



# Bridge Builders

News from and for New River Episcopal Ministry



## Serving our communities

The needs are great and our resources are often slim, but our hearts are generous. The news this month from each of the churches in the New River Episcopal Ministry reflect our desire to reach out, to help, to give, to find needs and to fill them. That is what Christ would have us do, and that is what we are called to do. Service: to family, to church, to community, to country, to the world. Leave no stone unturned.

### SPIRITUALITY

If God is  
for us, who  
can be  
against us?

Romans 8:31b

### UNITY

... to be  
made new  
in the  
attitude of  
your minds.

Ephesians 4:23

### SERVICE

Honor one  
another  
above  
yourselves.

Romans 12:10



### Church of the Good Shepherd

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### St. Andrew's

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### Ascension

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# Events & Outreach

## Good Shepherd

### Greetings from the Upper Kanawha Valley!

As we enjoy the crisp October air, we have some exciting updates to share from Good Shepherd in Hansford. First, we're delighted to announce that repairs are soon to begin on our church steeple and roof, both of which were damaged during the April tornado event. Our very own Eddy Grey has been our point person on working with contractors to get these necessary repairs completed, and we are excited to see the church restored.

In other news, our congregation continues to think creatively about new ministry opportunities. We're currently polling the community to gauge interest in hosting a *Game Night*! This event would bring together players of Dungeons and Dragons, other tabletop RPGs (TTRPGs), collectible card games (CCGs), and classic/modern board games. If you're a fan of games – whether it's roleplaying as a hero in a mystical land or showing off your strategy skills on a game board – stay tuned for more details!

The **Good Shepherd Book Club** kicked off its first meeting on October 7th. We are reading *Learning from London* alongside others in the diocese as we explore what the future holds for our churches. It's not too late to join in on



the discussion, so grab a copy of the book and come on over!

We also had a fantastic turnout for our **Blessing of the Pets** service

on the Feast day of St. Francis of Assisi on October 5th! Six dogs, five cats, and 13 humans joined us for a joyful celebration

of the animals who share our lives. Our heartfelt thanks to everyone who donated – your generosity filled a Jeep with supplies for the Kanawha-Charleston Humane Association. We also collected a monetary offering for Episcopal Relief and Development to aid in Hurricane Helene recovery efforts. What a blessing to see our community come together in service and love!



A special shout-out to **Reverend Bill** and **Senior Warden Tim Walker** for once again manning the rest stop at Mahan for the annual Paint Creek Bike Ride. Reverend Bill is looking forward to actually participating in the ride next year – so keep an eye out for him on the trail!

As we approach the holiday season, we're gearing up for the **Ron Morrison Christmas Food Box Giveaway**. This ministry provides families in need with all the ingredients for a festive Christmas dinner, and we are honored to continue this tradition of love and service. In addition, we are looking into hosting a **Christmas Community Concert**, featuring the talented students of Riverside High School's Band and Show Choir. More details will be coming soon!

Thank you for being a part of our Good Shepherd family. We look forward to celebrating the upcoming season of joy and gratitude with all of you.

Peace and Love from the Upper Kanawha Valley!

# Events & Outreach

## Ascension

### Come to the Day of the Dead Celebration!

We all love Halloween, but actually there are three back-to-back celebrations honoring the dead. They are Halloween, All Saints Day and All Souls Day. All Saints and All Souls are sometimes celebrated as Day of the Dead.

These celebrations arose in the 800s AD in Europe from a complicated mix of evolved traditions and influences.



Halloween was once known as a night of evil. Now it is better known by little ghosts and princesses coming to knock on doors. You shower them with treats to avoid their tricks. Halloween is short for All Hallows Eve.

The day following Halloween is All Hallows day, or as the church calls it All Saints Day. All Saints' Day commemorates all the saints of the church, both known and unknown, whose lives blessed others.

The day following All Saints day, is All Souls' Day. All Soul's is a day of prayer and remembrance for the faithful departed, who might not have made it to heaven yet.

On Friday, November 1, Ascension Church will hold a Day of the Dead Celebration for the whole community. Day of the Dead is celebrated mostly in Mexico and Latin America and is called Día de los Muertos in Spanish.

To welcome back the spirits of your loved ones, you are invited to bring pictures and mementos to share, which can be placed on

tables. Historically, people have displayed symbols of the four main elements: candles for fire to light the path, water to refresh the returning souls, foods representing the fruit of the earth, and paper banners for wind. Marigolds, sugar skulls, salt for purification and incense are also traditionally used.

The church will be open at 5:45 to set up the items you have brought. A pot luck dinner begins at 6 PM. We ask that you bring a favorite food of your loved one, or a Mexican dish. A grief counselor from hospice will be present during the evening.

After sharing our meal, we will go upstairs for a Taizé service. Taizé is a candlelight service consisting of chants, silent meditation, and short readings and prayers honoring those who have died.

After Taize, we will share desserts, Mexican hot chocolate and ponder the displays. Everyone is invited to participate in this event!

### Thankful for the Opportunity to Serve Thanksgiving Meals

Summers County citizens will again deliver meals to our neighbors this year, thanks to the efforts of many cooks in the Oak Hill area. More information about the project is included in St. Andrews' news. Ascension will be taking meal reservations through November 25, and expects to deliver 300 meals. Cookies or brownies are needed for desserts, and we need volunteers for delivering meals.

### Celebrations

Happy birthday to Lynne Larsen on November 16, to Darrell Martin on December 29, and happy anniversary to John and Beth Vuolo on December 28.



# Events & Outreach

## Ascension Holiday Happenings

Looking ahead to the holidays, Nancy is exploring ideas for a *weekly Advent practice*. We aren't sure if or how this will come together; stay tuned for more information.

Hinton's *Annual Christmas Walk* between the downtown churches, will be held Saturday,

Dec. 14 starting at 6 p.m. This beloved tradition brings the community together in a glorious celebration of the meaning of Christmas.

Ascension is planning a *Community Christmas Caroling* event in Shalom Park behind the Church with carols and hot chocolate for all.

## St. Andrew's

### Thanksgiving Meal Project

With a mixture of faith and the willing hands of many volunteers, the first annual free Thanksgiving dinner was served to 575 people in Fayette County and environs from St. Andrew's in Oak Hill in 2001. The goal was for the project to outgrow the St. Andrew's small kitchen. In a few short years, the Lewis Christian Community Center, with an industrial kitchen, became the preparation site. In 2023, more 3000 meals were served on Thanksgiving day.



The meal consists of turkey, mashed potatoes, gravy, stuffing, green beans, a roll and a dessert. Meals are packaged in Styrofoam containers and delivered to feeding sites around the county according to the reservations previously made.

### Day of Prayer

St. Andrew's will open its doors from 8 am to 4 pm, on November 5th, Election Day, for anyone in the community who would like to pray for our country and for the election.

### Mission Projects

St. Andrew's mission projects continuing this fall include giving money and supplies to the 6th grade at New River Elementary, 3rd grade

at Fayetteville Elementary, and the hygiene closet at Oak Hill High School.

We will be passing out Christmas boxes of food at the church the Saturday before Christmas.

Exciting events recently for members of St. Andrew's:

- David and Kelly Clanton were married on September 21st.
- Melanie Dragan celebrated her 80th birthday with a surprise party!
- Dr. Donald (Doc) Newell was awarded the Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award.
- Thank you to everyone who attended the 5th Sunday service in September, for making it a successful service and time of fellowship with food, fun, and friends. The desserts were delicious!

### Flood victims

We finally received contact information for Father Tim at St. Thomas in Tennessee. They need funds for restoration, so we will be sending the 5th Sunday offering and any other donations to them very soon.

### Diocesan Convention

The Convention will be held at Stonewall Resort on November 15th and 16th.

# Events & Outreach

Delegates representing St. Andrew's are Chris and Angela Dyer.

## St. Andrew's Celebrations

Happy birthday to Holden Hayes on Nov. 15, Jennifer O'Dell on Nov. 16, Jim Hayes on Nov. 19, Querino Guerini on Nov. 21, and John

Guerini on Nov. 24.

In December, please remember Chad McCune on Dec. 14, and Emogen Scarbro on Dec. 23.

Next year, Michael Schwartz celebrates a birthday on Jan. 10, Kathy Rutledge on Jan. 22, and Darlene Newell on Jan. 24.

The holidays will be here before we know it. Amid the busy-ness of the season, we know we need to take time to slow down, enjoy the lights, recharge our batteries, and rest in God. Our children follow our example, and so it's in their best interests for us to model gratitude, compassion, and an open heart.

As your youngsters begin to make their Christmas wish lists, this letter to Santa, adapted from United Thank Offering, can help. If you want to print a letter-sized version, just [click this link](#).

*Dear Santa, this year I am grateful for*

Person \_\_\_\_\_

Place \_\_\_\_\_

Thing \_\_\_\_\_

*For Christmas, I would like*

Something to read \_\_\_\_\_

Something I need \_\_\_\_\_

Something to wear \_\_\_\_\_

Something to share \_\_\_\_\_

Something I want \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you, Santa! Love, \_\_\_\_\_

## A Note from Your Editor

Our next NREM newsletter will be published in February, 2025. How will your church be observing the Lenten season, which begins March 5? Easter this year is April 20. I will need your stories and articles for the next issue of *Bridge Builders* by **January 25**.

With a digital publication, the number of pages isn't limited; please feel free to send photos and flyers along with your stories and other event and outreach information for the

months of February, March, and April.

Consider sharing how a particular event came about, or what an event means to your congregation or neighborhood.

If you know of others who would enjoy reading our newsletter, I hope you will forward it to them.

Send your information by **January 25** to Debbi McNeer at [djmcneer@gmail.com](mailto:djmcneer@gmail.com). Please use **Building Bridges** as the Subject of your e-mail. Thank you.

# Diocesan Convention

Diocesan Convention is the primary legislative body of the Diocese of West Virginia. Diocesan Convention meets annually and the location rotates around the Diocese.

The 147th Diocesan Convention will take place November 15-16, 2024 at Stonewall Resort.



For information about Diocesan Convention, contact Beth Marquart in the Diocesan Office.



**Beth Marquart**

Executive Assistant to Bishop Cowden



304-344-3597

**GO TELL IT ON  
THE MOUNTAINS!**

*147th Diocesan Convention of the Episcopal Church of West Virginia*

## *Day of the Dead*

### **Potluck Dinner Taizé Service**

**Friday, November 1 • 6-8 pm**  
Ascension Episcopal Church  
Corner of Temple and 5th

Reflect and remember your loved ones  
who have died. Share their favorite food,  
and bring a remembrance.

A candlelight service of prayer, music,  
and meditation will follow dinner.

All are welcome.  
We hope you will come.



## **Investiture of the Presiding Bishop-elect**

**Saturday, November 2, 2024**

The investiture of Presiding Bishop-elect Sean Rowe will take place Nov. 2 at the Chapel of Christ the Lord in The Episcopal Church Center in New York City with a prelude beginning at 10 a.m. ET and the service starting at 11 a.m. ET. There will be an extensive livestream production on the Episcopal Diocese's [YouTube channel](#) to support churchwide access and participation.