

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 22, 2023



The Right Reverend Robert C. Wright, Bishop

The Reverend Brandon Thomas Mazingo, Rector

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After Jesus' resurrection, he was who he had always been, and yet was transformed. In some ways he looked different, and being around him felt different as people worked through their senses of loss. But, when they heard the same messages of love and compassion and mercy coming from him, they knew he was their beloved.

So, too, the Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit, as part of the Body of Christ, has undergone quite the transformation in the past year. Coming out of the pandemic, and processing the transitional loss of Father Keith and Mother Bonnie, this church looks different, and to some feels different, than it did before. But, the message of ECOHS is what it has always been: one of love, compassion, and mercy, and it is much beloved.

In this past year, we have renewed many of the old traditions of this parish that had been lost during the pandemic. In events such as the Fish Fry, the Red Door Festival, and the Parish Weekend at Camp Mikell, we honored the treasures of this church, but in ways that fulfilled our current needs.

Groups such as the Men's Breakfast Group have seen their numbers flourish in this past year. The recently founded Beloved Sisters women's group is thriving and has proven poignant and edifying for all those who attend. Our outreach through programs such as the Pantry, Family Promise, the Preschool, and our recovery groups continues to evolve and serve new and diverse people in our larger community.

We've had a tremendous number of new families join us in this past year, including many young children and babies. The community of young(er) adults and families continues to deepen as we grow together. In addition to the younger families, we've had many new members from all walks of life: singles, couples, families, young and old, gay and straight, and of various ethnic backgrounds. But, it's not all newcomers. Several who were once members are now coming again. And we all come together and find a home here, a place where we are loved and belong, and a place where we can encounter God.

Those who seek a deeper relationship are finding it in our thriving Education for Ministry classes, Theology Study, and Bible Study. It is a joy to see the light of revelation, insight, and inspiration kindled in the eyes of those who attend. Several have been moved to tears when they described their experiences in those classes, explaining how they now experience God in a deeper, more meaningful way. Truly, ECOHS is a place where God wills to be found.

This coming year will see more transition, more growth, and an entering into yet another new reality for us. Most recently, the flooding of many of our spaces has seen a return to our origins for us. As was the case when this church was founded a half century ago, we are gathered to worship again in the "octagon." It is such an intimate place, such a wonderful honoring of where we began, and a reminder of how far we have come. It helps us to remember what is truly important, and why we are here. It is the perfect way, I think, to begin our ramp up to our 50th Anniversary.

As many of you know, next year marks the 50th year of worship and service in this place. In all ways, Holy Spirit has been blessed and guided by its namesake. We are much larger in all aspects: building size, attendance, diversity, scope of outreach, breadth of activities, depth of experiences, and ways in which God is leading us. This year provides ample more opportunity to listen closely for where the Spirit is guiding us, as we rebuild from the flood, as we look back to see where we came from, and look forward to where we are going. The capital campaign is designed to allow us to respond freely and fully to wherever the Spirit is calling us. We will enter our 50th year far less encumbered, nimble and agile, ready to act in our gratitude and love.

A year ago, I wrote in my first annual report that I couldn't be more proud of this parish. Well, I was wrong. Each passing year just keeps getting better. I cannot wait to see what happens next!

Yours in Gratitude,
Brandon+

Senior Warden 's Report

Sylvia Cardona

Our year together has brought us many reasons to rejoice and be thankful, and some deep sorrow as well. We began in January with the continued need for precautions against the virus that upended life as we know it since 2020 and Father Brandon on paternity leave. A little "lost in the desert" if you will. Soon though, we were able to gather for fellowship and meals together- rejoicing in each other's company as we celebrated Shrove Tuesday in style!

In March our vestry gathered with Canon John Thompson Quartey to learn collaborative ministry practice, communication, goal-setting and accountability. We were encouraged to dream big dreams that we could only fulfill when God is able to step in, and spent some time discussing wonderful ideas around our 50th anniversary celebration in a few years.

Spring brought us a consistent influx of visitors and returning friends, and soon we were celebrating Easter's promise of a risen Lord. In May we were finally able to celebrate our newcomers (and not so "new" comers- since some had waited for 2+ years!). Summer brought children to ECOHS for VBS for the first time in two years- and those joyful sounds permeated all our souls, thanks be to God! Fall quickly came around, and with it, more "joyful noise"- with Julie's continued leadership of the preschool, it is thriving once again, hallelujah! Most ministries are back in full swing now too, and we even have new ones, like the big group of Beloved Sisters gathering- the Holy Spirit is hard at work here!

Despite a few false starts and scheduling hiccups, Father Brandon's installation finally took place in December and boosted the joy of Advent. Bishop Wright was inspiring as always, and our kitchen team pulled out all the stops with an unforgettable reception!

While 2022 has allowed us many joyful celebrations, we have had our fair share of challenges as well, including the loss of several beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, wonderful spiritual leaders who have helped shape who we are in our cores. We continue to adjust to being back in community and our expectations for ourselves and each other.

Our building is also starting to feel the years a bit, so a few things have had to be repaired which takes a toll on our funds- which is why I also wanted to begin this summary with a look at all the blessings that having this building creates. We are fortunate to have been able to build and maintain a safe space where we can love and support one another, and be the hands and feet of Christ in our community.

Thank you to my fellow vestry members for their hard work and dedication to this ministry- it is not an easy task- and we all sacrifice time, peace of mind and even heartache- to serve our community of faith and continue to forge a path forward together. Our meetings often ran long, as we have had a lot of "firsts" and "new" and "different" this year- but it has made us all closer and stronger, and is ultimately, a blessing I will always be grateful for.

I have learned some important lessons this year, and have matured in my faith in ways I did not expect. However, I am dealing with some personal challenges and I will need to leave the vestry after December, and I am sorry to not finish my term. I hope that my contribution has been felt this year, and while you all have reason to be disappointed, I have been overwhelmed by the outpouring of love and support. Our Holy Spirit family is generous, patient and kind- I am deeply grateful to each of you, and hope to continue to be of service as best I can in other ways.

Junior Warden's Report

Russ McClelland

It has been an honor and privilege for me to serve as Junior Warden with Sylvia and Father Brandon in what has been an exciting and at times challenging one for our church community. We have welcomed many new families and have grown our ministries, including the start of new ministries like the Beloved Sisters and the return of others like the Men's Breakfast Club and the Red Door Festival. We formally celebrated our new ministry with Father Brandon at his installation by Bishop Wright in December. We have the new challenge of restoring the sanctuary and other areas damaged by water from the sprinkler system pipes that burst on Christmas Day while continuing to worship and carry out our many ministries such as Family and Promise and recovery meetings that use our facility. As a community of faith, we have much to be proud of and much to look forward to in the coming year, especially as we approach our 50th anniversary as a parish in May of 2024. I have no doubt that, with God's help and with prayer, we will meet these challenges and take advantage of the opportunities presented to discern and carry out God's will for the Church of the Holy Spirit.

Building and Grounds

Jay Franklin, Chair, Dane Bohnstedt, Vestry Liaison

Our building and grounds ministry was a very busy organization in 2022.

First the bad news: We started off with a water line leak in the preschool play yard under the climbing equipment in January that required us to trench in a new line. Afterwards a crew made up from our Holy Mowers leveled the ground and spread new mulch so that the playground was quickly back in service. In the fall we had a series of pump failures on our septic system which pumps into the city sewer line. Through our contractor, Applewood Services, and working with the City of Cumming we determined that a check valve on the city's side had failed and causing the failures on our side of the system. We were able to finally get everything squared away with the city hopefully picking up the majority of the cost just in time for the Red Door Festival in October. Then on Christmas day, we had multiple pipe breaks from frozen fire suppression sprinkler systems that flooded areas in the narthex, nave, chapel, parish hall and preschool. We were fortunate to catch this before too much water spread to other areas and thanks to quick action by several parishioners on Christmas night we were able to get most of the standing water up. We are now into recovery and restoration of our facilities and hope to have everything back in full operation by the end of February 2023.

Now the good news: We now have a team of 10 full time Holy Mowers that work in pairs each week to mow our 9 acre site. Thanks to a generous donation from a parishioner at the beginning of 2022, we now have two Hustler zero turn mowers that make quick work of the mowing task. This allowed us to retire the old Ferris unit that was on it's last legs. With 5 pairs of mowing teams, no one has to mow more than once a month during our April through September season. We are also developing a group of Holy Trimmers to better address the task of keeping up with the gardens and trees on the grounds. This will be especially important now that Ildi Mezey has moved away and we won't have her help with the

gardens she established by the playground and back of the building. We had workdays in the spring and fall that allowed our volunteers to take care of many of the maintenance items in the building and on the grounds.

As we move into 2023 we hope to again have spring and fall work days that will help us take care of many of the smaller maintenance items that require on going attention. We will need to address a major issue we have with the retaining wall around the picnic pavilion that has rotted away and requires replacement right away. This will be a major expense for 2023. Volunteers and special donations are always welcome to help support this important ministry that allows our campus to function and look good.

Communications and Evangelism

Putnam Smith, Vestry Liason

At ECOHS we work hard to keep the Church family informed of the goings-on in the parish. Besides distributing bulletins and making public announcements at every service, we use Constant Contact to send email to the entire membership, including a weekly notice that goes out every Thursday covering the upcoming Sunday services and activities that includes copies of the Sunday bulletins and highlights special events. We also use Constant Contact to send out pastoral notices covering events including weddings and births and deaths in the parish, to alert the membership to upcoming special services, and to notify everyone of special events and outreach opportunities. We also use Sign-Up Genius to facilitate sign-ups for special events and to recruit volunteers.

Another shared communication device is our parish newsletter, The Dove. The Dove is published about every two months and circulated by email using Constant Contact. Hard copies are also available in the Parish Hall.

ECOHS has been active all year welcoming visitors who enter our red doors almost weekly. We now have a *Welcome Packet* for ushers and greeters (or anyone else!) to offer visitors who attend. These packets contain a welcome note, useful church ministry and contact information and a few special treats for our visitors. In the Spring, for the first time since 2019, we recognized 24 family units who've recently become regular attendees or new church members. We officially introduced them to the congregation and offered a special welcome and reception after worship.

Our Newcomers' Committee isn't just the committee of a few, but rather a committee of ALL OF YOU! The ECOHS family does an excellent job of making visitors feel at home when they enter our red doors. It's important we ALL continue to do our part to make new friends feel a part of our wonderful Church family.

Special and well-deserved thanks for their work in the Communications and Evangelism ministries go out to Sylvia Cardona, Beth Jones, Janice McClellan and Cathy Schlecht!

Children's Christian Education

Julie Wilson, Children's Ministries Director

We are thankful to have had a year back in the building with Christian Ed onsite and all the joyful things that includes from Vacation Bible School, Advent Evenings, Lenten Evenings and other Christian Ed traditions that take place during the Sunday School hour. Some of the things we look forward to are King Cakes as we head into Lent, an Easter Egg hunt, Sunday School Kickoff, Thanksgiving lessons and Christmas celebrations.

Children's Christian ed is one of the building blocks of our children's love and relationship with God! It's an hour on Sundays with other special times throughout the year to grow in our knowledge and love of God. It's time to be in relationship with each other and practice the love that God shares with us.

We try to engage our children in the different ways they learn. Through word, song, art, science, dance, play and curiosity... it is joyful hour of learning together and an important part of childhood where we set the habit and pattern of coming together to learn and worship together.

We meet weekly on Sunday mornings from 9:30-10:30 in the children's area. If you are not receiving emails from me pretty much weekly about our children's program, please reach out to me and share your email address with me so that I am sure to include you in our updates and plans for the week.

With love,
Julie Wilson
jwilsonjat@gmail.com

Music Ministry

Tom Elston, Music Director

The year 2022 was one of challenges, opportunities, and successes as the ECOHS music department navigated the ongoing recovery from COVID.

Throughout the year, the Adult Choir presented a mixture of full-ensemble choral works as well as small-ensemble and solo presentations from both the standard repertoire and the church's *Lift Every Voice And Sing* hymnal. This approach offered increased diversity while managing "workflow" as singers re-engaged their personal schedules and lifestyles.

In Lent, the sound of hand bells was heard regularly by special teams of volunteers who rang "bell introsits" at the start of our services. Musical settings of the Kyrie, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei from one of the first Anglican prayer books were presented *a cappella* to the chime of hand bells, which engendered a meditative and reverent atmosphere for worship. The choir fully engaged music for services in Holy Week despite unexpected COVID-inflicted absences. The Easter Day service featured the talents of a trombonist / euphonium instrumentalist, who played jubilant arrangements for hymns, service music, and the choir's main anthem at the Offertory.

In May, for the parish's namesake festival held at Pentecost, special music was presented by the choir in the form of the festal mass setting *Mass Of Joy And Peace*, which engaged the musical talents of Nate David, clarinet, and Cathy Morris, flute, a friend in Cumming's musical community.

The return to Fall featured a parish-wide event in August consisting of a spaghetti supper followed by a musical setting for Compline from the New Zealand book of common prayer. Young people were invited to ring hand bells during the singing of the Nunc Dimittis canticle, the main musical offering sung in that

liturgy. The event was well attended and helped to re-energize interest in community evening meals as a way to experience fellowship.

At our 9/11 First Responders service in September, the choir returned from its summer hiatus with a memorable presentation of *Loving Hands*, an anthem featuring full SATB singing with a solo obbligato part played by Cathy Morris, who returned to ECOHS offer flute playing throughout the service.

The parish's annual All Souls service, held in November, was presented in the form of an "all-sing" evensong service followed by the celebration of the Eucharist. The choir again offered Robert Fuehrer's setting of requiem mass excerpts, which were sung at the Offertory.

In Advent, we heard the return of the Schubert *Deutsche-Messe* setting of the service music, which had not been sung since the beginning of the pandemic. Despite the unexpected absence of the music director due to COVID, members of the choir, led by Jeff Daniel, did a wonderful job of presenting a pre-service concert of seasonal favorites in the form of solo, small ensemble, choral, and congregational singing

As we turn the corner into 2023, we are optimistic over the reformation of our ensemble, which has seen the addition of new singers with several veterans navigating a return to normalcy with time for singing included in their busy lives.

It goes without saying that ECOHS possesses a wonderful group of engaged, dedicated, and talented musicians who offer their ministry whole-heartedly and steadfastly. They are a pleasure to work with and lead, and I encourage anyone contemplating making music with us to join at a level and frequency that fits with your much-appreciated gift of time and talents.

Tom Elston

Music Director & Organist

Outreach

Donna Kukarola, Vestry Liaison

ECOHS continued to do what we do best, opening our hearts to the community spreading God's love and understanding. There are so many to acknowledge and thank, everyone that organizes, volunteers, donates – you are so valuable and appreciated. All are always welcoming volunteers/participants! Here is a brief update on the ministries for 2022:

Family Promise

This is an organization in our county that empowers families experiencing homelessness to achieve sustainable independence.

ECOHS is a host church of Family Promise participating in their Residential Program. We provide meals, hospitality and meals for one week, four times a year to homeless families trying to obtain stability.

In 2022 we served 13 adults and 26 children. Our schedule for 2023 begins the week of January 23 when 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, ECHOS coordinator at printzmidge@gmail.com or 407-399-4698.

In Stitches Ministry:

We meet every Wednesday morning from 9-ish to 12-ish in the Parish Hall. Apart from enjoying fellowship with all our group, we knit and crochet and sew items for various organizations:

Northside Forsyth: Baby hats (about 300 babies are born there each month)

Rainbow blankets (having lost a baby, a full-term baby is born)

Hats, fingerless gloves, scarves, seat belt covers for Cancer Patients.

Northside Main Campus: NICU baby blankets

Jasper Pregnancy Crisis Center: Blankets, hats, bibs, burp cloths

and GA Family Partners

Grady NICU: Baby blankets and hats

ECOHS Newcomers Group: Pocket Prayer cloths

ECOHS Pastoral Support Ministry: Prayer Shawls

We would love to welcome any new people to our group. We love to share our crafts and teach anyone who is interested in taking up a new interest. We would love to welcome you!

Please contact: Ro Woodhead at 404-435-2311 or 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. Between 190-215 children are served by this ministry.

The Pantry:

The Pantry operates out of Wendy's Place on the last Saturday of every month from 8-9. We distribute laundry detergent, diapers, wipes, and feminine products. In 2022 we added a specialty item each month such as paper towels, toilet paper, or shampoo. Supplies for the pantry are provided by donations of diapers and detergent as well as financial contributions. Each month around 40 families are served but it has increased in the last two months. We expect this trend to continue in the next year. We hope to get additional funding so we can continue to serve those in need in the community. For more information contact Fiona Norris 678-591-8325.

Angel Tree:

Angel tree served 25 children in the foster care system. The parish took 85 gifts off the tree and from sign up genius. We provided 25 children with Christmas! Contact Carol Franklin for more info.

Wendy's Bears

Started up again this year after a break due to the pandemic! 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 75 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 or 678 617 9349.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Kukarola

Honduras Mission

Jay Franklin, Team Leader

In 2022 we were able to once again travel to Honduras with a mission team in support of the LAMB Institute. It had been two and a half years since we had sent a team there because of the pandemic. Many restrictions were still in place and required us to mask when around the children at Casa Hogar (children's home). We had a small intergenerational team of only seven people including 5 associated with Holy Spirit and 2 from St. Davids in Roswell. The children we knew from past visits had grown so much but were really glad to see missionaries coming again to spend a week with them. They were literally kept in a bubble at Casa Hogar through the pandemic and there were no cases of Covid reported. We brought towels, shower shoes and pillow cases made by our In-Stitches group to share with the children and staff. Our focus was to repaint and upgrade the kitchen building at Casa Hogar and we accomplished the task. We also had the opportunity to visit the school in Flor del Campo, transition houses for youth that will or are going to university and see the Joy Academy where some of the children are attending school that is taught in English. We also had our traditional day out where we visited Valle de Angeles (Valley of the Angels) and purchased many items to bring back for our fundraiser in support of the upcoming 2023 trip in June. It was great to spend time again with the children and staff of LAMB and share Christ's light with them. Our next fundraiser dinner has now been delayed to March due to the damage that our church building suffered due to frozen and burst pipes.

Parish Life

Janet McDermott, Vestry Liaison

Parish Life at Holy Spirit has not only been resuscitated, but it has flourished and grown.

We experienced increasing attendance as a result of optional masking going into effect and we were safely returning to "normalcy". We were able to restart the Newcomer's Program, Women's Prayer Group, Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, Lenten Suppers an Easter Egg Hunt as well as Easter Brunch.

We were so blessed to be able to converge once again at Camp Mikell! What a joy it was to be able to have fellowship with our parish family and to create some many memorable moments!

Spring brought us Mother's Day champagne toast as well as Father's Day beer and pretzels.

Summer brought us Spaghetti Supper and New Zealand Compline as well as Karaoke and Game Nights in the parish hall.

With the fall came Kick-Off Sunday and our parish Preschool growing in numbers. Considering the resurgence of different strains of Covid, this was a difficult time of the year and we not only survived, but we also thrived!

We were also once again able to welcome homeless families back into our building with our wonderful Family Promise program. And as always, our parishioners rose to the occasion with many helping hands.

A new women's group, Beloved Sisters, was formed with a very positive response from the women of this parish. The Women's Prayer Walkabout added an additional way for the women of the parish to share their faith.

With our beautiful fall weather, we had a wonderful Red Door Festival with car show, bouncy house, food truck, face painting, and we must not forget those delicious, sweet treats graciously donated, once again, by our generous parishioners!

Following the 116th Annual Council meeting on November 11th and 12th, we had our vestry election and annual parish meeting on November 13th. Our vestry is stronger than ever, and we are all looking forward to serving the parish and delight in the growth and vitality!

It has been quite a year for Holy Spirit. With the loss of some of our beloved parishioners, we have also experience new births in our parish. We continue to grow with new members enrolling on a regular basis. We have a new, vibrant Rector who will lead us into our Golden Jubilee and beyond. This is a very exciting moment for us. We are a parish filled with strength and spirit and I look forward to the coming years at the little church on the hill with the red doors!

Pastoral Support

Julie Wilson

We are so thankful for the leadership Father Brandon has provided over the past year. Our pastoral support team is in place and we try our best to be responsive to the needs of our parish for prayer, pastoral visits, meals and anything that might ease a recovery, a particularly trying time or help celebrate a growing family. Pastoral Support 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. So thankful for the people of this team who actively serve as the hands and feet of Christ in caring and praying for our parish members and those they love.

Peace, Julie Wilson

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 will be raising our rates this year as we have not 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.

The unexpected flood over Christmas has provided a great opportunity to clean out and re-evaluate the myriad of supplies that we have collected and you have donated over the years. We are so thankful for the team that the insurance company has provided to get things dried out and up and running.

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.

Peace,
Julie Wilson

Youth Ministry

Shannon David, Youth Minister

The youth of ECOHS continue to be a small but dedicated group. We mostly consist of a core group of three, but a few others join us when they are able. We have had some graduate and some feel that the age gap is too large, so only attend occasionally. And that is fine - we are always here! We continue to serve the church through acolyting and assisting with sound and broadcast, through outreach like caroling, and sometimes attending Diocesan events such as Annual Council Lock-in and tubing on the Chattahoochee. Any and all support is appreciated as we adjust our way of fellowship to accommodate a smaller crowd.