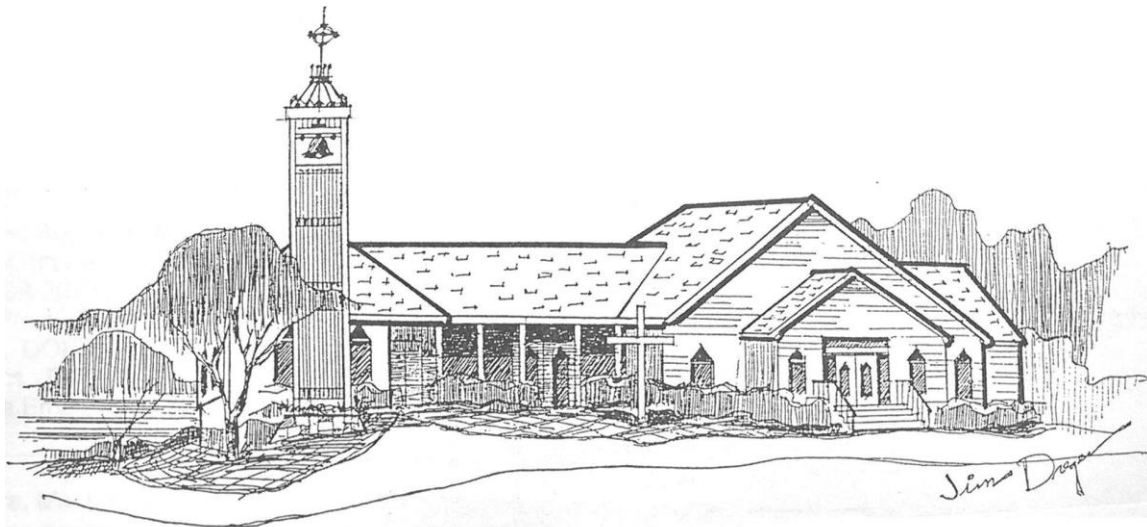


The Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit

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

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING - MINISTRY REPORTS

January 19, 2025



The Right Reverend Robert C. Wright, Bishop

The Reverend Brandon Thomas Mozingo, Rector

724 Pilgrim Mill Road, Cumming, GA 30040

Phone: (770) 887-8190, office@ecohs.net

www.ecohs.net

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As you all know, this year is the 50th year of The Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit in Cumming, GA. And, by all accounts, it has been an amazing year so far.

We started this 50th year off on the actual date of our founding with an amazing in-gathering of Eucharistic worship, with many clergy who had served here over the years gathered around the altar once more. Likewise, many members, past and present, came together to receive the Body and Blood of Christ from those clergy, a testament to the ongoing life of this church. This was all followed by a wonderful dinner, and a recounting of tales from the children of the founding rector. Truly a day to remember!

Immediately following that day, our Vacation Bible School began, which was immediately followed by the Honduras Mission Trip. I can't think of a better way to start our 50th year than these two tremendous examples of our outreach--both local and international--to the children needing to learn of God's Love.

Alongside this, we added the Days for Girls outreach program which has been a tremendous success, allowing us to be God's helping hands to underserved women around the world. Indeed, all of our many outreach programs continue to flourish due to your hard work and God's blessings. This includes several activities not witnessed by many parishioners such as the numerous 12 step programs and Girl Scout troops who meet here.

The life of the parish has been bountiful, as well, with Beloved Sisters, Men's Breakfast Club, Education for Ministry, Compline, the Labyrinth, Spiritual Formation, Adult Education, Theology Study, Bible Study, and Friday Night Fun Night all thriving. It was a joy to open up that last activity to the whole parish, and a joy to be able to cook for you all.

The Preschool is seeing record numbers, the ECOHS Children's Ministry continues to do amazing work with our littlest members, and our Youth Group has seen outstanding growth this year, both in numbers and in engagement.

Indeed, many of those Youth dedicated themselves to the Church and to God by partaking in Catechesis under Shannon David's tutelage. These members joined with the adult Catechumens engaged in our Adult Formation series, resulting in an awe-inspiring 23 confirmands who were received, renewed, or confirmed by Bishop Wright in December's ceremony. This is a phenomenal number from a parish our size, and speaks loudly and clearly of the vibrancy of our ministry here.

Our music ministry has also seen tremendous growth in the last year, with the various choirs developing their gifts nicely, and offering up glory to God in so very many ways. Despite the fact that Nancy Smith had to leave us due to family concerns, I anticipate the good work which she began to continue here. Just this past week we have employed an Interim Director of Music. John Hutchinson had been the Director of Music at Cumming First United Methodist for many years. He is a tremendous musician, and will support and nourish our parish musicians while we search for a permanent person in that role.

We can expect the remainder of our 50th year to be a truly wonderful one, and I am full of gratitude for all that you do to make that possible. I continue to pray that God will persist in the abundant blessings he has bestowed on us here, and that we will we follow the Holy Spirit wherever she may lead for the next 50 years!

Yours in Christ,
Brandon Thomas Mozingo, Rector

Senior Warden's Report

Jay Franklin

It has been a great experience and my pleasure to serve as a Warden at Holy Spirit during the past two years...in 2023 as Junior Warden and this past year as Senior Warden. This is the third time I have served on the ECOHS Vestry and each time has been very different. I have been blessed to have a great group of people on the Vestry this time that know how to work together toward common goals and get results. I will be rotating off, but the parish is in good hands with Bob Hitch as the new Senior Warden.

This has been a special year for ECOHS as we celebrated our 50th anniversary of the parish. The special service we had with many previous clergy was great. It has also been great to restart our Red Door Festival in the fall. Going about it with more of a lowkey approach that doesn't completely exhaust our workforce certainly feels right. Each year we learn a little more about how to improve the event and get better participation from the community.

The labyrinth project has really been a great addition to our campus and it was wonderful to be able to add the landscaping around it this year. Our music program has been truly outstanding and Nancy Smith will be greatly missed, but the time had come when they needed to move closer to family. I think we will soon find another great music director for ECOHS.

Our parish has struggled financially both during and since the pandemic, but I think we are on the upswing as we continue to receive our capital campaign pledge payments over the next year and a half. This will make us debt free. Having some parishioners step forward with bridge loans has allowed us not to have to deal with the banks, their fees and their high interest rates. As the area grows and we welcome more newcomers, I see Holy Spirit growing and sharing Christ's light with an expanded community.

Finally, I could not close without mentioning Outreach. It truly is who we are at Holy Spirit. Please be sure to read the outreach section of this report and hear about all the wonderful work that each of our outreach ministries do. If you are not yet engaged with one of the programs, please consider joining one by talking to the leaders that are listed. There are truly ministries here that will fit anyone's skill set.

Junior Warden's Report/Buildings & Grounds

Bob Hitch

The general approach to Buildings and grounds this year has to repair or replace critical issues, and postpone those repairs that do not affect programs or security of the facility. Holy Mowers continue their work with minimal repairs required for the equipment. Battery powered blower and string trimmer were added to reduce frustration with old 2 cycle equipment. These issues were addressed this year:

1. Lights in Octagon part of Parish Hall – standard LED bulbs replaced with Sylvania R20 (5W LED) Flood bulbs. Old fixtures have deeper sockets that are incompatible with new LEDs. Bend center socket contact up 1/8 inch before replacing bulb.
2. Lower level lady's bath 4 ft. florescent fixture (2) ballast failed. Replaced with new direct wire (by pass) lamps.
3. Front rain downspout (near memorial garden) clogged – opened & cleaned, long screw attaching plastic fitting to downspout was blocking flow of debris. Replaced with correct size screw.
4. Receptacle (right) at coffee counter failed – replaced with new one from inventory.
5. Pavilion fan/lights installed. Note: circuit breaker in Wendy's Place, GFCI in Gazebo, and 2 GFCI's in pavilion were reset. Electric service from Wendy's place to the pavilion was replaced – line break could not be repaired. Service to the Pavilion also failed – work around using extension cords was set up to allow use of the facility. New service cost estimate \$8,000.
6. Dog waste bags added (no cost) to Brian's Field fence at right side gate.
7. Elevator repaired three times.
8. Sewer pumps alarmed: Jan 11, April 15, &16, April 30, May3. Data logger is installed to determine exact times and possible sources – it does not appear to be our equipment at fault.
9. Large tree near Pavilion removed for safety – limb fell in storm, tree hollow.
1. Kitchen range (partially out of service) replaced with two new residential type ranges at the cost of repair for our old range with the advice of the Kitchen Committee. Fire Marshall approval secured for new installation. Kitchen vent hood and stainless wall behind stoves cleaned.
10. Roof shingles repaired 3 times due to wind damage. Cost about \$500 each repair.
11. Team lead by Chris Kennedy investigated Covering entrances at the front and rear of the church. Project held pending available funds.
12. Replaced leaking water heater.
13. Replaced failed heat pump unit serving Pre-school.
14. Front sign cleaned and coated with 'Briliantize'.
15. Exit signs and emergency lights tested, repaired and reported to Fire Marshall.
16. Several doors were adjusted to latch properly.
17. Painted trim and west window on Wendy's place. Repaired and painted benches in Gazebo area
Repaired and painted NE Sanctuary window exterior.

18. Built new foundation, & repaired Dorrough memorial fountain at the rear entrance. Replaced pump on rock fountain near Memorial Garden.
19. Repainted yellow curb at Office, Conference Room, & Choir entrance. Repaired lower handrail at choir entrance.
20. Replaced several (about 12) florescent lamps with 'no ballast' type. Cleaned bugs from fixtures.
21. Labyrinth planting completed (Ford lead team)
22. Our Holy Mowers continue to keep our grounds trimmed and neat. Outside contractor was used to clean up our Storm water Detention system. Contractor who was providing trimming and weeding has moved to care for her ailing Father. Replacement is being studied.

These issues are pending action, and should be anticipated for the next two years:

1. Blinds for Rector's office door. 24w x 69h x 1.75 thick (narrow req'd by door handle)
2. VOIP phone answering machine issues - service call requested from Vonage.
3. Dusk to Dawn lights above south doors (office, conference room, choir room) replace as previously done at the lower entrance.
4. Elkay model EZFSTL8_IF water fountain (choir room hall) runs constantly.
5. Kneeling rail for altar area.
6. Repair of electric service to Pavilion. Work around is in place.
7. Replacement of heating/Cooling unit in Youth Building. Motor bearing failure.
8. Covered entrance to be added at Sanctuary stairs and rear double doors.

As many of you know, the Finance Committee is a standing committee 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 and for assessing the financial condition and future needs of the parish.

Recent years have been remarkably eventful for the parish, but from a financial perspective the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted our community more than any other event. In the years since its onset in 2020, the pandemic has had lasting effects on church attendance resulting in a cyclical decline in current revenues. Over the past three years, a downward trend in our pledge income and corresponding operating losses and reductions in our cash balances became apparent, although the trend may be reversing following the payoff of our mortgage in 2024, as shown below:

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	(\$ 64,947)	\$ 343,553	\$ 561,974
2024	(\$ 4,409)	\$ 359,185	\$ 244,704

We have submitted a 2025 budget proposal to the Vestry that will be given a second reading and considered for adoption when the Vestry meets this afternoon, January 19, 2025.

In brief, the Committee recommendation is a "run rate" budget based on an assumption that Parish operations in the coming year will be substantially the same as in 2024. We know, of course, that there will be some personnel changes in the course of the year, but our hope is that the Parish will be able to hire replacements at a cost to the Parish comparable to the compensation currently being paid to those who will be departing, so we've held those line items constant.

After consultation with the Stewardship Committee we have also assumed that our Pledge Offerings in 2025 will roughly match the Pledge Offerings for 2024 (our principal source of income, budgeted at \$360,000 for 2024). At this juncture, the pledges in hand and verbally committed bear out that assumption, notwithstanding the usual turnover in the number of donors and the level of their gifts.

Notably, too, at some point during the year we anticipate the receipt Employee Retention Credit payments from the Internal Revenue Service that may amount to as much as approximately \$80,000.00. If so, these would be the last of our pandemic benefits and would enable the parish to realize an operating surplus in 2025. Unfortunately the Employee Retention Credit program has been highly controversial and triggered extensive governmental investigations, and we have elected not to budget this potential income in 2025.

To prepare the budget proposal, therefore, the Committee first annualized our year-to-date results of operations and then made adjustments in light of budget variations observed by comparing our reported 2024 results to the 2024 budget.

The net change in projected income is an anticipated increase for 2025 to \$552,940, which the Committee thinks is a reasonable projection. Since there is no prediction of income from our claimed Employee Retention Credits, we should have some room for error.

The balance of the budget consists of our projected expenses, prepared using the same methodology, comparing our actual 2024 results to the 2024 budget. The overall increase in our projected expenses for 2025 is \$52,705. As a result, the Finance Committee projects a small year-end surplus (Total Revenue \$552,940 less Total Expenses \$550,969, yielding a surplus of \$1,972) and has recommended the budget to the incoming Vestry on that basis.

The Finance Committee is very thankful to all those who have given or are thinking about giving to the parish, and we encourage your interest and participation if you would like to be more involved.

Putnam Smith, for the Committee: Jay Franklin, Senior Warden, Bob Hitch, Junior Warden, Ray Williams, Treasurer, Mark Bohan, Melinda Carey, Kristin Edwards, Debbie Onderko, Fr. Brandon Mozingo, Rector

Stewardship Report

Melinda Carey, Vestry Liaison

The Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit embodies the words found in this hymn.

We are one in the Spirit. . .

Sunday worship, Thursday healing service, Compline, Bible study, Adult formation, Theology, EFM, Group Spiritual Direction, Children and Youth programs, Pre-School, Nursery care, Vacation Bible School

We walk with each other. . .

Pastoral care, home communion, hospital visitations, prayer circle, meals, memorials

*We work with each other. . .*Sundays: Acolytes, Altar Guild, Flower Guild, Lay Eucharistic ministers, Ushers, Coffee Hour hosts, Parish Choir, St. Dunstan's Ringers, Hospitality: Kitchen crew, Parish meals, Beloved Sisters, Men's Group, Parish Weekend, Fish Fry, Red Door Festival, Friday Night Fun Night, SASSE, Vestry, Holy Mowers, Buildings and Grounds, Worship Committee, Outreach Committee, Pastoral Care Committee, Hospitality Committee, Memorials Committee

And they'll know we are Christian's by our Love. . .

Backpacks of Love, Wendy's Pantry, Family Promise, In-stiches/Days for Girls, Honduras Mission Trip, Angel Tree.

We at ECOHS give of our time, talent and treasure. Our commitment to the health and vitality of our parish and the support of the mission and ministry is remarkable. We give thanks to each one who has made a pledge commitment for 2025. We also are grateful for those who continue to regularly give and for the enormous generosity of volunteer time in support of our ministries.

Pledge Totals as of 1/14/25
82 Pledging households
13 New pledges
Total Pledged to date: \$330,008

Estimated 2024 Volunteer hours: 23,866!

Communications and Evangelism

Dee Rausin, Vestry Liaison

Communication and *Evangelism* are dual components in our effectiveness within our church and expanding into our community. This year, we have celebrated our church's beginning and how far it has come. In reflecting on these 50 years, our task is to identify and embrace the changes and challenges that are present as we focus on being a positive influence in our community.

Expanding our digital communication resources continues to show positive results. Access to information about current/upcoming events to members, visitors, and attendees of events is supported with more monitors in the main areas. The expanded version of *THE DOVE* has been very well received and provides updated information weekly including links to additional pertinent content. The church directory is updated more frequently as a download for current/newer members. Sign-up Genius emails are reminders of events as well as an organizational tool for planning purposes.

Another way that communication within our church is moving into our community is through the evangelism piece – the personal contact of inviting family, friends, and neighbors to events in addition to the regular Sunday services. Special musical events, VBS, Beloved Sisters, the Women's Prayer Brunch, the Men's Breakfast, etc., are opportunities to extend hospitality in casual settings. The newly installed Labyrinth is a recent example of opening our campus to others.

At this point, we are in a different phase from where things were the first "50-ish years" – then a significant social pause occurred – and now we are exploring how re-orientation will proceed for the future. An important part of this planning is consideration of "what and how" to include from the time prior to this "Pandemic pause," and how to re-engage with these components of our church's life. This endeavor also involves re-imagining events differently to be in-step with the changes in this area where we live – and open to looking at ways to be more relevant for our purpose of moving forward.

Children's Christian Education

Julie Wilson, Children's Ministries Director

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 are changing 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.

2024 was a great year for our Music Ministry! All of our choirs were in rehearsal from January 5th on throughout the year. We began January working on music for Lent, Holy Week, Easter and a Celtic Evensong.

SUNDAY MARCH 17TH, 6 P.M., CELTIC EVENSONG. We had an excellent turnout of parishioners and community. All of our choirs joined together for this wonderful Lenten evening of Celtic music. It was followed by an Irish Dinner in the Parish Hall. Great thanks to all of the great cooks out there!

Over the year, we had 4 new people join our Parish Choir. Martha Hood, John Wall, Alice Bryan and Roger Keyser. It was a good year for singers!

And Ringers! Our St. Dunstan Ringers grew to 7 people, and we played in worship many times throughout the year, and for every Evensong and Special Event.

SUNDAY, JUNE 2, ANNIVERSARY OF THE CHURCH. Again, all of our choirs were on hand for this festive 50 Year Celebration!

SUMMER 2024-The choir was used to taking a break in the summer, and we did from Wednesday rehearsals. Wednesdays were fellowship nights at Marie's Italian Deli, and we had a good turn-out all summer. The choir did, however, continue singing through the summer as they joined me in the front of the church by the piano to lead Hymns and Psalms.

SUMMER FAMILY CHOIR-JUNE 16 AND JULY 14TH! We invited people of all ages to come with their families and sing for these 2 Sundays. June 16th was Father's Day, and they sang "This Is My Father's World" and on July 14th they sang The Cameroon Processional Song, "Praise, Praise, Praise the Lord" accompanied by H.T. Smith on Djembe. We had a great turn out for both Sundays!

CELESTIAL SOUNDS BELL QUARTET-over the summer, we began a women's bell quartet. We played in the service 3 times over the summer. Thanks to Janet Pfaff, Becky Hitch and Penny Mraz for joining me in this very fun group!

AUGUST-All of our choirs were back in full rehearsal, and we received music in our folders through the end of November.

SEPTEMBER-All choirs received music for our Medieval Advent Evensong to begin rehearsing.

ST. CLARE SINGERS WOMEN'S CHOIR- The ministry of this choir is a wondrous thing. They shared music at the Oaks Assisted living in the Hamptons, and Manor Lake Assisted Living in Dawsonville each 4 times this year. They also sing with us for every special event: Celtic Evensong, Church Anniversary, All Souls and Advent Evensong. This is an amazing group of talented women!

OCTOBER-All choirs received music for Christmas Eve in their folders to begin rehearsals on those pieces.

NOVEMBER 2, ALL SOULS. Our Parish Choir joined with The St. Clare Singers for a beautiful, quiet and holy celebration of All Souls.

DECEMBER 15, ADVENT EVENSONG WITH MEDIEVAL MUSIC. Again, all of our choirs joined together for this beautiful evening of music. We were also blessed to have additional male singers from Good Shepherd Catholic Church and St. Luke's Catholic Church. Sydney Farber also joined us on the cello, and H.T. Smith on medieval hand drum and tambourine. It was a wonderful event for our parish and community. It was very well attended by the outside community.

Thank you to Sandi Culver, Carmen Smith and all who helped with the medieval reception! It was a fabulous feast for the eyes and the palates!

DECEMBER 20, THE LONGEST NIGHT. This beautiful observance was done with readings from Father Brandon, and piano music from me. The lights were low, and Sandi Culver did her magic decorating the Nave so beautifully with candles in all of the windows and around the altar. It has not been offered here before, but I thought the 12 people who came enjoyed it very much. It was offered to help those who may be mourning, lonely, in poor health or for whom the Christmas season is difficult.

DECEMBER 24, 4 P.M. CHRISTMAS PAGEANT-It is always a joy to work with Meg Davenport and watch the Children's pageant take shape, and be a beautiful telling and singing of the Christmas Story.

DECEMBER 24, 7:30, PRELUDE TO CHRISTMAS EVE- Our Parish Choir and St. Dunstan Ringers sang beautifully to welcome the Christ Child, and to lead carols for the congregation. The St. Dunstan Ringers were a lovely addition bringing us "Ding, Dong, Merrily on High" and "Mary Did You Know". They also accompanied a choir piece, "Antiphonal Noel".

GREAT THANKS TO ALL OF OUR SINGERS AND RINGERS! It has been a busy and glorious year for me here at Holy Spirit. It was a sad decision to resign on December 6, with my last Sunday being Jan. 5, 2025. It is the right decision for us to be closer to family. It has been such a joy and honor to be here at Holy Spirit. I pray that your music ministry will continue to flourish under new leadership, and your songs will rise to the heavenly spheres!

Outreach

Jay Franklin, Vestry Liaison

We are Outreach! There is no ministry that better defines ECOHS than Outreach. For a mid-sized parish, we do a disproportionate job of reaching out to support others. The great thing is that in each outreach program we have wonderful leaders who can put together a team of dedicated parishioners, secure donations and make a difference in our community and the world. Here are the outreach programs that we support:

- **Family Promise** – led by Midge Printz. We are a host church of the larger Family Promise organization of Forsyth County that partners with churches to help homeless families get back on their feet. ECOHS has been a part of this ministry for 8 years. We host 3 or 4 families for a week each quarter. In 2024 we hosted 13 families that comprising of 18 adults and 19 children. Our 2025 schedule begins the week of January 12th. Volunteers have an opportunity to provide needed items, prepare and serve meals and provide overnight coverage by sleeping at the church.

- **In Stitches** – led by Ro Woodhead. This group meets every Wednesday morning to make blankets, bibs, scarves, hats, shawls and other items for organizations such as Northside NICU, Jasper Crisis Pregnancy Center, North GA Hospice, and Atlanta Cancer Care.
- **Backpacks of Love** – led by Cathy Schlecht. This ministry serves children and families facing severe food insecurity by providing non-perishable food items. We hold an in-gathering on the second Sunday of every month. The Backpacks organization then collects the donations and delivers them from their distribution center to local schools. The Backpacks of Love organization, as a whole, for the school year ending May 2024, Backpacks of Love served / “gave a hand up” to an average of 215 students, for a total of 3,758 backpacks. In the current school year, they served an average of around 200 families from September to December, delivering around 200 bags biweekly. Many thanks to ECOHS for their monthly contribution to these totals!
- **The Pantry** – led by Sue Ellen Williams & Fiona Norris. This ministry operates out of the Wendy’s Place building on our campus. We deliver non-food products such as toilet paper, laundry detergent, wipes, diapers and feminine pads on the last Saturday of each month to needy families in our area. We served 540 families in 2024 at our once a month pantry. We average 96 volunteer hours at the pantry itself. In addition we spend 84 hours stocking, sorting and preparing items for distribution. The parish provides items requested throughout the weeks leading up to the pantry distribution.
- **Angel Tree** – led by Carol Franklin & Brenda Hobby. This ministry provides gifts for children in foster care. Possibly the only gifts they will receive each year. There was a huge participation by the parish in 2024 as we provided gifts for 25 children. The Angel Tree goes up in the parish hall in late November so parishioners can choose gifts to return to the church for distribution prior to Christmas. We also place some of the gift selections in an on-line signup genius.
- **Wendy’s Bears** – led by Donna Kukarola. Stuffed animals are donated for children that find themselves (through no fault of their own) spending time in the Forsyth County judicial system. Each year we provide over 250 stuffed animal friends to help these children cope with the stress they face. We have a donation bin in the Parish Hall and the donations are then delivered throughout the year by CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates for children).
- **CASA School Supply In-gathering** – Led by Donna Kukarola. We provided school supplies for children in the foster care system or under CASA prior to the 2024 school year. A collection bin was set up in the parish hall to receive the items and we then participated in the distribution that happened at a local car dealer.
- **Honduras Mission** – led by Jay Franklin & Amy Hill. We support the LAMB Institute with their many missions in Honduras. Former Associate Rector Bonnie Underwood got us started in this mission in 2016 and we have continued every year except for a two-year break during the pandemic. We send a team of intergenerational missionaries along with supplies and donations in support of a children’s home (Casa Hogar), a school in a depressed barrio in the capital city, a youth in action after school program, the Joy Academy Bi-lingual school, an anti-trafficking program and now a transition program as the LAMB youth transition into adulthood. Our missionaries typically work on a construction project at the children’s home. In 2024 we sent a team of 10 to Honduras where we worked on refurbishing and painting the younger boy’s cabin, and making rebar for building supports in the restrooms under construction at Casa Hogar’s new multipurpose building. This trip we took down fuzzy blankets for all the children, youth and staff along with field day, school and first aid supplies. Please come to see photos and hear about our trip at the fundraiser dinner for the 2025 trip that will be held the evening of February 22nd. We

are planning on a larger and more intergenerational team for 2025 that will likely consist of at least 15 missionaries.

- **Days for Girls** – led by Becky Hitch. Days for Girls is a nonprofit organization that provides sustainable feminine hygiene products for girls and women around the world. Days for Girls was started at ECOHS in January, 2024 in partnership with Altrusa of N. GA which provided \$1200 to purchase materials and supplies. Twelve ECOHS members and others in our community work twice a month to wash, iron, cut, sew, and pack the kits which are then provided at no cost to women around the world. Over 200 kits created at ECOHS are now in Paraguay, Honduras, local clinics, churches, schools and even Wendy's Place. All of our volunteer hours added to about 2400 hours for the year for just this program.

According to our recent survey of volunteer hours at ECOHS we found that 7754 hours went to outreach...that's 1/3 of the Holy Spirit total!

Parish Life

Janet McDermott, Vestry Liaison

In addition to our multiple, traditional activities the spotlight of this past year would have to go to the celebration of our Golden Jubilee.

For 50 years, ECOHS has been serving the people of Forsyth County. This is quite an accomplishment considering that some churches in our Diocese have had to close their doors permanently.

The Jubilee was attended by past and present parishioners, as well as past clergy. It was a holy and joyous occasion. How blessed we are to be surrounded by so much love. This is quite a testament to the "pioneers" who began our church, some who are still active members of the church and got to share their memories with all of us.

This is Parish Life. We are Parish Life. The living, breathing spirit in our church is palpable and I believe that this is why we continue to grow and prosper. Without the love we have for each other, this would not be possible.

It is with great anticipation that we enter into a new year. Personally, it has been an honor to serve these past three years as vestry liaison and look forward to the coming year.

Janet McDermott

Pastoral Support

Jeri Ellis, Vestry Liaison

The pastoral support ministry is a volunteer group that is responsible for lovingly lifting and caring for the women of our church through the women's prayer brunch, Advent quiet day, and other opportunities for prayerful worship. The men have an ongoing breakfast meeting that provides fellowship and support as well.

We are thankful for the people who actively serve as the hands and feet of Christ in caring and praying for our parish members and those they love. Father Brandon has provided leadership over the past year by attending to and supporting the pastoral support team. The support team serves to be responsive to the needs of our parish for prayer, pastoral visits, meals, and anything that might ease a recovery. We

know that any difficult situation is a particularly trying time. Additionally, we facilitate prayers to help celebrate a growing family or blessing shared with the team.

The pastoral team averages about 16 visits a month to parishioners, sometimes many more and sometimes less. We also initiate the meal train and regularly facilitate prayer requests.

The best way to send a prayer request is through an email to Julie Wilson - jwilsonjat@gmail.com. Julie does an amazing job of maintaining a prayer chain and seeks volunteers for meal support. She has been absolutely instrumental in the healthy functioning of this important 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 in 2023 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.

We are thankful to have enrollment numbers exceeding any numbers that I can remember. We have a waiting list and have 49 children enrolled or beginning this month. We are thankful to be using all of the space we have available for preschool and so incredibly thankful for the generous spirited and grounded families we have as well as the loving and creative teachers! Thanks be to God for this growing ministry!

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.

Worship Ministry

Cathy Middleton, Vestry Liaison

As I began my first year serving on the Vestry as Worship Liaison, I approached the role without knowing exactly what to expect. I quickly discovered that I have the privilege of supporting one of the most well-organized and dedicated groups in our church community. My role as Worship Liaison has been incredibly rewarding, and thanks to the outstanding leaders and teams, relatively low-stress. Together, Team Leaders and I meet monthly with Fr. Brandon to plan for each liturgical season, and I am continually inspired by the steadfast commitment of these ministries.

- **Flower Ministry** – Barbie Rodgers and her team of three members dedicate many hours every Saturday to picking up flowers and creating beautiful seasonal arrangements. Their artistry and dedication bring life and vibrancy to our worship services, and I am deeply appreciative of their work each Sunday.
- **Vergers and Acolyte Ministry** —Shannon David leads a team of Vergers who play a crucial role in ensuring worship services run smoothly. This includes providing support to Fr. Brandon and conducting periodic training sessions for both Vergers and Acolytes to keep them informed and prepared for their responsibilities. Their behind-the-scenes work is vital to the seamless flow of our worship.
- **Usher Ministry**—Sandra Culver dedicates countless hours organizing and coordinating ushers for all services—from regular worship to seasonal events and funerals. She also manages the Oblation Bearers and supports other areas of the church as needed. Her attention to detail ensures that all who attend our services feel welcomed and cared for.
- **Music Ministry**—Nancy Smith, our Music Director, continued to lead and inspire us through her gift of music. Her ministry’s details are outlined in her report, but I want to express my gratitude for her leadership and the joy her work brought to our worship. We will miss her.
- **Broadcast Ministry**—Meg Davenport and her team provide consistent and reliable technical support for the broadcasting of the 10:45 am service to those members who cannot attend in person. She spends many hours maintaining the equipment, addressing technical issues, and always does so with a smile. The efforts ensure that our worship services reach beyond the church walls, keeping everyone connected.
- **Altar Guild Ministry**—Barbara Tedrow oversees a team of ten Altar Guild members who rotate responsibilities to prepare for Sunday Eucharist and Thursday Eucharist services. Volunteers dedicate countless hours to their roles., with two members often spending five hours each Sunday preparing the altar, maintaining candles and brass, and changing paraments as needed. Thursday services require approximately 1.5 hours of preparation. Months with a fifth Sunday add additional set up time.

Barbara’s leadership extends far beyond overseeing the team. She is a member of one of the teams and in addition, spends significant administrative time updating checklists, reworking schedules and coordinating rotations to ensure everything runs smoothly. Countless hours are spent for all the ministries for the changes in the seasonal calendar: services for Lent, Easter, Advent, and Christmas to name a few—often add three or four additional services in that week. Also, funerals and baptisms require additional responsibilities. Finally, three Altar Guild members form the Linen Team, rotating monthly to wash, iron, and fold linens correctly—a process that takes about 3.5 hours per week. Their diligence ensures that every detail is handled with reverence and care.

Gratitude and Invitation

I am immensely grateful for the dedication and extensive hours of service of each member in these ministries. Their multiple contributions create a welcoming and sacred space for worship, enabling us all to connect more deeply with God and one another.

If you feel called to serve in one of these ministries, we would love to welcome you! There are opportunities for everyone to get involved, whether you have an eye for floral arrangements, a passion for music, or a desire to serve behind the scenes. Please reach out to learn more about how you can join these vital efforts.

Thank you to everyone who makes our worship experience meaningful and inspiring each week.

The youth of ECOHS are a wonderful, fun, creative group! As always, you have them taking part in different ways, and spreading their talents through our community. We have a thriving Sunday school with attendance hovering between 5-7 each week. We have Crucifers and broadcast helpers. We have volunteers at Wendy's Place. We had our annual Pancake Supper on Shrove Tuesday, where the youth help to clean and to serve our parish. We always have a strong group of volunteers for VBS. We have had several movie outings and a movie afternoon held in the youth room. I am so pleased to say that we have had 6 youth confirmed this past December at the Cathedral. If you see any tweens and teens around, try to get to know them! They are a huge asset to our church!