

# The Voice of *St. Margaret's*

The Official Newsletter of St. Margaret's Episcopal Church

July-August- September2022

## Mission Statement

The Mission of St. Margaret's Episcopal Church is  
To worship, to serve, and to form the spiritual growth  
Of individuals according to the teachings of Jesus Christ.



## **THE RECTOR'S DESK**

### ***GUN VIOLENCE EPIDEMIC***

Gun Violence is a daily tragedy affecting the lives of families in America and around the world. When disaster strikes, how do we respond? What should our reaction be? When our world shakes, when we are in shock – after it happens – after the shock has gripped our being – what we do next is vital. Far too often, when tragedy strikes, we expend all sorts of energy and effort to get out of our mess. If it is a family crisis, we seek counseling, and if it is a financial crisis, we seek a loan. If it is a job crisis, we seek new employment. In other words, we use our human effort to get us out of the mess.

According to John Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solution: Gun

violence is a public health epidemic in the United States. Every year nearly 40,000 Americans are killed by guns, including more than 23,000 who die by firearm suicide, 14,000 who die by intervention.<sup>1</sup> nearly 500 who die by unintentional firearm injuries, and more than 300 who die by undetermined intent.<sup>2</sup> This equates to more than 100-gun deaths every single day. In addition, every day, nearly 200 Americans visit the emergency department for nonfatal firearm injuries.

In 2019, the most recent year of data available, there were 39,707 gun deaths – 109 every day. Three in every five-gun deaths are suicides; more than one-third are homicides, while the remainder is unintentional, of unknown intent, or law enforcement intervention. Among high-income countries, the United States is an outlier in gun violence. It has been well-

## Service Schedule

Sundays  
8:am  
Holy Eucharist Rite I  
(No Music)  
On Hold for Now

9:30am  
Holy Eucharist Rite II  
(With Music)

Wednesday 6:30pm  
Bible Study  
Via Zoom

CONT'.

documented that firearm ownership rates are associated with increased firearm-related death rates.

The U.S. has the highest firearm ownership and death rates of 27 high-income countries. The firearm homicide rate in the U.S. is nearly 25 times higher than in other high-income countries, and the firearm suicide rate is almost ten times that of other high-income countries.

It is a common misconception that individuals with mental illness are responsible for gun violence. Compared to other countries, the United States has similar rates of mental illness, yet we have much higher rates of gun violence. **Mental illness does not cause gun violence – the problem is access to firearms.** While gun death data are the most reliable type of gun violence data currently available, it is essential to recognize those gun deaths are only the tip of the iceberg of the gun violence epidemic.

In addition to gun deaths, many more people are shot and survived their injuries, shot at but not hit, or witnessed gun violence. Many experience gun violence in other ways, for example, by living in impacted communities, losing loved ones to gun violence, or being threatened with a gun.

Many Americans celebrate guns in our culture and disregard the inherent public safety issues that a gun-friendly culture creates. U.S. firearm ownership rates exceed high-income countries, and Americans own 46% of the world's civilian-owned firearms. Thirty percent of Americans report owning a gun, with estimates of the total number of privately-owned firearms in the U.S. ranging from 265 million to nearly 400 million.<sup>13,14,15</sup> Most gun owners (66%) report owning multiple guns, and it is estimated that half of all guns are in the hands of just 3% of the U.S. population.

If you haven't faced great tragedy yet, listen, because you will very likely. We all feel sympathy when we see graphic pictures of gun violence. We all share in the despair with events like Buffalo, New York, Verdugo, California, Highland Park, Chicago, IL, and Akron, Ohio. It seems like it's always someone else. But what if it were you? When people are afraid of gun violence, this can also negatively impact the right to education and healthcare. It becomes traumatic to attend a school or visit a healthcare facility.

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2 Corinthians tells us that God is the God of all comfort. That he has the power and the willingness to see us through all the tragedies that life may bring us.

Now I don't mean that we only need God in difficult times. We need him all the time and should walk with him all the time, trust him, and rely on him all the time. I am saying that when a tragedy comes, we better have a shelter to protect us. We better have a relationship with the almighty God that will shield us, protect us, and deliver us through any tragedy.

**First, do not fear- have Faith.** I am not suggesting we should not express normal emotions of concern and uncertainty when tragedy strikes. I am saying that fear is not a spiritual response. We must trust God and not blame God. This is not God's fault. Some will blame Him. Some will turn against Him. If you make a pact with the devil, you certainly have punishment, but it is far more severe than any tragedy. Watching Christians get mad at God when things go wrong gets old. In a twisted way, they imagine they are punishing God when they turn away from Him or fall out of the church in response to the tragedy. But they are only punishing themselves.

Whatever has shaken you—God didn't do it. Sin did it. God allowed it for a higher purpose; we need to believe that and not blame Him. We shouldn't blame God but believe in Him. God is not responsible for our circumstances. He wants to save us from them, and He will if only we believe.

II Tim. 1:7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, love, and a sound mind. Fear will not comfort anyone. Fear will only bring more anxiety and distress. We are commanded to keep the Faith, especially when the world caves in when many give up on God and head for the hills. In Matthew 14:22, Jesus told Peter he had little Faith because he looked at the storm in fear instead of looking to Him in Faith. Look at what He said from the beginning when they first saw Him approaching, walking on water: "It is I, be not afraid" Yes,

**Second, pray and do not panic.** When panic takes over, prayer ceases. When tragedy strikes, we must resist the urge to respond in panic and in everything, by prayer and supplication, bring it all to the Lord. And now, we should continue to pray for those in Haiti. We should pray for America with what we face today and in the future. The natural man panics...but the supernatural man prays!

CONT'.

Psalm 91:1 He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. It's hard to see in the shadows, and it can be scary there until we realize Whose shadow that is! This is an opportunity to learn and a chance to help. It's time we, like Peter, get out of the boat and be a water walkers! Cowering in the hull of the ship during a storm is cowardly. It's time to step out, for there's a job to do, people to save, anchors to get set, life preservers to cast, sails to mend, rudders to steer, and opportunities to step out and make a difference!

We must rest in the "fact" that all is well even when we don't feel it. Bad things happen, but God is good! If God can be trusted with our souls, He can be trusted with our feet and everything that stands above them! We can be assured of the goodness of God in all things if we have the assurance of salvation.

What will we do when tragedy strikes? We must have Faith, not fear. We must pray, not panic. Don't run from the problem; respond to those in need.

Rev. Fr. Dr. Benjamin E.K. Speare-Hardy II



## Who's Who...

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## St. Margaret's Episcopal Church

5301 Free Pike  
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### Vestry

Agnes George, Senior Warden  
Mitchell Lucas, Junior Warden  
Joyce Stone, Church Treasurer  
James Bolden, Asst. Treasurer  
Barbara Bass, Secretary

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## Birthdays

### July

6 Curtis White  
15 Marlene Eskridge  
23 Judy Battle  
23 Sara Smith Custer  
26 William Reece  
27 Roy Parks  
30 Paula Ramey  
31 Maeda Thompson

### August

2 Valerie Jackson  
4 Harvey Toles  
5 Ellen McDaniel  
10 Phyllis Brunson  
18 Sandra Scott

### September

7 Thomas Clark  
9 Kimberly Stovall  
16 Lisa Emory  
17 Lisa Grant  
18 Brenda Wise  
19 Larry Combs  
25 Cynthia Kilby

**The Brotherhood Fish Fry and ECW Bake Sale is held on the 1<sup>st</sup> Friday of the month July, August, and September 2022 11:00am - 6:00pm see you there. There will be no meetings in Jul, Aug during the summer, Meetings resume on the 2nd Sunday of September 2022.**

**ECW meetings are held on** the second Sunday of every month after the 9:30am service, all women of the church are invited to attend, yearly dues is \$10.00.

Our Women's Weekend was a huge success and enjoyed by all in attendance. Thank you to Rev. Deborah Howard for her invigorating message on Sunday, and to Mother Abby Flemiester our celebrant, The Saturday luncheon was well attended and enjoyed by all. We were excited to gift the church with \$22,000.00. To God be the Glory. Thank you to Stacey Thompson Speare-Hardy, Women's Day Chairperson, and all the ladies for their dedicated and hard work to make our Women's Weekend a successful affair.

## Anniversaries

### August

6 James & Melanie Francis  
20 Thomas & Elizabeth Clark

### September

27 Jeff & Phyllis Brunson

# In Memory of our Loved Ones



*Dr. Harold C. Stratton, Jr.  
November 30, 1928 - September 19, 2020*

*Mrs. Elizabeth "Bette" Parker Stratton  
November 12, 1929 - June 12, 2022*

*Mrs. Evelyn Neely Hairston  
September 9, 1931 - June 15, 2022*

*Mr. Kevin Bernard Twyman  
May 8, 1959 - June 26, 2022*

*Mrs. Connie Hudgens  
July 7, 2022*

# **Making the Best of Everything for July, August, September – 2022**

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Looking back on the past two years is not very easy. Many people have experienced sadness along with personal fear. Although there are many changes and uncertainty for the future, it seems that more than ever, we need to hold on to and rely on our faith.

Perhaps these descriptions of faith will sustain you today and, in the days, to come:

Faith doesn't always take you out of the problem,

Faith takes you through the problem.

Faith doesn't always take away the pain,

Faith gives you the ability to handle the pain.

Faith doesn't always take you out of the storm,

Faith calms you in the midst of the storm.

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## **Understanding Independence Day**

Fourth of July (Independence Day is not only a day to celebrate the ideas of freedom. It is also a time to remember the sacrifices that have been made for it. Freedom doesn't come free, so on this day, as we honor our soldiers and those who have fought for freedom, let us use it as a reminder to treat one another with loyalty and respect and to work each day to be the very best citizens we can be for our country.

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## **Religious Thoughts**

What I've learned from life is that for every inch of sadness lies a foot of happiness ahead. I've learned that the simplest of times brings the grandest of pleasures and the hardest goodbyes often lead to the best hellos. I've learned that crazy chances guide us to unexpected discoveries and that tough times unveil the sincerity of people. I've learned that you have to hold onto our smile everyday and free yourself of that frown.

Submitted By: Ms. Brenda Cochran



## **Let Us Pray**

**Grace is when God gives  
us good things that we  
don't deserve.**

**Mercy is when He spares us  
from bad things we deserve.**

**Blessings are when He is  
generous with both.**

**Truly, we can never run out  
of reasons to thank Him.  
God is Good All The Time!**

## **Say Hello To:**

This month, allow me to highlight CAROL PREWITT.

Carol is a native Daytonian. She is one of four siblings, two sisters, Johnice Kimble in San Diego, CA, Pamela Berry in Los Angeles, CA, and an older brother, Ricky, who died during the 2019 tornado. She is the mother of Felicia Myers, and loving grandmother to two grandsons, all of whom live in Queenstown, MD.

Through a series of unfortunate events, Carol and her sisters found themselves living with their Great-grandmother, Isabelle Ellis, lovingly known as “Big Mama”. Carol feels very fortunate to have been loved and raised by this very special person. In Carol’s words, she was, “a woman who had no formal education, was full of wisdom, grace, steadfast courage, and the power of God’s love”.

After graduating from Roth High School in 1972, she attended Ohio State University, before finishing her college years, with a Sociology degree from St. Leo University, a private Liberal Arts University in St. Leo, Florida.

Carol is a United States Air Force veteran, who served four years in hospital Command as a mental health specialist. Her late husband, Major Dwight Prewitt, died on active duty May 7, 1990, while stationed at WPAFB.

Traveling the world, and experiencing different cultures is one of the many things she loves doing. While stationed at the American Embassy in Rabat, Morocco for two years, she taught fifth grade at a private American school.

Professionally, Carol wears many hats; Social Worker, Political Aide to Congressman Tony Hall and State Senator Fred Strahorn; Liaison representative for the USAF academy at the Pentagon in Washington, DC and Clerk of the County Commissioners, Montgomery County to name a few. She presides over her own consulting Company, Prewitt

Consulting, LLC., in the areas of Civility Training, Etiquette and Business Protocol; all just a sampling of her many talents. Like everything else, her social affiliations are numerous and varied. She is an Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. Silver Star, (25+ years of service), a member of the Black MBA Association, Dayton Chapter of The Links, Inc, an Eastern Star (Prince Hall Affiliate), Dayton Chapter of the National Council Of Negro Women, Twentig Inc., and Distinguished Toastmasters, Inc., to mention a few.

Her hobbies include, reading, writing poetry, bowling, skating and pilates, among other things.

When asked what brought her to St. Margaret's, she replied that she came as a guest of Fred Strahorn and was immediately enthralled by the warmth and meaning of Episcopalian protocol and service.

In five years, she would love to see us experience growth, with an increased membership that leads us to the ability of offering affordable housing to our community.

If she could change something about St. Margaret's, she would establish a Family Night for members and friends, that would include movies, games, healthy living sessions along with healthy cooking suggestions. By the way, She LOVES applesauce. Eats it with everything! Who knew?!?

Most of all, her love for St. Margaret's came through in her answer to what she likes most about our church. She loves the people, and the serenity she finds here, along with the rituals and the Sanctuary. It helps her remember "Big Mama's" wise counsel: GOD FIRST

So the next time you see this petite dynamo, with a jar of applesauce in her purse, wrapping up one meeting, on her way to another, right after a healthy dose of pilates, while taking time to greet each person with a smile and a hug,

**SAY HELLO TO..... CAROL PREWITT**

**Submitted By: Ms. Judy Wilso**



### **Presiding Bishop Michael Curry**

The following is a transcript of a sermon recorded by Presiding Bishop Michael Curry for the opening worship service of the 80th General Convention of The Episcopal Church, meeting in Baltimore through July 11. These remarks have been lightly edited for clarity.

Let me begin first by welcoming everyone who is with us this day, virtually and physically here in Baltimore. It is a joy and a real privilege to be here for the 80th General Convention of The Episcopal Church here in the city of Baltimore. I was blessed and privileged to serve for 12 years at St. James Church here, and I remember those years with great fondness. I love this city, and I am so grateful to Bishop Eugene Sutton, the clergy, the people, the staff, and the Diocese of Maryland, who have welcomed us so graciously. It's good to be here.

And now in the name of the loving, liberating, and life-giving God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

From the prophet Isaiah, chapter 51: "Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness. You who seek the Lord. Look to the rock from which you were hewn, from to the quarry from which you were dug. Look to Abraham, your father, and to Sarah who bore you." Look to the rock. The prophet spoke these words in a time of diaspora, disorientation, and dislocation. He spoke them to people whose world, for all practical purposes, had fallen apart.

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Around the year 586 B.C., the armies of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon began a prodigious march of conquest throughout much of the Ancient Near East. They conquered most of the countries. They approached Palestine. They razed the countryside, destroyed rural villages, and then eventually breached the walls of the holy city itself, Jerusalem. The armies entered the city, destroyed much of the city, entered the temple that King Solomon himself had built, desecrated the temple, and virtually destroyed a civilization. They carted many of the citizens of Jerusalem off to the land of Babylon, a long, long way from home, where they made virtual slaves of them. These were the days sometimes spoken of as the Babylonian captivity or the Babylonian exile.

These were days, as James Weldon Johnson wrote in “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” “when hope unborn had died.” These were days when later the book of Daniel would poetically picture the experience of exile as like being in a lion’s den, like being in a fiery furnace. These were days when a poet composed a poem of the experience, which is now the 137th Psalm: “By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept when we remembered thee, O Zion. How should we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land?” These were days of diaspora, disorientation, dislocation—strange and difficult days.

We may not be living in Babylon, but surely, we are living in strange and difficult days. The truth is we are here at the 80th General Convention of The Episcopal Church; and yet when the 79th convention ended in Austin, Texas, in 2018, none of us even remotely imagined the circumstances that would occasion us having to meet a year later—instead of in 2021, in 2022. We never imagined a General Convention where the opening sermon for our celebration of the Holy Eucharist would be delivered one day and shown by video the next. We never imagined that the House of Deputies would be in one room for Holy Eucharist and the House of Bishops in another. We never imagined where we are now today. It may not be Babylon, but these are strange and difficult days.

And to be sure, we are configured as we are for the right reasons, for public health and safety, but who could have imagined? Who could have imagined a global pandemic that would compel us for a period of time no longer to be able to worship in our churches, our mosques, our synagogues, our houses of worship, and be compelled to worship online? Who could have imagined or anticipated that a racial reckoning would be catalyzed by the death of a George Floyd or Breonna Taylor, an Ahmaud Arbery, and so many others? Who could have imagined the revelation of the pain of Indigenous boarding schools, of Native children buried a long, long way from home here in America? Who could imagine?

Who could imagine that the FBI would identify the rise of hate groups and domestic terrorism as one of the greatest threats to this country? Who could imagine? Who could imagine the continued decline of organized religion and institutional churches and synagogues and mosques? Who could have imagined that the people of Ukraine would have to defend their homeland for freedom? Who could have imagined January the sixth in an attempt to overthrow the government of the United States of America? Who could have imagined the continued murder of the children of God and gun violence at a grocery store in Buffalo, an elementary school in Uvalde, the Fourth of July parade in Highland Park, and our own Saint Stephen's Episcopal Church in Vestavia Hills, Alabama? No, this is not the Babylonian captivity, but these are strange, difficult, and complex times.

And maybe, maybe in the incredible providence of almighty God, the word of a prophet from the seventh century before the birth of Christ might speak to us in the 21st century A.D. Look to the rock. "Look to the rock from which you were hewn, to the quarry from which you were dug. Look to Abraham, your father, and to Sarah who bore you." Look to the rock.

If you look at the New Testament, Matthew chapters 5 through 7, you'll find there what is often called the Sermon on the Mount. And in that sermon, as in other places in the Gospels, Jesus builds on the teachings and the wisdom of Isaiah. Isaiah, in fact, is probably the most quoted prophet in the New Testament and most quoted by Jesus himself. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says things like, "Blessed are the poor and the poor in spirit. Blessed are the merciful, the compassionate. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst that God's righteous justice might prevail. Do unto others, as you would have them do unto you. Love, love even your enemies."

He says things like that throughout the Sermon on the Mount, a kind of catechesis of discipleship, if you will. But at the end of the sermon in the seventh chapter, Jesus concludes it, pointing back to the wisdom of Isaiah. He says those who refuse to listen to these words, to God's way of love and life, are like someone who built a house on sand. When the storms of strange and hard times come, as they surely will, that house built on sand will not stand. But those who listen to me, who listen to God's way of love and life, they are like those who build their house on a rock. When the storms of strange and difficult times will come, as they always do, and though that house may be shaken, it will not fall. It will stand.

Look to the rock from which you were hewn, to the quarry from which you were dug, look to Abraham, look to Sarah, look to Jesus, look to the rock. In a way that I don't think I was aware of

crossing Main Street from East Buffalo to West Buffalo was going from a Black community to a white community. Several of us attended St. Philip's Episcopal Church there in Buffalo, in the neighborhood of the Fruit Belt. And so we were being transferred to this new school across Main Street, in another world.

as a child, I learned this. There were two hymns that I learned as a child that are still with me. "Christ is made the sure foundation, Christ the head and cornerstone. Chosen of the Lord and precious, binding all the church in one. Holy Zion's help forever and her confidence alone."

Christ, the sure foundation.

And the other one I learned in grandma's Baptist church: "My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus' name. On Christ, the solid rock, I stand. All other ground is sinking sand." I learned that as a child, one in The Episcopal Church and one in grandma's Baptist church. The same wisdom, the same truth.

But growing up, I learned that truth in another way. The year was 1963. I was in the fourth grade, going into the fifth grade. There was a modest desegregation effort in the public schools of Buffalo, New York, where I grew up. Those of us who attended what was School 37 in what was called the Fruit Belt in East Buffalo, where most Black folk lived, a number of us were transferred from School 37 across Main Street to School 76, which at that time was an Italian neighborhood. School 76 is now the Herman Badillo School. The neighborhood has changed. But at that time,

The Sunday before we were to return to school in the fall, our Sunday school teacher, in addition to whatever the rest of the lesson was—and I don't remember it now—reminded us that just a month before there had been a march on Washington. This was 1963. She reminded us what that march meant. She reminded us that that march was a part of a movement for liberty, equality, and justice, not just for our people, but for all people, for all the children of God. She reminded us that we are part of that movement, and that in our way, going to this new school, we represent what that movement stood and stands for—the dream of a new America, the dream of a new world, the dream of a world where there's plenty good room for all of God's children.

She went on to say, and I do remember this: "Remember what you've learned here, remember what we've taught you. Remember what the Bible says—do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Remember, you shall love the Lord your God, and your neighbor as yourself. Remember, you must do your schoolwork. You must be excellent in your work. Your excellence is part of the movement for equality, freedom, injustice. Remember"—and this is how she closed—"Remember where you came from. When you go to a new and strange



place, remember where you came from.” It will orient you. She didn’t say that, but that’s what I hear her saying now. It will orient you when the world disorients you. It will strengthen you when the world weakens you. It will help you stand up when the gravity of reality will try to pull you down. Remember where you came from. Look to the rock, look to the Abrahams, look to the Sarahs, look to Jesus.

A while back, a number of church leaders and members of our staff came together to develop an evangelistic campaign reaching into the secular, non-Christian culture of America. It was an attempt to take the way of love that we’ve been living with and working at and share this with the wider culture beyond the red doors of the church, to share something of the reality of this Jesus and his way of love, to share something of the reality of the possibilities that his way of love opens for all of God’s children. And so we decided to develop a social media campaign, an evangelistic social media campaign that, if you will, re-presents Jesus of Nazareth into the wider culture, through Facebook and Instagram and Twitter and any social media at our disposal.

A number of very generous donors and dioceses provided funding for this, as well as The Episcopal church budget, and we were able to partner with marketing professionals for a fresh strategic approach and content. You’ll see this later this summer and in the fall, and you’ll be able to participate in this, adapting it to your local context as a diocese, a congregation, a ministry, a community of faith, and be able to share. I know that it will be a fascinating thing, but not likely to get Episcopalians knocking on doors on Saturday mornings as a rule. But this much I do know—I know you’re on Facebook because I’ve seen you, and I’ve seen all your cats. There are more cats in The Episcopal church; Lord, have mercy. Anyway, I’ve seen you on Facebook, so I know you’re on social media, and this social media campaign is designed so that all you have to do is share it. And when you start sharing it, your friends are going to share it, and your friends are going to share it with the people they know. The more it shares—this is geometry, this is geometrical—it’s going to start to get shared and shared and shared. That’s what a social media

campaign's about. And that's what we're going to be doing. So look for it coming late summer, early fall.

But as we were getting ready to do this, someone stopped us and asked, "Have we asked people in the society, who do you say Jesus is?" Maybe have we asked ourselves that? Dietrich Bonhoeffer said

that may be one of the most important questions even for the Christian. Who is Jesus Christ for you today?

But have we asked? And we realized, no, we've never actually asked the wider culture, religious, non-religious, what think ye of Jesus? So we contracted with the Ipsos group, a global marketing group that does this kind of research. We partnered with them, and they conducted a poll of the American population. It was a comprehensive poll, which actually gave us a snapshot into the American population across all races, ethnic groups, all religious groups, all political groups, across geographical territories. I mean, everybody is in this survey.

And here were the results. Eighty-four percent of the American population says that Jesus is an important spiritual figure worth listening to. Eighty-four percent across all groups. Democrats, Republicans, independents, liberals, conservatives, religious, non-religious, Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, no religion. Everybody. Black, white, everybody. Eighty-four percent. Jesus is in.

Then we asked them, "What about Christians? What about the church?" Well, they answered. Among non-Christians in particular, those who are not Christian, 50% associated Christians with the word hypocrisy; 49% with the word judgmental; 46% with self-righteousness; and 32% with arrogance. And then, nearly half of non-Christians in America—hear this—nearly half of non-Christians in America believe that racism is prevalent among Christians in the church.

Now, before you think I'm Debbie Downer, there's actually good news here. It's embedded in those of us who believe that every problem is a possibility in disguise. Remember, 84% of the people surveyed across the board find Jesus attractive, something about him compelling. Eighty-four percent. The problem is there's a gap between Jesus and his followers. Are you with me? And it's that gap that's the problem. It's that gap that undermines our efforts to commend this Jesus and his way of love to a wider culture, to those who don't have a religious background. It's that gap, that gap between this Jesus, who is attractive, and his followers, some of whom often are not. But there's hope because Jesus told us how to close the gap.

In John's Gospel, John chapter 13, it's the Last Supper. Judas is about to leave to betray him. Jesus will wash the feet of his disciples. And in chapter 13, he tells them and tells us how to close the gap. "I give you a new commandment." I want you to hear that word commandment. "I give you a new commandment." Not a new idea, not a new option, not a new possibility. I give you something of the caliber of what Moses did coming down Mount Sinai with two tablets in his hand. I'm giving you the same thing, the same way, the same gravity. "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." The same way God loves you, love each other, with that same love. "For by this," and he adds this, "by this, everyone will know that you are my disciples, that you love one another."

Walking the way of unselfish, sacrificial love as Jesus taught us, closes the gap. Following the way of this Jesus, until his footprints and our footprints become indistinguishable, begins to close the gap. "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."

There's an old spiritual created and sung by African slaves who truly lived a Babylonian exile, a long, long way from home. That spiritual says very simply, "You can have all this world, just give me Jesus." Give me Jesus. Now I know that spiritual can be misunderstood to be an example of escapism, but I want to suggest that there's a deeper wisdom there. A

wisdom that grasped what Isaiah was getting at, how you live through hard times. A wisdom that Jesus was getting at, how you live for such a time as this.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer said it this way: “The task of the Christian is to allow Christ to become the center of their lives.” That’s what the

slave was talking about. You can have all this world; you give me Jesus, and I’ll make it.

But doing that is not easy. I know that. But fortunately for us, there are ancient, time-tested ways, spiritual practices, that are intended and designed, if you will, to be pathways for the Spirit who can help us. Stay with me. I’m coming to the conclusion. Just stay with me. These pathways are spiritual practices, and they’ve been used. Moses on Mount Sinai before the burning bush, hearing that voice: “Moses, Moses, I have heard the cry of my people who are in Egypt. I had seen their affliction because of their taskmasters, and I have come down to deliver them. Now I will send you to Pharaoh to tell old Pharaoh, ‘Let my people go.’” All of that happened while Moses was in a state of contemplation, meditation—a spiritual practice that opened the pathway for him to hear the voice of God.

These spiritual practices of prayer, of reflection, of action, they’re pathways for the Spirit, if you will, for the amazing grace of God to do God’s work in us. There’s a song that says it this way: “There’s a sweet, sweet Spirit in this place, and I know it is the Spirit of the Lord. Sweet Holy Spirit, sweet heavenly dove.” Listen to this: “Stay right here with us, filling us with your love.” When there’s a pathway for the Spirit, filling us with God’s love, that love is Christ at the center of our lives, and that love can overflow through us. Like the old hymn says, “Breathe on me, breath of God, fill me with life anew, that I may love what thou dost love and do what thou wouldst do.”

You'll find many spiritual practices that you can use, free of charge on the Way of Love section of The Episcopal Church website. Go there and use them; they're there for you, different efforts, group efforts, individual resources. A new one is coming out at the end of July, a nine-session curriculum called "Centered" for small, gathered communities online on Zoom or in person to actually practice this de-centering self and enthroning Christ at the center of our lives.

But the truth is, we've been doing this for a while. We've actually been practicing this spiritual practice for a while. When I first became presiding bishop, we made a video in New York City on 42nd Street. And in that video, I talked about us being the Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement with Christ at the center. And in that video, I said, there's a moment in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist when we de-center self and when Christ is centered among us and in us.

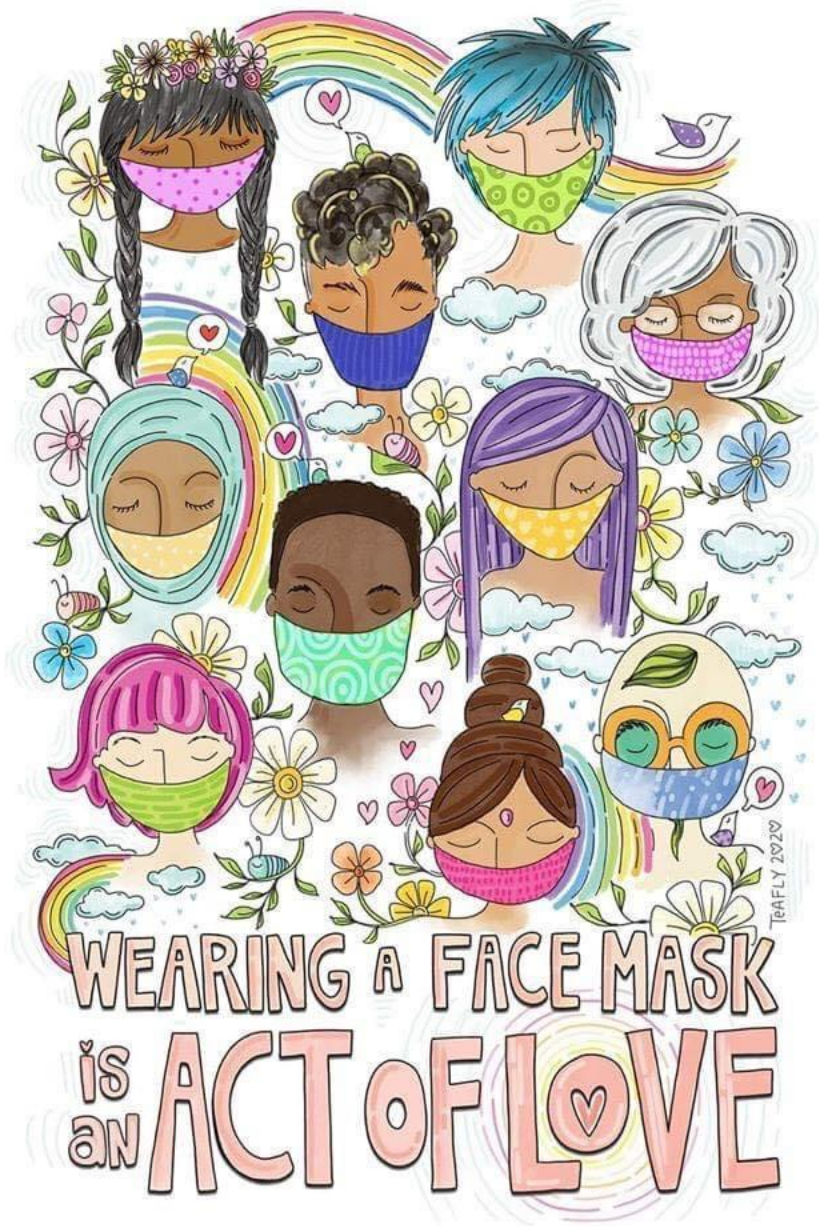
And you know when that moment is—it's at the reading of the Holy Gospel. For all the reading of other passages of Scripture, we are seated; but when it is time for the reading of the Holy Gospel, as we are able, we stand up. And very often there is a procession from the altar or from up in the sanctuary into the nave. Sometimes it's a grand procession with a cross or a verger, or sometimes even incense and acolytes with torches and a Gospel book, an adorned Gospel book, down to the center of the nave; and the whole room—notice what happens—the whole room turns, reorients itself to where the Gospel is being read. It is as though we all turn around, bishops take off their hats. Now, the whole room turns around, stands up, Christ at the center. "Blessed are the poor and the poor in spirit. Blessed are the merciful. Do unto others, as you would have them do unto you. Love, love even your enemies. A new command I give you, that you love one another."

There's ancient wisdom here. Because when Christ is the center, when we say yes to the way of unselfish, sacrificial love, then we do the work of racial reconciliation and justice. Then we're able to do the work of truth-telling and reckoning and healing. And then we can help our

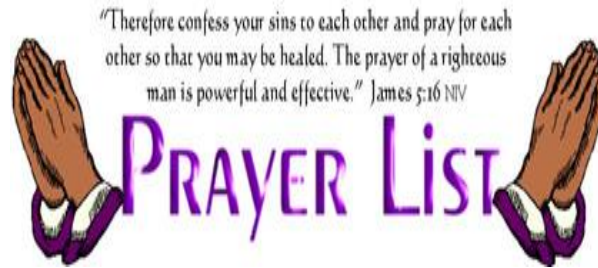
church and help our land be a land where there's plenty good room for all of God's children. So remember. Remember where you came from. Remember your baptism. Remember this Jesus. Remember and be remembered as God's new creation, God's beloved, God's precious child. And remember, as the late Bishop Barbara Harris told us over and over again, the God behind you is greater than any problem ahead of you.

"My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus' name. On Christ the solid rock I stand. All other ground is sinking sand."

**God love you. God bless you. And may God hold us all in those almighty hands of love. Amen.**



WEARING A FACE MASK  
IS AN ACT OF LOVE



**Bernadette Wills**, 4821 Old Hickory Place, Trotwood, Ohio 45426  
**Beverly Barker**, 5012 Heatherton Dr., Trotwood, Ohio 45426, (937) 837-0949  
**Billy Jean Edwards**, Bette and Harold Stratton's son's mother-in-law  
**Connie Hudgens**, 5790 Denlinger Rd., Trotwood, OH 45426, (937) 854-7864  
**Donna Wright**, 413 Majestic Dr., Dayton, OH, 45417 (937) 263-3700  
**Fr. George Kimani**, 303 W. Herr St., Englewood, OH 937 708-6129  
**Frank Carr**, 1969 Section Rd, Apt 309, Cincinnati, OH, 45237 (513) 628-6605  
**Harvey Toles**, Walnut Creek Assisted Living, 2501 Keystone Club Drive, Suite #650 Dayton, OH 45439, (937) 299-0194  
**James Francis**, 148 Copperfield Dr., Dayton, OH 45405, (937) 540-8206  
**Deacon Jeanie Manning**, 825 E. Main Street, Prairie City, IL 61470, 309 775-3313  
**Joyce Bolden**, 2150 Poplar St., Obetz, Ohio 45307, (614) 491-7879  
**Joyce Emory**, 725 Ellsworth Dr., Trotwood, OH 45426, (937) 546-3476  
**Lucille Scott**, 1438 Chadwick Dr., Dayton, Ohio 45406, (937) 275-0587  
**Lukinta Lucas**, Atlanta, Georgia, son of Mitchell, nephew of Raymond Lucas  
**Madeline Moxley**, 531 Belmonte Park North #904, Dayton, OH 45405, (513) 633-6659  
**Otis Mae Williams**, 5790 Denlinger Rd., FC16, Trotwood, OH45426  
**Paula Ramey**, Wood Glen Alzheimer's Community, Magnolia Unit, 3800 Mall Woods Dr., Dayton, OH 45449, (937) 436-2273  
**Peggy Libecap**, St. Margaret's Hall, #221, 19860 Madison Rd., Cincinnati, OH 45206  
**Robert Lewis**, 1312 Earlham Dr., Dayton, OH 45406  
**Roy Parks**, Contact his daughter, Anna Carter @ 336 337-4176  
**Shawn Sandridge**, 917 Stolz Ave., Dayton, OH 45417, (937) 960-0778  
**Thasha Kuntz**, Cynthia Kilby's cousin  
**Theresa Griffiths**, Father Ben's mother who is in Liberia  
**Valerie Jackson**, 3650 Stormont Road, Trotwood, OH 45426, (937)837-6717



## CoCL grants can help with new initiatives

Planning programs, new initiatives or new ways to be Christ in your community? Budget tight, yet you feel called by the Holy Spirit to this new \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank)? Could you use some seed money to get this idea off the ground? The Commission on Congregational Life (CoCL) may be able to help!

The application for CoCL Grants can be found [here](#). If you have questions about your idea or the application process please contact Fr. Seth Wymer, Chair of CoCL at [rector@stjohnlancaster.org](mailto:rector@stjohnlancaster.org).

# Is There a Purpose for the Challenges We Face in Life Today?

Some people believe that difficult times stimulate growth in a way that good times don't. Facing challenges and navigating one's way through them often builds resilience capacity. Knowing that one can overcome obstacles, learned from struggles and be able to benefit from mistakes often lays a solid foundation for success in life.

The purpose in facing challenges is often unexpected but are non-the-less powerful advantages over our challenges.

First, Challenges remind us that we are stronger and more capable than we give ourselves credit for. Challenges also help us to cultivate gratitude and compassion. They also clarify what we truly want in life.

Facing our challenges is a way to push ourselves to determine what we are actually capable of and when we look back on those tough times that we had, we can be proud of how we dealt with them and also be able to remind ourselves that life does not get better, but also remember that challenges aren't always unpleasant.

The problems and challenges that we have in life do serve a great purpose. A life without challenges causes us to develop a habit of taking things for granted; and we may feel that all that comes to us is owed to us and we then develop a sense of entitlement to all of God's gifts. We often also fail to remember God. When we face challenges that we cannot deal with on our own, this is the time that we look for that higher power for help. We also begin to question the real meaning of life to understand exactly what the purpose is for us to be here.

We learn to take our attention away from the world outside and focus on our best through meditation. The first priority we should have is to spend time in meditation. Through this practice, we find a place of peaceful retreat within us and we find ourselves beginning to be involved with not only peace, but a sense of joy as well.

## CONT'

There are six common challenges in our lives that we should overcome if we are anxious to become better people and live fruitful lives. The first one is LOSS -whether you lose your job or even a relationship, loss is an inevitable part of life. It is one of life's biggest challenges, but it does give us an opportunity to reflect on what is truly important so that we can keep moving forward.

Failure is the second necessity. There is not one single person who has not experience failure. In order to grow, we must fail and the fact is that failure is a natural check point on our journey, one that allows us to evaluate our choices in how we believe, so that we are able to make improvement.

Setbacks is the third necessity. These have several names such as missteps, monkey wrenches, and unforeseen circumstances. These setbacks are ever present on our journey to became a better person and having a full face.

Our moral compass which means right from wrong for ourselves in every life challenge. We may agree in one ideology and another one tomorrow. Deciding what we believe is so important on our road to becoming this great person. Self- improvement is anchored in our own personal sense of right and wrong.

Here is one positive quote in being challenged. According to Martin Luther King. ***“Our very survival depends on our ability to stay awake, adjust to new ideas, to remain vigilante, and to face the challenge of change.”***

**Submitted By: Ms. Brenda Cochran**



## **Remembering St. Margaret's EC**

You may make a bequest to St. Margaret's Episcopal Church by preparing a new will or by adding a codicil to your present will. To make sure your exact intentions are carried out wills and codicils should be prepared by or with the advice of an attorney.

The most useful bequest is an unrestricted bequest for the general purpose of the Church. This permits the Church to use your gift wherever it is needed at the time.

For more information on making a bequest consult your attorney or estate planner.

### **Membership in St. Margaret's Episcopal Church, Trotwood**

If you are currently a member of another Episcopal Church and would like to transfer your membership to St. Margaret's please contact the Parish Administrator at 937-837-7741 so that a request for a letter of transfer can be prepared for you.

If you are not currently a member of an Episcopal Church and desire to become a member we would welcome your commitment to God and the Church. All baptized Christians are welcome to receive Communion in the Episcopal Church and to participate fully in programs and ministries of the Church.

Individuals who have been baptized within any denomination can officially be prepared for membership by attending formal confirmation classes, which are conducted by the church. The Bishop subsequent to class completion will perform confirmation of prepared candidates. Dates for both classes and confirmation will be announced when they have been determined.

If you would like additional information or baptism, please call the Parish Administrator at the church office 937-837-7741. Planning a reception or anniversary celebration or just looking for a place to hold a meeting call for complete details.



## **Eucharistic/ Acolyte Ministers Schedule July-August 2022**

### **July 9:30am**

- 3. Judy Battle
- 10. Barbara Hudson Banner
- 17. Phyllis Brunson
- 24. Judy Wilson
- 31. Willa Smith

### **August 9:30am**

- 7. Jim Bolden
- 14. Cynthia Kilby
- 21. Ellen McDaniel
- 26. Brenda Cochran

**Greeters:** Sandra Scott, Barbara Scott, Yvonne Hodges

In Person Service continues with one service only  
at 9:30 am.

Communion will be the communion kits.

Please make an extra effort to serve when scheduled or **if absolutely unable please make arrangements to trade with someone.** Thank you for your dedication and support to this ministry.

Peace and Blessings,  
Phyllis Brunson

## Readers Schedule July-August 2022

### July 9:30am

- 3. Brenda Cochran  
Robert Bass  
Jim Bolden
- 10. Judy Battle  
Gloria Johnson Oatts  
Raymond Lucas
- 17. Phyllis Brunson  
Robert Stockton  
Wanja Kamani
- 24. Monty Reece  
Judy Battle  
Brenda Cochran
- 31. Gloria Johnson Oatts  
Judy Wilson  
Robert Bass

### August 9:30am

- 7. Jim Bolden  
Brenda Cochran  
Raymond Lucas
- 14. Wanja Kamani  
Judy Battle  
Gloria Johnson Oatts
- 21. Robert Bass  
Judy Wilson  
Phyllis brunson
- 28. Robert Bass  
Monty Reece  
Raymond Lucas

Please make an extra effort to serve when scheduled or **if absolutely unable please make arrangements to trade with someone.** Thank you for your dedication and support to this ministry.

Blessings,  
Judy Wilson

**\*\*Announcements\*\***

**July bulletins are sponsored by:**

<p><b>Sylvia Hill In honor of her children's birthdays →</b></p>	<p><b>James L. Hill, Jr. July 1 Deborah Hill Howard, July 25 Terrie Hill Kelly, July 26</b></p>
<p><b>Ron Ogletree in honor of Laura's birthday , July 21</b></p>	
<p>If you <b>wish to sponsor bulletins</b>, please sign-up on the sheet provided in the Narthex. Cost is \$40.00 for each month you wish to sponsor. See Barbara Bass to make your payment and obtain a receipt. Thanks.</p>	
<p><b>Bible Study</b> classes are held every Wednesday at 6:30 pm via Zoom</p>	
<p><b>Noah's Ark and The Creation</b> – Mt. Enon Missionary Baptist Church is extending an invitation for us to join with them for this travel experience. The trip is scheduled September 13, 14, 15. If interested, information packets are available in the Narthex.</p>	
<p><b>Church Picnic</b> – we will be hosting our annual church picnic <b>here</b> on the grounds of St. Marggaret's (and in the parich hall) on Sunday, July 24. 2022 immediately following the service. Come dressed to attend, bring your lawn chairs, and let us know how you are willing to help. Looking forward to a festive time! Any questions, see Raymond Lucas or a Brotherhood member.</p>	
<p><b>Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872 – 1906) A Tribute Exhibition</b> – our very own in-house artist, Simeon Oyeyemi (who sings in the choir), is a featured artist in this year's exhibit. The exhibit is open for viewing through September 4 at The Dayton Art Institute.</p>	
<p><b>Registration</b> for both of our summer camp programs <b>is now closed</b>. See information for each camp below.</p>	
<p><b>SMEC Summer Art Camp</b> will be held July 18 – 22, 2022, 8:00 am – 3:00. Please contact SAC Director, Carol Prewitt (937 237-1639) or visit St. Margaret's website (stmargaretsdayton.org) for additional information.</p>	
<p><b>SMEC STEM Camp</b> will be held July 25 – 29, 2022, 8:30 am -2 :00 pm. Only 12 students will be accepted. Please contact STEM Director, Virgil Oatts (937 248-8752) or visit St. Margaret's website (stmargaretsdayton.org) for additional information.</p>	

## **Announcements Continued**

**Mercy Manor** is celebrating 30 years of providing services and support to women. They are extending to us an invitation to participate in their 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Charity Golf Trournament on Friday, July 29, 2022, starting at 9:00 AM at Meadowbrook Golf Club. Golfer entry fee - \$100 per golfer. Lunch is included.

Additional opportunities to support:

Donation for the meal served during the award program - \$25

Sponsorship levels - \$300 to \$1,000

Organization sponsorship for a hole - \$150 or carts \$100

Souvenir Journal Ads range in cost (\$25 to \$200) depending on location of the ad in the booklet. Please consider supporting.

Golf registration- contact Greg Fowler (937) 287-2911 or Kurt Jackson (937) 266-0921. Sponsorship, ads and lunch Barbara Hudson-Banner (937) 7 554-2239 or Sherri J. Walton (937) 546-4984.

### **Bishop Wayne Smith, Provisional Bishop, Diocese of Southern Ohio**

– will visit St. Margaret's on Sunday, September 12, 2022. The Vestry will address all needs in preparation for this visit. We will undoubtedly sponsor a coffee hour in his honor. Our Chancel Choir returns that Sunday, so let's plan for a grand event. Everyone who can be present that Sunday, please do so.

*St. Margaret's Episcopal Church*





*Living the Vision from Generation to Generation*



**St. Margaret's Episcopal Church  
5301 Free Pike  
Trotwood, OH 45426**

**Office: 937 837-7741 Fax: 937-837-7970**

**E-Mail: [office@smecdayton.org](mailto:office@smecdayton.org)**

**Web: [www.stmargaretsdayton.org](http://www.stmargaretsdayton.org)**

# Notes