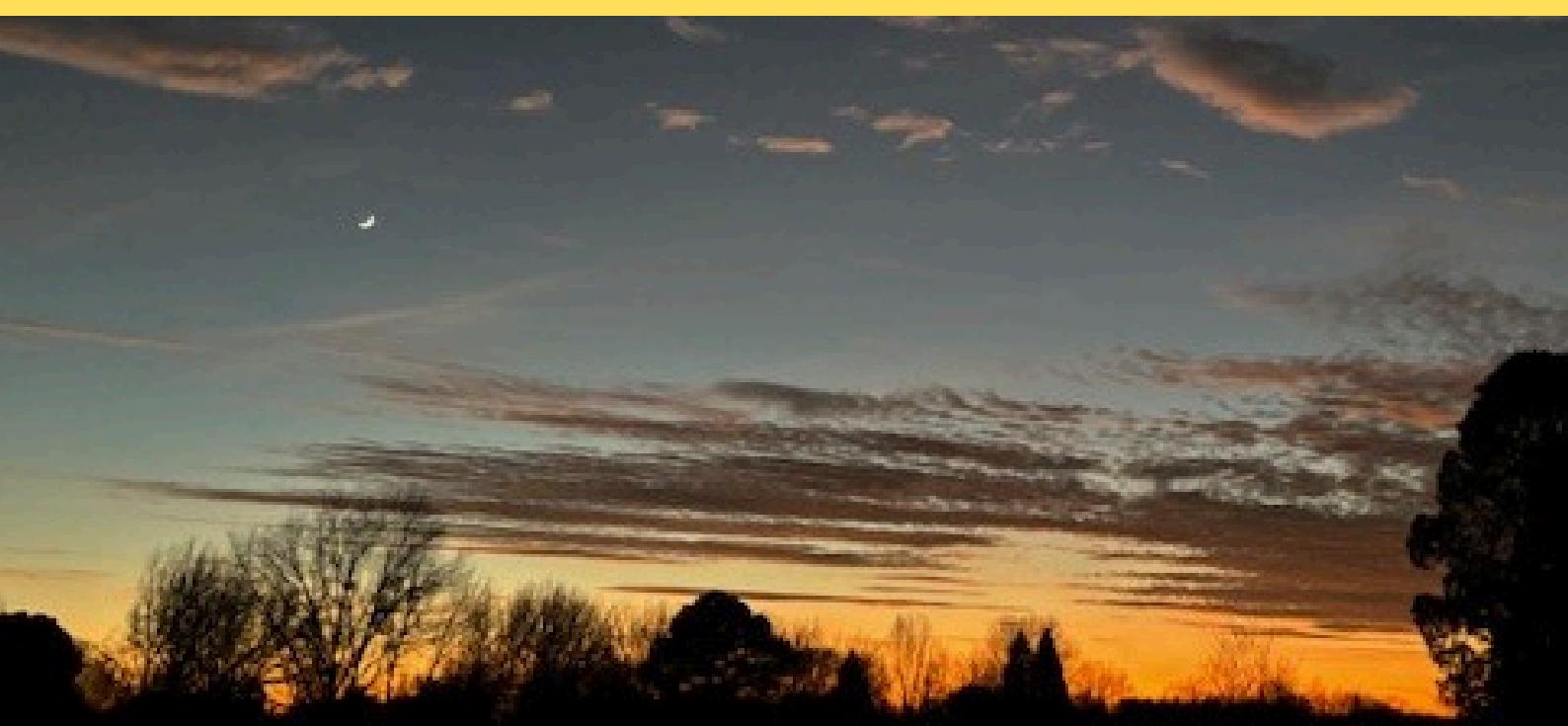


MAGGIE'S CROSS



From Our Rector

It Starts with Forgiveness

It feels like we live in a time of name-calling. Every time I turn on my television or open a news article, the current climate in our society seems to lend itself to blame, suspicion, and division. I cannot remember a time in my life when our world felt as chaotic and divided as it does now, though, to be sure, historians might point to the 1940s or the 1860s in our country's own short history to show that this is nothing new. Still, the level of vitriol has reached extraordinary heights, and perhaps what is most unsettling is the ease with which even the most devoted followers of Jesus seem to join in.

So what is a Christian to do in these troubled times? Certainly, as people called to "do justice" (Micah 6:8), and as people called to be the light and salt of the earth, Jesus has a different expectation for us. More importantly, Jesus gives us a commandment. Beloved, we are called to love our neighbor; and to love our neighbor, we must first see one another as neighbors. No exceptions. No one is left

out. Every human being who has ever lived, or ever will live, was conceived into this world by God our Father and is loved so deeply that He sent His Son for all of us, that we might be in right relationship with Him. All are invited into this union with Jesus, and all have value through Him. It is only when we embrace this divine truth that we can begin to heal this fractured world.

I was reminded when reading a short online posting of a clergy colleague that our response starts with forgiveness. When teaching His disciples about the Kingdom, Jesus exhorts them to "love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you." I find this really, really hard, beloved, but forgiving when it is difficult is where healing and transformation begin. The Church and its people, as image-bearers of the risen Lord, are called at our core to reflect the divine attribute of forgiveness so that, through Christ's reconciling work, the world might be healed. To be sure, there is a need for societal forgiveness as well as institutional repentance, but true change

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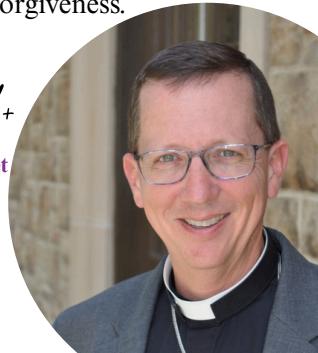
comes through the small, divine acts of forgiveness in our lives, where one person is reconciled to another. Through these small acts of mercy and grace, the work of Jesus is truly accomplished.

During this upcoming season of Lent, let us position ourselves for forgiveness. Let us love our enemies. Let us bless those who curse us. Let us pray for those who use us, so that Jesus might use our love to change hearts—and the world.

It all starts with forgiveness.

Your priest,

Fr. Todd +
dill@saintmargarets.net



"I find this really, really hard, beloved, but forgiving when it is difficult is where healing and transformation begin." -Fr. Todd Dill+

SERIOUSLY?



I cannot count the number of times over the past few months that I have found myself saying, “Seriously?” Sometimes I say it quietly to myself in response to something I’ve seen or read. Other times I say it out loud to whoever happens to be nearby. Seriously? This is the thing? has become a recurring refrain.

Often, this reaction arises from encountering something in the world that simply does not seem right. At other times, it is my response to what is clearly sinful in our shared life. Between these reactions and several conversations here at the church—both during Sunday Formation and Wednesday Bible Study—a deeper question has emerged: Do we truly consider the seriousness of sin?

It seems that in our world we have, at times, used grace to soften not only the consequences of sin but even our response to it. We trust, rightly, that Jesus always offers forgiveness. And for many of us, our individual sins do not appear to affect our lives in dramatically visible ways, often because of our privilege.

But what about corporate sin—communal sin? The sin committed on our behalf, or the sin in which we participate without even realizing it? How seriously do we take sin when it is shared, systemic, or unseen?

A few weeks ago, while preparing for Lent, I tried an interesting exercise. I asked ChatGPT about the relationship between repentance and discipleship. The response was striking: “Repentance is where discipleship starts, and repentance becomes a lifelong posture of a disciple of Christ.”

Is repentance truly our lifelong posture? I find it relatively easy to speak about the love of Jesus and our call to love others well. But I am less certain that I have always understood repentance as an essential, ongoing posture of that love. Repentance gives birth to humility—and ours is a world deeply in need of humility. It may be that only through humility are we able to love others as Jesus loves.

The season of Holy Lent is quickly approaching. Perhaps a guiding word or focus for us this year might be repentance or humility. There are few moments in our world that call us to repent, and few places in our culture where humility is genuinely valued. May this season of Holy Lent lead us into sacred spaces of repentance and humility, for the sake of love and the life of the world.

Amen.

BY REV. FATHER MATT ADDINGTON
ASSISTANT TO THE RECTOR

Father Matt is in the office M-Th
and can be reached at:
addington@saintmargarets.net



Music

BY GAVIN D. CRAIG

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC & ORGANIST

Merbecke, Music, and Reform

Last spring, I introduced settings of two portions of our ordinary (those parts of worship which repeat each week) by John Merbecke (ca. 1510-1585). This Lent, I will introduce a Sanctus (“Holy, holy, holy”) also set by Merbecke, which will enable us to use his setting for the whole service. But why add another setting to our repertoire, especially when we already have the fine setting for Rite I by Healey Willan? To understand the significance of this music, we need to look at the circumstances that impacted its creation.

execution for embracing and spreading Protestant doctrines. He was pardoned at the urging of the Bishop of Winchester, but he continued to promote Protestant doctrine, including creating the first English concordance (a cross-reference) of the Bible.

With the accession of Edward VI, the Church of England shifted its theology much more in a direction aligned with Merbecke. When the first Book of Common Prayer was adopted in 1549, Merbecke set the text of the liturgy to music, publishing The Book of Common Prayer Noted in 1550. This is the first appearance of liturgical music in English, and it was the sole authorized music for the new liturgy. Merbecke went on to write various religious texts and compositions, remaining aligned firmly with the Protestant side of the Reformation.

With the theological changes the Reformation produced came changed attitudes about worship and thus about music. With the Edwardian reforms, the use of Latin was no longer favored, with one of the articles of religion promulgated in 1553 stating, “It is most seemly [...] that in the congregation nothing be openly read, or spoken in a tongue unknown to the people.” Intelligibility was the order of the day, and not only was music in Latin on the chopping block (or music as a whole among more extreme reformers), but even vernacular music was expected to present the words in a way that made understanding them simple.

Thus, Merbecke, though a skilled choral composer, set the liturgy with a single vocal line suitable for an untrained choir or even a congregation. The melodies neither go too high or too low, and, in contrast to the Gregorian repertoire, this music uses one note for each syllable. The rhythm of the music does not conform to regular patterns, as is de rigueur in nearly all other music, but rather it follows the rhythms of the spoken text. These principles guided, though much more loosely, the work of many great vocal composers of sixteenth century England, creating a beautiful repertoire in the face of a demand for accessibility.

Just as Merbecke’s music arose from a shift in ecclesial attitudes, ecclesial attitudes eventually supplanted it as attitudes towards music began to again favor complexity and expressiveness. However, attempts to reconnect with earlier Christianity in the nineteenth and early twentieth century saw a revival of Merbecke, to the point where his music was listed as the “First Communion Service” of the Hymnal 1940, and I think it is suitable for us to similarly, through its simplicity, connect to a period which formed the very identity of our tradition.



Youth

pfeifer@saintmargarets.net

BY ELIZABETH PFEIFER

ASSISTANT TO THE RECTOR FOR YOUTH MINISTRY

WHAT A GIFT. WHAT A SURPRISE.

There are always surprises in the world of youth ministry. I may not love every surprise in the moment but, the surprises keep things interesting! In 2025, **two big surprises** were brought to me by 1) a tiny mountain town called Marshall and 2) a group of upperclassmen high schoolers.

1) Hurricane Helene devastated the western part of our state in fall 2024.

In early 2025, I was eagerly searching for an organization that StM could partner with to support our WNC neighbors as they took on the years-long challenge of cleaning up and rebuilding after Helene. Through a friend of a friend of a friend, we found **Marshall Relief Alliance**, serving the town of Marshall (just north of Asheville). We quickly planned a youth group work weekend there in March 2025. The need was great and folks from StM went again in April, June and August. I have never felt so welcomed anywhere in my life. We served and then, when we went back, it was like reuniting with old pals. By summer, we “ran into people” from town on the streets and at coffee shops. StM wasn’t just there to support our neighbors, we were welcomed there like it was our home too. *What a gift. What a surprise.*

2) The last couple of high school graduation seasons have been tough as our youth group has graduated several incredibly active high school seniors each year. I know that graduation happens every year and our group always rises to fill the “seat on the couch” left by our graduating seniors. But, I always wonder what the dynamics of the next group of upperclassmen will be. Well, if fall 2025 didn’t bring me one of the greatest surprises a youth minister can ask for: a group of 11th and 12th graders who stepped up immediately, particularly a large cohort of 11th grade guys. They are a consistent presence at our meetings, they know how competitive to be during games before it becomes too competitive, they know when to joke and when to listen. They bring energy and an “EYC wisdom” to them that others in our group can emulate. *What a gift. What a surprise.*

In spring 2026, I have opportunities to continue to be surprised! St. Margaret’s is heading back to Marshall and much progress will have been made in continuing to rebuild the town (our last trip was in August). Several students will graduate from high school in June, and a large group of 10th graders are eager to join the ranks of upper classmen. We have a few overnights and many weekly meetings for even more surprises to come about. We would love to have your student join us and see what surprises are in store.

EYC is headed into a long stretch of weekly meetings, and **we hope you’ll mark your family calendar and plan for your student to join us from 5:00-6:30 with dinner 6:30-7:00pm!** EYC will meet on February 1st. EYC will not meet on Feb 8th due to the Super Bowl. Following that one week break, EYC is back in action until Easter and will gather for the remaining Sundays in February and every Sunday in March! When coming to youth group, please enter through the double back doors, near the playground. All 6th-12th graders, and their friends, are welcome.





Children's Ministry

BY JAMIE PETER

ASSISTANT TO THE RECTOR FOR CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

childrensministry@saintmargarets.net

As we begin a new year together, our children's ministry is joyfully continuing the celebration of Jesus' light in our lives and in our homes.

After the blessed Christmas season, the Church enters the season of Epiphany, which is a time that reminds us of Christ being revealed to the world. One beautiful Epiphany tradition is the **blessing of homes** on or after the Feast of the Epiphany (January 6). Families may use chalk blessed during the Epiphany liturgy to write $20 + C + M + B + 26$ above their home's doorway.

The letters C, M, and B have two meanings. They are the traditional initials of the three magi of Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar and they also stand for the Latin phrase Christus mansionem benedicat, meaning "May Christ bless this house." The plus signs represent the cross, and 2026 marks the year. Thank you to the Cervini, Girardeau, and Peters families for sharing their wonderful pictures of this special tradition!



Sunday School classes resumed on January 11th, and our students have been exploring the Gospel of Matthew. Recent lessons have focused on Jesus' baptism, His identity as the Lamb of God, and His calling of the disciples. The children have enjoyed creating meaningful crafts along the way, including paper doves, lamb masks, and "fishing nets" filled with love.

It has been such a joy to see so many smiling faces at Sunday School each week. The laughter, conversations, and genuine kindness among the children have been a true blessing. Their love for Jesus and desire to share His light with the world is inspiring. We encourage parents to continue bringing their children each Sunday and to model what it means to be disciples of Christ. We look forward to welcoming new families and growing our children's ministry together in the year ahead.





Outreach & Parish Connection

BY TRACI SCOTT

ASSISTANT TO THE RECTOR FOR OUTREACH & PARISH CONNECTION

connection@saintmargarets.net

StM 101 Class for Newcomers

Join us for our 2-week StM 101 Class on February 8 and 15 at 9:30am. Are you new to St. Margaret's or never been able to attend 101? In this 2-part session of our newcomers class, we discuss the Episcopal faith, our church's history, our various ministries and how to get engaged in the life of our parish. We'll also take a tour of the building. RSVP to Traci at connection@saintmargarets.net

OUTREACH

Walk with us or support us on Sun, March 1st to help us Keep the Cup!



Common Heart's annual Hunger Walk is coming up on Sunday, March 1st at 2pm at Crooked Creek Park in Indian Trail. StM is putting together a team to walk that day and we need your help.

The goal is to raise awareness about hunger in our community and raise funds to support Common Heart's food pantry programs. St. Margaret's is determined to maintain our fundraising title from last year when we raised over \$18,000!

Use the link to sign up to join our team and spread the word to your friends and family. Please register and/or donate today!

Support the St. Margaret's team here: <https://bit.ly/HWalk2026> You can also write a check to St. Margaret's with "Hunger Walk" in the memo line.

In Union County, it's estimated over 25,000 adults and children are hungry or facing the threat of hunger. That's over 10% of the residents of our county. 1 in 6 children in Union County live in homes facing food insecurity. Common Heart's food pantries are a lifeline for our hungry neighbors. Each month, over 5,500 individuals are served through 14 pantry programs, one of which takes place at St. Margaret's.

Monthly Saturday meal prep & delivery



On the 3rd Saturday of each month, volunteers make 60 hot meals and deliver them to our neighbors in the Waxhaw area. It takes 17 volunteers to make this happen each month and we'd love to have you join us! This is also a great way for families to volunteer together. We need help with grocery shopping, baking desserts, cooking in the St. Margaret's kitchen and delivering the meals.

Did you know that you can now use our Walmart account to submit the grocery order and schedule your pick up? Contact Traci with any questions at connection@saintmargarets.net

Please use these links to sign-up: Cooking, shopping, desserts: <https://bit.ly/newCKFmeals> Delivery: <https://bit.ly/newCKFdelivery>

Wednesday night food pantry at St. Margaret's

Don't forget that volunteers are needed every Wednesday evening from 6pm-8pm at our drive-thru pantry right here at St. Margaret's.

The volunteer slots fill up quickly, but you can check here for openings: <https://bit.ly/stmpantry>

New slots are opened the first week of each month for the following month and cancellations happen often, especially the day before and day of each pantry.

Cookies for Kairos Prison Ministry - due March 17 by noon



Homemade cookies will be needed again in March for the men of Kershaw Correctional Facility. Please mark your calendars and watch for more details coming soon!

We welcome new members:

Nicki Pegan

The Proctor Family

Bobby & Pat Rone

George & Carla Deckelman

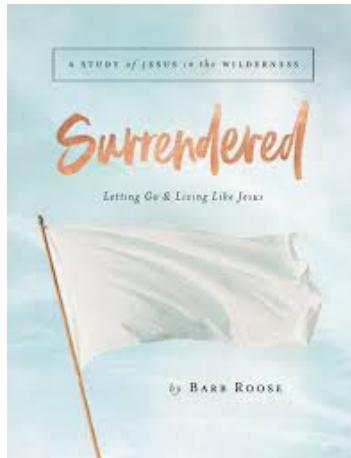
The Markowski Family



Parish Connection continued...

connection@saintmargarets.net

Women's Lenten Bible Study



Our Lenten study will begin Monday, February 16th at 7pm in the Youth Room led by Lauran Godwin and Melinda Shelley.

We will be diving into *Surrendered: Letting Go and Living Like Jesus* by Barb Roose.

The class will meet for 6 Mondays.

Click this link for more details and registration:

<https://stm.breezechms.com/form/5c2f5d3729>

Click this link to order your book:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/1501896288>

This study will equip you to give up control, reach for God, let go of fear, and experience the blessings of the surrendered life. It's possible to let go and live like Jesus and the result is experiencing God's power and peace as never before.

COMING IN MARCH

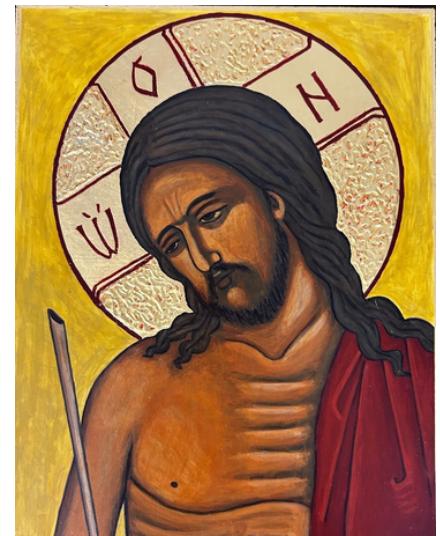
St. Margaret's LENTEN 2026 Icon Retreat March 9-13, 2026

Monday - Thursday - 8:30 am - 4:30 pm/Friday - 8:30 am - 3pm

During this Lenten workshop, we will write the icon, Christ the Bridegroom. Our Chaplain will be The Rev'd Sarah Hollar, who will lead us in worship and meditation each morning, adding a richness and depth of understanding of Christ and the days of Holy Week as we create his holy image. No experience is necessary to create a beautiful icon - just an open mind and a willingness to trust the process.

We will begin each day with Holy Eucharist at 8:30 am followed by gathering time and then working on the icon and the day will end around 4:30 pm. We will close out the week with a celebratory Blessing of the Icons on Friday at 2pm. Lunch options are: bring your own, or you can choose to order in. (If you choose to order in, a separate link will be sent to you to make your choices and pay.)

The fee for the retreat, including icon board, paints, brushes, gold, and personal instruction is \$150. This is a special discount for the people of St. Margaret's. Icon retreats like this usually cost \$495, but our own iconographer, Cathy Harrison, wants to make this wonderful and spiritual experience available to all that wish to explore this meditative art form. All you need to bring is a lamp to illuminate your work space and an apron to protect your clothes.



[CLICK HERE
to register](#)

LENTEN RETREAT DAY, March 14



St. Margaret's Chapter of The Daughters of the King invite you to a Lenten Retreat "Repetitive Prayer As A Workout for Your Soul" The retreat will be held on Saturday, March 14 from 10:00 AM – Noon in the nave.

The retreat is offered to the congregation at no cost. [CLICK HERE](#) to register. All attendees are invited to bring rosary prayer beads or rosaries, or things like loose beads, shells, or small stones that can be used to count prayers.



Update

THE JOSEPH PROJECT

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

2026-2027

We have received 97 pledges
to The Joseph Project
totaling \$470,500.

We have received \$183,800 as of 1/29.

Thank you!

Need to fulfill your pledge?

Simply [CLICK HERE](#), use the drop-down menu, and select

The Joseph Project under the Giving tab on our website.

You may also place a check in the collection plate—just be sure to write

“The Joseph Project” on the memo line.

Want to make a pledge to this new ministry? [CLICK HERE](#)

Thank You

FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Thank you to everyone who joined us for our annual meeting on Sunday, January 11th.

Father Todd offered an engaging overview of 2025 and shared an inspiring look at what is planned for 2026.

We extend our sincere gratitude to Parish Treasurer David Feldser for his dedicated service and for providing a clear and informative presentation on the parish's financial health.



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

Assistant to the Rector

The Reverend Fr. Matt Addington+
addington@saintmargarets.net

Priest Associate

The Reverend Sarah Hollar+
hollar@saintmargarets.net

Deacon

The Rev. Ludwig Wallner

Organist & Director of Music

Gavin D. Craig

music@saintmargarets.net

Executive Assistant to the Rector

Joanie Cameron

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Assistant to the Rector for Youth Ministries

Elizabeth Pfeifer

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Assistant to the Rector for Preschool Ministries

Dana Platé

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Assistant to the Rector for Finance & Accounting

Kathy Marakoff

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Assistant to the Rector for Children's Ministry

Jamie Peters

childrensministry@saintmargarets.net

Assistant to the Rector for Outreach
& Parish Connection

Traci Scott

connection@saintmargarets.net

2025 Vestry

Amy Pharr, Senior Warden

Philip Huff, Junior Warden

Bill MacMinn

Jenny Marlier

Kathleen Culpeper

Karen Paar

Erin Culver

Jeff Henry

Patrick Williams

David Feldser, *Treasurer*



*First Monday of the month: Prayer time in the nave with Father Todd, 10:00 am

*Wednesday Evenings: Food Pantry, 6:00 pm & Compline on FB live at 9:00 pm

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

 **REMINDER:** Wednesday Evening Compline with Father Todd, 9 pm on Facebook

