



## March 2025



This month we will march head long into Lent. It is often the case that the Jewish holiday of Purim falls within the season of Lent in the Western Church. If you are unfamiliar with Purim the holiday takes as its Scriptural host the story of Esther. Esther will only come up in the whole three year cycle of the lectionary once and not in the season of Lent; which I think is a shame because it captures Lent so well. I think it is presented so seldom because, of all the Old Testament stories, Esther is the most uncompromisingly Jewish. The story is a fictional account of the Jewish people living in the Persian Empire after they had been taken there by force a generation before (5th-4th Century BCE). The story is about the moral peril of the Jewish people in a foreign land who are saved by the brave and brilliant actions of Esther, who due to great beauty and elegance has won the king's favor.

One remarkable aspect of the book/scroll of Esther is that the Old Testament's central character YHWH (God) is never mentioned, not once, not even alluded to. Jews celebrate this story in late winter/early spring in the festival of Purim. Purim is a beautiful festival with rituals full of metaphor and mystery.. too much to elaborate on here. But I do want to say that Purim like Lent is about the boundary between life and death, about the shifting identity and relationships that comes in the near death moments. For obvious reasons, the holiday is given new significance after the Holocaust. Purim, and the book of Esther, force us to wonder who we will be and how we will treat each other in those moments that we are most separated from God and our identity. There is a lesson for all of us in Esther!

With our Nation so divided, so partisan-ly entrenched, I think we are in the Esther moment. Though in a very different way than the 6th BCE or modern century Jews we have been removed from the places of common identity and placed here in the death moment. The celebration of Purim includes a dramatic reading, any time Haman is mentioned people hiss and make their displeasure known. The part of the story that is easily overlooked is that the villain Haman is identified as an Agagite, you would have to know your Bible well to get this (1 Samuel 15) Haman is a throw back to a mistake, a stain on the nation of Israel, a moment when they traded trust for greed. The people are brought to the brink of destruction because they have not come to terms with their past sins.

I identify most with Haman, Haman has everything, he has the riches, power, and the respect of the king, but because Mordecai won't pay him deference, he risks it all to tear, not only Mordecai, but all the Jews down. God, we have everything and we tear each other down. Haman's plot almost works but is thwarted by Esther, courageous wonderful Esther. She risks everything, forgoes riches and glory herself in an act of love for her people, "If I perish, I perish," she says. The heart of the Purim ritual, similar to the Lenten disciplines we take on, is to give two gifts of money to the poor and two gifts of food to a friend... because in the death moments it is our love that will save us.

Blessings to you,

*Rev Robert* (you can call me Robert)



## Birthdays

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

## Anniversaries

- March 4  
Anne and Clint Iles
- March 5  
Gerri 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 Y., Bill B., Gail T., Julia M., Walter B., Randy M., Shane B., Claire M., Sara P., Tav G., Andrea M., Charles III, Kate M., John N., Floyd T., Ray L., Leslie S., Terry & Jean M., Suzie L., Pam C., Ann G., Jan H., Joe U., Rosalie G., Stuart T., Joe V., Jocelyn, Edie T., Gini H., Michael H., 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.



**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5, 2025**

*Ash Wednesday Services*

- 12:00pm** Ash Wednesday Liturgy with Imposition of Ashes and Holy Communion
- 7:00 pm** Solemn Liturgy for Ash Wednesday with Imposition of Ashes, Holy Communion and Hymnody  
*(This service is Live-Streamed via our YouTube Channel)*



**Don't Forget!**  
*Daylight Savings Time Begins Sunday, March 9, 2025*  
 Remember to turn your clocks **FORWARD** one hour before retiring on Saturday evening **March 9<sup>th</sup>** so that you arrive in time for the *Prelude*, and *not the Postlude* on Sunday morning.



**It's Time Again! ECW's "March For Diapers Time"!**

We will be collecting all sizes of new, unopened packages of diapers the entire month of March. Beginning March 1st, you can bring your donations to the labeled box in Skiles Hall, and we'll make sure we get them to the Children's Council. Last year we collected over 1,600 diapers, this year let's make it 2,000! THANKS!



ECW are asking for donations of small items that might be appropriate for a Silent/Live auction during our annual St. Patrick's Day Dinner to be held on **Saturday, March 15 at 6:00p.m. in Skiles Hall**, in honor of Tom McDonough. We could take items that could be combined together to make a gift basket like gift cards, or that stand alone. Call or text Patty Dilley at (508) 450-1604 or email her at [hatch108@charter.net](mailto:hatch108@charter.net) and reference St. Patrick's Day Dinner.



The Clan McDonough invite the good people  
of Holy Cross

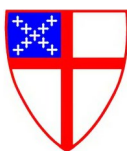


To a St. Patrick's Day Celebration  
Saturday Evening, March 15, 2025  
Skiles Hall 6:00pm  
\$40 per person

A full Irish dinner will be served  
with  
Plenteous drink and mischief

Proceeds go to the ECW in honor of our beloved  
St. Patrick & St. Tom

For Reservations call:  
Claire McDonough 828-266-3542



Please plan to join the Parish Forum after the 11:00 am service on **Sunday, March 16, in Skiles Hall.** Food will be provided along with an update on the Rector search, a hosted conversation with the Vestry, and information on opportunities to join ministry engagements at Holy Cross. The forum will end by 2:00 pm. Childcare will be provided.



## MEN'S NIGHT OUT

After a two month mid-winter hiatus, the **Men's Night Out** (MNO) group begins its *NINTH* year of fellowship **from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 18** at the home of Jim Zellner, 127 Saddle Way Drive, Blowing Rock, NC 28605. Limited parking is available at the house with overflow space down the hill near the Zellner Party Barn, but carpooling is strongly encouraged. The meal will consist of Southern fried chicken, ham biscuits, mashed potatoes with gravy, green beans, and coleslaw with baked cinnamon apples and ice cream for dessert. The suggested donation is \$10 per person and your RSVP is due **no later than 5:30 p.m. on Sunday, March 16** to [KeithTMartin@gmail.com](mailto: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!

## Holy Cross Centennial Celebration

### **A hundred Years!**

This year marks a centennial since the corner stone was laid for our sanctuary. So much has happened in those one hundred years. The ways we have celebrated, mourned, learned, sung, read, and worshiped in the sanctuary acts as a bridge between all that went before and all that is to come. A small group is working to commemorate this moment, to take a loving look at the past and inspire love of our community for the future.

Events to look forward to

**March 23:** During the 11am worship, Noyes Long and Katerina Whitley will make a presentation on the stations of the cross that will draw us closer to the core story of Lent and to the beauty of our sanctuary.

**April 27:** We will have a worship service that commemorates some of the giants of our Holy Cross history, The Rev Dr Scott Oxford will preach.

**May 25:** We will host a Eucharist in the style used when our sanctuary was built.

**June 27-28:** We will host guided historical tours of the sanctuary, cabin, and St John's Chapel.

**July 19:** You will be invited to a banquet, a time to eat, share stories, dance, and remember what has been and honor what will be.

What we need from you: this year we will bury a time capsule with items that mark the past one hundred years. If you are willing to share a story about Holy Cross and how it has impacted your life, Rev Robert is ready to interview you and record your stories. We plan to produce an altar hanging that will carry this time forward. We hope to embroider historical tableau on the altar frontal.

We want your ideas!

Rev Robert Hartmans  
Interim Rector, Holy Cross Valle Crucis  
423.400.0826

*Centennial  
Celebration*

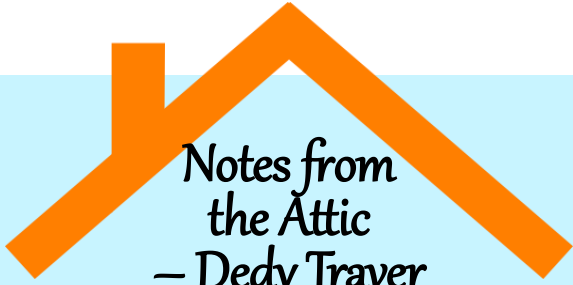


Busy times ahead! **MOC** continues to serve Hurricane Helene victims and our neighbors in need of heat. The energy companies have been great in educating us about costs, delivery and what they can and cannot provide. We work with the Division of Social Services (DSS) and our partner churches to cobble together payment for big heating bills such as \$700 fill ups of propane. There are notes of appreciation coming in from individuals and families that are so grateful for the help they are getting. Speaking of thanks, a special kudo to Sis Kinney who worked to edit and provide our MOC operations manual. This was a tiring job and it's looking good due to her efforts. Our team wishes you all a happy Valentine's Day and St. Patrick's Day, and many thanks for your generous support of MOC's work.

Radie Armstrong, MOC Chair, 2025

# March 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		(From March 4: Joby Bell and Bud Gerber's birthday Anne & Clint Iles anniversary) 				1 Dan Shepherd's birthday
2 11:00am Holy Eucharist Rite II Suzie Long's birthday 	3 8:00pm "Online Compline Radie Armstrong's birthday 	4 ASH WEDNESDAY 12 & 7pm Services (7pm includes music)	5 Daniel Love's birthday Gerry and John Persad's anniversary	6 8:00pm "Online Compline 	7	8 Janice & John LaCapra's anniversary Don't forget to set your clocks forward for tomorrow 
9 11:00am Holy Eucharist Rite II 	10 8:00pm "Online Compline Sibyl Pressly and Joe Underwood's birthday 	11 John & Faye Cooper's anniversary	12	13 8:00pm "Online Compline 	14 Gena Rankin's birthday	15  6pm Annual St Patrick's Day Dinner Skiles Hall
16 11:00am Holy Eucharist Rite II followed by the Parish Forum Art Yervey's birthday	17 8:00pm "Online Compline Mike Galleher's birthday 	18 Henry McGuire's birthday  5:30pm Men's Night Out	19 Barbara Pariseau, Kazuko Ehrhardt, and Jennifer Henigin's birthday	20 8:00pm "Online Compline Lisa Griffin's birthday 	21 Jim Toomey's birthday John Goodrich & Mary Willis' anniversary	22 Deborah and Mike Galleher's anniversary
23 11:00am Holy Eucharist Rite II 	24 8:00pm "Online Compline 	25	26	27 8:00pm "Online Compline Bob Bondi, Alana Starkey and Chuck Canady's birthday 	28 David Yate's birthday	29
30 11:00am Holy Eucharist Rite II 	31 8:00pm "Online Compline 					



## Notes from the Attic – Dedy Traver

Did you know there was a murder mystery in Valle Crucis in 1849???? The mystery in this murder was not who did it. People pretty much agreed who did it but the mystery of why. People disagreed as to motive. No proof was found. And so what does a murder have to do with the early days when Bishop Ives, Rev. Glenney French, and Brother Skiles were there? The person suspected of the murders (yes, there were two murdered!) was the cook for William Mast!! Millie, was hired by Rev. Glenney French (head of the Order of the Holy Cross) in December 1847 to replace the cook, Gurd Wiggins who left, unregretted!! According to Rev. French, Millie had been a cook from time to time and had also labored as a field hand. She was a gloomy, discontented passionate, revengeful creature, according to, common report, and according to French's experience, for a time was in accordance with it. He soon found that she was grateful and loyal, and when considerately and kindly dealt with, her temper was not excessively bad. So here is a tale of woe!!! This comes from I. Harding Hughes, Jr. book. *“Valle Crucis, A History of an Uncommon Place”*.

“This story has been told and retold many times and in differing versions. Everyone seems to have agreed as to who the guilty party was. Yet there was no hanging. In fact, there was no trial, not even an arrest. Was the unpunished guilty person a popular member of one of the prominent Valle Families and therefore somehow immune to prosecution? Were the two murder victims poor people without influence – or perhaps black slaves? No. No to both questions. A slave woman, it was generally agreed, murdered two members of a prominent Valle Family. And she got off without feeling the hand of either the law or vigilantes. The story, a tragic one for all concerned, was recounted by the victim's nephew, David Finley Mast:

On the morning of Oct.16, 1849, my uncle, William Mast, his wife and all of their children except one fell violently ill just after breakfast. All were writhing in agony, and the whole household was running about here and there trying to find some remedy for the pain. A few moments later, the children vomited and immediately got better, but the parents got worse, and a few moments later they were dead. Just how they met their death has never been determined. After the funeral it was remembered that the only member of the family who did not get sick was the one who drank milk instead of coffee for breakfast. It must have been the coffee. Suspicion was immediately directed at the cook, Millie, a slave, who had prepared the breakfast. It was thought that she had put wild parsnips—a deadly poisonous herb – in the coffee, but of course there was no way of proving it. After some investigation, the matter was allowed to drop when Millie was sold with the other effects of William Mast. If Millie did poison her master and mistress, there still remains the question of her motive. There are two stories, the most plausible of which is that the killing grew out of Millie's love affair with Silas Baker, a slave owned by Miss Elizabeth Baker. Millie and Silas had been courting for a long time and hoped that some way they would become the property of the same family, so that they could be married. The slaves learned, however, that Jacob Mast (William's uncle) was coming from Texas to marry Miss Baker and take her to Texas. In that case, they would probably take Silas with them. Then, what was to become of this African love affair? He and Millie hoped that Jacob Mast would buy Millie and take her also to Texas. They hinted this to their masters, but their hints fell on deaf ears. Finally, when they lost hope that Jacob would buy Millie they concocted their plot. They reasoned that if William were dead, his effects would have to be sold to settle the estate among the children and they hoped that in that case Jacob would buy Millie. Accordingly, Millie gathered some wild parsnips and put them in her master's coffee. Some who have told the story assert that Millie did not intend to kill any but the master, because the rest of the family did not ordinarily drink coffee. On that morning, however, Mrs. Mast and all the children except one drank the coffee. When the investigation was over, Silas and Millie waited anxiously for the sale of William Mast's property, hoping that Jacob would buy Millie. The bidding started. Millie looked appealingly at Jacob, but he did not even bid on her. Instead, a man named Whittington took Millie to Tennessee and sold her again, and Silas went with Jacob and Miss Baker to Texas.

The mystery in this murder, therefore, lay not in who did it but why. People disagreed as to motive. No proof was found. Of course, the system under which she lived dictated that Millie, guilty or innocent, would not really go free.”

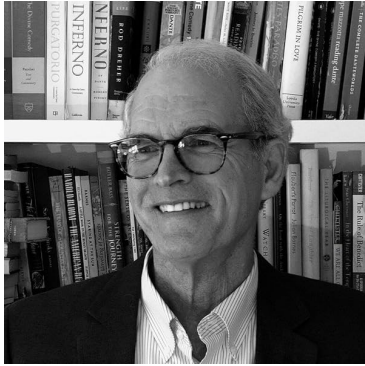
So, there you have it! The 176 year old unsolved murder mystery in Valle Crucis!!

# ECW Spiritual Retreat

Lake Logan Conference Center, Canton, NC

Friday, April 4-5, 2025

The Rt. Rev. Bishop Porter Taylor, Retreat Leader



Porter Taylor was the 6th Bishop of Western North Carolina. He earned a PhD from Emory University focusing on Literature and Theology. He has published three books: To Dream as God Dreams: Sermons of Community, Conversation and Hope, From Anger to Zion: An Alphabet of Faith, and most recently Are You Persuaded? In and Out of Being a Bishop. After he reassigned as the Bishop of WNC, he taught at Wake Forest Divinity School for three years. He lives in Asheville with his wife Jo and their vivacious dog Sadie.

## Retreat Schedule:

### April 4: Friday

3-5pm - arrival and check-in time

5-5:30pm—Reception and get acquainted time

6pm—Dinner

7:15pm—Welcome from The Rt. Rev. Bishop Taylor

### April 5: Saturday

8am—Breakfast and check out of rooms

9:15am—**Session One**

Noon—Lunch

1:14pm—**Session Two**

3pm—Depart for home. Have a safe trip

*Please see registration form on next page*



## ECW Spiritual Retreat

Lake Logan Conference Center April 4-5, 2025

Registration form (MUST BE RECEIVED BY MARCH 22, 2025)

*All attendees will be required to fill out Lake Logan online registration and release form prior to arrival) [www.lakelogan.org/registration-and-release](http://www.lakelogan.org/registration-and-release)*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Church: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Lodging Over Night Price: \$150.00**

(Includes Friday dinner, Saturday breakfast and lunch)

### **Commuter Price: \$60 (Open to men and women to attend)**

(Includes Friday dinner, Saturday breakfast and lunch)

### **Please make check payable to ECW/WNC**

Mail check and registration form to:

Diane Mance, ECW Diocesan Treasurer

105 Poppy Lane

Asheville, NC 28803

Diane's contact:: Email: [mancediane40@bellsouth.net](mailto:mancediane40@bellsouth.net)

Phone: 828-275-2972



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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. Robert G. Hartmans, Interim Rector  
Shane Watson, Interim Organist  
Ahren Koenig, Parish Administrator

[Vestry](#)

Terry Fulton (2026), Senior Warden  
Darby Logan (2025), Junior Warden  
Tav Gauss (2025), Nina-Jo Moore (completing vacant term), Doris Boulton (2026),  
Angela Williams (2026), Radie Armstrong (2027), Derek Eggers (2027), Sis Kinney (2027)

[Officers](#)

Jan Skopecek, Treasurer

Dedy Traver, Clerk

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

