

A Celebration of Ministries

Annual Report for 2024



ST. BEDE'S
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Annual Parish Meeting
February 2, 2025

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St. Bede's Vestry Slate 2025



Gwen Heaton – Gwen comes to St. Bede's from a Lutheran background where she focused on children's ministry. Since coming to St. Bede's in 2021 she has been a member of the Altar Guild, the Flower Guild, and the Invite Welcome Connect Team. Gwen also enjoys serving as a lector. Gwen worked for many years as a Registered Nurse, ending her career in nursing education and is now retired. She enjoys sharing church time with her three grandchildren. Because she has a strong belief in giving back the time God has given us, she looks forward to serving on the Vestry.



Shane Hunziker – Shane has been a member of St. Bede's for five years now, although having arrived just prior to the pandemic, you may have only gotten to know him over the past several years. In that time, he has served as Lector, Eucharistic Minister, and Crucifer. He has spent his whole life in the Episcopal Church and is especially grateful for his eight years spent with the Education for Ministry (EfM) program. Shane was previously a member of All Saints' Episcopal Church, Atlanta, where, among other ministries, he served on the committee for Carmie McDonald's discernment for the priesthood. He is employed as a Technical Lead Software Engineer with Cox Automotive and is somehow nearing his twentieth year there. Shane is blessed to be married to Julia and lives in Tucker with their two black kitties, Willow and Salem. He is excited to serve St. Bede's in whatever capacity he is able.



Martha Robert – Martha is a cradle Episcopalian and was a member of St. Bartholomew's, Atlanta for more than 25 years before moving from the metro area in 2013. She was an educator in Decatur schools and then financial administrator of Nicholas House and the Atlanta Children's Shelter. Martha was executive director of the Chattahoochee Valley Episcopal Ministry in Columbus GA for more than 7 years before retiring and returning to Atlanta (east Gwinnett!) in 2022 to "hang out" with her now eight-year-old granddaughter after school and whenever else she can. Since returning to Atlanta, Martha has found a home at St. Bede's. She has participated in the parish's Sacred Ground Circle and is a current member of the Outreach Committee and the Contemplative Living group. She also is finishing a provisional year with the Order of St. Anna the Prophet, taking novice vows on February 1st. Martha looks forward to serving St. Bede's on vestry and in growing together in faith and action as God's body in the world.

St. Bede's Annual Parish Meeting Minutes – January 28, 2024

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 11:57 am by the The Very Rev'd S.Chadwick Vaughn, Rector.

Opening Prayer

The Rev'd Raymond Walker, III, Priest Associate, led the opening prayer.

Appointment of Clerk for the Annual Meeting

Cathe Echterhoff was appointed as recording clerk of the Annual Parish Meeting.

Approval of Minutes from 2023 Annual Parish Meeting

Minutes of the 2023 Annual Parish Meeting were reviewed and approved as written.

Presentation and Election of New Vestry Members

Chad shared that the Vestry is moving to change the language of the bylaws regarding the number of Vestry members. Previously there were 4 new members each year. This year there are 3. The Vestry Slate for 2024 was presented. The candidates are: Jim Handsfield, Paul Martin and Miriam Needham. The 2024 Vestry slate was accepted.

Comments from the Senior Warden

Orisha Parsons, the Senior Warden, thanked the off-going members of the Vestry, Judah Sali, Maggie Kottke, Barbara Helms and Nina Daniel. She also welcomed the new members. She stated that the Youth have been very active and had great field trips. Orisha appreciates those who are willing to worship and serve at St. Bede's. Orisha will continue as Senior Warden in 2024.

Stewardship Update

Chad recognized the Stewardship Chairs, Cheryl and Fred Murphy. This past year we exceeded our pledged amount. The pledge goal for 2024 is \$460,000. Currently \$428,000 has been received in pledges from 74 people.

Report from the Treasurer

Chad provided the Treasurer's Report. He stated Will Mizell is retiring as treasurer and head usher. Nigel Poland is the new treasurer, and Jim Helms is the new head usher. Chad recognized Will for his service to St. Bede's. In 2023 Income had a deficit of \$11,419, mostly from non-pledged income. Expenses were close to budget. The balance on the Surplus/Loss Fund after the 2023 deficit is posted is \$26,045. Chad shared that the balance on the Diocesan Mortgage Loan is \$94,400. It is on track to be paid off in 2027-2028.

Rector's Comments and Recognitions

Chad shared many thanks. He recognized church groups by category:

Christian Formation – Adult, Children, and Youth

Pastoral Care

Outreach and Social Justice

Facilities and Grounds

Music and Worship including Altar Guild, Flower Guild, Bread Guild, Lectors, Eucharistic Ministers, Acolytes, Ushers, Worship Technology

Hospitality and Kitchen Ministry

Stewardship and Endowment

Finance and Bede Counters

Invite – Welcome – Connect

Chad recognized the Vestry including the new members Jim Handsfield, Paul Martin, and Miriam Needham; off-going members: Judah Sali, Barbara Helms, Maggie Kottke, and Nina Daniel; and continuing members Orisha Parsons, Kim Padgett, Jennie Couture, Fred Murphy, Connie Coralli, Barb Pettitt, Loretta Vail, and Jelani Valdez.

Treasurer: Will Mizell

Chancellor: George Shingler

Clerk: Cathe Echterhoff, Nancy Ward

Clergy: Lynnsay Buehler (longest serving), Mimi Guerra, Raymond Walker, Iñaki Guevara, Claiborne Jones, and Bill McLemore (45th Parish Meeting of his ministry).

Staff: Laura Pittman, John Whitt, Beth Cannon, Molly Graves, Ashley Brown, Jerry Simmons

Diocesan Council: John Branan, Orisha Parsons, Judah Sali, and Molly Graves

Staff Transitions: Muriel Diguette to Laura Pittman as Parish Administrator

ESOL leadership: Connie Coralli and Claudia Fedarko

Parish Grounds Working Group: Kim Padgett and Julia Dalbom

Chad would like to form a Parish Vision and Vitality team. He is exploring this concept with resources from the Bishop's Office of Congregational Vitality and with Rob Townes.

An entrance welcoming sculpture memorial to Jim Barton from Nancy Bruce is in the planning stages with Ann Cowperthwaite. Chad will share photos in the near future.

Chad closed by thanking everyone for all they do and requesting prayers for St. Bede's.

The meeting adjourned at 12:58 pm.

Submitted by Cathe Echterhoff, Clerk of the Vestry

Financial Report for 2024

(with review of prior years)

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024		
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Budget	+/-
Pledged Income	418,126	430,993	424,060	418,476	439,387	455,112	460,000	(4,888)
Non-Pledged Income	88,051	71,227	59,137	58,032	41,046	37,071	46,000	(8,929)
Special Offering	5,057	3,482	7,113	2,070	5,362	3,954	4,879	(925)
Other Income	13,855	2,646	3,872	4,440	2,902	8,198	3,747	4,451
Interest Income	<u>488</u>	<u>423</u>	<u>248</u>	<u>390</u>	<u>4,053</u>	<u>10,064</u>	<u>8,000</u>	<u>2,064</u>
Total Revenues	525,577	508,771	494,430	483,408	492,750	514,399	522,626	(8,227)
Clergy Compensation & Benefits	189,492	181,130	183,418	188,402	200,754	195,882	197,998	(2,116)
Priest Asst Stipend	<u>113,589</u>	<u>119,307</u>	<u>121,845</u>	<u>121,255</u>	<u>107,798</u>	<u>109,129</u>	<u>109,867</u>	<u>(738)</u>
Total Personnel	303,081	300,437	305,263	309,657	308,552	305,011	307,865	(2,854)
Worship Support	698	74	520	352	553	664	300	364
Music	<u>4,671</u>	<u>5,679</u>	<u>4,056</u>	<u>2,638</u>	<u>2,416</u>	<u>2,109</u>	<u>2,500</u>	<u>(391)</u>
Total Worship	5,369	5,753	4,576	2,990	2,969	2,773	2,800	(27)
ESL	4,847	3,029	0	2,163	3,680	3,759	4,100	(341)
Community Engagement	5,128	6,894	10,050	11,320	10,166	11,700	13,300	(1,600)
Hospitality	<u>2,443</u>	<u>493</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1,004</u>	<u>2,811</u>	<u>3,199</u>	<u>3,600</u>	<u>(401)</u>
Total Serve	12,418	10,416	10,050	14,487	16,657	18,658	21,000	(2,342)
Christian Formation	4,868	2,430	1,148	2,605	1,997	1,995	2,500	(505)
Evangelism	<u>512</u>	<u>166</u>	<u>230</u>	<u>57</u>	<u>541</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>700</u>	<u>(700)</u>
Total Grow	5,380	2,596	1,378	2,662	2,538	1,995	3,200	(1,205)
Office Expenses	17,331	12,142	11,699	13,121	15,771	15,604	15,665	(61)
Diocesan Commitments	46,823	48,445	50,958	52,726	52,406	50,572	50,597	(25)
Facilities	40,978	30,534	32,098	34,208	37,449	46,050	44,911	1,139
Mortgage	25,345	25,345	25,345	25,346	25,345	25,558	25,345	213
Finance (Booking, Audit, Fees)	3,820	7,760	8,154	5,988	6,427	10,996	10,546	450
Resource Development	2,543	313	422	169	252	1,554	400	1,154
Utilities	33,400	29,708	25,201	30,581	35,558	40,276	38,496	1,780
Vestry	<u>4,533</u>	<u>2,275</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>244</u>	<u>1,630</u>	<u>1,650</u>	<u>(20)</u>
Total Other	174,774	156,522	153,877	162,139	173,452	192,241	187,610	4,631
Total Expenses	501,023	475,724	475,144	491,935	504,168	520,678	522,475	(1,797)
Net Income (Deficit)	24,554	33,047	19,286	(8,527)	(11,418)	(6,280)	151	(6,431)

Recap of 2024 Financials

We ended 2024 with a **\$6,280 deficit**. The primary reason for the deficit was due to actual non-pledge gifts being below what was budgeted along with a few pledges that were not paid in full. Other factors included increases in certain utility expenses and other increased operational expenses.

Highlights of Revenue section:

- We collected around 99% of pledges - \$455,000 of \$460,000 pledged.
- Christmas and Easter Offerings of \$3,945 were \$925 less than budgeted.
- Building use income was \$3,200 more than budgeted.
- Interest income on church accounts was \$2,064 more than budgeted.

Highlights of Expense section:

- Overall expenses were \$1,798 under budget.
- Most all ministry and operational areas were at or under budget for 2024. Those areas that were slightly over budget were generally related to higher operating and administrative costs.

Items of note from the Balance Sheet and Funds (as of 12/31/2024):

- **Diocesan Loan** – In January 2016 we borrowed \$275,000 from the Diocesan Foundation to pay off the mortgage loan from United Community Bank. The Diocesan Foundation Loan is a 15 year, 3% interest loan and will be paid off no later than December of 2030 (earlier with further principal reduction gifts).
The current loan balance is \$74,000 (was \$94,400 on 12/31/2023).
- **Bentley Loan** - In January 2016 we also borrowed \$30,000 from ourselves (i.e., the Bentley Fund) to pay off the mortgage from UCB. The terms of the loan are the same as the Diocesan Loan, so we are paying ourselves interest at 3%.
The current loan balance is \$5,233.
- **The balance of the Capital Improvement & Replacement Fund is \$36,945.**
We accrue \$667/month (\$8,004/year) to have a “set aside” fund for large capital maintenance expenses, i.e., major roof work, replacement of HVAC units, etc.
- **The balance of the Annual Surplus/Loss Fund is \$16,040** (after the 2024 deficit is posted). From time to time the Vestry may decide to fund projects using this fund or elect to keep it to absorb potential year-end losses.
- **The balance of the Bentley Fund is \$80,571.**
- **The balance of the Organ Maintenance Fund is \$8,666.** These are funds reserved for anticipation of future major maintenance on the organ.
- **The balance of the St. Bede’s Endowment Fund was \$225,475** on 12/31/2024 (was \$203,947 on 12/31/2023)

Ministry Reports

✠ Committees of the Vestry

Endowment

2024 Members: Pat Pickett, Chair; Rob Townes, Laura Martin, Nigel Poland, Muriel Diguette

Summary of 2024 Actions:

- Pat Pickett was approved by the Vestry as chairman for 2024. Nigel Poland and Muriel Diguette were elected to three-year terms on the committee
- The Morning Star Society donor recognition plaque was installed in the Commons. Please see Rob or Chad if you wish to join the Morning Star Society by remembering St. Bede's in your estate planning or by making a donation to the endowment and have your name added to our list of "stars."
- The Vestry approved the request for the church to receive a quarterly distribution of "Available Endowment Funds" from the Episcopal Church Foundation. This procedure will begin in 2025.
- The committee discussed asking the Vestry to reallocate some of the funds currently held in the "Bentley Fund" into the Endowment. This was tabled until 2025.
- Rob Townes was elected by the committee to be chair in 2025; Muriel Diguette was elected to be secretary. Paul Werner was approved to replace Pat Pickett on the committee for a three-year term. These designations were approved by the Vestry.

The committee will entertain requests for disbursements from the Endowment for various church projects during the first quarter of 2025. Forms will be available.

At the end of December, 31 2024 (the last statement from the Diocesan Endowment Fund), **The corpus of the St. Bede's Endowment was \$180,492** with the overall **Endowment Fund balance as being \$225,475.** (was \$203,947 on 12/31/2023)

Pat Pickett, *Chair*

Facilities and Property

In 2024, the Building and Grounds group accomplished several activities. Continued maintenance on the building structure and systems included replacement of damaged ceiling tiles, re-lamping of fluorescent fixtures in the commons area, bathrooms and sacristy, updating and inspection of the kitchen hood fire protection system, and various maintenance tasks and repairs to HVAC units. In addition, we requested and received vendor quotations for replacement of the roofing systems over the Commons, Parish Hall and Kitchen. Those roofing systems, both flat and shingled, are over 25 years old and in need of replacement. We are pleased to report that the Vestry has approved a contract for roof replacement that should begin in early 2025. Grounds work has included cleaning out the playground area behind the

Mission Wing, and cleaning and /or replacing signage at the Henderson Mill and Midvale entrances. In addition, the Vestry entered an agreement with Matt Johnson of Fox Hollow Gardens LLC to provide a landscaping plan and routine maintenance of the grounds. Kelly Landscapes continues to provide grass cutting and leaf cleanup. Finally, Jerry Simmons, our Sexton, continues to provide twice a week services to clean and maintain our interior spaces.

Jim Helms & Jeff Swoope, *Co-Chairs*

Resource Development – Stewardship

The 2024 Annual Pledge Campaign for St. Bede's

Our Stewardship Theme for the 2025 Campaign: Caring for One Another

“I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” John 13:34-35

This year’s stewardship campaign celebrates our call to love one another by caring for one another. The St. Bede’s community has demonstrated this caring in many ways, both in our church community and in the greater world. We count over 50 different ministries in which members of our congregation are actively involved. We thank you all for making this church a vibrant community of prayers, helpers and believers.

We would like to thank the four members who offered reflections on what St. Bede’s means to them and why they pledge. They are **Jim Handsfield, Shane Hunziker, Gwen Heaton, and George Shingler.**

THANK YOU, THANK YOU!

**Thank you to all who have already
prayerfully considered and returned
your 2025 pledge of financial support to St. Bede's.**

As of Thursday, January 30, we have received 75 pledges totaling \$392,000.

**So far, 41 pledgers have increased their pledges.
We have received 6 new pledges.**

If you have not pledged yet and would like to do so, you may do so either online (there is a link in the weekly E-News) or by picking up a pledge packet at the church. Thank you for your generosity of time, talent and money.

Faithfully yours,

Claudia Fedarko and Steve Hadler, *Co-Chairs*

✠ Worship

Liturgical Ministries

- Would you like to use your voice to enhance our wonderful choir?
- Would you be willing to bake bread for our Eucharist?
- Is your gift reading aloud?
- Would you like to share in serving communion?
- Could you take the time to help with the Altar preparations and cleanup?
- Would your children enjoy serving as acolytes?
- Would you like to help usher during services?

Members of the various liturgical ministries have the opportunity to serve God and St. Bede's and also get to know their co-workers on a personal level. These ministries strive to enhance the liturgical experience for the congregation by consulting with the clergy and providing support for the liturgy. If you are looking for a way to become more involved at St. Bede's, please consider joining one or more of these ministries – many of which just need your help one Sunday a month. Among these groups are:

Altar Guild – Helen Ackall & Anita Montelione

Bread Guild – Jody Klein

Flower Guild – Nancy Ward & Ray Callaway

Lectors, Eucharistic Ministers, & Acolytes – Raz Schreiber

Choir/Instrumentalists – John Whitt

Ushers – Jim Helms

Altar Guild

The mission of the Altar Guild is to prepare the altar for worship. This involves communicating with the bread guild, ordering wine, and any other supply in shortage.

In addition, cleaning and polishing the sacred vessels, preparing the elements to celebrate Holy Eucharist, and cleaning the linens that need to be laundered.

We are thankful for the dedicated members: Nancy Ward, Gwen Heaton, Anita Montelione, Helen Ackall, Ron & Connie Aylor, Suzanne Shapiro, Robin Schreiber, and Toni Graney.

We are always looking to add new members, if you are interested, please contact any of the team members, or co-chairs Anita Montelione and Helen Ackall, you will be assigned to one of four teams who serve once a month.

Helen Ackall and Anita Montelione, *Co-Chairs*

Flower Guild

The Flower Guild faithfully plans and executes altar and Commons arrangements for Sunday worship, special occasions, funerals, and holidays as well as small offerings for shut-ins at Christmas and Easter. Five teams rotate weekly to prepare our space for worship. New members are always welcome, so please consider joining. The Flower Guild Ministry is supported solely by donations for memorial and thanksgiving dedications from parishioners and we thank all for their generosity this past year.

Nancy Ward and Ray Callaway, *Co-Chairs*

Lectors, Eucharistic Ministers, & Acolytes

The St. Bede's Liturgical Ministry provides support for the 10 am Sunday liturgy and Eucharist. The ministry provides readers for the lesson, psalm, and intercession, as well as Eucharistic Ministers and crucifers.

There are four Liturgical Teams to provide this support, one team for each of the first four Sundays each month. For those months with a fifth Sunday, a call is made to the entire ministry to fill the needs of that 5th Sunday service. The Liturgical Ministry also provides support for special services, such as Easter and Christmas, by making a similar call for ministry volunteers.

Liturgical Ministry Team Leaders:

1st Sunday: Orisha Parsons

2nd Sunday: Raz Schreiber

3rd Sunday: Suzanne Shapiro

4th Sunday: Cheryl & Fred Murphy

A Liturgical Ministry Training Guide is being developed. The first draft of the guide is in clergy review and the final guide should be available by the 2nd quarter of 2025. This guide is intended to help with consistency in executing the duties of individual ministry roles each Sunday and provide instruction on how to perform those duties. The guide will support members of the Liturgical Ministry "being on the same page." Video training guides are being considered.

Presently there are sufficient resources (people) to provide support for our regular 10 am worship, however, there are not enough to prevent team members having to serve every Sunday on the team they are assigned. Several teams do not enough ministry members to allow the rotation of duties within the team for their Sunday. Invitations to the join the Liturgical Ministry will be included in the Sunday announcements once a month.

Respectively submitted,
Raz Schreiber, *Liturgical Ministry Coordinator*

Music Ministry

**How often, making music, we have found
a new dimension in the world of sound,
as worship moved us to a more profound Alleluia!**

– Fred Pratt Green, The Hymnal 1982, #420

Music continues to play an active and important role in the liturgical life of St. Bede's, and I am grateful for a singing congregation that is appreciative and supportive of good music. Those who participate in the music program and offer their musical gifts contribute greatly to the life of a healthy parish, as does the network of moral support from the families of those who share their gifts.

I repeat my annual appeal for more participation in musical opportunities at St. Bede's. The choir is open to anyone at any time and is in great need of new membership. All musicians and those with an interest in music are welcome, regardless of previous experience. Just speak to John Whitt or any choir member about becoming part of our music program. We are a supportive community within a community and have a good and rewarding time together preparing for worship at St. Bede's.

If you have instrumental experience but haven't sung, you may be a better singer than you think. If you've ever sung in a choir, in school or church, consider joining ours. We want to get to know you and welcome you into our community. If you're not a singer, but perhaps play an instrument, make yourself known. We don't know who you are if you don't tell us!

Musical participation at St. Bede's offers many benefits:

- It is a way to experience a caring community within the larger community
- Choir explores the history and function of the music we sing, which helps to deepen its meaning and
- significance of its place in worship
- Choir provides an opportunity for leadership and participation in worship life and the opportunity to deepen
- the meaning of worship for others
- It's leadership and service rolled into one package
- It's fun. We enjoy each other's company and laugh a lot.
- And now and then, we sing things.

Concerts and Musical Outreach

We are fortunate to have a relationship with the Amethyst Baroque Ensemble, a local early music group who present two to three concerts during the year and will continue to make St. Bede's its Atlanta home. Programs have been well received and well attended, bringing in people from the community as well as within the parish. We continue to explore other concert and performance opportunities, seeking opportunities to raise our visibility in the community and to make our excellent space available for a variety of musical programming.

Lauda Musicam, directed by Jody Miller, who also founded Amethyst, will also present a concert at St. Bede's this year, on February 8th at 7:00 pm. Look for more information in eNews and the website. Lauda (for short) is a full renaissance band consisting of players of unusual medieval and renaissance instruments. St. Bede's will be hosting their chamber ensemble program, which will include a number of smaller groups within the larger ensemble, featuring their particular specialties. This will be an interesting and worthwhile event.

Brian Bishop, one of our visiting choir singers and keyboard artist will also be presenting a Lenten Concert featuring the *Trois Leçons de Ténèbres* (3 Lessons from Tenebrae) by French baroque composer François Couperin, plus other works by Couperin and Marin Marais. He will be joined by sopranos Wanda Yang Temko and Zorica Pavlovic, with Jacob Bitinas on viola da gamba, and Brian on organ and harpsichord. The date is March 15, 2025, at 7:30 pm.

Yours faithfully,
John J. Whitt, *Organist & Choirmaster*
jwhitt@stbedes.org

Worship Technology Team

Our team of Tina Kottke, Molly Graves, Katelyn Vaquero, Becca Love, and Judah Sali continued to live stream both the 10:00 and 1:30 services to YouTube.

The setup is simple, requiring just one person to operate the equipment. We would love to add more people to the Worship Technology team. No prior experience is necessary, but an interest in learning about audio-visual technology is a plus. We will teach you what to do! We welcome any youth or adult interested in this ministry to speak with Judah Sali or Molly Graves.

Judah Sali and Molly Graves, *Coordinators*

✠ Serve

Outreach

This past year we continued to support the Clarkston Community Center in their afterschool program, continued our financial commitment to NETWorks Ministry as well as volunteering our time in the NETWorks food bank. We continued our long-time support of the Emmaus House Thanksgiving at Home program – collecting 189 Thanksgiving Meal Bags. We ingathered much needed supplies for infants and families in need through Baby Jesus Baskets. We collected over 80 pairs of diabetic socks for the Common Soles Foot Clinic at Church of the Common Ground. And we supported many other local and diocesan ministries and programs.

We have asked The Episcopal Relief and Development to disperse some of our funds to assist countries that are rebuilding after experiencing earthquakes, other natural disasters, and resettlements as a result of war and conflicts and aiding humanitarian efforts. It also has come to our attention that in 1991 an organization was established in the US for the sole purpose of aiding sick and injured children without any means of support. The (PCRF)Palestine Children's Relief Center-has brought children regardless of their religious and/or political affiliation to the US for medical care and has constructed two wings in a hospital in Ramallah for pediatric oncology patients and children suffering from cardiology issues.

The committee meets once a quarter to discuss current natural disasters, ongoing (both national and international) issues, and with the assistance of ERD, tries to allocate our limited resources to those areas that are in the most need. If you are interested in this endeavor, please contact either Anita Montelione or Karen Werner, our co-chairs.

We welcome all who are interested in Outreach to join us at our quarterly meetings.

Anita Montelione and Karen Werner, *Co-Chairs*

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

The English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program began in January 2013 and is now in its 13th year. We began fall of 2024 with 136 students registering. We filled five levels (Basic, Levels 1, 2, 3, and Super Conversation) with about 90 students and were forced to leave some students on waiting lists. We are bursting at the seams so to speak! Our winter fiesta was well attended with over 100 students and family members and many from St. Bede's who support this ministry.

We continued to staff our nursery with two bilingual staff members (both related to family members who attend our Spanish language services) and others from our parish who volunteer to support this ministry. This wonderful service is invaluable in allowing many parents and families to attend ESOL.

ESOL functions with a large staff of volunteer teachers and coordinators with members of St. Bede's and other community volunteers assisting in this program. Erica and Jelani Valdez help with administrative functions and provide superb hospitality, providing refreshments after class and the opportunity for students to interact and get to know each other. Of note, over the past 12 years over 70 have taught in our ESOL program.

We continue to enjoy the updated classroom space in the Mission Wing made possible in part by a 2018 Episcopal Community Foundation Grant. This renovation has made teaching easier and the classrooms much more inviting and conducive to learning. These classrooms are multifunctional, allowing everyone using the Mission Wing to enjoy and benefit from this renovation.

Our program has been blessed with volunteers and financial support from within and outside of our St. Bede's community. Donations, large and small, combined with budgeted funds from the church make this work possible.

Orisha Parsons and Judah Sali, *Coordinators*

Hospitality Ministry

St. Bede's parishioners continue to enjoy gathering for refreshments and fellowship between morning services and Christian formation class. A call for committee members this year resulted in the formation of teams to cover the preparations and serving of refreshments for Sundays and special receptions, as well as for the weekly light cleaning of the kitchen. Donations of tablecloths, kitchen supplies, serving pieces, and monetary funds have been received and are always welcome. Thanks to all who have helped with the many tasks needed for our Hospitality activities.

Nancy Ward, *Coordinator*

Pastoral Care Ministries

Pastoral Care at St. Bede's is a kind and tender presence that imbues all aspects of our life together in church and community. In 2024, while we continued to experience transitions in ministry and service, we rallied around each other collectively, offering support through presence, phone calls and email check-ins, and visits to homes, rehabs, hospitals, and more. We have accompanied each other through deaths, relocations, illnesses and all sorts of personal adversities. We continue to sit with each other in our times of need offering food, comfort, prayer, eucharist, prayer shawls, rides, flowers, and love.

If you find yourself inspired by the possibilities, let's work together in the year to come to support ministries such as:

Share the Care: a ministry of providing a meal to a parishioner in a time of need.

Prayer Shawls: either by working in your own home or gathering together, a group creates and blesses prayer shawls to support parishioners through transition or challenge.

Eucharistic Visitors: who offer eucharist while visiting parishioners who are missing this community connection.

Flower Delivery: offering a small vase of a fresh flower arrangement near Easter and Christmas to folks who are homebound or otherwise need an extra touch of care from our community.

I deeply appreciate the ways this ministry has offered support to all who have needed it this year and look forward to the ways we will grow together in the coming year.

The Rev'd Raymond Walker III, *Priest Associate*

✠ Grow

Adult Christian Formation

Adult Formation takes many forms at St. Bede's – from formal programs like Education for Ministry (EfM) to various book and bible study groups to Popcorn Theology & Quiet Days to the Adult Sunday Forum classes. Our 2024 Sunday Adult Formation offerings began with an Episcopal 101 Class led by Chad Vaughn and others. This class allowed for newcomers and long-timers to explore together what it means to be a Christian of the Episcopal variety. During Lent, we joined with Episcopalians around the Diocese of Atlanta as we were led through a series of meditations by Bishop Wright on the topic – “Letting Go”. Various parishioners paired up to lead conversations on Bishop Wright's video meditations. In Eastertide, Raz Schreiber led us through an exploration of Understanding our Spiritual Type. This Fall, Paul Martin offered a series on understanding Celtic Spirituality. And then later in the Fall we had some fun learning about the Hymnal with John Whitt and “Hymns from a Hat”. Deacon Iñaki offered a session on the Compostela de Santiago and the Spanish way of pilgrimage. We finished the year with an Advent series led by Lynnsay Buehler on using the Enneagram as a tool for better understanding ourselves and our faith. During Advent, we also had opportunities to write cards to prisoners on death row and to detainees at Stewart Detention Center. In the year ahead, we plan to offer many other opportunities to enrich our understanding of our faith. Please join us for a class, small group, quiet day, or a book or film discussion. Your voice and the sharing of your faith journey always enriches these conversations and offerings!

Healing Our Racism Book Group

The Healing Our Racism book group was formed in the Summer of 2020 in response to the heightened racial tensions. Our group has doubled in number over the past few years. We have read and discussed many books tending to the historical complexities of racism in our country, and recently we've begun to read some fiction to enrich our understanding. Since we meet on Zoom, we've been able to include a member who lives in North Carolina, and others of our group when they are away from home. For this reason, we plan to continue meeting on Zoom the 3rd Monday of each month at 2pm. Please join us!

Muriel Diguette

Bible, Books, and Banter

Our small group of current and former St. Bede's folks meets twice a month, in person with a Zoom connection. We share our stories, as we try to discern God's presence in our lives. Books we've discussed this past year include: *Hannah Coulter*, by Wendell Berry; *Hard and Holy Work*, by Birdwhistell and Mayfield; *The Seeker and the Monk*, by Sophronia Scott; *The Second Life of Mirielle West*, by Amanda Skenandore; *Everything Happens for a Reason—and other lies I've loved*, by Kate Bowler; *Practice the Pause*, by Caroline Oakes. We welcome new participants. If you're interested in inquiring about our group, please get in touch with Martha West, at mtwest@bellsouth.net.

Martha West

Children and Family Ministries

In 2024, we continued offering a “pull-out” formation time for children during 10 am worship. Children ages 3 years old through 5th grade (and younger with an adult caregiver) begin the worship time with their families and then process out early in the Liturgy of the Word, returning at the Peace, in time to celebrate the Eucharist. This allows about 20-30 minutes for a Godly Play story and some “wondering” time.

For families with young children, our “Playground” offers an inviting space to participate in worship, and we also invite them to use the unstaffed nursery room if they need an alternate space for either a quiet break or for louder play.

With Spanish-language worship moving from 2:30 to 1:30 pm in 2024, we resumed offering Christian Formation for young children immediately following the fellowship time after 10 am worship. This class is mostly attended by children whose families attend the 1:30 service immediately after this formation time. This class is taught in English. Using Godly Play storytelling, books, and other resources, we focus on learning about what we do in church – the liturgy and the sacraments – in addition to experiencing stories about the people of God, stories about Jesus, and stories told by Jesus. At the end of the 2024-2025 program year, the children in this class will be able to participate in a celebratory communion service to acknowledge their growing in faith.

Other events, celebrations and resources offered in 2024 included:

- Illustrated Ministry micro-practices and prayers mailed weekly in the e-news and coloring pages and scripture story booklets in the Playground,
- Evening Bilingual VBS for families with over 50 participants enjoying dinner, storytelling, music and crafts together during which we collected school supplies and money to support NETWorks Back2School Shop, and we made cards and wrote notes to ICE detainees at Stewart,
- Advent Wreath-making Workshop offered in the morning and afternoon with a home worship booklet available in English or Spanish to help families observe a holy Advent and prepare for Christmas,
- Las Posadas and Christmas Tree Decorating,
- A well-attended Christmas Eve Pageant with young children, teens, and adults who donned costumes and offered readings to help tell the Nativity story.

I am grateful for the entire St. Bede’s community for supporting our ministry to families with young children through your prayers, financial support, hospitality, time, energy, and presence. Many thanks go to the awesome team of VBS volunteers who enabled us to have a wonderful week of fellowship and fun this summer celebrating the Saints and saints of the church! And finally, a special shout-out to Junior Abraham for being a faithful Godly Play co-teacher with me for many years.

Molly Graves, *Director of Children’s & Family Ministry*

Youth and Family Ministries

2024 brought great growth and opportunities for the youth program here at St. Bede's. With the change in time for our worship in Spanish to 1:30 pm, we have more young people participating in the youth program than we had over the last few years. We extended confirmation classes from six weeks to last the entire Christian education year, which in turn provided us multiple ways to connect our young people to St Bede's in ways that we couldn't before. Together the youth created over two hundred Bede's Bags to provide meals to those in need, collaborated and purchased forty-two Thanksgiving meal bags for Emmaus House, and pooled our money to create baby Jesus Baskets (and learned that babies are REALLY expensive.). We had participants join others from the Diocese at New Beginnings and will have more folks join Happening in early 2025. We have explored what it sounds, looks and feels like to be in the presence of God while going out into the world, whether it be eating at Waffle House or shooting pool in the youth room downstairs. We look forward to growing together in our faith and friendships over the coming years. And as always, continue to send peace, grace, grooviness and love into the world.

Beth Cannon, *Director of Youth & Family Ministries*, and Judah Sali

The Julian of Norwich Center

January 2024 – December 2024 Summary of Activities for the Annual Parish Meeting

Most of the people with whom I have met this year are coming to St. Bede's to meet in The Julian of Norwich Center. On occasion, as needed, I have met with a few people on their porches or in their homes, and I have been able to continue meeting with 2 directees who moved out-of-state, thanks to Zoom.

Thanks to 2 generous donors during the last quarter of the year, the Center was able to provide **37 scholarships totaling \$1,091.32.**

73 individuals were seen for Spiritual Direction

- ✧ A few were seen one time, everyone else was seen regularly, once every 4-8 weeks
- ✧ 51 Episcopalians: 9 from St. Bede's; 42 from 18 other parishes in the Diocese of Atlanta, 1 in California, 1 in Tennessee
- ✧ 22 from other denominations: United Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, UCC, AME, Cooperative Baptist, Anglican
- ✧ 54 women, 19 men

1 couple recived Pre-marital Counseling – 1 woman, 1 man

14 people served through the Contemplative Living/Centering Prayer Group

- ✧ 11 group members in 2023-2024
- ✧ 9 returning from last year with 3 new members in 2024-2025
- ✧ 9 Episcopalians: 5 from St. Bede's; 4 from 3 other parishes
- ✧ 2 searching
- ✧ 2 from other denominations: Roman Catholic, Lutheran
- ✧ 14 women, 0 men

8 people served through the Education for Ministry (EfM) Group

- ✧ 7 group members in 2022-2023
- ✧ 6 returning from last year
- ✧ 1 new member 2023-2024
- ✧ 7 Episcopalians: 5 from St. Bede's; 1 from another parish; 1 looking for a new parish
- ✧ 1 from another religion: Hindu
- ✧ 7 women, 1 man
- ✧ After completing 9 4-year cycles (36 years) as an EfM Mentor, I discerned it was time for me to retire from mentoring a group.

Many people served through offerings in other settings:

- ✧ Presided at a Marriage, Dunwoody, GA, 5/18/24
- ✧ Led Advent Meditation, Mary & Martha's Place, Atlanta, GA, 12 participants, 12/5/24

St. Bede's parish served:

- ✧ Lenten Quiet Day, "Following Jesus into Conflict," with Dr. Kyle Lambelet, 24 participants, 3/23/24

- ✘ EfM Quiet Day, “What is my Gift to Offer?,” with Dr. Jo Marie Lyons
9 participants, 5/11/24
- ✘ Advent Quiet Day, “Filled with the Holy Spirit, Giving Voice to Blessing: Praying with Mary and Elizabeth,” with The Rev. Susan Lupo
17 participants, 12/7/24
- ✘ 2 Popcorn Theology gatherings:
The American Society of Magical Negroes – 18 participants, 8/31/24
Barbie – 21 participants, 11/16/24
- ✘ Participated in the liturgical life of the parish
- ✘ Taught 4 Adult Formation classes:
Lenten series “Letting Go of the Familiar,” with Kim Padgett, 15 attendees, 2/18/24
The Enneagram, about 24 individuals participated over, 12/1, 8 and 15

Made 4 silent directed retreats, including one 8-day retreat, Green Bough House of Prayer

Received monthly Peer Supervision for Spiritual Direction

Many served through providing referrals to spiritual directors, retreat centers, spiritual direction training programs, peer supervision groups and therapists and writing recommendations.

The Rev’d Lynnsay Buehler, *Director, The Julian of Norwich Center*

St. Bede’s Ministries in Spanish

It is with deep gratitude that I greet you in the name of Dios, nuestro Padre, (God, our Father,) and report to you as the priest serving here at St. Bede’s primarily with our Ministries in Spanish! While my work in this ministry is part-time, it is a great honor to serve God and neighbor in this particular way.

In 2024, we experienced much in the way of transition. As the year began Rev. Irma (Mimi) was primarily officiating our service at 2:30pm. Following Easter, we bid her farewell to offer her services to God elsewhere in the diocese as she continues as Hispanic Missioner. Since then, with your support, I have had the privilege to partner closely with Deacon Iñaki and other leaders like Carmen, Judah, Molly, Orisha and Beth to lead this ministry while fostering deeper community within our whole parish. To this end, in August we moved our worship service to 1:30pm, such that now all parishioners, including our youth and children, have greater access to St. Bede’s program offerings and times of fellowship between services. Join us as we continue to create opportunities for bilingual and multicultural growth in faith and fellowship!

Most recently at Sunday afternoon worship, we have had an average of 50 in attendance; with some Sundays seeing upwards of 80 and others seeing as few as 25. What’s most evident is that our community of worshippers are faithful, love God, and love each other. Here’s a little about how we have gathered and celebrated throughout 2024:

BAPTISMS: More than 6 young people were baptized and their families welcomed into our community.

PRESENTATIONS: There are 2 Hispanic traditions of presentation: at 40 days, recalling the presentation of Jesus in the temple; and at 3 years, to give thanks to God and the Virgin Mary for the life of the child. We presented at least 4 children.

CONFIRMATION: We have celebrated the confirmation of at least 3 youth.

QUINCEAÑERAS: We have celebrated at least 6 quinceañeras praying with them as they move into this new season of life with God's help and the Virgin Mary's guidance.

MEMORIAL SERVICES: While I served in at least 3 funeral services, we had at least 2 services in memory.

DAY OF THE DEAD: As a whole parish we remembered those who we love that are with us no longer, and shared in this remembrance together with pictures, writings, and other tokens of our loved one's lives on a beautiful Ofrenda (Altar of Remembrance) erected under the leadership of Carmen.

LA GUADALUPANA: Our fantastic celebration of Our Lady of Guadalupe was held on Wednesday, December 11th featuring the Choir, Los Chinelos (Guerrero Dancers,) and The Mariachis, who continued to play while we gathered to eat, fellowship, and dance after. The youth did a great job offering us the representation. So many people's efforts came together to make this event a huge success as we welcomed over 100 people to our celebration. I am grateful for Deacon Iñaki's leadership as we worked with Judah, Beth, Pedro, Carmen, John, Molly, Victoria, the flower guild, and a host of folks who offered their time and talents of cooking, carrying, organizing, offering roses, cleaning and more.

LAS POSADAS: We shared in a bilingual representation and journey of the story of Jesus' birth in a stable, following the path of Mary and Joseph as they looked for a place to stay, followed by songs and treats and Christmas tree decorating! Our children dressed up, leading the path for us, well-supported by Molly with assistance from some of our youth.

BULLETINS AND MUSIC: We have transitioned our bulletins to a similar style as our morning worship while moving from occasional live music to recordings from which we can provide song books! We are grateful to John, Laura, Iñaki, Judah, and Chad for getting us settled into this new style and rhythm.

BILINGUAL WORSHIP: St. Bede's continues to celebrate a number of holy days through bilingual services, where we are able to welcome folks throughout the whole parish and their families and friends into worship together. Vacation Bible School (VBS) is also bilingual, where we have intergenerational and multicultural fun learning about our faith and enjoying fun activities and crafts.

ETC: We have welcomed visitors, gathered to eat great food and/or dance and celebrate one another, and hosted festivities like Sabor Latino. We have renewed one couple's wedding vows and celebrated the wedding of another. I have blessed homes, water, rosaries, icons, people, and the stories they carry in their hearts. I am proud of the work this ministry does and look forward to how its members continue to move this ministry forward.

Paz y bendiciones a todos. (Peace and blessings to all.)

And thank you for your continued love, encouragement, and prayers for me and Tra and our girls as I attend this work beyond the clinics of Winship, in this community.

In love and service,
Rev'd Raymond Walker III
Padre Ramón

Invite – Welcome – Connect Ministry

The Invite – Welcome – Connect Committee is comprised of members Jennie Couture, Susan Reef, Suzanne Shapiro, Madison Jameson, Sally Cook, Gwen Heaton, Cindy Houston, Cathe Echterhoff, and Loretta Vail.

The committee has been discussed promotional ideas, and we choose Jar Grippers which we are also selling to the parishioners and giving to each visitor. We hope you will take a jar gripper home with you. Thank you to Susan Reef for handling the details on this project.

We are continuing with our loaf of bread for each person that visits St. Bede's. A huge thanks to Suzanne Shapiro, Susan Reef, and Loretta Vail for baking the banana bread.

A wonderful group of greeters meet every parishioner and newcomer who enters through the doors of St. Bede's at for worship at 10 am. A huge thanks to our faithful team: Orisha Parsons, Nancy Bruce, Anita Montelione, Helen Ackall, Suzanne Shapiro, Junior Abraham, Sally Cook, Loretta Vail, Pat Pickett, and Anita Maloof, and Jennie Couture for always being at the door with a smile, a greeting and an answer to questions as visitors enter our doors.

We had a luncheon for our newcomers on October 20. Thank you, Chad, for leading the group discussion and the luncheon. We will be having another one this spring.

If anyone is interested in joining Invite - Welcome - Connect we are always looking for new ideas to help us invite, welcome, and connect with visitors and the newcomers to St. Bede's.

Loretta Vail, *Chair*

Parish Life Ministries

Sisters of Bede

The Sisters of Bede happily report that 2024 was another year of successful projects and in-person social events.

In May, the Parish Hall, under the leadership of Fran Snider and Loretta Vail, was graced with beautifully decorated tables, delicious food and joyful conversation for our **Annual High Tea**. Thanks to the generosity of our volunteers who baked, poured copious cups of tea and served cakes, sandwiches, cookies, and scones to guests, and to all those who participated in the Silent Auction and Raffle, organized by Barbara Helms, we were able to donate \$5,026 to the St. Bede's signage fund.

In December, the **Advent Bake Sale**, organized by Fran Snider and Loretta Vail, revised the "Christmas Attic Shoppe" featuring loved and gently used decorations and holiday ware. The Bake Sale and Attic Shoppe raised \$1,920. The Sisters thank everyone who baked, cooked, priced, and volunteered their time to make this event so successful.

Our Artist Vender's Market, **Art From the Heart**, has been transformed. The decision was made to reinvent the Market so that it served a greater number of artists and participants. The Commons will become home to a gallery that will feature local artists and provide interesting art to admire and to purchase. A leaky roof slowed the process down, but it is anticipated that the gallery will be operational by March.

Bunco continued, and the time was changed to allow more people to attend. We now meet, generally, on the third or fourth Sunday of the month, and are now gathering at 3 or 4 pm. Bunco is open to all the women at St. Bede's.

Lois Shingler

Men of Bede

The Men of Bede (MOB) is an organization of men that is built around helping, assisting, and serving. We welcome men from all age groups to join us in fellowship and camaraderie. We come together as a group monthly for breakfast at the Northlake Old Hickory House. We are a no-guilt group with an informal organization, and we always show up with helping hands when the need arises.

Some of the MOB activities in 2024 included assisting with renovation improvements within the church; moving furniture around the church; helping set up for events at the church, changing lights and minor repairs when needed; and outside grounds maintenance and clean up. We spent several Saturdays working in the Memorial Garden area and other outside areas of the church grounds. When called upon, we also come together to help and assist our fellow parishioners with their personal needs.

We enjoy our time together and we seek to actively welcome and include new members. When a call goes out for assistance, all you got to do is show up when you can.

Jim Helms

Mostly Mysteries Book Club

Mostly Mysteries Book Club meets once a month on the 4th Monday of each month. During the last year, we have met via Zoom. In 2025 we hope to mix Zoom meetings with in-person meetings.

In 2024, we read 12 books (11 mysteries and 1 book of short stories). We again traveled around the world and the US with *The Way of the Bear* by Anne Hillerman taking us to Utah, *The Benevolent Society of Ill-Mannered Ladies* by Alison Goodman taking us to Regency England, *The Bookshop Murder* by Merryn Allingham taking us to Sussex, and *The Frangipani Tree Mystery* by Ovidia Yu taking us to Singapore. We read books by a number of new authors to us.

Several new members joined us this year. We are so glad to have them and would welcome any others who would like to join. We also miss our former members and hope they are reading along with us.

Cathe Echterhoff



ST. BEDE'S
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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