

# MAGGIE'S CROSS



## *A Letter from our Rector*

BY FATHER TODD R. DILL+

### *What is God asking of us?*

Perhaps the most frequent phrase that I have heard muttered over the past 24 months is, "I can't wait for things to get back to normal." Maybe you've said it yourself as I certainly have. Deep within most of us is a natural aversion to change; certainly, to change of the magnitude our world has experienced and that which we have each endured on a personal level. Change like this has a way of knocking us each off balance, of disrupting our lives so significantly that we have lost that feeling of groundedness that is so essential to healthy living. No wonder our instinct is to find any way we can to return ourselves and our lives to a place that we call normal. If we can only go back to the way things were, if we can just recapture what we had before, then everything would be perfect again! One can only hope.

This hoping for things as they were is a hope that has been voiced repeatedly throughout the ages. The Israelites in the desert cried out to go back to the way things used to be; at least then they had enough food to eat. Abraham longed to be back home as he journeyed years to places unknown to him. When Jesus asked Peter

if he too would follow the crowds and abandon Jesus, Peter exclaimed, "Lord, to whom shall we go?" It was the correct answer, but certainly lacked the enthusiasm and conviction that perhaps our Lord was looking for! Time and again, humanity has experienced the unsettling reality of being disoriented when confronted with new circumstances and new patterns of life that are different than we are prepared for or accustomed to.

In each of these examples, the longing for what was always gave way to following our Lord. The Israelites continued to follow God in the desert. Abraham did stay the course, and his faith allowed him to constantly follow God and not the desires of his own being. Peter did in fact, stay with Jesus (mostly), and he became the early voice of the burgeoning movement that proclaimed Jesus as risen, and called all to follow Him as Lord and Savior. So too, beloved, is the call for us. What if, instead of looking to the past for comfort, we asked ourselves, What is God asking us to do? We have been placed here on Earth together at this time and in this place to follow Him. He has called us together to build His kingdom. What is Jesus asking us to do right now?

I hope that you will spend some time in the coming days and weeks seeking an answer to that question in your own life. God created you and gave you unique gifts so that you might use those gifts to participate in His divine plan. He has called us together to combine our gifts so that unified through His Son, we might cooperate in the building of His Kingdom

**"Change like this has a way of knocking us each off balance, of disrupting our lives so significantly that we have lost that feeling of groundedness that is so essential to healthy living."**

here on earth as it is in heaven. We have all been called, beloved, to seek to please God and follow Him wherever He made lead us, regardless of the circumstances that we find ourselves in. Where we are, and the world around us, is our mission field. COVID or not, we are called to lives of faithfulness and discipleship.

God is calling us to follow His Son, wherever He might lead us. He is asking that we put our faith and trust in Him.

God is calling. We will follow?

Your rector,

*-Fr. Todd+*





# Thoughts from Rev. Sarah

BY THE REVEREND SARAH HOLLAR+

PRIEST ASSOCIATE

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Resolution: **KINDNESS**

## A Saint, A Resolution, A Difference

A few days before New Year's, Archbishop Desmond Tutu died. In the days following, tributes poured in from across the globe testifying to his faithfulness, his gifts of leadership, and his personal charisma. Official news outlets listed the titles and positions he held over his lifetime. The Nobel Peace Prize, the Albert Schweitzer Prize for Humanitarianism, the Gandhi Peace Prize and the Presidential Medal of Freedom sent the clear message, this was a man of substance and persuasion.

In the 1980's, when the powers of his beloved homeland, South Africa had no inclination to listen and the world at large was disinterested, Desmond Tutu diligently toiled to point out the inequities of Apartheid and encouraged non-violent and economic pressures to create a more just society. Acknowledging his effectiveness when the system was disassembled, Nelson Mandela appointed Tutu to head the Truth and Reconciliation Commission which has become a model for other nations struggling with racial, religious, or tribal strife within their peoples and borders.

I met Desmond Tutu in 2003 when our graduating class chose him to be our Seminary Commencement Speaker. Many of us had encounters with him in his brief stay and to a person, it was said, he is in no hurry! There was no one of more importance for him to engage. His full attention was on me for as long as he was in front of me. In his presence, I felt my belovedness in the Lord. To be the recipient of that spiritual gift is both moving and memorable. It stays with you.

*In Made of Goodness and Why This Makes all the Difference*, a book coauthored with his daughter, Mpho Tutu, also an Anglican Priest, they wrote, "Goodness changes the way we see the world, the way we see others and most importantly, the way we see ourselves. The way we see ourselves matters. It affects how we treat people. It affects the quality of life for each and all of us. What is the quality of life on our planet? It is nothing more than the sum total of our daily interactions. Each kindness enhances the quality of life. Each cruelty diminishes it."

Made in the image of God assumes and assures us that we carry goodness within us. We are built to extend and accept kindness. This quality of kindness and the acts it inspires is no small thing. It is no small thing!

I'm of a mind that in 2022, the best resolution we can make for ourselves, for our loved ones, for the communities in which we reside, and for the ether that surrounds is to claim our God given essence. May this be a year we cultivate our goodness and actively lean into our kindness. May this be a year we guard our tongues, temper our judgements, default to the softer word and more generous opinion. May 2022 bring us the understanding that kindness is not weakness. It has the mighty power of attraction and persuasion.

Blessings on the life you make in 2022, *Rev. Sarah*

2022

Goodness







# *The Deacon's Bench*

## *St. Thomas the Apostle*

**BY LUDWIG WALLNER**



During the month of December, most of us are busy with Christmas preparations and all that they entail, but the church has set aside December 21st as the Feast Day of St. Thomas the Apostle.

Most of us know about Thomas and the encounter he had with Jesus after Jesus rises from the dead. Thomas does not believe that Jesus has risen and states so in telling the disciples that unless he places his fingers in the place of the nails and his hand in Jesus' side he will not believe. Most of us know the rest of the story about Jesus appearing to Thomas and the rest of the disciples and telling Thomas to place his fingers in the mark of the nails.

From this encounter Thomas has earned the title "Doubting Thomas", but what else do we know about Thomas?

Thomas is also known as Didymas which means twin. But we do not know anything about his twin brother or sister. He was a native of Galilee and a fisherman by trade.

Thomas is referred to in detail in the Gospel of John, but his election to one of the twelve apostles is recorded in Matthew 10:3, Mark 3:18, Luke 6:15 and finally Acts 1:13.

According to all accounts Thomas possessed a nature which contained several conflicting elements. He had great difficulty in reconciliation, possessed little natural buoyancy of spirit, and he was inclined to look at life with icy coolness or despondency.

Yet he was a man of indomitable courage and entire unselfishness. He is said to have possessed a perpetual faith in the teachings of Jesus with a sincere and deep love for Jesus as teacher.

Thomas is said to have established the first Christian church in ancient Babylon and then he travelled to India. It is said that Thomas traversed the subcontinent of India preaching the good news and baptizing hundreds of new believers. He established churches for the new believers and ordained clergy to minister to the people. According to tradition, Thomas is credited with the conversion of six kings and three emperors of India.

Tradition says Thomas died a martyr's death, although there are two widely held versions of his death. One version is that he was praying on a mountain and was slain by a lance. The mountain is now called Mt. Thomas in Mylopur, a suburb of Madras.

The second version is that he was preaching the Good News and at the instigation of the Brahmins he was stoned by some of the people in the crowd. As he was stoned he fell down and as he laid there a Brahmin struck him with a lance.

In her devotional book "The Apostles", Helen Moman states that it is an accepted fact that some of St. Thomas' bones were transported to Edessa. During the crusades the bones were carried away to the island of Chios. From here tradition states that Manfred, Prince of Taranto placed them on a ship bound for Ortona in Italy, where they were placed in the cathedral.

According to Mary Sharp in her book, "A Traveler's Guide to the Saints", she states that the bones of St. Thomas are in Goa and Melapore, India. Tradition also has some of St. Thomas bones in the church of Santa Croce at Gerusalemme, Italy.

In the church of Melipore there is a stone cross which is said to mark St. Thomas' burial site where his body was buried until it was taken to Edessa in the fourth century. However wild many of the stories are told about St. Thomas the names of India's two most powerful and ancient rulers, Gundaphor and Gad, have recently been shown to have existed and may have encountered St. Thomas.

It is evident that St. Thomas was a disciple who was pessimistic and filled with doubt and yet became a vigorous missionary. Based upon much research, his missionary work to Babylon, Persia and India must be accepted as probable. One of the things that comes to us through history, is that Thomas was a fearless evangelist and a great builder of churches.

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# Youth Spotlight



**BY ELIZABETH PFEIFER**

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FOR YOUTH MINISTRY

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The St. Margaret's youth program had a strong calendar year full of fun programs and day events, small group discussions, and a fair amount of fun and laughter. Some parts of 2021 looked similar to pre-pandemic while other times, particularly in the first part of the year, brought moments when you could not ignore our covid reality.

We appreciate the youth and parents who worked very hard to juggle all that life throws at them while still managing to read all of Elizabeth's weekly news.

*A look back at what the youth of St. Margaret's took part in in 2021:*

- 23 Sunday night EYC meetings (9 in the spring and 14 in the fall)
- Discussed Lenten disciplines and made prayer beads together (over Zoom)
- Played lawn games like bocce ball, corn hole, and disc golf (all designed to keep our distance)
- Celebrated Palm Sunday with shouts of hosanna while we decorated cookies
- Discussed ways to mark the days of Holy Week at home for a second time.
- Ate a lot of ice cream sandwiches!
- Had a takeout dinner picnic at Blakeney
- Celebrated the end of the school year at Waxhaw Creamery
- Went to Carowinds!
- Assembled backpack snacks, multiple times, for South Providence
- Sorted food at Loaves & Fishes and sorted clothes at The Closet
- Resumed meeting together as one large group in the fall and spent time learning about our peers we hadn't seen in quite some time.
- Designed and painted picnic tables for our gatherings in the fall and learned that we have several very talented artists in our group
- Ziplined over the Catawba River at Camp Canaan
- Brought back several group favorite games: blind volleyball, indoor noodle hockey, and more.
- Spent several meetings discussing what it means to walk humbly with our God (Micah 6:8)
- Ate an unhealthy amount of sweets. But, hey, if you can't do it when you're a teenager, when can you?!

Stay up-to-date with youth group gatherings by signing up for our EYC text updates: text stmyouth1 to 43506 and reply "yes" if prompted with an opt-in text message.

**A special thank you** to the many adults who volunteered with youth group in a variety of capacities this year.

We especially thank:

*Matt Saunders*

*Madison Dill*

*Erin Nelson*

*& Molly Scialabba*

for the time they dedicate to our Sunday night gatherings.

**EYC will meet every Sunday in January from 5:00-6:30. All 6th-12th graders are invited to EYC gatherings and friends are always welcome.**

## Confirmation Class for 2022 begins on January 23rd

The Rite of Confirmation, in which one makes a mature profession of faith in Jesus Christ, will take place in the spring of 2022 at St. Margaret's.

The classes are open to students 10th grade and above and any adult members of the parish who wish to be confirmed, to be received, or to reaffirm their faith.

The Confirmation class will gather weekly on Sunday mornings from 10:00-10:45am for the first few months of 2022. Regular attendance at class and worship will be required.

For more information:

<https://stm.breezechms.com/form/confirmation2022>.





# Children's Ministry

**BY CATHERINE CHINTALA**

ASSISTANT TO THE RECTOR  
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## **2021 = blessings... changes, pivoting & flexibility**

2021 was a year of many blessings at Saint Margaret's Church....and plenty of changes, pivoting, and flexibility too!

Our year started off all virtual with our Way of Love Sunday School classes at home, and even some YouTube craft and cooking videos! We were slowly able to add outdoor activities as the year progressed, like our Holy Week Fellowship Gathering and Club 4-5. I was so thankful to be able to have Sunday School in person for the new school year, and to be able to have many of our beloved traditions, like Blessing of the Backpacks, Holy Communion Classes, and the Saint Nicholas Festival. Adding intergenerational Sunday School gatherings was a fun new addition to 2021 as well. Hearing little ones' voices during worship and seeing artwork on our Sunday School bulletin board were welcome reminders of our vibrant parish family!

I am so grateful for the support of our wonderful Sunday School volunteers, and for all of our parish families! We are still in the midst of uncertainty, and we don't yet know what 2022 will look like. But we can be certain that our Saint Margaret's family is here to support one another, bless our community, and share the Good News!

*Mark your calendars for a few upcoming dates in Children's Ministry, and keep a lookout for emails with additional details:*

- **January 9 at 10am: Epiphany Pageant**
- **January 23 from 10-10:45am: Sunday School resumes**
- **February 6: Nursery care resumes**
- **February 13, 20, 27 from 10-10:45am: Holy Communion Classes**
- **March 6: Holy Communion Celebration at the 8:45am service**

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at [childrensministry@saintmargarets.net](mailto:childrensministry@saintmargarets.net).

I hope you and your family have a healthy, happy, and blessed 2022!



-Catherine



## Epiphany House Blessing with Chalk

The Church has a custom of blessing homes on the Feast of the Epiphany (January 6) and the weeks following. Family and friends gather to ask God's blessing on their homes and those who live in or visit the home. It is an invitation for Jesus to be a daily guest in our home, our comings and goings, our conversations, our work and play, our joys and sorrows.

A traditional way of doing this is to use chalk blessed during the liturgy for the Feast of Epiphany and write the following above the home's entryway:

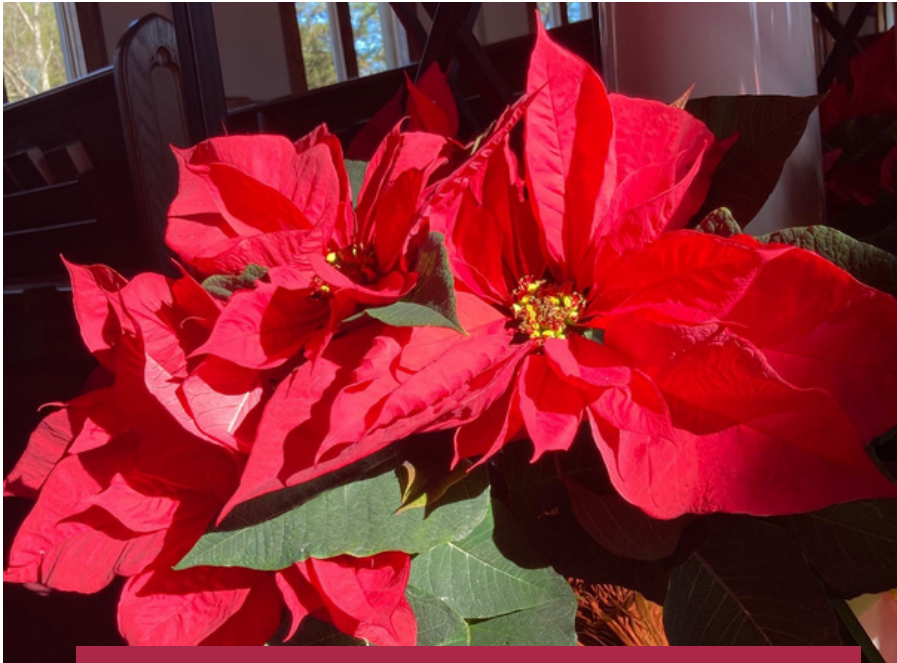
**20 + C + M + B + 22**

The letters C, M, B have two meanings. They are the initials of the traditional names of the three magi: Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar. They also abbreviate the Latin words *Christus mansionem benedicat*, "May Christ bless the house." The "+" signs represent the cross and 2022 is the year.





## *Signs of the season*



## *Shining bright*







*St. Nick Smiles*



*Red Door Welcome to 2022*







# Outreach & Parish Connection

**BY TRACI SCOTT**

ASSISTANT TO THE RECTOR  
FOR OUTREACH & PARISH CONNECTION

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

At St. Margaret's, our Advent season was so much brighter because we were able to come together and serve our community in several ways!

In early December, we once again supported the **Union County Christmas Bureau** and their goal of providing gifts to families in need this holiday season. St. Margaret's parishioners adopted 75 "angels" and filled their wish lists. Then, 9 parishioners met on a chilly Friday morning to deliver all of the gifts to the Bureau in Monroe. **Thank you to all who supported this effort, including Jenny Marlier, Patty Avery and Sarah Whalen** who coordinated the project. We hope to fill even more Christmas wishes next year!



Our third **Community Kitchen Fellowship** event also occurred in December and it was a day where you could feel the Christmas spirit in the joyful hearts of our volunteers! Breakfast team veterans (& some family members) made beautiful "to-go" meals of ham, potatoes, green beans, rolls & dessert. Another team of 7 drivers delivered the 67

meals to our Waxhaw neighbors in need. One of our first-time drivers texted me when she was done and said "all of our meals are delivered and our hearts are full!" We have decided to continue this ministry on the 3rd Saturday of each month, but it will only succeed with your support!

**\*A reminder that ALL AGES ARE WELCOME to help with CKF!**

Please sign-up to help deliver meals at 11am:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f0f4eaba7283-delivery>

or cook at 8:30 am:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f0f4eaba7283-cooking>

## Upcoming Shelter meal on Tuesday, January 25

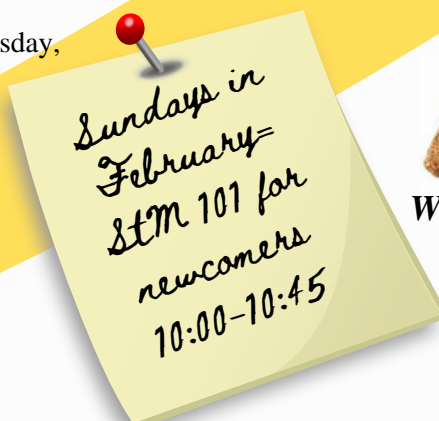
Two teams of volunteers are needed. One group will cook the meal at 1pm in the St. Margaret's kitchen and another group will serve it at the Community Shelter in Monroe at 5:30pm.

As in years past, we will do our Shelter meals on the 4th Tuesday, every other month.

Please sign-up here if you are able to help:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F0F4EABA7283-2022>

or email Traci at [connection@saintmargarets.net](mailto:connection@saintmargarets.net)



**We welcome new members:**

Carol Walser

Mary Lynn Ford





Our church office is open M-Th from 9:00-4:00  
& 9:00-12:00 noon on Friday.

### Rector

**The Reverend Fr. Todd R. Dill+**  
dill@saintmargarets.net

### Priest Associate

**The Rev. Sarah Hollar**  
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### Deacon

**The Rev. Ludwig Wallner**

### Director of Music & Organist

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### Assistant to the Rector for Newcomers

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**Traci Scott**  
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### Thank you to our 2021 Vestry

Terry Anderson\*  
Mike Murphy\*  
Densel White\*  
Jessica Parker  
Chad Hinton  
Brian Scott  
Kathyann Dugan  
Hugh Laughlin  
Simon Haaroff

Warren McDonald/David Feldser, *Treasurers*  
\*Election to be held on 1/9 for new term.



Christmas Eve 2021  
St. Margaret's Field

# January Calendar

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

- **Saturday Worship: Rite II, 5:00 pm**
- **Sunday Worship: Rite II, 8:45 am** LIVESTREAMED on our YouTube channel
- **Sunday Worship: Rite II, 11:00 am**



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

## The Epiphany Proclamation A.D. 2022

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, the glory of the Lord has shone upon us, and shall ever be manifest among us, until the day of His return.

Through the rhythms of times and seasons let us celebrate the mysteries of salvation.

Let us recall the year's culmination, the Easter Triduum of the Lord: His Last Supper, His Crucifixion and Death, His Burial, and His Rising, celebrated between the evening of the 14th day of April and the evening of the 16th day of April, Easter Sunday being on the 17th day of April.

Each Easter—as on each Sunday—the Holy Church makes present the great and saving deed by which Christ has forever conquered sin and death. From Easter are reckoned all the days we keep holy.

Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent, will occur on the 2nd day of March.

The Ascension of the Lord will be commemorated on the 26th day of May. Pentecost, the joyful conclusion of the season of Easter, will be celebrated on the 5th day of June.

And this year the First Sunday of Advent will be on the 27th day of November.

Likewise the pilgrim Church proclaims the Passover of Christ in the feasts of the holy Mother of God, in the feasts of the Apostles and Saints, and in the commemoration of the faithful departed.

To Jesus Christ, who was, who is, and who is to come, Lord of time and history, be endless praise, for ever and ever. Amen

