

Diocese of Western North Carolina



Commissions, Committees, Agencies and Boards

Reports for Diocesan Convention

2023

**Global Mission Committee Report for the 2023
Diocese of Western North Carolina Convention**

With deep appreciation to the parishes in the Diocese of Western North Carolina, thank you for your support of our Diocese which makes the Global Mission/Sustainable Development grants possible. Thank you for your involvement in this invaluable ministry not only to our brothers and sisters in Christ across the world, but also to our neighbors in our Diocese. Your continued support of outreach enables us to act as Christ's hands and feet to those whom we may never meet. In so doing we are also acting as Jesus's evangelist as we live out the Gospel values into the world.

Name of Project: Consider Haiti's Healthcare, Clean Water and Sustainable Nutrition Programs
Sponsoring Parish: Grace Episcopal Church, Asheville

Project Description: Consider Haiti has worked for over 20 years in three remote mountain villages (Sourd Borgne, Fond Baptist and Ivorie) and one urban location (Montrouis) to provide nutritional support, clean water and health care to families of severely malnourished children. There are seven Haitian, healthcare community agents who identify children who are at risk for complications of malnutrition. Every six months, 55 children are enrolled in the program. Each receives therapeutic, calorie dense food to get their growth back on track, a water filter/bucket system that is shared among multiple families and a goat which is typically bred, the offspring sold pays for school, building materials and food. Consider Haiti believes that every child deserves clean water, good health and the opportunity for their families to experience financial solvency.

Amount Awarded: \$11,137

Name of Project: Reducing the Backlog of Pediatric ENT Surgeries at the Ahli Arab Hospital, Gaza City, Gaza.

Sponsoring Parish: St. James Episcopal Church, Hendersonville in partnership with the American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem.

Project Description: The Ministry of Health considers pediatric ear, nose, and throat (ENT) surgeries to be elective and therefore not a priority. Nevertheless, best practices in pediatric care indicate that delayed intervention has a huge negative impact on children's health, wellbeing, and the ability to succeed in school. These children's improved health and their ability to attend school will allow their families to function in a more productive manner. The surgeries offer a significant and a permanent benefit to the child and their family, but because repeat visits from an untreated child are greatly reduced, doctors and nurses have more time to treat more patients at the Ahli Arab Hospital's free community clinics. In January 2023, there

were 1,000 backlogged cases at the Ahli Arab Hospital and 8,000 cases backlogged in Gaza. The grant amount enables 25 children to receive ENT surgical treatment.

Amount Awarded : \$5,000

Name of Project: El Eden micro-business

Sponsoring Parish: St. James Hendersonville

Project Description: This project will establish a new Micro-business – El Eden to preserve fruits and vegetables (Dehydrated, Pre-cooked and Frozen) in the Province of Guantanamo, Cuba under the auspices of All Saints Episcopal Church in Guantanamo, Cuba and the Diamond of Sahara Farm. Currently, no such business exists in the province. Produce must be obtained from other provinces or from abroad, if it can be found. El Eden will also serve as a pilot for other parishes. The grant will produce year-round healthy food for the most vulnerable in the parish (families with special needs, children, the elderly and the sick) as well as new employment opportunities for residents. Technical support will be provided to other parishes so that they might start their own micro-business. Initially, 25 of the most food insecure families will receive food from this micro-business. 6-8 of the local residents will be trained to run the business in an area where there are few, if any, opportunities. This pilot project will be a show case of hope for other churches and communities in Cuba, where hope is a fragile commodity these days, and hunger is the current reality across the country.

Amount Awarded: \$4,450

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. Deacon Clare Barry

Global Mission Committee Chair

**2023 Foundation Annual Report to the Convention of the
Diocese of Western North Carolina Nov. 11-12**

Established in 1962 by Bishop Henry as a non-profit corporation, the Foundation's funds foster, develop and contribute to the support of the religious, educational and charitable work of the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of WNC, or elsewhere, by making gifts, grants, loans and advances solely and exclusively for religious, educational and charitable purposes to any individual, organization, institution, agency or other body within the Church or associated or affiliated in any way with the Church.

Under current policy, the Foundation restricts fund distribution solely to grants up to \$20,000 per application. Also by policy, the annual distribution is no greater than 4% of the total fund based on a three year rolling average.

Total Assets as of Dec. 31, 2021: \$3,828,169.00

Total Assets as of Dec. 31, 2022: \$3,086,468.94

Total Assets as of July 31, 2023: \$3,276,548.12

Permanent Chair: Bishop Jose McLoughlin

Elected/Appointed Members:

Jo Ann Hasskamp – President, St. James, Black Mountain;

Sherree Brady– Vice President, St. Peter’s By the Lake, Denver

Dillon Manly – Treasurer, Trinity, Asheville

Dale Ward – Secretary, St. Mark’s, Gastonia

Kathy Ledbetter – Trinity, Spruce Pine

Stan Allison - St. Mark’s, Gastonia

Lee Berger - All Saints, Franklin

Allen Fullwood – St. Mary’s/St. Stephen’s, Morganton

John Russell –All Saints, Franklin

Grant distributions since 2022 Annual Report to Convention:

12/06/2022: \$ 20,000 St. Mary’s/St. Stephen’s, Morganton, Rectory improvement/outbuildings for secure storage.

02/07/2023: \$ 7,130 St. Mary’s/St. Stephen’s, Morganton, Rectory improvement completion

06/05/2023: \$ 5,000 St James, Black Mountain, Playground Fund –requested \$20,000

\$ 10,000 St David’s, Cullowhee, accessibility and furnishing improvements - requested \$20,000

\$ 20,000 Church of the Messiah, Murphy, mold remediation/furnace replacement – requested \$22,300

\$ 20,000 Holy Family, Mills River, new HVCA & capital improvements to buildings – requested \$42,826

\$ 20,000 Holy Communion, Glendale Springs, capital improvements, paint, roof + \$15k Dio. Loan

\$ 20,000 St. Matthias, Asheville, design & engineering plans - drainage & structural integrity spec. report

08/08/2023: \$ 20,000 St. Gabriel's, Rutherfordton, kitchen remodel for Food Ministry and Accessible Restroom

2023 Board Initiatives:

- Update Bylaws to specify 1 member per deanery plus 3 at large and clarify vague language.
- Involve board members in application prep, site visits & communications to ensure funds are spent as approved and reduce workload on Diocesan CFO.
- Implement a dedicated TAB for Foundation on Diocesan website for easier grant application and promotion of The Episcopal Foundation of Western North Carolina.
- Increase contact and communication with Investment Manager from semi-annually to at least quarterly.
- Present a full slate of candidate nominees at Convention.

Respectfully submitted – Jo Ann Hasskamp – President, The Episcopal Foundation of Western North Carolina

Human Hurt and Hope Fund Report to Diocesan Convention 2023

The Human Hurt and Hope Fund was established as part of the Centennial Witness program to address the needs of the citizens of Western North Carolina. HHH was listed as one of the three most important ministries supported under the Freed for Ministry program established to determine the use of funds after the Lake Logan debt was retired.

The Human Hurt and Hope Fund has empowered Episcopalians and their partners to address human need through hands-on ministries in communities around the Diocese. HHH funds programs which address issues of justice, poverty, and marginalization, as we live out our Baptismal vow to serve Christ in all persons and respect the dignity of every human being.

In 2021, the Diocese received 8 grant applications for a total of \$115,000. After site visits and/or Zoom conversations, all eight grants were approved for a total of \$115,000. Funds were granted for five food programs, to programs to provide housing, a mental health program, and a Latino ministry program. In addition, three Justice and Outreach grants of \$5,000 or less were awarded.

Since its inception, the fund has awarded grants for over \$1.5 million dollars. Grants are intended to support innovative programs that involve Episcopalians in ministries that respond to human needs. The original donor of the monies to fund HHH grants intended for the money to be spent and not used to establish an endowment. To that end, the HHH grant has appropriated all its funds and will not award grants in the year 2024.

I am extraordinarily grateful to the committee members who discovered all the incredible work of the parishes in our diocese to address the increasing needs of housing and hunger and immigration. Those members of HHH are Mary Elizabeth Banks, St. James, Black Mountain; Sandra Camp, St. Gabriel's, Rutherfordton; Mary Anne Farrell, St. John's, Sylva; Claudette Forbes, All Saints, Gastonia; Maureen Hunt, Grace Church in the Mountains, Waynesville; Tim Rhodes, St. John's, Asheville; The Rev. Kevin Todd, St. Paul's, Edneyville; and Tari Watson, St. James, Hendersonville.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristi Neal

The Rev. Kristi Neal, Deacon
Chairperson, Human, Hurt and Hope Fund

Report from Iona WNC to the Diocese of Western North Carolina, 2023

It has been a year of growth, opportunity and celebration for Iona WNC. Since last year's report, we celebrated the graduation and priestly ordination of our first student, the Rev. Dr. Anita Ware. We consider ourselves fortunate that Anita has remained involved with leadership and spiritual formation components of our curriculum.

Iona WNC combines a three year online curriculum developed and administered through the Seminary of the Southwest, and monthly intensive weekends that include academic seminars, spiritual formation, leadership development, liturgical practicum, community worship, and guest speakers who bring wisdom and expertise to issues of contemporary interest to the Church. Our faculty are experts in their fields, with extensive teaching experience. The program is supplemented with ongoing engagement and best practices work with Iona deans from across the Episcopal Church. Iona students are eligible for many of the same special events as seminary students, including Lily programs for supporting ministry development, and the Episcopal Preaching Foundation workshops.

This year, we welcomed two new students to the program, in addition to our second year student. One of our new students is an M.Div. graduate and is doing a year of focused Anglican studies, using the Iona curriculum and intensive immersion model.

Our students are showing great academic promise, as well as impressive skills for leadership in ministry. It is a joy and privilege to be a part of their formation.

We would like to thank our core faculty, the Rev. Rich Biega, Mr.Ed. Bleynt, the Rev. Judith Davis, Ph.D., the Rev. Dcn. Bob Zito, and the Rev. Dr. Anita Ware, as well as our Iona Board members for their ongoing commitment and support. Special thanks to Bishop José and Canon Augusta for their vision, encouragement, and enthusiasm.

“Glory to God, whose power working in us can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine!”

Faithfully submitted,
The Rev. Dcn. Pam Bright
Dean for Spiritual Formation

The Rev. Margaret Ann Faeth, Ph.D.
Academic Dean

The Commission on Ministry

Pursuant to the Canons of The Episcopal Church, the Diocesan Commission on Ministry is nominated by the Bishop and confirmed by vote of the annual Convention of the diocese for three-year terms. The purpose of the Commission is to advise and assist the Bishop: “(a) In the implementation of Title III of the Canons of The Episcopal Church. (b) In the determination of present and future opportunities and needs for the ministry of all baptized persons. (c) In the design and oversight of the ongoing process for recruitment, discernment, formation for ministry, and assessment of readiness therefor.”

The Commission on Ministry of this diocese meets annually on retreat to review and improve our work, several times during the year via Zoom to review the progress of people in discernment, and we hold two overnight retreats with those people invited. In the past year we saw the ordination of Rev. Anita Ware to the priesthood in January and Rev. Dr. Perry Hildreth to the transitional diaconate in September. From those still in progress, we made an additional recommendation for candidacy to the diaconate and four others for postulancy.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Dr. Bill Breedlove

Towel Ministry Report for the 101st Annual Diocesan Convention

For the past five years, about 15 campers have come to the Church of the Transfiguration in Saluda for four nights of reunion, fellowship, great food, fun music, and worship; but the main reason they come is to lend a helping hand to our elderly neighbors who have deferred maintenance issues at home.

Each year, campers arrive on Wednesday afternoon. They’re split into teams that work on home repair projects on Thursday through Saturday. They work on the projects with volunteer mentors from about 8:30 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. Projects include things like building ramps, repairing gutters, cleaning out debris and plant overgrowth, and interior and exterior painting. Our adult mentors leading the work teams have enough remodeling experience to coordinate more difficult projects, too, such as plumbing, electrical, and structural projects.

Our original campers in 2019 are still attending, even though they’re in college. They are now considered “counselors” with leadership responsibilities.

Parish volunteers prepare breakfast and dinner, and lunches are packed by the campers before they leave for the workday. Each team brings enough lunch to share with the homeowners. When lunchtime comes, they all sit down and have a meal together, opening space for conversation. All in all, the goal is to help our neighbors in need, but the bonds of friendship among the campers, parishioners, and the community are where the memories are made.

On Sunday, the campers share their experiences with the Transfiguration congregation at the 10:30 service. Each camper steps up to tell a little about their experiences and where they encountered God during the week.

Our diocese helped fund this ministry in 2019 with a Human, Hurt, and Hope Grant. Since then, Towel Ministry has been self-sufficient. Some campers pay fees to attend, and some receive a full scholarship because of parish support from our annual Outreach budget, and donations from the Saluda community.

The Rev. Canon Augusta Anderson reminds us, “Bishop José’s ministry and subsequent vocation as priest and bishop were all impacted when he participated in Towel Ministry, bringing youth from Virginia to Valle Crucis. Bishop José is committed to expanding Towel Ministry across the diocese and supporting parishes that are interested in hosting this important extension of Jesus’ love, mercy, justice, and compassion.”

Parishes that would like to host a Towel Ministry camp are welcome to contact The Rev. Chip Broadfoot for consultation.

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. Chip Broadfoot

2023 Deanery Report from the Asheville Deanery

The Asheville Deanery met consistently throughout 2023, and served as a place of prayer, trust, consolation, celebration, and networking. From January to May, the clergy from the Asheville deanery met monthly at differing churches throughout the region. The Cathedral of All Souls, St.

James in Black Mountain, and Trinity Episcopal Church all hosted meetings throughout the year.

The meetings functioned mainly as check-ins for clergy around the deanery. Each session was started by reading a poem together and talking about its theme. A light breakfast was always served. Clergy were updated on upcoming events, and were able to ask for help about a certain issue that was occurring in their neighborhood or parish. Clergy also celebrated milestones in their congregation and the joys of their vocation or personal life.

This was my first year as dean of the Asheville Deanery. In my first year, I focused on creating a consistent presence for the group, and providing detailed information on happenings around the diocese. I also tried to share different events/activities happening in one another's parishes. It is my hope that this group becomes a resource for neighboring clergy, and to build more trust among colleagues. Going forward, I plan to encourage more clergy participation among the deanery, and to incorporate informal social gatherings.

Here's a fruitful 2024 in the Asheville Deanery,

The Rev. Will Bryant

Dean of the Asheville Deanery

Piedmont Deanery, Diocese of Western North Carolina Annual Report 2023

The following reports have been received from individual parishes:

St. Peter's by the Lake, Denver, NC

Highlights of 2023

*May 2023 - Called the Rev. Tara Bartal (Graduate of School of Theology, Sewanee) as Curate/Associate Rector.

*September 2023 - Expanded our Back Pack for Kids ministry with local schools, doubling the number of children we are supporting.

*October 2023 - Annual Parish Retreat to Valle Crucis with over 50 parishioners joining the fun.

*November 19, 2023 - Celebrating the 50th anniversary of the founding of our parish with special services and lunch.

*December 7, 2023 - Ordination of the Rev. Tara Bartal to the Sacred Order of Priests.

Submitted by, Rev. Ron Taylor, Rector

St Francis Rutherfordton, St. Gabriel's Rutherfordton

Highlights of 2023 St. Francis

1. Bishop Mary Gray-Reeves visit July 30 Joint service at St. Gabriel's
2. Kitchen reopening in April
3. St. Francis Day Celebration Joint service with Blessing of the Animals and Music in the Park October

Highlights of 2023 St. Gabriel's

1. Feast of Absalom Jones joint service with St. Francis
2. Beloved Community Pilgrimage-stop on the tour in February
3. Bishop Mary Gray-Reeves visit July 30 Joint Service

August 2 Camino Bilingual Service, Presentation and Dinner at St. Francis. Oscar Rozo Celebrant Submitted by, Rev. Toni Belhu, Rector

St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Lincoln NC

Mimi's Room

Mimi's Room provides free supplies to low-income families with children under the age of 5. Donations are solicited from the community and are offered for free to these families.

Donations include, but are not limited to clothes, shoes, toys, coats, hats, gloves, blankets, bottles, as well as higher cost items such as car seats, cribs, and pack-n-plays (as long as they are in compliance with current regulations).

Our ministry objectives are:

- To provide support and resources to low-income families
- To provide support and resources to families with small children under the age of 5
- To connect with the wider community
- To keep our resources circulating among families within our community
- To target a demographic not already widely administered to in the Lincoln Co. area. During the month of September, 2023 Mimi's Room served 23 families

St. Luke's planned and sponsored the first annual Pirate 5K Run/Walk/Adaptive event, a part of the second annual Pirate Week in Lincolnton, NC. The run began at Historic St. Luke's Episcopal Church and ended at the St. Luke's graveyard at the final resting place of Lorenzo Ferrier who may or may not be the famous pirate Jean Lafitte. The event had 100 participants, 18 community sponsors, and grossed over \$7,000 dollars.

Episcopal Church of Our Saviour Woodside, Lincolnton NC

Cemetery Initiative

Review the status of the Church of Our Savior cemetery. Determine needs for cemetery grounds, documentation of plots, guidelines for burials and cremains.

Points of interest:

- Need church property survey
- Reviewed the June 19, 1981 – hand drawn cemetery plot survey
- GPR (ground penetrating radar) the cemetery to determine grave sites not marked on the 1981 plot.
- Historical ties that could be made to Woodside Plantation and could Church of Our Saviour be included in the National Historical Register?
- Capture “tribal knowledge” regarding the policies of who could be buried at Church of Our Saviour.

Submitted by, Rev. Elizabeth Tester, Rector

Redeemer, Shelby 2023

Our feeding program, Shepherd's Table, has seen an increase in clientele and is now regularly giving away nearly 200 boxes of food per week. This is a strain on our supply lines but so far we are keeping up.

We have monthly bird walks with a church member who is an expert ornithologist. We also have had several other events including: concerts, Choral Evensongs and Perry's Ordination to the Diaconate which were also big features of 2023.

Submitted by, Rev. Caroline Kramer, Rector

St. Mark's, Gastonia

St. Mark's is feeding and clothing an increasing number of neighbors, nearly one hundred every week, through various means. The choir is dedicated, and growing in their harmony and ability. The youth program is re-established after the pandemic, and committing to one another and to diocesan activities. They recently sent eight young people to the National Acolyte Festival! In the year to come, we hope to involve more lay ministers in our many endeavors, and to set a vision and funding for our long-term goals.

Foothills Deanery Report to the 101 Annual Convention of the Diocese of Western North Carolina.

The Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement continues to thrive in the Foothills Deanery which is comprised of eight parishes: Grace Episcopal Church, (Morganton); St. Alban's Episcopal Church, (Hickory); St. James' Episcopal Church, (Lenoir); St. John's Episcopal Church, (Marion); St. Mary's and St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, (Morganton); St. Paul's Episcopal Church, (Lake James/ Morganton); St. Paul's Episcopal Church, (Wilkesboro); and the Episcopal Church of the Ascension, (Hickory).

Clergy Transitions The following clergy transitions have taken place since last year's convention: In January the Rev./Dn. Anita Ware was ordained the first by-vocational priest in the Diocese. Anita serves as Priest Associate at the Episcopal Church of the Ascension in Hickory. In June the Rev. Jared Grant, Associate Rector at the Church of the Ascension, accepted a call to serve as Associate Rector at Christ and St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Norfolk, Virginia. In August the Rev. Marshall A. Jolly accepted a call to serve as Rector at St. Thaddeus Episcopal Church in Aiken, South Carolina. In October the Rev./Dn. Barbara Burns, having served as Deacon at St. Alban's, retired from the diaconate.

Parish Reports

Grace Episcopal Church - Morganton Green Team: The Green Team has sponsored two speakers during the past year. Greg Buckner, new local representative of Catawba Riverkeeper, and Crait LeHoullier, the "Tomato Man." The group voted to become a corporate sponsor of the Riverkeeper, and participated in a project to attract beavers to a creek in Burke County. The group replanted our pollinator "Butterfly Garden" last fall, and has maintained it through the summer. The Green Team participated in the creation and maintenance of a community garden, the Good News Garden, at St. Mary's/St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Morganton. All produce will be donated to local food groups. In the spring we sponsored a Bird Walk on the Morganton Greenway, and this fall there was a group hike at Lake James State Park. Pastoral Care: Pastoral Care continues to be a vibrant ministry at Grace. Visits, letter writing, phone calls and home Eucharist are all part of this ministry. Father Marshall (prior to October 1, 2023), Kathy Peters and a couple of pastoral care teams rotate visits with those who are unable to

attend church or are experiencing acute illnesses. We average 4-5 visits per month in addition to another volunteer who writes 6-7 letters each month to members of the parish. Our Gracie Dolls and hand sewn labyrinths continue to delight those who receive them as part of efforts to remind people they are held in prayer by their Grace Church family. Mission & Outreach: We have a strong partnership with Burke United Christian Ministries that continues to grow. We assist with providing meals for people on a regular basis at BUCM. We had a Saturday morning ministry where we provided peanut butter sandwiches for people. This prompted BUCM to start serving breakfast on Saturday morning so people would have options from Friday lunch time until Monday. We have also partnered with the Burke County Department of Social Services Street Medicine team to visit places where people without homes are living and provided meals that we cooked and delivered. A warm meal on a cold day feeds body and soul. We participate in an Interagency council that is exploring ways to better meet the needs of people who are food insecure, unsheltered, or struggling with their mental health. Grace has become a go to place for assistance with unexpected expenses, emergency needs and other types of financial support. Several times a week, people will stop by and ask for help. In addition to asking for financial assistance, we have many people who don't have places to live who will come and ask for food or water. We keep a pantry stocked with these items as well as socks, hygiene supplies, blankets, and other necessities. We are one of the few places that will purchase and provide food for people's pets, primarily dogs with an occasional cat. We have packed and distributed hygiene bags for people who don't have places to live. We have different focuses for these bags: foot care; general needs; cold weather care, etc. This year we received a Dignity Matters grant from the Burke County Women's Foundation for \$5,000. This grant enables us to provide feminine hygiene products to teenage girls and women who often struggle to afford these items. We have packed and delivered bags to three local schools as well as BUCM. We have learned that 1 in 4 girls miss school due to their monthly menstrual cycles and the lack of feminine hygiene supplies. We are currently working with Calvary Lutheran Church to assist with the Emergency Shelter Network, so we are prepared to provide people with a place to stay when extremely cold weather arrives in WNC. Children & Youth: The Children and Youth at Grace continue to be an integral part of the life of the parish. In addition to our weekly Sunday School class, we began a Wednesday night program called Creation Space. Each week our elementary age children integrate faith formation with art exploration. Thanks to the Patricia Minkler Howell Children's Outreach Grant we have been able to expand our program by creating a dedicated space for Creation Space and partnering with local youth to expand art offerings. At Grace we are most proud of how children and youth are integrated into all aspects of parish life, including acolytes, lectors, and even helping with altar guild. **St.**

Alban's Episcopal Church - Hickory St. Alban's Parish celebrated its 50th Anniversary this year. The parish was founded when 13 families, led by the Rev. Randy Ferebee, were sent forth by the Rt. Rev. William G. Weinbauer from the Episcopal Church of the Ascension in downtown Hickory to form a mission in north Hickory on September 9, 1973. Bishop Weinbauer, then the Coadjutor Bishop, later became the fourth bishop of the diocese. The weekend of September 9

and 10 this year, the people of St. Alban's celebrated this milestone with a large birthday party on Saturday, and a Festival Eucharist on Sunday where the Rev. Tryggvi G. Árnason, (current rector), and the Rev. Randy Ferebee, (founding rector), presided at the Eucharist together. In October, the people of St. Alban's joined together with the people of the Church of the Ascension and of the Church of the Epiphany, Newton, to celebrate our common bond of mission and ministry at the Church of the Ascension. We hope that this will be an annual event. Outreach continues to be an important component in the mission and ministries of St. Alban's. Our Community Garden provides seasonal vegetables for the local soup kitchens; teams commit to provide meals for the Corner Table in Newton and help serve meals at the Hickory Soup Kitchen; volunteers participate in serving at the Greater Hickory Cooperative Christian Ministry; we participate in a collaborative effort to help build homes with the Catawba Valley chapter of Habitat for Humanity; we are committed to the LaGonave - Haiti partnership where we provide funds to help feed the children/students at the Holy Spirit church school in the village Gros Mangles and contribute to the funds to pay the teacher's wages, as well as helping to fund the Bill Rice Community Health Center on the island of LaGonave. We participate in offering hot breakfast at Our Father's Pavilion on Sunday mornings where the marginalized gather for worship, and collaborate with the local Hickory / Catawba Valley Rotary clubs funding and organizing a Rise Against Hunger effort, where annually we pack 60,000 meals to be provided for the hungry in 3rd. World counties. Members of our parish volunteer at the Chloe Waldrop Taylor Renewal Center where single mothers and their children experiencing homelessness find refuge, and participate in programs to help build them up; and other volunteers commit to helping out at the women's ReSources Warehouse, an enterprise operated under the umbrella of Safe Harbor. Family Formation is offered throughout the year. Children and youth are afforded the opportunity to participate in Sunday children's chapel, Sunday acolyte teams, Sunday afternoon / evening youth groups, diocesan events, attending Camp Henry, and seasonal activities. There are also opportunities throughout the year for adult formation: Women's Bible studies; a book club; men's group; thematic forums and studies during the seasons of Advent, Epiphany, and Lent; St. Alban's chapter of the Daughters of the King; and last but not least an exceptional music program with adult choir, adult bell choir, children's choir, and children's bell choir. Apart from outreach and formation, the people of St. Alban's enjoy having a good time together. In that, notable St. Alban's fundraisers for outreach have made their mark in the Hickory community, such as our annual Oyster Roast and Chili Cook-Out; our Fish Fry, (formerly Lobster Fest prior to COVID); and our annual Yard Sale. With all these fundraisers which extend opportunities of participation to the larger community, all proceeds go to our outreach efforts. Closer to home, we care for each other by praying for each other, providing meals and prayer shawls to provide comfort, and attending to the needs when they arise for each other.

St. Paul's Episcopal Church - Wilkesboro St. Paul's continues to be an outpost of justice, compassion, mercy, and welcome in Wilkes County. Our Crisis Assistance Ministry is going strong serving marginalized members in our community by offering financial assistance with

bills, rent, and utilities as well as a variety of needs that cannot even be classified. Each Thursday we offer an outpost of welcome and hospitality with a wonderful hot lunch, access to a top notch clothes closet and help finding not only support, but solutions to the challenges of our neighbors without shelter. And through our Step Ahead Program we take this support even further utilizing vocational training, community volunteering, and other training to help people struggling for economic equilibrium. We also continue to welcome a number of visitors to enjoy our Ben Long Frescoes. We offer public hours as well as guided tours with an excellent Docent. Our Community Engagement Ministry has been going strong by offering Wednesday Night Concerts and activities from Celtic and Americana music to thoughtful Labyrinth Walks and Reflections supported by the beautiful music of cello, Hammered dulcimer and more. In addition, we are excited to resume our Family and Childrens Ministry with a number of events upcoming. We are also in deep discernment over developing community partnerships with other helping organizations in our local community. We seek to support and offer facilities and more to those in our local community who are reaching out to create hope for those who feel hopeless. A sign in our Commons area proclaims: St. Paul's is Welcoming, Loving, and Generous. While we struggle in the way that all communities struggle, we work very hard every week to make sure that the proclamation on the banner is visible in all that we do.

The Episcopal Church of the Ascension - Hickory We held a grand celebration with the Bishop and former and present members on Ascension Sunday, May 21st 2023 in honor of our 150th anniversary. In October we hosted the first of what we hope will become an annual service and picnic with St Albans, Hickory and Epiphany, Newton. 67 years ago the people of Ascension launched Epiphany, 50 ago years they launched St. Albans. The three churches decided it was time to worship together again. In January we were delighted to host the priestly ordination of The Rev Anita Ware, the first priest in the diocese to complete the Iona program. For the first time in many years we baptized 15 babies in one year and had a great 4 week Sunday Morning VBS with around 20 young children participating. The Rev Jared Grant accepted a call to a church in Virginia. We called The Rev. Anita Ware to serve 10 hours a week while she continues her full time work in the school system. She is helping with our children and family ministry as she continues ministry at the local soup kitchen.

Submitted by, The Rev. Tryggvi Arnason

Episcopal Diocese of Western North Carolina Latino/Hispanic Ministries Report - 2023

“After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go.” Luke 10:1 (NRSVUE) As we reflect on the work done with the Latino/Hispanic community in Western North Carolina in 2023, the words of the gospel of Luke 10:1 come to mind. From worship gatherings, work in the community, retreats, summer programs, and many other gatherings, our work has been about collaborating and working with others.

Episcopal Church of the Epiphany & Multicultural Center - Newton

Early this year, while building relationships with different organizations in our community, we decided to host Catawba County’s Parents Support Team, a program that empowers young parents in our community. While working together with this group of people, we identified two leaders from within the Latino / Hispanic community who joined forces with us and helped us organize our first resource fair for minority communities in Newton. We hope to provide this resource bi-annually. Similarly, we have partnered with the Catawba Park Rangers to provide a monthly community hike to minority communities in Newton and nearby communities to educate our youth about the importance of the environment, exercise together, and build community. Also, we continue providing English, Spanish, Piano, and Guitar lessons to the community and diocesan families. Acknowledging that we all, clergy and laity, are called to work together, this fall members of our parish gathered for a retreat in which we identified a new vision and mission statement for our parish, a set of core values that are important to our community, and a set of projects we want to achieve in 2024. We have found in each other a vital part of the body of Christ. We have joined forces to worship, work, and bring light and hope to our community of Newton.

Trinity Episcopal Church - Spruce Pine At Trinity Episcopal Church in Spruce Pine, the Latino/Hispanic congregation joined forces with community members this spring for a local fundraiser. Members of our parishes cooked traditional foods from Mexico, Salvador, and Honduras and sold a total of \$2,500.00. The funds received have been used to aid those in extreme need in this community. We also worked this summer with the community garden, the local YMCA, the public library, and other organizations in the area to provide fresh vegetables and services to minority communities. Thanks to this effort we helped approximately 300 families in Mitchell County. We are working this fall on strengthening our youth group, we are having weekly gatherings (coffee hour) for parishioners to get to know each other and identify areas where we can join forces and are planning different gatherings outside the parish for this fall and winter.

The Savior - Newland While working with the Latino/Hispanic community in Newland, we have identified the potential to grow our parish community through youth ministry. Early this year we partnered with a college student from Appalachia State University and began to provide youth gatherings at the parish. This fall, we hope to use the Godly Play curriculum to strengthen

our relationships with youth and families and provide more Christian education resources to our children and youth.

La Capilla de Santa Maria - Hendersonville Understanding that the work of ministry is the work of all believers, earlier this year our regional missionary identified a group of leaders within the parish and invited them to join the vestry. While empowering this new group of leaders through bible studies and weekend retreats, they have strengthened their leadership base, they have focused their energy on strengthening their youth and music program. Their youth is made up of thirteen youth and their worship band has nine members. Together with other parishes in the Hendersonville area, they have had summer gatherings, have come together to work on the Capilla's grounds, and have raised funds through a garage sale for their ministries and work in the community. This is one of our parishes that has experienced tremendous growth throughout the past three years. From a small group of twenty members, they have a Sunday average of forty-seven participants and continue growing each Sunday.

St. Mary's and St. Stephen's - Morganton Even though this is the smallest Latino/Hispanic community in our diocese, through gatherings and visits to this community, we have experienced from its members this eagerness to grow and make an impact in the community. We hope to gather with this community in early 2024 to strategize and find ways to help it grow and flourish.

Diocesan Work - Along with these parishes, we have collaborated with clergy and leaders in the diocese to provide Spanish classes to clergy and diocesan staff, we organized and provided our First Latino/Hispanic Bilingual camp at Lake Logan this past July, as well as our 3rd Diocesan Latino Family Retreat that took place at Valle Crucis this September, we have provided three college grants to Latino/Hispanic youth in WNC and we have collaborated with parishes in Gastonia, Hickory, Hendersonville, Marshall and Rutherfordton. We would like to give thanks to all those who have joined us on this journey, especially the Rev. Erin Kirby, the Rev. Toni Belhu, the Rev. Logan Lovelace, the Rev. Tryggvi Árnason, the Rev. Karla Woggon, the Rev. Lynn Orvill, the Rev. David McNair, the Rev. Christine Walton, The Rev. Tim Hoyt, the Rev. Thomas Buechele, Lake Logan's interim executive director Eden Lewis, Camp Henry's director Frank Townsend, Lake Logan staff and Camp Henry's 2023 counselors, Valle Crucis executive director Margaret Love and Valle Crucis' staff, diocesan interim youth coordinator Charlotte Garcia, diocesan missionary for communications Rachel Carr and all those who have prayed, worked and play with us this year. As we dream and plan for the work that is ahead of us in 2024, we invite you to keep us and our parishes in your prayers. We would also like to invite you to consider joining us in this common work. Invite us to your parish and communities to dream together and together continue building God's beloved community.

Yours in Christ,

The Rev. Oscar Rozo
Diocesan Latino/Hispanic Missioner

The Rev. Miguel Alvarez
Latino/Hispanic Regional Missioner

Blue Ridge Service Corps 2023 Report to Annual Convention

Blue Ridge Service Corps began its 2023-24 program year in late August when we welcomed Tay Allen, Kana Parker, and Colin Rice to Folwell House, where they are spending this program year building intentional community while giving themselves to serving our regional community. We're grateful to our non-profit site placements for this program year: Habitat for Humanity Asheville, Creative Peacemakers, Deerfield Episcopal Retirement Community, Center for Spiritual Wisdom, and Dayspring Foundation. Our corps members work with these non-profit partners throughout each week, and we're grateful for the opportunity to partner in these organizations' inspiring work, while also trusting these partnerships are mutually beneficial.

Our corps members also commit to formation time together each Monday with Interim Director, Kevin Todd, and they gather each Thursday for a community meal. Their broader community also includes the BRSC Advisory Board, who continue to find ways to support this ministry and our corps members, including a monthly "Breakfast with the Board" offering.

We're already gearing up for next program year, which we hope will include bringing some more of our non-profit partnerships to Henderson County, with the goal of alleviating the burden of transportation for our corps members while also building a greater sense of cohesion and mission for the corps members as they invest in making a difference in our community. We're also looking to build our Parish Partner program for the 2024-25 program year.

If you and your parish are interested in learning more about this aspect of BRSC and how you can join us in this ministry, please contact The Rev. Kevin Todd for more information. BRSC and our diocese have been blessed with our 2023-24 corps members. Tay, Kana, and Colin are each unique, inspiring individuals, and we hope you have a chance to meet them and join in the community that is being built this year.

Submitted by, The Rev. Kevin Todd

Becoming Beloved Community Annual Diocesan Report

The Barrier Breakers in-person pilgrimage for the diocese took place on February 25th. St. Gabriel's, St. Matthias, Good Shepherd, St. Cyprian's, and St. Stephen's were represented and Bishop José Mcloughlin joined pilgrims from across the diocese for lunch at St. Gabriel's at the end of the day.

In June, members of the committee took the Anti-bias training course developed by Canon Augusta Anderson. The course was unanimously decided to be another tier to the training all clergy and lay leaders are required to take every 5 years. The other tiers are Dr. Catherine Meeks' Dismantling Racism curriculum and Sacred Ground.

The Beloved Community committee gathered in February to focus on goals to broaden what it means to be a community beyond race. We decided our focus areas would be tackling land acknowledgement, literacy, and mental health/ wellbeing with the plans of having a "Becoming Beloved Community Fair" for each deanery that would provide models for finding community resources and volunteer opportunities for congregants.

Respectfully submitted,
The Venerable Brenda Gilbert
Beloved Community Committee Chair

Camp Henry Annual Report 2023

The summer of 2023 saw Camp Henry host nearly 400 youths from 36 different churches in the Diocese. We played, prayed, and worshiped together all summer to the theme of "Let It Begin with Me". Some new activities were introduced, such as a weekly cookout down at the boathouse, aptly named "Boojum's Bash", along with many other new night programs and increasingly creative "skills" periods.

Camp Henry Outdoor School campers got to experience nights on trail in Pisgah National Forest while learning and refining their trail backpacking skills. Our LAMP program (Leadership, Adventure, Mission Program) saw two full sessions of youth honing their leadership skills, along with learning what makes up a quality Camp Henry staffer. This summer also saw the introduction of a new camp session for Hispanic youth, with our Bilingual Session, which hosted over 50 Spanish-speaking campers from all over Western North Carolina. The success and impact of this week has solidified it into our normal program offerings! Overall, a great summer as we move forward into planning for the future.

With an upcoming charity golf tournament and Cold Mountain Music festival in 2024, we hope you'll join us in celebrating and supporting this important mission for the youth in our Diocese!

Respectfully submitted, Frank Townsend – Director of Camp Henry

PECM, Tappestry, and 3rd Place

The Presbyterian Episcopal Campus Ministry (PECM) continues to serve the students of Appalachian State University. Our focus for this past year has been on fostering community, feeding our students in body and mind, refreshing their souls with spiritual practice, and bringing a spirit of play to buffer against the mental health crisis we are facing from the impact of the pandemic on our students' lives. We meet weekly, offering a meal and some programming (worship, game night, service work, deep discussion night). We were excited to reinstitute our Moveable Feasts, visiting the local Episcopal and Presbyterian churches that support us to have a potluck meal and fellowship. For Bible Study, we explored the book of Genesis throughout the academic year.

Tappestry - Tappestry has shifted to serve young professionals and graduate students in their mid 20s-40s. We currently meet monthly for food and fellowship.

3rd Place

For the 2022-2023 Academic Year, 3rd Place hosted 5 groups/week in the Fall semester and 6 groups/week in the Spring semester who had regular weekly meetings. In addition, there were 32 one-off events – 16 of which were art shows, 6 of which were music shows, and one of which was a meditation class that met once a week for a month. Excluding holidays and the winter and summer breaks, 3rd Place was being utilized all but 37 days, all of which were Fridays and Saturdays when a music or art show was not being held. Students and professors at AppState are more aware of 3rd Place as a venue for their art, and so we have seen an increase in senior thesis art shows and class shows offered by professors. We are excited to support the talent of our students as well as local artists in the area.

Episcopal Campus Ministry at Western Carolina University 2023 Convention Report

ECM@WCU entered its third year with the start of the 2023-2024 school year. The previous three years Kelsey Davis was the campus missionary and Rev. Gaelyn Evangreene as the rector of St. David's was a support and bridge between the campus ministry and the parish. With Kelsey leaving to take a new position, Mtr. Gaelyn added the role of campus missionary to her work as rector of St. David's.

Here are some highlights from the past year and goals for the year ahead:

1. Official status and campus connections: Last Spring our ministry became an official student organization which opens doors for outreach on campus. As school started this August Mtr. Gaelyn and returning students met many Western students at Valley Ballyhoo, the welcome back and student organization fair. Hundreds of packages of Skittles, Bible verse cards, and stickers with the message that God loves you were given to hundreds of students. Tabling on campus has allowed for additional outreach, deep conversations about scripture and God's love, and led committed Episcopalians new to Western and previously unchurched students to attend Bible study and worship at St. David's.
2. Weekly gatherings moved to Sunday evenings to better accommodate student schedules. Each week students and Mtr. Gaelyn gather for Evening Prayer and an open homily, followed by dinner, and a time of fellowship. Churches in the Western Deanery along with St. David's parishioners provide dinner each week.
3. The need for connection and for mental and spiritual health supports are an essential part of campus ministry. Students have identified prayer, Bible study, art, and music as important components of campus ministry. St. David's is blessed to have a talented artist who is also gifted with young adults and who has volunteered time to bring materials and make space for art as a means of self-expression and stress reduction. Many students are carrying a heavy workload and find it difficult to make it to regular meetings but stay in touch via technology and coffee meetings with Mtr. Gaelyn.
4. Goals for this year include regular Coffee and Chat times with Mtr. Gaelyn on campus, Bible study in the Student Union, a joint project between St. David's parishioners and ECM students to build and maintain a Little Free Pantry to help address food insecurity on the Western campus, and the rehabilitation of the St. David's trail system to make space for hammocking for students for stress reduction, silence, and connection to nature.

Episcopal Campus Ministry at Western is a deeply spiritual, laughter-filled, and caring community. We are excited to welcome new students almost every week, and though we remain small in numbers, we are excited to share the love we have found in this community with the wider campus. We ask for your prayers for our ministry.

Respectfully submitted,
The Rev. Gaelyn Evangreene

Annual Report for Youth Programming in the Diocese of WNC

This year was a year of transition for youth programming in our diocese, with Eden needing to help at Lake Logan. I stepped into the role of Interim Youth Coordinator and have really enjoyed building connections with our youth, helping them grow, and dive deep into their relationship with Christ. It has been a very busy, but wonderful year.

Our first event of the year was a **Roller Skating day event**, we enjoyed fellowship with over 30 youth, youth leaders, and chaperones, representing 6 different churches. Instead of roller skating, the Youth Council has expressed interest in a snow tubing event for Winter 2024.

The **High School Spring Conference** was in March at Lake Logan and the theme was 'God has a Plan and I have a Purpose'. During this conference youth had programming tied into the theme, mostly led by adult leaders and youth council, they had small group time to dive deep into spiritual and personal conversations, they enjoyed field games, singing and dancing, and a glow in the dark dance party! On Sunday youth help plan and participate in Eucharist together. We also had a blessing for the seniors and said see you later to 2 really wonderful youth council members. We had over 30 youth, 7 chaperones and 2 priests!

Next for Youth programming was a new event, **5th grade day retreat**. On Saturday, May 6th, Youth Council held this event at Trinity Episcopal Church, and spent time volunteering with The Church of the Advocate and learning about how Kindness is Cool! The main point of hosting a spring event specifically for 5th graders is to allow them to dip their toe into the world of youth. Going to an overnight event can be overwhelming for a first event, so this one day event is the perfect thing to get them ready and excited for Middle School Retreat in the Fall!

Diocesan Family Night is an event that came from real passion for youth and fellowship at Holy Cross at Tryon. They reached out for help in planning a diocesan wide event for families to meet each other and mingle. We hosted the family night at Tryon International Equestrian Center on their huge Skydeck. Over 240 people attended from age 3 to 83, representing over a dozen different churches! We enjoyed the show jumping, a burger and hot dog dinner, and fellowship with new friends in the diocese.

Camp Visits, during the summer I visited almost every session of camp, I would come up and enjoy programming and lunch, during lunch I introduced myself to the campers and made them aware of all the events they could attend throughout the year. At the high school sessions I passed out over 30 youth council applications. I felt like this was a really good way for me to stay connected with the youth throughout the summer. I also really enjoyed getting to know Frank and the rest of camp staff during this time! Those connections lead us to begin planning

our first ever College Conference for December of 2023. I had the honor of being involved with **Latino Camp**, a brand new program allowing Latino families and youth to come experience camp at no cost. I really enjoyed helping Oscar with the programming and leading the Retreat House full of all the families who came to camp together!

By August I had 24 **youth council applications** to review. After interviews and releasing the schedule, 24 dwindled to 15 really strong and excited youth council members! Frank Townsend agreed to be an adult leader and Fr. John Simpson is again our Spiritual advisor, I am so thankful to these two guys for pouring so much love and passion into youth ministry in our diocese!

Earlier in the year, I wanted to find ways to better equip Youth Council with leadership skills and time to build their community so they could better lead and plan together. I applied for the **Patricia Minkler Howell Grant** to help build our community. The Youth Council was awarded \$3,750. The plans for those funds include a retreat for youth council at the beginning of their year together, church visits we hope to go to in the spring, and more opportunities to be together throughout the year so they can better lead the youth in our diocese.

Thanks to the grant I was able to plan a **Youth Council Retreat** for our 15 youth council members, Frank, and myself to get a good start on planning for the year, and to get to know each other! We made vision boards, planned the Middle School Conference, and the Fall Conference, and talked about where we wanted to see youth ministry in our diocese by the end of the year. We also got to swim, roast marshmallows and sing and dance together! I truly feel like this event helped Youth Council form a bond that will help them lead together all year long!

The **Middle School Conference** was a huge hit this year! We had almost 30 middle schoolers, 14 Youth Council members leading them, and 7 adult chaperones at Lake Logan! The theme for that conference is Faith, Friends, and Family, Youth Council did a great job leading sessions, facilitating small groups, and bonding with the middle schoolers. It was so fun to watch all the small groups plan their part of Eucharist and watch their personalities come to life while glorifying God! They played field games together, danced and sang together, and dived headfirst into their faith journey!

We are currently gearing up to have the **High School Fall Conference** in just a couple of weeks, at Lake Logan. The theme is Putting Yourself First and Youth Council is excited to lead sessions on finding yourself, self love, and success. We currently have almost 25 youth signed up to be there.

Frank and I are taking 3 of our youth council members to the **Provincial IV Youth Networking Meeting** in the Diocese of South Carolina, Nov. 30th - December 3rd. While there we hope to

learn more leadership skills and make connections with other dioceses in our province. We are also excited that we will be at Camp St. Christopher at the same time as the Province IV House of Bishop's, so we'll get some time with Bp. Jose too!

I am also working with Frank and two camp counselors, Dottie Benninghofen and Jack Anderson on a **College Conference** that will be held at Lake Logan December 17th-19th. This conference is a great opportunity for college students in our diocese to come together in a place that is so special to them and recharge their hearts and minds after the fall semester. There will be time to dive into their faith journey, time to connect with nature, and time to just be together and be in community with one another. We are currently looking for sponsors for these college students to come to this event. We have some young people very excited about going, but don't have the funds to attend. If you would like to sponsor a college student please reach out to me and I would love to help you set that up!

My **goals** for the rest of this year are to continue building connections with youth at these events, give the youth a safe and understanding person they can come to when they are struggling, keep encouraging Youth Council in their leadership skills, and most importantly, shine light on the love Christ has for these young people! I am so excited and proud of how fired up our youth are for their spiritual journey, social justice, self care, and taking care of one another. I am proud and honored to lead this generation and I **thank you** all for the opportunity to know your children.

Respectfully submitted,
Charlotte Garcia, Interim Youth Coordinator.