

# The Call

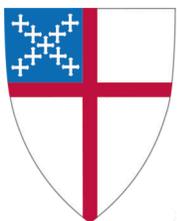
Newsletter



## Annual Meeting Report

February 2026

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**St. Andrew's**  
Episcopal Church





# Annual Meeting

**We had a great Annual meeting this year. See Rev. Les' Column for the rector's report. We elected some wonderful Leaders for our church!**



## Acknowledgments

Before the election Rev. Les took some time to say thanks to all our leaders especially those that were completing their term. Here are some excerpts from that.

A Huge Thank you to our outgoing Vestry members: Rita Coggins, Ashley Newcomb, Dotsy Royal, and Lori Joyner. We are deeply grateful to Rita for her care and oversight, to Dotsy for clarity, decisiveness and diligence and to Ashley for his expertise and willingness to jump in on a moment's notice. We will also miss Lori who helps us laugh, gives great insight and helps us always look from the perspective of loving kindness.

We would also like to thank George Vargha who served faithfully for many difficult years as our treasurer. He stepped down mid year and Katie Keeter was elected by the vestry to take over for him. He is deeply loved by all in this church and has done amazing work with us over the years. We are also grateful to Katie Keeter, who has taken the transition smoothly and has helped us as we have continued to modernize and professionalize our financial infrastructure.

We would like to thank Catherine Jansco for her service as clerk this year. She is a joy and has been great to work with.

We would like to thank Tommy Parker for his many years of service on vestry and Jr. Warden. He is kind, dependable and lovely. For very understandable reasons Tommy Parker had to vacate his seat from the class of 2028.

It is my privilege and honor to thank Leslie Hall for her service this past year as Sr. Warden. Leslie has a sharp mind and a true servant's heart. Despite a lot of personal obligations in the past year she has proven to be an invaluable resource and asset to me. I can't imagine having gotten through this last year without her in that position. Leslie continues on the vestry, where her service is treasured.

○○○○ ————— ST. ANDREW'S  
RECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT



Once, I was chatting in a coffee shop with a woman who was discovering new depths in her relationship with God. "I don't understand it," she said. "I have been a Christian my whole life. Why is all this happening now?" I am not sure where these words came from because I don't remember thinking them. It must have been the holy spirit because I don't really think in garden metaphors. I said, "The rose grows a long time, but blooms overnight." This is how the gifts of discipleship come. They are gifts that grow a long time before they are recognizable.

I believe that we are now in a season of blooming here at St. Andrew's in a most beautiful way. We are doing things that many people couldn't imagine just a few years ago, thanks to a lot of work and God's incredible grace.



Our outreach is blossoming with the creation of an actual committee to oversee it, and thanks to Deacon Susan's incredible leadership and enthusiasm. Now we have the Red Bag Ministry, which keeps the needs of our Rocky Mount Community always before us. What a fantastic way to make sure that all of our members not only support our community's needs but also are aware of the providers and non-profits making such a difference in and out all year.

Our music ministry is blossoming. Not only is our choir growing stronger and larger. We now have a full music program offering classes in music theory and a handbell choir. What a gift it was this Christmas to see our choir loft full and people of so many different ages and backgrounds coming together. Polly's incredible leadership, the hard work of the volunteers and the support of our staff musicians are truly transforming this ministry. I can't wait to see what is possible.



Our youth ministry is finding new vim and vigor as well. The vestry has approved the funds so that our property team can update the stone cottage into a top-notch space for a number of ministries, but particularly for our youth. How wonderful to have such a charming place for our youth to grow, connect, and come to know the love and guidance of Jesus.

I am overwhelmed with joy to think about Lora Pons' transformation in this place. From visitor to member, from member to nursery worker, from Nursery worker to head children's chapel leader, from volunteer leader to school staff, and now just this year from School staff to full-time Children and Family Minister. What a gift to have her work and play with our children and support our families with her unique joy and love. This marks a huge step forward for our children's ministries and for our church. With her leadership, creativity, charm and work ethic I am sure that we will continue to see growth in our connection to the school and the church.



Our church administration is blossoming, too. Sarah Katherine Rollings does such fantastic work with us that we have been able to subcontract her services to Good Shepherd. She now works full-time at both the churches on campus at St. Andrews in the morning, then at Good Shepherd in the afternoon. Our innovation and modernization is now blessing Episcopalians all over Rocky Mount. At the same time, we are becoming quicker and more responsive to the everyday needs of our parishioners and school, thanks to our growing level of expertise and organization.

I believe that we will continue to bloom, making a real difference in the lives of our members and in the Rocky Mount community. Blooming of course, takes energy. While much of this energy comes from time and talent we are able to make these level-up changes in large part because of your generosity and our financial acuity.



The most obvious signs of health in a congregation are in its attendance and its finances. While many churches have struggled with a decline in attendance, we are seeing consistent growth. Not only was there a jump the year I came, but a year later, our attendance has still matched and even exceeded that. In the last two years, our operating budget grew 40% to \$500K this year. We also received a significant (over \$700,000) bequest at the end of 2026. Wisely, the vestry took that money and is using it to seed an endowment to support our ministries (operating fund). This way, this gift will perpetually bless this church. That fund is also open to move giving if you feel moved to make a major gift or you are interested in helping provide for your church family in your will. If you have any thoughts or are considering that please contact me.

With all of this incredible success, I am also aware that in some ways this is an awkward time in the life of a congregation. When I talk to other clergy and tell them I have been here for a year and a half they say, "Ah, so the honeymoon is over, huh?" That is because we know that often in the second to third year of a rector's tenure, there is a period of adjustment, almost an adolescence in the life of a church. The gifts that were delightful in the beginning of the tenure start to get taken a little for granted. The weaknesses that were overlooked in the first year start to become annoying. Social scientists call this stage of the group process "storming." The good news is that it is no mystery how to overcome it. We talk it out. Jesus told us the same thing. When you have a problem with your brother or sister it is on you to say something to them and start by keeping it between the two of you (Matthew 8:15-17).

In our ministry with each other we adapt to each other. I am much more involved in the finances than some of the Rector's in the past. That is because I know how key finance is to overcoming the obstacles before us in the next 10 years. But it is also because I am a numbers guy. I oversee the pledging and giving for the same reason. I would never "play favorites" because of that. I will always spend more time with our homeless members than I do with our major donors, and that is exactly what our major donors would want me to do, too. Overseeing giving is not a glamorous part of a Rector's job, in some ways it is more like cleaning the toilets. But everyone wants clean toilets. Everyone wants a responsible budget, and everyone wants as much of the money they give to do as much good as possible. This means that we need to have accurate income projections, which, after many years as a Rector, I have learned how to do. While this kind of attention to financial detail may seem new to many in our parish, if you talk to leaders of our diocese or across the Episcopal Church, you will find that a financially oriented rector who has access to giving information is considered to be the best practice.

And if you want even more tangible proof of that, just look to our ministries, which are flourishing. See what God is doing through you and me and us together. It is truly beautiful. And if you ever have concerns, please talk with me. I genuinely look for feedback. That may not make a honeymoon but it is how love deepens and broadens and transforms us into what God wants us to be. Sometimes it is harder work than others but when you see the blossom it is all worth it.



# February 2026

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
<p>1 8:00am HE Rite I 9:15am A.C.E 10:30am HE Rite II Children's Chapel</p>	<p>2 St. Elizabeth's Guild 12pm</p>	<p>3 Food Pantry 9- 11am</p>	<p>4 Food Pantry 9- 10:30am Healing Service 10:30am</p>	<p>5 Food Pantry 9- 11am</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7 Men's Club 8am</p>
<p>8 8:00am HE Rite I 9:10am Annual 10:30am HE Rite II Children's Chapel</p>	<p>9 12</p>	<p>10 Food Pantry 9- 11am Book Club 10am ADK 4pm Vestry 6pm</p>	<p>11 Food Pantry 9- 10:30am Healing Service 10:30am</p>	<p>Food Pantry 9- 11am</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14 Diocese Discipleship Meeting 11am</p>
<p>15 8:00am HE Rite I 9:15am A.C.E 10:30am HE Rite II Children's Chapel</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17 Food Pantry 9-11am Pancake Supper 6pm Finance 6:30pm</p>	<p>18 Food Pantry 9-10:30am Ash Wed. Services 7am, 10:30am, 7pm</p>	<p>19 Food Pantry 9-11am Meals on Wheels 10am Outreach 6pm</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21</p>
<p>22 8:00am HE Rite I 9:15am A.C.E 10:30am HE Rite II Children's Chapel</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24 Food Pantry 9- 11am</p>	<p>25 Food Pantry 9- 10:30am Healing Service 10:30am</p>	<p>26 Food Pantry 9- 11am</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28 TRCC 3-5pm</p>



## Ministry Schedule February 2026

### LAY/LEM Readers

#### February 1

8:00 Dick Arnow  
Tim Knapp

10:30 Sarah Dial  
Sarah Dial  
Brandon Rollings

#### February 8

8:00 Virgil Evans  
Brian Westcott

10:30 Terry Shackelford  
Lisa Stone  
Sandy Suggs

#### February 15

8:00 Ramona Orzell  
Ramona Orzell

10:30 Pete Roy  
Forrest Mericle  
Martha Lamm

#### February 18

7pm Elizabeth Pope  
Martha Lamm  
Michele Richwalski

#### February 22

8:00 Albert Corinth  
Pam Parker-Colwood  
Ramona Orzell

10:30 Paul Stone  
Elizabeth Pope  
Omari Ansong

### Acolytes

#### February 1

10:30 Walker Wells  
Jack Lea

#### February 8

10:30 Lauren Renck  
Megan Renck

#### February 15

10:30 The Mericles

#### February 18

7pm TBD

#### February 22

10:30 Landon Newcomb  
Liam Jenkins

### Ushers

#### February 1

Billy Suggs  
Steve Thurkill

#### February 8

Dan Melnyk  
Don Mucci

#### February 15

Brad Earle  
Skip/Stacey Partington

#### February 18

Jan Arnold  
Skip Partington

#### February 22

Jan Arnold  
John Lea

### Vestry Greeters

Nancy Knapp  
Sarah Dial

### Kitchen Clean Up:

Missy Fillietaz

### Pantry Volunteers

Diane Renck  
Martha Gallop

### Pantry Distributers

Tuesday- Patty Kennedy  
Wednesday-Rosemary Clark  
Thursday- Elizabeth Hunter

# ELECTIONS

## VESTRY

The vestry is the highest committee in the parish. It is responsible for setting the budget, policy, and vision. Your vestry members work alongside the Rector to both oversee current ministries and plan for the future. Each year, we elect four (4) positions for a three-year term. This year, there was a mid-year vacancy. In the case of a mid-year vacancy, the vestry votes to fill the seat. Jon Renck was elected by the vestry in November to fill that vacancy from the class of 2028.



We had four unopposed candidates for the four vestry positions retiring in 2029, who were elected unanimously and with enthusiasm. Those candidates are:

- Carly Thrower
- Pam Parker-Collwood
- Maria Newcomb
- Mary Ruffin

## DIOCESAN CONVENTION REPRESENTATIVES

Each year, representatives from each church and all the clergy meet to make decisions for the Diocese of North Carolina. St. Andrew's gets three representatives, and we have three nominations for Representative and one for Alternate. This year all the candidates were elected unanimously and enthusiastically. They are:

- Tim Knapp
- Shannon Bertrand
- Virgil Evans
- (Alternate) Rees Lea

## VESTRY OFFICERS

The Clerk, Treasurer and Jr. Warden positions are elected by the Vestry at their first meeting in January. They elected Cathy Earp the Clerk and Jon Renck the Jr. Warden. Katie Keeter was elected mid-year 2025 to replace George and reelected for 2026 at the January vestry meeting. The Senior Warden is appointed by the Rector, and Rev. Les appointed Nancy Knapp your Senior Warden at our Annual meeting.

# Treasurer Report

2025 Calendar Year  
Katie Keeter

For my first report as St. Andrew's treasurer, I want to acknowledge and thank George Vargha and Steve Thurkill and the steady, faithful leadership they have provided over the past several years. They have consistently invested significant time and effort into our parish finances, helping safeguard the church's financial health and strengthening our ability to plan with confidence. Their disciplined stewardship, outside of the Scott Bailey Scholarship, they invested approximately \$500,000 in certificates of deposit (CDs)—an approach that has continued to generate interest income and strengthen our savings.

This year also brought meaningful operational progress. As we transitioned accounting and recordkeeping fully to electronic processes and began working with an accountant who specializes in churches, our financial management became more timely, transparent, and decision-ready. This shift has improved how we track and manage expenditures within the Operating Budget, while also ensuring Donor Restricted Funds are used for their intended purposes. That stewardship translated into tangible ministry impact during 2025—such as leveraging capital funds to add an additional room in the preschool, using the All Saints Fund to respond to spring flood damage, and continuing to provide roofs for families connected to our summer mission trip. Thanks to our parish's ministry, our 2025 results look promising. Giving income came in approximately \$70,000 over plan. Expenditures were approximately \$33,000 over budget, driven largely by increased payroll due to additional lay staffing and higher food pantry ministry costs as grant support decreased. Even with these changes, the year is expected to close with approximately \$17,000 in net positive operating income, compared with a budgeted \$20,000 net negative—a \$37,000 favorable swing that reflects both faithful generosity and improving financial resilience. At the end of the year (December 30th), we received a generous estate bequest, which we will combine with CD income to establish a lasting endowment for our parish. As we approach 2026, our favorable outcomes have enabled us to hire Lora Pons as our Children's and Family Ministry employee, supporting continued growth in our ministry in that area. The Finance Committee and Vestry will concentrate on refining the endowment strategy, offering updated guidance on giving methods, and systematically documenting financial procedures to enhance accountability and promote sustainable stewardship.

## St. Elizabeth's Guild: Who Are We?

St. Elizabeth's Guild has been a part of St. Andrew's from 25 years or more. We meet on the 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of the month in the Parish Hall from 12pm-1pm. We next meet on Monday, Feb. 2nd.



Our mission statement is to bring women of St. Andrew's church together to laugh, share blessings and ask for prayers.

As a Guild we have a leader and a treasurer. Our dues are \$10 per year. The Guild meet from October to May. There is a hiatus for the summer months.

We have been involved in St. Jude's by collecting greeting cards, supporting the Wilford school at Christmas, supporting My Sister's House, participating in the Lenten luncheons by hosting a lunch. We have served 100 lunches during this period, providing a Lenten supper meal during our Lenten period, Flower Ministry, etc. We have made donations to the Preschool scholarship fund as well. Annually, we host a Thanksgiving Staff Luncheon to thank our church staff for their commitment to St. Andrew's and to let them know how much we appreciate them. We also have our Annual Tea Party each May. We have also facilitated retreats for the women and guests to participate in. Some programs we've had in the past are Getting to Know the Disciples, meeting the Women in the Bible, learning to paint led by Martha Lamm, and Christmas gatherings. The women of the church and guests are welcome to attend any all events!

Each month we have a new program. Volunteer(s) sign up for hosting monthly meetings and provide dessert and beverages. We bring our own bag lunch. At these meetings we take time to honor prayer requests and to share our blessings.

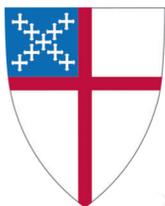




## A Walk to Bethlehem

Our St. Andrew's preschool got the chance to walk through Bethlehem and visit Jesus in the stable. They got to see the old markets, try unleavened bread, and see the Three Wise Men! Upon leaving Bethlehem, they met Rev. Les in the Sanctuary for Christmas songs.





# St. Andrew's Episcopal Church



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## Our Parish Family



**Discipleship: A Conversation  
with the Diocese**  
**Feb. 14<sup>th</sup> at 11am-12:30pm**

We will pray, share a meal, get to know one another and explore a question at the heart of our collective ministry: What is a disciple? Please register on the app.

**Shrove Tuesday Pancake  
Supper**  
**Feb. 17<sup>th</sup>**  
6pm in the Parish Hall

### Outreach Potluck Fundraiser

**Feb. 8<sup>th</sup> at 11:30am in the Parish Hall**

Bring your favorite soup recipe to share with the congregation or simply participate! Make sure you have some cash on you to vote for your favorite soup! Email the office if you wish to enter your soup into the contest!

**Ash Wednesday Services**  
7am, 10:30am, 7pm

Book Club is reading Theo of Golden by Allen Levi. We look forward to seeing everyone February 10th at 10am in the Parlor Room to discuss!



We will be packing Food Pantry bags on February 15th after the 10:30am service in the Parish Hall.

**RISE Against Hunger**  
Saturday, Feb 7th  
10am-12pm

**Church of the Good Shepherd**

Join us in packaging over 15,000 meals to support nutrition, education, and health for children and families facing hunger right now around the world. Register online or on the app.



**Men's Club** meets Saturday, February 7 at 8am in the Parish Hall.