



July 2026



## Rector's Corner

Dear Friends,

Thank you! Thank you for the warm welcome and reception of my family and I, for offers to help as we settle in, for your tips on life in the high country, your popping by the office to say hello, your taking me up on my request to invite me to visit you at home, or grab a coffee or lunch, or wherever else. I look forward to continuing to get to know each of you, let's connect!

There is a lot to learn and catch up on and begin to think about as I join in alongside the long history of good stewards and disciples who have served here, and I'm grateful to be joining all those who serve in the many various ways so many of you do! I'm also grateful the core of my calling as a priest in God's Church remains the same: to love you.

To call us all to love those around us and all those we encounter. To let Christ's light shine through us and through our actions and share the Good News of his grace and mercy, available to all, as a beacon in these mountains.

I've been moved in celebrating the Eucharist in our beautiful church and at St. John's; we have a real gift in these thin places God has called us to, and to which God continues to call people! I've marveled at the many visitors that come over to spend some quiet time in prayer in our church from the Conference Center (what a powerful ministry it is to be able to keep our building open for those seeking a holy place.) In addition to our members and the usual summer visitors, I've met newcomers looking for a church home or seeking some new relationship to God in their lives. God is still active and I think the future for our ministry at Holy Cross is bright. I'm excited to consider new and renewed ways to welcome those whom God might be calling to join us here and excited to explore strategies for mission with you as we move forward into our work together. I'm eager to connect to our neighbors and partners in mission and ministry and just see what all the Lord might have in store for us.

I've never had a newsletter before, so right now I'm launching out with my thoughts as I've only just begun to get my legs under me here. I'd also love to know what sorts of things you'd like to hear about, learn about, explore and reflect upon together. There's a lot of ways to do that, but I do enjoy writing and so this space is certainly one way for that. Let me know what you think and what you're hungry for, both in this regard, and regarding anything about our parish life!

Again, thank you. See you in Church. Invite a friend!

God bless you,

*Fr. Jonathan* (you can call me Jonathan)



## Birthdays

- |                      |                     |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Bob Capps          | 22 John Cooper      |
| 1 Eric Buermann      | 24 Seth Creech      |
| 3 Dave Gignac        | 26 Bob Darst        |
| 4 Kim Baker          | 26 Susan Howard     |
| 4 Richard Reeves     | 26 Nancy McInnes    |
| 6 Al Dasher          | 26 Julie Gates      |
| 8 Joyce Forsythe     | 26 Christian Harris |
| 8 Mary Jane Major    | 27 Sam Yates        |
| 9 Blaine Paxton Hall | 27 Alex Poorman     |
| 10 Janice LaCapra    | 30 Ann Gerber       |
| 12 Katherine Collier | 30 Pan McCaslin     |
| 14 Graham Browning   | 30 Angela Williams  |
| 19 Shane Watson      | 31 Pat Underwood    |
| 21 Patsy Townsend    | 31 Sarah Jordan     |
| 21 Mike Alford       |                     |

## Anniversaries

July 3  
Mary and Frank Watson

July 12  
Gini and Mike Halus

July 13  
Beth and Ed Beck

July 23  
Mary Jane and John Dewees

July 27  
Pat and Joe Underwood

## Prayer List

*Please hold these people in your healing prayers*

**For Healing:** Our injured and disabled military personnel, our veterans, all civilians harmed in conflict, and for Dayton C., Wendell S., Noyes L., 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., Leslie S., Suzie L., Pam C., Ann G., Rosalie G., Stuart T., Michael H., Laura B., Linda B., Mike L., Mike M., Susan M., Jacquie M., Arthur L., Coleman B., David, Michael T., Wayne W., Sally, Bob C.

**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.



# MEN'S NIGHT OUT

## JULY 21

### MNO Participants Become R.O.M.E.O.S. on Tues., July 21st in Boone!

For the first time in our ten year history, **MNO** will be hosted by our Jewish brethren at the **Temple of the High Country** in Boone. They call themselves the "R.O.M.E.O.S" (**R**etired **O**ld **M**en **E**ating **O**ut) and our primary hosts Howard Brafman and Kurt Love look forward to welcoming us from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, July 21 at 1043 West King Street. The meal will be catered by Chef Pauly from Boca Bistro at a cost of \$12 per person. As always, bring your favorite beverage to enjoy and share, and carpooling is strongly encouraged with overflow parking across Poplar Grove Connector at the N.C. Cooperative Extension ("Ag Center").

**MNO** is a monthly opportunity for men from within our parishes, faith centers, and in our community to enjoy having an evening of fellowship together. We're very flexible and inclusive, so feel free to bring a friend... *or three!* To let our gracious hosts know how many will be in attendance, please RSVP by noon on Sunday, July 19 via email to [KeithTMartin@gmail.com](mailto:KeithTMartin@gmail.com).

If you do not drive at night, need a ride to and/or from MNO, or are without reliable transportation for whatever reason, simply 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!*

### MNO Sets All-Time Record Attendance Mark!

Perhaps it was the unprecedented gathering of all three Episcopal priests in the Watauga County -- two of them meeting each other for the very first time -- that generated a record turnout, or perhaps the Italian feast prepared by three star Michelin Chef Aidan Waite, but a record 67 brethren from at least a half dozen faith communities, along with other friends and guests throughout the High Country, joined in fellowship at St. Mary of the Hills Church in Blowing Rock on June 16. Our esteemed founder, the late Ray Lutz, would be so proud that MNO has kept his vision flourishing all these years. Pictured, from left to right, are our host, Rev. Andrew J. Hege from St. Mary of the Hills, Rev. Jonathan Chesney from Holy Cross/St. John's, who began his ministry here on June 1, and Rev. Mike Alford, whose first Sunday in the pulpit at St. Luke's is July 5. Our next MNO gathering is on July 21 at the Jewish Temple of the High Country in Boone. *(Photo credit: Keith Martin)*



# July 2026

Sun

Mon

Tue


Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

*(From July 26: Bob Darst, Julie Gates, Nancy McInnes, Christian Harris and Susan Howard's birthday)*



5 Holy Eucharist 9:00am St. John's 11:00am Holy Cross

6 8:00pm "Online Compline" Da Al Dasher's birthday

7

8 Mary Jane Major and Joyce Forsythe's birthday

9 8:00pm "Online Compline" Blaine Paxton Hall's birthday

10 Janice LaCapra's birthday

11

12 Holy Eucharist 9:00am St. John's 11:00am Holy Cross Katherine Collier's birthday & Gini and Mike Halus' anniversary

13 8:00pm "Online Compline" Ed and Beth Beck's anniversary

14 Graham Browning's birthday

15

16 8:00pm "Online Compline"

17

18

19 Holy Eucharist 9:00am St. John's 11:00am Holy Cross Shane Watson's birthday

20 8:00pm "Online Compline"

21  5:30-7:30pm Men's Night Out Mike Alford and Patsy Townsend's birthday

22 John Cooper's birthday

23 8:00pm "Online Compline" John and Mary Jane Dewees' anniversary

24 Seth Creech's birthday

25

26 Holy Eucharist 9:00am St. John's 11:00am Holy Cross

27 8:00pm "Online Compline" Alex Poorman and Sam Yates' birthday Pat & Joe Underwood's anniversary

28

29

30 8:00pm "Online Compline" Ann Gerber, Angela Williams, and Pan McCaslin's birthday

31 Sarah Jordan and Pat Underwood's birthday

4  4th of July Kim Baker and Richard Reeves' birthday

# Outreach

**(June 10)** Your Outreach team is tightening our belts due to very large increase in calls. We have reduced our assistance to \$250 max. We had a discussion about denials and have stopped helping those who are months in arrears with their bills. The likelihood of stabilizing financial status with \$250 when \$2,000 is owed is not good. We have ceased paying for car payments. Our lens now is, “Is the request an emergency issue? Does it involve medical need? Will giving assistance solve a problem or just forestall consequences that are inevitable?” Our team is on the ball and dedicated to stretching our funds to continue serving Watauga, Avery and Ashe residents, provide community grants and have a buffer to carry over into the next year before Fair proceeds are available. We are alert to the needs and are monitoring our resources closely. Say a prayer.

**(July 1)** Midpoint. Thank you and congratulations to each member of the Mission and Outreach team. After an intense June meeting in which we realized we cannot have \$7,000 months and still be solvent, MOC had a June in the \$6,000 range. We are helping only those with true emergencies now. Our greatest requests are for help with rent and utilities. We meet this month to decide community grants and we are confident we can support grants in keeping with what we have given in prior years. We are walking a tightrope, but so far, no one has tumbled. We appreciate the support we have had from the Vestry and Fr. Jonathan. Thanks to those who have donated to the MOC coffers, those who have included us in prayers for wise decisions, and for your trust in this team. He hears and He sees. He is with us.

Those helped in June:

Housing	9
Utilities	11
Automotive	1
Medical	0

*Your MOC team— Judy Bondi, Sis Kinney, Niki Craig, Vickie Traynum, Mary Stolberg, Martie Thompson, Kip Kingree, Roberta Gates and Radie Armstrong*

## Valle Country Fair

Hi friends!

Work on the 2026 Valle Country Fair continues as we are four months away from the *big day*. Many thanks to all who help make the fair a success.


We are searching for four (4) volunteers to work directly with Margaret Love and her staff at the Valle Crucis Conference Center taking money as cars enter the parking area on Saturday / Fair Day. If you are interested and would like more information about this volunteer opportunity, please contact Julie Gates at 704-906-2269.

We encourage and welcome any general volunteer hours you might be willing to give this year's fair. Our beloved community event needs you. Please contact Julie or Tracey at [vcf.chairs@gmail.com](mailto:vcf.chairs@gmail.com).

### Holy Eucharist and Healing Services

For summer months, Holy Cross will resume offering a reflective evening service of Holy Eucharist with healing prayer **at 5:15 pm on the last Wednesday of the month**. All are welcome.





## Notes from the Attic – Dedy Traver

In July 1925 the cornerstone of our Holy Cross Church was put in place with the building being completed in 1926. Last year we had a wonderful summer long celebration commemorating that event. The first service in our current sanctuary was July 12, 1926. How many of you have looked at the cornerstone for Holy Cross Church? Did you know that Floyd Townsend's father, Lewis Townsend, was present for the event? Lewis helped to put items in the cornerstone! See if you can find the cornerstone next time you are at church! Most of this information comes from a book [Historical Sketches-Diocese of Western NC](#) by James B. Sill.

In July 1923, after four years without a rector, The Rev. J. Preston Burke came to Valle Crucis to assume charge of the Mission School and the Chapel of the Cross (Holy Cross). Mr. Burke was from Lincoln County, a graduate of Christ School, Arden and of the Western Theological Seminary, Chicago. He was ordained to the ministry by Bishop Joseph Blount Cheshire (the granite cross on top of the church is in memory of him). Prior to coming to Valle Crucis he had served four years as rector of St. Thomas' Church, Reidsville, NC. When he came in 1923 to Valle Crucis the number of communicants listed was 86. Rev Burke was also in charge of the missions at St. John's, Dutch Creek, and the church at Blowing Rock. In November 1923 the Mission School newsletter listed reasons why a new church building was needed: "Our present building is unsightly, badly located and quite inadequate for our needs. It is almost filled by the children of the Sunday School. An average of between 15 and 20 people are confirmed here yearly. Valle Crucis is fast becoming a popular summer place. Many people were turned away from the village boarding house this summer. Our School is growing in size and usefulness." In the October 1924 newsletter there was an architect's plan for a proposed new church building, which shows that Mr. Burke was not slow in promoting what he felt was a great need for the developing of the work of the Mission and School. A Ways and Means Committee of the Mission was formed for building a new church, The committee was Rev. Burke as chairman, Mr. T.D. Heffner, C.E. Welch, W.W. Mast, Lawson Townsend, Dr. H.B. Perry, C.D. Taylor, Lee Tester and Duke Tester. The committee issued a leaflet, "A New Church for Valle Crucis", which explained the need of a new building and asked for subscriptions towards its building. The leaflet was sent to friends of the Mission. It says that "The people (of Valle Crucis) are devoted to the Church through years of associations. They are eager for a New Church, and are willing to do all that their limited means will permit." Miss Virginia Bouldin was treasurer of the Church Building Fund. A stone structure was planned. At the laying of the corner-stone in July 1925 Bishop Horner officiated and there were two other bishops present, Bishop Cheshire of North Carolina and Bishop Finlay of Upper South Carolina. Bishop Cheshire spoke of the past days of the Mission, referring to his part in the reviving of the Mission in 1895, after the work connected with it had been dormant a few years. It was a noteworthy incident that four generations of the Townsend family were present at the ceremonies of laying the corner-stone, all Church members, and each depositing something in the stone, one a New Testament, another a Prayer Book, another a Hymnal, and the other a list of communicants. This was an outward token of the eighty years history of the Mission. The New Church was opened for its first service in 1926. The Rt. Rev. Edwin A. Penick, Coadjutor Bishop of North Carolina, preached the first sermon in the church on July 12, 1926

The church building was designed by Mr. Harold Macklin of Macklin and Faught, Architects of Winston-Salem. Mr. Macklin came from England and the style of architecture shows in this building. Mr. Macklin said, "The style of architecture is English – no squares, no glass geodomes, no linoleum floor. It is a church and looks like a church."

The woodwork for the Sanctuary and Chancel, including the beautiful altar of native oak, was the gift of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Taylor of Asheville and given in memory of Eli Springs Blackwood. You will notice a plaque to the left of the altar. A handsome altar set consisting of the brass cross, vases and Eucharist candlesticks was placed

*Continued...*

*Notes from the Attic continued...*

in the church and blessed on Sept. 12, 1926 in memory of The. Rev Lee Frontis Anthony, Priest-in-Charge of Holy Cross in 1918. He had a short tenure at Valle Crucis but was beloved by all of the people in the valley. He died January 1919 during the flu epidemic.

A notable mark of Mr. Burke's ministry at Valle Crucis was his acting as host to the Summer School for Church School teachers and others held there in the years 1924-1927. This was under the direction of the Diocesan Committee on Religious Education, of which Rev. J.W.C. Johnson of Gastonia was chairman. It was sponsored by the Dioceses of North Carolina and Upper South Carolina as well as by our own Diocese. As we know now, this school was the forerunner of what has become the Kanuga Conferences. Mr. Burke was foremost in the Diocese in the promotion of religious education. Much credit is due in those early days to Mr. Johnson's interest in getting a summer school started at Valle Crucis, which proved successful in every way. Communicant members numbered 106 on Mr. Burke's leaving Valle Crucis, when he accepted a call to become rector of St. James' Church, Hendersonville (He left in 1927 or 1928).

### ***Summer Food Ministry: Our Families Need Us***

This summer, we are once again partnering with the Valle Crucis United Methodist Church to provide food assistance to families in our community. The need is greater than ever.

Last summer, we served 6 families. This year, we have **11 families in need** — nearly double from last year. With rising grocery and gas prices, many families are struggling to provide enough food during the summer months when children no longer have access to school meals.

Every two weeks, an email will be sent with a link to an online sign-up sheet for requested food items. Because we are serving 11 families this summer, our list of requested items is significantly larger. We will provide 4 food deliveries throughout the summer and appreciate your support in helping us meet these growing needs.

**If you sign up for an item, please honor that commitment.** Our distributions are planned based on promised donations, and when items are not brought, families may go without food they desperately need. Food items will be collected on shelves set up in Skiles Hall.

Thank you for helping us be the hands and feet of Christ by caring for our neighbors during this critical time.



### ***Staff Transition***

With a mix of sadness for us and joy for him, we share that our Director of Music, Shane Watson, has accepted a new position at Arizona State University. His last Sunday with us will be July 19. Details below and forthcoming about how we'll celebrate his time with us and wish him well, but in the meantime, please wish Shane congratulations on an exciting next step in his career and thank him for sharing his gifts with us at Holy Cross.

On Sunday, July 12 we will have a parish send off for Shane after church. There will be cookies (regular, GF and sugar free) with charcuterie on the table. Please bring an appetizer, or a plate of sandwiches, fruit or dessert to share. We'll supply a cake, tea and lemonade. Don't forget our GF and sugar free friends who need food, too!

*(photo credit Stacey Bulmer)*





Holy Cross Episcopal Church  
PO Box 645  
Valle Crucis, NC 28691

[www.holycrossvallecrucis.net](http://www.holycrossvallecrucis.net)  
email: [holy\\_cross@skybest.com](mailto:holy_cross@skybest.com)

Diocese of Western North Carolina  
The Rt. Rev. José McLoughlin, Bishop

Clergy & Staff

The Rev. Jonathan C. Chesney, Rector  
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), Paul Cribbins (2027 - completing term), 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**



**July Newsletter**