



December 2024



Dear Holy Cross,

It has been such a joy to live in the mountains these past weeks, the beauty of the snowfall and the winter fun have reminded us of a small part of why we chose to be here with you. Your welcome and embrace of us are the larger part.

The snow brings to mind that we are in the midst of Advent and Christmas. I request two things of you in this season. First, is to take some time to sit with those things that are unresolved in your heart. This is Advent work. It may be some new trouble, or old broken relationships. This season is an opportunity to wonder how God might restore those things and to live hopeful lives, anticipating the many ways Christ will come to us.

My second request is that as visitors come to marvel in the wonder and beauty of this place, especially on Christmas Eve, we refrain from jokes about “Christmas and Easter Only people”. Any time a person chooses to be a part of our worshipping community and to be present with us, it is a gift to us, it is Christ’s self in our midst.

Advent Blessings to you,

*Rev Robert Hartmans* (you can call me Robert)



## Birthdays

|                         |                   |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| 2 Walter Pitts          | 17 Grace Alford   |
| 2 Tracey Conway         | 17 Jacob Alford   |
| 3 Jim Reed              | 17 Dawn Anderson  |
| 6 Steve Smith           | 21 John Harris    |
| 7 Joe Harmon            | 24 Denise Bentley |
| 9 Katerina Whitley      | 25 Derek Eggers   |
| 11 Mary Armstrong       | 27 Jim Logan      |
| 11 Dennis Carlton-Jones | 29 Debbie Stewart |
| 11 Lee Rankin           | 29 Bill Morgan    |
| 12 Paul Cribbens        | 30 Pat LeVarge    |
| 13 Noyes Long           | 30 Wendell Seaver |
| 15 Ron McInnes          | 30 Terry Fulton   |

## Anniversaries

December 7  
Judy and Bob Bondi

December 28  
Dottie and Bill Hancock



### Prayer List

*Please keep the following in your prayers:*

**For Healing:** Our injured and disabled military personnel, our veterans, all civilians harmed in conflict, and for Dayton C., Laura B., Wendell S., Noyes L., Marilyn W., Gerry P., Rebecca M., Sam Y., Bill B., Roberta T., Gail T., Julia M., Walter B., Randy M., Shane B., Claire M., Sara P., Tav G., Andrea M., Charles III, Mack G., Janis B., Steve S., Nick H., Pat & Linda H., Kate M., John N., Floyd T., Ray L., Leslie S., Hope L., David S., Terry & Jean M., Suzie L., Pam C., Mary M., Cornelia S., Ann G., Mary Jane M., Dave & Pat P., Jan H., Kelly C., Jesse H., Joe U., Rosalie G.

**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.



***Special Announcement:***  
**105th Annual**  
**Hanging of the Greens!**  
**Sunday, December 22**  
**at 12:30PM**



Just as they have for the past 104 years, all parishioners and friends are invited to gather for the annual Hanging of the Greens in advance of Christmas. We need as many people as possible to help transform the décor of our beloved church from the somber tones of Advent to the glorious brightness of Christmas. We plan to green the church on Sunday, December 22 at 12:30pm following the 11am worship service. We will need to put up the pew candle holders, window candle holders, fill the candles with oil, hang the wreaths. There are jobs for everyone. So, bring your clippers and a lot of enthusiasm! The garlands and wreaths are purchased but we need folks to find greenery such as fir, white pine, Galax leaves, boxwood, etc. and bring it to the church **by Saturday, December 21st.**

Please let Dedy Traver know if you can help. She may be reached at 898-5771 or email [traverarms@yahoo.com](mailto:traverarms@yahoo.com).

We will provide soup and sandwiches in Skiles Hall.

If you can bring a pot of soup or make a tray of sandwiches, please let Dedy know.



***CHRISTMAS AT HOLY CROSS:***

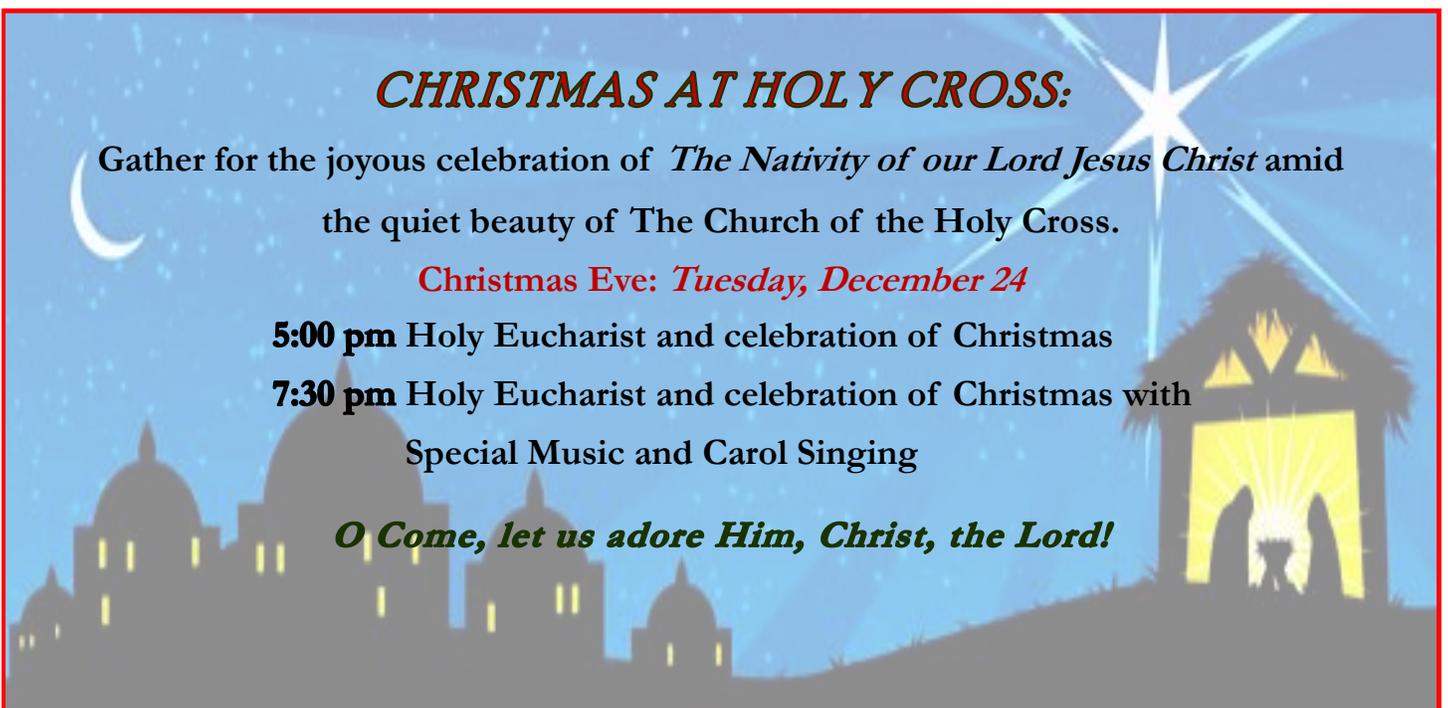
Gather for the joyous celebration of *The Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ* amid the quiet beauty of The Church of the Holy Cross.

**Christmas Eve: Tuesday, December 24**

**5:00 pm** Holy Eucharist and celebration of Christmas

**7:30 pm** Holy Eucharist and celebration of Christmas with Special Music and Carol Singing

***O Come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord!***





Thanksgiving had a special meaning for MOC this year! Mission and Outreach and all the people they serve are thankful to Tav Gauss and the good people of Holy Cross Community (and beyond) for their generous donations since Hurricane Helene impacted Western North Carolina on September 27. Devastation from that storm will impact our neighbors for a long time and we are just beginning to feel their need. We are ready, thanks to all of you.

We are ending this year with \$46,000 in reserve from the 2023 Fair. With what Tav has brought in MOC will be able to fulfill our usuals “asks”, follow up with our heating project, and possibly provide for some nonprofit grants. This is beyond expectation since the loss of the Valle Fair severely limited our outlay for Watauga and Avery Counties.

We spend approximately \$40,000 a year on the requests that come for help with rent, car repair, utilities, medical needs and other related assistance requests. We spent \$40,000 in grant monies in 2024. The remaining \$30,000 was intended for a heating project. Until this time, Holy Cross MOC partnered with other churches and agencies to pay the large bills for oil and propane tank fill ups. Some of our partners are tapped out. Others are happy to assist but their resources are carefully given with need as great as it is. Our callers would have to procure pledges from 2-4 other sources for us to release our funds to the energy companies. With the reserve from 2023 the intention of MOC was to fill oil and propane tanks for 31 households. Now, with the help from your donations, MOC is able to assist those without heat, and those needing hurricane relief with rent deposits (FEMA does not cover deposits), contribute to car repair, assist with rent to the newly unemployed, and provide gas cards for those transferred out of town from companies flooded and closed here. We refer those people to other agencies for food and clothing, heaters and furniture and those needing social workers and counselors.

If anyone in the parish desires access to our expenditures, guidelines for assistance, or has questions about funds or operation, please let me know. I would be happy to make a group presentation or sit with you personally to answer your questions.

There was a great discussion when Fr. Robert invited me to present MOC doings and status after church a few weeks ago. I welcome your inquiries and most definitely your support.

Thank you, Heavenly Father, for challenges and for the energy and resources to meet them. God is good!

**MOC members wish each you peace, hope and joy this season!**



Holy Cross MOC members

*Judy. Sis. Niki. Roberta. Ann.. Beth J. Vickie. Martie. Kip. Mary S.. Mary Jane. and Radie*



## MEN'S NIGHT OUT

The final *Men's Night Out* gathering for 2024 -- and the conclusion of our eighth year of fellowship -- is a festive holiday gathering and "roast beast feast" beginning with BYO cocktails **at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, December 17** in the dining room at the historic Valle Crucis Conference Center with dinner served promptly at 6:15 p.m. Remember that after this meeting, we'll be taking a two-month hiatus over the winter season, resuming in March 2025.

We're repeating the v-e-r-y popular menu from last year created by then-chef Nick (or "Poet Fernando," as you'll see from this vivid description) consisting of pot roast, or "USDA Prime chuck roast tenderly bathed and simmered until it's a melt in your mouth consistency in a rich stock containing carrots, onions, garlic, thyme, and sage (with a savory chicken option for non-beef eaters) accompanied by Yukon gold mashed potatoes, creamed and herbed, Southern classic green beans with butter, salt and pepper, accompanied by rustic oven warm wheat rolls, and a splendidly sumptuous salad bar serving all the favorites with a choice of dressing, and... spiced fruit cobbler served warm with vanilla ice cream for dessert, plus coffee, tea, water, and juices," but please remember to bring your favorite libation. ***Yum!*** The cost is a suggested **\$22** contribution per person.

In light of the holiday spirit, and in honor of VCCC providing such heroic hurricane relief assistance and a welcoming home to Valle Crucis School, MNO participants are asked to prayerfully consider a contribution above and beyond that amount in support of VCCC's unparalleled "Ministry of Hospitality."

MNO is an opportunity for men from within the parish 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! In order to let our gracious hosts know how many will be in attendance from Holy Cross, please RSVP by noon on Tuesday, December 11 (note the early deadline) via email to [KeithTMartin@gmail.com](mailto:KeithTMartin@gmail.com) by text or phone to (704) 608-2755.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** 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. Please join us.



### It's **ANGEL TREE** Time!

- Bring your wrapped and tagged gift(s) to Skiles Hall.
- All gifts and teacher gift cards need to be delivered to Skiles Hall **no later than Sunday, December 8.**
- For those buying gifts for Life Care Persons please add a few nice toiletries (lotions, creams, body washes, etc.)

THANK YOU so much for your help!

# December 2024

| Sun   | Mon   | Tue   | Wed   | Thu   | Fri  | Sat  |
|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|
| <p>1 <b>1st Sunday of Advent</b>  <b>10am Parish Brkfst Chili &amp; Jelly Sale</b><br/>11am Holy Eucharist</p>                   | <p>2 <b>8:00pm Online Compline</b><br/>Tracey Conway and Walter Pitts' birthday</p>                 | <p>3 <b>9am Morning Prayer</b><br/>Jim Reed's birthday</p>  | <p>4 <b>4pm DOK meeting</b></p>   | <p>5 <b>8:00pm Online Compline</b></p>                              | <p>6 <b>10am Annual Advent Retreat Skiles Hall</b><br/>Steve Smith's birthday </p> | <p>7 <b>Joe Harmon's birthday and Judy and Bob Bondi's anniversary</b></p> |
| <p>8 <b>2nd Sunday of Advent</b>  <b>11am Holy Eucharist 5pm ECW Meeting &amp; Potluck supper</b><br/>Katerina Whitley's b-day</p> | <p>9 <b>8:00pm Online Compline</b></p>  | <p>10 <b>9am Morning Prayer</b></p>   | <p>11 <b>4pm DOK meeting</b><br/>Mary Armstrong, Dennis Carlton-Jones and Lee Rankin's birthday</p>   | <p>12 <b>8:00pm Online Compline</b><br/>Paul Cribbin's birthday</p> | <p>13 <b>Noyes Long's birthday</b></p>   | <p>14</p>  |
| <p>15 <b>3rd Sunday of Advent</b>  <b>11am Holy Eucharist</b><br/>Ron McInnes' birthday</p>  | <p>16 <b>8:00pm Online Compline</b></p>   | <p>17 <b>9am Morning Prayer</b><br/>Grace and Jacob Alford's birthdays</p>  | <p>18 <b>4pm DOK meeting</b><br/>Dawn Anderson's birthday</p>   | <p>19 <b>8:00pm Online Compline</b></p>                             | <p>20</p>  | <p>21 <b>John Harris' birthday</b></p>                                     |
| <p>22 <b>4th Sunday of Advent</b>  <b>11am Holy Eucharist</b></p>  | <p>23 <b>8:00pm Online Compline</b></p>   | <p>24 <b>CHRISTMAS EVE</b><br/>5pm Holy Eucharist<br/>7:30pm Holy Eucharist<br/>Special Music &amp; Carol Singing</p> | <p>25 <b>CHRISTMAS DAY</b> </p> <p><i>(From Dec. 24: Denise Bentley's birthday)</i></p> | <p>26 <b>8:00pm Online Compline</b></p>                             | <p>27 <b>Jim Logan's birthday</b></p>  | <p>28 <b>Dottie and William Hancock's anniversary</b></p>                  |
| <p>29 <b>The First Sunday after Christmas</b><br/>11am Holy Eucharist<br/>Debbie Stewart and Bill Morgan's birthday</p>   | <p>30 <b>8:00pm Online Compline</b><br/>Pat LeVarge, Wendell Seaver and Terry Fulton's birthday</p> | <p>31 <b>9am Morning Prayer</b></p>   | <p><i>(From Dec. 25: Derek Eggers' birthday)</i></p>  |   |  |  |



## Episcopal Church Women News

The December ECW meeting will be a potluck dinner in Skiles Hall on **Sunday December 8th at 5:00 pm**. We'll have a short business meeting, good food, and a Christmas game.

Please join us!



**Thank you!**

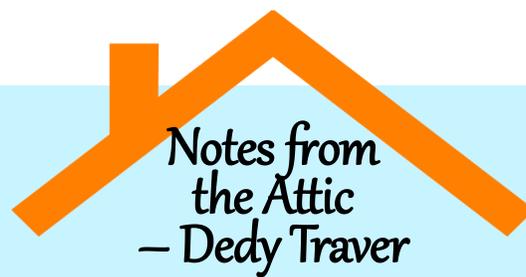


Thank you so very much, Holy Cross parish, for the wonderful “Farewell” service and reception for me and my family! We are most grateful for your kind parting words, blessings, songs, and prayers. They were truly special!

To Andrea and the Choir: Thank you for the beautiful singing, especially on the “Old Irish Blessing”. To Catherine Morton: Thank you for the beautiful flowers that day. To the ECW and Patty Dilley (and clean-up crew): Thank you for the fabulous reception, and the amazing cake. Finally, to Fr. Robert: Thank you for the heartfelt blessing offered at the worship service on November 10.

In all the 36 years of parish ministry I have served, this is the most incredible and touching Farewell I have ever received. Thank you for your generosity and thoughtfulness!

Yours in Christ,  
Elaine and Scott Kallestad  
Adam and Marie



## Notes from the Attic – Dedy Traver

Last month we had a farewell reception for Elaine Kallestad who retired as our choir director/organist after 17 years. This month's "Notes" are from that reception. This reflects the history of our music program at Holy Cross from as far back as 1847 and how important it has been over the years.

When the Episcopal Church formed the Valle Crucis Industrial School in the early 1900's (later to become the Valle Crucis Mission School), music was a very important part of the education. The students were taught music and they also were the church choir until the school closed in 1942. When I came in 1972 there was not a choir at that time but we did have an organist, Evelyn Hall (Katy's mother!) and the organ was an electronic Hammond Spinet organ. We had a parish meeting to do some long range planning. One of the things the congregation wanted was a choir! The facilitator said that whoever indicated on the survey that they wanted to have a choir, then they would be the ones to form a choir!! So Christy Powell helped to form the choir and volunteered to direct it. When she moved away, somehow I was wangled into directing the choir. Eventually, the vestry "came to their senses" and hired a choir director/organist who was Donna Littlejohn. (Before Donna was hired, we "upgraded" the organ to another electronic organ – either an Allen or Wurlitzer.) Donna did so much to improve our music program including the formation of a handbell choir! Eleanor Manley helped direct the bell choir. When we used to do combined morning prayer/Eucharist services, Donna worked with the choir in learning to sing the canticles. She also introduced the choir to chanting the psalms. And here's where a little bit of history comes in! Many of you may not realize this but music and choirs have been an integral part of Holy Cross as far back as 1847 when Bishop Ives was here! According to the book "Missionary Life at Valle Crucis" written by Susan Fenimore Cooper in 1889, "There were three religious services in the chapel every day –full Morning and Evening Prayers, and also a short noon-day service, in which all took part. Mr. Skiles not infrequently read the Lessons. Great attention was paid to training the young men in singing; all who had good voices were required to practice Church music regularly, and the result was remarkably successful. The chanting was unusually good. A clergyman of long and varied experience declared that he could not remember ever hearing the Church Anthems so effectively and so nobly sung as by the choir of men and boys at Valle Crucis, whether at the daily services, or at the Holy Communion in that old basement Chapel, in the scattered school-houses, at Mission services, or when gathered about the grave of some poor member of the flock. The good people learned the chants and anthems and took pleasure in singing them in their rude but kindly homes. Little bands of men and women, after leaving the schoolhouse or cabin where a Sunday service had been held, would often go on their way through the forest paths chanting the Benedicite-a holy song of praise never before heard in those ancient forests. And these were people who could not read. They were deeply impressed by the reverent solemnity of the Holy Sacraments. And the noble, ancient chants of the Church seemed to penetrate to their very hearts' core. At times they sang them with tears in their eyes. The mode of instruction employed by the missionaries was well adapted to their condition. Direct, earnest, plain, catechizing, the heart-stirring Liturgy, the noble chants, with short, simple sermons, assumed something of the character of the ancient Gospel instruction, when books were few, and the faithful were hearers rather than readers."

So you see, we have a long history with our church music. When Donna retired she left us with a wonderful music program in place. Casey Whaley (a music student at ASU) became our interim choir director/organist for about a year. Joe Causby, another ASU organ student, played the organ for us while Casey was director. Elaine Kallestad was hired and has certainly moved the music program up the scale! And especially with the handbells! By the time

*continued*

*Notes continued...*

Elaine was hired the electronic organ was “on its last leg”, so to speak! It often bleeped and blurped, especially at Christmas and Easter, and we never knew when it was going to quit altogether! On Joe’s last Sunday before his graduation, for the postlude he played Vidor’s Toccata which is a big loud piece – as the choir listened from the back of the church we all held our breath as we were certain that would be the final demise of the electronic organ! Elaine, along with several other people, was able to locate the pipe organ we now have in place. It was purchased from a church in Minnesota. An organ builder from Winston-Salem brought it down from Minnesota, reworking and voicing it for Holy Cross Church.

All this to say, being a choir director is no easy task and we thank you, Elaine, for all the years of keeping us on track and providing loving and caring leadership. You have enriched our worship services in the greatest way. And many thanks to Scott, Adam and Marie as well. The gifts and talents that you all have shared with us over the years have brought so much joy to so many. We will miss you but hope you will come to visit!

“May the road rise to meet you, May the wind be always at your back. May sun shine warm upon your face, the rains fall soft upon your fields and until we meet again may God hold you in the palm of His hand. May the Lord bless you and keep you, may the Lord cause his face to shine upon you, and give you peace.”





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Valle Crucis, NC 28691

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

**Clergy & Staff**

The Rev. Robert G. Hartmans, Interim Rector  
Ahren Koenig, Parish Administrator

**Vestry**

Andrea McDonough (2024), Terry Fulton (2026), Co-Senior Wardens  
Walter Browning (2024), Patty Dilley (2024), Tav Gauss (2025), Darby Logan (2025),  
Nina-Jo Moore (completing vacant term—2025) Doris Boulton (2026), Angela Williams (2026)

**Officers**

Jan Skopecek, Treasurer

Dedy Traver, Clerk

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



**December Newsletter**