

# MAGGIE'S CROSS



## *A Letter from our Rector*

BY FATHER TODD R. DILL+

## *Just a little longer*

When I was very young, I used to be the unofficial tracker of time and distance when my family went on vacation. Now to be clear, no one asked me to do this, but I was always so excited to get to our destination, I took it upon myself to notice every mile marker, every exit sign, and would routinely ask my father and my mother, "How much farther?" While I may have thought that my attentiveness to these small details was endearing, for the rest of my family, it was just plain annoying. Can you imagine a four- or five-hundred-mile trip in a car with a six-year-old calling out the mile markers, each and every mile, while also asking for a constant update on our arrival time? And so, the answer to my question was always met with the same from my parents; "Just a little longer!"

I do not like waiting. I never have, and I probably never will. I do believe that

I have become slightly better at waiting as I have gotten older, but something deep inside me makes it difficult for me to wait. Waiting in the doctor's office, waiting in traffic, waiting for this pandemic to be over; I just have never found it easy to wait.

Perhaps some of you might have the same difficulty as I do. And yet, that is exactly what the Church invites us to do during the holy season of Advent. This liturgical season is a time that is set aside for us to trust in God as we wait for His faithful response to our prayers, to our needs, and to the renewing of His entire creation.

During this Church season, we look back and remember with great excitement as we recall the longing for the Messiah, even as we ourselves await His return in glory.

During this in between time, it is so easy for us to become impatient and to wonder whether God is listening at all. How long before our prayers are answered? How long, O Lord, before healing comes? How much farther is it to before we see You in all of your glory?

It is times like this that it is helpful to remember the words of the Psalmist, who encourages our faithful patience as we seek the response of God:

*I remain confident of  
this: I will see the  
goodness of the Lord in  
the land of the living.*

*Wait for the Lord; be  
strong and take heart  
and wait for the Lord.*

Sometimes, it is just hard to wait on God to answer our petitions; it is hard to wait for God to act.

But as the writer of Psalm 27 writes, we can have confidence in the goodness of God. The Messiah did in fact come. Jesus came into this world and abides within you this day. While the world seems so upside down, know that our Lord is among us and is working through us and in us to recreate this world. When will this all finally be accomplished? When will the world seem a little less crazy? "Just a little longer."

Until then, you and I wait. And pray. And trust in the Lord our God.

Your priest,

*-Fr. Todd+*  
[dill@saintmargarets.net](mailto:dill@saintmargarets.net)







*Shining Christ's*

**LIGHT**

*through the darkness*

*Many Thanks*

*to our 180 pledging units that have  
committed to St. Margaret's in 2021.*

*We are so grateful to report that  
\$753,108 has been pledged to our  
parish for the coming year.*

Our goal is to exceed the 232 pledges  
we received in 2020 and reach  
\$1,097,710.

Please [click here](#) to make a pledge if you have not already.

**STEWARDSHIP** *Twenty21*



# Youth Spotlight



**BY ELIZABETH PFEIFER**  
ASSISTANT TO THE RECTOR  
FOR YOUTH MINISTRY

[pfeifer@saintmargarets.net](mailto:pfeifer@saintmargarets.net)

**This has been a year of... dare we say it... pivots, and I want to say thank you to our students, parents, and volunteers who have moved and swayed with us.**

Youth group for years has been synonymous with thirty plus students crammed onto couches, games or program activities that involve shared touch, eating meals together, traveling, hugs or high fives, and more.

Our mission to learn about God and our faith has not changed but the way we go about learning has most definitely changed. Thank you to those who have been patient with Elizabeth while she adjusts to this new type of gathering, for always wearing your masks so well, for still have thoughtful discussions through those masks, and for understanding why you must wait until you are in your car to eat your candy.



## Join us for our final EYCs of 2020!

It has been QUITE a year and we are looking forward to wrapping up the year with our students.

**Please join us on  
December 6th & 13th  
for games, Advent cheer and more!**

The Diocese of North Carolina has suspended any indoor gatherings so EYC will continue to meet by the firepit on December 6th & 13th. Students should bring a mask, their own chair/blanket, and Christmas PJ pants, silly sweaters, or warm blankets are welcome!

Middle School will gather from 4:00-5:00pm and High School will gather from 5:15-6:15pm.



# Join us for Advent

This year we celebrate the beautiful season of Advent from November 29th through December 24th, and Christmas Day on December 25th. Although many things have looked different in 2020, the season of Advent will not. Advent has historically been a time of waiting and watching for the coming of our Lord.

The practices of the church call us to take time to pause, reflect, pray, and await the birth of Jesus. This time of the year can be so busy, filled with parties, events, shopping, and preparing for the holiday season. The month of December will certainly look different than it has in prior years.

*Perhaps this year, more than ever, we will be able to celebrate Advent more fully.*

*The lessons you can find here are for weekly use beginning the First Sunday of Advent through Christmas Eve.*

[Click here](#) to access lessons for families with children 5th grade and under.

[Click here](#) to access lessons for adults and families with students 6th grade and above.

We also have two daily offerings we encourage parishioners to use as an Advent resource. One for the more artistic, one for the more contemplative. Mix and match at your discretion! *Click the bold title below to access the PDF.*

- 1) Advent Word:** A daily, artistic, and meditative practice with a worldwide community. A new word is offered each day to use for prayer and meditation. Participants can also create their own Advent calendar with small writings or drawings related to the word of the day. Plus, there's a podcast! More info on the additional offerings here.
- 2) Antiphons for Advent:** Originally written by the Rev. Dr. Patrician M. Lyons, these short, daily devotions are designed to allow for daily reflection during Advent.

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## **Advent activities planned on the church grounds**

Join us for a new way to mark Advent with our St. Margaret's **Parish Advent Tree & Labyrinth**. From Dec 4th through Christmas Day, all parishioners are invited to help us decorate an outdoor, live tree (in front of our red doors) and/or drop off pine branches to help us build the labyrinth in our field (facing Rea Rd.) at a time of their own choosing.

We are asking parishioners to bring an ornament to decorate the tree. We encourage you to take a picture of you & the ornament, and send an email telling us why you picked the ornament you did. *\*You are welcome to retrieve your ornament after Christmas, or the church will pull them down and reuse.*

**We hope you will join us in these ideas to help get you back to church and to continue to shine Christ's light in our community.**

For questions and to tell us about your ornament, please email Elizabeth at [pfeifer@saintmargarets.net](mailto:pfeifer@saintmargarets.net)





# CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

## Gratitude & Preparation

BY CATHERINE CHINTALA

ASSISTANT TO THE RECTOR

FOR CHILDRENS MINISTRY

[childrensministry@saintmargarets.net](mailto:childrensministry@saintmargarets.net)



I can't believe it's already December! We have quickly shifted from pumpkins, autumn leaves, and giving thanks to decorating, shopping, and preparing for Christmas.

This year has looked so different for many of us! My family had a very quiet Thanksgiving at home, and I'm sure many of you did as well. Driving and being with extended family was replaced with FaceTime and Zoom calls. But what didn't change was the meaning of Thanksgiving. We have so much to be thankful for, and we still kept our tradition of telling each other what we are most thankful for during our Thanksgiving dinner. One thing I am truly grateful for is my family, and my extended church family here at St. Margaret's. Although we can't be together in person, I'm thankful we can keep in touch over Zoom calls, social media, and livestream worship.

This past Sunday marked the beginning of Advent, and for many people, we are now "officially" in the holiday season. The flurry of holiday activities – decorating, baking, shopping, and events – is upon us. Many of our activities will look very different this year, as we prepare to celebrate at home. My family won't travel like we are used to doing at this time of the year, and we won't be able to see extended family in person. But we are still keeping our traditions at home, and we are adding a few new ones. This year is the first year we are doing Advent candles, and each day we are completing our #AdventWord coloring activity. We are trying to take advantage of having more time at home by appreciating the quiet season of Advent. Many years it has been easy to get caught up in holiday preparations and events, and miss out on the true reason for celebrating Advent and Christmas. Perhaps this year more than ever we can truly observe Advent, and take more time to be quiet, pray, and appreciate the beauty of this season.

I invite you to participate in the weekly Christian formation lessons that Elizabeth and I have written, as well as the daily Advent practices of #AdventWord and Advent Antiphons. 2020 might be the year that you and your family adopt a new practice for Advent!

Have a blessed, healthy, and happy Christmas!  
-Catherine



*Thank you for sending in leaves of gratitude to help our bulletin board tree grow!*

### #AdventWord

a global advent calendar

|              |             |
|--------------|-------------|
| 29 TENDER    | 12 HONEY    |
| 30 DELIVER   | 13 GO       |
| 1 STRENGTHEN | 14 REST     |
| 2 EARTH      | 15 WORSHIP  |
| 3 REBUILD    | 16 PRAY     |
| 4 FELLOWSHIP | 17 LEARN    |
| 5 GLORY      | 18 BLESS    |
| 6 SPEAK      | 19 TURN     |
| 7 COMFORT    | 20 REJOICE  |
| 8 PATIENT    | 21 MYSTERY  |
| 9 MERCY      | 22 WISDOM   |
| 10 BAPTIZE   | 23 HOLY     |
| 11 WORD      | 24 PROCLAIM |

[www.adventword.org](http://www.adventword.org) 2020





## PARISH LIFE

# Focusing on things that really matter

BY TRACI SCOTT

ASSISTANT TO THE RECTOR  
FOR NEWCOMERS & PARISH LIFE  
[connection@saintmargarets.net](mailto:connection@saintmargarets.net)



As we enter the Advent season of 2020, things don't feel quite as hectic as they normally do, which is refreshing. I seem to have more time to focus on things that really matter in my life....and was thrilled to get our decorations up early because we really needed some Christmas cheer as soon as possible this year!

For the past few newsletter issues, we have introduced you to some of your fellow parishioners through an interview-style feature called "Pandemic Parishioners." We thought you'd enjoy reading how others are weathering this strange year and thought it would also connect us as a parish while we can't physically be together. In this same vein, **we have begun pairing up parishioners to stay in touch with one another on the phone.**

So many of us are feeling very isolated and lonely and to have a phone call from a friendly voice can make a difference. **If you are interested in making or receiving calls, please contact me at [connection@saintmargarets.net](mailto:connection@saintmargarets.net) or 704-243-3523 x777.**

***One way we can stay connected is through serving together.***

A huge thank you to all who delivered turkey dinners with us on November 22! About 25 StM parishioners met at the church to pick up the turkeys provided by Common Heart. Fr. Todd prayed with and blessed the group before departing to deliver 26 dinners to seniors in need in the Waxhaw area. Each recipient also got a Thanksgiving card and a handmade prayer square from our Knots of Love ministry.

There are so many other ways for you and your family to give back during this Advent season. If you're looking for some ideas, please consider the list below:

**StM Angel Tree** – provide gifts for those who are struggling this year in Union County. Each "angel" comes to us through the Union County Christmas Bureau. Gifts can be dropped at the church on Dec 5 (10am-12pm); Dec 6 (4-5pm); Dec 9 (10-11am or 5-7pm). **Sign up HERE**

**Common Heart** – volunteer to work at the pantry at their Indian Trail location organizing food, preparing for a mobile pantry or delivering food. Or volunteer to work at one of their many pantry events across the county...there is one each Thursday evening at Union UMC in Waxhaw. **See all of their upcoming volunteer needs here:**  
<https://commonheart.org/volunteer/>

**Community Shelter of Union County** – prepare a meal to be served at the **homeless shelter** in Monroe. Their calendar of available meal slots can be found here: <https://www.unionshelter.org/kitchen/>  
You can just drop off the food and they will serve it or you can stay and serve.

**Donate clothing to The Closet in Monroe.** They are especially in need of winter clothing for infants, children and teens. Drop off at 104 S. Hayne St, Monroe Thursdays 11am-1pm or at Southbrook Church 5607 Monroe-Weddington Rd, Weddington.  
<https://www.facebook.com/closetministrymonroe/>

**Rise Against Hunger** has a *Meet The Need*

*Market* that allows individuals the opportunity to help the families and communities that they serve. With their packaging events suffering because of the pandemic, this is a good way to people to still support their efforts around the world. <https://act.riseagainsthunger.org/event/meet-the-need-market/e302437>



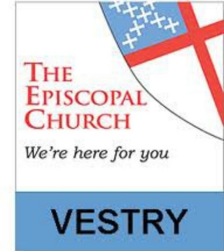
*All of the local non-profits we work with would appreciate financial donations as well:*

- <https://hopeunioncounty.org/>
- <https://commonheart.org/>
- <https://www.unionshelter.org/>
- <https://heartformonroe.com/donate/>
- <https://www.operationreachout.org/>

Please contact Traci with any questions at  
[connection@saintmargarets.net](mailto:connection@saintmargarets.net)



# Did you know?



## Three New Vestry members announced

Congratulations to Kathyann Dugan, Hugh Laughlin, and Simon Haarhoff for their selections as vestry members of Saint Margaret's Episcopal Church. They will be replacing our outgoing members, Chris Cox, Amy Gorman, and Julie Jenkins, who have all served so faithfully and joyfully for the past three years.

Sincere gratitude goes out to these outgoing vestry members, and thankfulness for our new members as they begin their three-year terms on our leadership team.

This year's selection process for vestry replacements was much different than any other year in the church's history; a process that was necessitated by the pandemic that we currently find ourselves in. The diocese provided guidance to all parishes, as the typical election of new members is required to take place in conjunction with the parish's annual meeting. Given the fact that we will not be able to hold an annual meeting this year, nor does the diocese allow for remote or virtual elections, the diocese offered three ways forward for each parish. First, the open positions could remain vacant. Second, the departing members could stay in their positions until such time as a formal vote could be taken at an annual meeting. Third, the current vestry could select their replacements. Given this direction and these options, we chose to go with the third option and have the current vestry elect the new members for the upcoming 2021 term. 2020 has been filled with so many changes and uncertainties, and our parish has certainly felt our fair share of disruption. But how wonderful it is that despite all of the unsettledness of this year, we continue to have at our parish wonderful individuals who are willing to serve the church and lead us in ministry through these difficult times.

### KATHYANN DUGAN



Episcopal Church rectories were my home for the first twenty years of my life. My father was an Episcopal priest for 55 years, a wonderful priest and a great father. He left us with a legacy of knowing God's love and showing us an example of doing for others with kindness and love.

I started serving in the church by being in the choir at age five and have been in the choir of many of the Episcopal Churches where I have been a member. Between moves with my family as a child and moves with my Air Force (retired) husband, Tom, I have been a member of fourteen Episcopal Churches.

Besides singing in the choir, I have served on Altar Guilds, chairman of a welcoming committee, a greeter, a Sunday school teacher, an office volunteer and am a member of The Order of the Daughters of the King since 2009.

Tom and I have been members of the St Margaret's parish family since fall of 2015. We have felt "at home" at St Margaret's since we entered the red door as visitors the year before when we came here from California to find a new home and a new church home. It will be an honor and privilege to serve on the Vestry of St Margaret's.

### SIMON HAARHOFF



Born in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) as the second son of tobacco farming parents. I was baptized into the Anglican Church. Attended boarding school through kindergarten, primary and high school, a total of 13 years. Both primary and high schools were affiliated to the Anglican Church, and as there was no segregation between Church and State, school life revolved around daily assemblies, Sunday evening services and midweek communion services. I left high school and joined the Rhodesian Army as an officer cadet and was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Rhodesian Light Infantry. During this time I saw active service as well as command and training assignments.

In 1980 we emigrated to South Africa. It was also during my Army service that Ann and I were married in 1973 and had our three children, Margaret, David and Patrick, all born in Rhodesia, but educated in South Africa. In 1996 I had an opportunity in the USA and we decided to move on a 2 year work visa and set up home on Long Island in Hicksville, NY. Ann won the green card in the lottery and on receiving our green cards we decided to stay in the US. After working for a number of small SAP consulting firms I joined Price Waterhouse Coopers (PwC) in 2011 as a program director, where I spent much time working in China. In 2013 we moved to Shanghai for a year and then to Hong Kong for 18 months. On our return in 2016 we decided to move to the Charlotte area and moved into our house in Indian Trail in January 2016. Google is what got us to St Margaret's! 2 results gave us the option of St Margaret's or St Paul's. We decided to try StM's first and attended the 7:45 service. Ken Koch was the usher and invited us for breakfast and we never made it to St Paul's! Since joining StM's we have been regular attendees at the 7:45 service and the 5:00 pm Saturday service. I have become a lector and a Lay Eucharistic Minister serving at both the above services. I am now fully retired and greatly miss the weekly opportunity to gather and worship at St Margaret's and look forward to returning to open worship and communion. I am honored to have been called to serve on the Vestry and look forward to taking up my duties in the New Year.

### HUGH LAUGHLIN



I was born into the Episcopal church as my father was the rector of Trinity Episcopal Church in Bloomington, Indiana. I grew up singing in the church choir as well as serving as an acolyte, carrying dad's Coptic cross for Christmas and Easter services. I joined the U.S. Navy in 1991 serving in both active and reserve duties, retiring from the Navy Reserves in 2015 as Mass Communications Senior Chief Petty Officer. I graduated from Indiana University, Bloomington, with studies in business

My wife Cynthia and I were married in dad's church in 2003. Our son Colin was baptized there in 2005. My career moved us to Charlotte in 2008 where we found St. Margaret's which became our church home. Following my return from being mobilized from the U. S. Navy Reserves to Afghanistan, we said if the opportunity came for us to return to Charlotte and St. Margaret's we would jump at the chance. That opportunity to return came in June 2016. At StM I have often helped Cynthia in the nursery on Sunday mornings and serving as an usher. Currently I am the Director of SAP, Information Security for Brighthouse Financial where I facilitate our company's SAP security and IT compliance program. The Lord calls us to serve in many ways. It is an honor to serve our church as a member of the vestry as we grow in numbers and in God's faith.





ADD YOUR  
PINE BRANCHES TO THE

# SAINT MARGARET'S ADVENT LABYRINTH

on the church field facing Rea Rd.  
**December 4 - 24, 2020**

a safe, outdoor setting and way to get  
back to church during this special season.







## December Calendar

In our continued response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we are following the direction of the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina.

- **Sunday Worship: Rite II, 9:00 am** LIVESTREAMED on our YouTube channel
- **Thursday, 12/24 Christmas Eve:** a pre-recorded service will be available for viewing on our YouTube channel at 4:00 pm.





 [\*\*CLICK HERE for our YouTube channel\*\*](#)

### DRIVE THRU ADVENT FESTIVAL

**Saturday, December 5th**  
**10am-noon**



We are excited to host a drop-in, outdoor Advent event this year! Please come to:

-  • drop off your Angel Tree gifts
-  • take a family photo by our beautiful building
-  • bring an ornament to decorate the StM Advent Tree
-  • pick up a craft kit & Christian Formation materials
- and wave to St. Nicholas!



### *Blessing for the season of Advent*

May Almighty God, by whose providence our Savior Christ came among us in great humility, sanctify you with the light of his blessing and set you free from all sin. *Amen.*

May he whose second Coming in power and great glory we await, make you steadfast in faith, joyful in hope, and constant in love. *Amen.*

May you, who rejoice in the first Advent of our Redeemer, at his second Advent be rewarded with unending life. *Amen.*

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you for ever. *Amen*



**Please note:** Our church office will now be open M- Th from 9-2 and on Fridays from 9-12 noon with limited staffing. Drop in visits are not allowed.

#### Rector

**The Reverend Fr. Todd R. Dill+**

dill@saintmargarets.net

#### Director of Music & Organist

**Mara DeLuca**

music@saintmargarets.net

#### Executive Assistant to the Rector

**Joanie Cameron**

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**Traci Scott**

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### 2020 Vestry

Chris Cox, *Senior Warden*

Amy Gorman, *Junior Warden*

Julie Jenkins

Terry Anderson

Mike Murphy

Densel White

Jessica Parker

Chad Hinton

Brian Scott

Warren McDonald, *Treasurer*

