

# MISSIVES



## From The Pastor

BY PASTOR BILL MILHOLLAND

*Originally intended to be published in November.*

*The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff — they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD my whole life long. Psalm 23*

We love to hear this psalm. We love it because it's comforting ... because it promises God's providence and presence ... and because it promises

God's protection, even in the face of death and enemies.

But I'd like to suggest it's one of the best passages of scripture for stewardship. Because, more than anything else, Psalm 23 promises that God will provide: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want."

Want. Think, for a moment, about how powerful "wanting" is in our culture. So much of our lives is built around our wanting this or that. It becomes such a vicious cycle — to make everything work the way it's supposed to work, we are encouraged at every turn to want. To want more stuff, to want nicer stuff, to want lots of stuff. We live with the idea of scarcity, far more aware of what we don't have than what we do. Since we are bombarded every day with messages telling us what we don't have, it's easy to be seduced into thinking that our happiness comes from getting everything we want. No wonder so many people are unhappy. We are consumed

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by what we lack instead of being grateful for our abundance.

And that's where Psalm 23 comes in. At every turn, Psalm 23 promises us God's provision for everything we need in this life. It stands against so much of what we're told by the world and invites us into another frame of mind...to simply say thank you because "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." In other words, the Lord is my shepherd and provides all I need. Period.

Why am I telling you all this? Because the message God gives us through this psalm is such a wonderful way of thinking about stewardship. Realizing how much our Good Shepherd gives us can enable us to live with thanksgiving and share our abundance with the world. Giving is an important part of our life of faith, and it becomes a way of celebrating the abundance of God's provision for us.

So, when you hear the word "stewardship." Before you immediately think it's a churchy way to just ask you to give, take stock of what you have been given already. Perhaps one way to do that is to take a pencil and paper, and for five minutes or so, make a list on one side of ten things for which you are most grateful in your life. In the other column, list ten things you want most right now. Then ask yourself: Which would have the greater impact on my life – losing what I'm grateful for or gaining all I want?

Then I'd like to ask you to pray – really pray – a prayer of thanksgiving for what God has given you.

My hope is that we will better recognize God's generosity to us and see life from the perspective of his abundance rather than scarcity ... and move us away from a constant wanting and into a trust of God's blessing. Then we can lead lives of confidence and courage and generosity, knowing that "the Lord

REALLY IS my shepherd, I shall not want. Lord Jesus Christ, you are our good shepherd. You provide us with all we need, you give us new birth in the waters of baptism. You anoint us with oil, and you nourish us at your table. In your goodness and mercy, take away the shadows of fear that surround us, and lead us to live securely in you and dwell in the house of the Lord now and forever, for your name's sake. Amen

## From the Senior Warden

BY JAMES HAYES

As we approach Christmas, I am reminded of the reassuring words of Philippians 4:4-7: "*Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*"

Although not from the Gospel Christmas narratives, I believe these verses capture the spirit of Christmas – the call to rejoice, to be gentle, and to find peace in the Lord's nearness. The Christmas season is a time of joy, a celebration of the miraculous birth of our Savior, and a reminder that we are always able to turn to God in prayer.

As we gather and exchange gifts with our loved ones, we must remember the true gift of Christmas – the gift of love and salvation through Jesus Christ. Rejoice in the Lord's presence and let the gentleness of our hearts reflect His love for us.

The message to "not be anxious about anything" is a comforting reminder of His presence as we look

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*The one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.*

*2 Corinthians 9:6-7*

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forward to the coming year. We bring our prayers and petitions before God with thanksgiving and are promised that His peace, a peace beyond our understanding, will guide our hearts and minds.

May the joy of this Christmas last throughout the coming year and as a parish family, let us rejoice, be gentle, and find solace in our nearness to the Lord.

I wish you and yours a Christmas filled with joy and a New Year blessed with peace.

## Potluck Dinner Program

*This article was originally intended to appear in the October Missives, which was not published. Nevertheless, the information remains important.*

At St. Mary's Quarterly Potluck Dinner Program held on September 14, 2023, about 26 of our parishioners attended, each bringing their favorite creations to share. However, the event was not just a culinary gathering, it was also an opportunity to spotlight various community ministries on which St. Mary's and St. James can partner.

Reverend Phillip Craig, our Priest-in-Charge, reminded us of the incredible impact our church communities can make by jointly supporting ministries. Father Craig highlighted several:

1. Share Furniture: This nonprofit, all-volunteer ministry works tirelessly with local organizations in Wilmington to distribute furniture donations to individuals and families in need. Your support and involvement can help transform a house into a home for those less fortunate.

2. A Safe Place: This vital organization is dedicated to aiding victims of human trafficking, offering safety, support, and

a path toward healing. By joining this ministry, we can be a beacon of hope for survivors seeking refuge and recovery.

3. Men-on-a-Mission: A dedicated group of men from St. James committed to service, fellowship, and organizing various community service projects. Participation can foster fellowship and strengthen our community as we work together to make a difference.

4. Eden Village: This visionary initiative is on a mission to build a tiny home community for the chronically homeless. Having a home is a key component in long-term health care.

These ministries offer many ways to serve, support, and make a meaningful impact on the lives of others. Whether you have a few hours to spare, a particular skill to share, or a heartfelt desire to help, consider these ministries. To learn more, please reach out to Rev. Craig.

## Projects Summary

As everyone has no doubt observed, St. Mary's has undergone a significant face lift over the last four months.

At the beginning of the year, the vestry decided that there were sufficient funds in St. Mary's capital expense reserves to address long-deferred facilities issues. So, it developed a program to improve the quality and appearance of our 50-year-old church campus by modernizing outdated equipment in the Fellowship Hall, improving facility access and security, and better caring for the youngest of our parishioners. It should be noted that these improvements fulfill our responsibility to be good stewards of the property entrusted to us by safeguarding our valuable assets, as well as creating an

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*For to us a child  
is born, to us a  
son is given, and  
the government  
will be on his  
shoulders. And he  
will be called  
Wonderful  
Counselor,  
Mighty God,  
Everlasting  
Father, Prince of  
Peace.*

*Isaiah 9:6*

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environment that attracts newcomers to explore and engage with our parish. Together these efforts symbolize St. Mary’s ongoing commitment to stewardship, outreach, fellowship, and community involvement.

As a result of the excellent work of the Junior Warden, Karl Hammers, and the Treasurer, George Francis, a variety of contracts were developed and bids were obtained that resulted in the \$65,667 improvements program outlined below:

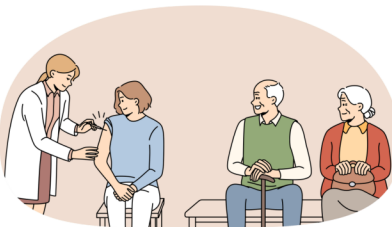
- Fellowship Hall kitchen appliances, equipping childcare space, and floor replacement: \$15,776
- Parking lot resurfacing and striping: \$43,045
- Exterior door repair/replacement, ADA hardware and powered door openers (This work is expected to start in December): \$6,846

To defray some of the program costs, the vestry decided to apply for a grant from the Diocesan Foundation. George Francis prepared a detailed, well-supported application, which resulted in a successful grant of \$10,000, which St. Mary’s will receive by check in January.

Perhaps the most disruptive portion of the program was the Parish Hall flooring project, which required moving everything out of the kitchen, office, bathrooms, and common room beforehand, then moving everything back afterwards.

St. Mary’s received outstanding support from the Men-on-a-Mission organization from St. James Church and many hardworking St. Mary’s parishioners on two Saturdays.

Daniel LeClair developed the movement plan and managed the work, which proceeded smoothly despite several changes in schedule, resulting in a much more attractive, safer, and functional Parish Hall.



## Fall Vaccines

It's important for adults aged 65 and older to consult their healthcare provider about the following vaccines:

1. COVID-19 vaccine
2. Flu vaccine
3. Pneumococcal vaccine
4. Shingles vaccine
5. Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, and whooping cough) or Td (tetanus and diphtheria)

In addition to these, the CDC now recommends the Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) vaccine for individuals aged 60 years and older. Stay informed about these crucial vaccinations by visiting [www.CDC.gov](http://www.CDC.gov).

## Linda Hadden

Linda is now living in Alabama and doing much better! The ECW encourages everyone in our parish family to send her a note. It would mean so much to her. Thanks!!

Linda Hadden  
The Harbor @ Hickory Hill, Apt. 43  
2102 Summit Pkwy.  
Prattville, AL 36022



# December Events

Lutheran Service  
December 3  
11:00 AM

Parish Annual Meeting  
December 3  
After the Service

Parish Xmas Lunch  
December 10  
After the Service

ECW Xmas Lunch  
at Mad Boar  
December 12  
11:30 AM

Vestry Meeting  
at Marshburn’s  
December 13  
6:00 PM

Christmas Eve Service  
December 24  
11:00 AM

Lessons & Carols  
December 31  
11:00 AM

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## Birthdays

Gary Trawick 12/3  
Don O’Connell 12/8  
Rev.Cheryl Brainard 12/11  
Susan Stocks 12/12  
Rev. Thom May 12/15

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## Anniversaries

Conor & Lauren Nelson 12/12  
Valde & Helle Jorgensen 12/26

# A Glimpse of Creation

BY JAMES HAYES

*Long ago you laid the foundation of the earth,  
and the heavens are the work of your hands.*

Psalm 102:25

Evening constellations,  
those celestial patterns  
that beguile the imagination,  
are just glittering emanations  
of primordial light  
travelling cosmic distances  
to arrive after eons  
the instant we gaze upward –  
a photo album  
of time immemorial  
revealing original images  
of God's nascent creation.



## Prayer about Important and Unimportant Things

ANONYMOUS

God our Father, forgive us that we so often give our best to the wrong things. Sometimes we put far more enthusiasm, thought, and effort into our pleasures, games, and amusement than into our work. Sometimes we keep our best behavior for strangers and our worst behavior for our homes; and often we treat our nearest and dearest with a discourtesy and disregard that we would never show to strangers. Sometimes we become irritated, annoyed, and angry about things that in our calmer moments, we know do not matter. Sometimes we lose our temper over trifles. Sometimes we allow very little things to cause a quarrel with a friend. Help us to see what is important and what is unimportant so that we may never forget the things that matter, and never allow the things that do not matter to matter too much. *Amen.*

## Did You Know

Bill of Rights Day is nationally observed on December 15th each year to commemorate the ratification of the first ten amendments to the United States Constitution in 1791. It is a time to appreciate the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed to American citizens, such as freedom of speech, religion, and the right to a fair trial. While not as widely recognized as other holidays, it's an important occasion to reflect on the basic principles that makes our Democracy so unique.

## The Book of Common Prayer

The first Book of Common Prayer (BCP) of the Episcopal Church of the United States of America's was published in 1789, shortly after the U.S. gained independence. It reflected liturgical independence from the Church of England but maintained core Anglican traditions. Notable revisions occurred in 1892, 1928, and 1979. The 1979 BCP is especially significant for its efforts to be more inclusive by introducing gender-neutral language, expanding liturgical options, and including additional prayers and services to reflect diverse worship practices. The prayer book is a dynamic, adaptable, liturgical resource that reflects the evolving nature of worship in the Episcopal tradition.

## From the Editor

I appologize that the Missives for October and November were not published. To make up for it, I've included some information from previous months.

If you'd like to submit an announcement or an article to be included in Missives, send to [stmarysmisives@gmail.com](mailto:stmarysmisives@gmail.com). Ensure it's written exactly how you want it to appear, keep an eye on the length, and include a point of contact.



## St. Mary's Parish EST. 1908

Priest-in-Charge **Rev. Phillip Craig**  
Secretary **Pam Anthony**  
Organist **Jennings Trawick**  
Membership **Pat Casaw**  
Webmaster **Daniel LeClair**  
Missives Editor **Jim Hayes**

## Vestry

Senior Warden **Jim Hayes**  
Junior Warden **Karl Hammers**  
Treasurer **George Francis**  
Clerk **Pam Anthony**  
Outreach **Daniel LeClair**  
Finance **Roxanne Marshburn**  
Pastoral Care **Armin Jancis**  
Fellowship **Armin Jancis**  
Worship **Jim Hayes**

## Mission

To witness to the love of God in Christ for all people. To this end we commit ourselves to faithful worship as we gather together around the Word and the Sacrament, share our resources with those in need, and invite all to share our life in Christ.

## Visit or Contact Us

Street Address:  
506 S. McNeil Street  
Burgaw, NC 28425

Mailing Address:  
P.O. Box 841  
Burgaw, NC 28425

Office: 910-259-5541  
Email: [stmarysburgaw@gmail.com](mailto:stmarysburgaw@gmail.com)  
Online: [www.stmarysburgaw.org](http://www.stmarysburgaw.org)

## Those Who Serve

Vestry Person of the Month	Jim Hayes	
<b>Sunday December 3 The First Sunday of Advent 11:00 AM</b>	Celebrant	Pastor Bill Milholland
	Lay Assistant	Pat Casaw
	Acolyte/Crucifer	Danny Buck
	Oblations & Usher	Valde & Helle Jorgensen
	Organist	Jennings Trawick
	Altar Guild	Donna Anderson
	Coffee Hour Angels	Brenda & Bill Starling
<b>Sunday December 10 The Second Sunday of Advent 11:00 AM</b>	Celebrant	The Rev. Nancy Jose
	Lay Assistant	Pam Anthony
	Acolyte/Crucifer	Emily Smith
	Oblations & Usher	Jimbo & Heidi Robbins
	Organist	Jennings Trawick
	Altar Guild	Pat Casaw
	Christmas Luncheon	
<b>Sunday December 17 The Third Sunday of Advent 11:00 AM</b>	Celebrant	The Rev. Nancy Jose
	Lay Assistant	Karl Hammers
	Acolyte/Crucifer	Pat Casaw
	Oblations & Usher	Donna Anderson & Kimon Davies
	Organist	Jennings Trawick
	Altar Guild	Pam Anthony
	Coffee Hour Angels	Pam Anthony & Armin Jancis
<b>Sunday December 24 Christmans Eve Service 11:00 AM</b>	Celebrant	The Rev. Dan Macgill
	Lay Assistant	George Francis
	Acolyte/Crucifer	Kayla Marshburn
	Oblations & Usher	Armin Jancis & Danny Buck
	Organist	Jennings Trawick
	Altar Guild	Heidi Robbins
	Coffee Hour Angels	Heidi & Jimbo Robbins

*IMPORTANT: If you cannot serve as scheduled, please find a replacement and inform Pam Anthony of the change as soon as possible.*

## Those Who Serve

<b>Sunday December 31 Christmas Festival of Lessons &amp; Music 11:00 AM</b>	Lector	Jim Hayes
	Organist	Jennings Trawick
	Altar Guild	Donna Anderson
	Coffee Hour Angels	Jennings & Gary Trawick

*IMPORTANT: If you cannot serve as scheduled, please find a replacement and inform Pam Anthony of the change as soon as possible.*