

WYE PARISH PROFILE

Diocese of Easton

July 21, 2026

Wye Parish Financial Overview

Wye Parish is an Episcopal parish family of two small historic old church buildings, located in two different small towns, in 2 different counties on the Eastern Shore of Maryland.

- A. Old Wye Church, 1721, Wye Mills, Talbot County, MD This property contains a church building, parish house (church office, library, meeting rooms and kitchen, rectory (presently rented), small cottage (for Vestry Meetings), storage building and a sizable cemetery. A bridge crosses a creek to the Celtic cross and large field for future cemetery enlargement.
- B. St. Luke's Chapel, 1842, Queenstown, Queen Anne's County, MD. This property contains one building housing a chapel, social hall and kitchen.

This union of two churches offers unique financial complexities that build on each other's strengths. Our parish has a long history of providing spiritual guidance in Christ to the local community and thus requires strong financial stability to continue that mission. You will see in the following paragraphs just how we are financially structured and fully capable to accomplish our mission in Christ.

Financial Strengths:

- **Strong Balance Sheet / Cash Reserves** - Limited debt and large invested **Cash Reserves**. *Some \$2.5M held in liquid assets. **Our Debt-to-Asset Ratio** averages 4-5%*
- **Endowment** – focused on ability to provide for the upkeep of the physical structures. *A **Trust Fund** delivers approximately \$160k per year to physical maintenance.*
- **Credit Line** – Available **Credit Line with Queenstown Bank**, \$120,000 to be used in times of need, is currently untapped.
- **Financial Performance** - Consistent history of meeting budgeted revenue and overall income objectives, while maintaining a diligence on overall costs.

- **Stewardship Program** – Our **Stewardship Committee** is focused on promoting stewardship education, organizing annual pledge drives, and creating a culture of generosity. Our parish consistently achieves goals set to accomplish its mission for Christ.
- **Accounting System** – Our accounting system (QuickBooks) maintains accurate and an up to date status of financial performance. Monthly financial reports are made to the vestry and finance committee. These include a Balance Sheet, Profit and Loss Statement and Cash Flow.
- **Financial Oversight** – the Parish Finance Committee provides a fiduciary responsibility to insure that proper controls, investments and use of funds are maintained with the overall mission of the church.
- **Financial Policies** - The parish adheres to GAAP standards and has an internal mechanism in place regarding use and control of parish assets.
- **Transparency** - Periodic financial reports are disseminated to the parishioners, keeping them abreast of the current parish financials
- **Housing** – the Parish currently has lovely housing for a new rector if needed. A valuable asset for any family.
- **Special Funding Events** – The Parish runs two key fund-raising events: The Books Café (adds revenue to the parish budget) and the ECW Christmas Bazaar (supports community organizations and the parish).

Current Financial Summaries for Year Ending 12/31/2025:

- **Statement of Activities (Income Statement):**

Statement of Activity
VESTRY OF WYE PARISH
January 1- December 31, 2025

	Total
Revenue	\$220,306.71
Expenditures	<u>\$221,899.11</u>
<i>Net Operating Income</i>	<u>-\$1,592.40</u>
Other Revenue	\$934,140.65
Other Expenditures	\$348,117.60
<i>Net Other Income/Expense</i>	<u>\$586,023.05</u>
Net Income	<u>\$584,430.65</u>

- Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet)

Statement of Financial Position Summary
VESTRY OF WYE PARISH
As of Dec 31, 2025

Distribution account	Total
Assets	
Current Assets	
Bank Accounts	203,738.12
Total for Current Assets	\$203,738.12
Other Assets	2,530,937.67
Total for Assets	\$2,734,675.79
Liabilities and Equity	
Liabilities	-\$1,351.60
Equity	2,736,027.39
Total for Liabilities and Equity	\$2,734,675.79

- *Contributors, Carol Bilek, Ron Dryka, and Barbara Perry of the Finance Team*

Wye Parish Community Vision *(2500 character limit)*

What are your community's hopes for this position, and what qualities in applicants will help you live into them?

What Wye Parish Hopes for in a New Priest

Wye Parish seeks a priest who will help us deepen our life of faith, expand our care for one another, and for our neighbors, and guide us into the future. We hope for a priest who is warm, engaging, and relational—who enjoys people, tells stories well, has vibrancy, and helps us feel connected to God, to one another, and to the wider community.

Qualities We Are Looking For

We appreciate a priest who enjoys exploration of Scripture and the Christian way. We recognize an interest among parishioners in contemplative prayer and spirituality, so openness to both forms of worship would be a gift.

Our parish includes a range of theological perspectives. We seek a priest who can help us listen well, speak honestly, and remain open to diverse views without becoming politically divisive. The ability to guide difficult conversations with grace, patience, and spiritual maturity is important.

Pastoral care is important. Our congregation includes older parishioners facing aging, grief, and loss, as well as parishioners who struggle with addiction, depression, or loneliness. We need a priest who sees pastoral care as central, and who can offer a steady, compassionate presence in times of need.

We identified areas where we hope a priest will bring strength and grow alongside us: congregational development and church growth; strategic planning, and use of our campuses; formation for all; and fundraising. Formation is especially important. We want to expand what we offer so parishioners at every stage of life can be nurtured in faith and supported in their spiritual growth.

Ministry Skills and Priorities

Leadership Style

We appreciate an adaptive leadership style as we discern who is called to be next. Our parish context has two campuses, an aging demographic, and a congregation

that cherishes its traditions, while also showing openness to change. We need a leader who can honor what we love while helping us imagine newer models of being a church.

Collaborative leadership is important. Much work happens in small groups. We value a priest who can recognize, encourage, and strengthen the gifts laity brings. We hope for someone who will invite shared ministry rather than carry the work alone.

We value servant leadership. During the interim, laity learned to run the parish and became actively involved. We hope our next priest will build on lifting up lay leadership.

Our Vision for the Future

Our vision is to be spiritually grounded, pastorally attentive, welcoming, and open to faithful renewal. We want to grow in numbers AND in faith, mutual care, and shared responsibility for ministry. We hope to make wise use of our spaces, strengthen formation across generations, and cultivate a parish culture where people feel known, supported, challenged, and invited into deeper discipleship.

We seek a faithful partner for our next season: someone who will love Wye Parish as it is and with an eye toward future possibilities, help us become what God is calling us to be, and walk with us with wisdom, courage, humility, and hope.

- *Contributors: The former and present Search Teams*

- *Resources: Work from the first search team efforts, results from previous Holy Conversations, and the Holy Cow survey results.*

Leadership Skills (select a maximum of 5)

1. Adaptive Leadership
2. Collaborative Leadership
3. Conflict Management
4. Fundraising and/or Capital Campaigns
5. Strategic Planning

Ministry Skills *(select a maximum of 10)*

1. Academic/Theology
2. Adult Formation
3. Children & Family Formation
4. Church Growth
5. Outreach
6. Pastoral Care
7. Preaching
8. Stewardship
9. Worship & Liturgy
10. Youth & Young Adult Formation

- Contributors, The Search Committee in consultation with the Vestry of Wye Parish

Narratives *(2500 character limit)*

What is your organization's mission and focus?

Our mission as a people in Christ is to seek God's love, peace, and guidance while providing opportunities for lifelong spiritual growth, fellowship, and service. Rooted in the teachings of Jesus Christ and the traditions of the Episcopal Church, we strive to be a welcoming community that leads others to Christ through prayer, the sacraments, worship, and service.

Worship is at the center of our parish life. Through liturgy, Holy Eucharist, music, prayer, and preaching, we gather to encounter God, deepen our faith, and be strengthened for the work of discipleship. We value the richness of Episcopal worship and seek to make our common prayer meaningful, reverent, and accessible to both longtime members and newcomers.

Our focus is to explore and grow in our spirituality inside the church walls and then share that spirituality beyond them. We do this through ministries of hospitality, formation, fellowship, outreach, and pastoral care. We seek to welcome all people with warmth and respect, help parishioners discover and use their gifts, and build a community where people can find belonging, encouragement, and purpose.

Service to the wider community is an important expression of our faith. Through long-standing ministries such as the Episcopal Church Women's (ECW) Christmas Bazaar and the annual used book sale (Books Café) at St. Luke's Chapel, parishioners give their time, energy, and resources to support local charities, parish needs, the Rector's Discretionary Fund, and the care of our historic spaces. These efforts reflect our desire to respond to community needs with generosity, compassion, and hope.

We recognize that our parish is still discerning the fullest expression of its mission for the future. That discernment is itself part of our focus: listening for God's call, learning from one another, and preparing to grow in faith and service. With the guidance of a new rector, we hope to clarify our shared vision, strengthen our ministries, and continue

becoming a parish that worships faithfully, welcomes generously, serves joyfully, and bears witness to Christ's love in the world.

- *Contributors: Rob Sherwood, and Rev. Charlotte*
- *Resources, the Bylaws and 2024/2025 Annual Reports.*

How would you describe your ministry's context?

Wye Parish is rooted in the rural and historic communities of Maryland's Eastern Shore, where faith, family, tradition, natural beauty, and a sense of community shape daily life. Our parish serves two historic campuses eight miles apart: Old Wye Church in Wye Mills and St. Luke's Chapel in Queenstown. Both are small and rich in history, while also connected to the broader resources of Annapolis, Baltimore, Washington, D.C., and the Chesapeake Bay region.

Our parish is active and in good standing in the Diocese of Easton. We are a welcoming, social, and generous congregation. Our members support parish life through worship, fellowship, stewardship, volunteerism, and outreach. Fellowship after worship is an important part of our common life.

Our two locations reflect both our heritage and our future. Queenstown is experiencing population growth and offering strong potential for parish growth. The village of Wye Mills is an area of deep historic character and more moderate growth. For decades we offered worship at both churches each Sunday. Recently, we began worshipping together at one church, alternating by month, which has strengthened our sense of unity as one parish.

The wider community includes longtime residents, newcomers, retirees, families, and people drawn to the Eastern Shore's quieter pace of life, farmland, waterways, cultural opportunities, schools, colleges, healthcare, festivals, theaters, farmers markets, historic landmarks, and outdoor recreation. These resources contribute to a rich quality of life and create meaningful opportunities for connection and ministry.

At the same time, our context includes challenges common to many rural and small-town communities, including an aging population, social isolation, economic differences, and the need to engage younger generations more fully in church life. Wye Parish responds through worship, pastoral care, hospitality, formation, fellowship, outreach, and renewed engagement with the Diocese and wider community.

Our ministry's context is one of preservation and possibility. We cherish our historic churches, Episcopal traditions, and close parish relationships, while recognizing the need to grow, adapt, and listen for where God is calling us next. Our hope is to remain a faithful, welcoming, and generous parish that shares Christ's love and serves as a beacon of faith, hope, and community.

- *Contributors: Bibi Schelberg, Suzanne Sheahan, Rob Sherwood*

How would you describe your congregational leadership culture?

Our leadership culture is grounded in shared responsibility, transparency, care, and faithful stewardship. We are governed by a nine-member Vestry that meets monthly and gathers annually for retreat. The Vestry works in accordance with recently updated bylaws, participates in the wider life of the Diocese of Easton, attends Diocesan Convention, serves on various committees, pays its full apportionment, and remains committed to the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Episcopal Church.

Our leadership model is increasingly collaborative. While the Vestry remains the governing board, much of the parish's work is carried out through committees and ministry teams that include additional members from across the congregation. Teams develop worship plans, shape finance objectives, and update cemetery records and management practices. This broader participation reflects our belief that ministry is strengthened when many gifts are recognized and shared.

We recently updated our bylaws with an eye toward reducing the Vestry from nine members to six over three years. This plan reflects both practical needs and a growing confidence in team-based ministry. Wye Parish invites wider lay participation, encourages accountability, and makes good use of the experience and commitment already present within the parish.

The Rector leads the spiritual direction of the parish and works with a Worship Team. Financial leadership is shared through the Finance Team with input from the Rector and Vestry. The Parish Administrator is managed by the Rector together with the Treasurer or Finance Team, creating a structure that balances pastoral leadership, administrative oversight, and fiscal responsibility.

Wye Parish is shaped by its relationship with the Diocese of Easton, a diverse community of worshipping congregations across Maryland's Eastern Shore. During this season in which the Standing Committee holds ecclesiastical authority, we remain attentive to diocesan discernment and committed to participating faithfully in the wider Church.

Our leadership culture is one of trust, collaboration, and careful discernment. We value clear communication, responsible governance, respect for Episcopal order, and the willingness of lay leaders and clergy to work together for the good of the parish. As we look ahead, we hope to strengthen shared ministry, develop new leaders, and lead with transparency, humility, and care.

- Contributors: *Lennie Anthony and Bibi Schelberg*

How would you describe your congregational/liturgical styles and practice?

Wye Parish's congregational and liturgical life is rooted in the Episcopal tradition, with worship shaped by the *Book of Common Prayer* and approved supplemental resources such as *Enriching Our Worship*. Our services are structured and participatory, while remaining informal, accessible, and low church in style. We follow the rhythms, colors, and seasons of the Christian calendar, and our worship invites the congregation to listen, pray, sing, respond, and share in Holy Communion.

The congregation participates actively in spoken responses, prayer, and music. A strong musical lead is especially important to our worship, helping support congregational singing and deepen the experience of common prayer. Our physical practices are simple and familiar: we sit to listen, stand to praise, and sit or kneel to pray.

Hospitality and community are important expressions of our worshipping life. During the Peace, parishioners often cross the aisle and take time to greet one another warmly. Announcements are made after the blessing, preserving the flow of worship while still allowing the community to share important parish news. Fellowship after worship is long and leisurely,

reflecting the congregation's genuine enjoyment of being together and its desire to build relationships.

Wye Parish currently offers one principal Sunday worship service at 9:30 a.m., held at one of our two campuses. Christmas Eve and Easter are exceptions, when services are offered at both locations. In addition to Sunday worship, the parish provides services twice a month at a nearby assisted living and memory care facility. These services include Holy Communion, use the liturgy appointed for the nearest Sunday, and include a shortened sermon.

We also offer a Sacred Circle gathering mid-week twice a month at St. Luke's Chapel. This gathering provides a more spiritual and contemplative form of worship and reflects a growing interest in prayer, healing, sharing and deeper spiritual practice within the parish. Wye Parish has offered separate healing services in the past, and Sacred Circle has become a meaningful extension of that tradition. We are currently considering adding a monthly healing service as part of our regular Sunday worship life.

Overall, our worship is prayerful, welcoming, relational, and grounded in Episcopal liturgy. We value reverence without formality, participation without performance, and tradition that remains open to spiritual growth.

- *Contributors: Lenny Anthony, Rick Culotta, Rev. Charlotte*

How does your congregation approach cultural identity and inclusion?

Wye Parish approaches cultural identity and inclusion through hospitality, relationship, and a genuine desire to welcome people from many walks of life. We understand ourselves as a welcoming community where those who come to worship, volunteer at parish events, or participate in fellowship are greeted with warmth, listened to with respect, and invited into meaningful connection. Visitors and members often experience the parish as friendly, personal, and sincere.

Our congregational culture places high value on relationships. The Passing of the Peace is often long and genuine, reflecting a community that wants to know one another beyond surface-level greetings. Fellowship after

worship is also an important part of our common life, providing time for conversation, support, laughter, and deeper pastoral relationships. These practices help create a sense of belonging and care within the congregation and extend naturally to guests and newcomers.

At the same time, we recognize that inclusion is not only about being friendly; it also requires intentional formation, listening, and growth. One of our current challenges is that we do not yet offer enough variety in Christian formation for every age and stage of life. We hope to strengthen our ability to engage children, youth, young adults, families, adults, and older parishioners in ways that are meaningful and accessible. We are seeking leadership that can help us broaden participation and create pathways for people with different needs, backgrounds, and experiences to grow in faith together.

Wye Parish also includes a diversity of theological perspectives. Recent parish survey work explored how members understand Scripture, conversion, social change, and the historic teachings of the Church. The results suggest that the parish is more theologically conservative than many congregations, yet there is also a strong desire to remain welcoming, respectful, and open to people from different backgrounds and viewpoints. We seek a parish culture where theological conviction and generous hospitality can coexist.

Our approach to inclusion is therefore both relational and aspirational. We are not finished growing, but we are committed to becoming a community where people feel heard, valued, and invited into the life of Christ. We hope to continue learning how to welcome more fully, listen more deeply, and build a parish where faith, friendship, service, and respect shape our common life.

- *Contributors: Christine and Matt Schoene*

- *Resources: The Wye Parish Bylaws, Case Studies, Church History, Visitor's information Guide and Holy Cow Survey.*

Optional Narratives (*select at least 5 - 2500 character limit each*)

Describe your congregation's theology or spiritual identity. –

Establishes our foundational identity and helps candidates understand if they are a theological and spiritual fit.

Wye Parish's theology and spiritual identity are rooted in the Christian faith as expressed through the Episcopal tradition. Wye Parish believes in preaching the Gospel. We are called to witness to and proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ. We are shaped by Scripture, the *Book of Common Prayer*, the sacraments, the liturgical year, and the shared life of worship, prayer, fellowship, and service. Our identity is grounded in seeking God's love, peace, and guidance, and in helping people grow as disciples of Jesus Christ throughout every stage of life.

Our congregation is low church in style, yet we care deeply about how Scripture, liturgy, preaching, and Holy Communion are treated. We value worship that is reverent, accessible, participatory, and spiritually nourishing. We are drawn to thoughtful preaching and teaching that take Scripture seriously, engage Christian tradition with depth, and help people connect faith with daily life.

Theologically, Wye Parish includes a range of perspectives. Recent reflection suggests that many in the congregation identify with more traditional or theologically conservative views, while also recognizing the importance of listening to and learning from those who see things differently. We seek a spiritual identity that holds conviction and humility together: faithful to the teachings of the Church, open to honest conversation, and committed to avoiding unnecessary division.

Our spirituality is both relational and contemplative. We are a warm, hospitable parish that values fellowship, pastoral care, and shared ministry. There is growing interest in contemplative prayer, healing, and deeper spiritual practice, reflected in offerings such as Sacred Circle and healing services. We hope to continue helping parishioners encounter God in silence, reflection, and prayer.

We understand Christian faith as something lived outwardly in service. Outreach, generosity, stewardship, and care for the wider community are

important expressions of our theology. We believe that spiritual growth should lead to compassion, hospitality, and meaningful engagement with the needs of others.

Wye Parish's theology and spiritual identity can be described as Episcopal, Christ-centered, prayerful, relational, and grounded in tradition while open to faithful renewal. We seek a rector who can honor our theological character, bridge diverse views with grace, deepen our formation, and help us discern how God is calling us to grow in worship, service, and discipleship.

- *Contributors: Rob Sherwood and the Search Team*

How does your congregation discern and adapt to the changing needs of your community? – *This reveals our approach to ministry responsiveness and community engagement – critical for a new rector to understand.*

Wye Parish discerns and adapts to changing needs through prayer, conversation, observation, and a willingness to try new approaches. Many parishioners are involved in community outreach as individuals. Now, we are bringing those concerns more fully into the life of the parish and ask what they mean for our shared ministry. In May 2025, we engaged in a parish-wide exercise to identify what members care about, what values we hold dear, and where our concerns connect with the needs of the wider community. Parishioners named worship, fellowship, spiritual growth, outreach, preserving tradition, supporting the community, caring for individuals in need, and increasing our visibility as important priorities.

Our discernment revealed core values of love, community, service, companionship, respectfulness, continuity, dignity, stability, belonging, and loyalty. These values guide how we respond to change. We seek to preserve what is life-giving in our traditions while also being open to new ways of serving, worshiping, and engaging others.

One example of this responsiveness is the Episcopal Church Women's decision to adjust how proceeds from their annual bazaar are distributed. For many years, many smaller gifts were given to many local organizations. Recently, they chose to make fewer, larger gifts to increase the impact of their giving and make a more meaningful difference in the community.

Another example is our shift from holding separate Sunday services at two churches to worshipping together as one parish, alternating locations monthly. This change came after recognizing that attendance at both services was declining. Gathering together would strengthen relationships between the churches. Since then, attendance has been slowly increasing and our unity has deepened.

We have also shown openness to liturgical and spiritual adaptation. The parish approved moving the altars at both churches out from the wall so the priest can face and engage the congregation during Communion, a change that was received positively. In addition, ministries such as services at Queenstown Landing, Ashes to Go, Sacred Circle, and introduction of a regular healing service to reflect our desire to meet people where they are and respond to spiritual needs both inside and beyond the church walls.

Overall, our approach to discernment is practical, prayerful, and relational. We listen to one another, pay attention to changing patterns, and are willing to experiment when change may strengthen worship, deepen community, or expand service. Our responsiveness is revealed in our growing commitment to connect faith with action, tradition with renewal, and parish life with the needs of the wider community.

- *Contributor: The Rev. Charlotte Meyer and the Search Team.*
- *Resources: Parish exercise and Holy Conversation from May of 2025.*

How does your congregation sustain its spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being? – *This signals our awareness of clergy burnout and shows candidates you value sustainable ministry – increasingly important for attracting quality leaders.*

Wye Parish sustains its spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being through a culture of shared ministry, pastoral care, flexibility, and respect for healthy rhythms of work and rest. After the retirement of a rector who served for 36 years, the congregation experienced a season of rotating supply priests. Rather than resisting change, parishioners learned to appreciate a diversity of preaching, worship leadership, and liturgical styles. This experience strengthened our flexibility and helped us recognize that ministry does not depend on one person alone.

Spiritually, we are nourished by worship, prayer, Holy Eucharist, preaching, music, and ongoing opportunities for learning. We are comfortable with Morning

Prayer. We have a licensed lay preacher who regularly offers sermons that are warmly received by the congregation. We have a regular Bible Study group that is totally lay organized and led. It includes people who are not members of Wye which makes it unique both as a community offering and an example of members' willingness to put effort into their spiritual development. This balance honors both our liturgical tradition and the practical needs of sustainable clergy leadership.

Emotionally, we sustain one another through relationships, fellowship, pastoral care, small groups, holy conversations, retreats, and shared leadership. We build strong relationships among parishioners, lay leaders, clergy, and the Diocese. We understand that caring for a rector and the rector's family is part of parish health. We want our priest to experience gratitude, appreciation, compassion, sabbath, rest, and support for continuing growth.

Physically and practically, we recognize the connection between spiritual, emotional, and bodily well-being. In summer, the choir takes a break, we simplify worship materials by using a shorter bulletin and relying more directly on the *Book of Common Prayer*, and we adjust the sermon time to include a brief liturgical teaching moment. These changes bring freshness and energy to worship without overtaxing staff, volunteers, or clergy.

Our commitment to sustainable ministry is also reflected in practical support. The parish budget includes funds for sabbatical, the Vestry supports learning opportunities inside and outside the Diocese, and the parish provides a rectory. Committees, lay worship leaders, and parish volunteers share responsibility for ministry, helping prevent burnout and encouraging broad participation.

Overall, Wye Parish values sustainable ministry by honoring rest, supporting clergy and lay leaders, adapting worship thoughtfully, investing in formation, and recognizing that healthy ministry requires spiritual depth, emotional care, physical well-being, and shared responsibility.

- *Contributors: Bibi Schelberg, Suzanne Sheahan, and the Search Team*

In what ways is your congregation engaged in the wider Church or local community?

Wye Parish is engaged in the wider Church and local community through diocesan participation, partnerships with neighboring congregations, outreach ministries, and a willingness to collaborate across parish and denominational lines. We value our connection to the Diocese of Easton and participate in

diocesan life through convention, apportionment, worship, communication, and shared mission. We also support Camp Wright, our local youth and family camp founded by the Diocese in 1930, by leading worship during summer sessions and maintaining a leadership presence at the Children's Home Foundation and many other committees.

Our parish formed meaningful relationships with nearby Episcopal congregations and other churches. We partner with our local Cathedral's Third Place program for young adults. Recently we joined Christ Church, Easton in supporting a mission trip to Peru, enabling one of our youths to participate. We worked with the local Methodist church to offer Vacation Bible School, and we value opportunities for joint worship, especially during Holy Week and at Easter sunrise services. These partnerships reflect our belief that ministry is strengthened when churches work together for worship, formation, service, and community witness.

Locally, Wye Parish supports and partners with organizations that respond to human need with compassion and practical care. These include Haven Ministries, Tides of Grace, and Camp New Dawn through Compass Hospice. Through the Episcopal Church Women's Christmas Bazaar, the St. Luke's used book sale, and other parish efforts, we raise funds and provide support for local charities, parish needs, pastoral care through the Rector's Discretionary Fund, and the maintenance of our historic worship spaces.

Music and hospitality also connect us with the wider community. We support music programs in other churches, invite the public to concerts offered at Wye Parish, and build positive relationships with local high school students seeking performance experience. These events allow us to open our doors, share space, and welcome neighbors who may first encounter the parish through music, fellowship, or service.

Overall, our engagement is practical, relational, and mission-minded. We seek to be a faithful presence in the Diocese, a collaborative partner with neighboring churches, and a generous contributor to the life of the local community. Through worship, service, youth engagement, outreach, music, and shared ministry, Wye Parish strives to extend Christ's love beyond our walls and participate in God's work on Maryland's Eastern Shore.

- *Contributors: Carol Bilek, Edward Radcliffe, Bibi Schelerg, Savannah Scott, and the Search Team.*

What does stewardship mean to your congregation/diocese, and how do you practice it? – *This addresses the vital areas of financial health, resource management, and congregational commitment to supporting ministry.*

For Wye Parish, stewardship means the faithful care of all that God has entrusted to us: our faith, relationships, financial resources, time, talents, historic buildings, and ministry in the wider community. We understand stewardship not simply as an annual pledge campaign, but as a year-round spiritual practice rooted in gratitude, generosity, responsibility, and trust in God's abundance.

In 2024, three members of Wye Parish participated in a five-week stewardship course offered by Project Resource through the College of Bishops. That experience helped the parish develop a more intentional and effective stewardship strategy. One of the most important lessons we learned was that stewardship must be ongoing. When a congregation speaks regularly about gratitude, giving, ministry, and mission, there is less need to "catch up" before the annual pledge drive.

Following that course, Wye Parish formed a stewardship team whose members shared inspirational messages with the congregation over a six-week period. This lay-led approach helped connect stewardship to personal faith, parish life, and shared responsibility. The result was encouraging: both the number of pledges and the value of pledges increased. Although participation the following year was not quite as strong, pledge values continued to grow, showing that the congregation is deepening its commitment to generous support of the parish's mission.

At the same time, Wye Parish conducted a significant campaign to raise funds for the Stained-Glass Window Restoration Project. The congregation responded generously, demonstrating a strong commitment to preserving the beauty, history, and sacred character of our worship spaces. We recognize that this special campaign may have affected annual pledging, but it also revealed the parish's willingness to give sacrificially for something we value deeply.

Stewardship at Wye Parish is also expressed through care for our two historic campuses. We devote time, attention, volunteer energy, and financial resources to maintaining our properties so they can continue to support worship, fellowship, outreach, and community connection.

Overall, stewardship for Wye Parish is about sustaining what has been entrusted to us while preparing faithfully for the future. We practice it through year-round

teaching, lay leadership, financial giving, volunteer service, care for historic buildings, and a growing awareness that generosity is central to discipleship.

- *Contributors: Carol Bilek, Sharon Butler, Jim and Mary Campbell, Rick Culotta, Tom Radcliffe, and the Search Team*

What are your current strategic priorities or plans for the future? – *This tells candidates where you are headed and what they will be stepping into, making expectations clear from the start.*

Wye Parish's strategic priorities center on faithful growth, deeper worship, stronger formation, pastoral care, and clearer engagement with the wider community. We seek a rector who can work collaboratively with the Vestry and lay leaders to develop a specific, practical strategy for parish growth—one that helps us reach new people, welcome them well, and incorporate them into the life and ministry of the church.

A major priority is attracting and supporting families with children and youth. While we currently have children and young families in the congregation, we need to strengthen Christian formation and make necessary changes so that younger generations can find a meaningful place at Wye Parish. This includes developing age-appropriate formation, creating pathways for family engagement, and helping the whole parish become more intentional about welcoming newcomers.

We also want to deepen our worship life. Music is an important part of Episcopal worship at Wye Parish, and we hope to strengthen or improve the musical leadership and congregational singing in ways that enrich our experience of common prayer. We value worship that is reverent, accessible, participatory, and spiritually nourishing, and we are open to thoughtful changes that help us pray more deeply together.

Pastoral care and healing ministries are important strategic priorities. Our congregation includes older parishioners facing grief, loneliness, illness, addiction, depression, and other difficult life circumstances. We hope to develop ministries that offer compassion, prayer, companionship, and healing to those who are hurting, both within the parish and in the wider community. Sacred Circle, services at Queenstown Landing, and the addition of regular healing services point toward this growing focus.

Another priority is strengthening stewardship and sustainable ministry. We want to build on recent stewardship efforts, broaden lay leadership, maintain our two

historic campuses responsibly, and ensure that clergy, staff, and volunteers can serve in healthy and sustainable ways.

Wye Parish hopes to become a more visible, welcoming, spiritually grounded, and mission-focused parish. Our future plans include clarifying our shared vision, growing in numbers and depth of faith, strengthening formation for all ages, expanding outreach, using our two campuses wisely, supporting lay leadership, and discerning how God is calling us to serve Maryland's Eastern Shore.

- *Contributors: Rob Sherwood and the Search Team*
- *Resources: Notes from the previous Search Team, Parish Holy Conversations, Annual Reports 2024 and 2025, Holy Cow survey results.*

Why did we focus on these six optional narratives? *They cover our identity (who we are), our direction (where we are going), our context (our community), our resources (stewardship), and our culture (sustainability). Together these paint a complete picture that the Search Committee believes will attract the right rector for our next chapter.*

-Contributor, Matt Shoene