

# MAGGIE'S CROSS



*From Our Rector*

## *Small Acts of Faith... Together*

On December 28th, Saint Margaret's held a worship service to mark the remembrance of the Feast of the Holy Innocents. Eight people were in attendance, and that number included the reader, crucifer, and chalice bearer for the service. A small group it was indeed, and a very different gathering than the services that were held just a few days earlier on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. But there was something quite profound and important about this small gathering for this day. These often-forgotten martyrs of the church were remembered, and a community of faithful souls gathered together to share in the Blessed Sacrament. While it was a small gathering of people, I believe it to be an important act of faith for the beloved people of Saint Margaret's.

In truth, we have these small acts of faith that occur all the time at our parish. On Christmas Eve, I noticed Chad, Page, and Reagan Hinton, serving together (for the first time), at the altar. At the 11pm Mass, I saw another family serving in the same way. Elizabeth, Westley, and Ian Culp. This continues a trend that several of our families have modeled for years. They serve together, very quietly and very faithfully, following Jesus at our parish. From Jane and David Knight, to Josh, Hadley, Harper and Hayden Ward, countless moments of dedication happen time and time again, and I believe these acts of faith we do together are so very important to the fabric of our faith journey.

It is clear from the life of Jesus that our walk of faith is always done in community. Jesus called his disciples to Himself and gathered a following in which they always ministered together. When Jesus sent His disciples out into the world, it was never alone, but always with a fellow companion:

*Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village. Calling the Twelve to him, he began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over impure spirits. (Mk 6:6-7)*

As we begin another calendar year together, I would like to encourage all of us to not miss the small opportunities

of faith. It is all too easy to think that only large, grand religious moments bring us and the Spirit together, but just as important are those small acts of faith that happen where no one notices. When two gather to pray, when a mother blesses her child, when one prays the Daily Office at the airport because the commitment to prayer brackets our lives. Small acts of faith are vital, so perhaps it is worth our attention to strive together to be faithful in the small opportunities offered to us. To remind us of these moments, I offer you this prayer from the Daily Office of the Episcopal Church:

*Almighty God, who hast given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication unto thee; and hast promised through thy well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name thou wilt be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of thy servants as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting. Amen.*

Your priest,

*Fr. Todd*

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# Music

**BY GAVIN CRAIG**

*DIRECTOR OF MUSIC AND ORGANIST*

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# The Hymnal in your Bible



Think of the most popular verses from scripture: “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.” “Be still, and know that I am God.” “The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?”

What do these verses have in common? They are all from the book of Psalms. Through the millennia, billions have found comfort and inspiration in this book. But its contents have a character distinct from the rest of scripture; these verses are not story or prophesy, poetry is not a completely accurate descriptor; the Psalms are fundamentally music. I would like to start our year off with a history of the Psalms as music and discuss their role in our liturgy today at St. Margaret’s. The Psalms are traditionally attributed to King David, the authorship and times of their composition are quite diverse. They generally follow various dictates of ancient near eastern poetry, which rely on patterns other than rhyming. One scheme routinely employed in the Psalms is that the half-verses (separated by an asterisk in our Book of Common Prayer) relate to each other in some way, whether repeating or emphasizing a theme, reflecting on an idea, or continuing it. Certain Psalms employ acrostic patterns, where each verse begins with a specific letter of the Hebrew alphabet. In addition to being carefully crafted poems, the Psalms were doubtlessly intended to be sung. Certain manuscripts bear hints, in the heading and text, of musical instructions such as instrumentation, voicing, or possible rests. The ancient Israelites were not known to have a method of musical notation, so the melodies would have been passed on orally. Eventually, the original melodies were lost, but Jewish worship adopted methods of chanting from neighboring civilizations, with simple melodies adapted to the text.

When we read about Jesus singing a Psalm at the Last Supper, this sort of chanting is almost certainly what is being described. As early Christian worship split from synagogue and temple worship, this tradition of Psalm chanting remained the dominant form of music in worship. By the middle ages, the Mass was firmly codified, including a cycle of Psalm verses to be sung through the year to appointed melodies, as well as a new set of “Psalm tones” – similar to the synagogue chanting – for longer texts.

The Reformation saw changes to worship and music as much as to theology. Where Luther introduced the singing of hymns, conservative reformers such as Calvin sought to promote Psalm singing. The Psalms were translated into vernacular metrical poetry and set to contemporary styles of music, intended for singing by the whole congregation. As the Church of England came under the influence of Calvinist reformers, a similar tradition of metrical poetry appeared in English. From this we get some of our most beloved hymns: “O God, our help in ages past” and “The King of love my shepherd is”. And for the Daily Office, a tradition of Anglican Chant developed, quickly developing into a rich and beautiful choral repertoire.

As the Church of England relaxed from the Calvinist tradition of only using Psalms, the singing of a Psalm between the readings remained a staple at Eucharist. This Psalm is called the “Gradual”, as it was traditionally sung by a lone cantor standing at the steps (“gradus” in Latin) before the altar. Though there is great liberty in how the Gradual can be done, singing it brings us closest to the original context and meaning of the Psalms. There has been a resurgence in the modern church of all the ancient ways of chanting the Psalms, many of which we use here: sung by choir to Anglican Chant, sung to the ancient Psalm tones, sung by choir alone, or by the congregation together, or with a simple response for the congregation to meditate on the text.

Through Epiphanytide at the 10:30 Eucharist, we will again be chanting the Psalm as a congregation to a simplified form of Anglican chant, developed as an easy way for the whole congregation to join in the Psalm. To join in, simply sing the text on one pitch, and change to the next pitch when the text has a | vertical line. Once you master the melody, perhaps try a comfortable harmony – and of course, to learn more, the Adult Choir is a great opportunity to learn even more about the broad tradition of Psalm chanting. As we sing together, I hope you’ll feel a connection to the centuries which have expressed their faith through the words and music of the Psalms.





# Youth Spotlight

**BY ELIZABETH PFEIFER**

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ASSISTANT TO THE RECTOR FOR YOUTH MINISTRY



The St. Margaret's youth program had a truly fantastic calendar year full of fun programs and retreats, small group discussions, and a fair amount of silliness. Our students have taken Jesus' call to make disciples seriously and have been inviting friends, and friends of friends, to our Sunday evening meetings. We appreciate the youth and parents who worked very hard to juggle what life throws at them while still managing to read all of Elizabeth's weekly news and respond to texts.

## *A look back at what the youth of St. Margaret's took part in in 2023:*

- Had 30 Sunday night EYC meetings
- Spent the season after the Epiphany "wondering" about Jesus and learning stories that defined his ministry
- Learned about different styles of prayer – including walking a labyrinth
- Commandeered a section of Oak Island beach when 38 students joined for our EYC Beach Retreat
- Celebrated 10 graduating seniors who received their handmade scarves from our Knots of Love ministry
- Participated in a 9-day international mission trip to San Jose, Costa Rica
- Volunteered at Vacation Bible School
- Welcomed our 6th graders and new families with our annual summer bowling outing
- Started a new tradition and welcomed our 9th graders to the "high school couch" with a pizza gathering
- Overwhelmed the amazing staff at Haagen Dazs multiple times (we love ice cream, any time of year!)
- Overwhelmed the parish hall when 77 students attended EYC Kick Off in August. It was the best overwhelmed the room has ever been!
- Spent a beautiful fall weekend at Bethelwoods Camp for our fall overnight
- Spent multiple meetings discussing what it means to be a disciple of Jesus
- Read a whole book of the Bible in just three weeks (the book of Titus)!
- Ate a rather absurd amount of candy. And mac-n-cheese. But, hey, if you can't do it when you're a teenager, when can you?

*For all of those things and more, I say: thank you and here's to 2024!*

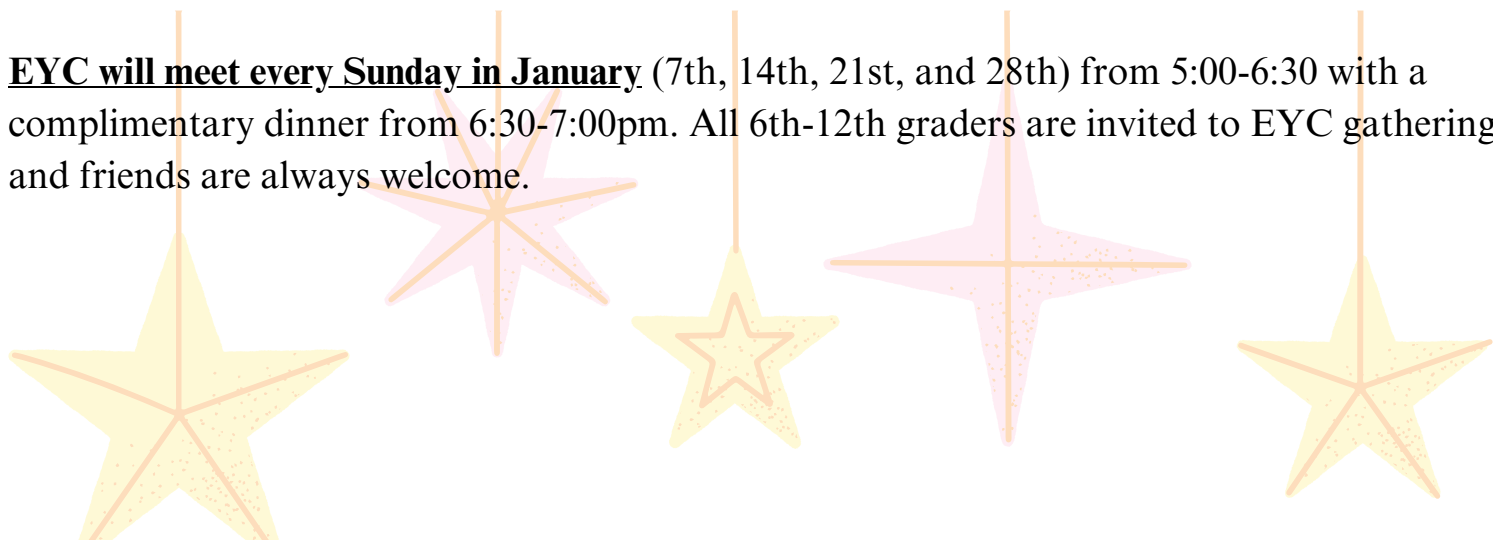






*A special thank you to the many adults who volunteered with youth group in a variety of capacities this year. We especially thank: Madison Dill, Sue Jaquish, Julie Jenkins, Erin Nelson, Molly Scialabba, Mark Shaffer, and Sharon Sullivan for the time they dedicate to our Sunday night gatherings.*

**EYC will meet every Sunday in January** (7th, 14th, 21st, and 28th) from 5:00-6:30 with a complimentary dinner from 6:30-7:00pm. All 6th-12th graders are invited to EYC gatherings and friends are always welcome.





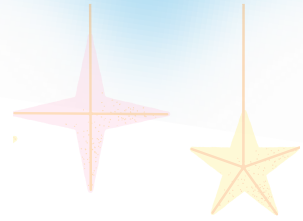


# Children's Ministry

**BY JAMIE PETERS**

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December and the end of 2023 was a very busy time for the Saint Margaret's Children's Ministry! Our **Sunday School** continued with our Love First curriculum and Advent lessons. We read an amazing book called *The Sparkle Box* by Jill Hardie, which is a story about how kindness can change Christmas. We finished up our lessons in 2023 with a Happy Birthday Jesus celebration in preparation for the birth of our Savior.

**Club 4-5** met on December 10th for a pizza lunch and fellowship. It was wonderful to gather during this special time of year and we took time to read *The Legend of the Candy Cane*, discussing how this seasonal candy represents Jesus. We also played candy cane games galore, which made for an afternoon of fun and laughter.

Our **Annual Saint Nicholas Festival** took place on December 2nd with crafts, live music, and a delicious dinner. Children made homemade Saint Nicholas and wooden Saint Margaret's ornaments and enjoyed a visit from Saint Nicholas himself. It was a delightful evening filled with fellowship and fun—plus lots of hot cocoa! Thank you to all the volunteers who made this event possible.

During the 5pm Christmas Eve service we held our “pick up” children's **Christmas Eve Pageant**. Since no rehearsals were needed, children were invited to show up and pick out their favorite costumes to participate. There were several adorable angels, donkeys, shepherds, and a bright shining star! The children did a remarkable job sharing the story of Jesus' birth!

As we enter January, we will be covering **Epiphany** and starting our Love God unit in the *Love First* curriculum.

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

*Mark your 2024 calendars for these upcoming dates in Children's Ministry:*

**January 7th:** Nursery Care Resumes

**January 14th:** Sunday School Classes resume, 9:30-10:15am

**January 14th:** Club 4-5, 11:45am-1:00pm  
*will also meet: 2/11, 3/10, 4/14, & 5/5.*

**Feb. 18th, Feb. 25th, & March 10th:**  
Spring Holy Communion Classes, 9:30-10:15am.

**March 17th:** Holy Communion Class  
*Celebration at 10:30am service.*

**April 7th:** Easter Egg Hunt, 9:30am

**June 24th-27th:** Vacation Bible School







# Parish Connection

BY TRACI SCOTT

ASSISTANT TO THE RECTOR

FOR OUTREACH & PARISH CONNECTION



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## Foyer Groups

Are you interested in joining a Foyer Group to meet other StM parishioners?

If there is enough interest, we are trying to form 1-2 more groups mid-year. These groups have about 6-8 members and meet monthly at each other's homes or at a restaurant to share a meal and get to know each other better. The meeting schedule is determined by the group's members.

Please contact Traci at [connection@saintmargarets.net](mailto:connection@saintmargarets.net) for more information.



## MONTHLY MOVIE SERIES on Homelessness

Join us for our monthly movie series on the **2nd Friday of each month at 9 am** in the Youth Room.

This year, the focus is on homelessness. The movies were selected to increase awareness of attendees in the hopes that they will make a positive shift in their attitudes and intentions towards homelessness.

Understanding the complexity of the problem and the conditions leading to homelessness are the first steps in addressing and solving the problem.

The next movie is "No Vacancy" on January 12th. 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.

## DID YOU KNOW?



### *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 + 24**

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 2024 is the year.





### Angel Tree

A **HUGE thank you** to all who shopped and donated gifts to fulfill the wish lists of 73 “angels” this year! Once again, the amazing outpouring of generosity from our parish continues to be an inspiration!

*Jenny Marlier, Sarah Whalen and Karen Mills spent many hours bagging and labeling the gifts to get them ready for transport. Our awesome crew of drivers got everything over to the Christmas Bureau in Monroe safely. Thank you all for brightening the Christmas season for our special neighbors.*

### Monthly Meal Deliveries

As we enter a new year, please consider helping with our monthly meal deliveries to 65 local neighbors. Each month, we need help in the kitchen, shopping for groceries, baking and delivering. It takes 23 volunteers every time for all to run smoothly.

***The 2024 dates are loaded in the links below so please sign up for as many as you'd like.***

The 3rd Saturday of the month, the cooking team comes to the church at 9am and the delivery team comes at 11am.



Questions, contact Traci at [connection@saintmargarets.net](mailto:connection@saintmargarets.net)

**[CLICK HERE](#)** to sign up for cooking, baking, shopping:

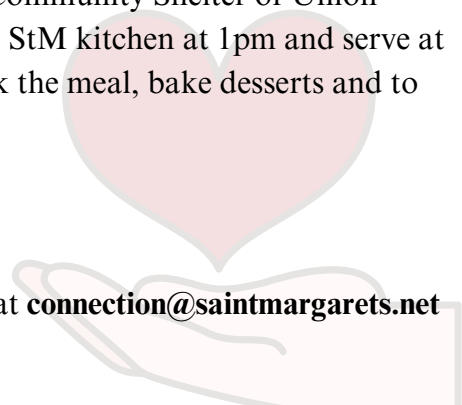
**[CLICK HERE](#)** to sign up for delivery.

### Shelter meal on Tuesday, January 23

Throughout the year, St. Margaret's volunteers prepare and serve meals at the Community Shelter of Union County together. Our next date is coming up on January 23rd. We'll cook in the StM kitchen at 1pm and serve at the Shelter in Monroe at 5:30pm. We need volunteers to shop for groceries, cook the meal, bake desserts and to help serve at the Shelter.

If you are able to help, please **[CLICK HERE to sign up.](#)**

Questions, please contact Karen Schaphorst at [karen@schaphorst.com](mailto:karen@schaphorst.com) or Traci at [connection@saintmargarets.net](mailto:connection@saintmargarets.net)







# January Calendar

- 1/1 CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED
- 1/7 Parish Breakfast & Father Jay Retirement celebration, 9:15 am
- 1/15 CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED
- 1/21 Annual Parish Meeting, 9:30 – 10:15 in the Parish Hall
- 1/25 Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul the Apostle, 5:30 service



**CLICK HERE for our YouTube channel**  
***SERMONS in library!***

*Join us for worship on the Feast Day of  
The Conversation of St. Paul the Apostle:*

**Thursday, January 25th**  
**5:30 pm**

*The Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul celebrates  
St. Paul turning away from persecution of Christians  
to promoting Christianity.*



*O God, by the preaching of your apostle Paul you have caused the light  
of the Gospel to shine throughout the world: Grant, we pray, that we,  
having his wonderful conversion in remembrance, may show ourselves  
thankful to you by following his holy teaching; through Jesus Christ our  
Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one  
God, now and for ever. Amen.*



*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+**  
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**The Reverend Sarah Hollar+**  
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Deacon

**The Rev. Ludwig Wallner**

Organist & Director of Music

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## 2024 Vestry

**Paula Holbein**  
**Philip Huff**  
**Bill MacMinn**  
**Jenny Marlier**  
**Colin Miles**  
**Amy Pharr**  
**Josh Ward**  
**Emily Nelson**  
**Tom Washington**

**David Feldser, Treasurer**