

MAGGIE'S CROSS



From Our Rector And the Word became Flesh!

The holy season of Advent is upon us. It is a time of year that brings joy, anticipation, family, craziness, and all sorts of varied activities. Theologically, it is a time in which the Church looks back in remembrance to the great gift of our Savior's birth, while at the same time looking forward to the promised second Coming of Jesus to reign as Lord of His re-created cosmos. The word Advent comes from the Latin word *adventus*, which means coming, which is where this season gets its name and meaning.

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." These words come from the extraordinary and famous prologue of the Gospel of John, which is read at our Christmas Day liturgy. John's birth narrative is so very different from the intimate story we regularly read

from Luke's Gospel. No angels, no shepherds, and no manger surrounded by animals! What we experience is the glorious story of the God of Genesis, who created everything that is, and formed the heavens and the earth, comes to be with us. Why would God do that? Why would the maker of all things come to His creation as a small child to dwell among us?

I would suggest to you that the answer is both very simple and very profound. God came to us so that we might be drawn close to Him. God, in His infinite love for us, became flesh so that all things would be drawn to Him. Jesus did come to start a kingdom, and yes, Jesus came to save the world. But Jesus does that by inviting each person in this world, one at a time, to fall deeply in love with Him. One of the radical claims of Christianity, in stark contrast to all other religions both ancient and contemporary, is that we don't have to chase after God. We don't have to convince God that we are worthy of His love. God already loves us completely. He comes to us in the flesh, as a vulnerable and small child, in order that He might woo us to fall in love with Him!

As we are planning our calendars this Advent, I would encourage us all to find a little time to allow ourselves to draw closer to Jesus.

"God came to us so that we might be drawn close to Him. God, in His infinite love for us, became flesh so that all things would be drawn to Him."

Perhaps for some it might be a little more time in prayer. Maybe you and your family could commit to more Sundays in worship. Drawing closer to Jesus could manifest itself if you dedicate a day in December to serve the needy or intentionally connect with someone who needs your encouragement and support. During these next four weeks, let us all find ways to have our heart drawn closer to Jesus. He came in the flesh for the world. He came in the flesh for you. Jesus loves us each so very much. Let us commit together to do our best to allow our hearts to be transformed by Him.

Peace, blessings, and joy be with you and your family this season of Advent. I will be praying for you, and hope that you will do the same for me.

Your priest,

Fr. Todd

dill@saintmargarets.net



Lessons the Holy Family teaches us about **REAL** life



In a season too busy with preparation, competing options and obligations, where more touted over enough, what benefits do we find by contemplating the mothering of Mary, the steadfastness of Joseph, the tension and grace between Jesus and his siblings? How might these considerations influence our modern family dynamics?

Facilitator: Rev. Sarah Hollar

Hosts: St. Margaret's Chapter of The Daughters of the King

Date & Time: Saturday, Dec. 16th, 9:00-2:00

Flow of the day:

Introduction of theme, table discussion, personal reflection time, table sharing, lunch, personal reflection, pair, and triad sharing

Concluding Worship:

A Taize service with Advent candle lighting rite and personal prayers for the season

16
Saturday,
December
9:00 am-
2:00 pm

[Click here to](#)
REGISTER TODAY!



Music

BY GAVIN CRAIG

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC AND ORGANIST

music@saintmargarets.net

What is a Carol?

Sunday, December 10 at 4:00pm, we will celebrate the beloved Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, a beautiful choral service commemorating the mystery of salvation in scripture and song. But while there is a diverse array of music written to celebrate the Nativity of Our Lord, I strive to exclusively program carols for this liturgy, as opposed to motets, anthems, or other choral genres. This then brings up a question I have always struggled with: *What is a carol?*

First, it is important to note that carols are a diverse repertory. The only genre of carols that survive in any use today are Christmas carols, but carols have been sung for seasons of the calendar or lectionary year, various feasts, and other occasions. Further, if one looks at the carol repertoire, one finds carols that are sacred or secular to varying degrees. George Grove's famous Dictionary of Music and Musicians says carols are "used during the Christmas season, in reference to the festival, under one or other of its aspects. In some it is regarded chiefly as a time of mirth and feasting; in others as the commemoration of our Lord's nativity." Whether a carol speaks of angels or of pudding, the palpable joy in the feast is the same.

The carol is surely also defined by its historical context. Carols originated in the mystery plays, dramatic additions to the liturgy with staged production, dance, and song, of the eleventh through thirteenth centuries. One example of this is the Coventry Carol, told from the perspective of mothers during Herod's slaughter of the Holy Innocents. Eventually carols began to be sung outside of the context of the plays, and they became integral parts of the popular celebration of the seasons. One of the earliest and most celebrated of these is "I sing of a maiden," which together with "Lullay, my liking" date from around 1400. Further, into the seventeenth century, foreign carols started to gain popularity in England with the import of the Swedish carol book *Piae Cantiones*. Many of our current favorites came from this collection, and its "Personent hodie" will be heard at this year's Lessons and Carols, together with these other milestones of the repertory.

But for a definition, I think few can top Percy Dearmer's introduction to the 1928 Oxford Book of Carols begins with a convincing definition: "Carols are songs with a religious impulse that are simple, hilarious, popular, and modern." The religious impulse is obvious, as is the hilarity (joy). Note also the simplicity of the great carols: "The first Nowell" is the same almost entirely stepwise melody repeated three times. By "popular," Dearmer refers to folk origin, as opposed to skilled and famed composers or poets – take a look through the Christmas section of the Hymnal and count how many carols lack a composer and/or an author. And by modern, he elaborates that the carol does not need to update itself or speak to another time; it is unapologetic in reflecting the lived reality of its originators.

Works like Dearmer's were themselves part of the history of the carol. Into the nineteenth century, the carol began to die out in England, forgotten in changing fashions. However, scholars such as Dearmer, as well as Ralph Vaughan Williams and Martin Shaw sought to preserve the carols and promote their singing, leading to a grand revival through which we have many of the carols we love today. We will hear and sing some of the greatest of these at this year's Lessons and Carols. *Join us for an evening of beautiful music on December 10th at 4:00pm as we live into this rich and ancient tradition.*





Youth Spotlight

BY ELIZABETH PFEIFER

ASSISTANT TO THE RECTOR FOR YOUTH MINISTRY

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Our StM youth group made the most out of an only three-meeting month! In November, we started a new series and decided to read a whole book of the Bible in only three meetings. It helped that the book only has three chapters and so we spent a week reading each chapter of Paul's letter to Titus. There was lots to digest and discuss but we focused on Paul's repetition of the phrase "love what is good" (1:8), or variations on it, such as "teach what is good" (2:3) or "do what is good" (3:1). We discussed that "good" in these verses means "of God" and looked at ways we can love, teach, and do things that are of God and allow us to serve and connect with God.

We also played laser tag to celebrate the final Sunday of being able to play games outside during our meetings before it became just a tad too dark. When we move inside, the games become a little bit more made up and a little sillier. But, there's always laughter, and some friendly competition, and this month was no different.



Mark your calendars and plan to join us in December from 5:00-6:30pm with dinner 6:30-7:00pm. Haven't been to EYC yet this school year? COME JOIN US! We'd love to see you as we celebrate the season of Advent. We will meet Dec 3rd, Dec 10th (White Elephant Christmas Party), and Dec 17th (Christmas movie night). All 6th-12th graders are invited, friends are always welcome!

It's White Elephant time! Make sure to carve out time in your schedule for EYC on Dec 10th from 5-6:30pm with dinner 6:30-7. Bring a small (\$10 or less) gift for our yearly, hilarious tradition of a White Elephant gift exchange; feel free to get creative or reuse something from around the house. Remember: NO GIFT CARDS. Christmas PJs or tacky Christmas sweaters welcome!





ADVENT IS...
JOYFUL PREPARATION

HOPE TO SEE YOU AT OUR LAST EYCS OF 2023!

EYC will meet Dec 3rd, 10th*, and 17th
from 5:00-6:30pm with
dinner 6:30-7:00pm

*Dec 10th: White Elephant Gift Exchange
Dec 17th: Christmas movie night!

'And they shall name
him Emmanuel, which
means God is with us.'
-Matthew 1:23





Children's Ministry

BY JAMIE PETERS

ASSISTANT TO THE RECTOR FOR CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

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Let the Advent season begin! May we all remember the real reason for the season during the hustle and bustle of this busy time of year.

It is almost time for two annual children's events here at Saint Margaret's! The Saint Nicholas Festival is on Saturday, December 2nd from 4:30pm-6:30pm. This fun evening of fellowship will feature holiday crafts, live music with Laura Sells and the StM Children's Choir, story time with Deacon Ludwig, a digital photo booth, a hot cocoa bar and a pasta dinner....and a very special visit from Saint Nicholas! **[CLICK HERE to RSVP!](#)**

This year we will be having our children's Christmas pageant at our 5pm Christmas Eve service. All children and youth are welcome! Costumes and props will be provided at this "pickup" Nativity pageant. No rehearsals and no sign ups are needed, just show up by 4:30pm to participate in this sweet tradition as we share the story of the birth of Jesus! More information will be provided soon!

Our children's Sunday School focused on gratitude and blessings during the month of November. Students created Gratitude Turkeys and Blessings Trees while remembering all that they have to be thankful for in life.

We had a wonderful Club 4-5 meeting in November with our 4th and 5th graders. They enjoyed a pizza lunch and went on an outdoor scavenger hunt with the help of the Bible finding items that we can be thankful for in nature. We would love to welcome any 4th and 5th graders to this awesome group, so mark your calendars for our next meeting on Dec. 10th.

Be sure to mark your calendars for these upcoming dates in Children's Ministry:

December 2nd: Annual Saint Nicholas Festival 4:30-6:30pm *Dinner will be offered beginning at 5:30 pm.

December 3rd: Parish Breakfast with Children's Craft Table at 9:15am

December 10th: Club 4-5 11:45am-1:00pm

December 17th: Last Sunday School classes of 2023

December 24th: Children's Christmas Pageant at the 5pm service

January 7th: Sunday School classes resume in 2024





SAINT MARGARET'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

INVITES YOU TO OUR ANNUAL

Saint Nicholas Festival

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2ND ● 4:30PM-6:30PM

JOIN US AS WE GATHER TO ENJOY THE BEAUTIFUL SEASON OF ADVENT!
WE WILL HAVE HOLIDAY CRAFTS, DINNER, STORY TIME WITH DEACON LUDWIG,
A HOT COCOA BAR, AND LIVE MUSIC.



[CLICK HERE TO RSVP NOW](#)

*Please bring canned goods &
non-perishable food
to benefit Common Heart.*



Dinner Served at 5:30pm

- Choice of Baked Ziti or Buttered Noodles
- Salad with Various Dressings
- Bread
- Applesauce and Fruit Cups
- Dessert

*Chicken Nuggets offered as a
Kid's Option as well*

Questions? Contact Jamie at
childrensministry@saintmargarets.net



St M



Parish Connection

BY TRACI SCOTT

ASSISTANT TO THE RECTOR
FOR OUTREACH & PARISH CONNECTION

connection@saintmargarets.net

Join us for StM 101 Class

Are you new to St. Margaret's or never been able to attend 101? This 2-part session of our newcomers class will take place December 10 & 17 at 9:30am in the Connector Hall. We will discuss the Episcopal faith, our church's history, our various ministries and how to get engaged in the life of our parish. We'll even take a tour of the building. If you are able to join us, please RSVP to Traci Scott at connection@saintmargarets.net

FINAL Brew Crew – Tuesday, December 19

Join Fr. Jay for the last gathering of our men's coffee hour at 9:15am in the Parish Hall.

MONTHLY MOVIE SERIES



Join us for the next movie in our monthly series, "The Pursuit of Happyness," Friday, December 8th from 9am-12pm in the Youth Room. Please park in the rear of the building. Guests are welcome!

RSVP here for the movie(s) you plan to attend. **CLICK HERE** for a full schedule of movies.

This month's movie, "The Pursuit of Happyness," is the inspirational true story of Chris Gardner, a San Francisco salesman who's struggling to make ends meet as a single dad. Chris' determination finally pays off when he lands an unpaid internship at Dean Witter; but without a salary, Chris is evicted from his apartment and, with his 5-year old son in tow, joins the ranks of the homeless.

Welcome

Welcome new members:

- Kathleen Culpeper
- Susan Norwood
- Vietta Durnin
- Vicki Arthur





THANK YOU to all who bought gifts for the children on our Angel Tree! 73 local families will have a brighter Christmas because of you! Gifts are due on Sunday, December 3rd.

To see instructions about how to package and drop off your gifts, **[please click here.](#)**

If you weren't able to get an angel, the Union County Christmas Bureau is requesting donations of items for babies and teens, their two hardest groups to get gifts for.

For babies and infants: light and sound toys, teething toys, diapers, floor gyms/play centers, board books

For teen ladies: makeup kits, perfume sets, fingernail kits, scented candles, blankets and throw pillows, jewelry making kits, hair care items, hair accessories and lotions

For teen gentlemen: colognes, travel hygiene kits, sports decor.

For all teens: socks, headphones, earbuds, tablets, art & drawing sets, LED strip lights, watches, manga comics, graphic novels.

They can also use coloring books, crayons, colored pencils and new clothing of any age.

We can deliver these items for you if you bring them to StM by December 3rd and mark them appropriately. Or you can drop them off at the Union County Christmas Bureau at 2520 W. Roosevelt Blvd, Monroe, NC (the old Habitat Restore site next to Griffin Motors).

Volunteers needed Saturday, December 9th

Our monthly meal deliveries to neighbors in Waxhaw is happening on a different date & time this month. More people are needed to shop for the groceries, assemble the meals and deliver. Please sign up if you are able to help. Shop for groceries and get reimbursed:

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

Cooking & meal assembly at 12:00-1:30pm: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f0f4eaba7283-cooking#/>

Deliver at 1:30pm: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f0f4eaba7283-delivery#/>

BLOOD DRIVE

One Blood will be on the StM campus on Sunday, 12/17 for our parish blood drive. Appointments encouraged. **[CLICK HERE](#)** for link, but walk-ins accepted. Your support is greatly appreciated.



Thank you Father Jay!

As you all know, this month marks the final month of Fr. Jay's time with us as a member of the staff of Saint Margaret's Episcopal Church. Fr. Jay's final Sunday on staff will be December 31st, and we will recognize the blessings of his time with us at the parish breakfast on January 7th.

Fr. Jay joined the clergy team almost two years ago, and he has been a blessing to this parish and to me personally since his arrival. He is a deep man of faith and has been an integral part of our ministry team. Fr. Jay spent countless hours visiting with parishioners in their homes and hospitals, proving extraordinary pastoral care in the most tender of situations. He has been a wise counselor, and faithful priest, and a good friend.

The good news for the beloved people of Saint Margaret's is that Fr. Jay and Karen will still be active members of our church. As Fr. Jay enters into full retirement, he and Karen plan to be engaged in the ongoing ministries of this parish. You might even see Fr. Jay behind the altar occasionally to help cover when either Reverend Sarah or myself are not available.

Fr Jay, thank you. Your ministry with us was important, and you have left a mark on our hearts. God bless you and Karen as you enter into this new season of joy and intentional time to be with family! Our prayers and our gratitude go with you.

Fr. Todd+

JOIN US

to celebrate Fr. Jay's ministry

Sunday, 1/7

*at our parish breakfast
in the Parish Hall*

9:15 - 10:15

to mark this special occasion.

*"Fr Jay, thank you. Your ministry with us was important,
and you have left a mark on our hearts"*



Saint Margaret's Day lunch, 11/19/23



December Calendar

[CLICK HERE for our
YouTube channel](#)
SERMONS in library!

- 12/2 Annual St. Nicholas Festival, 4:30 pm – 6:30 pm
- 12/3 First Sunday of Advent
- 12/3 Angel Tree Gifts DUE!
- 12/6 Funeral for Richard Bobay, 3:30 pm
- 12/8 Friday Movie Series, 9:00 am in the Youth Room
- 12/9 Funeral for Dawn Phillips, 1:30 pm
- 12/10 Lessons & Carols, 4:00 pm
- 12/16 Advent Retreat
- 12/21 Fr. Jay's Brew Crew for Men, 9:15 am
- 12/24 The Fourth Sunday of Advent, service at 9:00 am
- 12/24 CHRISTMAS EVE: services at 5:00 pm, 8:00 pm & 11:00 pm**
- 12/25 CHRISTMAS DAY: service at 11:00 am**
- 12/26-1/1 CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED



Our children's Christmas pageant will be held at our 5pm Christmas Eve service. All children and youth are welcome! Costumes and props will be provided at this "pickup" Nativity pageant. No rehearsals and no sign ups are needed, just show up by 4:30pm to participate as we share the story of the birth of Jesus!



Join us
this Christmas

Sunday, 12/24
9am

Advent 4 morning service
&

5pm, 8pm, 11pm

Christmas Eve Services

Monday, 12/25

11am

Christmas Day Service

St M

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

Rector

The Reverend r. Todd R. Dill+
dill@saintmargarets.net

Priest Associate

The Reverend Sarah Hollar+
hollar@saintmargarets.net

Priest Associate

The Reverend Fr. Jay Mills+
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Deacon

The Rev. Ludwig Wallner

Organist & Director of Music

Gavin D. Craig
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Assistant to the Rector for Children's Ministry

Jamie Peters
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Assistant to the Rector for Outreach
& Parish Connection

Traci Scott
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2023 Vestry

Kathyann Dugan
Hugh Laughlin
Simon Haaroff
Paula Holbein
Philip Huff
Colin Miles
Josh Ward
Emily Nelson
Tom Washington
David Feldser, Treasurer