

ST. MARGARET'S
EPISCOPAL CHURCH
ANNUAL REPORT 2017



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ST. MARGARET'S

YEAR IN REVIEW 2016

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What you can do



What we'll do together



Bring Yourself

Set a goal this year to add one additional Sunday per month to your regular attendance pattern. For those who attend rarely, you might start with a goal of one Sunday per month. If you regularly attend one Sunday per month, try two. If you usually worship twice in a month, this year plan to miss not more than once each month. If you're good about attending three Sundays... then why not four?!



Bring One More

Do you know anyone who might be looking for a church home? Do you have a new neighbor, friend, or co-worker? Please invite them and make plans to give them a ride or meet them at church for their first Sunday. The work of conversion is God's work. The work of welcome and hospitality belongs to the whole church. Your work is to issue the invitation.



Bring Your Light

Jesus calls each of us to be followers in the way, working to bring life and healing to the world around us. To do this, we need to be equipped by prayer and study, and work together to serve others. So, what is God calling you to do? This may mean that you choose a new class to take at St. Margaret's, or that you join a ministry, or volunteer in the community. How will you shine your light this year?

25% Growth in Attendance

One of our hopes has been to add an additional worship service to our Sunday offerings, but in order to get there we need to be filling our sanctuary every week. With each one of us increasing our attendance by just one Sunday per month, we will easily increase our average crowd by 25%, allowing us to reach that goal and add a new service.

25% Growth in Membership

If each one brings one, we expect our membership will grow by 25% or more this year. That would be an additional 33 households, bringing new life to our worship, more volunteers for our outreach, and new companions for our spiritual journeys. When we invite and welcome new people the Holy Spirit comes with them.

25% Growth in Discipleship

The number of people in church each Sunday and the number of members in our community are only important inasmuch as they serve our purpose: to create and sustain followers of Jesus Christ who will join in the reconciling work of God's kingdom. In a word, our purpose is discipleship. Our goal is to see a 25% increase in active participation as we all grow as followers of Jesus.

RECTOR'S REPORT

The Year of our Lord 2016 will be remembered as the year of "Bringing the Good News." It was St. Margaret's 25th Anniversary, and we celebrated by reclaiming our identity as a missionary community. We renewed our mission to gather week by week in worship where we are transformed by Love. We reclaimed our mission to invite others to be our companions as we follow Christ. We restored our mission to grow as disciples, serving those in need, while we seek to heal a hurting world. As missionaries Bringing the Good News, we set some bold goals:

25% growth in attendance | 25% growth in membership | 25% growth in discipleship



The results were all positive! Our attendance grew from an average of 140 people on Sundays to 159 people every week. Due to especially strong commitment from our members in the first half of the year, we found that we were ready to start a third worship service, which was launched in August. Our new schedule offers three different styles of worship to welcome and serve a greater diversity of people, and gives more opportunities for members to get involved in leadership. Our Sunday attendance grew by 14%.

To grow in membership, we asked everyone to invite someone to church, and many of you did. In preparation for the new worship service, members of the bread guild baked miniature loaves of bread, and 200 personal invitations were extended! Once again, we've broken our record of welcoming new members, bringing in 19 new households this year. This is a 14% growth in membership.

Discipleship was always going to be both the hardest to measure, and the most important of our goals. By measuring increased participation, we trust that God is working through our collective ministry to bring the good news into our hearts and into our neighborhood. Our measurement of participation in worship, service, and Christian formation grew by 21%!

Our growth this year reveals that the Holy Spirit is alive and working through us at St. Margaret's. The good news here is that we are not done yet! ... There's plenty of room for us to continue to grow as we look toward achieving these big goals.

And there is no doubt in my mind that we will. This past year, we also spent time discerning God's will for our future, and looking at how to build an infrastructure that will support the ministries of this parish. In April, sixteen discernment meetings were held so that every member of the parish could participate in a discussion about our building needs and the possibility of a capital campaign. In August, we presented a proposed plan based on our discernment, and sent a feasibility study survey to each household in the parish to measure our commitment and ability to build an addition. In November, we announced that we will proceed with a capital campaign and create next year the Peggy Bosmyer Christian Formation Center. Bringing the Good News will transition in 2017 to Building the Good News!

So, as I look back now at 2016, I am grateful. I am grateful to the vestry that has risen to new levels of leadership and partnership to make all of this possible. I am thankful for the hard-working staff who support all of our work with their skills, talents, and positive attitudes. I have been delighted to welcome the Rev. Ragan Sutterfield, who has stepped in with grace and wowed us all with his creative ideas and excellent preaching and teaching. And I am grateful for this entire congregation, and all the volunteers and leaders who make St. Margaret's the most welcoming and vibrant Christian community in Little Rock!

Thanks to you all for Bringing the Good News this year!

Mary+

CURATE'S REPORT



A flash and a family—those are the two words that come to mind as I think back over this past year at St. Margaret's. It is a flash because I can hardly believe that six months has passed so quickly. There has been much to learn, much to do, many people to meet, and so much to take joy in that the time has passed and half a year seems like yesterday.

Even though the time has passed quickly my sense of belonging at St. Margaret's has gone deep. I feel like this is truly a place where I can join the family of God and I am so thankful that this is the place where I am able to begin my ministry as an Episcopal Priest in God's church.

I began my work as curate on July 1st, about a month after graduating from Virginia Theological Seminary and making the move from Alexandria, Virginia back to Little Rock. Moves can be hard, especially for children who have not known anywhere else, and I have been thankful for the community of St. Margaret's for welcoming my family and me into your family. My two year old daughter screams "church! church!" excitedly whenever we pull into the parking lot of St. Margaret's and I can only hope that her experiences of church will continue to elicit the kind of joy she has found here.

My work as curate is a bit strange in that I am both fully working and functioning as a priest (as of October 1st) and still in training. I explain the work of a curate to folks outside of the Episcopal Church as something like a medical resident—a doctor, but still in training. I am ordained a priest, but still in training.

St. Margaret's has been a wonderful place to grow into my priestly vocation, not only because of the vibrancy of the community and skill of the leadership, but also because of the variety of opportunities to learn. My second week on the job I helped with the Interfaith Friendship Camp and so I was initiated into the wonderful interfaith work St. Margaret's is doing. This fall I had the opportunity to lead a book study on *How God Changes Your Brain* by Andrew Newberg as a part of ITSSM and I was also able to participate in the symposium with Dr. Newberg when he came to our campus. Few churches of our size have the kind of rich theological education that ITSSM offers to St. Margaret's.

Because of the Episcopal Church's understanding of ordination, there is a great deal that is hard to teach in seminary because of the inability to practice sacraments reserved for the ordained. I have appreciated the kind reception of the congregation and the helpful and gentle guidance of The Rev. Mary Vano as I have learned how to serve as a celebrant at the Eucharistic table. I have the privilege at St. Margaret's to offer the body and blood of Christ to God's people each Sunday and it was that work to which I felt called nearly five years ago. I am deeply thankful that St. Margaret's is the place where I am able to begin this ministry in God's church.

God's blessings,
Ragan+

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS!

In 2016 we....

Brought Ourselves



Brought One More



Brought Our Light



SR. WARDEN'S REPORT



2016 has been an action packed year for St. Margaret's! After almost a year of planning, we celebrated our 25th Anniversary with a big gala on the Feast of St. Margaret's in November, complete with a wonderful new cross for Williams Hall made possible by a generous unnamed donor. And earlier in the year, we began an in-depth exploration into the parish's vision for St. Margaret's over the next 25 years. As you recall, we conducted small group meetings held in our homes with many expected results, and some surprises!

Armed with that data, we then embarked on a discernment phase to test the viability of a capital campaign to provide for our growing needs. We were guided in this process by the Episcopal Church Foundation (ECF) led by Sarah Townsend who led us with grace and confidence. In addition to considering needs for new space, we investigated long deferred major repairs to our facility, as well as planning for some wonderful additions to our worship space.

Some of my insights and thoughts from this year:

- There has been an air of contagious excitement throughout this year, and ALL vestry members, as well as parishioners, have risen to its challenges with commitment, love and anticipation.
- We have a great spiritual leader in our Rector Mary Vano who believes in us, and believes that there is no reason why we won't be successful in meeting our goals for the next 25 years.
- It's been such a pleasure working with our vestry. Everyone has been kind, courteous, caring and respectful of one another (highly unusual in today's world). In addition, every vestry member has volunteered beyond routine vestry responsibilities to help move St. Margaret's on to our next phase of growth and development.
- And finally, I can honestly report that being on the vestry these past three years has been enjoyable and extremely rewarding. Although the vestry is the lay branch of the church, I can say, thanks to Mary, the experience has been a blessed and holy time.

Peace,

John Allison
2016 Senior Warden

JR. WARDEN'S REPORT

I'm keeping with our theme of Good News. We closed out the year by changing the light bulbs in our Sanctuary and Welcome Center to LED. And with a generous gift installed a FM hearing assist system. Now all our community can see and hear the Good News!!!



Many other projects were completed this year in an effort to polish the diamond that is our campus!! Sidewalks were cleaned, floors were polished, kitchen & closets were cleaned and organized, Sanctuary seating kept neat and straight. We did have to replace an A/C unit (they are 20 years old). Several maintenance projects were completed, light fixture, ballast, electrical receptacles, leaks, etc. We got the sign on Chenal relit. And of course the crown jewel, the beautiful cross was hung in our Sanctuary.

The building in general is in good shape per an inspection we had done last year. However, being 20 years old we are in need of miscellaneous repairs and upgrades which will be addressed in our Capital campaign. The future and growth of St. Margaret's looks awesome, the jewel is beginning to shine even brighter as together we bring the Good News.



Thank you so much for the opportunity to serve, it has been my honor.

Ronnie Beggs
Junior Warden

TREASURER'S REPORT



I am pleased to report that St. Margaret's started and ended 2016 with a balanced budget. This is significant because of the expanded programs initiated and pledges fulfilled slightly less than anticipated.

This past July, we welcomed our first ever curate, Rev. Ragan Sutterfield, and his family to St. Margaret's. Already he has been able to assume many task, help expand and start new programs and cook excellent soups for the Advent Church Family Dinners.

We were also able to bring back a new version of the 9:00 service, with an emphasis on the younger members of our church family and expanded music programs orchestrated by our Director of Music Ministries, John Briggs.

Then, we invested the groundwork for the capital campaign, to be followed in short order by groundbreaking of the Peggy Bosmyer Educational Building, a dream we have had for several years.

Finally, we celebrated our 25th anniversary. Do we know how to throw a party, or what!?!

(And, yes, we replaced another air conditioner.)

Again, we accomplished a lot within a very tight budget thanks to the fiscal responsibility of our staff and oversight of the Vestry. My thanks to the members of the Finance Committee for their sage advice: Jan Thames, Mary Waldo, Beth Echols, Al Eckert, Jim Bradberry and John Adams.

2017 looks to be as challenging as this past year, and we will need your continued support and timely pledges to make it as successful as 2016.

Bob Joblin

Treasurer



DEACON'S REPORT

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. 1 Peter 4:10

St. Margaret's used our many and varied gifts to serve others in our community throughout 2016.

Adopt-A-Street Cleanup: This year marked the return of this program to pick up litter for one mile of Chenal Parkway.

Backpack Food Program: St. Margaret's Youth gathered and packed food for hungry children at Robinson Elementary. Each Friday, children identified by the school go home with backpacks filled with enough food to get them through the weekend.

Episcopal Relief and Development: Members of St. Margaret's collected change throughout the season of Lent in ERD Hope Chests, which were presented at our Easter services.

Food Truck Meet Up: In addition to bringing our neighbors to our beautiful campus for delicious food and great company, we accepted donations for The Van; Safe Haven; and a college fund for an owner of one of our vendors who was a murder victim.

FoxRidge Assisted Living: St. Margaret's continued to offer weekly Evening Prayer, and Holy Eucharist once a month for our elderly neighbors.

Simple Gifts Fair: Our Simple Gifts Fair greatly expanded in 2016, with vendors including Beattitudes, Rice Depot, Wingspur Wild Horse Rescue, and sponsorships of socks for St. Francis House and food for our Backpack Program.

St. Francis House: We hosted our annual dinner for our veteran brothers and sisters in January in our Welcome Center, and brought Easter Sunday lunch to the shelter. The Men's Group raised \$1,220 with the popular fundraiser Rock for Camp, and the EYC delivered Christmas food baskets.

United Thank Offering: Organized by the Women's Group, our "blue boxes" were presented October 16 with funds to be used for domestic and international grants.

Uplift After Loss Grief Program: For the first time we offered this program for members of our congregation and others in the community so that to provide help for the journey through grief.

Looking toward the future, an Outreach Discernment Committee was formed in February to begin a year-long process of identifying one new way that we can make a significant difference as a community for our community. This group of interested members looked at successful models of Christian ministry, conducted a survey to determine what ministries St. Margaret's may be called to launch, and is creating a plan for doing so. We look forward to initiating and engaging in this important effort in the coming year.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord!

The Rev. Cindy Fribourgh



ADULT CHRISTIAN FORMATION



“Train yourself in godliness, for, while physical training is of some value, godliness is valuable in every way...” so the author of the Epistle to Timothy expresses the need to be formed into Christlikeness. Over the course of 2016 St. Margaret’s offered a wide variety of opportunities for training in godliness—conforming our minds, hearts, souls, and strengths into God’s purposes.

On Sunday mornings we offered classes covering everything from faith and food to humor in the bible. Here is a listing of the courses offered for adults on Sunday mornings:

- Hazardous Saints
- Lent: Time to Stop, Pray, Work, Play, & Love
- Humor in the Bible
- Food & Faith: Justice, Joy, and Daily Bread
- Church, Creation, and the Common Good
- Conversations with Scripture: The Parables

In addition to these regular Sunday school classes, the “Women at the Well” class engaged in a number of studies including the following:

- Lent for Families
- For the Love by Jen Hatmaker
- Letters from the Farm, A Simple Path to a Deeper Spiritual Life by Becca Stevens
- 1st Corinthians: Living Love When We Disagree
- Waiting for Wonder: Learning to Live on God’s Timeline

Our newcomers class, “Welcome to St. Margaret’s, Y’all,” was offered twice in the spring and then found a new expression as the “Introductions” class this fall—a course that offered introductions to key aspects of theology, prayer, scripture, and the Episcopal Church.

With our new worship schedule we also added a Sunday school class that serves those who attend the 8:00 a.m. service and Sunday school teachers who are seeking to learn more themselves. This class explored Christian Practices through the “Animate” series as well as a deeper study of the week’s lectionary readings.

Outside of Sunday mornings Lent Compass Groups studied the Growing a Rule of Life curriculum developed by the Society of St. John the Evangelist and during Advent St. Margaret’s offered a series of “Advent Family Dinners” where we enjoyed time together and reflected on Simplicity, Sabbath, Service, and Silence with a variety of guest speakers.

We are deeply thankful for all of those who have served as teachers and coordinators for our adult formation this year including Leah Dalton, Laura McKinney, Vivian Blair, Cindy Minor, Bob Joblin, and Skip Cochran.

Through these adult formation offerings and our regular life of worship, fellowship, and prayer St. Margaret’s has offered what we hope are opportunities for our community to be formed into the people God has called us to become through God’s grace.

Ragan+

PARISH LIFE

The mission on the parish life team is to enhance the personal relationships between the members of our community by providing events to help us get to know each other at a deeper level. As always, the focus of our activities is on fun, fellowship and community building. These events also provide us the opportunity to invite guests to be a part of our community at St. Margaret's.



PENTECOST PICNIC

The Pentecost Parish picnic was held at the Braswell's Farm on May 15th. There were lots of games for the kids. As usual, the Men's Group provided hamburgers and hot dogs with all the fixings. Once again, Erica & Leah provided the beverages as well as opening their beautiful home to St. Margaret's for our Pentecost Picnic. A great time was had by everyone.

INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION

The Independence Day Celebration was held at St. Margaret's on June 30th. The 4th of July celebration is open to all parishes in the Central Convocation. The Men's Group provided hamburgers, hot dogs & French fries! Shay and the youth organized fun & games. The evening ended with our annual parade. Alice Kunce led the way for the decorated bicycles, strollers, wagons & tricycles.

PARISH RETREAT

Our third annual Parish Retreat was held at Camp Mitchell on August 28th. Our retreat leader was The Rev. Sandra Curtis and the theme for the retreat was "Bringing Your Light". One of the workshops offered was Walking in the Light and the Dark. This showed us the Reflections from pop culture on our experiences of darkness and light. There was time for yoga, hiking, swimming, a movie and quiet time. Our Parish Retreat gives us the opportunity to get away together at Camp Mitchell, where we can enjoy being with each other.

ST. MARGARET'S 25TH CELEBRATION

What a magical day November 13th was as we celebrated the 25th Anniversary of St. Margaret's. Our theme was the "Academy Awards" complete with a red carpet entry. A slide show presentation of our 25 year together ran continuously with Academy Awards musical hits as background music. The Very Reverend Dr. Chris Keller, our first priest at St. Margaret's, said a few words about the founding of St. Margaret's. Michael Connery made a presentation about our plans for future growth, and Mark Fortune presented silly awards to various members of the parish. Richard McKay and the EYC had a photo booth for guests to have their photos taken. Bishop Benfield blessed our new cross....and then Mary presided over the unveiling of our magnificent cross that took everyone's breath away. Guests enjoyed hors oeuvres and drinks throughout the evening.



WOMEN'S GROUP



The Women's Group in 2016 was busy with service projects and fellowship! The women learned how to make knotted prayer cords, participated in cleaning up our adopted mile of Chenal Parkway, made donations to local female refugees with the "Women 2 Women" challenge, viewed the movie *God in the Box*, baked communion bread, crafted Christmas cards for residents of Fox Ridge, and shared many laughs at the, ornament exchange, Christmas party! The United Thanks Offering brought in a total of \$673!

If the women are not working on a service project, they gathered for dinner and fellowship at various restaurants throughout Little Rock. Regular attendance has steadily grown and I hope that trend continues in 2017. Women's Group meet the 2nd Monday of each month, and you can find details in the Connections bulletin. You may also join the Facebook page "St. Margaret's Women's Group", for the most up to date information.

Krystal Marsh

DAUGHTERS OF THE KING



During 2016, as part of our pledge to service we prayed for the prayer list and others who requested prayers via the DOK prayer box in the Welcome Center and the House of Prayer.

We were asked to co-host the March 5th Spring Assembly with Christ Church at St. Margaret's. We put together a meeting which included breakfast and lunch for about 45 attendees from across the state, a Eucharist with Bishop Benfield, and presentations from The Rev. Brooks Cato, "Darkness and Prayer", based on Barbara Brown Taylor's [Learning to Walk in the Dark](#) and DOK Sister Nancy Allen speaks "Between the Veils, A Christian Woman's Solidarity with Her Muslim Sisters."

We did our 2015 project work on color coding the acolytes' vestments, including providing new wooden hangers for the acolyte and other vestments. We will be working on keeping them organized at least monthly.

Our future projects in 2017 include making T-shirt dresses for families in the Arkansas Delta, which The Rev. Cindy Fribourgh suggested was a very needy area of our own state. We also will be preparing bags that can handed out to homeless people as we see them along the streets we frequent. We will be including items such as socks, gloves, scarves, toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, pop-top canned food, bottled water, granola/protein bars, etc. and will be asking the congregation to join us in supplying items for these dresses and bags.

We hope to grow our number in 2017 and ask that any ladies who might be interested contact Debby Walter, Marolyn Ogden, Dede Hale, Nancy Daniels or me for further information. Daughters of the King is a worldwide service, prayer and evangelism order founded in 1885.

Debby Walter and Suzanne Kirchner

MEN'S GROUP

In 2016 the Men's Group:

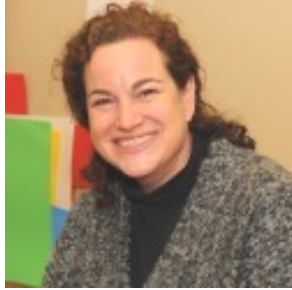
- Cooked 12 Second Sunday breakfasts
- Provided fresh baked cookies for Sundays when breakfast was not served.
- Prepared and hosted one Catfish Dinner for ~100 people
- Supported the annual Independence Day event by setting up, cooking, and cleaning up after the event.
- Coordinated what we think was the 9th edition of the Rock for Camp fundraising event for Camp Mitchell.
- Supported the St. Margaret's 25th anniversary celebration by installing the new cross and preparing Williams Hall for the event.
- Supported the October 26th ITSSM Symposium – How God Changes your Brain by setting up for the event.
- Provided and cooked the main course for the January St. Francis House Veteran's meal.
- Participated in the St. Margaret's Adopt-a-Road program.
- Through the support of the congregation and the efforts of the men of the church, we happily report that we have met all of our charitable goals for 2016:
 - \$1000 to the general operating fund of Camp Mitchell
 - \$900 (3 scholarships) for the Robert R. Brown camp for adults with developmental challenges
 - \$250 St Francis House Angel Tree donation
 - \$250 Salvation Army Angel Tree donation
- And, one last item, a check for \$400 will be given to the Reverend Mary Vano this month for use in her discretionary fund to assist those in need.



+ Alf Williams



INCORPORATION



Incorporation ministry includes:

Helping to greet visitors and newcomers, preparing and providing information folders

Recording attendance

Following up with visitors and delivering a loaf of bread.

Responding to requests for information about St. Margaret's or the Episcopal Church

Weekly visitor reports to staff, hospitality team leaders and neighborhood shepherds

Following up with missing members and welcoming back returning members

Inviting newcomers to newcomer class and membership

Newcomer gatherings

Quarterly new member welcome rites

Supporting greeter team leaders Alan and Leigh Anne Bennett and neighborhood shepherds

Coordinating after worship coffee hours

Participation in the Growth and Evangelism team

Encouraging members and newcomers to participate in ministry, through the Gifts of Life event on Rally Day

We welcomed 37 new members in 2016!

Focus in 2017:

Continue to strengthen our hospitality ministry to ensure that everyone who enters St. Margaret's feels comfortable and welcomed.

Continue to welcome newcomers to St. Margaret's, especially by strengthening greeter team.

Continue to invite members into deeper relationship with God through worship and prayer, formation, fellowship, and service .

NURSERY

- Elizabeth Connery continued as director
- The nursery was staffed by Rachel Walter, Savannah Marshall, Kathleen Connery, and Stephanie Harpole, who joined the staff in July.
- Dana Downes, Kris Alexander, and Hailey Strother served as substitute caregivers.
- Staff cared for 23 children, with an average Sunday attendance of 6 children
- Childcare was offered each Sunday from 9:15-11:45, as well as during various adult formation classes, parish retreat, and special worship services.

FAMILY MINISTRY

- Information was distributed during Epiphany, Lent, Holy Week and Easter, Advent and Christmas for families' use.
- Each Sunday, a worship packet was prepared for the youngest children and included an age-appropriate version of that day's readings.
- The Women at the Well class continued to meet each Sunday during formation time, some Sundays joining the ongoing Adult Formation classes. We studied Lent for Families with Kim Baker, For the Love by Jen Hatmaker, Letters from the Farm by Becca Stevens, First Corinthians: Living Love When We Disagree by Melissa Spoelstra, and Waiting for Wonder: Learning to Live on God's Timeline by Marlo Schalesky
- Prayer books and beaded bookmarks were presented to those being confirmed, reaffirmed, and received
- Blankets were given to graduating seniors, and prayer beads were given to a student traveling overseas for graduate studies.
- Children returning to school in the fall were given a special blessing and backpack charm
- We hosted an Advent Event, St. Nicholas visit, Christmas tree decorating party and chili a supper.
- The Christ Child Guild ministered to families by: praying for families expecting a child, prayers of thanksgiving at the birth of their child, delivering a meal, welcoming the baby during the Sunday service with a cradle cross. Personalized prayers, based on original artwork by Jane Holt, were given to each new baby. At baptism, each child was given a faith basket, a prayer card, a signed parchment, and a baptism banner.
- An adult who was baptized was given a Bible.

PARENT'S DAY OUT

- 13th year of operation directed by Elizabeth Connery
- Program offered Tuesdays and Thursday from 9:00-2:00 for two sessions during the spring and the fall
- Classrooms were staffed by Dana Downes , Tammy Gridley, Jerra Hollinger, Teri Fritch, Hope Bucher, Stephanie Harpole, and Savannah Marshall.
- Amanda Peters, Rachel Walter, Kathleen Connery, and Kris Alexander substituted as available

MUSIC & LITURGY



Thank you to our Parish Choir for their continued service to St. Margaret's. They are the backbone of our music program, presenting over sixty anthems throughout the last year. Holy Week alone saw the choir singing in six services in eight days! Their dedication is vital to the quality of music we enjoy on a weekly basis.

Thanks to the generosity of many parishioners, we enjoyed guest musicians at multiple services this year, including Easter, Independence Day, The Feast of St. Margaret, and Christmas Eve.

We launched the new nine o'clock service, with our Soprano Section Leader, Elizabeth Wheeler, taking on additional duties as Assistant Music Director. Elizabeth and I, together with Mary Vano, are working to further fulfill the worshipping needs of our parish. We welcome your participation, whatever your musical abilities, as we build the music program in this service.

Elizabeth has also begun to offer instrumental lessons here at the church in the hopes that we can nurture a new generation of musicians at St. Margaret's. We hope to expand that program in the new year to include voice lessons.

Our facilities continue to be used for performances by various outside groups such as local piano teachers and Episcopal Collegiate School's Choir and Orchestra.

Thank you to St. Margaret's for making it possible for me to attend the Sewanee Church Music Conference at The University of the South. This was my fifth year attending this gathering of Episcopal musicians, and it plays a vital role in my personal spiritual formation. In addition, I am continuing work on my Master of Voice Pedagogy at Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey, with approximately half of my course work completed.



Whether you've sung with us in the past, in other parishes, or never before, I encourage you to join us as we make a joyful noise!

John Alec Briggs

ITSSM



The Institute for Theological Studies at St. Margaret's is a ministry of St. Margaret's Episcopal Church, established for the benefit of the community and the wider church. Our overarching aim is to promote "faith with understanding."

The ITSSM continues to evolve. The initial start-up grant that provided the bulk of the funds for the ITSSM has reached its end. Nevertheless, the ITSSM continues to promote "faith with understanding."

Our highlight for 2016 was a one-day symposium on October 29th at St. Margaret's with Andrew Newberg, M.D., as the keynote speaker. Dr. Newberg, who is Board certified in internal medicine and nuclear medicine, is a pioneer in the neurological study of religious and spiritual experiences, a field known as "neurotheology." He is director of research at the Myrna Brind Center of Integrative Medicine at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital and Medical College, Philadelphia. The author of several books, including the bestselling *Why God Won't Go Away*, his latest book--*How Enlightenment Changes Your Brain: The New Science of Transformation*-- is slated for release in March. His research has been featured in *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *O, The Oprah Magazine*, and on the Discovery Channel, the National Geographic Channel, the BBC, and NPR.

The Rev. Mary Vano and Dr. Donnal Walter joined Dr. Newberg for a panel and question and answer session with audience members.

The ITSSM Guild hosted the event and were able to make it happen with the help of many volunteers. Thanks are particularly owed to Jo Gibbons, Deb Cooper, Dwight Cowan, Susan Hiller, Sharon and Ronnie Beggs, Jay Bruno, Sharon and John Echols, Millie Lockwood, Elizabeth Connery, Al Eckert, Tom Strother, cJohn Keller, Richard McKay, Barbara Hoffman, Donnal Walter, Pam Smith, and Mary Logan.

A very special thanks is owed to Jan Thames and Skip Cochran who were instrumental in organizing and facilitating the event.

A book group led by The Rev. Ragan Sutterfield discussed Dr. Newberg's book *How God Changes Your Brain* over the weeks preceding the event.

The Interfaith Center of



The ITSSM Interfaith Center has become recognized as a community leader providing educational programs to promote understanding and peace among the world religions, and leadership in times of conflict and need. We are also developing best practice programs and are teaching others how to begin interfaith work in their own congregations.

Here is a brief review of our activities during 2016:

Interfaith Friendship Camp

The Interfaith Center launched the Interfaith Friendship Camp July 11-15 bringing together 33 children from diverse faith traditions to build relationships, develop awareness of people of different religious backgrounds, and strengthen their sense of identity in their own faith. During the week, children were involved with team building skills, meditation, storytelling, cooking, art, service projects for Arkansas Food Bank and Heifer International, and composing and singing peace songs.

Muslim Christian Dialogue

The Rev. Susan Sims Smith and Mrs. Said presented this class to Pulaski Heights United Methodist Church, Arkansas Women's Leadership Forum, and St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Fayetteville. This six-week educational program covers these topics: Jesus, Women, Prayer, Violence, Silence, and Dreams.

Multi-Faith Youth Group (MFYG)

The Multi-Faith Youth Group has continued to grow, now including high schoolers from six different faith traditions. They were involved with "Passing the Baton: Young Adults Respond to Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King's Testament of Hope" at Temple B'nai Israel on Martin Luther King Day; the Love Thy Neighbor prayer service; a multi-faith panel discussion at Pulaski Heights United Methodist Church; the interfaith event with the State Oracle of Tibet; JCA's Walk for CommUnity; the annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Service; and Winter Peace at Pulaski Heights United Methodist Church.

Love Thy Neighbor: Moving from Darkness into Light

On September 10 the Interfaith Center hosted the Fifth Annual Love Thy Neighbor service at St. Mark's Episcopal Church featuring musical performances by Mr. John Willis, the Central Arkansas Interfaith Choir, and chanters and musicians representing Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, Jewish, Hindu, and Baha'i faiths. Jewish, Christian, and Muslim leaders presented prayers of confession and forgiveness in a spiritually uplifting, diverse, and sacred gathering of participants from all the major world religions. The event was followed by the Interfaith Food Festival which more than 300 people attended.

ITSSM INTERFAITH CENTER

Interfaith Best Practices

Mrs. Said lead several workshops this year to teach others how to begin interfaith programming in their communities. This year she shared our best practices at Kanuga Conference Center in North Carolina, Synod of the Sun Presbyterian Conference in Dallas, Salt Lake Interfaith Round Table in Utah, Year of Mercy Conference for the Catholic Diocese of Arkansas, Widening the Circle Conway Interfaith Group, Episcopal Collegiate School in Little Rock, Unitarian Universalist Church of Little Rock, Second Presbyterian Church in Little Rock, Parkhill Presbyterian Church in North Little Rock, and Hendrix University in Conway.

Listen to our Neighbors Panel

Responding to the desire of others to hear stories about minority faiths, Mrs. Said put together a panel of Muslims to share their American experiences. The panel has made presentations at St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Conway, and at First United Methodist Church and Pulaski Heights Methodist Church, both in Little Rock.



Visit From The State Oracle of Tibet

Kuten La, the medium for the State Oracle of Tibet and the Dalai Lama, came to Arkansas with seven other monks in October to do public programs as well as to visit the Arkansas House of Prayer. The ITSSM Interfaith Center and the House of Prayer co-sponsored his trip. Hendrix University, the Ecumenical Buddhist Society, and the Interfaith Center hosted events that were very well attended, allowing the community to learn about our brothers and sisters who are Buddhists.

Leadership and Recognition

The Interfaith Center was active in planning, organizing, and serving in leadership roles at the Martin Luther King Day Interfaith Services, Annual Pilgrimage for Peace Walk, Arkansas Peace Week Celebrations, Annual Assembly for Interfaith Arkansas, Interfaith Thanksgiving Services, the Just Communities of Arkansas Walk for CommUnity, and the post-election Peace and Solidarity Rally.

Mrs. Said was honored as *Peacemaker of the Year* by the Arkansas Coalition for Peace and Justice in February 2016, and *Humanitarian of the Year* by Just Communities of Arkansas in May 2016. The Interfaith Center received the *Mimi Dortch Award* for Unity and Relationship at Interfaith Arkansas's Annual Assembly, and was recognized in the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette and local news channels several times for our outstanding programming.

Cindy Fribourgh

ARKANSAS HOUSE OF PRAYER



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MISSION

*Arkansas House of Prayer
is an interfaith haven, set
apart in Nature, dedicated
to contemplative prayer,
meditation, and quiet,
where all are welcome.*

Arkansas House of Prayer Administrator's Annual Report 2016

Emphasizing key areas of Visitors, Volunteers, Communications and Programming, and Building and Grounds.

VISITORS

In 2016, Arkansas House of Prayer has welcomed

- Nearly 1,400 visitors
- 37 new key fob users.
- 30+ children from the Interfaith Center's Interfaith Friends Camp who learned meditation from The Rev. Susan Sims Smith and Sophia Said.
- The Venerable Thubten Ngodup, State Oracle of Tibet and spiritual advisor to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, accompanied by Lama Tenzin Choegyal and seven Tibetan monks. All visited the House of Prayer for meditation before leading a program to promote interfaith understanding. Over 150 in attendance at program.
- New Year's Eve Worldwide Peace Meditation, held at AHOP and hosted by Little Rock area Oneness group. 20 total guests who meditated as part of a global synchronized peace meditation effort.

VOLUNTEERS

- We are grateful for our team of 10 weekend Greeters. Contact John Willis if interested in weekend volunteer opportunities at AHOP.
- We are grateful to Patti Bailey, Dan Blair, and Leslie Singer who concluded their terms of service to the AHOP Board of Directors as well as Sarah Catherine Gutierrez who is taking a leave of absence.
- We welcomed Leah Elenzweig and Michael Connery as new board members.

COMMUNICATION AND PROGRAMMING

- Launched Seeking Silence newsletter and distributed first two issues (June and November).
- New online application for key fobs at arkansashouseofprayer.org.
- New Arkansas House of Prayer group on Insight Timer app (October 2016).
- Fall Centering Prayer Retreat, in November, led by The Rev. Lowell Grisham and Dr. Nick Cole, which had 30 participants, several of whom were new to Centering Prayer. 30% of these applied for and obtained key fobs for regular use.
- "Love Thy Neighbor: Moving from Darkness to Light," annual interfaith event, co-sponsored with the Interfaith Center. 400+ in attendance at program and interfaith food festival afterward. Second year in its new venue at St. Mark's Episcopal.

ARKANSAS HOUSE OF PRAYER

BUILDING AND GROUNDS

- New exterior doors installed, March 2016.
- Planting of legacy maple honoring The Rev. Susan Sims Smith, April 2016.
- Additional roof repairs May-June 2016.
- All Hands on Deck campaign (Fall 2016) to repair collapsed Post Meditation Garden deck area at AHOP was successful, with all funds raised within two weeks of appeal. All repairs completed by December 2016.

ENDOWMENT

Our efforts continue to endow Arkansas House of Prayer for the future, for the prosperity of the building itself, the grounds and gardens surrounding it, and for its ministry. Our final goal is \$1,300,000.

To date, we have \$980,000 toward that goal, including pledges. This is a \$100k increase from this time last year.

We thank the Board of Directors, Dr. Christie Beck, board president, The Rev. Susan Sims Smith for her years of leadership and service, the Episcopal Diocese of Arkansas and the Rt. Rev. Larry Benfield, The Rev. Mary Vano and St. Margaret's staff, and the generous volunteers and donors who support this ministry with gifts of resources, service, and, of course, prayers.

Respectfully Submitted,

John Willis, Arkansas House of Prayer Administrator



YOUTH



The EYC at St Margaret's has been busy this past year!! The EYC now has 12-15 youth showing up for our Sunday meetings typically from 5-7pm. This school year the EYC has been fundraising and preparing for a summer mission trip to Nashville and Indianapolis. With the continued support from the church we hope that this will be a lasting memory for our youth. This past year we have also added a couple of great guys to our support team Rev. Reagan Sutterfield and Josh Palmer. Both of these guys have been great additions to our youth program. Along with the continued support from Ronnie and Sharon Beggs and Millie Lockwood our Sunday school teachers I think we have great leadership from the church.

As we continue this year we look forward to hosting our annual Pancake supper on Shrove Tuesday and continuing our Lenten tradition of Lent Madness, who is going to win the golden halo this year? Along with both of these events the youth also look forward to Youth Sunday on Mother's day.

The newest program that the youth have been working with year is the Backpack program. We support 18 students at Robinson Elementary School with food for the weekend. This has been great for the youth as they with the guidance of Terry Chacko they have been packing bags with at least 10 items since the start of the school year.

Overall it has been a great year! We look forward to continued growth in numbers and doing God's work.

Richard McKay
Youth Director



CHILDREN'S CHRISTIAN FORMATION

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd at St. Margaret's is a Christian formation program for children aged three to nine years, in which they experience and form an authentic, faithful relationship with God. CGS is rooted in scriptural and liturgical study framed by Maria Montessori's principles of education. This allows the children to experiencing the Gospel through sensorial rich materials. The children are free to work with these materials that represent the essential proclamations of the Christian message. The adults prepare the sacred space, which we call *the atrium*, for the children so that the children can respond to their relationship with Jesus, the Good Shepherd. The atrium is a place of community and worship rather than a classroom for academic study. It is a place to be with and enjoy God, listen to the Word, and to pray. Our atria were designed and created by members of St. Margaret's to reflect the beauty of creation and God's abiding love.



The Good Shepherd Atrium is a community of three to five year olds and the average weekly attendance is eight. The True Vine Atrium is a community of six to nine year olds and the average weekly attendance is three.
Catechists and Gatekeepers: Bonnie Johnson, Drea Razer, Debby Walter, Sharon Echols and Belinda Rogers

If you are interested in learning more about The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, please let us know. We will happily arrange for a time for you to observe in an atrium. If you feel called to serve in The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program, we would love to have a conversation with you about options and training.

Kris Alexander
Director of Catechesis of the Good Shepherd



ST. MARGARET'S MISSION STATEMENT



**OUR MISSION IS TO BUILD GOD'S
KINGDOM THROUGH THE POWER OF THE
HOLY SPIRIT IN BODY AND SOUL.**

We will grow our congregation, seeking a broad diversity of people.

We will provide programs to replenish the spirit, teach the faith, and equip our people to make visible the love of Christ in their homes and communities.

We will not wait for people to discover us. We will extend ourselves to invite people who do not know, believe, or trust in God, to find Him with us. To that end, we will contact the people of western areas of Little Rock, to tell them about our church and its programs, and invite those who are not active in church to join us.

We will make our church warm, friendly, and accessible to strangers. As visitors arrive, they will be welcomed. As they return, they will be personally visited and invited to explore the many ways they can become involved in church.

We will provide classes, groups and programs through which people may grow in their understanding and personal awareness of God as God is known in Christ, and enjoy the fellowship, support, and care of others.

We will be an energetic contributor to the welfare of our city and all of its people. We will build a place of hospitality on the growing western edge of Little Rock, welcoming others to share our facilities and grounds. And we will reach out and build bridges to other churches, communities and groups throughout the city.

We will strive to be a leading congregation of the Diocese of Arkansas. We will remember that it was the vision of the Diocese to build St. Margaret's; through the generosity of others, land was provided for this church, as well as the financial support to launch us well. We will do our part to carry the mission of the church to other places.

We will make the classic substance, depth, and beauty of Anglican spirituality and worship warm, and easily accessible to persons who are not familiar with the church.

THROUGH ALL THIS, WE INVITE OTHERS TO EXPLORE AND EXPERIENCE WITH US THE TRUTH THAT THE LOVE OF GOD IN JESUS CHRIST PERVADES ALL OF LIFE, AND PREVAILS THROUGH ALL SUFFERING, SIN, AND DEATH, INTO THE LIFE TO COME.



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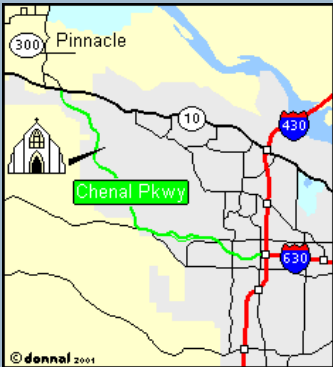
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ST. MARGARET'S ANNUAL REPORT 2016



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