

Historical St. John's Church Highgate, VT 2024

St. John's is getting back on its feet! The most pressing threat to the building, a failing roof, has been resolved. Programming has resumed. The church's Bicentennial Celebration is coming in 2029.

Physical Upkeep: Deferred maintenance during Covid lockdown left St. John's roof to fail. When repairs began, workers discovered rotting in certain rafters. The Vestry of HTC voted to use what remained of St. John's endowments to complete the project of nearly 100k. The new standing-seam roof is in place and will last another 50+ years. Once the building was dry, a mold test was performed. The building passed as acceptable for safe use. To make the building as safe as possible, the vestry voted to hire a professional mold remediation company. This work, scheduled April 1, 2025, will include scraping away peeling paint. Estimates have been received to repair and paint the ceiling after the remediation. Once this is done, indoor programming will resume.



Programming: The Franklin County Citizens Band performed on the lawn last summer, drawing a crowd of 90. Band members report that it is their favorite performance venue. This event served as the "pilot" for a fund-raising model which combines a concert sponsor (Erik Kenyon) and free-will donations for concessions provided by volunteers and local businesses (Fiddler on the Green). The event raised \$900 in all. Programming for Summer, 2025 is in the works with concerts, weddings, church services and presentations on local history. This work reflects collaboration with local partners: MVU, BFA, Franklin Middle School, McGill University, the Highgate Manor, Highgate Historical Center and Vermont Youth Orchestra Association.



Next Steps: The Vestry charged the St. John's Commission to develop a 4-year plan for using St. John's to deepen the ministry of Holy Trinity in the broader community. With the most pressing repairs completed (roof repairs) or in the works (mold remediation / painting), remaining work will be spread out over the next three years. The bulk of this involves the church windows whose wooden portions must be scraped and repainted every 50 years or so. The Vestry approved this plan, which will give the St. John's Commission four more years to show sustainability. We look forward to sharing the joy of St. John's with the community as we approach our Bicentennial Celebration. Watch the St. John's [Facebook page](#) for upcoming events.

SEP Budget

a/o 30 Nov 2024

Unrestricted

Balance \$11,867.79

Restricted

Balance \$11,164.29 (\$3,800 committed to LVRT)

Balance by category

Bikes/Signs \$88.95 (\$3,800 committed)

Capacity Bldg \$1,477.25

Substance Misuse \$1,625.61

Beautification \$3,357.48

Marble Mill \$815.00

CD Beautification \$16,482.84 (12/15/24 Statement)

Swanton Enhancement Project

Report of the Swanton Beautification Committee

January 9, 2025

Thanks to many volunteers, the Swanton Selectboard and Village trustees, and donors of time and money for supporting Swanton beautification. Downtown has never looked so robust and inviting.

In 2024 we accomplished the following:

- Created a new garden at the Town office building
- Erected and planted window boxes at the Village office building
- Expanded plantings at Veterans Park
- Expanded the garden at the Swanton Library
- Doubled the number of hanging baskets on Grand Avenue to 12
- Created a small garden at Merchants Row laundromat
- Planted ten streetside trees on Canada Street

New activities in 2025 include:

- Landscaping near the new art board by the VFW building
- Plant numerous trees along our streets and in parks, pending approval of a grant proposal to the *Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Program*.
- Fundraising initiative with direct letters and flower power fundraising

We welcome volunteers to join in our efforts to beautify our community, perhaps an hour or two per week. Thoughts and ideas are always welcome.

Suzie Kelleher
Swanton Beautification Committee

Swanton Enhancement Project Meeting

MVSD Report Talking Points (2 minutes)

for

January 9, 2025

MVSD:

- **New Reading Program:** All of the MVSD elementary schools continue to fully implement the *American Reading Company's Core Curriculum* for grades K-6. Some of the celebrations and successes that have been observed thus far during our first full year of implementation include: consistency and cohesiveness between grade levels and schools, strong connections between reading and writing, a wide variety of high-quality, engaging and relevant books at every grade level, data collection and analysis that results in individualized reading goals based on the unique needs of students, and increased engagement and passion for reading, particularly by more reluctant readers. The American Reading Company provides substantial coaching and support during the implementation period.
- **Proposed Budget:** The process of creating a proposed Fiscal Year 2026 budget is coming to a close in the next few weeks and the School Board and District are focusing on strategies to ensure that the community members have all of the information they need to be informed. One example of the upcoming outreach includes a series of informational videos featuring district staff that highlight both budget and programmatic information. There will be a budget input meeting at 6:00pm on 1/14 in the MVU Library. This meeting gathers more community feedback before the board adopts a budget at the end of January. There will also be an informational meeting about the finalized budget on Tuesday, February 11, at 7:00 PM, at MVU.

Swanton:

- Swanton School is working with a consultant, Sarah Ward, to increase the Executive functioning skills of students. Executive Functioning includes a set of cognitive skills that help students plan, organize and complete tasks, as well as regulate behaviors. People with executive function problems may have difficulty with remembering long directions or instructions, deciding what step to do first, paying attention in class, and controlling emotions when things don't go their way. All K-6 teachers are receiving job-embedded professional development on this topic.
- Swanton School's Continuous Improvement Leadership Team is focusing its efforts on the three pillars of our continuous improvement plan: safe and healthy schools, academics, and attendance/truancy and engagement.

Highgate:

- At Highgate, we often work to align our community partners to help support our families, students, and community members. Late summer our new Library Director, Christine Watson, was welcomed to Highgate Library and Community Center. This was exciting news! Throughout the winter months, Highgate library and Community Center, Highgate Recreation Department, Highgate Town Administrator, and Highgate Elementary School are connected to help plan events and activities during the winter months!
- Highgate Elementary is also working to think about the budget for next year to help support our curriculum (including our new Math and Reading Frameworks which is exciting), our Social Emotional Learning (SEL) instruction, our Restorative Practices, and focused on strategies and resources to help our focus on attendance and students being present at school daily!

Franklin:

- We recently continued our math professional development focusing on problem-solving with consultant Christian Courtemanche. Christian planned and co-taught a “3 Act Task” with each teacher. This is a task where in Act 1 (Engage with the Story), students are shown a video to set the context for the task and make some estimates. In Act 2 (Engage with the Task), students are given information to help them solve the problem. In Act 3 (Engage with the Solution) students compare solutions, reflect on their work, and the actual solution is revealed. The purpose of 3 Act Tasks is to have students participate in real-world mathematical problem-solving. The teachers’ collaboration with Christian included time to anticipate strategies students might use and plan the strategies to be shared later with the whole class to move students to more efficient methods. After the in-class activity, the debrief with teachers included creating specific skill practice sets for students to work on to improve their operational fluency. We value this professional development that provides exciting learning opportunities that benefit our students and teachers!

MVU:

- Missisquoi Valley Union Middle and High Schools continue to work with Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC) to streamline our Post High School and Secondary Learning for students. In April, MVU along with area Franklin County schools and the Franklin County Industrial Development Corporation will host an Apprenticeship Fair to expose students to local employment options. Over 40 local businesses will be in attendance to provide information for students in grades 7 & 10. Our 8th and 9th grade students continue to be exposed to Vermont colleges and universities with trips scheduled for this spring.