

MAGGIE'S CROSS

May 2020



A Letter From The Rector

BY FATHER TODD R. DILL+

Planning for Our Reunion

I am ready to see all of you. It has been too long since we gathered together, and my heart longs for the moment where we can return to our lovely church and worship together, pray together, and most importantly share together the Sacraments of the Church. These past two months have been an extraordinary time in the life of our parish and in the world. It has changed the way that we live in our homes, how we interact with one another, and it will certainly have a lasting effect on our community, even beyond the moment when our bishop and our civic authorities allow us to return to public gatherings. While no timetable has yet been set, please know that we have already begun discussions on how best to enter back into our common life together at Saint Margaret's. First and foremost, +Bishop Sam and the Diocese of North Carolina, along with the CDC and our Governor, will have strict guidelines for us to follow as we enter back into our sacred space and begin to contemplate corporate worship and other church gatherings. At the parish level, I have had several conversations with the vestry, Saint Margaret's staff, and countless parishioners in order that we might identify areas of

concern that may need to be addressed. Some of the items that have been identified for consideration are:

1. # of weekend service offerings
2. Congregational singing
3. Space for the altar party and choir
4. Maintaining social distancing in the pews
5. Sanitizing stations
6. Liturgical practices i.e. the Peace, the Common Cup, and the exiting from our worship space
7. Adjustments to office access during the week
8. Formation opportunities on Sundays and throughout the week
9. And on and on and on!

This is but a partial list, but I share this all with you to let you know that we are having these discussions, and even when we think we have some of the answers, we will need to have both flexibility and graciousness as we navigate through this transition period, as things will likely continue to change at a rapid pace and we will need to be able to adjust accordingly. During this time of transition and uncertainty, in which everything around us seems to be changing, I want to share with you a truth that will never change; Jesus is Lord. He really did rise from the dead, He really does know each of you by name and He loves you each deeply. Jesus is the Good Shepherd, and our

"During this time of transition and uncertainty, in which everything around us seems to be changing, I want to share with you a truth that will never change; Jesus is Lord."

Gospel text for this week reminds us that the Good Shepherd "...calls His own sheep by name and leads them out." Beloved, Jesus will lead us out, and He will gather us back together, because that is what the Good Shepherd does for His flock. I may not have all of the answers in this world, most especially during this time, but I do know that Jesus has us and He has promised to love and protect each one of us! I miss you all so much and cannot wait until I see you again. As we wait for our time of reunion, please know that we are still bound together through our baptism into the Body of Christ. We are His flock, and He is our shepherd. If that is all that we ever have, that will be enough!

Peace and Blessings be with you all during this Holy Season of Eastertide!

- Fr. Todd+

dill@saintmargarets.net



Do not fear



BY FATHER LITO SANTOS+

santos@saintmargarets.net

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." Isaiah 41:10



We stayed at home and continue to do so as we wait for new guidance from our public officials to let us revert to our regular lives that have been disrupted by COVID-19. It brought fear and uncertainty to us all. We need no convincing – we simply complied. Amidst the uncertainties and inconvenience, we did not resist nor protest – we simply complied. The words of the prophet Isaiah sustain us in our current state. Our God is ever present and reassures us of His faithfulness. We only need to trust his embrace and loving presence. We only need to believe in his mighty assurance for he says: **I am your God.**

- Fr. Lito+

Lectio Divina



BY FATHER ERIC GRUBB

grubb@saintmargarets.net

Feasting on the Word of God

During this time of social distancing and isolation, we are away from the central prayer of the Church, the Holy Eucharist. At the center of our prayer life is the weekly celebration of the Holy Eucharist and the receiving of Christ's real presence among us under the signs of bread and wine. In this time apart from our Eucharist celebration, we may begin to hunger for this sacred meal.

This is certainly true for me as I long to be together again in worship. This time apart has caused me to wonder how God might use this present difficulty for my spiritual growth? One way has been to reflect on this hunger and the ways we as Christians feast on and are nourished by God's presence. Jesus quoting from Deuteronomy says, *"we do not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."* In this season, we may want to spend more time in scripture and experience the ways we are fed and nourished by the word of God.

Continued of next page...

Lectio Divina Preparation

- Set aside about 30 minutes for the whole process.
- Select a passage. I find that this is a great way to prepare for Sundays by using one of the upcoming lectionary passages. You may want to start with the Gospel lesson. These can be found at <https://lectionarypage.net>
- **Light a candle and say a prayer** to open your heart and mind to God's guidance. I like to use this prayer: *Come Holy Spirit fill the hearts of your faithful and enkindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And you shall renew the face of the earth.*

- Let us pray.



- *O God, who has taught the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit, grant that by the gift of the same Spirit we may always be truly wise and ever rejoice in his consolation. Amen.*

One of my favorite ways to read and pray with scripture is Lectio Divina (divine reading). Lectio is an ancient form of reading scripture that comes from the monastic tradition. We have writings dating to at least the 3rd century that speak of this method of prayer and, to this day has remained an important form of prayer in monasteries.

Lectio's aim is communion with God through the reading of scripture. Sometimes Lectio is referred to as feasting on the word.

I will outline how to do Lectio Divina below, but if you want to learn more about it, I would recommend reading *Lectio Divina: From God's Word to Our Lives* by Enzo Bianchi or read the article on this link which is also a good introduction https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lectio_Divina.

May we feast of God abundant presence in these strange days.

- Father Eric

Lectio (Read)

- The first step is to read the passage. Read through the passage slowly three or four times, pausing briefly in silence between each reading. In this first step, you are not trying to interpret or assign meaning to the text but simply reading and getting familiar with it.

Meditatio (Meditate)

- In the second step, you are to meditate on the passage. I like to do this by reflecting on a particular word or phrase that stood out to me when I was reading. You might reflect on why it stood out to you or what might God be trying to tell you in that word or phrase.

Oratio (Pray)

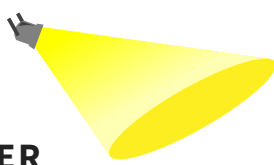
- In the third step, we move from meditation to prayer, dialog with God. God has spoken to us through the scripture; now it's our turn to talk in the dialog. Here we allow our meditation on the word to lead us into prayer. Some may find it helpful to write out your prayer.

Contemplatio (Contemplate)

- Spend the final five to ten minutes in silent contemplation. Close your Bible set aside any writing material, and sit silently attentive to the fact of God's presence. You can think of contemplation as being with a close friend without have to talk because being with one another is enough.

Close your time with the Lord's prayer.

Youth Spotlight



Wait...

what?



BY ELIZABETH PFEIFER

ASSISTANT TO THE RECTOR FOR YOUTH MINISTRY

Well, this is not quite how we imagined finishing up the 2019-2020 school year, is it?

Although it certainly is not how I imagined it, there are a few things that are mainstays, even in a pandemic: teenagers are incredibly resilient, teenagers are creative and will spend their “quarantine time” in ways that still make me laugh, procrastination still reigns and teenagers will wait and wait, and wait some more, to do their remote learning work.

Our students have always amazed me with their ability to cope and make the best of any situation. When we are handed bad weather on a beach retreat, when our mission site has a snafu and does not have the needed supplies, or when our bus in Costa Rica breaks down, our students keep their grumbles to a minimum. They may be disappointed but they know the adults around them are doing the best they can and so they emulate that attitude.

The students I have spoken to during this immense time of uncertainty, continue to show this ability to cope. They are, of course, deeply disappointed at the activities that have been cancelled, they are angry that everything has been put on hold, and they are sad they cannot see their friends. But, they are thankful for safe homes, for the ability to see their friends on FaceTime, for the chance to read a book (for fun!). And, much to some parent’s dismay, they are even thankful for the time they are spending with their families (maybe not “all family time, all the time” but everyone has their limits!).

In addition to checking in individually with students, EYC has been gathering for separate middle and high school Sunday evening Zoom calls and taking it week by week as we know that Zoom burn-out is real! If you are not currently receiving information on these calls and would like to be added to the EYC email distribution list, please let me know.

We are all experiencing this pandemic together but, at the same time, it looks different for each person. Your student is likely a sliding scale of emotions from hour to hour (aren’t we all right now?) and I am here to support them and your family however it needs to look. Texting, FaceTiming, letter writing, connecting on Instagram? I am available to your student in whatever way they would like, please let me how I can support them.

I miss our students and your families more than words can say. Your families are in my prayers and I hope to see your student on an upcoming Zoom call and in-person sooner rather than later.

-Elizabeth

"We are all experiencing this pandemic together but, at the same time, it looks different for each person. Your student is likely a sliding scale of emotions from hour to hour and I am here to support them and your family however it needs to look."



Questions? Email Elizabeth at :
pfeifer@saintmargarets.net

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

BY CATHERINE CHINTALA

ASSISTANT TO THE RECTOR

FOR CHILDRENS MINISTRY



Day-to-day life has changed so much since our last newsletter! Our days are spent trying to figure out how to navigate through this "new normal" of staying at home, social distancing, and Zoom calls. Although we are missing so much outside of our homes, this period of time has given me so much of what I have been craving: time at home, time with my family, and time to step back and reflect.

With in-person worship and education put on hold temporarily, we have many opportunities to experience church at home. I hope you can check out some online resources that I have found to be really helpful. Two of my favorite are: buildfaith.org and growchristians.org. These websites have great articles, resources, and ideas for simple activities to do with your kids. With daily homeschooling and videoconferencing, I have found that my kids really seem engaged with simple activities, like reading from a children's Bible storybook and talking about God's creation while playing in the backyard.

St. Margaret's will also continue to provide resources for you to use at home. Use what works for your family, and if you need any additional ideas or support, please don't hesitate to contact me at childrensministry@saintmargarets.net. I am praying for all of you, and I can't wait until we can be together again in person!

At the end of the day I like to say this prayer:

Lord, it is night.
The night is for stillness.
Let us be still in the presence of God.
It is night after a long day.
What has been done has been done;
what has not been done has not been done;
let it be.

The night is dark.
Let our fears of the darkness of the world
and of our own lives rest in you.

The night is quiet.
Let the quietness of your peace enfold us, all
dear to us, and all who have no peace.
The night heralds the dawn. Let us look
expectantly to a new day, new joys,
new possibilities.
In your name we pray. Amen.

With in-person
worship and
education put on
hold temporarily,
we have many
opportunities to
experience church
at home.

"I found this prayer from the New Zealand

Prayer Book that I wanted to share.

We are living in such an uncertain time, and we don't know what next week, next month, or next year will look like. We are at home all of the time and seemingly, should have more time to get things done, but there is always so much to do each day!

Most of us are juggling multiple roles simultaneously, and days seem packed full of work, school, and household tasks."

-Catherine

Questions? Email Catherine at :
childrensministry@saintmargarets.net

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY CON'T:

Pentecost 2020

*Pentecost falls on Sunday, May 31st
and we invite you to celebrate at home:*

1. Wear the color red!

This is a fun and simple way to remind us of the importance of Pentecost in the church calendar. If you want, **send a picture of your family and send it to childrensministry@saintmargarets.net** and it will be shared on StM's Facebook page.

2. Read Acts 2:1-13

3. Create a Pentecost Pinwheel

- a. Talk about why there are doves and flames on the pinwheel. Where can you read about flames in the Bible (examples include Old Testament stories of Moses and the burning bush and the pillar of fire that led the Israelites through the desert; the New Testament story you just read in Acts 2) Where can you read about a dove in the Bible (look at Mark 1:10 where the Spirit descended like a dove during the baptism of Jesus).
- b. If it is a windy day, take your pinwheel outside to see the wind move it. If there is no wind, blow on your pinwheel to create wind to move it, just like the rush of wind that is described in Acts 2:2.

4. Ask

Just like the wind, we cannot see the Holy Spirit, but we can see what it does!

Can you think of ways the Holy Spirit moves our church family at St. Margaret's? How is the Holy Spirit moving us to do amazing things? (some ideas are: growing food in our giving garden, collecting food to give to those in need, donating blood, baking cookies and visiting inmates through Kairos, donating supplies for Canine Companions, mission trips, repairing homes through Fixing it for Christ, providing hot meals at the Union Co. Shelter, etc.)

***Christian theology is grounded in a doctrine of three in one,
the Holy Trinity: often described as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.***



Pentecost was a big Trinity moment!

***The Father sends the Spirit to
make the Son present.***

On Pentecost we can teach and celebrate the Trinity.



Let's continue to grow!



WELCOME



BY TRACI SCOTT

ASSISTANT TO THE RECTOR FOR NEWCOMERS & PARISH LIFE

connection@saintmargarets.net

We can continue to grow the church, especially during this time of isolation when people need God's love even more. Invite your friends to join you in virtual worship – share on Facebook – forward our worship emails.



At the beginning of this stay-at-home period, the staff's immediate concern was taking care of our parishioners that were the most vulnerable to this virus and that live alone. We started making a plan to connect and stay connected with those members, but that quickly blossomed and grew into a bigger effort to stay connected as a parish. We decided to attempt a type of "phone tree" to check on each other and find out if anyone had needs as this shutdown continued on and we were isolated for a longer period of time. **Many thanks to the Vestry, staff and ministry leads that have spent time calling/emailing/texting fellow parishioners just to "pass the peace."**

We know we haven't contacted everyone individually yet, but we hope you all know that your St. Margaret's family is here for you so, please reach out even if you just need to talk with someone who doesn't have the same last name as you do! **We also encourage everyone to call one St. Margaret's friend this week because it's always nice to hear from someone just because they were thinking about you.**

We can continue to grow the church, especially during this time of isolation when people need God's love even more. **Invite your friends to join you in virtual worship – share on Facebook – forward our worship emails.**

Also remember the outreach opportunities that continue to support our community and connection within the parish, even if we are socially distancing. The need for food in our community is skyrocketing.

Please consider donating at StM for Union County food pantries on Tuesdays from 2-4pm in the front roundabout at StM and share this opportunity with your neighbors as well. We can all make a difference!

Call a St. Margaret's friend this week!

Did you know?

FOOD COLLECTION

Thank you for your help

Our Pandemic Food relief efforts continue and we thank everyone for all the donations we continue to receive each Tuesday. Operation Reach Out in Monroe is thrilled to receive it all because the need is growing every day. Let's keep it up! Every Tuesday 2-4 pm.



STAFF CHECK-INS

STM staff connects in quarantine

Even though we have safety parameters in place to battle the corona virus, our clergy & staff meet twice a week on video conference calls to continue our ministries and work remotely to serve our parish. Please let us know if we can do anything to help you. We are a call or email away and are praying for our parish family daily.

PASSING THE PEACE

Prayers and phone calls...

In an effort to PASS THE PEACE while we all cannot worship in church together our clergy, staff and vestry have been taking some time to call and email our parish family to check in and just share a friendly greeting while we are all quarantined. We also have started a weekly INTENTIONAL PRAYER INITIATIVE that is sent out through an eblast on Tuesday mornings. We list 10-15 names of parishioners we are asking you to intentionally pray for. **We hope you continue to feel our thoughts & prayers!**



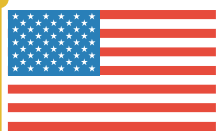


May Calendar

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina has directed that all parishes cancel worship services and parish activities through 5/17.

Parish events, worship services and christian formation will only be added back to our calendar when deemed safe by our Diocesan Office, Government officials and our Rector.

**Our Preschool is now closed for the remainder of the 2019-20 school year.*



A Prayer for our Country

*Almighty God,
who hast given us this good land for our heritage:
We humbly beseech thee that we may always prove
ourselves a people mindful of thy favor
and glad to do thy will.
Bless our land with honorable industry, sound learning,
and pure manners. Save us from violence, discord, and
confusion; from pride and arrogance,
and from every evil way.
Defend our liberties, and fashion into one united people
the multitudes brought hither out of
many kindreds and tongues.
Endue with the spirit of wisdom those to whom in
thy Name we entrust the authority of government,
that there may be justice and peace at home,
and that, through obedience to thy law,
we may show forth thy praise among the nations of the earth.
In the time of prosperity, fill our hearts with thankfulness,
and in the day of trouble, suffer not our trust in thee to fail;
all which we ask through Jesus
Christ our Lord. Amen.*



Rector

The Reverend Fr. Todd R. Dill+

dill@saintmargarets.net

Senior Assistant to the Rector for Pastoral Care

The Reverend Fr. Lito Santos+

santos@saintmargarets.net

Assistant to the Rector

The Reverend Fr. Eric Grubb+

grubb@saintmargarets.net

Director of Music & Organist

Mara DeLuca

music@saintmargarets.net

Executive Assistant to the Rector

Joanie Cameron

parishadmin@saintmargarets.net

Assistant to the Rector for Youth Ministries

Elizabeth Pfeifer

pfeifer@saintmargarets.net

Assistant to the Rector for Preschool Ministries

Dana Plate'

preschool@saintmargarets.net

Assistant to the Rector for Finance & Accounting

Denise Kiliniski

finance@saintmargarets.net

Assistant to the Rector for Children's Ministry

Catherine Chintala

childrensministry@saintmargarets.net

Assistant to the Rector for Newcomers & Parish Life

Traci Scott

connection@saintmargarets.net

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*