



ST. ANDREW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Annual Report for Parish Meeting Sunday, May 4, 2025

Almighty and ever living God, source of all wisdom and understanding, be present with those who take counsel in the Annual Meeting of the St. Andrew's for the renewal and mission of your Church. Teach us in all things to seek first your honor and glory. Guide us to perceive what is right, and grant us both the courage to pursue it and the grace to accomplish it; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (BCP page 818)

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church Statistics

(Year to date 2025)

Baptisms	2	Youth Confirmed	4 (anticipated)
Marriages	1	Adults Confirmed	1 (anticipated)
Funerals	3	Adults Received	1 (anticipated)

(2024)

Baptisms	19	Youth Confirmed	0
Marriages	0	Adults Confirmed	0
Funerals	3	Adults Received	0

Total Active Baptized Members: **381**

Adult Members in Good Standing: **312**

(have received Holy Communion at least three times the preceding year and are faithful in corporate worship)

Communicants in good standing under age 16: **69**

Others who are active whose baptisms are not recorded in our Parish Registers, or in another Episcopal congregation: **168**

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The Vestry of St. Andrew's

Karen Mitchell, <i>Senior Warden</i>	Term Expires August 2026
Phil Modisett, <i>Junior Warden</i>	Term Expires August 2026
Jackie Scott, <i>Register</i>	Term Expires August 2025
Dorothy Ballard	Term Expires August 2025
Caswell Richardson	Term Expires August 2025
Paul Sayegh	Term Expires August 2025
Rob Tobin	Term Expires August 2025
Lee Benz	Term Expires August 2026
Nash Bilisoly	Term Expires August 2026
Tayloe Gwathmey	Term Expires August 2026
Tiffany Crawford	Term Expires August 2027
Jerry Hines	Term Expires August 2027
Leslie Hipps	Term Expires August 2027
Bruce Martin	Term Expires August 2027
Becky Ruffin	Term Expires August 2027

2024 Convention Delegates

Jerry Butler

Paul Sayegh

Penny Lewis

Eddie Brown

St. Andrew's Staff

The Rev. Charles Lane Cowen, Rector

The Rev. Dr. Connie Jones, Priest Associate

Stephen Leist, Director of Music Ministry

Richard Rigg, Associate Director of Music Ministry

Harper Bathel, Director of Children and Youth Ministry

Allison Enedy, Parish Administrator

Michelle Sturges, Bookkeeper

JonMichel Sipes, Facilities Manager

Larry Brett, Treasurer

Steve Blevins, Assistant Treasurer

Dave Branch, Assistant Treasurer

Reports

Senior Warden's Report

Submitted by Karen Mitchell

Greetings and many blessings to each of you.

Our "Vestry calendar" year began in September with the Celebration of New Ministry for The Rev. Charles Lane Cowen. Our Parish and Fr. Charles entered into a mutual covenant to worship together and support in our many ministries. A lovely reception followed the service, attended by our folks and many friends and guests. It was truly a memorable event filled with grace and joy. Our Vestry held a retreat in February 2025, allowing us time to reflect, plan, and prioritize our work and service. Four focus groups were parish administration, building and grounds, Christian formation, and outreach. It is quite apparent that our aging building and infrastructure need to be our top priority. This focus will require multiple resources, both human and financial.

Several of our ministries need additional volunteers and new leadership. We plan to have (and have had) Coffee Hours that are hosted by ministry groups, so look for opportunities to serve. The weekly emails also highlight these areas. We have a pressing need for a volunteer coordinator – please let me know if that would be of interest to you.

In true St. Andrew's fashion, we do love to eat! Whether it's the Breakfast Brigade – do thank them for your breakfast this morning! – or Parish Life, EYC, etc. we share good food with great companionship. The chili dinner, pancake supper, dinner conversation groups, Savor the Moments, Coffee Hour are but a few of the times we gather.

Our growing membership is apparent at all services. We have so many blessings, and I am grateful to our staff and each of you for your presence and your gifts. It is an honor and a privilege to serve as Senior Warden of this parish that is filled with love for all.

Buildings and Grounds Report

Submitted by Phil Modisett, Junior Warden

We are fortunate to have a building full of memories. As each memory gets created, the building experiences a bit of wear and tear.

Over the past year, we have completed repairs to our HVAC cooling tower, replaced two sections of the rubber membrane on our flat roofs, and replaced one of the main drain lines from the building to the street.

The reality is that we continue to find ourselves in a reactionary position. For this reason, I have formed a smaller ad hoc committee with a couple of building and construction professionals. We have the goal of prioritizing existing needs and to create an asset management system in order to get ahead of repairs that could have been prevented.

Building and Grounds also has some bright spots...literally. We recently repaired and upgraded the exterior lighting so that all of the doors and our grounds remain well lit at night. We have also upgraded the interior lighting in White Hall and the classrooms to LEDs to save energy and be easier on the eyes.

Lots happening with Building and Grounds but we'll keep it going and make it happen.

Music Ministry

Submitted by Stephen G. Leist

This past January marks my 10th anniversary as Director of Music Ministry at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church. Since the previous Annual Meeting, the St. Andrew's Parish Choir made some noteworthy accomplishments. It has been alternatively a busy year and a period of taking something of a rest.

The summer of 2024 remained a busy time for the choir, as we were preparing for our residency at Bristol Cathedral in England, which occurred August 5-12. Regular rehearsals continued throughout the summer to make sure that the choir was ready to meet the demands of singing Evensong each day, with a Sunday morning sung Eucharist and final Evensong. We had several guest singers, all of which made the residency a very successful experience. Several of the days, the

dean and other clergy remarked on hearing music they were not familiar with, in addition to being very complimentary on our singing of the services. The cathedral clergy and staff were easy to work with, helpful, and welcoming. We were delighted to have along with us several parishioners and choir spouses, which made for a unique fellowship. We also had a great deal of fun. Not only does the city of Bristol itself have lots to offer, but the choir had side trips to Stourhead, an 18th century country house and gardens, Caerphilly Castle, and the city of Cardiff in Wales. The hard work paid off, and St. Andrew's was well-represented in this first-ever trip made by a choir from this church. Special thanks go to Linda Tobin, who managed the trip, with Doug Mitchell arranging local transportation.

The fall of 2024 was a time to "come down" from the trip to England. Much of the music was familiar, including our November Evensong service. Extra music was done for the installation of The Rev. Charles Lane Cowen as rector, a unique special event in the life of this church. The highlight of the fall was the 10 p.m. Christmas Eve service, which for the first time featured a sung mass as part of the service. Using the Missa Sancti Joannis de Deo, or "Little Organ Mass," by Franz Joseph Haydn, this was a step up for the choir to handle. Accompanied by the string ensemble hired for the occasion, it made for a special worship experience. Plans are to continue this as part of Christmas, rotating other masses. Through the winter and spring of this year, the choir has continued to do more familiar music with some new anthems on occasion. One challenging anthem new to the choir this year was a setting of Ubi caritas by the Norwegian composer Ola Gjeilo, sung during the Epiphany season and repeated on Maundy Thursday. Easter featured a festive anthem, with the service accompanied by a brass ensemble that we have been working with for 10 years. The Easter season will finish off when St. Andrew's hosts the annual Hymn Festival for Ascension on May 29, with guest conductor and organist Dr. John Cummins, from St. Paul's in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

It has been my pleasure and privilege to lead this choir for ten years. We have seen a lot of changes over the course of that time, with new music introduced for the choir and the congregation. This will continue to be a ministerial goal of this program. Choir numbers have gone up and down over these years, and the choir has slowly built back from COVID losses, caused by members moving out of the area. Currently at 14, an ideal number would be 20 singers, and this continues to be elusive. Paid singers have been raised to a more respectable level this year, and I am thankful to the vestry and congregation for making that happen. Administratively, paid singers now have letters of agreement, something which I had hoped to introduce when I started in 2015. Every week, I give thanks for this choir and this church, and I look forward to more liturgical and musical opportunities to come.

Submitted by Richard Rigg

As Associate Director of Music Ministry, I am very pleased with the participation of the Children's Choir, Handbell Choir, and Gospel Lights in the musical life of St. Andrew's. This year (starting in September, 2024) has been a very active year for each of these ensembles as they prepared special music adding to a variety of services and events.

The Children's choir has 9 children who practice each Sunday after the 10:15 liturgy. They have added music during communion for the 10:15 liturgy each month from September through April. These young musicians also served as the main body of the choir for the annual Christmas Pageant in December. This ensemble performs a variety of age-appropriate repertoire, usually during the administration of communion.

The Handbell Choir practices each Thursday from 6:30 to 7:15. This ensemble currently consists of 6 members of various musical background and expertise. They have added music during communion for the 10:15 liturgy each month from September through March and additionally on Easter Sunday. Although we have recently lost two members who moved their church membership elsewhere, these musicians are always eager to add wonderful music to the service whenever possible.

As has become regular practice, the Gospel Lights began the year at the September "Welcome Back" service on the first Sunday after Labor Day. Consisting of 6 musicians who sing and play a wide variety of instruments, this group focuses principally on "Old Time" gospel repertoire with a small amount of contemporary literature. They have provided music for the 10:15 liturgy (both communion music and postludes) each month from September through January and are proud to continue to provide music to lighten the joyful work of the participants in the Rise Against Hunger meal-packing each year.

Treasurer's Report

Submitted by Larry Brett

St. Andrew's financial condition improved as we moved into 2025. Annual giving by the parish in 2024 exceeded the budget and revenues were over budget. However operating expenses exceeded the budget, caused by spending in Building and Grounds.

St. Andrew's derives its income from a variety of sources. Pledges and plate contributions account for approximately 72% of our income. Additional income consists of rental income from West Ghent School and the former rectory. Approximately 20% of our income comes from the St. Andrew's Endowment accounts. The vast majority of this comes from The Dorothy Denby Trust, a charitable trust established under the will of a deceased parishioner. The Denby Trust provides that St. Andrew's each year receives income calculated at 5% of the fair market value of the Trust, valued as of October 1 of each year. Thus, the Denby Trust income is strongly affected by the stock market. This generous gift has funded various needs and projects that would not otherwise have been possible from just our pledge and rental income. The Trustee of the Denby Trust is Bank of America. St. Andrew's is also fortunate to have an endowment fund, which is the result of many gifts and bequests over the years.

Following Diocesan requirements (based on revenue amount), in 2023 St. Andrew's retained a CPA firm to Review our financial statements. The same firm will prepare a review for 2024 Statements.

The Finance Committee is chaired by Nash Bilisoly, and the members include Larry Brett (Treasurer of St. Andrew's – a volunteer position), Michelle Sturges, Rob Tobin, Phil Modisett and

Tayloe Gwathmey. Steve Blevins and Dave Branch serve as volunteer Assistant Treasurers, saving the church the salary that would otherwise be payable for this part-time position. The 2024 year-end financial report is attached.

Christian Formation

Submitted by Harper Bathel

Our St. Andrew's kids began the summer of 2024 with their second grant from the Matthew 25 Fund. The **Matthew 25 Summer of Mission** offerings cared for our neighbors from Mission of the Holy Spirit, Laundry Love, GAM (Ghent Area Ministry), and CHKD. Our kids love being a part of these outreach projects! Both our Children's Chapel and Vacation Bible School communities participated. This opportunity has kept our energy high over the summer months as we cared for kids in our local community. The summer of 2024 also marked a new era in our **Vacation Bible School** program; we created our own curriculum focused on kids in the Bible. One of the most popular segments each day was an interactive experience in our sanctuary.

We kicked off our fall program year by **connecting** our families through our offerings. **All Ages Formation Hour** at 9 a.m. on Sunday mornings has a devoted group of adults that have been studying female biblical characters. Our **Children's Center** opens at 9 a.m. to welcome all ages for fellowship, prayer, and faithful play. Then it welcomes our youngest members and their families during our 10:15 worship. We are grateful to our parents and teens who staff this offering which is open 50 weeks a year. In Lent, our teens and adults gathered for our **Confirmation** offering where we focused on sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation, Book of Common Prayer, Worship, and The Episcopal Church.

As one of our largest offerings, **Children's Chapel** continues to gather our 4 – 10 year olds during the first part of our 10:15 a.m. worship. During this time, they pray together, learn responses to our worship, wonder about the Bible stories, and explore our Episcopal traditions. A large group of ages 4, 5, and 6 year olds make up most of the attendance. Thirty kids, teens, and adults experienced a special Epiphany Retreat called *Be the Light*. Our Children's Chapel program gathered at least 45 times throughout our year.

Throughout our year, our teens gather in several ways with their two main offerings being **EYC** and our **Acolyte Ministry**. Both programs give an opportunity to be able to explore their faith, give their time to our church and outreach while deepening their relationships with God, their peers, and adult leaders. New this year, our students created an Ofrenda on our Lady Altar for Dia de Los Muertos for All Saints Sunday which the parish found meaningful as they remembered their loved ones. A BIG thank you to our students who set up for our Rise Against Hunger meal packing event each year. This mission gathers over 80 volunteers to pack meals to be sent overseas. Our high school students and families received a grant from the Schafer Trust that allows young people the opportunity to learn and focus on the importance of peace. These families are in the beginning stages of planning an overseas peace pilgrimage for the summer of 2026.

At a glance our program through numbers: *(numbers reflect summer 2024 – end of April 2025)*

- **Baptisms:** 14 infants, children, and teens were baptized
- **Baptism Prep Classes:** 3 classes offered, 10 families gathered
- **Confirmation Classes:** 11 teens and 18 adults participated
- **All Ages Formation:** 8 to 20 gathered
- **Children's Center:** 4 to 16 kids gathered weekly, *(we had 20 for Easter!)*
- **Children's Chapel:** 4 to 18 kids gathered each week; our highest week being at least 22 kids!
- **Be the Light Kids Retreat:** 21 kids, 5 teens, and 4 adults
- **Vacation Bible School in June:** 17 kids registered, 6 teen and 14 adult volunteers
- **Acolytes:** 23 youth, grades 5 – 12th served in this ministry, 3 adult leaders
- **EYC:** 4 to 18 kids gathered every time we met, 4 adult leaders and parent volunteers
- **Youth Sunday:** over 30 kids and teens helped to offer our worship including 3 senior preachers, and 5 seniors participating in some other aspect of our service
- **Hands on Outreach for our Youth:** over 7 opportunities *(GAM, Laundry Love, Mission of the Holy Spirit, CHKD Busy Bags, and more)*
- **Hands on Outreach for All Ages:** over 5 opportunities *(CHKD Busy Bags, Advent Card Ministry, Rise Against Hunger, College Care Packages, lanterns for Easter Vigil)*
- **College Care Packages** sent to over 25 college students twice a year
- **Volunteers:** over 30 active adults and 15 teens support our programs at least 4 times a year, many volunteer at least once a month! *(year round programs and VBS represented in these numbers)*

Rector's Report

Submitted by The Rev. Charles Lane Cowen

It would seem most fitting that by visible things the invisible things of God should be made known . . . by the mystery of the Incarnation are made known at once the goodness, the wisdom, the justice, the power or the might of God¹

As I approach the 2nd anniversary of my arrival at St. Andrew's, I am amazed that I have been here only a short while. In these two years I have learned so much about this vibrant and Spirit-filled community, and it feels very much like home.

I am not alone in this feeling. When I talk to staff, members of the vestry, and people in the pews, over and over I hear people say that St. Andrew's feels like their second family and a place where they just fit. It's hard to capture that sense of "just fitting." There's an intangible feeling of peace that comes from finding your place – a puzzle piece on the edge of the table that finally clicks into its place and becomes part of the beautiful image unfolding.

¹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, vol. 9 (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, n.d.), 569.

The great theologian Thomas Aquinas wrote frequently about the concept of “fittingness,” especially when he talked about Jesus and his nature as the Word of God made flesh. For Thomas, it is fitting that God’s love pours out into the world not as some supernatural power but as one of us. It is fitting that Jesus endures suffering and death just as we do in order to transform life into death.

For me, and for many of you, the community of people at St. Andrew’s dedicated to following Jesus as we praise God, care for one another, and care for the wider world just fits. It’s where God calls us because it leads to a transformed life of hope in finding our place. We, like that singular puzzle piece, also know that we only fit when we gather all the other pieces of the puzzle. When I ask new folks what brought them to St. Andrew’s, they almost always name another member of the church who told them about us. No one – literally no one – has said they come to St. Andrew’s because of the priest. That’s a good thing! Like you, I am one piece of the larger puzzle.

As our puzzle expands into the mosaic that is St. Andrew’s, we are finding that our beautiful spaces are aging and not always serving the needs of our expanding community. This Easter we had close to 400 people across the two services! Even more exciting, we had a full church on the Sunday after Easter, which never happens! The joy of our church is that it’s too good to keep to ourselves, so we are growing. As we grow, our building is being used more often by more people, and we have an obligation to care for our facility as it becomes a gathering place for God’s people.

Having spent two years with you, it has become apparent to me that my work at St. Andrew’s is two-fold. First, the Holy Spirit has called me to serve alongside you as we proclaim the Good News. My dream for St. Andrew’s is that we will continue spreading God’s love with all the world as we welcome all people, especially those who may have had bad experiences of religion and are looking for a safe haven where they can be celebrated for who they are. Second, I dream that over the next several years we develop and implement a plan that will assess our physical campus, bring our spaces into a healthier, more secure state, and then create a plan that ensures that these spaces are available to God’s people for the next 100 years and beyond.

We at St. Andrew’s worship together, pray together, play together, eat together, celebrate together, mourn together, cry together. I hope that God’s people will continue that pattern of togetherness, find where they fit, and seek to share that fittingness with all the world.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Charles Lane Cowen", followed by a small superscripted plus sign.

The Rev. Charles Lane Cowen
7th Rector

2025 Vestry Nominees



Becky Colaw has had a Forest Gump life. Graduating from the University of Tennessee with a BS in Broadcasting Management, she spent several years working in the television industry before enlisting in the Air Force and attending Officer Training School. In her 20-year career, she participated in the Gulf War, several regional conflicts and multiple operations. While in the Air Force she received an MPA in Criminal Justice and went to night school to earn her JD from Regent University. Most importantly, she met her wife Lori while both were on active duty. After the Air Force she worked at Hall Automotive as a staff attorney, had a private practice for another 17 years, and finished up as General Counsel at Priority

Automotive. She retired for good in January of 2024 and is now a celebrated chicken farmer who loves riding and driving horses. Life really is a "box of chocolates."



Donna Feld, a New Jersey native, and an Irish Italian Catholic came to the Episcopal Church by divine guidance. Donna enjoyed a 35 year career practicing as a clinical social worker, now retired, earning her Master's degree in social work at Rutgers University in New Jersey. She spent her career working across the life cycle from HIV counseling and testing with pregnant women, youth and family services, private practice, and school social work to ending her professional career focusing on grief work. She was involved as a member of the board of a local non-profit grief center at the Jersey Shore serving as a facilitator with young adults and offering parent support and training new facilitators.

In March 2020, when the world shut down for the pandemic, Donna came to Norfolk, Virginia, to care for her then 15-month-old grandson, William, now 6-years-old. Life had other plans for her and she remained in Virginia, now with two more beautiful grandchildren, Hazel (4) and Eloise (18 months) and her daughter, Rebecca, and son-in-law, Cory. Donna found her community here in Virginia at St. Andrews, which started with an introduction from her daughter's neighbor, Libby, a life long member at the church. After a warm and welcoming meeting with Andy Rohrs, Donna knew she had found her spiritual home here at St. Andrew's. Since joining the church Donna has been involved in the book club, Women of the Way, Theology before lunch, Sunday morning forum, Thursday evening bible study, and the Altar Guild.



Matt Frauenzimmer (Capt., USN) grew up in San Clemente, California, and graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1997. Over a 25+ year career, he's served in multiple operational, leadership, and command roles—from deployments aboard aircraft carriers to shaping Navy ISR policy. He's flown over 2,500 hours, led in combat and crisis response, and commanded both aviation and installation units. He holds graduate degrees in leadership and military education, and today leads the Hampton Roads Naval ROTC Consortium. His proudest achievements are not personal awards, but team successes reflected in his units' collective accomplishments.



Charlie Hinsch, is a native of New York who moved to Norfolk in 1999. He earned his bachelor's degree in education from SUNY Oneonta and has been an educator for over 26 years, beginning his career in Norfolk Public Schools before moving to Virginia Beach City Public Schools. Starting as a 5th-grade teacher, Charlie now serves as a Coordinator of Instructional Technology. He earned his master's degree in Educational Leadership from Old Dominion University in 2007.

Charlie and his husband, Jose, joined St. Andrew's in 2010 after visiting several local parishes. They immediately knew they had found their church home at St. Andrew's, drawn by its shared values, welcoming spirit, and strong sense of community. Together, they have two children: Grayson (16) and Emma (7). When Charlie's mother moved to Norfolk in 2014, she also became a member of St. Andrew's, finding the same warmth and connection that had drawn Charlie and his family.

Charlie has been deeply involved in the life of the church for the past decade, supporting the children's and youth ministries by assisting with the Episcopal Youth Community (EYC) and leading Children's Chapel. He previously served on the Vestry from 2020 to 2023 and found the experience truly rewarding. In addition to his work at St. Andrew's, Charlie is active in the broader Norfolk community as a board member for the Granby Street YMCA.

Charlie is honored to continue serving the St. Andrew's family and looks forward to supporting the church's mission and ministries.



Penny Lewis, a lifelong Episcopalian, grew up in Northern Virginia. She received her undergraduate degree from the University of Richmond and a master's degree from Old Dominion University. She was delighted when her husband Don's Navy career brought them back to Hampton Roads in 1986, and they joined St. Andrew's Church. Penny had a long career in higher education, working for Penn State University, Tidewater Community College, and the University of Virginia. She retired in 2016 to enjoy traveling, digging in her garden, and volunteering in the archaeology lab at Historic Jamestowne.

Over the years, Penny has been involved in a variety of activities at St. Andrew's, including the Pastoral Care, Outreach, and Centennial committees, NEST/winter shelter teams, the Breakfast Brigade, and various Flower Festival and bazaar committees. She found it especially meaningful to be a part of the Columbarium Committee and the 2009 Rector Search Committee. On certain Sundays, you will find her ringing handbells, ushering, and occasionally volunteering in the nursery where she enjoys getting to know the youngest members of the St. Andrew's family.

Penny finds St. Andrew's to be a place of joy, comfort, and inspiration. She served on the Vestry under two previous rectors and looks forward to this new era at St. Andrew's with Fr. Charles.