ANNUAL MEETING

ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

SYLVA, NC

2026 MEETING PACKET

stjohnssylva.org

MEETING AGENDA

Opening

Treasurer/Financial Report

Senior Warden Report

Junior Warden Report

Rector's Report

Communications Update

New Member Welcome

Parish Happenings

Closing

VESTRY

The vestry is comprised of elected lay leaders responsible for the temporal affairs of the parish (i.e., maintaining buildings, making the budget, raising funds, and providing materials necessary for worship). The vestry calls the rector (with the Bishop's consent) and works with the rector. Vestry members are elected by the parish and serve three years. Members may serve multiple terms with one-year gaps between each.

Current Vestry Members:

Mary Anne Farrell, *Sr. Warden*

Stephen Jones, *Jr. Warden*

Karen Tharp

Fergus Tuohy

Dru Russell

MaryK Buranosky

The Vestry Nominating Committee has completed its search and announced Jane Eastman as the prospective candidate for the upcoming Vestry election. Mary Anne Farrell will continue serving on the Vestry but is completing her term as Senior Warden. Jane has been nominated as the candidate for the next Senior Warden.

The parish will have the opportunity to vote on the proposed candidate at the Annual Meeting on November 8.

Members of St. John's are encouraged to participate in the annual meeting and the life of our parish as we look ahead to the coming year.

STAFF ROLES

Rector, Rev. Erin Maxfield-Steele (Pronouns: she/ella)

Part-Time (30 hours/week), Salaried

Email: priest@stjohnssylva.org

- Spiritual Leadership - Lead worship, preach, provide pastoral care, administer the sacraments, and oversee Christian formation.
- Church Leadership - Supervise staff, work with the Vestry, provide vision, and guide parish ministries such as outreach and community justice.
- Parish Administration - Maintain the Parish Register, oversee canonical compliance, and complete the Annual Parochial Report.
- Pastoral Ministry - Prepare candidates for Baptism, Confirmation, Reception, weddings, and funerals.

Director of Music, Erin McCully (she/her)

Part-Time (36 Sundays & Rehearsals, 13 additional as Musician only), Salaried

Email: music@stjohnssylva.org

- Music Planning - Select hymns, choral music, preludes, postludes, and coordinate music with the Rector.
- Choir - Lead rehearsals, direct the choir, and foster a positive and supportive music program.
- Musicians - Recruit guest musicians, supervise section leaders, and arrange substitutes.
- Music Budget - Manage the music budget with the Treasurer and Bookkeeper.
- Organ -Play organ during Sunday services and develop skills.
- Special Services - Coordinate music for Christmas, Holy Week, Easter, Pentecost, and other services. When able, coordinate with participants and provide music for weddings and funerals.

STAFF ROLES

Children's Minister, Beth Jones (she/her)

Part-Time, Volunteer

Email: eaj_28741@yahoo.com

- Children's Church - Prepare activities and weekly worship.
- Coordinate Assistants - Reach out to volunteers to assist with worship and to maintain compliance with Safe Church practices
- Spiritual Care - Offer gentle and compassionate instruction in the essential teachings of Christ and Scripture

Parish Administrator, Jan Staffelbach (she/her)

Part-Time (7 1/2 hours/week), Hourly

Email: office@stjohnssylva.org

- Office Management - Manage phones, email, mail, office supplies, and daily office operations.
- Worship Support - Prepare bulletins and coordinate volunteers for bulletin preparation.
- Records - Maintain parish records, membership database, and prayer list.
- Financial Support - Prepare weekly deposits and assist with giving statements.
- Facilities & Technology - Coordinate office equipment, maintenance requests, REALM, Gmail, MailChimp, and electronic files.

STAFF ROLES

Administrative Coordinator, Aeryn Knight (he/they/el)

Part-Time (6 hours/week, & 2 hours/week additional "Shelter" work), Hourly

Email: arcolton16@gmail.com

- Communications - Manage the website, social media, and parish communications.
- Organization - Maintain calendars, improve workflows, and support parish organization.
- Administrative Support - Support the Rector, Vestry, and staff with projects and initiatives.
- Volunteer Coordination - Coordinate volunteers and assist during meetings and events.
- Shelter from the Storm - Assist Rector and Committee with parish education, research, and community outreach.

Bookkeeper, María de Lourdes Hernandez (she/ella)

Part-Time (15-20 hours/month), Hourly

Email: maria.stjohnsylva@gmail.com

- Accounts Payable - Prepare checks, pay bills, and process vendor payments.
- Payroll - Process ADP payroll and maintain payroll records.
- Accounting - Perform bank reconciliations, journal entries, and maintain financial records.
- Giving Records - Record pledges and contributions in REALM.
- Reporting & Compliance - Prepare financial reports, 1099s, quarterly statements, audit support, and annual financial reporting

RECTOR REPORT

Dear people of St. John's,

Each year, I'm humbled by what our small parish is able to do. The Holy Spirit interrupts and invites, and we respond with what little we have and find that it is enough and more than enough. I am grateful to participate in, shepherd, and accompany this powerful witness. We are known in Sylva and Jackson County as a safe and courageous community of Christ followers.

Each one of you is a blessing to me & to this community--thank you!

Rev. Erin+

Below is a list of work I have led or supervised:

In the Parish

- Improved website *(thank you, Aeryn Knight, for doing this work!!!)*
- Outreach to newcomers, conversations, coffee, emails, texts, and phone calls
- Parish-wide communication improvement conversation (*we heard you and I hope communications are reaching you and working well for you! Let us know if not!)*
- Working closely with Larry Fox in coordinating In-Reach care for parishioners
- Started Youth Group (quarterly gatherings at the Anges for High Schoolers*--thanks to Eason and Jessica Ange for hosting and assistance!*)
- Monthly Movie Nights for children of all ages *(thanks to Beth Jones for coordination, hospitality, & creativity)*
- Increased Children's Church volunteers *(thanks to all who have been and are working to complete Safeguarding Trainings! These are free and open to all!)*
- Worked with vestry to formalize groups meeting at St. John's *(MOUs, fee scales, insurance considerations, vetting, etc.)*
- Shelter from the Storm Speakers coordination (*Steve Steen & Andy Hansen, Meg Kissenger to come in Spring)*
- Hired Erin McCully as Music Director and developed that position with her, incorporating Organ Accompaniment to her role

RECTOR REPORT

- Hired María de Lourdes Ramirez as Bookkeeper
- Conducted successful Stewardship Campaign (*we're still not at our goal--so please fill out a Pledge Card if you haven't already. If you have, thank you!*)
- Blessing of the Backpacks
- Choral Evensong planning
- Building Dedication & Note Burning
- Parochial Report submitted to the diocese with growth, financial strength, and strong ministries to report
- Vestry Retreat-*gathered with Vestry at Lake Logan for a rich time of reflection, planning, & prayer*

In Sylva

- Supported efforts to keep our local library safe and accessible for LGBTQIA+ and unhoused people by staying in the FRLA
- Fourth Annual Sylva Pride Mass & Festival: we marched with St. John's banner, celebrated God's love through worship, and held a virtual Pride Storytime. *Thanks to the 30ish volunteers who assisted with the Pride Mass, and to Marion El-Bayadi, Aeryn Knight, Neil Wetmore, & the Maxfield-Steele kids who assisted in hosting the Pride tent. Grateful for the presence of St. David's, WCU Episcopal Campus Ministry, & The Grove Church in Bryson City.)*
- Assisted with this year's annual Audit *(thank you, Joe Butler!!)*
- Blessing of the Animals w/ St. David's, Cullowhee *(Thanks, Helen Jones, for organizing this!)*
- Outreach to the Unhoused *(thanks to Aeryn Knight for accompanying outreach & being a regular laborer at Community Table)* by taking supplies to campsites and people walking or resting around Sylva
- Opened the church twice during inclement weather: as a cooling station in August and a warming station in October

RECTOR REPORT

In the Diocese

- Attended Small Parish Leadership Gatherings
- Assisted with music for clergy conference
- Assisting with planning a Spring "Trail of Tears" Pilgrimage for young people across the Diocese

Broader

- I was grateful to participate in a protest in Washington DC which led to my arrest at the Hart Senate building as I joined other faith leaders and Faith in Action organizers in denouncing the dehumanizing brutality of our government's so-called "Homeland Security Agency" and Immigration and Customs Enforcement.
- With the support of our wonderful Vestry, I spent two weeks researching my family history in South Dakota & leading services at three parishes across the state.

SNR. WARDEN REPORT

It has been an honor—and a lot of fun—to serve as Senior Warden, especially because of the creative and dedicated people on the Vestry. We've developed a more open and efficient process for our meetings, making the work much less onerous than when I last served. I encourage everyone in the parish to consider serving on the Vestry. You'll learn a great deal and have the satisfaction of doing meaningful work.

Some of our major accomplishments this year include:

- **Staying on budget** and keeping our finances on target.
- **Expanding our community outreach** by supporting the Shelter from the Storm grant and securing diocesan grant funding for the Birthstone Center.
- **Improving our space** Thanks to Stephen Loper's vision, relocating the choir to better accommodate our growing parish, and completing the rectory painting.
- **Supporting the LGBTQ+ community** through our annual Pride Mass.
- **Providing fair living wages** for our dedicated staff—Jan, Maria, Aeryn, Erin McCully, and Mother Erin—which is essential to retaining the talented people who serve our parish.
- **Starting pledge season earlier** to help us plan proactively and prepare next year's budget.
- **Opening our doors** to community groups and making better use of our space.
- **Clearing out old files** and reorganizing the front office.
- **Supporting Mother Erin's ministry** and fostering the loving, welcoming community that makes St. John's special.

I'm grateful to have been part of this work and proud of what we've accomplished together. Most of all, I'm thankful for the people who make St. John's such a wonderful church community.

Mary Anne Farrell
Senior Warden

JR. WARDEN REPORT

The past year has brought several improvements to our church buildings and grounds, along with continued attention to the care and maintenance of our property. These efforts help ensure that St. John's remains a welcoming and well-maintained space for worship, fellowship, and ministry.

At the Hastings House, we completed tree trimming and painting, and we hired Tollie's Landscape to provide regular lawn maintenance for both the church and the rectory. We also relocated the organ and made changes to the sanctuary configuration to better accommodate our worship space. Monitored smoke detectors were installed as another step toward maintaining a safe environment for our parish community.

Looking ahead, we hope to improve lighting in the parking lot and establish a regular maintenance schedule with an HVAC contractor. These projects will help us continue to care for our buildings, address ongoing maintenance needs, and plan responsibly for the future.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed their time and effort to these projects and to the continued care of St. John's.

Stephen Loper
Junior Warden

TREASURER REPORT

In January, the Saint John's vestry approved a 2026 budget of $202,907, most of which pays for our clergy, staff, and music program, and covers the cost of maintaining our buildings and grounds.

On the cash flow side, we are doing better than budgeted year to date. Thanks to the generosity of parishioners who pledged for 2026 and folks who have been giving in other ways, we are currently ahead of budget on revenue year-to-date. We've also spent less than was budgeted YTD. While the revenue surplus usually narrows as we approach the end of the year, we are currently in a favorable position.

As reflected in the attached report, through September 30, 2026, the parish has taken in $14,808.33 more in pledge revenue and plate offerings (unrestricted income) than budgeted and has spent $14,087.81 less than budgeted.

Regarding assets, Saint John's has a healthy cash reserve in case of emergencies or opportunities. This year, the vestry approved the purchase of five $20,000 certificates of deposit that will earn a higher rate of return than a standard checking or savings account. These will have laddered maturities to provide easier access should the funds be needed. As you can see on the attached report, as of September 30, we had purchased three of these. We purchased a fourth CD in October and plan to purchase the final CD in November.

As of our September 30, 2026, quarterly account statement, we have just over $421,000 invested with the WNC Diocesan fund, which is managed by an investment adviser. While these nonrestricted funds are not earmarked for anything specific, the vestry and finance committee have viewed them as a cushion to make up any potential future budget shortfalls. This is comforting, though we hope our stewardship efforts each year will allow us to cover our annual expenses through pledges alone, making the investment fund available for giving back to the parish and to the wider community.

TREASURER REPORT

The diocese has been generous with our parish. You may recall its grant committee awarded us $20,000 last year to help people affected by Storm Helene, $10,000 to help us pave our parking lot, and $5,000 to assist the local agency Birthstone in its mission of supporting local families with perinatal care. The diocese's generosity has continued this year, awarding the parish $12,000 for the Shelter from the Storm project that several passionate parishioners have spearheaded to provide a variety of resources for unhoused people in our area. In October, the diocese awarded Saint John's an additional $2,300 to fund a speaking event focused on matters of mental health and our unhoused neighbors.

Saint John's is a small parish with a modest budget. Most of our annual revenue pays our clergy and staff and supports our cherished music program. We want to take care of our people and provide them a living wage. Inflation makes it more challenging for individuals and families to cover their essential expenses. Health insurance costs are rising considerably. The parish is now contributing to Mother Erin's family health and dental plans, and we expect these costs to rise over time.

Many thanks to all who have already pledged to Saint John's for 2027. These pledges help the vestry and finance committee feel confident when planning for such expenses as they prepare the annual budget. Knowing what income to expect empowers them to provide raises for our people, to support our music and other valuable parish and community programs, and to care for our beautiful buildings.

Thanks and peace,
Fergus Tuohy
Saint John's Treasurer

FINANCIAL REPORTS

St. John's Episcopal Church

Summary Statement of Financial Position

As of: Sep 30th 2026 | *Inactive Account | Includes Open Transactions

Assets	
Cash	
1018 Rector's Discretionary Account	624.97
1050 CD 1050	20,000.00
1052 CD 1052	20,000.00
1053 CD 1053	20,000.00
Operating Account	
1001 General Operating Account-First Citizens	86,359.01
Total Operating Account	86,359.01
Total Cash	146,983.98
Investments	
1004 IBM Investment Computershare	5,446.29
1006 Diocese of WNC Investment	421,182.99
1051 Kyndryl Stock	8.00
Total Investments	426,637.28
Other Assets	
1030 Church Renovations	850,701.89
1040 Equipment	1,176.02
Total Other Assets	851,877.91
Total Assets	**$ 1,425,499.17**
Liabilities & Net Assets	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
2400 Payroll Tax Liabilities	1,248.68
Total Current Liabilities	1,248.68
Due to/from Inter-fund Accounts	
2100 Due to/from Capital Account	27,818.70
2101 Due to/from Operating Fund	(27,936.44)
2104 Due to/from ECW Fund	(1,130.00)
2106 Due to/from Flower Fund	117.74
2114 Due to/from Rector's Discretionary Fund	160.00
2127 Due to/from Choral Student Intern Fund	970.00
Total Due to/from Inter-fund Accounts	0.00
Total Liabilities	1,248.68
Net Assets	
Net Assets Without Restrictions	
3000 Net Assets without Restrictions	512,181.42
3100 Unrestricted Building Net Asset	198,184.40
Total Net Assets Without Restrictions	710,365.82
Net Assets With Restrictions	
3500 Net Assets with Restrictions	713,884.67
Total Net Assets With Restrictions	713,884.67
Total Net Assets	1,424,250.49
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	**$ 1,425,499.17**

St. John's Episcopal Church

Statement of Operating Activities

Date Range: Jan 1st 2026 - Sep 30th 2026 | *Inactive Account | Includes Open Transactions | Filtered by: Fund, Core Account

Accounts	Actual Jan 01, 2026 - Sep 30, 2026	Budget Jan 01, 2026 - Sep 30, 2026	Budget Over/Under Jan 01, 2026 - Sep 30, 2026	Actual This Year Year to Date	Budget This Year Year to Date	Budget Over/Under This Year Year to Date	Annual Budget Remaining This Year Year
Revenues							
Rental Income							
01-4007 Facility Use	600.00	974.97	(374.97)	600.00	974.97	(374.97)	700.00
Total Rental Income	600.00	974.97	(374.97)	600.00	974.97	(374.97)	700.00
Unrestricted Income							
01-4001 Pledges Received	141,855.00	130,664.97	11,190.03	141,855.00	130,664.97	11,190.03	32,365.00
01-4006 Other Funds Received	14,868.30	11,250.00	3,618.30	14,868.30	11,250.00	3,618.30	131.70
Total Unrestricted Income	156,723.30	141,914.97	14,808.33	156,723.30	141,914.97	14,808.33	32,496.70
Total Revenues	**$157,323.30**	**$142,889.94**	**$14,433.36**	**$157,323.30**	**$142,889.94**	**$14,433.36**	**$ 33,196.70**
Expenses							
Clergy Expenses							
01-6001 Clergy Salary Expense	35,444.67	34,989.03	(455.64)	35,444.67	34,989.03	(455.64)	11,207.33
01-6002 Clergy Utility Expense	3,500.00	3,854.97	354.97	3,500.00	3,854.97	354.97	1,640.00
01-6003 Clergy Pension	9,228.51	8,918.19	(310.32)	9,228.51	8,918.19	(310.32)	2,662.37
01-6004 Clergy Health Insurance	918.17	5,961.78	5,043.61	918.17	5,961.78	5,043.61	7,030.83
01-6005 Clergy Life Insurance	148.00	0.00	(148.00)	148.00	0.00	(148.00)	(148.00)
01-6008 Clergy Professional Development	0.00	771.03	771.03	0.00	771.03	771.03	1,028.00
01-6014 Clergy Cell/IT Expenses	0.00	231.30	231.30	0.00	231.30	231.30	308.40
01-6015 Clergy Business Expense 01-7092 Clergy Travel Expense	0.00	77.13	77.13	0.00	77.13	77.13	102.80
	0.00	308.43	308.43	0.00	308.43	308.43	411.20
Total Clergy Expenses	49,239.35	55,111.86	5,872.51	49,239.35	55,111.86	5,872.51	24,242.93
Staff Expenses							
01-6006 Church Organist 01-6010 Administrative Assistant 01-6020 Nursery	3,080.00	3,417.75	337.75	3,080.00	3,417.75	337.75	1,477.00
	4,073.76	6,879.78	2,806.02	4,073.76	6,879.78	2,806.02	5,099.24
	240.00	1,228.50	988.50	240.00	1,228.50	988.50	1,398.00
	7,063.94	4,882.50		7,063.94	4,882.50		
01-6070 Choir Director	7,032.50	11,114.28	(2,181.44)	7,032.50	11,114.28	(2,181.44)	(553.94)
01-6071 Non-salary music budget	5,376.60	5,896.53	4,081.78	5,376.60	5,896.53	4,081.78	7,786.50
01-6072 Admin/Tech Assistant	5,264.83	5,783.40	519.93	5,264.83	5,783.40	519.93	2,485.40
01-6073 Bookkeeper	3,547.45	2,119.95	518.57	3,547.45	2,119.95	518.57	2,446.37
01-6099 Staff Payroll			(1,427.50)			(1,427.50)	(720.85)

Accounts	Actual Jan 01, 2026 - Sep 30, 2026	Budget Jan 01, 2026 - Sep 30, 2026	Budget Over/Under Jan 01, 2026 - Sep 30, 2026	Actual This Year Year to Date	Budget This Year Year to Date	Budget Over/Under This Year Year to Date	Annual Budget Remaining This Year Year
01-7096 Professional Services	347.38	0.00	(347.38)	347.38	0.00	(347.38)	(347.38)
Total Staff Expenses	36,026.46	41,322.69	5,296.23	36,026.46	41,322.69	5,296.23	19,070.34
Other Expenses							
01-7091 Supply Priest	875.00	1,320.03	445.03	875.00	1,320.03	445.03	885.00
01-7095 Supply Priest Travel	354.03	0.00	(354.03)	354.03	0.00	(354.03)	(354.03)
01-7099 Supply Organist	200.00	299.97	99.97	200.00	299.97	99.97	200.00
Total Other Expenses	1,429.03	1,620.00	190.97	1,429.03	1,620.00	190.97	730.97
Church Building & Grounds							
01-7016 Church Heating Fuel	625.12	771.03	145.91	625.12	771.03	145.91	402.88
01-7017 Church Water & Sewer	542.37	539.73	(2.64)	542.37	539.73	(2.64)	177.23
01-7018 Church Electricity	3,639.09	2,698.47	(940.62)	3,639.09	2,698.47	(940.62)	(41.09)
01-7019 Church Telephone & Internet	2,274.63	2,698.47	423.84	2,274.63	2,698.47	423.84	1,323.37
01-7026 Church Repair & Maintenance	3,177.29	9,682.92	6,505.63	3,177.29	9,682.92	6,505.63	9,733.31
01-7027 Church Pest Control	264.00	1,061.28	797.28	264.00	1,061.28	797.28	1,151.00
01-7029 Cleaning Service	4,425.00	4,163.40	(261.60)	4,425.00	4,163.40	(261.60)	1,126.20
01-7030 Hastings House Repair & Maintenance	0.00	2,999.97	2,999.97	0.00	2,999.97	2,999.97	4,000.00
01-7040 Smoke Detectors	408.00	1,500.03	1,092.03	408.00	1,500.03	1,092.03	1,592.00
Total Church Building & Grounds	15,355.50	26,115.30	10,759.80	15,355.50	26,115.30	10,759.80	19,464.90
Administrative Expenses							
01-6206 Church Website	19.00	126.00	107.00	19.00	126.00	107.00	149.00
01-6209 Diocesan Clergy Conferences	0.00	104.13	104.13	0.00	104.13	104.13	138.78
01-6210 Church Internet	164.97	0.00	(164.97)	164.97	0.00	(164.97)	(164.97)
01-6299 Other Expenses	1,795.95	0.00	(1,795.95)	1,795.95	0.00	(1,795.95)	(1,795.95)
01-7020 Advertising	167.00	77.13	(89.87)	167.00	77.13	(89.87)	(64.20)
01-7031 Kitchen Supplies	410.77	385.47	(25.30)	410.77	385.47	(25.30)	103.23
01-7032 Office Supplies	3,042.64	3,700.53	657.89	3,042.64	3,700.53	657.89	1,891.36
01-7033 Realm Accounting Software	700.00	693.90	(6.10)	700.00	693.90	(6.10)	225.20
01-7041 Church Insurance	3,704.00	3,539.97	(164.03)	3,704.00	3,539.97	(164.03)	1,016.00
01-7042 Workers Comp Insurance 01-7093 Bank Charges	0.00	154.17	154.17	0.00	154.17	154.17	205.60
01-7094 Postage and Delivery 01-7098 Equipment/Furniture Minor 01-7100 Post Office Box Rental 01-7115 Printing	234.65	749.97	515.32	234.65	749.97	515.32	765.35
	294.81	0.00	(294.81)	294.81	0.00	(294.81)	(294.81)
	0.00	77.13	77.13	0.00	77.13	77.13	102.80
	0.00	157.50	157.50	0.00	157.50	157.50	210.00
	944.96	0.00	(944.96)	944.96	0.00	(944.96)	(944.96)
Total Administrative Expenses	11,478.75	9,765.90	(1,712.85)	11,478.75	9,765.90	(1,712.85)	1,542.43
County Taxes							
01-7212 Jackson County Food Tax	6.06	0.00	(6.06)	6.06	0.00	(6.06)	(6.06)

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01-7217 Jackson County Sales Tax	131.39	0.00	(131.39)	131.39	0.00	(131.39)	(131.39)
01-7227 Buncombe County Sales Tax	66.02	0.00	(66.02)	66.02	0.00	(66.02)	(66.02)
01-7232 Haywood County Food	51.88	0.00	(51.88)	51.88	0.00	(51.88)	(51.88)
Tax 01-7237 Haywood County Sales	34.16	0.00	(34.16)	34.16	0.00	(34.16)	(34.16)
Tax 01-7246 Macon County Sales	9.11	0.00	(9.11)	9.11	0.00	(9.11)	(9.11)
Tax 01-7527 Swain County Sales Tax	0.06	0.00	(0.06)	0.06	0.00	(0.06)	(0.06)
Total County Taxes	298.68	0.00	(298.68)	298.68	0.00	(298.68)	(298.68)
Missions and Outreach							
01-6102 Vegetable Garden	0.00	13.14	13.14	0.00	13.14	13.14	17.48
01-6104 Christian Education	353.75	115.65	(238.10)	353.75	115.65	(238.10)	(199.55)
01-6105 Church Music Program	488.12	206.64	(281.48)	488.12	206.64	(281.48)	(212.62)
01-6106 Church Altar Guild	593.80	131.04	(462.76)	593.80	131.04	(462.76)	(419.04)
01-6107 Parish Life	0.00	492.66	492.66	0.00	492.66	492.66	656.89
01-6203 Other Outreach	1,523.77	253.62	(1,270.15)	1,523.77	253.62	(1,270.15)	(1,185.56)
01-6205 Flower Expense	1,269.24	104.85	(1,164.39)	1,269.24	104.85	(1,164.39)	(1,129.43)
01-6207 Diocesan Pledge	20,036.20	16,849.98	(3,186.22)	20,036.20	16,849.98	(3,186.22)	2,430.40
*01-9999 N/A	0.00	77.13	77.13	0.00	77.13	77.13	102.80
Total Missions and Outreach	24,264.88	18,244.71	(6,020.17)	24,264.88	18,244.71	(6,020.17)	61.37
Total Expenses	**$ 138,092.65**	**$152,180.46**	**$ 14,087.81**	**$138,092.65**	**$152,180.46**	**$14,087.81**	**$64,814.26**
Net Total	**$19,230.65**	**($9,290.52)**	**$28,521.17**	**$19,230.65**	**($9,290.52)**	**$28,521.17**	**($31,617.56)**

ST. JOHN'S CHOIR

The goal of St. John's Choir is to provide deep connection and spirituality through music. We hope that each Sunday, we give the congregation the confidence to join your voices with ours to sing praise to God and experience deep connection with each other through song. We also hope to provide music for contemplation during communion and the offertory. The choir includes many versatile musicians (composers, arrangers, and instrumentalists) who share their gifts with us and with you throughout the year. Most importantly, our choir is made up of people who care deeply about each other, about St. John's, and the community we build through music.

We thank you for your continued support of the music department. Financial support from you and our Vestry is vitally important, but it also means so much when you tell us you enjoyed our musical offerings. If you have suggestions or other feedback, please feel free to share it with Erin McCully, whose contact information is in the report.

Choir-Specific Expenses:

- Choir music
- Section leader stipends
- Piano tuning (upstairs and downstairs)
- Music resources for the liturgical year
- Director/Organist stipend
- Substitute musician stipends

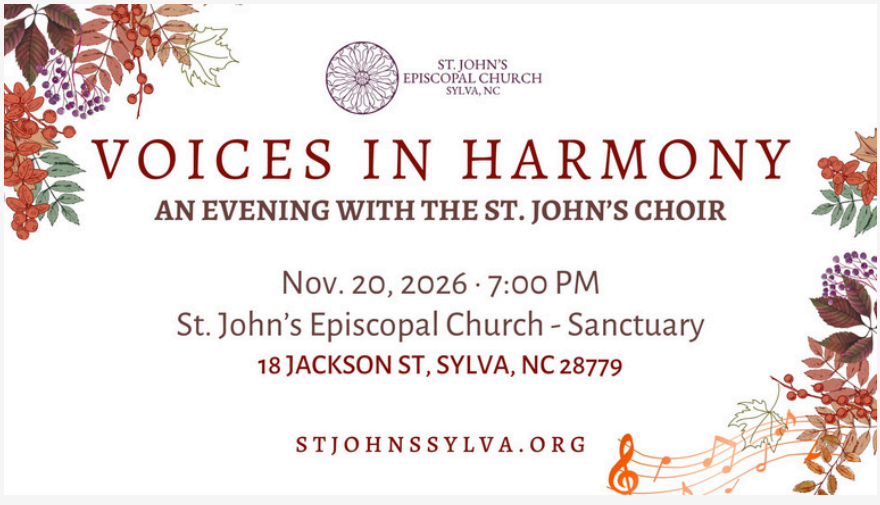
CHOIR EVENTS

Choir events from the past year:

- Dec 2025: 3rd Annual Christmas Carol Sing-a-Long
- April 2026: Evensong (first Evensong at St. John's for… a long time?)
- July 2026: Erin McCully becomes organist in addition to choir director
- July 2026: First Pop-Up Choir Event
- Aug 2026: Organ and choir areas moved and reconfigured - thank you to Helen & Richard Jones and Stephen Loper and all others who helped make this plan a reality!
- Aug 2026: Choir Retreat
- Sept 2026: Pride Mass, featuring St. John's Pride Pop-Up Choir
- Sept 2026: New Choir Chairs - thank you, everyone, for your support and generosity, and thank you to Helen & Richard Jones for putting them together!

Upcoming events:

- Nov 20, 2026: Choir Concert, 7:00pm
- Dec 9, 2026: Lessons and Carols on Dec. 7th (during 11am Eucharist)
- Dec 10, 2026: 4th Annual Christmas Carol Sing-a-Long - 6:30pm
- Dec 13, 2026: Lessons & Carols (during 11am Eucharist)
- Dec 24, 2026: Christmas Eve Candlelight Service (7pm)



CHOIR MEMBERS

Kara Addy, alto (new in 2026!)

Jessica Ange, alto

Lisa Boynton, alto

Jenn Brooks, alto section leader

Paul Busick, bass

Ken Cabe, bass

Susan Cain, soprano section leader

Larry Fox, tenor

Carol Hogue, alto

Lynn Hogue, bass

Helen Jones, soprano

Allison Kaserman, soprano

Toby Lawrence, tenor (new in 2026!)

Patricia Loper, soprano

Ron Robinson, tenor

Naylen Ryder, bass section leader

Adam Shepherd, tenor section leader

Erin McCully, director (music@stjohnssylva.org)

IN-REACH MINISTRY

The In-Reach Ministry reflects St. John's call to be "doers of the Word" (James 1:22), serving as God's hands and feet within our parish community. This ministry offers compassionate, practical support to parishioners during times of need, whether from illness, grief, childbirth, caregiving, or other life changes.

Over the past year, members have provided caregiver relief, meal delivery, home communion, transportation, grocery shopping, bereavement and emotional support, and simple acts of kindness like cards, phone calls, and visits. In-Reach support often extends beyond an initial contact, continuing for weeks as needs evolve. Caregiving can be exhausting, and ongoing support for caregivers is an important part of caring for the whole family.

Anyone who would like to offer support is encouraged to share specific ways they are able to help. Whether offering a meal, providing transportation, or checking in regularly, each act of care helps ensure that no one in our church family feels alone.

Contact: Larry Fox (*lfoxkcab@aol.com*)

GARDEN MINISTRY

There are 15 parishioners that devote time to our church gardens. This year the garden group devoted at least 180 hours of effort to plant and maintain the church flower and vegetable gardens. We met at least once a week beginning in April and will be mostly done in early November.

We harvested at least 12 bags cucumbers, 20 bags beans, 46 bags peppers and 86 bags tomatoes. (That's more than 700 lbs of tomatoes.) We donated all to United Christian Ministries.We bought all the seeds and flowers and most materials with our own personal money. Shelton farms once again donated tomato and pepper plants to our vegetable garden effort. Flower garden plants and seeds cost at least $270. Garden dirt cost approximately $700. Straw and other materials cost about $90. We will likely spend another $75 on winter flowers like pansies. The church paid $165 to buy mulch for the garden walkways between beds to reduce weed maintenance requirements. We spread the mulch

We took time after each work session to enjoy fellowship, tea and sometimes snacks in the parish hall.

Contacts: Paul Busick (*flygolf66@gmail.com*) and Joe Butler (*judaculla3037@gmail.com*)

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

A vital part of what makes St. John's such a warm and loving community is our Children's Ministry.

Each Sunday we invite our children to explore God's love and creation through the Storymakers curriculum sponsored by our diocese. It a flexible resource that can be adapted to the multiage needs and imaginations of our children.

In addition to our Sunday morning ministry, Family Movie Nights that are open to all parish families are planned each month. We also send "Get Well" cards to parish members and host Coffee Hour after church on a regular basis. A Children's Ministry community outreach is planned for the coming holiday season.

Our children enrich us through their childlike trust,vitality and unique personalities. Their spiritual foundation depends, not only on their parents, but on each of us at St. John's to help them along their faith journey!

Many thanks to all of our adult volunteers for your commitment to our children! We can always use more volunteers! If anyone else is interested or has questions, please contact Mother Erin or Beth Jones.

Contact: Beth Jones (*eaj_28741@yahoo.com*)

ALTAR GUILD

Many thanks to Altar Guild members for the time, care, and dedication they give to prepare and maintain our altar each week. Their hard work, attention to detail, and faithful service help make our worship services beautiful and meaningful.

Current members include:

Allison Tomas

Dru Russell

Cary Elvington

Mary Elvington

Helen Butler

Paige Madison

Jane Eastman

Cyndie-Faircloth Smith

Service on the altar guild is open to all. The only requirement is that one be mindful of the high privilege of serving in God's sanctuary.The altar guild is a group of lay members of our parish whose responsibility is to prepare all things necessary for the celebration of the Holy Eucharist and any other services of the church.

Contact: Allison Tomas (*allito60@yahoo.com*)

COFFEE HOUR

In the book of Hebrews, Old Testament, we are told that we cannot neglect each other by not meeting up but that we should carve out space for each other "not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching." (Hebrew 10:25) A church's coffee hour is more than sharing coffee and food, it is about turning a passive crowd of worshippers into a community that welcomes newcomers and invites them to stay a little longer, providing a safe and welcoming place for all to share life's ups and downs with loving and supportive peers, and bringing together diverse age groups outside the formality of the the liturgy. For those who work, coffee hour may be the only chance at meeting others and establishing relationships and friendships within the church. As Episcopalians, we believe that "Christ is in this place." The holy spirit follows us from that holy sanctuary to a place of fellowship and communion with each other where we are spiritually fed. That is how we strengthen the bonds of community.

Interested in hosting coffee hour? Sign up on the white board in the Parish Hall!

Contact: Eileen Rice (*mom22.granny21@yahoo.com*)

EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN

The Episcopal Church Women has had a very successful year. In February, Mother Erin celebrated the Eucharist with us; and with her help, we developed group norm guidelines for our business meetings. In March, we joined forces with St. John's partner Uncomplicated Kitchen and, with the help of the Men's Group, hosted a chili luncheon which was a fundraiser for the organization. Together we made $430 for Uncomplicated Kitchen, and we hope to make this a yearly event. In June, we reviewed our $3000+ treasury and decided to disburse some of our funds to the music program and to Mother Erin's rector's purse to assist a family in need. Also, in June, we proclaimed MaryK Buranosky our devotional chair, Kathy Broeker our treasurer, and Helen Butler our secretary. Most importantly, we had a well-attended evening meeting in the summer. We will be holding more evening meetings starting in the spring so that we can become a more inclusive organization.

Thus far, we have had four business meetings and five lunches or dinners out. Dru Russell and Allison Tomas invited ECW to their homes for luncheons in May and in December of last year. Another luncheon is planned in December. These luncheons are a wonderful way to strengthen our friendship and to become true sisters in Christ.

In a few days, ECW will be hosting a Jumble Sale, which will be our major fundraiser of the year.

Contact: Cyndie Faircloth-Smith (*fairclothsmithc@yahoo.com*)

SHELTER FROM THE STORM: THEN TO NOW

The “Shelter from the Storm” project began with a simple but powerful question from Mandy Taylor to Steve Steen while volunteering at Community Table: “What if no one had to spend the night out in freezing weather next year?” When you have shared a meal with someone and have heard their story, it becomes difficult to watch them step back into the cold with nowhere safe to go. It becomes personal. This led Mandy to call her lifelong friend Karen Tharp because she had heard that St. John’s was led with courage and heart. So, a vision began to take shape.

Our first meeting for “Code Purple”, in February 2026, brought together an enthusiastic group within the St. John’s congregation, some of whom already were serving in a similar capacity in Bryson City. Carol Hogue took on writing a grant because it just so happened to be available through the church, and Mother Erin renamed the project “Shelter From the Storm” and helped revise the grant beautifully towards the church's purpose. (See the link here to read the grant proposal).

Once we received the grant(Yay!), we began asking the practical questions of how, when, and where, and stayed grounded in the most important question of all: Why? We knew our neighbors needed a safe place to find shelter from the cold. We knew that this was loving our neighbors as ourselves. However, those of us at St. Johns also questioned what was the best use of our funds and felt we should take time to discern what was needed without assuming we knew best for the unhoused in our community.

We began listening to the voices of those experiencing homelessness, volunteering at Community Table, welcoming speakers who knew this subject matter well, and attending book readings and courses by those who could broaden our understanding

and perspective of our unhoused population. Mandy and Steve, as well as other churches and organizations, filled us in regarding what had been tried, researched, and attempted. As we moved forward, it became clear that the gaps that needed filling revolved around emergency shelter and supplies.

We are called to love our neighbors as ourselves, to be God's hands. And though we are small and mighty, we knew we needed help. So with the help of Mandy Taylor and Steve Steen, Sylva church leaders came together several times to explore how we could share our resources, work together, and respond in meaningful ways. Multiple services for the unhoused community are located in downtown Sylva. Community Table is downtown and a common gathering spot, and downtown is relatively easy to navigate on foot. It seemed best to start right here.

Every meaningful threshold needs someone willing to take the first step. St. John's has offered to be that starting point by providing space and financial support, with the hope that others will join us. We believe they will. Shelter from the Storm is more than creating a place to find refuge; it is an opportunity to build compassion, strengthen partnerships, and bring our community together around a shared purpose. From that first nudging "What if" question from Mandy to the work taking shape today, our hope remains the same: that no one in Jackson County has to face a freezing night without shelter. Right now, we are working on securing cots and bedding, figuring out storage, as well as organizing food, laundry, and supplies. Together, with other churches offering their help, space, and more, we believe we can make a lasting difference in the lives of our unhoused neighbors and our wider community.

COMMUNITY PARTNER UPDATES

SYLVA EMERGENCY WEATHER RESPONSE FROM MANDY TAYLOR

Conversations about supporting unhoused and inadequately housed members of our community began in late January of 2026 among two vestry members and Mandy Taylor, a retired educator. By early February, a small group of the congregation met with Mr. Steve Steen, operations manager of Community Table and Mandy Taylor. During this meeting, congregation members shared their experiences working with The Grove Church in Bryson City and prior work supporting the fundamental needs of community members. Steve and Mandy shared information about Code Purple and the need for a warming station in Sylva. Next came conversations about applying for a grant through the Diocese. Carol Houge took the lead in this effort. Aeryn Knight developed logos and branding to help build a communication plan. The grant was submitted in April, in two parts. The first round of funding was centered on discernment by contemplating the issue of homelessness from multiple perspectives through a slate of guest speakers and book studies. This round was released in May. The second round of funding, accessed after the period of discernment, centered on procuring cots and bedding for a warming station, was released in October.

After the grant submission, a community meeting was held in April at the First United Methodist Church (FUMC) to explore ways to support the unhoused during Code Purple. This meeting, led by Kasey Valentine from the Smokey Mountain Long Term Recovery Group, was a continuation of conversations started by Pastor Karen Doucett (FUMC) in April of 2025. Community Nonprofits, concerned citizens, unhoused members of the community, faith leaders, and WCU students attended the April 2026 meeting. Between April 2026 and October 2026, Mother Erin+ and Karen Tharp were involved in a series of meetings with faith leaders from the First Baptist Church in Sylva, Lifeway Church, the First Presbyterian Church, FUMC, Paul Phillips (Executive Director of HERE), Steve Steen, Kasey Valentine and Mandy Taylor.

As of October 2026, cots and bedding have been ordered, a plan for providing evening meals has been determined, and an in-take process has been developed. The group of faith leaders is in the process of finalizing which church will host the first Code Purple night, guidelines and procedures for taking advantage of the warming station, setting dates for free training provided by Vaya Health, and scheduling a community meeting to update the community and recruit volunteers.

St. John's continues to be instrumental in moving this work forward. The willingness to secure grant funding has proved invaluable. The thoughtfulness and intentionality demonstrated by the vestry and Mother Erin+ created space for meaningful collaboration among the faith leaders in downtown Sylva.

COMMUNITY PARTNER UPDATES

THE FOUR PILLARS OF HEALTH MEDITATION GROUP

The Four Pillars of Health Meditation Group was formed to help fill the absence left by the Meditation Center that closed in Sylva a few years ago, while recognizing that the need for healing meditation is still present within our community. We are an open group in the community that welcomes anyone who wishes to aid in their healing journey—**Cultivating Balance, one breath at a time**—while allowing the body to return toward a more natural state of homeostasis, where the body is better able to aid itself in its healing journey. We view an individual's overall health as being made up of four pillars: the **Mental Pillar, Emotional Pillar, Spiritual Pillar, and Physical Pillar**. Seeking balance among all four areas can aid an individual in manifesting the healthiest version of themselves that they can be.

The Current Monthly Format

- **First Tuesday of the Month -** Tips and techniques to aid individuals in developing a healthy meditation practice are shared. The month's national health awareness observances are also shared, followed by an introductory meditation.
- **2nd, 3rd, and 4th Tuesdays of the Month -** These evenings focus on attuning to the here and now through meditations designed to allow each individual to seek out healing within the areas of their Four Pillars that are in need of healing. Healing prayers and/or energies are then directed toward those areas. One or more of the month's national health awareness observances are also highlighted, with healing prayers and/or energies sent toward them. On special 3rd Tuesdays of the month, when available, we may feature a sound healer along with a guided meditation.
- **4th or 5th Tuesday, When the Month Has Five Tuesdays -** Vissy shares one of his **Four R's Meditations**. These are special meditations that Vissy has been teaching in the area since 2015 to aid individuals who have a difficult time with traditional meditation practices. This system was designed for those who have tried to meditate in the past but have come to the conclusion that **"I just can't."** The Four R's Method is designed to remove that line of thinking and provide a full method that can aid an individual in developing a meditation practice that works for them.

As stated before, we welcome everyone, and our goal is simply: **"Cultivate Balance, one breath at a time."**

A Note on Healing and Medical Care

Meditation and the practices shared within this group are intended to be supportive tools in an individual's healing journey. ***Meditation should never be considered a replacement for professional medical care.*** *When medical attention is needed, individuals are encouraged to seek the appropriate care from a qualified medical professional. Meditation can be used alongside appropriate medical care as one additional tool for supporting overall well-being.*

COMMUNITY PARTNER UPDATES

UNCOMPLICATED KITCHEN

In 2026, Uncomplicated Kitchen continued advancing its mission to empower individuals through food literacy by teaching essential kitchen skills and bridging the gap between food access and culinary confidence. St. John's played a vital role in this work, serving as a welcoming home for several of our core programs throughout the year. **Meals in an Instant (January-March)** helped neighbors build confidence with time-saving, budget-friendly Instant Pot cooking. **UNIDXS Classes (May–June)** offered bilingual, culturally inclusive instruction that celebrated community and accessible kitchen skills. **Eat Well Spend Less (August–October)** supported families in stretching their grocery budgets while still preparing nutritious meals, and **Great Gravy (November)**will bring festive, skill-building holiday cooking to the community.

Beyond these programs, Uncomplicated Kitchen continued its youth-focused work through **UnKit KIDS! Camps**, which foster creativity, independence, and hands-on learning, and through **The Culinary Lab at Jackson Community School**, where students build essential culinary and nutrition skills that support lifelong healthy habits. Together, these programs reflect our shared commitment to providing food literacy education throughout our community here in Jackson County and beyond.

COMMUNITY PARTNER UPDATES

PIC-N-PLAY DULCIMER GROUP

Pic n Play is a group of local mountain dulcimer players who love getting together at St. John's to play music, laugh, and make new friends. The group has been playing together for about 30 years, and St. John's has been our home for more than 20 of those years. During the past year, we have had three new players join us for free lessons before our twice monthly jams where all of us continue to learn from each other and to develop our own playing skills and repertoire. We play at the Jackson County Library each 5th Saturday to bring traditional mountain music and this traditional instrument to visitors and residents of the area. We appreciate the continued support of St. John's as we work to maintain the musical traditions of our mountains. We always welcome new or experienced players to join us on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays of each month.

LOOKING AHEAD

We are deeply grateful for everyone who has shared their time, energy, and gifts with St. John's over the past year. Your commitment continues to help us grow in faith and serve our community with joy.

We also extend our heartfelt thanks to all who have partnered with us this year, from local organizations and ministries to individual volunteers and community members. Each partnership helps us live out our mission in meaningful ways.

We look forward to another year of connection, service, and growth together.

WAYS TO PARTICIPATE

- **Keep your information up to date.** Update your directory information using a directory contact card or by emailing *office@stjohnssylva.org*.
- **Share your gifts.** Explore opportunities to serve through a ministry or support one of our community outreach efforts.
- **Stay connected.** Follow us on Facebook and sign up for our newsletter to learn about upcoming events and opportunities.
- **Be part of parish life.** Join us for worship, attend parish gatherings, and look for ways to connect with others in our church community.