

# BLOOMING



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# Unanticipated Bloom

The Reverend Brad Landry

Everyone needs a beloved curmudgeon in their life. Well, maybe you don't need one, but you likely know one. One such beloved curmudgeon was the long serving verger at the parish where I served as a curate fresh out of seminary. Prentice described himself as someone who "smoked like a chimney and drank like a fish," and his gravelly voice and cackling laughter was proof. As the verger, he kept the liturgical trains running on time, and lovingly fussed after the acolytes like a benevolent grandparent. Twice a year, for daylight savings, Prentice would leave a phone message saying "I know your contraption (his default description of mobile phones) will do it automatically, but I'm just calling to remind you to change your clocks so you're on time for church." I miss those phone calls.

As much as Prentice would have described himself as a traditionalist stick in the mud, his attention to detail and care for others is what endeared him to parishioners. One such detail that captured his attention was a particular plant that seemed to suit his personality perfectly: the Christmas cactus. The Christmas cactus is a prickly plant that never seems to bloom on time. Well, Prentice loved them and the sacristy was full of them.

Prentice watered them, watched them, and grumbled when they didn't bloom by Christmas. But the delight he had when they finally put forth their flower was such joyful innocence I will not soon forget.

While I am no gardener, I can appreciate those plants that combine beauty and bristle. Roses may be beautiful, but one must watch out for the thorns. Christmas cacti have blooms, but the spines must be handled with care. So much wisdom contained in these peculiar plants.

The first 39 books of the bible are often called the "Old Testament," or sometimes "The Hebrew Bible." The additional 27 books of the Christian Bible are called the "New Testament."

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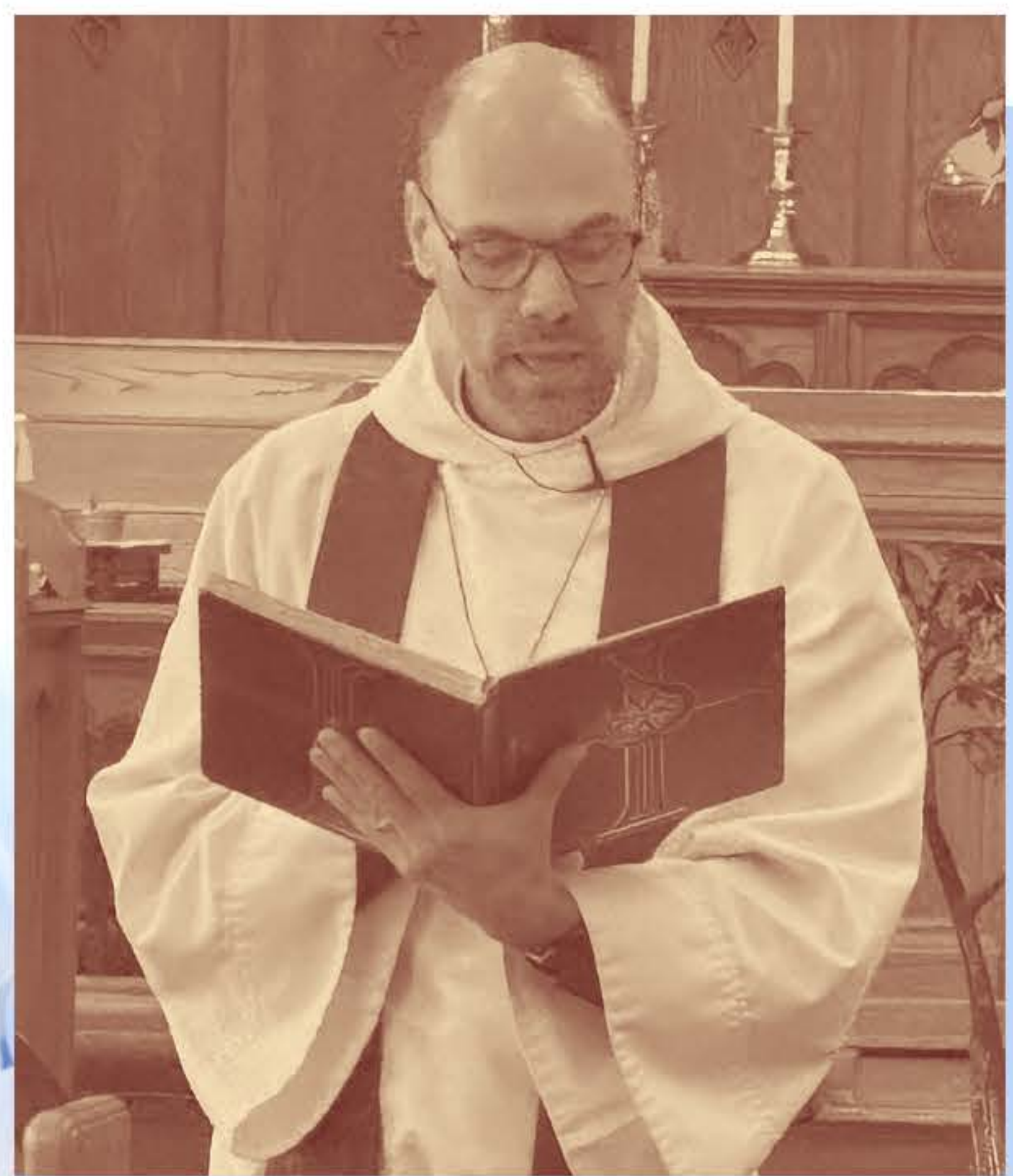
But theologians have sometimes referred to the created world God's "first testament." As we look at roses, or Christmas cacti, the change of seasons, the mountains or the beach, or a beautiful sunset we see something of God revealed in God's creation.

There is a beautiful hymn - O love of God, how strong and true - that describes this first testament of God's creation:

***We read you in the sky above,  
we read you in the earth below,  
in seas that swell and streams that flow.***

The next stanza goes on to describe how God reveals God's self most fully in the person of Jesus:

***We read you best in him who came  
bearing for us the cross of shame;  
sent by the Father from on high,  
our life to live, our death to die.***



Whether we are speaking of the "sky above/earth below" or the Holy Scriptures, we discover that God is a God who desires to be known. God reveals, reaches out, longing to be in relationship.

All of us, whether kindly or curmudgeonly, come with our own thorns and spines and defense mechanisms. Yet even the prickly Christmas cactus puts forth its bloom. So keep tending, keep watering, keep waiting, keep anticipating. God desires to be known in and through you. That is the beauty of the unanticipated bloom.

*Fr. +*



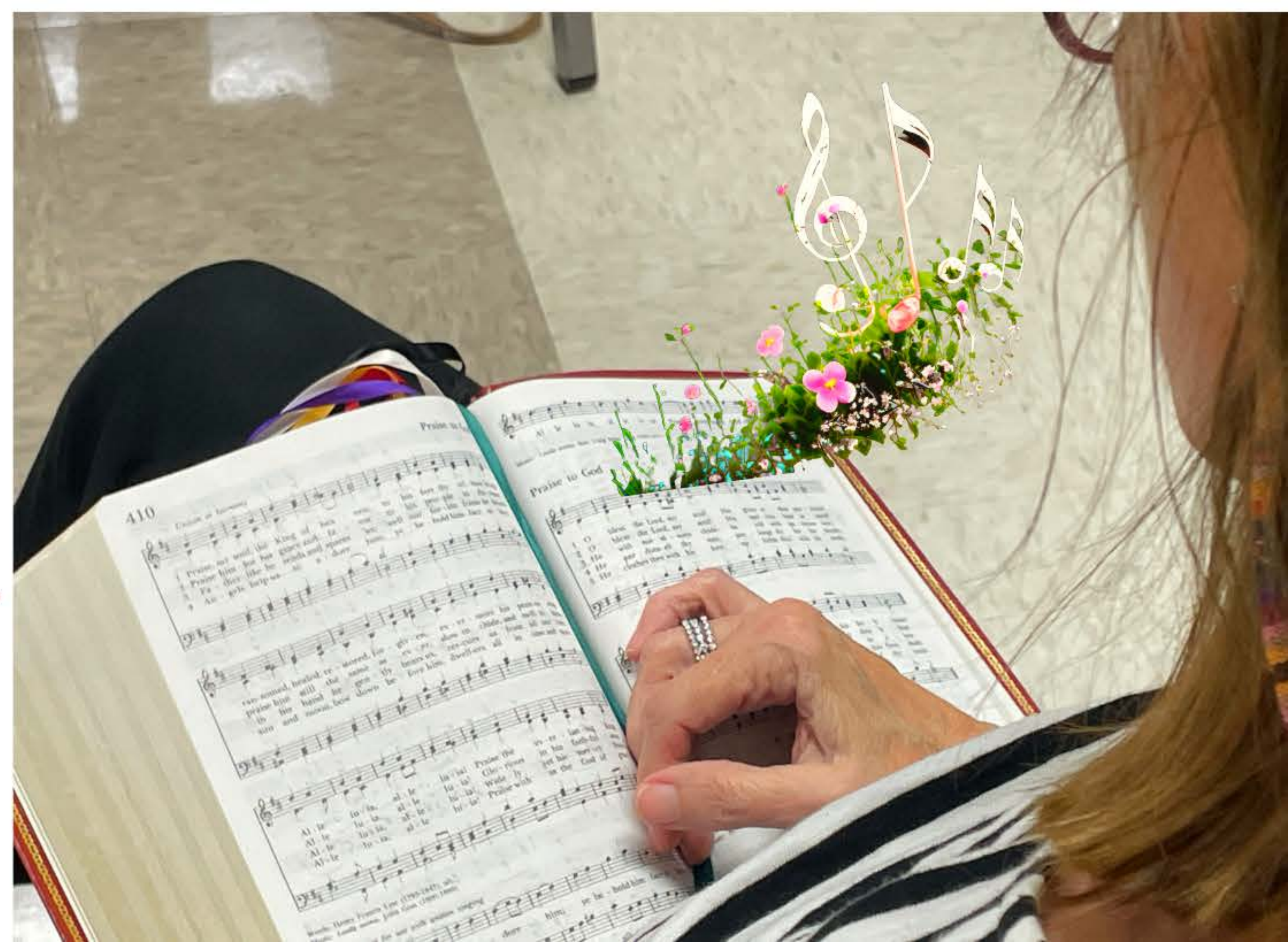
# Blooming

By Maggie Gill  
Director of Youth and Children's Music

I love the church year because it constantly reminds us of all the vast, beautiful parts of ourselves. In Advent, we await the coming of Christ, preparing ourselves for the joy of Christmas. After Christmas, we experience the light of Epiphany—a time of pilgrimage, growth, and recognizing the light around us as the star leads us again to Christ. Then, with Ash Wednesday, we are reminded of the brevity of our life and the dust from which we are made. In Lent, we begin a period of self-examination and repentance, preparing us for the exultation of Easter. With the coming of Pentecost, we accept the flame of the spirit, and we then spend time resting, growing, and working before the coming of Advent quickens our hearts again. In this yearly cycle, we are called to see all of who we are.

We musicians move with this journey of the year in a way that most people do not. In each season, we are preparing for the next or the next two. Right now, in Children's Choir and Youth Choir, we are rehearsing music for a Sunday in Lent, a Sunday in Easter, and more. Each of the anthems we are practicing holds a different message and purpose. With each of these pieces of music, we plant a seed of self-reflection, worship, joy, and shared mystery. Each song plants a seed, and over the coming weeks, we tend that seed and nurture it until it blossoms in a shared moment with our entire parish community.

In a wider way, this yearly journey reflects the way we grow through periods of our life and gives us continual ways to connect with jubilant or difficult parts of ourselves. It also gives us a way of sharing our own story with a deeply connected community. Music enriches this personal and communal experience in ways that go much deeper than we expect. We see evidence of this spiritual truth in both our religious tradition and in the Bible. Hundreds of times in the scripture, we are told to sing and make music to the Lord. Music of choirs, dance, and instruments permeates the stories of our biblical heroes. In our prayer book, there are listed individual songs of those biblical saints called 'canticles.' Music was such an important part of our historical Christian tradition that the beginning of Western music notation evolved as a way for monks, nuns, and priests to write down the music they needed to practice for church!



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Science goes even further in showing the importance of music. Learning about things through music solidifies those things neurologically unlike any form of learning.

Music gives us a voice for emotional expression and helps with emotional regulation. Singing or playing in an ensemble encourages teamwork that impacts the body deeply - people that sing together can even unconsciously sync their heartbeats while making music. Groups that sing together also connect emotionally in incredibly special ways. For example, when we make music with a group, our bodies can react with the same release of emotions and chemicals that happen when you get a hug. The more we learn, the more we see the wisdom in our scripture and our tradition.



As we enter this new year, I encourage you to make music with All Saints.

Join a choir, play guitar in a 5:30pm Sunday service, bring your infant to a Fiddlesticks class, volunteer to help with Children's and Youth Choirs, or sing with extra gusto in a service (no matter what you think you sound like!). Help us tend this special garden we have around us in our community. **Beautiful things are blooming.**



## IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES

### Fiddlesticks Music

#### 11-Week Spring Session

Starts March 10

Music Classes throughout the week for infants-8yrs. Visit [www.fiddlesticks-music.com](http://www.fiddlesticks-music.com) for more info

### Lenten Contemplative Service

#### Wednesday, February 21, 2024 at 6:00pm

A service of song, scripture, and silence as we enter the holy season of Lent. Find more info about our Contemplative Services here: <https://www.allsaintsbhm.org/contemplative-services>

If you are interested in being a musician or lector for any of these services, contact Maggie Gill, [mgill@allsaintsbhm.org](mailto:mgill@allsaintsbhm.org)

# Let's Go Plant Some Seeds!

By David Walters  
Parishioner

My winter vegetable garden is now coming to an end and it is time to start thinking about the spring and on into late fall. It's a very exciting time; however, planning is required. Decisions like what soil improvements are needed; what seeds to purchase; and when to start planting or just a few of the many questions on my mind this time of year.

During this initial process, I am heartened with knowing it won't be long before warmer weather gets here and seedlings make their appearance. More beauty comes later with the different stages of growth and, of course, the sharing at harvest time. It's a wonderful blessing!

As many of you know, I have been called and accepted a one-year position on our Vestry. After being a vestry member almost 20 years ago, I am aware of the many challenges and rewards associated with this endeavor. As we prepare for the Lenten Season, I am thankful to be a part of our garden here at All Saints. The beauty comes with all the work we do with our many ministries, **the love we have for those around us, and our sharing this love with others.**



# Blooming

By Bebe Hardin  
Preschool Director

According to Merriam-Webster's Dictionary, Blooming is defined as thriving, healthy, beautiful and vigor. All Saints Preschool embodies these values and is a prime example of Blooming. It's a blessing to watch these children growing up and learning and blooming right before our eyes. The Preschool is designed to build skills in socialization, creative art, and self-concept. It is also designed to work with parents and to assist them in the social, emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual development of their children in a Christian environment.

Our program requires a high degree of teacher involvement with the children, but at the same time is intended to permit the children to gain self-confidence by accomplishing creative tasks successfully on their own. The teachers are vital for the success and BLOOMING of the children. The skills these children learn are so important in the shaping of their little minds and preparing them for elementary school.

At the end of the school year on May 15, when we celebrate Graduation with our 4K and 5K classes, it's a blessing to know that **these children were blooming every day while they were in our care at All Saints Preschool**, and we had the privilege to watch them grow and thrive with vigor and smiles.

**THANKS YOU  
FOR HELPING  
US BLOOM!**



Thank you to the over 400 children in the last 18 years that have gone through and "bloomed" through Solemn Communion! Thank you also for the continued love, prayer, and support for this meaningful offering. Solemn Communion is a special program for the 3rd grade children at All Saints. This experience is designed to help children enjoy and more fully explore the mystery of Christ's gift of himself in the Sacrament of Holy Communion. This series of classes, retreat, and Solemn Communion celebration is an integral part of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd approach to Children's Formation. Our classes began in January and will continue until March, ending in a beautiful church service (Feb. 25) where the group takes Eucharist together with bread they have made themselves during the retreat day.

A huge thank you to Elena Moreno and Robin Belk for their exceptional interim leadership of the children's and youth choirs during Maggie Gill's courageous battle with cancer in Fall 2023. Their dedication and musical expertise ensured the continuity of our choir program, providing education and a spiritual place of growth to our young folks.

Maggie Gill is indeed back, fully healthy and excited to be making music again! Elena will continue with our children's and youth choirs as Youth Music Assistant.

Thank you to the wonderful children who gave their time, talent, and energy to the two Christmas Pageants this year. Thank you to all the volunteers who helped make the pageants such beautiful services. What a gift this is to the parishioners, to the community, and to the glory of God.



Thank you to all of our amazing Youth Sunday school teachers: Phil Croft, Courtney Reeves, Josh Reeves, Jay Murrill, Leah Murrill, and Bo Garrett.

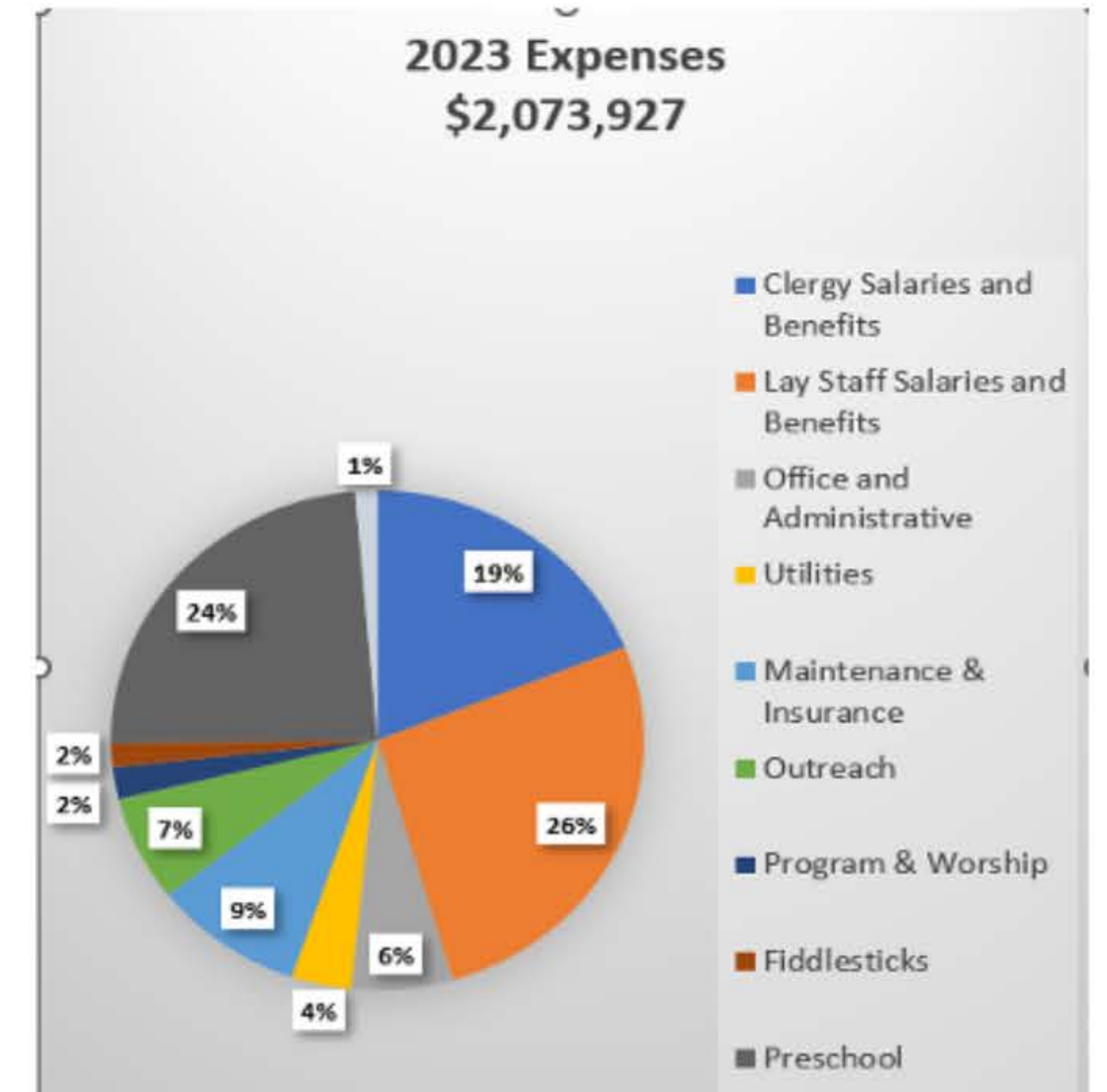
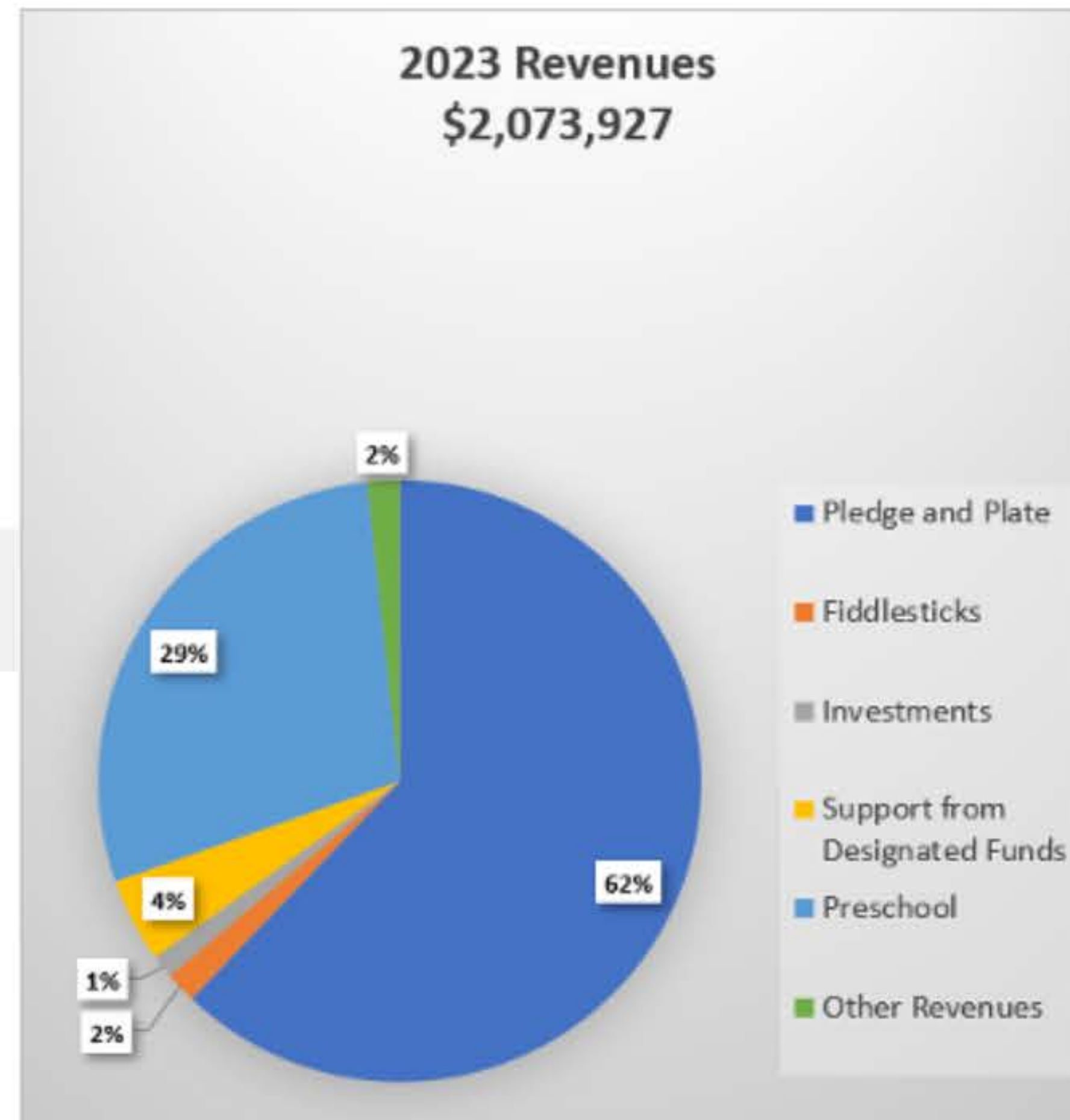


# FINANCES ARE BLOOMING

AN UPDATE FROM  
**Connie Bryson**  
 Director of Finances

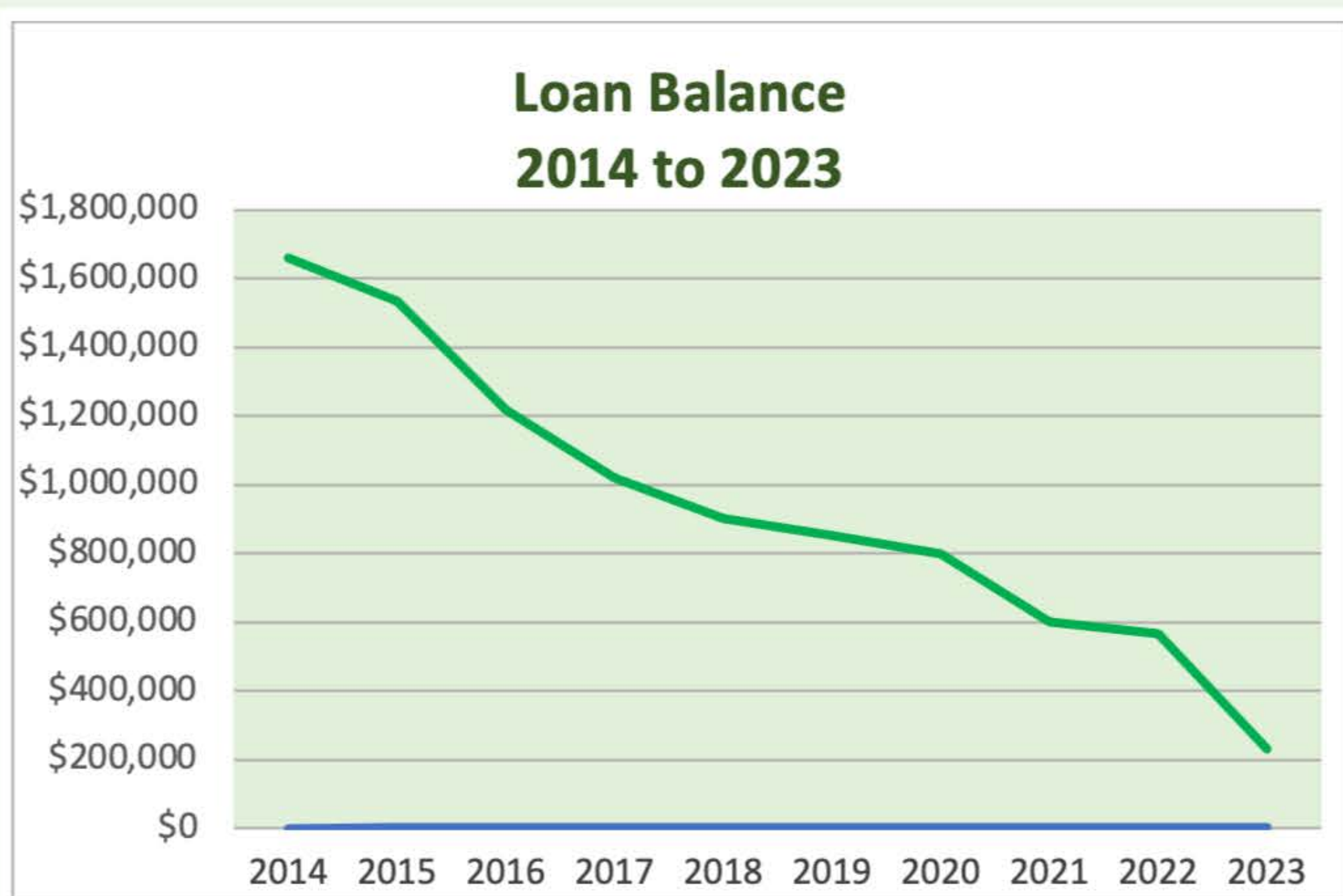


Here is a snapshot of 2023 Revenues and Expenses. Last year was a very good year in comparison with previous years. The church had budgeted a deficit and we are glad to report that the actual deficit was at least 50% lower than planned. This year and future years are projected to bring us closer to a balanced budget.



We have several large projects planned for this year. The new lighting project for the Nave is currently ongoing and soon to be completed. Other plans include a new gate to protect the outside Preschool area and updated smoke detection systems in the Nave.

The church has been aggressively paying down our loan balance over the last decade. In 2023 we were able to pay \$300,000 and restructure the remaining balance for a lower monthly payment. Below is a chart showing the decrease in principal balance since 2014.



The following organizations and missions benefited from our church outreach grants in 2023, largely due to parishioner support.  
**Thank you very much for your generosity!**

- Angel Tree Prison Ministry
- Avondale Breakfast Ministry
- Cahaba Valley Health Care
- Community Grief Support
- Community Kitchens
- Episcopal Place
- Family Promise
- GraceWorks
- Honduras Mission Trip
- Hope Inspired Ministries
- Sawyerville
- Special Session at Camp McDowell
- St. Andy's Pantry
- Temple Beth El Civil Rights Experience
- Uniontown Water Program

# ALL SAINTS STATISTICS SINCE OCTOBER 2023



**3**  
Births

**0**

Deaths



**18**  
New Members

**0**

Members  
that have left



# CALENDAR



## FEB

**21** Lenten Contemplative Service - 6:00pm

## MAR

**17** St. Patrick's Day

**24** Palm Sunday - 8:30am, 11:00am (+Live Stream) & 5:30pm Services

**28** Maundy Thursday - 6:30pm Service + Live Stream

**29** Good Friday - 12:00pm Service + Live Stream

**30** Proper Liturgy for Holy Saturday - 9:00am Service  
Easter Festival - 10:00am to 11:30am on Terrell Commons  
The Great Vigil of Easter - 7:15pm Service

**31** Easter Sunday - 8:30am, 11:00am (+Live Stream) & 5:30pm Services

## APR

**4** Summer Preschool registration for currently enrolled families & parishioners

**11** Summer Preschool registration for new families

**14** Rite 13 Ceremony - 11:00am Service  
EYC - Spring Field Day against other local Episcopal churches

**21** The Rt. Rev. Glenda Curry, Bishop's Visit & Confirmation Sunday

**28** Youth Sunday

## MAY

**1** Children and Youth Choir Performances

**4** All Saints Loves Homewood Festival

**5** Children and Youth Choir Performances  
6th grader recognition with presentation of prayer books for level III (4th, 5th, 6th graders)  
plus the end-of-the-year party at Kathleen's house following the service

**15** Last Day of Preschool/4K/5K Graduation at 11:30am

**19** Pentecost  
Last Atrium of the school year & EYC youth banquet

## JUN

**23** \*\*Save the date: VBS starts on this date and runs until June 26th



Main: 205-879-8651

Preschool: 205-879-1092

After-hours pastoral care emergency phone: 205-617-8954

**Rector:** The Reverend Brad Landry, blandry@allsaintsbhm.org

**Associate Rector:** The Reverend Ranie Neislar, rneislar@allsaintsbhm.org

**Priest Associate:** The Reverend Cindy Carter, ccarter@allsaintsbhm.org

**Priest Associate:** The Reverend Mike Cleckler

Parish Coordinator: Tara Portney, office@allsaintsbhm.org

Director of Communications: Brian Wallace, bwallace@allsaintsbhm.org

Facility Coordinator: Brian Wallace, bwallace@allsaintsbhm.org

Director of Finance: Connie Bryson, finance@allsaintsbhm.org

Preschool Director: Bebe Hardin, bhardin@allsaintsbhm.org

Organist/Choir Director: Melanie Couch, mcouch@allsaintsbhm.org

Youth & Children's Music Director: Maggie Gill, mgill@allsaintsbhm.org

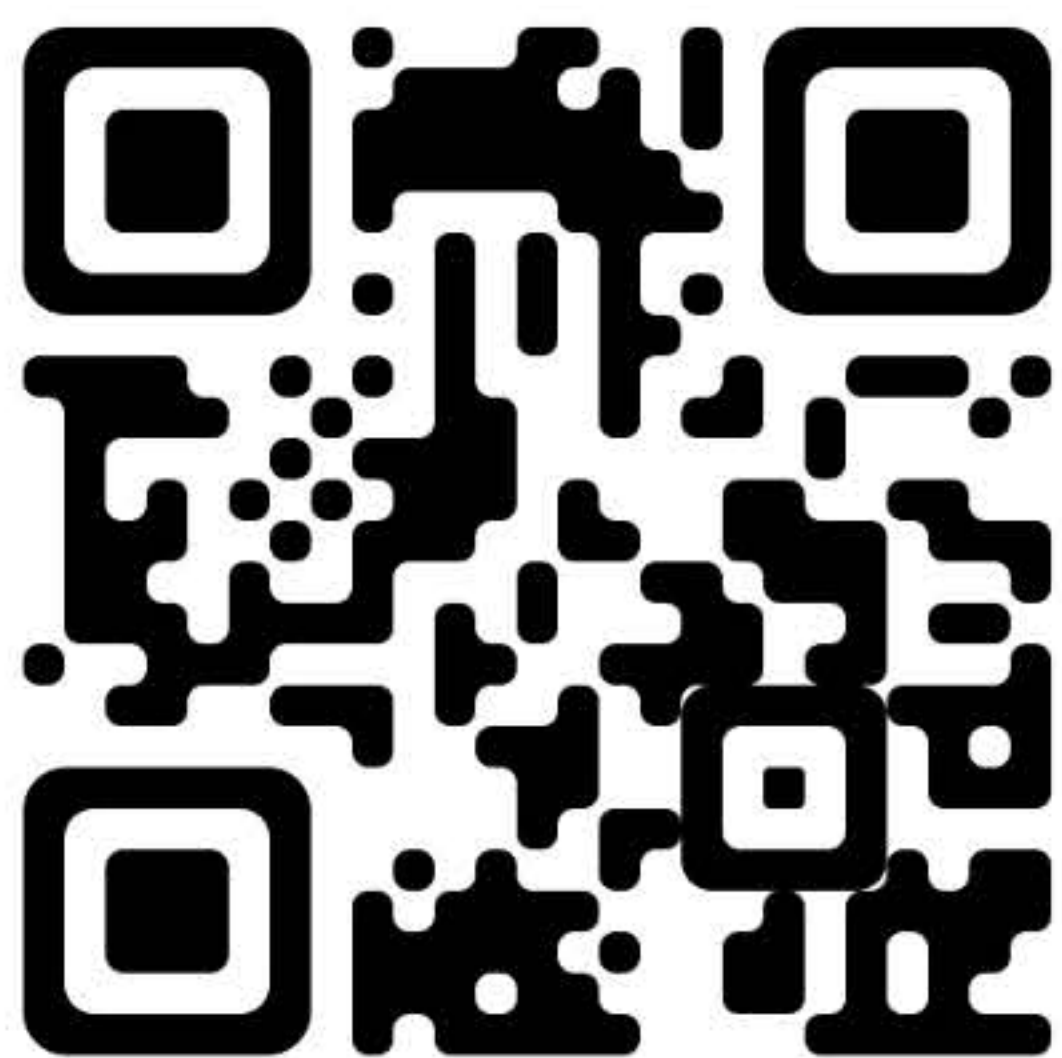
Nursery Director: Jennifer Cupps, jcupps@allsaintsbhm.org

Director of Youth Ministries: Grace Turner, gturner@allsaintsbhm.org

Children's Formation Director: Kathleen Busbee, kbusbee@allsaintsbhm.org

Children's Formation Assistant Director: Jeannie Feldman, jfeldman@allsaintsbhm.org

5:30 Music Director: Randolph Horn, rchorn@samford.edu



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Announcements



Give / Pledge



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