



March 2026



Interim's Comments...

It is thrilling to read of the announcement of the calling of the Rev. Jonathan Chesney as our new Rector! I have not yet had the pleasure of meeting him and his family, but look forward to welcoming them all soon. I will remain as the Interim Priest in Charge into May, but the definite date is to be determined.

To that end, I look forward to continuing preparations for the congregation to embrace our shared ministry with Jonathan.

First and foremost, this is a time for you, the people of Holy Cross, to show up for worship and get involved in the many and varied ministries of our parish. This includes Adult Formation offerings and becoming aware of the various ministries essential to the ongoing life of our parish: Choir, Eucharistic Ministers for Sunday worship, volunteers for our Children's Sunday School and Chapel which has most recently been in place since 2021, Hospitality Committee, Building and Grounds Committee, Episcopal Church Women, Men's Night Out, Daughters of the King (see Kim Gauss), and the list goes on.

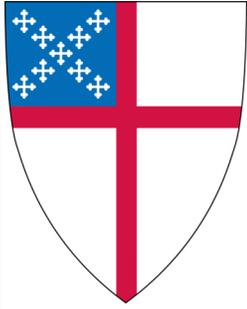
We are beginning training for Lay Eucharistic Visitors, who will be an invaluable cadre available to assist Jonathan in the growing need for pastoral visitations and the sharing of the reserved sacrament to the homebound and hospitalized. Related to this we will be revitalizing the Pastoral Care Committee (more on this ministry later).

Second, continue praying. Offer daily prayers of thanksgiving for the sacrificial ministries of the Transition Committee and Vestry over the past 18 months+. Offer prayers of healing for the many in our community who suffer, and for their caregivers. Pray for guidance for all as we live into the transitions that are part and parcel of our entering another blessed chapter in the long history of this parish in the Vale of the Cross!

In the words of Cris Greer, a deacon and friend of blessed remembrance here: "Straight ahead!"

God bless, and see you in church,

Father Scott +



Dear Sisters and Brothers of Holy Cross:

Holy Cross Episcopal Church joyfully announces the calling of **The Rev. Jonathan Chesney** as its new Rector.

After a very thoughtful and prayerful search process, the Vestry and Discernment Committee are delighted to welcome The Rev. Jonathan Chesney to lead our parish into its next chapter of worship, service, and spiritual growth. Fr. Chesney brings a deep love for the Gospel, a heart for pastoral care, and a strong commitment to community engagement and discipleship.

Throughout his ministry, Fr. Chesney has demonstrated a passion for preaching, teaching, and building vibrant, Christ-centered congregations. His leadership reflects a collaborative spirit and a desire to nurture ministries that serve both the church and the wider community.

Fr. Chesney will be joining us from the parish of the Holy Communion in Memphis, TN where he serves as Senior Associate Rector. A graduate of Virginia Theological Seminary, he has served in the Dioceses of Alabama, Chicago, and West Tennessee. Born in the Virginia Blue Ridge Mountains and long-involved in camp and conference center ministry, he shares a special love for community-oriented parish life in Appalachia, as well as our connections with the Valle Crucis Conference Center.

“We are excited about the gifts and vision Fr. Chesney brings to Holy Cross,” said parish leadership. “We look forward to growing together in faith, strengthening our ministries, and continuing to be a strong welcoming presence in our community.”

Fr. Chesney and his wife Alison (Ali) will join our Holy Cross family with their three children, Georgina (Georgi), Maisie, & Malcolm (their twins). Ali serves as a Garden Science teacher. We will be blessed to have them living in our rectory for the years to come.

The Chesneys plan to join us on June 1, with Fr. Chesney’s first Sunday celebrating with us being June 7. Please make plans to join us. More details about his first Sunday and opportunities to greet them will be shared soon.

Please join us in warmly welcoming The Rev. Jonathan Chesney and his family and keeping them in your prayers as they begin their ministry with us.

Welcome home to Holy Cross, Chesney family! We’re so glad you’re joining us!

The Vestry & Discernment Committee



Dear new friends at Church of the Holy Cross,

Greetings in Christ! I am overjoyed and deeply honored to have been called to serve as your next rector. We have already been warmly greeted several times with the phrase “welcome home to Holy Cross” and that welcome was in truth what drew me to your profile and parish. The space you made for school children and Methodist friends after their spaces were unusable post-Helene spoke to me of a people alive with the spirit of Christ’s call to love our neighbors, just the sort of place I hoped to join in ministry. Such Benedictine hospitality, welcoming all as Christ, only made sense when I learned about the first and early Anglican monastic society in Holy Cross’ history and spiritual D.N.A.

And I do feel a bit that I am coming home, even though I’ve never lived in North Carolina before. Born in the Virginia side of the Blue Ridge, though I did not live in them long, those mountains always felt like a homecoming. I feel blessed to be bringing my family to them. Ali, my wife, grew up in Waukegan, Illinois, though we met and married at Camp McDowell in Alabama. We spent a year in Chicago before Memphis, where I did a deep dive into pastoral care as an ER chaplain, and have spent the last seven years in Memphis, with me at Holy Communion, and Ali teaching gardening science at Hutchison School. We’re eager to make a new home in your gracious rectory, beginning a new chapter with our daughter Georgi, and our twin daughter and son, Maisie and Malcolm. Knowing we will live next to your beautiful church calls to my mind the words of the Psalmist, that even “the sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, at your altars, O Lord of hosts.”

Ali and I deeply value community and so will spend a little longer in Memphis this spring, finishing our work and saying goodbye well to the places and people among whom we have served and that have nurtured and supported us so well these past few years. And then, we will come to you with full and eager hearts, ready to jump into life at Holy Cross and in the high country. I will come to you ready to listen and look for the ways God will call us to serve and journey together and all those God will put in our path. I expect many joys, plenty of challenges, and above all, opportunities to live into and bear witness to God’s grace within and without us, that great work of Christian discipleship shared in the rhythms of our liturgy and tradition. Until then, know that I hold you in my prayers with thanksgiving and anticipation to be with you.



Yours in faith,
Jonathan+



The Interim's Notebook

"Pride and grace never reside in the same space." - Scottish proverb

"It is always easier to follow Jesus with our heads than with our feet." - Anon

"Prejudice always obscures the Truth; Bigotry twists, fights against and tries to kill it." - Scott O

-"Fanaticism consists of redoubling your efforts when you have forgotten your aim." - George Santayana



Birthdays

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Dan Shepherd | 17 Mike Galleher |
| 2 Suzie Long | 18 Henry McGuire |
| 3 Radie Armstrong | 19 Jennifer Henigin |
| 4 Joby Bell | 20 Lisa Griffin |
| 4 Bud Gerber | 24 Jim Toomey |
| 5 Daniel Love | 27 Bob Bondi |
| 10 Sibyl Pressly | 28 Alana Starkey |
| 10 Joe Underwood | 28 David Yates |
| 10 Jennifer Koenig | |
| 12 Dan Koenig | |
| 14 Gena Rankin | |
| 16 Art Yergey | |

Anniversaries

- March 4
Ann and Clint Iles
- March 5
Gerry and John Persad
- March 8
Janice and John LaCapra
- March 11
Faye and John Cooper
- March 22
Deborah and Mike Galleher
- March 24
John Goodrich and Mary Willis



Prayer List

Please keep these people in your prayers:

For Healing: Our injured and disabled military personnel, our veterans, all civilians harmed in conflict, and for Dayton C., Wendell S., Noyes L., Marilyn W., Gerry P., Rebecca M., Sam, Bill B., Julia M., Randy M., Shane B., Claire M., Tav G., Andrea M., Charles III, Kate M., Floyd T., Ray L., Leslie S., Suzie L., Pam C., Ann G., Rosalie G., Stuart T., Michael H., Laura B., Mike L., Ann I., Mike M., Susan M., Jacquie M., Arthur L., Coleman B., James C., Dylan C., David, Michael T., Nicole B., Steve S., Wayne W.

For those in Harm's Way: All who serve with the armed forces at home & abroad, all who serve in the Peace Corps, and all health & relief workers throughout the world.



Schedule of Services in Holy Week

March 29 – *The Sunday of the Passion*

- 8:00 am** The Liturgy of the Palms, Great Procession, and Holy Eucharist, Rite II
(quiet service with no music)
- 9:00 am** Valle Crucis United Methodist Church Service
- 9:45 am** Crafting of Palm Crosses in Skiles Hall
- 11:00 am** The Liturgy of the Palms, Great Procession, and Holy Eucharist, Rite II,
and the recitation of the Passion Story
(Sunday School is available during this service)
(This service is Live-Streamed via our YouTube Channel)

April 1 – *Holy Wednesday*

- 4:30 pm** “Mary’s Way of the Cross” – presented by Holy Cross DOK,
and Holy Eucharist
*The “Stations of the Cross” from Mary’s point of view, the mother of our Lord.
It is poignant, emotional, and beautifully stated. All are welcome.*

April 2 – *Maundy Thursday*

- 7:00 pm** Holy Eucharist with foot-washing and stripping of the altars
(This service is Live-Streamed via our YouTube Channel)
Silent vigil before the Blessed Sacrament 9:00 pm – midnight.

April 3 – *Good Friday*

- 12:00 pm** Walking the Stations of the Cross
- 7:00 pm** Solemn Liturgy for Good Friday
(This service is Live-Streamed via our YouTube Channel)

April 5 – *Easter Sunday*

The Feast of the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ

- 8:00 am** Festival Celebration of the Holy Eucharist, Rite II
- 9:30 am** Annual Parish Easter Brunch in Skiles Hall
- 11:00 am** Festival Celebration of the Holy Eucharist, Rite II
(Sunday School is available during this service)
(This service is Live-Streamed via our YouTube Channel)



Episcopal Church Women News

ECW will meet on **March 8th** in Skiles Hall **after the 11:00 service.**
Please join us as we will be discussing plans for this year's Easter Brunch.

March 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>1 8am & 11:00am Holy Eucharist Rite II Dan Shepherd's birthday</p>	<p>2 8:00pm "Online Compline Suzie Long's birthday</p>	<p>3 Radie Armstrong's birthday</p>	<p>4 Joby Bell and Bud Gerber's birthday Ann & Clint Iles anniversary</p>	<p>5 8:00pm "Online Compline Daniel Love's birthday Gerry and John Persad's anniversary</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7 Don't forget to set your clocks forward for tomorrow</p> 
<p>8 8am & 11:00am Holy Eucharist Rite II after 11am service Janice & John LaCapra's anniversary</p>	<p>9 8:00pm "Online Compline</p>	<p>10 Sibyl Pressly, Jennifer Koenig and Joe Underwood's birthday</p>	<p>11 John & Faye Cooper's anniversary</p>	<p>12 8:00pm "Online Compline Dan Koenig's birthday</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14 Gena Rankin's birthday</p>
<p>15 8am & 11:00am Holy Eucharist Rite II</p>	<p>16 8:00pm "Online Compline Art Yerger's birthday</p>	<p>17   5:30pm Men's Night Out Mike Galleher's birthday</p>	<p>18 Henry McGuire's birthday</p>	<p>19 8:00pm "Online Compline Jennifer Henigin's birthday</p>	<p>20 Lisa Griffin's birthday</p>	<p>21</p>
<p>22 8am & 11:00am Holy Eucharist Rite II Deborah and Mike Galleher's anniversary</p>	<p>23 8:00pm "Online Compline</p>	<p>24 Jim Toomey's birthday John Goodrich & Mary Willis' anniversary</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26 8:00pm "Online Compline</p>	<p>27 Bob Bondi and Alana Starkey's birthday</p>	<p>28 David Yate's birthday</p>
<p>29 Sunday of the Passion (Palm Sunday) 8am & 11:00am Holy Eucharist Rite II</p> 	<p>30 8:00pm "Online Compline</p>	<p>31</p>	<p>1 Holy Wednesday "Mary's Way of the Cross" 4:30pm Presented by Holy Cross DOK and Holy Eucharist</p> 	<p>2 Maundy Thursday 7pm Holy Eucharist with foot-washing & stripping of the altars</p> 	<p>3 Good Friday 12pm Stations of the Cross 7:00pm Solemn Liturgy for Good Friday</p> 	<p>4</p>



MEN'S NIGHT OUT

After a two month mid-winter hiatus, the **Men's Night Out** (MNO) group begins its TENTH year of brethren fellowship **from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 17** in the Party Barn at the home of Jim Zellner, located at 3664 Winkler's Creek Road in Blowing Rock, NC 28605. Parking is available, but carpooling is strongly encouraged. In honor of St. Patrick's Day, our meal will consist of beef and lamb shepherd's pie -- along with a poultry alternative, both infused with Guinness! -- with a fresh green salad, Irish soda bread, and dessert. As always, bring your favorite beverage to enjoy and share (think Irish whisky and beer). The suggested donation is \$10 per person and your RSVP is due **no later than 5:30 p.m. on Sunday, March 15** to KeithTMartin@gmail.com.

MNO is a monthly opportunity for brethren from within our parishes and throughout our community to enjoy an evening of fellowship together. Remember to bring your beverage of choice, but PLEASE RSVP by the due date. If you do not drive at night, need a ride to and/or from MNO, or are without reliable transportation for whatever reason, please let us know. We have participants from all over the High Country who would welcome your company and be happy to pick you up and deliver you safely home. **Come join us!**

SATURDAY, MARCH 14, 2026

Lent & the Gift of Imagination with Katerina Whitley Valle Crucis Conference Center

Come join us for an experience that will give new meaning to the sacred and challenging season of Lent. This Lenten Retreat will have a different focus than others you may have attended.

We will spend our time considering how the gift of Imagination can help us read the Bible with intelligence and a renewed understanding. We will learn about how the prophets imagined God's purpose for God's creation.

Enter more fully into the stories and emotions of the Passion with master teacher Katerina Whitley. The program will be in the beautiful, light-filled Johnson Hall, with lunch provided. \$65 covers an amazing facilitator, lunch, snacks, and program materials.

Please contact the Valle Crucis Conference Center to register for this workshop, or follow this link to sign up: <https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/lent-and-the-gift-of-imagination>.

Outreach

In January, there were 16 people who received assistance from MOC.

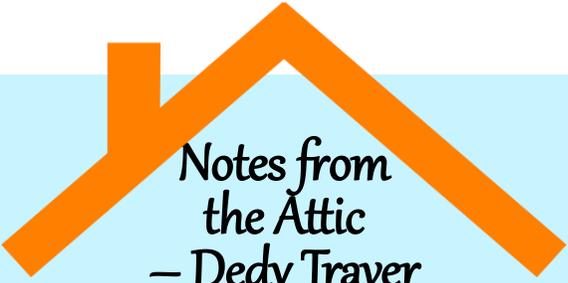
Utilities	7
Housing	5
Auto	2
Medical	2

Total Outlay: \$2,916

Greatest need was for utilities of electric heat, propane and kerosene and water. Second to that was help to pay rent due to missed work days. Weather played a role with both. Outlay is expected to be the same in February and March. Fair proceeds were received in the sum of \$83,000 which included a \$5,000 grant from the Watauga Arts Council thanks to Keith Martin who wrote the grant. Thanks for that, Keith!

Stay warm, folks!

Your MOC team— Niki, Vickie, Mary S., Sis, Martie, Kip, Roberta and Radie



Notes from the Attic – Dedy Traver

Have you heard of John Preston Arthur? He was born and educated in SC. He eventually moved to Asheville where he practice law. He eventually moved to Boone in 1912 where he lived in the Blair Hotel until his death in 1914. In the early 1900's he began working on his 710 page book, "*Western North Carolina – a history from 1730-1913*". The was published in 1913. He is a very descriptive writer and is a great view into mountain life in the 19th century. He delights in many topics and has much humor! So Notes this month are selections from Mr. Arthur's book on various topics in Watauga county.

The Weather - It is colder in Watauga both summer and winter than in any other county in the State, probably, with the exception of Ashe, Alleghany, Avery and Haywood. The "cold Saturday" was February 8, 1835. The date of the Big Snow cannot be fixed, except that on the 2nd and 3rd days of December 1886. But old people remember hearing of a snow that was so deep that all fences were obliterated from the landscape and deer were slaughtered by the score. On the 5th day of June, 1858, corn knee-high was killed in this county and all fruits and vegetables, while white-oak trees between Boone and Jefferson were killed outright, some of their stumps being still visible. There was a frost at Blowing Rock July 26, 1870, while on February 13, 1899, the thermometer went to fourteen degrees below zero. On the 15th of May, 1835, there was snow while land was being laid off for corn and sugar water was being boiled for maple syrup on Brushy Fork.

Agricultural - Patch farming was the rule for years, only small clearings being possible because of the sparseness of the population. Corn could not be raised at all for many years till the land was opened up to the sunlight. Owing to the stumps and roots, it was difficult to plough the ground at first, and the planting was done with the hoe. Gradually the land became warm enough to produce and mature corn or maize. Cabbages and all root crops flourished from the first settlement. Buckwheat and rye did well long before wheat, oats and other small grain began to thrive. Stock were fed on Irish potatoes and buckwheat, as is still the case in some places.

Long, red Irish potatoes were carried in the arm as are ears of corn, and horses get fat on them. Hogs were kept in the mountains all winter, as the mast rarely failed. When a very cold or snowy time came, corn was carried to these hogs, beds were made for them in sheltered places, under cliffs, and in caves of rocks, but for many it was literally a case of "root hog or die." Col. W. L. Bryan has a bronze medal and a diploma which were awarded to him at the Columbian Exposition for the best buckwheat. If a colony of Swiss could be induced to try their lot with us, they could demonstrate the fact that on our mountain slopes, properly terraced, we could raise grapes, fruit of all kinds, and goats and cattle without number. Cheese factories have been already established at Sugar Grove, June 5, 1915, and elsewhere. The factory at Sugar Grove was the first established in the South. It is already thriving. With a little harder work and more scientific methods, wealth would follow agriculture in Watauga.

Counterfeiters - From about 1857 and till 1875 or thereabouts a gang of counterfeiters and horse thieves carried on their business from Taylorsville to Cincinnati, Ohio. Boone was one of their headquarters. Dark and blood-curdling stories are still told of the secret murders and robberies which occurred in a house near Taylorsville, which stood near a body of water. It is said that the owner of this house enticed travelers to stop over-night with him and that they were never heard of again. When, years afterwards, the pond was drained saddles and bridles were found at the bottom, heavily weighted with stones. It was supposed that the horses were hidden in the woods till a favorable opportunity offered, when they were driven across the mountains to Cincinnati, Kentucky and Tennessee and sold. The basement of an old, unfinished house which had been built by W. F. Fletcher, framed and covered, was used as a hiding place for the horses as they passed through Boone,

Continued...

Notes from the attic continued....

being tied under that dilapidated building during the nights they stayed in that town. When the dwelling of the man living near Taylorsville was removed after his death, skeletons of human beings were found underneath the floor. A woman saw a man chasing another near this house at dusk one evening, and reported the facts to the sheriff. Investigation revealed nothing but tracks, but when the road was changed later on, a human skeleton was found buried near a ford under the bank of a creek. About 1872 or 1873 Watauga County was flooded with counterfeit ten-dollar bills on the Bank of Poughkeepsie, of New York. They were thick, badly printed bills and were far too green in color to deceive experts, but they passed current here for some time. The house in which these men congregated at intervals stood near the present site of the county court house till about 1883, when it was removed



Will you help with this year's Valle Country Fair?

The VCF team has a few vacancies this year. Can you help? These roles do not take much time, most are physically low impact AND are critically important to the success of the fair.

Volunteer Coordinator:

The main task is to match volunteers with our Holy Cross booths that needs extra hands. You will work directly with the Fair Chairs and Booth Leadership to help them fill volunteers for the day of the Fair. Most of the work can be done by email and phone calls. The volunteer coordinator is present on Fair Day in the volunteer tent to help direct volunteers. Find a friend to assist and lighten the load!

Road Signs

This person finds a friend or two and puts up banners and signs along roadways 3-4 weeks before the fair then takes them down the Sunday after the fair. This job takes 3-4 hours at the most and goes faster with more people. This work is somewhat physical but requires no heavy lifting. Bob Gates has all the information on exactly where the signs go, and the Gates will train you. Easy peasy.

Outside Vendors

This person will shadow our current outside vendor coordinator (Trish Lanier) this year and will take over this leadership role in 2027. This coordinator works directly with non-Holy Cross food vendors (examples include the kettle corn vendor, funnel cake vendor, etc) to schedule their attendance, share information with the layout chairperson and answer questions as needed. This work is physically low impact.

Please contact Tracey Heiss (703) 919-9767 and Julie Gates (704) 906-2269 by emailing them at vcf.chairs@gmail.com or by calling directly. Thank you for your consideration!



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[Diocese of Western North Carolina](#)
The Rt. Rev. José McLoughlin, Bishop

[Clergy & Staff](#)

The Rev. Dr. Scott A. Oxford, Interim Priest-in-Charge
Shane Watson, Director of Music
Ahren Koenig, Parish Administrator

[Vestry](#)

Nina-Jo Moore (2028), Senior Warden
Randy McDonough (2028), Junior Warden
Doris Boulton (2026), Catherine Morton (2026 – completing term), Angela Williams (2026),
Radie Armstrong (2027), Derek Eggers (2027), Sis Kinney (2027), John Goodrich (2028)

[Officers](#)

Jan Skopecek, Treasurer

Dedy Traver, Clerk

Church of the Holy Cross
PO Box 645
Valle Crucis, NC 28691

