

THE Messenger

MAY 2026

ST. MARY'S-ON-THE-HIGHLANDS EPISCOPAL CHURCH



Were not our hearts burning within us...

By The Rev. H. Huey Gardner

The 50 great days of Easter continually draw our hearts and lives to reflect on the gift of redemption offered to all humanity through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Paul, Peter, James, Timothy, and many others became devoted to speaking openly about what they had experienced through their friendship with Christ and what they had come to understand in Easter.

Holy Scripture offers descriptions of doubt (Thomas), loss of hope (Emmaus), guidance (Christ as the Good Shepherd), and the reality that, no matter what, Christ can still be known through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. This last reality is clearly conveyed in the Gospel of John. Jesus tells His followers, “do not be disheartened; do not allow loss to consume your existence.” John’s Gospel leans into the sense of abandonment that the early followers felt. In his Gospel, Matthew tells us that Christ will be with those who love Him until the end of the ages. John echoes this with Jesus’ statement, “I will not leave you comfortless.” These statements are among the most empowering in the Gospels because they describe the role of the believer in the world. The believer is to preach, teach, and lead others into the deep living waters that only Christ offers. While some may have felt abandoned by Christ, the reality is that we have been empowered by Easter! Through preaching, teaching, and bringing others into the “sheepfold,” we know the presence and power of Christ.

Among the various post-resurrection accounts, the story of two individuals walking to Emmaus is one of my favorites. It begins with the human experience of loss. We hear the statement, “We had hoped.” The disciples put their hope in Jesus, but the crucifixion crushed that hope.



The Supper at Emmaus by Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio (1601)

In this statement, their whole perception seems oriented to the past. Jesus appears to them, shares a meal with them, and as they experience His opening of the Holy Scripture, their hearts burn with excitement and joy.

Realize what happens next. They are so excited about the new orientation Easter brings to the world that they run back to Jerusalem to tell the others they have seen the risen Lord! Their eyes are opened to what God is doing to redeem all creation. Paul writes that the whole creation yearns to be freed from the corruption and shame introduced to the world by the serpent in the garden. The serpent opened Adam and Eve's eyes to shame and disharmony. Through Easter, God opens the eyes of all creation to what is possible with God.

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VISION OF ST. MARY'S-ON-THE-HIGHLANDS

St. Mary's will offer a wide range of worship, education and outreach experiences that draw people closer to Christ.

MISSION OF ST. MARY'S-ON-THE-HIGHLANDS

St. Mary's mission is to serve God by proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ within the Parish and into the world by worshiping in the Anglican tradition, by faithfully administering the sacraments, and by ministering to the spiritual, emotional, and physical needs of our Parish family and our community.

Adult Christian Education

Sunday Mornings
9:30 AM in Randolph Memorial Hall

- **Sunday, May 3:** Learn about one of St. Mary's best resources for Christian Education – the St. Mary's Library! June Mays and Anne Burrows (pictured right) have recruited a team of volunteers to organize our library. We have almost 2,000 books available! The oldest book is over 100 years old, but all are being brought into the 21st century – that is right, we are going digital! Soon you will be able to search online by author and subject to see what is available. **Subjects include New and Old Testament, Devotionals, Theology, Christian Life, Prayer, Southern Churches, Church History, Fine Arts, Literature, Biographies, and many more.** You will also be able to sign up for an account to check out books quickly and conveniently.
- **Sunday, May 10: Christian Education Showcase** We will celebrate the last Sunday of our Easter Semester with a showcase **highlighting and celebrating the many educational opportunities at St. Mary's** – from Sunday mornings and beyond. Christian Education isn't just Sunday School. We have opportunities to gather and learn about the faith most days of the week. There are small and large groups, early-morning and evening classes, lectures, and discussions. Come give thanks to the many volunteers and staff who make these offerings possible, and learn about what your next favorite class might be. **We will also recognize the many volunteers who create, coordinate, and present our Christian Ed Offerings.**



St. Mary's Men of the Church
Beast Feast
Wednesday, May 13
5:30 pm in the Motor Court

The Men of the Church will gather on May 13 in the motor court to share the harvest of hunting season. With turkey season ending, bring the bounty from your deep freezer and come ready to share stories from the hunting and fishing trips that fuel this feast.

We'll have the grill and deep fryer hot, so bring your fish, fowl, or game, seasoned and ready to share, and something to wash it all down with. We'll have prizes for the best recipe and the furthest harvest – whether that's a duck from Greene Co. or an elk from Alaska.

Please email richard@stmarysoth.org with what you plan to bring.



For our next outing,
we are heading south to Montevallo!

Here are the details:

- Depart by bus from St. Mary's at 9:00 AM.
- First stop: American Village in Montevallo (www.americanyillage.org)
- Lunch at 1:00 PM (time approximate) at Main Street Tavern
- Return to St. Mary's immediately following lunch
- \$40 pp includes admission to American Village and lunch
- **Pre-payment is required.** Visit our Events page to register and pay: www.stmarysoth.org/events.

From The Editor

Final Print Edition of *The Messenger*

As previously announced, beginning with our June 2026 issue, St. Mary's will transition *The Messenger* to a primarily e-newsletter format. This change reflects our commitment to being good stewards of church resources while continuing to share timely and meaningful information with our parish community.

As printing, production, and mailing costs continue to rise, moving to an electronic format allows us to reduce expenses and direct more of our resources toward ministry, outreach, and parish life. An e-newsletter also enables us to share news and announcements more quickly, helping everyone stay informed and connected.

We recognize that email is not the best option for everyone. **If we do not have an email address on file for you, you will continue to receive a printed copy of the newsletter by first-class mail.** In addition, the digital version will be available as usual on our website, and a limited number of printed copies will be placed around the buildings for anyone who would like to pick one up.

If you need to update your contact information, please contact Melodie Elam at melodie@stmarysoth.org or 205-881-1261. Thank you for your understanding and support as we take this step together in faithful stewardship and communication.



St. Mary's Cursillo Community

We've got a lot of great things happening this year, and we'd love for you to be part of it! **If you're already a Cursillista, be sure to join the St. Mary's Cursillo group on Realm to stay connected with upcoming events, important dates, and community updates.**

Interested in attending Cursillo? We'd love to help you get started. Please contact our **Parish Lay Rector, Christy Parsons**, through Realm for more information.

2026 CURSILLO DATES

Cursillo #240
Thu, May 28 - Sun, May 31, 2026

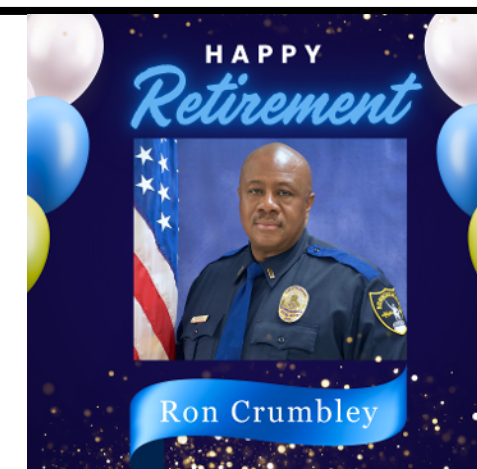
Cursillo #241
Thu, Oct 8 - Sun, Oct 11, 2026



Ron Crumbley Retirement CELEBRATION!

Sunday, May 3 / 10:30 Worship Service

Everyone is invited to celebrate Ron's retirement after 22+ with St. Mary's and 32 years with the Birmingham Police Department.



Children's Ministries

We Love Our Volunteers!

It takes several volunteers each Sunday to offer Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, Kids' Word, and Chapel. St. Mary's is grateful for these faithful parishioners who have led formation for children in 3K-6th grade this program year:

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd			Kids' Word		Children's Chapel
Corie Segrest	Andy Spinks	Fluff Roberts	Riley Griffin	Liza Davis	Jenna Dorlon
Stephanie Spinks	Bevelle Worthen	Phyllis Pelham	Meredith Plains	Rachel Lopez	Hallie Anderson
Megann Cain	Laura Beale	Michele Hill	Katherine Terry	Jenna Dorlon	
Sue Ratliff	Beverley Hoyt	Liz Kerr	Anne-Allen Hogan	Lora Blalock	
Lindsey Scoggins	Meg Krawczyk	Patricia Craft	Helen Ahlquist	Marguerite Morris	
Marguerite Morris	Dianne Matheson	Cora Causey	Letty Harrison	Lindsay Cartmell	
Stephanie Robinett	Lora Terry	Emily Rich	Carolyne and Alex Kontomitras		
Linda Kennedy			Stephanie and Andy Spinks		

Club 456
GAME NIGHT
 Games - Prizes - Pizza
 Roll the Dice, Grab Your Cards!
Friday, May 1 6-8 PM
 Bring a friend!
 RSVP katie@stmarysoth.org

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL
 JUNE 8-10
 9:00-12:30

Visit our events page to sign up as a volunteer and to register your child: www.stmarysoth.org/events.

PLEASE NOTE: To guarantee a T-Shirt for your child, please register by Friday, May 8.

KINDERGARTEN TOUR OF THE CHURCH AND SPECIAL RECOGNITION
Sunday, May 3 at 9:30
 Meet in the Level One atrium

Sixth Grade SPECIAL SUNDAY
Sunday, May 10 9:30 Education

Make sure your sixth grader is in atrium this day. We will do a special CGS lesson and then recognize the sixth graders moving to EYC and present them with a gift.

KIDS' WORD BREAKS FOR SUMMER
 MAY 17-SEPT. 6

Your child will begin church with you. After the Gospel, children follow the crucifer out for children's chapel and return at the Peace.

Youth Ministries/EYC

Youth Sunday!
 May 3 / 10:30 AM Service

Everyone's favorite Sunday is just around the corner! Youth Sunday is an opportunity for the students (7th - 12th grade) at St. Mary's to lead a Eucharist service by serving as greeters, ushers, acolytes, chalice, readers, and musicians. Our hope is to have as many students as possible involved in the service.

Please email Jessica@stmarysoth.org sign up!



Created for a Purpose: July 20-24

Created For A Purpose is a creative arts camp for girls rooted in Scripture and the Gospel. Campers (rising 3rd-8th grade girls) are led by high school, college, and adult women from the parish. Each day includes hands-on activities and biblical teaching, emphasizing that God has gifted everyone with talents to be used for His glory.



Interested in Serving?

Counselors: Rising 9th-12th grade girls and college women. Rising 10th graders and older will receive a \$200 stipend.
Adult Volunteers: All women of the parish are invited to sign up!
 Visit the Events page of our website for application links (www.stmarysoth.org/events).

Outreach Events

sawyerville SUMMER CAMP

Snack Collection for Campers!
 We are collecting individual packs of Cheez-its and Goldfish for Camp Sawyerville. All donations can be dropped off in the Outreach office on or before **Monday, May 18**.

Dinner for Staff: Thursday, June 4
 St. Mary's will serve dinner to the Sawyerville staff. If you would like to serve at this events please contact *Monica Sargent* (monica@stmarysoth.org).



Who Knew???

Thursday, May 21 / 12:30 PM / Living Room



Support for Alzheimer's Patients and Families

You may feel alone in the face of a dementia diagnosis, but you don't have to be. **Learn from a representative of the local Alzheimer's Association** about programs and resources for patients and family members right here in Birmingham.

Contact Emily Rushing or Kaki O'Flinn to find out more about our regular monthly gatherings or to suggest a topic.

A Thank You from Sewanee

Dear Friends at St. Mary's-on-the-Highlands,

For more than four decades, your parish has faithfully supported the University of the South's School of Theology. Annual gifts like yours sustain the daily life of the seminary, supporting students as they study, pray, and prepare for ministry. The University, familiarly known as Sewanee, is proud to house one of only eight Episcopal seminaries in the United States—and one of four that offer fully residential theological formation.

Your steadfast generosity reflects who you are as a parish, and it is worth pausing to celebrate what your commitment to Sewanee has made possible. Year by year, your gifts have added up, and so have the lives you've touched. For the past 42 years—including an unbroken stretch of the past 17—St. Mary's has helped form more than 1,500 clergy and even more lay leaders who now serve across the Church, sharing the Gospel around the world.

We are deeply grateful for your partnership, and we invite you to remain connected to the School of Theology through worship. Choral Evensong is offered each Wednesday at 5:45 p.m. online, so that you can pray alongside our community from wherever you are: <https://vimeo.com/event/1286230>. [Pictured below are the members of the Schola Cantorum who sing the Wednesday evening Choral Evensong.]

With thanksgiving for each of you,

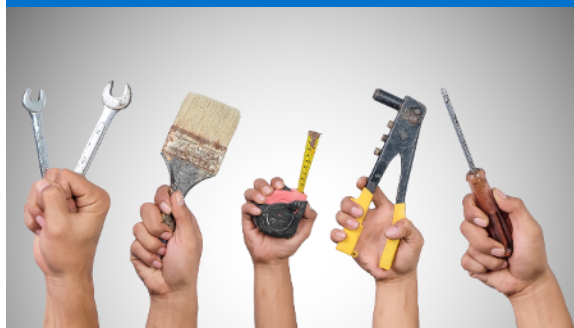
Claire Cotten, C'10

Major Gift Officer

cdcotten@sewanee.edu



Men's Service Ministry



These men are ready to serve!

Do age or physical limitations make it difficult to move bulky furniture or change a hard-to-reach light bulb? If so, the Men's Service Ministry would be glad to help!

A group of our men has volunteered to staff this ministry, which provides services to parishioners, at their residences, who are unable to do such things as hanging framed items, relocating furniture, etc. This also includes small hand-tool repairs. **Requests for assistance should be directed to Meade Whitaker at mwhitaker@bradley.com or work (205) 521-8261.**

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Walking with God and living a life guided by the Holy Spirit is a challenge. There are many “things” that distract and consume our attention. Making worship a weekly priority is one way to live into Easter. It takes discipline to break away from the “ways of the world” and replace those endeavors with a life more pleasing to God.

My hope for all of us around St. Mary's is that we will step into Easter with both feet this year. The hope of Easter is exciting and life-changing, and brings those who lean into it great joy. I hope you will look toward Easter and the hope that can be found there.

Preaching Schedule

- May 3: The Rev. Deacon Kaki O'Flinn (8AM & 5PM)
Edmund Ball (10:30 AM Youth Sunday)
- May 10: The Rev. Richard Ahlquist
- May 17: The Rev. H. Huey Gardner
- May 24: The Rev. Richard Ahlquist
NO 5:00 PM SERVICE
- May 31: The Rev. Deacon Kaki O'Flinn

St. Mary's On-Call Clergy Number

205-881-3278

This number is only active on the weekends. Weekday Pastoral Emergency Calls should be directed to 205-933-1140.



Things slow down a bit during the summer months, but we still have plenty going on! Mark these dates on your calendar and watch for more details coming soon.

- **June Gathering of the St. Mary's Book Club: Tuesday, June 16** Our selection is *The Correspondent* by Virginia Evans. Join the conversation in the Living Room at noon.
- **Middler's Dinner: Thursday, June 18** 6:00-8:30 PM. Hosted by Hill and Dan Weathers. BYOB. RSVP by Venmo payment of \$15 pp to @Hill-Weathers. Include your email in payment details so we can send you parking instructions!
- **St. Mary's Night at the Barons! Thursday, June 25** We will be on the Banquet Patio again this year!
- **Ordination of our New Bishop: Saturday, June 27** The Very Rev. Richard T. Lawson, III will be ordained and consecrated as the 13th Bishop of Alabama by Presiding Bishop Sean Rowe at the Cathedral Church of the Advent.

Transitions

Births

James Stewart Justice
Son of Katherine and Jamie Justice
Grandson of Lisa and Charlie Miller
Born March 29, 2026

Baptisms

Monroe Mae Wudel
Daughter of Rachel and Adam Wudel
Granddaughter of Debbie and Dave Dresher
Baptized on April 4, 2026

Edward Hampton McFadden
Son of Evalyn and Hampton McFadden, III
Grandson of Harriet and Hampton McFadden, Jr.
Baptized on April 12, 2026

Marriages

Alexandra and Montana Murphy
Daughter and son-in-law of Evans J. Dunn
Granddaughter and grandson-in-law of Evans Dunn, Jr.
Married March 21, 2026

New Members

Spencer and Sarah Lacey
Keller, Teddy, and Caroline

Rest In Peace

Charles Edward Buck
April 21, 2026

Alice Wilkerson Sarrett
April 23, 2026



ST. MARY'S

ON THE HIGHLANDS
1910 12th Avenue South
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The Messenger is a monthly newsletter of St. Mary's-on-the-Highlands to inform readers about what is happening in and around our parish community.

Visit us on-line at stmarysoth.org