



Go! for Lent 2017

A Booklet of Lenten Meditations from St. Margaret's Church

*A series of reflections on scripture passages that include the
word "go" — similar to the "Go! for Lent" meditations
from the Episcopal Church in 2016.*



Wednesday, March 1

1 Peter 5:6 — Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.

Pride is assuming you can accomplish things through your own volition and takes all credit for what God alone does. But humility involves being thankful for many blessings and recognizing that successes are a reflection of God's work in our lives rather than a reflection of what we can do on our own. This definition of humility as a dependence on God can often be looked upon incorrectly in our society as a lack of confidence; a lack that carries with it negative connotations for competency. But humility need not be associated with weakness. If we walk the fine line between confidence and pride, we will realize that self-confidence can be preserved while remaining grounded in the knowledge that our abilities are derived from God.

As Brian and I will soon be raising a daughter, we want more than anything for her to feel empowered and capable, particularly in today's world with the struggles she'll face as a female. However, I also hope to teach her humility when it comes to recognizing the genesis of her accomplishments.

Holly Williams first attended St. Margarets in the Fall of 2015 with her husband, Brian, after moving from Fairfax, VA to begin work as a physician at Annapolis Primary Care. She is part of the grants committee at St. Margarets and jointly serves with her husband on a coffeehour team. The couple is anxiously awaiting the birth of a baby girl in March.

Thursday, March 2

Mark 4:35 —*On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, “Let us go across to the other side.”*



This verse is a part of the parable of Jesus stilling a storm while on a boat and brought back a particular period in my Naval career. I was assigned to the USS Independence still in Norfolk, VA, as Chief Engineer. As the Apostle Paul spent much of his ministry sailing around the Mediterranean Sea, we did the same in the 1970s. Storms were prevalent, and steaming as well as anchoring were challenges. In 1973, a terrible storm made it dangerous to land aboard a carrier. A propeller plane, used to transport cargo and personnel, failed to land and turned upside down in the water. The pilot and co-pilot were killed, but eight passengers were still in the plane. A plane crewman, after what seemed to be an hour, was knowledgeable of hatch locations and opened one. Our 5,000 on shipboard watched in amazement as mail and cargo appeared followed by eight persons. One of my classmates at USNA – Paul Ilg survived and later became a Rear Admiral and Carrier Group Commander. When all seemed lost, a miracle happened. Thanks be to God.

Jim (Tug) Knorr has been a fixture of St. Margaret's for over 20 years. He has served as a member of the Brotherhood of St. Andrew, written articles for the Spire newsletter, and been in charge of the ecumenical Way of the Cross service at Manresa in Annapolis for many years. He has known his wife Beth, also a leader at St. Margaret's, since the fourth grade. His daughter Debbie (with husband Kemp and children) as well as daughter Suzie also attend SMC. He had a 31-year career in the U.S. Navy and is an expert crabber.



Friday, March 3

Zechariah 8:21 — the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, “Come, let us go to entreat the favor of the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts; I myself am going.

I know I've been blessed so much by having loving parents who challenged me and raised me in such a loving community, including St. Margaret's. I spent more than half of my military career overseas and have been all over our country as well, and I know that simply the fact I happened to be born in the United States and here in Annapolis is a blessing of abundance that many don't take time to appreciate. Safety, acceptance, education, opportunity, love – all things I took for granted growing up here and never imagined being without. But, when I left the cocoon and ventured out of my comfort zone, I came to understand the challenges so many face. Hunger, poverty, despair, hopelessness, fear... my personal experiences with these challenges were tempered by the knowledge that I could come back into this cocoon, but not everyone has that choice. So, when given the chance, I answered the call, traveled from one city to another, and served to protect and champion those who needed it and encourage others I met along the way to do the same. My traveling days are far fewer now and my blessings are greater than I ever imagined they would be, but I still hear the call to serve the Lord through St. Margaret's and our surrounding community. I myself will continue to seek the Lord. I hope you will join me.

Tom Wenz started attending St. Margaret's as a child, was an acolyte, and confirmed in the church here. He returned when he moved back with his family (Seung Won, Buddy and Abigail), haphazardly at first and then weekly starting in 2011. Tom's a retired Air Force public affairs officer and has continued in that field with the EPA Chesapeake Bay Program. He's a member of the Vestry, a Diocesan Convention Delegate, liaison for the Buildings & Grounds Commission, and in the choir (when time allows).

Saturday, March 4

Genesis 8:15-9:3 — Then God said to Noah, "Go out of the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you. Bring out with you every living thing that is with you..."



What a challenge that must have been for Noah. God asks him to leave the confines of the ark. God asks Noah to leave the ark that Noah built himself to God's specifications and live safely upon with his family and all the animals while God destroyed every other living thing. To follow God's command to go forth out of the ark, the one you built and spent an epic time living in, must have given Noah pause. What was he to see? What was this new reality? What could possibly be out there?

But Noah did go forth out of the ark, with his family and the animals in his stead, and was subsequently blessed by God for his faithfulness. He was given the great responsibility to replenish the earth, and was rewarded with the fear and dread of every beast on the earth and sea.

I'll admit, every day I struggle to go forth out of bed. Why leave the comfy confines of my own home when I do not know what the day holds for me? Why go anywhere despite my familiar surroundings? What could possibly be out there for me? But every day I do "Go forth" (some days more slowly than others). And every day I find, like Noah did, a world full of God's promise and blessings. I will continue to follow Noah's brave example and "Go forth."

Sarah Viscardi began attending St. Margaret's in the summer of 2014 and joined with her family, husband Mike and children Henry and Caroline, in 2015. She currently works with a college entrance exam startup, counseling students and parents through the college application process. She served St. Margaret's on the most recent stewardship campaign. She often attends church by herself, as Mike says God can also be found on the golf course.



Sunday, March 5

Luke 14:23 — Then the master said to the slave, "Go out into the roads and lanes, and compel people to come in, so that my house may be filled."

This is a parable of the great banquet and challenges us to push through our insecurities and exercise our hospitality side.

Interestingly it is preceded by the parable on humility and is followed by the costs of discipleship. It is important to stretch ourselves. Move from our own "echo chamber" while moving the boundaries we have set to ensure our comfort.

By being more welcoming, we won't miss out on what could mean growth for us as children of God and our church community. How can you push your boundary today and grow as a child of God?

Ernest Freeland and his wife Amanda started attending St. Margaret's in June of 2008. For her, it was a return after a ten-year absence; for him it was a first time attending regularly. His journey at St. Margaret's has led to many great things including his confirmation, baptism, and graduation from the Education for Ministry program. He has also served on the Missions Commission and been a youth program volunteer.

Monday, March 6

*Isaiah 55:12 — For you shall go out in joy,
and be led back in peace; the mountains and
the hills before you shall burst into song, and
all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.*



The context around this passage is fierce, but this one verse is calming and reassuring. I have walked with each of our babies through our neighborhood and state park. Each time we went out the door we were filled with joy. I was thrilled to be stretching my legs; the girls would be giddy with the adventure. As we walked the trails, trees rustled with life, in every season. The leaves moved to different rhythms as breezes and winds blew through. Sometimes we kicked through creeks, sloshed through mud, tossed leaves or crunched snow. When we were tired, we turned back to the house in peace. We were renewed, warmed from sunshine, tired from trying to keep up. The Lord reassured us with His gifts – singing hills and clapping trees – and we felt love.

Anne Sessions is the current Senior Warden at St. Margaret's. She and her husband have a media production company that produces spots, events and programming for a variety of clients. They have three daughters, one dog, one cat and a hamster, all of whom are eating them out of house and home.



Tuesday, March 7

Job 2:11 — Now when Job's three friends heard of all these troubles that had come upon him, each of them set out from his home—Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. They met together to go and console and comfort him.

A dear friend once called me in a crisis and said, “Just listen to me and don’t respond.” I loved that she said that because it forced me to LISTEN – to truly hear what she had to say. This was important and she let me know outright. She didn’t need me to offer a dull cliché like “been there, done that,” or to fix the problem, or toss out unsolicited advice. She needed her friend to hear. I did listen. Then I got in my car immediately and went to be with her. Job’s three friends heard he was in trouble and they gathered together to go and be with him. They could have said “Not this week – I know I *SHOULD* go, but there’s nothing really I can do to help...” or they could have convinced themselves that the journey was too long and they were really busy right now. That’s what is wonderful about our mighty God. In our deepest moments of distress, anger, disappointment, frustration, exhaustion, or personal crisis, God hears our cries without offering advice, rebuke, or judgement. Sometimes, God sends your best friend to sit with you, to provide comfort, and to let you know you are not alone.

Debe Tighe and her husband, Dick, have been attending St. Margaret’s for almost two years. Debe is a communications editor and has been a long-time graphics design and publications specialist, as well as a photographer and occasional community theater actor. In choirs forever (and a previous chime choir director), Debe sings in St. Margaret’s Chancel Choir. She also assists people who have LGBTQ+ family members, particularly those who are transgender, with a support group and as a guest speaker.

Wednesday, March 8

Luke 4:18 – The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.



I recently found a quote on a calendar that essentially said, “All are gifted, but some never bother to open their packages.” March 8 is the Feast of Geoffrey Studdert Kennedy (June 27, 1883 –March 8, 1929). He was an English Anglican priest and poet, nicknamed “Woodbine Willie” during WWI for giving Woodbine cigarettes along with pastoral care to injured and dying soldiers –enemy and friend, ignoring his own safety. They said his cheerfulness affected all he cared for. What is in your “package?” What can I bring with the spirit of the Lord? Personally, I have served at St. Margaret’s as registrar (fancy name for secretary) for four rectors. I literally type the words about our parishioners who are healing, proclaiming, liberating, preaching, and giving recovery that are shared during vestry meetings. I am inspired by what so many do. Maybe others are inspired by the words that I write telling of all the good happening here. Open your package. Share your gift. Share the good news.

Kathy Polk has been a member since the 1990s. She has served as vestry member, registrar, delegate to the convention, secretary of the Anne Arundel Regional Council, and member of the Diocesan Council. Kathy is a Lay Eucharistic Minister, a lay reader, an EFM graduate, and an EFM mentor. She volunteers for winter relief, Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets, Camp Allen, and assists with clerical work in the office.



Thursday, March 9

Psalm 48:14-Go through its citadels, that you may tell the next generation that this is God, our God forever and ever. He will be our guide forever.

The word "go" also appears in verses 12 and 13 of this psalm. I heard in this scripture that our God is great, and greatly to be praised in the mountain of his holiness - Zion.

"Walk about Zion and go round about her: tell the towers thereof."

I think of the many opportunities I have, we have, to tell of God's greatness during Lent and all year long. We are a family of loving, caring, supporting and accepting people and to me that is the best demonstration of God's greatness at work.

We "go" about this by encouraging others, offering a hug, smiling to a newcomer, inviting others to join, or sharing a story.

Richard Hays has attended St. Margaret's over the past thirteen years and came initially to help James (Fitzpatrick) with special music for Easter. He has since joined the chancel choir, motet ensemble, flower guild, and grants committee (as a grants liaison). He also serves as a coffeeshop host and solicited pledges for the creation of the formation building. Professionally he is a Senior Account Manager for Conference & Logistics Consultants in Annapolis, and helps source, negotiate and contract venues for the eight association conferences the business manages yearly.

Friday, March 10

Isaiah 58:8 —Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.



What light can I bring to the world? This is the question I contemplated as a 15-year-old girl on the cusp of being an adult in the Episcopal church while remaining a child in my community. By participating in weekly bible lessons I believed I was making my call known to the Lord. But where was my answer? I was feeding the poor and forming relationships with the needy--but where was my answer?

Part of my answer came when I formed a deeper connection with God during my summer missions in Germantown, PA. While pointing to the fellow adults around me to show the way, I learned my answer from the smallest of children. These children knew how to love wildly and chose each day to put their trust in the Lord. Upon returning home, I knew I wanted to be a part of the structure that supports the youngest Christians in my community. Take away the yoke from your midst and stop pointing the finger at others and the Lord will answer.

Newly elected to her third term, Julia Drooff has served on the St. Margaret's vestry as the youth representative. She grew up as a member of SMC in the youth program, serving as an acolyte, and working coffee hour. A senior at Broadneck High School, Julia participates in student government and varsity cross country/track and field. She will be attending Scripps College in California in the fall.



Saturday, March 11

Isaiah 60:19-20 — The sun shall no longer be your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you by night; but the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory. Your sun shall no more go down, or your moon withdraw itself; for the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your days of mourning shall be ended.



This passage, to me, is talking about the fulfillment of God's creation. The sun and moon are no longer to guide me as God's glory has surpassed them. I believe that in heaven there is no day and night, only God's glory which is light everlasting.

Personally, when times get stressful and overwhelming, I must pray and listen to realize what God has planned for me in this life. I must be confident that my choices and path will lead to the everlasting light.

Sarah Westcott has been a parishioner at St. Margaret's for two years. She lives in Annapolis with her husband, Paul, and two small children. She is an active participant in this year's "Bible Women" book study.

Sunday, March 12

James 2: 14-17 —What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,” and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.



This passage reminds me that I not only need to keep faith in God, I need to act on that faith. This especially speaks to me. On the whole, I am not so afraid of losing faith at this time in my life. Works guided by faith, though, are another matter. I do try to embody faith and morality in my daily works, but many activities only “check the box” for God in a mundane way—good and admirable actions that don’t connect to faith all that meaningfully. To go deeper, the remedy is pretty straightforward: choose to do works that touch faith at more profound levels. I have become involved with the St. Margaret’s team that prepares Sunday dinners at the Light House shelter. It is stressful and upsetting to be with people not so different from me who have fallen into terrible circumstances often through unpredictable cascades of misfortune. However, to break bread and visit with them helps me embody my faith in a way that I find very powerful. I can feel how much they welcome the simple fellowship of having me sit and eat with them. So faith in Jesus is essential to my identity as a Christian, but embodying that faith in such works keeps it real.

Ernie Tucker has attended St. Margaret’s Church regularly since the fall of 2000 and served on the vestry a couple of years ago. His main activities in the church have been playing music with the Third Sunday Band and helping coordinate adult formation offerings. He cherishes the fellowship of the clergy and parishioners of our church: a community striving to live in the light of God’s blessing.



Monday, March 13

Joshua 1:16 — They answered Joshua: “All that you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go.”

In this verse, the Israelites are committing to following Joshua's direction. Without context, this seems like a fairly easy thing to do. It seems understandable that they would support their new leader who was to bring them into the land that God had promised to Israel. Leading up to this commitment, a lot of tragic things had happened. Most recently (and perhaps most notably), Moses had died. His death was a direct result of their rebellion in the desert. It could have been easy for the Israelites to begrudge a new leader, especially one succeeding Moses. But, they took heart in the fact that Moses had laid hands on Joshua and blessed him, and that God had hand selected Joshua to be His new mouthpiece. So, with what I imagine to be so many conflicting emotions, the Israelites are ready to cross the Jordan River to take possession of Canaan.

The Israelites trusted that God had a plan for them, and they just blindly followed. When we really, *really* trust God, it doesn't matter what seems impossible. Because even though *you* can't think of a way that it's going to work, you know that God has told you His ways are “higher than your ways.” He has a plan for you, a *great* (and sometimes scary, and nerve-wracking, and lifechanging) one; don't get in the way of you being a huge champion of faith!

Dana Timmer, wife Stacy, and their two boys have been coming to St Margaret's for about a year and a half. She is a Program Manager at T-Mobile. Stacy is an Aviation Analyst at Rockwell Collins/ARINC. Dana serves as a Eucharistic minister, lector, coffeeshour host, and in whatever roles necessary during Vacation Bible School.

Tuesday, March 14

*Jeremiah 1:7 — But the Lord said to me,
“Do not say ‘I am only a boy’; for you shall
go to all to whom I send you, and you shall
speak whatever I command you.”*



As I reflect on this passage, it speaks to me of finding our God given voice and using it for God's will. It is easier to be quiet in this contentious time to keep peace. After all, I am retired, an old lady to some. No longer relevant. It is uncomfortable, especially in a new place to express viewpoints that are not popular or cause anger. Much easier to tutor, knit, enjoy my family.

Coming of age in the South in the 60's, I remember colored water fountains, segregated schools, fear of the KKK. I am part of the generation that stopped a war and integrated the south. More importantly, I am a child of God.

At this time, I feel that civil liberties that I have seen expanded during my lifetime are at risk. My heart cries for the African American mother who fears for her son's safety because of his skin color, the refugee fleeing the horror of war and persecution, and the child who does not know where he will sleep tonight. So during this Lenten season, I will listen to that quiet, still voice within. I will join with other like-minded Christians to be aware of the opportunities to witness and act. I will go. Here I am, send me.

Beth Arruda came to St. Margaret's five years ago, shortly after retiring and moving to Annapolis to be near family. She worked 40+ years as a physical therapist and healthcare leader in Hawaii and North Carolina. Beth treasures volunteering for St. Margaret's in outreach programs and enjoys being a docent for the Hammond Harwood House.



Wednesday March 15

Mark 16:15 — And he said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation.”

I've always been a question-asker. When I look at the history of my spiritual life, there was often a central question on my mind during each time period. Recently, that question has been this: “How does God act in the world?” That is to say, “What—if anything—should I expect of God? And what does God expect of me?”

I'm thinking about this now because another question comes to mind when I read Jesus' command to proclaim the good news: what is the “good news?” I learned the traditional gospel message as a kid, but today I decided to imagine what I'd honestly say if someone asked me for some good news from the Bible. What would I say about how God acts in the world, and in what ways is He good?

I came across a Psalm while thinking about that question. In Psalm 146, David is praising God for being who He is, saying that God executes justice for the oppressed, gives food to the hungry and sets prisoners free. God opens the eyes of the blind, protects the stranger, and supports the fatherless and the widow.

That passage describes a benevolent God who is incredibly active in the world. In a time where things might seem broken, this is the good news I feel like sharing: God is present; He invites us to partner with him in valuing all creation; and to do what we can to increase goodness in the world.

Joanna Tillman is a portrait photographer who assisted us this summer for our new photo directory and has been attending St. Margarets for about two years with her husband, Justin. She is on the Missions Commission and is serving as a Grants Liaison.

Thursday, March 16

Genesis 27:3-4 —Now then, take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field, and hunt game for me. Then prepare for me savoury food, such as I like, and bring it to me to eat, so that I may bless you before I die.



This passage is taken from the famous tale of deceit and trickery: the story of Jacob stealing Esau's birthright and blessing from his father Issac. Issac was sick and dying, and Jacob had taken a piece of animal fur to cover his hand and make it hairier as his older brother Esau's. Issac would feel Jacob's hand and confer his blessing onto who he believed to be his oldest son.

How far would we go to steal God's blessing from another? From our own kin? And yet, this scoundrel Jacob is the one who wrestles with God under the stars, who is given the name Israel (one who has striven with God and with humans, and has prevailed), who is blessed beyond measure. Of course, the devious DNA runs hard in the Genesis family, as Jacob's children threw the youngest, Joseph, into a well to die.

During Lent, and all seasons of penitence, it is refreshing to remember that God's blessing is freely given, and cannot be stolen or taken. It does not leave us. Nor does it lavish riches upon us, or give us an ease of life. When we hear people say how "blessed" they are, it usually has to do with good circumstances falling upon them. Genesis, Issac and Jacob remind us that God's blessing may mean nothing more than God with us, and nothing less than God walking with us in our darkest, most devious moments.

The Rev. Peter W. Mayer has been the Rector of St. Margaret's since 2010. He lives in Arnold with his wife, Allison, and children, Sarah and Allen. He is an avid fan of the Boston Bruins, cats, and Pearl Jam.



Friday March 17

Matthew 2:7-8 — Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage."

I pulled a book off my shelf this fall called *Remaking the World*. It contains the speeches of a Lutheran minister from the early 30's to the early 60's and encourages people to examine their ideas, motives and aims. He encourages absolute truth, absolute love, absolute unselfishness and absolute purity. In 2013, I spent three weeks at a retreat center in India that uses these principles as the ethical foundation for business, politics and life. The message was that you remake the world by beginning with your own heart, examining your own motives and making amends for your own wrongs. Wow, try doing this every day. This Lent, I am reconsidering where I need to GO and what I need to do for the kingdom in this very fractured time. This morning my quiet time included Hebrews 13:1-8. The phrases that caught my attention included, "The Lord is my helper, I will not fear; what can man do to me? ... Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. So do not be swept off your course by all sorts of outlandish teaching; it is good that our souls should gain their strength from the grace of God...." Let us be aware of God's presence and help, intentionally examine our hearts, and GO forth to love and do good in the world. This task is not easy, but, with God's help and the encouragement of our faith community, may we make progress this day.

Sue Snyder works in the leadership, development and training arenas for public, private and non-profit organizations through her company The Knowledge Network, LLC. She has been a member of St. Margaret's Church since the early 90s and loves to travel, garden, and sing.

Saturday, March 18

Exodus 4:10-13 — Now go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you are to speak. But he said, “O my Lord, please send someone else.”



This passage in Exodus is a conversation between God and Moses when God is informing Moses that He has chosen Moses to save the Hebrews being held as slaves. This passage identifies the self-doubt Moses has in his ability to succeed. Moses even goes as far as to question God's judgment and asks him to choose someone else.

When we are asked to lead, are we ready? Do we believe we can succeed? Just as a parent comforts their child by telling them that everything will be OK and they are there to help, God is comforting Moses. He tells him “I will be with your mouth, I will tell you what to speak.” I feel comfort in realizing that whenever I am faced with doubt, God is by my side and with me every step of the way. This allows me to eliminate the distraction of doubt and focus on what I can control, my words and actions. Regardless of the situation, no matter how dire it may seem, I cannot lose my faith that God is supporting me and guiding me.

Greg Smith, his wife (Alli) and kids (Gabby, Audrey, and Emery) joined St. Margaret's Episcopal Church about five years ago. Alli sings in the Third Sunday Band, and Greg has helped to prepare dinners for winter relief. He currently works at Saint Agnes Hospital in Baltimore as Director of Pharmacy.



Sunday March 19

Luke 17:14 — When he saw them, he said to them, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went, they were made clean.

Jesus is hailed at a distance by a group of 10 people who had social and medical problems and were precluded from normal social activity. Jesus responds to their call by sending them, just as they were, to the priests. Each of these 10 chose to act upon Jesus' command, to see the end point of social acceptance and physical health. Despite the inclination to think they knew better and were not clean enough or good enough, these men and women chose to listen, internalize God's command, and take strides toward health and wholeness. I wondered what condition made me hail Jesus from a distance to ask for mercy and when was I told to go and show myself to the priests? I wondered if this was a new command or one that I had already satisfied. Jesus' command to show myself to the priests came approximately 30 years ago at the Canterbury Center for Episcopal Campus Ministry during my undergraduate education at Old Dominion University. I interpreted this as a call to priesthood in the Episcopal Church. In the fullness of time, God revealed my own spiritual healing as the purpose so that I could then do the work God had chosen for me. God's desire for me seems to be managing the medical signs and symptoms of disease while also working to heal the unseen wounds of people. Now, I am a nurse in an inpatient setting of a high acuity, academic medical center. I regularly invoke the prayer, "Not my will, but Thine." I try to give space to the responses from God when I ask for mercy. I invite you to join me on this journey, even if it will take 30 more years to truly discern the command to "Go!"

Michelle Montalbano has been a St. Margaret's parishioner since 2006. She plays pool, ping pong, and foosball at her home in Arnold with her two sons, Alec and Aaron. She works as a neurology nurse at the University of MD Medical Center in Baltimore.

Monday, March 20

Esther 4:16 — Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will also fast as you do. After that I will go to the king, though it is against the law and if I perish, I perish.



Esther was a queen in Assyria who happened to be Jewish. She was a foreigner living in a foreign land and her religious heritage and faith made her an outcast. She became one of the King of Assyria's harem because of her beauty. The king, persuaded by his advisors, initiated a persecution of Jews.

Imagine the huge dilemma for Esther as her people are threatened. She decides to speak to the King on their behalf.

What I love about her story is that Esther requests the community and her staff to pray for her as she seeks the courage to speak for her people. She held a prayer vigil in the palace!

With the strength garnered by three days of prayer, she went to the King to protest the extermination of her people. Persuaded by Esther's determination, he relented and stopped the persecution and deportation of the Jews in Assyria.

Who amongst us today would have that courage?

The Rev. Jane Milliken Hague is the Associate Rector at St. Margaret's. She works in the areas of missions and parish life, as well as adult formation. She loves dogs, country music, and the Washington Nationals.



Tuesday March 21

Matthew 36:27 — And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me, yet not what I want but what you want.”

How human Jesus was! And how alone and abandoned he must have felt! He had just left most of the apostles in the Gethsemane olive grove and asked that they sit while he goes further into the grove to pray. Matthew writes just before this passage that Jesus was anguished and distressed. What human wouldn't be, knowing what laid ahead, beginning with Judas' betrayal, his agony and death? He told Peter, James and John that His “soul is crushed with grief to the point of death.”

Jesus knew what the next few days would bring, both in his divine and human mind. As the Son of God, he knew he would suffer through torture, be hung on a cross and that he would rise from the dead; all so we humans can be offered salvation and the promise of eternal life. As a human, how afraid Jesus must have been! He surely had witnessed the brutality of others crucified. Prone, with his face in dirt, Jesus asked his Father to reconsider His plan. At the same time, Jesus was a fully obedient Son, declaring that he will do what his Father wants. Jesus placed His Father's desires above any of his earthly wishes. What a behavior to model! Sometimes doing what God wants and desires can be uncomfortable or even painful. May we learn from Jesus' actions to place God above our earthly desires, even if they cause us suffering or discomfort in His name.

Fran Becker and her husband Rich attend the 7:30 a.m. service where Fran serves as a Eucharistic Minister. She brings experience in nonprofit leadership in her role as vestry member and liaison to the Day School. She has also been very involved in missions.

Wednesday, March 22

Matthew 28:19-20 — Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.



In my mind, today's scripture has three pieces of instruction from Jesus to his disciples. The first was to go and baptize the people of all nations, in essence spreading Christianity around the globe. The second was to teach the world's people to obey everything Jesus commanded. The third was a reassurance from Jesus that He would always be with them, that they would never be alone, till "the very end of the age."

Although I believe that, I do understand what Christ wanted in the first instruction, and that a world full of true disciples of Christ would be heaven on Earth, I also believe that much wrong has been done in our world in the name of Christianity. (Think: Crusades.) Though I have no authority to say this, I think Jesus' three pieces of instruction should be re-ordered. Baptizing the people of the world in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit is really putting the cart before the horse if we haven't first taught the world and modeled for them Jesus' Great Commandment. Even in 2017, I don't think our world is ready for the conversion and baptism of step one until the world first understands and commits itself to the ingredients of true love. To me, these ingredients are living simply, enriching all lives, self-sacrifice, kindness and courage. Christ's Great Commandment was to love God and to love one's neighbor as oneself. (In our Middle School Sunday School class, we like to say "the rest is details.") For me, personally, part of loving my God and my world, is to apologize for some of what is being done in this world in the name of Jesus Christ. From there, with prayer and faith, I try to just love.

Julie Svendsen and husband Kurt are co-leaders for our middle school Sunday School class. They have three children very involved in church activities and Julie has long been active in children's formation. She is also a grad of the Education for Ministry program.



Thursday March 23

Mark 5:34 — He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.”

I have tried to be faithful to Jesus since my childhood. I was struck blind in my left eye in November 1983 just after I finished delivering nine Thanksgiving dinners to indigent families in the District of Columbia. I prayed for healing that night and each day thereafter and went to an ophthalmologist the next week. He prescribed steroids by mouth and I was healthy again in two weeks. Did my faith make me whole? The following summer (June 1984) I was at a picnic and my diaphragm started tingling. I visited a neurologist and he put me through a battery of tests and diagnosed multiple sclerosis. My family was pretty devastated but for some reason I was not worried. My faith continued that I would be healed. I did not start limping until 1995. I retired in 1998. I can no longer ski or walk very far but my spiritual life is very rich with the love of my family and my friends at St. Margaret's. God has been very good to me.

Grant Harmon started coming to St. Margaret's in August 2001. From 1969 until April 1998, he was an FBI Special Agent. At St. Margaret's, he ushers, is a Lay Eucharistic Visitor, sings in the Chancel Choir, and is a member of the Brotherhood of St. Andrew. Grant helps with Winter Relief at St. Margaret's and St. Phillips. He's a graduate of EFM and a volunteer with the Department of Aging who has been installing safety devices for the elderly since 2002. He is married to Ruth—a member of the Vestry and teacher for Godly Play.

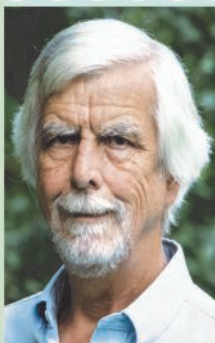
Friday, March 24

*Matthew 14:14-22 — Jesus said to them,
'They need not go away; you give them
something to eat.'*



Herod beheaded John the Baptist. We are told, Jesus got in a boat to be alone, to find a “solitary” place, to grieve. People from the city followed after Him. Why? I have to ask myself, would I have followed a vast crowd looking for Jesus? Likely, I would have, given I consider myself a Christian, but probably not without my Whole Foods lunch, a bottled water canteen, bug spray and my cell phone with a bathroom location app! Completely self sufficient! We realize when the disciples decided to leave their fishing boats, and put down their nets, they weren’t following their GPS or googling the best Episcopal church with an active children’s youth group—they were the youth group! They were allowing God to transform their lives by their act of surrendering. Surrendering their self sufficiency. Jesus surrendered to His grief, but He also showed His compassion and the humanity by healing the sick in the crowd. As the day wore on, the disciples were feeling overwhelmed because no one had eaten, they couldn’t pull out their phones to find the best restaurant prepared to feed 5,000 men, plus women and children...they had to look to Jesus. And Jesus, in turn, looked to His Father asking Him to bless the 5 loaves and 2 fish, which became not only sufficient to satisfy the crowd, but provided leftovers. By surrendering our own self sufficient tendencies to God, we can also see God’s provision and faithfulness in our lives.

Chris Porter is a professional artist with a signature gallery located in her home state of Mississippi. She lives in Annapolis with her partner, Mollie MacKenzie, and daughter, Samantha. They have been attending St. Margaret’s Church for almost two years.



Saturday, March 25

Luke 10:1-12 — Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, first say, "Peace to this house!" And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you.

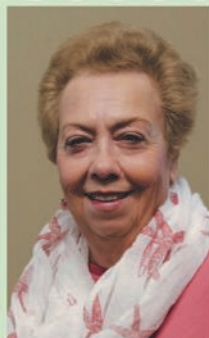
As Christians, we are being asked to leave our comfort zone and go out into an unfamiliar and uncomfortable world leaving behind our social media accounts and our non-interactive communications methods to interact face-to-face with people. I interpret this scripture to mean we are asked to expose people to the joys of a life in Christ and allow them to convince themselves to follow Jesus rather than trying to sell them on the idea.

One of the traits of any successful salesperson is the ability not to sell their product to their customers, but to have the customers sell themselves on the product. Bishop Sutton alluded to this in his recent sermon at SMC. For many people, what we are being asked to do is not easy and many of our real-life experiences are cautioning us against it. I cautiously ventured out of my comfort zone for SMC on several occasions and have been spiritually rewarded in every case. Put your trust in God and venture out of yours.

Bob Baltz attends the 7:30 a.m. Sunday service at St. Margaret's, and volunteers in many ways in our mission efforts. He is also a volunteer for the Maryland Dept. of Natural Resources and shares his knowledge of rescuing local animals with our Day School students on a regular basis.

Sunday, March 26

1 Samuel 3:1-9 — Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.'"



In this passage Samuel does not realize that it is God calling him - it takes God three tries to get Samuel's attention. Like Samuel, it is not always clear to us when God is speaking to us. It is incredibly hard to hear God speak to us in the world in which we live. There are so many "voices" competing for our attention - jobs, family, friends, deadlines. And technology makes it that much harder. Our cell phones, laptops, tablets connect us to a myriad of other voices. Facebook, IM, Twitter, email, etc. which demand our attention and it seems that most of us are unable or unwilling to disconnect. For me, it has become more and more important to disconnect and embrace silence. It is in the silence that I am able to ponder what is happening in my world and listen for what God may be telling me. It doesn't take a big chunk out of my day but sitting in the silence in a prayerful and mindful attitude recenters my thinking and makes me feel that I can more fully understand what God has in mind for me. It does take clear-headed effort to put aside everyday life and its distractions and truly listen. There is no more appropriate time than this Lenten season to remember that God loves us and to find out what path God wants us to take. In the silence, one is able to find new ways to serve God and keep Him in our lives everyday.

Janis Brewer has been attending St Margaret's for about seven years. She is a Lector and Eucahristic Minister and recently joined St. Margaret's Guild. She retired from thirty years as a high school history teacher in July.



Monday, March 27

*Psalm 121:8 —The Lord will keep your going out
and your coming in from this time on and for
evermore.*

Living in a quickly moving society as we do, expectations of high performance weigh heavily on all of us. How can I pass the next exam? How can I succeed in my job? How can I get ahead? How can I keep my children on the right path?

The pressure to perform sometimes overwhelms us. From where will help come to ease the pressure?

As Psalm 121 says, our help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. Lift up our eyes to the hills, and the Lord will tend to our going out and our coming in, and all of the affairs that cause us tension.

It's difficult to exhale and let go of our own worries -- they're ours, after all -- but relief is near if we only ask.

Capt. Jeff Macris is a history professor at the U.S. Naval Academy. His wife Jen serves as advancement coordinator for the nonprofit Touchstone's Discussion Project. They have five children and all have been active in formation at St. Margaret's.

Tuesday, March 28

Mark 10:21 — Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, “You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.”



Follow me. Have you ever heard these words in your heart at some time in your life? I have, and thank goodness, I paid attention. Almost four years ago, I was diagnosed with breast cancer. Early on the morning of my surgery, waiting for the docs and full of worry about the future, I was visited by a pretty, perky, cheerful woman who said her name was Nancy. She told me that she belonged to a group of breast cancer survivors, called SOS, whose members visit breast cancer patients before surgery and mentor patients through treatment. She gave me a bag of small and thoughtful gifts and lots of encouraging support. During treatment, I couldn't forget Nancy. I kept hearing a little voice in my head that said, “That is something you could do for other women facing the same challenge.” Finally, I called Nancy. I told her how much her visit had meant to me and asked her if she thought her group could use another volunteer. She put the wheels in motion, and eventually I became an SOS (Survivors Offering Support) volunteer just like Nancy. Since then, I have met dozens of very brave women facing their own tough journey and hopefully have helped them a little. I know where that little voice in my heart came from, and I am so glad I listened when it said, “Go. Do this.”

Joan Rich is a retired attorney. St. Margaret's has been her parish church for over 20 years. She serves as a Lay Eucharistic Minister, a weekly office volunteer, an EfM graduate, and was a former liaison, member and chairman of the Grants Committee.



Friday, March 31

Ruth 1:16 — But Ruth said, “Do not press me to leave you or to turn back from following you! Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God.”

Going, staying, these words are all too familiar to my family and me. Each time we go, we are given a gift from God of starting over. Doing life over is never easy. Next chances are always filled with baggage from the past. Often that baggage comes back to haunt us during the hardest times of our lives. But it also gives us two feet to stand on.

The baggage is the wrinkles from our laughs, the grey hair from our worries, the slashes on our broken hearts. We come to this new place with all these things, and even though they hurt, we are eager to create more. Worldly things are only temporary--homes, churches, friendships and love. We know no matter how long or short our stay, we are expected to live our lives fully and completely.

We are to love those around us unconditionally, which makes each time we go, hurt more than the time before. We understand, the time will come once again and God will cradle us onto our next journey, and only then will we feel that the pain is not pain of sadness or hurt but one of a tattered, used but stronger heart.

Director of St. Margaret's Family Ministry Jenelle Mejia lives with her husband Ponch and their five children. They have started life over many times during Ponch's career in the US Coast Guard. Jenelle has been an elementary school teacher and worked in children's ministry for many years. The Mejia family enjoys eating dinner together every night and taking part in the simple things such as bike rides, days in the park and gardening.

Saturday, April 1

Genesis 12:1-10 — Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.”



When we travel, part of the pleasure is seeing the world through different eyes. Breaking with the familiar jars us into looking harder at ordinary things—the architecture, food, cars and the clothes people are wearing. When we come home after a long trip, the things we know so well that we hardly notice them suddenly look strange and new.

When Abraham moves from his home to Canaan, he is going to accept God’s promise of a great blessing and a nation he can call his own. But the move also signifies that faith in God means a new life, and taking on the traveler’s way of seeing. As he moves from Ur to Egypt to Canaan, Abraham becomes a permanent stranger. Even after he has arrived in Canaan, Abraham says to his neighbors in the land God gave him, “I am a sojourner and a foreigner among you.” As Christians, people of faith who look forward in Lent to being renewed at Easter, we stand a little apart from the culture around us—we look beyond the getting and spending and the rush of daily life. And yet as we go about our lives at home, we’re steeped in the familiar. How do we maintain our spiritual sense so we can refresh our vision? The traditional disciplines of Lent—fasting, service, and increased prayer—were designed to alienate us from our workday world, but there are other ways of seeing the world and ourselves afresh. However you choose to move yourself out of the ordinary, use Lent as a time to adopt the attitude of a sojourner, as a prelude to accepting the blessings and new life that await you.

From 2001 to 2004, Paul O'Donnell was a founding editor of the award-winning religious news and opinion website Beliefnet.com. In 2012, he and his family returned to Severna Park to be closer to Alice's family. A new member of the vestry, Paul has also been part of winter relief, acted as a grant liaison, and last winter led an adult education forum.



Sunday, April 2

Luke 4:18-19 — “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

We are blind. We are oppressed. We are captives of our own unexamined narratives. There is not a soul in this room who dreams without regret. Who walks toward the light without being bound by what has been left behind, in the darkness. Who has spoken without anger. We are human. We are flawed. We are the children of God. We are also the messengers of God. We are brought into this world in grace, with a multitude of gifts, the most important of which is faith. I do not speak of the blind faith of the followers. I speak of the deep faith of the forgotten. The faith that comes from grief, from deprivation, from tragedy, from senseless violence. The faith that is inextricably linked to hope. The disciples that God sent into the world two thousand years ago, are no different from the disciples that we have become. It is our work to delve into our own darkness. To discover the ghosts that hold us captive in the past. To release us so that we can become the messengers of God. We have been sent to proclaim the release of the captives, to proclaim the recovery of our sight. We have been sent to become free, to become visionaries, to bring the news of grace, faith, and hope, because the Spirit of the Lord is upon us.

Carolyn Surrick is a musician, writer, mother and daughter. She lives with her extended family in Crownsville and has been a member of St. Margaret’s Church since 2003, when her daughter, Julia, and Lena Hanrahan became thick as thieves (when they were two years old.)

Monday, April 3

Psalm 122 — I was glad when they said to me, “Let us go to the house of the Lord! Our feet are standing within your gates, O Jerusalem.”



Psalm 122 is a beautiful song of ascent. Back when folk music was rocking the Roman Catholic Church, the St. Louis Jesuits had a beautiful rendering of the psalm. We used it at the Easter Vigil when I was at Catholic University. The building of the fire, the lighting of the paschal candle, the singing of the Exsultet, and the readings of the history of salvation (all eight of them – we were over-achievers) all happened in a rather spare, dark room. Then we sang “I Rejoiced When I Heard Them Say” as we moved to the chapel (guitars are wonderfully portable). In a brightly lit room we celebrated Eucharist. I remembered that ascent several years later at an Easter Vigil at St. Gregory of Nyssa in San Francisco, where the celebration again started in darkness, where we heard the promise of salvation, and then moved to light, where we celebrated Eucharist while dancing around the altar. (Yes, this is an Episcopal church.) The Litany of the Saints accompanied the procession to the chapel. Here you could nominate anyone to be a saint, as long as he or she was dead. We asked for the prayers of some interesting characters. (Yes, this was San Francisco.)

In the Traditional Latin Mass the prayers at the foot of the altar begin with the priest saying “Introibo ad altare Dei” (I will go to the altar of God.) Maybe it should be “Introibimus ad altare Dei” (we will go to the altar of God) because that’s what we do when we celebrate together. We move from darkness to light.

Jim Weekley has been a member of St. Margaret’s Church since 2006. He is an occasional Lector and Eucharistic Minister and serves as a member of the Technology Committee. He and his wife, Valery, have two sons and live in Arnold, Maryland.



Tuesday, April 4

John 14:3 — And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also.

The song “Jesus Loves Me” speaks to God’s love and strength in our lives as expressed in the scriptures. We sing this song as children, but it also speaks to us as mature adults. No matter our age, God is our Father and we are his children. God calls for our hearts to remain like those of children—trusting, believing, innocent, affectionate and joyful.

Just as our parents prepared a house of shelter and safety, so, too, our Father prepares on earth and in heaven a place for His children. We are given gifts that will be with us throughout our lives. We will walk hand in hand with the Holy Spirit and ultimately join the Holy Trinity in our heavenly home.

We are given a gift of the simplicity of a child, finding joy in the smallest of moments. As God’s children, we believe in God’s promises and move forward to love one another, forgive one another, and provide for one another as our Father provides for us.

Jenna Lane began attending St. Margaret’s last year. She serves as a greeter, a volunteer for winter relief, and a liaison for the grants program. She is also a visitor service associate for Historic Annapolis.

Wednesday, April 5

Mark 10:52 — Jesus said to him, 'Go; your faith has made you well.' Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.



In January 2016, shortly after my 85th birthday, I went to the Arnold post office to mail some "Thank You" notes. When I left, I decided to travel north on Richie Highway. As I approached the stop sign to make a right turn, a car exceeding the speed limit was making a turn to go north to Church Road. The car was across the yellow stripe heading directly at me. I said, "Dear God, that car is going to hit me!" To avoid a head-on collision, I immediately turned the wheels to the far right, leaned toward the passenger seat, and drove into the curb. I believe my actions and the airbags saved my life! My vehicle was demolished, but no one was injured. I truly believe that God and Jesus were the reason my life was saved. They gave me the opportunity to "follow in their way." I intend to devote the remainder of my life to serving God, Jesus, St. Margaret's Church and my community. Also, I will love and support my wonderful family and my neighbors, so help me God!

Often you will find Web Chamberlin greeting you as you arrive before the 9 a.m. Sunday service. He is also involved with Relay for Life, the Newcomers Committee, the grants program, Foyers, and is a coffeeshop host.



Thursday, April 6

John 16:7 — Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.

As parents we introduce our children to new circumstances all the time. And, then, we turn and go. We leave them with a babysitter, at the kindergarten door or in a college dorm. We go because it gives our children room to grow; to experience their own competence; to develop their confidence and independence. It's not always easy and it can be downright scary for both parties. As John makes clear, the disciples are really worried and confused about what Jesus means. Because we know this story and because we know about Pentecost, we may be tempted to ignore their angst. Yet their fear is justified. Jesus says, "you will weep and mourn...you will have pain..." In my spiritual life, I have been fortunate enough to sense the thin veil that separates us from the divine. I have had profound experiences of God's presence, His grace, His guidance, His humor and even, in one split-second moment, the radiance of His love. Notice I use the past tense. I no longer enjoy God's close and reassuring presence, and I mourn His absence. But Jesus promised His disciples that they would know joy again. So, I wait. I try not to long too much for what was, afraid I'll miss what is before me. Could it be that the parent in God has faith in me? Maybe that's all we need to go and keep going as children of God: God's faith in us.

Ann Lallande was born and raised in Puerto Rico and, as a competitive swimmer, she represented the island in Central and South America, Canada and Japan. After college, she taught for two years, became a journalist, married a Naval Officer and had two children. As a Navy family, they made several moves, including a stint in Guam. They landed on St. Margaret's doorstep in 1993.

Friday, April 7

John 16:28 — I came from the Father and have come into the world; again, I am leaving the world and am going to the Father.



Our world is constantly changing. Sometimes the change is welcome, and at other times not so much. But when unwelcome change occurs we can interpret it as a calling to go out and create love, kindness, and understanding. It probably felt like an unwelcome change to the disciples when Jesus said he would soon leave them to go be with the Father. However, by leaving the world and going to the Father, Jesus exhibited the ultimate expression of love – he sacrificed himself to save all of us. Afterward, the disciples realized they could be the vehicles for positive change by continuing to spread Jesus' message of love. Today, I find myself getting wrapped up in the changes we face: polarizing politics, racial and ethnic disparity, and discord throughout the world. It is often difficult to see the love and kindness that exist. It is times like these, filled with adversity, fear, and pain, that we can convert negative change to positive change. The Lenten season is about self-reflection, which enables us to decide what kind of positive change we'd like to see in our lives, in our communities, and in our country. Through the process, we can prepare mind and body to go out into the world to effect positive change and to spread love, kindness, and understanding.

Allison Johnson and her spouse Spencer, joined St. Margaret's after the Reverend Peter married them in December 2015. She is currently a law student at Georgetown, but will begin practicing law in Washington in October 2017, with an environmental focus. Allison and Spencer both began serving as Eucharist Ministers this year.



Saturday, April 8

*Acts 22:10 — I asked, “What am I to do, Lord?”
The Lord said to me, “Get up and go to
Damascus; there you will be told everything that
has been assigned to you to do.”*

To me this verse is a reminder that faith is not inertia, an endpoint or place of stasis. It is, as Rev. Peter has said, a journey. I see it as a journey without a final earthly destination, but one that, like Paul, we continue as the Lord calls us. This verse is the second time in Acts that we hear this conversation between Saul/Paul and Jesus. Earlier, in chapter 9, Saul is heading to Damascus to find Christians and imprison them. A bright light surrounds him and a voice says, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” Saul says, “Who are you, Lord?” Jesus says, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.” I interpret Jesus’ words to mean that when you persecute anyone, you persecute Him. He also gives Paul a clear directive to keep going, without sharing what is in store for him. Before this incident, Paul thinks he’s on one mission (to take prisoners). Now he’s heading to the same destination without knowing what awaits. The Lord has a plan for him, but he is blind to it (literally—he temporarily loses his sight and has to be led by his companions to Damascus). By Acts 22, Paul himself is being persecuted and recalls the story as he pleads a defense. While I’ve never had the experience of the Lord telling me so clearly where to go, I’ve had times in my life where I’ve wondered or even pleaded, “What shall I do, Lord?” Life is going along and then—bam!—it is clear the status quo and inaction are not acceptable. But what to do when the solution is unclear or half-formed at best? This passage and others that call us to “go” suggest that God wants us to continue in faith, even when we don’t know what awaits.

Justyn Kopack has been a St. Margaret’s parishioner since 2004 and currently serves on the Mission Commission, on the Grants Committee and as a coffeehour host. She lives on the Broadneck Peninsula with her two daughters, who are active in the youth programs. In her professional life, she provides content strategy, editing and project management support to federal web projects.

Sunday, April 9

Luke 10:25-37 — Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers? He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."



My grandma grew up in a small Arkansas town where she married her beau from church and raised seven children. My grandpa worked two jobs just to keep food on the table. They lived in a small house that he built himself and were able to scrape by enough for them and their children to live on.

About 20 miles away there was a juvenile detention center and every now and then a siren would go off to alert neighbors that there had been an escape. For most in her community, the siren meant that the neighbors should put their animals up and lock their doors and windows.

For my grandma, it meant the opposite. She would make a little more to eat and lovingly prepare a plate to place on the front steps with a handwritten note that included a prayer for whomever might need it. I love this parable of the Good Samaritan, and the grace and love my grandma showed to everyone she ever met.

Laura Tayman is the Print & Digital Editor at St. Margaret's. She lives in Arnold with her own Professor Harold Hill (husband Mike, a band teacher) and her kids/college students Anna and Joey.



Monday, April 10

Isaiah 6:8 — Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Then said I, “Here am I; send me.”

Throughout this Lenten meditation series we are reflecting on verses with the word “go.” In the case of this verse, I feel that it isn’t necessarily important where the Lord is asking me to go, but what seems most important is that I hear that God has a need to send someone to do His work, and that I am willing. One of my favorite hymns is “Here I am Lord,” based on this bible verse. When I sing that hymn I often think two things: (1) Do I hear the call of the Lord, as the person in the song seems to hear? and (2) If and when I do, am I willing to step up and say, “Here I am Lord, Is it I, Lord?. I have heard You calling in the night. I will go Lord, if You lead me. I will hold Your people in my heart.” I think God is continually calling us to carry out His plan in our world. What I don’t know is whether I am allowing myself to hear it. Am I listening? How will I hear it – in prayer, scripture, a sermon, a phrase in a hymn? If I allow myself space outside my busy life to hear God’s call, how will I answer? Will I be willing – willing to keep listening to God, willing to act on His behalf, willing to physically go somewhere to do what is needed? I pray that I will keep my ears open and that I will answer God’s call with an

Elizabeth Parker began attending St. Margaret’s in 2005 with her husband, Tim. They have two children, Katherine (9) and Matthew (6). Elizabeth is a Pediatric Endocrinologist who is currently looking to establish a Healthy Lifestyles clinic for families in the Annapolis area. At St. Margaret’s, Elizabeth has been a part of the Motet Ensemble and Vestry in the past and she is currently serving on the Altar Guild, teaching Sunday School to the high schoolers, and sits on the St. Margaret’s Day School Board.

Tuesday, April 11

John 14:2-3 — In my Father's house there are many dwelling-places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also.



When you've been singing in church choirs long enough, you often find yourself humming after listening to the lessons on Sunday mornings. It turns out that a great number of the verses in the bible come with their own melodies. The readings at Christmas almost demand to be sung to Handel's score rather than simply read. John 14:2 has its own soundtrack, but instead of arriving with the powdered wig of Handel, it comes as a spiritual, out of the hardships of enslaved men and women. In "Run to Jesus" one sings—

"Run to Jesus, shun the danger,
I don't expect to stay much longer here.
Many mansions there will be,
One for you and one for me,
I don't expect to stay much longer here."

Frederick Douglass has remarked that it was the singing of this song that first led him to the idea of one day escaping from slavery. With his words, Jesus gives us hope. He gives us confidence in a future that we cannot always see. There is room for us all in God's Kingdom.

A St Margaret's member since 2005, Russell Jackson sings in the Motet Ensemble, serves on the Missions Commission, and is St Margaret's representative to My Brother's Pantry. He is usually found with wife Froggi and their boys Joseph and Zachariah. By day, Russell is a mathematician -- and he was sorely tempted to move from the notion of "many mansions" into a discussion of infinity and Cantor's continuum hypothesis.



Wednesday, April 12

Matthew 26:36 — Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.”

Jesus was about to enter the most critical, difficult, and dangerous period of his life. He needed time alone to be with God, to quiet himself, pour out his heart, to find his way through. So, he found a quiet place where he could pray in private and pour out his fears and feelings and ask for help.

That is exactly what we need to do in times of trouble in our lives. We need to find a quiet place, open our hearts and minds to God, pour out our feelings, and listen for the wee small voice that will guide us through.

Notice Jesus did NOT try to ignore or suppress his feelings, distract himself with friends, or more activity or work, numb himself with food, drink, or drugs. Instead he went to God in prayer. He was real. He cried out to God, asking that “this cup be removed from me.” But nevertheless he ended his prayer with, “may your will be done.” He asked for what he wanted, but also was willing to be God’s vessel in the world, doing what was needed.

In my life, I have had the image of a tiny light, like a candle, that I follow through the darkness, trusting that I will be led where I need to go. As followers of Jesus, let us each seek God. God is our source, our strength, our very present help in times of trouble. May we have the courage and faith to follow God, even when life is very difficult.

Rev. Nancy Kelly graduated from Sancta Sophia Seminary and was ordained through the International Council of Community Churches in 1991. For 20 years she served as a chaplain at Anne Arundel Medical Center and taught classes in prayer, meditation, dream study through Inner Light Spiritual Center, which she founded. Prior to that, she worked for the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and owned an environmental consulting company, Coastal Resources, Inc. She has been a member of St. Margaret’s for about 10 years and sings in the choir.

Thursday, April 13

Matthew 26:18 — He said, “Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, ‘The Teacher says, My time is near; I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.’”



Just as the man heard Jesus telling him to “Go... and Say,” my personal experience is that God talks to us very directly when we are receptive. When God speaks to me, I experience a physical sensation that it is the right thing to do – for now – and usually a very simple task: go to the meeting to learn more; call so and so to learn more; “take a nap if you’re feeling weary, and I will give you rest.” Each small action builds on the next until at some point it can grow into something larger – such as Winter Relief or taking on a refugee family.

An experience that had a profound effect on my life began 15 years ago when I felt God’s call to learn more about Taizé chant. After attending several services at the Washington National Cathedral, I felt God’s nudge to set up a Taizé workshop for local Annapolis churches (with God providing a very helpful friend to help stuff envelopes!). At the workshop, I met two other singers, and together we founded Trinitas, an a cappella vocal trio. This led to ten years of programs for the Cathedral’s Labyrinth series, three CD recordings, and numerous workshops at local churches and conferences. How would I ever have known from my first calling that this was God’s plan? What is your story? It is in trusting the small steps that God can lead us to an extraordinary and challenging life of faith.

Kate Caldwell and her husband Harry have been attending St. Margaret’s for about six years, and have been active in the music, outreach, and education ministries. Her 30-year fundraising career has focused on capital campaigns and estate planning programs. Now working as a consultant, Kate enjoys more time for music locally, including leading Community Sings to re-ignite the art and love of a cappella singing.



Friday, April 14

*Mark 14:42 — Get up, let us be going.
See, my betrayer is at hand.*

Interposed between Jesus's pleas for his disciples to stay awake with him and that dramatically tense moment when a sword is drawn in anger, this is a pivotal moment; a transition from apprehension to movement. It is a moment pregnant with resolve. There are no more decisions to make; events are moving forward. The only choice is *how* to act.

I've known times of anxious waiting and worrying. Those times when every assumption about the future lies ground underfoot, childish-seeming in their naiveté, trod into dust. Those times when I question my purpose. I have lain awake for hours, staring into a blackness that only deepens the longer I look. Yearning for a resolution and dreading it. I think Jesus's wondering how his friends could sleep at such a time is one of the most achingly human moments of his life.

But that moment is gone! Judas approaches! All of the 'what-ifs' lose their power, and reality demands we deal with it as is, not how we would like it to be. The future happens whether we will it or not. The time of suspense is over. The time for action has come. I suspect we all know those moments, when we recognize the only choice left is not *if*, but *how*, to act. I think of it as that irreversible moment the crucial stick is yanked from the beaver dam. Now all of the water can rush forward again, moving, no longer fetid and stagnant.

We get up, and we go.

Jeff Conover and his wife Alice have been St. Margaret's parishioners since 2001. He's a former Army officer, former government contractor, former graduate student, and now the Youth Ministry Leader here at St. Margaret's.