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The Rev. Samuel V. Tallman, Priest Associate
The Rt. Rev. J. Gary Gloster, Assisting Clergy
Dr. James Bumgardner, Organist/Choirmaster
Greta Wilson, Parish Administrator
Joe Raulerson, Financial Secretary
Bill Stroh, Sexton
Nursery Attendants: Megan Redford, Alex Scheurer, Chloe Shaut

Vestry

2021	2022	2023
Gigi Poole	Doug Galke, Jr. Warden	Marjory Holder
Sterling Hutcheson	Lisa Kaufamnn	Faith Jones
E.B. Springs	Roy McCraw	Chip Monroe
Jim West	Tim Silver, Sr Warden	Patty Patella
Amanda White, Treasurer	Elizabeth Sudderth, Clerk	

The Newsletter

This publication is for you, about you, and by you. If you have news to share, please submit it to Greta Wilson in the office on or before the 15th of each month. We want to hear from you.

Parish Newsletter



Pentecost 2021 Volume 4 Issue 1

St. Mary of the Hills Episcopal Church
Blowing Rock, North Carolina

From the Rector

*“And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind,
and it filled the entire house where they were sitting...”*

(from the sermon for the Day of Pentecost, May 23, 2021)

Like the rush of a violent wind, the writer of Acts recalls, the Holy Spirit arrived, filling the entire house in which these apostles and friends were sitting. We mountain folk know that sound well, the unsettling roar of a powerful gust that rattles the windows and stirs the soul.

From this rushing wind of God’s Spirit emerged the capacity for those gathered to speak in previously unknown languages. So unfathomable were the new sounds coming from the mouths of these disciples of Jesus, those gathered nearby suggest that they must be ‘filled with new wine.’ Surely, they are drunk, nothing more, the crowds thought.

Yet, each heard in their own language, the good news of God’s unending love.

More than a one-time miracle, the Pentecost event is an important foreshadowing of the life to come. Those who heard and felt the rushing wind of God’s Spirit are the same ones who will carry the message of God’s good news beyond the confines of first-century Jerusalem, to far-away and foreign lands, to the very edges of the known world of their own day.

The lives of these apostles, and the lives of those whom they encounter on their journeys, will never be the same, because of the power of God’s Advocating Spirit within them.

If we allow ourselves the space to reflect, I believe we find that there is much within the Pentecost story that resonates with our twenty-first century experience as Church, even if we are not suddenly moved to speak in new languages this morning.

The mission of the people of our church is to grow spiritually in Christ through worship, stewardship, study, service, and fellowship.

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We are, after all, emerging from a life behind the closed doors of a pandemic period that called us to love from a distance, to gather while scattered. Now, we are called to consider our future, to plot the next chapter in our journey together as disciples of the risen Christ.

As I've read and re-read the story of that first Pentecost, along with the movement of those earliest Christians, recorded throughout the chapters which follow in the Book of Acts, I've become convinced that there is no greater moment to reconsider our vision of what it means to follow Jesus, here and now.

Our forebears in the faith offer us a compelling testimony, an enduring image of who we are called to be as the Body of Christ, in this and every generation.

First and foremost, we are a people of prayer. The Church, at its very best, is a school for prayer. Throughout the Book of Acts, over and over again, we find those first Christians who formed and grew the Church, tending to the constant work of prayer, in adoration of the living of God and tenderly aware of the needs of others.

Our prayer book's catechism, or outline of the faith, little-known and infrequently referenced, professes that the first means by which we achieve our mission of restoring all people to unity with God and each other in Christ, is through prayer and worship.

All that we are, all that we can ever hope to be, is rooted in our worship of the Triune God. This is what sets the community of the Church apart from every other community to which we belong – that we are a people of constant prayer and worship. We gather, principally, to offer praise and worship, not of our selves, but of the God who made us.

Even more, we are a community of disciples, still being formed and re-formed by the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ. In addition to prayer, the Book of Acts tells us that the early Church committed itself to the apostles teaching.

In addition to that first work of gathering to sing and proclaim praise to God, we are called, as twenty-first century disciples, to continue the life-long work of study and exploration – to read the scriptures together, to consider how they speak truth into our lives today, to dare to think the thoughts of God and allow our lives to be molded by the great Creator.

The Christian spiritual journey is a summons to a life never satisfied to remain in one place too long, but always seeking and searching for new wisdom and deeper understanding.

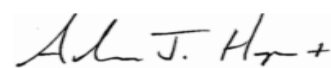
But this vision of Church does not end there. Like those first apostles of old, our calling is to the proclamation of God's good news, the hope of new life and promise of redeeming love for all, in this and every place. Whether among the hills of the high country or at the far corners of some far away land, God's Advocating Spirit still summons us to the transformation of the world in Christ's name.

A twenty-first century vision of a spirit-led Church is nothing short of working for a world where every human being has enough food to eat, clean water to drink, clothing to wear, shelter to call home, and care for the health of their bodies and minds. It is nothing short of a tearing down of the systems and structures that promulgate the myth of scarcity, that somehow there is not enough, and the building up of a community where the justice of God reigns.

My friends, this is the vision of Pentecost - a church that prays and worships, a church that learns and grows, a church that restores and transforms. We cannot have one identity without the other. These spokes are the very core of our common life – worshiping, wondering, and working together.

By the power of that rushing wind of God's Holy Spirit, may we be so inspired to live this vision, disciples of the risen Christ, in this our own day.

Faithfully,



Building the beloved community

Habitat for Humanity is propelled by a vision of a world where everyone has a decent place to live. We devote ourselves to creating that world because we believe everyone — every single one of us, regardless of who we are or where we come from — deserves a decent life and deserves the opportunity for a better future.

Believing is not enough. And so we build.

We build houses — and through those houses, the strength, stability and self-reliance that families need in order to achieve a better life. That better life is our primary goal. And so when we build houses, we also build bridges between people of diverse backgrounds, we build paths to more connected communities, we build ways for all people to come together and share in the creation of a new world.

That new world allows access, equality and opportunity for all. That new world represents what Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. called “the beloved community.”

The beloved community is fair. The beloved community is just. And the beloved community is built on love. Not just any love, but as Dr. King said “the love of God operating in the human heart.” That’s a practical love that requires participation. When that love is truly and fully present, it compels us to act.

It’s part of Habitat’s birthright. We began at Koinonia Farm, an interracial community farm outside Americus, Georgia, founded in 1942 by farmer and biblical scholar Clarence Jordan. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Clarence and his fellow Koinonia residents were fiercely committed to the equality of all people and utterly devoted to creating opportunity for all.

Born from that vision, we have grown into a global organization that has worked hard to live out that kind of love for more than 40 years. It fuels our belief that making homeownership accessible and affordable for low-income families is a critical component to creating the kind of future that Dr. King envisioned.

We have to care about the needs of those among us who need our help. We have to take on the struggles of others as our own and want for them the exact things that we want for ourselves. We have to live each day in the knowledge that we are bound together, that each of us must do our part, that we thrive together or we will wither alone.

During a brief correspondence in the 1950s, Dr. King wrote to Clarence, noting the struggles that Koinonia faced from hostile and unwelcoming neighbors. “I hope that you will gain some consolation from the fact that in your struggle for freedom and a true Christian community you have cosmic companionship. God grant that this tragic midnight of man’s inhumanity to man will soon pass and the bright daybreak of freedom and brotherhood will come into being.”

We still await that daybreak. While much has been done, so much more work remains. This will never be a world of equality, of fairness, of human decency that leaves no room for poverty or prejudice or violence, unless we build it. Bold actions speak louder than words. Working together, side by side, is what will continue to move us from tragic midnight to glorious morning. For as Dr. King so powerfully stated: “Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.”

With his emphasis on the beloved community, Dr. King gave us the blueprint. Folks of faith and perseverance like Clarence have stewarded it and advanced it. Now it’s up to all of us to make it a reality.

In 2021, as we mark the anniversaries of Dr. King’s tragic death and the passage of the Fair Housing Act just days later, Habitat renews our pledge to work harder than ever to help make the beloved community a reality. [Join us.](#)

Jonathan Reckford
CEO, Habitat for Humanity International

Allison Jennings, Director of Development
Watauga County Habitat for Humanity

News from the Junior Warden

June 1, 2021

Our spring grounds cleanup, held on Saturday May 8th was a huge success! Due to the pandemic, we were not able to combine the workday with an after-church picnic as we have in years past. Despite this change, 23 hearty souls signed up for either a morning or afternoon work session. Everyone worked hard and effectively to rake, weed and mulch all of the flower beds in our church yard. Please join me in thanking these folks for the hard work they performed to keep our grounds looking wonderful.

Parishioners may also be interested to know that work continues on several maintenance projects around the church. This past winter we developed a leak in the sanctuary near our organ. After many months of seeking a contractor willing and able to navigate our steep roof, we were able to secure a roofing contractor who completed the work on May 20th. We have also engaged a contractor to repair the concrete at the front of the church and work on some seepage/leaking in the Belltower. We hope to have this work completed in June after the Bishop's visit.

Doug Galke, Jr. Warden

The Bishop's Visitation on June 6, 2021



For the first Sunday in over a year, the church was full and buzzing with the vibrancy, enthusiasm, and love that each of us has desperately missed during the pandemic.

Bishop Josè McLoughlin was with us; it is the largest congregation he has gathered with thus far during this time.

Our rector and wife's newborn son, David Alexander, was baptized and was a perfect participant.



The day dawned beautifully, the flowers on the altar were exquisite, the church was full of parishioners and guests, and we enjoyed the lovely voices and music from our full choir.

We hope to begin having lemonade on the front lawn soon so come back! We miss you and want to see you as you feel comfortable joining us.

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Celebrating Major Feast Days

The Church, in her wisdom, offers us a calendar of festival and fasting days to mark sacred time together. Those days designated as major feasts are days that commemorate significant events and people in the life of our Lord and in the development of the Church and inspire us in our own journey of faith.

Over the past couple of months, St. Mary's began and will continue a pattern of observing each of the Church's major feast days with a celebration of the Holy Eucharist. To meet a variety of schedules, these observances will vary in time, offered at either 9:00AM, 12:00PM, or 5:30PM. Upcoming dates and times include:

The Nativity of Saint John the Baptist	June 24 th at 12:00PM
Saints Peter and Paul	June 29 th at 12:00PM
Saint Mary Magdalene	July 22 nd at 5:30PM
Saint James the Apostle	July 26 th at 9:00AM
The Transfiguration of our Lord	August 6 th at 12:00PM

The bulletin announcements, weekly Epistle, and parish website will announce each service time as they draw near. Join us!

THE CHOIR IS BACK!

And we're back! The full choir is now able to sing together at St Mary's for the first time in so very long, and it feels terrific. We spent the long months of lockdown staying in touch with one another via Zoom and having the occasional outdoor distanced and masked rehearsal when weather allowed, but nothing compares to the act of preparing and singing for a liturgy in our own space, with and for our own people. 'Ordinary time' means more than usual this year, and in a most welcome way.

Look for a possible evensong in the months to come, and for some form of KenFest choir reunion as well. Meanwhile, hold forth with gusto and abandon on Sunday mornings when it's time for a hymn or a piece of service music. The long months of silence and isolation are now ended.

Keep singing,

Jim



OUTREACH

The Outreach Committee has been at work prayerfully, contentiously, and compassionately considering and responding to the concerns of people whose needs and cares have come to our attention. We have invited people who know first hand the issues facing people of our area and beyond to share their insights and expertise with us. We wanted to sharpen our insights so that our contributions might be more deeply informed and - effective.

Elizabeth Young and Meg Furman from the Hunger and Health Coalition shared their experiences and insights about health and food insecurities. Amanda Hege keeps us apprised about how efforts to get food to those who need it most, particularly, in rural areas, are progressing. We invited our own Larry Turnbow, who serves as a member on the Watauga County Board of Commissioners to speak to us on housing and the need for low-income housing.

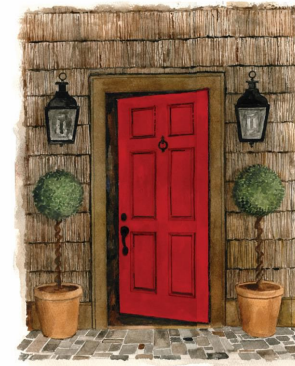
A subcommittee on housing has been established and is headed by Lynn Coulthard. We anxiously await the first report from this group. Anyone who is interested in joining these efforts please contact Lynn at (828-964- 6072).

Susie Greene continues to steer the good ship “Back on Your Feet Boxes” and letters of gratitude sail back to us. Sue Wilders heads up the Bread of Life efforts and delicious meals are still being delivered to the residents of Hospitality House, as a result of the loving care and efforts of the five teams. Any one wanting to join a team and help please contact Sue at (828-355-9751)

Our financial contributions thus far this year have totaled \$19,726.00. These funds have included gifts to honor of the people who were killed in that horrendous homicide in Boone in May. We also made a contribution supporting the work of the Episcopal Diocese of Arizona on the border in their shelter program for children, Cruzando Fontaras. Other contributions included gifts to: Habitat for Humanity, Hospitality House, Compassion International, Hunger and Health Coalition, Mobile Home Delivery in our five County area, Scholarship Program of the Immigrant Justice Coalition in Watauga County and New Dawn School for girls in Sri Lanka.

Members of our Committee include: Mike Austell, Lynn Coulthard, Judy Gloster, Susie Greene, Amanda Hege, Torre Hinnant, Olivia Knight, Loy McGill, Tina McKnight, Chip Myers, Carmen and Patty Patella, Clare Tager, Patti Turner and Sue Wilders.

Questions, concerns, suggestions are welcome. Please contact Gary Gloster, Chair at (704-650-2014) or jgarybish@aol.com



The 2021 Tour of Homes

Tour of Homes planning is in full swing! The Tour Committee decided that because of current information from public health officials and the need to plan in the weeks ahead, St. Mary's will have a virtual tour again this year. Videographer Douglas Meyers will showcase four unique properties - the homes of Polly and Richard Gambill, Jeff Roberts, Lee Rocamora and John Thompson, and Jean and Otis Sawyer. Each of the homeowners has graciously agreed to a virtual tour, and the 2021 online Tour video will include a number of additional features that you will enjoy viewing, including a professional floral demonstration by Kay McCloskey, and information about the High Country's non-profit services. In addition, an online Tour Auction will highlight desirable items on which to bid.

The Tour has netted between \$62,000 - \$80,000 annually over the last three years to support area non-profits. Through a grant process, all applying organizations received support in 2020, including: Blowing Rock Parks and Recreation, Blowing Rock school, BRAHM, Children's Council, Community Care Clinic, Crossnore School, Habitat for Humanity, High Country Caregivers, Hospitality House, Hunger and Health Coalition, Life Village, Oasis, WAMY Community Action, and Western Youth Network. Organizations supported by the Tour continue to experience tremendous strain as they respond to constant area needs. Because of the community's generosity, these agencies have been able to help; providing food, clothing, educational resources, programming and shelter.

You can participate in the tour by making a generous tax-deductible gift by check or gifting online at stmaryofthehills.org (Tour of Homes) on a secure site. In addition, you may donate an auction item (art, jewelry, dinners, a vacation home, golf or fishing outings, etc.) and know that your tax-deductible donation will help us continue to fund area non-profits providing essential support. To contribute an auction item, please leave it at the church by June 22nd with an item description and value, and donor's name and address.

Look for more exciting information about the Virtual Tour and Auction in the weeks ahead.

Loy McGill

Planning committee: Ron Armstrong, Carolyn Crutcher, Doug Galke, The Right Rev. Gary Gloster, The Rev. Andrew Hege, Marjory Holder, Suzanne Miller, Will Merrill, Chip Myers, Patty Patella, Tim Silver