

The Magnificat



Before becoming a priest, I worked at an Episcopal Church as a Music Minister. Then, I also became the Children's Minister to help the church establish a Children's Ministry. Both of these jobs kept me very busy especially around Christmas! There was Advent music to prepare with the Choir, special anthems to practice, Christmas services to work ahead on, and special guest musicians to prepare music for and incorporate into the Worship Services. I had to prepare the curriculum for Sunday School, Children's Chapel and Wednesday night Kid's Club. Then of course there was Santa's visit, presents to be purchased, an outdoors "living Manger" to organize (yes, the children were a part of that and it was adorable!), the Children's Christmas Pageant to rehearse and perform on Christmas Eve which meant that costumes had to be prepared the week before. WOW! It was a lot of work and I loved every minute of it! I tried really hard to create a beautiful and meaningful experience during Advent for everyone. This included some special activities to help engage the children in the season.

One really special tradition that I introduced to the church was "Nativity Hide and Seek". On the first Sunday of Advent I placed the empty crèche on the altar. Then I hid several Nativity figures around the Nave. On that first Sunday when the children returned from Children's Chapel during the Peace, they were asked to find where I had hidden the figures. Chaos ensued! The children began running everywhere trying to be the one to find the figures. It was so much fun! And not only fun for the children, the congregation was also excited to see their excitement and cheered when a child found a nativity figure. After all of the figures were found for that first Sunday, the children were allowed to go to the altar and place the Nativity figures in the crèche. And so, this Nativity hide and seek continued during the Sunday's of Advent until our Nativity Scene was completed except for Baby Jesus (and the wise men). I told the children that on Christmas Eve, I would allow them to place baby Jesus. They were so excited to be able to add the Baby Jesus on Christmas Eve to the Nativity scene that they had built.

I worked diligently that December to create a beautiful Advent and Christmas season for everyone. I became so concerned with everyone's spiritual journey that I neglected my own. The day before Christmas I was rushing through the Nave trying to do all of the last minute preparation before the Christmas Eve Services. Feeling overwhelmed and exhausted I remember rushing past the altar when suddenly something said, "Stop". I can't explain what happened, only that I had a very real sense that I should pause. So I just stood there looking at the altar. Suddenly, my eyes were drawn downward to the Nativity scene that the children had built during the Sundays of Advent.

And then I saw it. The children had placed all of the figures in a circle, looking inward. And right in the middle of the circle was an empty place; a perfectly prepared spot waiting for the Baby Jesus.

When I saw that the children, with no instruction from any adult, had realized that they needed to prepare a place for Baby Jesus and that his arrival was what all of the figures were waiting and watching for, I just cried. I thought; that is it. And in that moment those little children taught me something. What matters most this season is not the busyness, or making everything perfect for everyone else, or even making things perfect for me; what matters most is creating that little place of anticipation for Jesus to come once again and be the center of my life.

Let us all learn from the little children and prepare a place in our hearts this season for Jesus to be born anew in our hearts and lives. Amen.

With Anticipation,
Mother Leanne+



Poinsettias are a Christmas Tradition here at St. Mary's to mark the holiday season. The time is coming to order your poinsettia as a dedication to a loved one, and as a part of the church decoration.

Envelopes will be provided in the pews to enclose your donation in, \$8.00 suggested donation. Be sure to print on the envelope who you would like the flowers to be in honor or memory of, along with your name.

Envelopes may then be placed in the offering plate on Sundays. All dedications must be submitted by Dec. 15th. Contact the office if you have any questions. 850-623-2905

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# St. Mary's Winterfest



Friday, Dec. 5 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Saturday, Dec. 6 from 9 to 2 p.m.  
6850 OAK STREET, MILTON FLORIDA

WE NEED HELP  
DECORATING THE  
RECTORY

*Tuesday, December 2nd  
at 10:00am*

PLEASE JOIN YOUR  
FRIENDS AND HELP MAKE  
OUR RECTORY  
*"Christmas Card Perfect!"*

## vendor booths

art • candles • clothing • crochet/knit work  
honey products • home/holiday décor • jewelry  
salves • woodcrafts • other creative handiwork  
retail sales • local authors

## food

baked goods • turkey gumbo • chili  
hamburgers • hotdogs

## Feeding the

5,000

*In the spirit of Christmas,*  
through December 14th, we will collect the  
following food items for our patrons:

|                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Boxed mashed potatoes  | Cans of gravy         |
| Stuffing mix in a box  | Corn bread mix        |
| Cream of mushroom soup | Crispy Fried onions   |
| Green Beans            | Canned sweet potatoes |



*Your donations are deeply appreciated.*

# Christmas Open House at the Rectory



Please join your church family for a Christmas gathering at the Rectory on

**Saturday, December 13th from noon-2:00pm.**

Bring food to share. All are welcome!



Join us on the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday in Advent for a lesson on the symbolism of St Nicholas



Join us this Sunday as we study the Advent theme of PEACE using the song "Silent Night"



Join us on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday in Advent for a lesson on the symbolism of the Advent Wreath



Join us this Sunday as we study the Advent theme of JOY using the song "Joy To the World"



Join us on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday in Advent for a lesson on the symbolism of the Nativity



Join us this Sunday as we study the Advent theme of LOVE using the song "What Child Is This?"

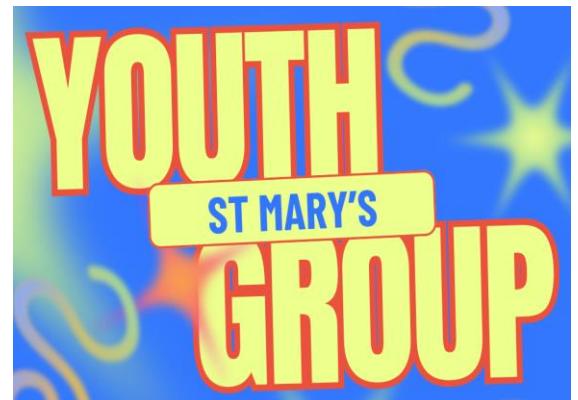


## ***The Altar Guild***

The altar guild is responsible for setting up for worship services, memorials, weddings, and other occasions. It is truly a blessing to serve in this behind-the-scenes ministry, supporting the worship services and sacraments of our congregation. Preparing the Lord's table is not just a task, but an act of devotion—laying out the linens, placing the vessels, and ensuring that all is in order so that hearts may be lifted in praise and thanksgiving. Each preparation is a prayer that our worship may be pleasing in God's sight and that all who come may experience His grace and welcome. We warmly extend an invitation to others in our congregation who feel called to participate. If you are interested in joining, please email [candymcguire@gmail.com](mailto:candymcguire@gmail.com).



**All youth who are participating in the Christmas pageant should meet in the Rectory on Wednesday at 5:30pm for dinner, then the pageant rehearsal.**



December

| Sunday                                                                                                                                                               | Monday              | Tuesday                        | Wednesday                                                                                                                                                      | Thursday                                   | Friday.                                   | Saturday                                                                 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                      | 1                   | 2                              | 3<br>9am Pantry Vols.<br>9:45am Centering<br>Prayer<br>11am Bible Study<br><u>Noon</u> Advent<br>Worship<br>5:30pm Choir<br>5:30pm Youth<br>6:30pm Bell Choir  | 4<br>9am Food<br>Pantry                    | 5<br>Winterfest<br>School for<br>Ministry | 6<br>Winterfest<br>School for<br>Ministry<br>Pastoral Care<br>Lay School |
| Advent Two<br>7<br>9am H. E. Rt. II<br>10am Breakfast<br><u>11am</u> H. E. RtII<br><br>1pm Evangelism<br>Lay School                                                  | 8                   | 9                              | 10<br>9am Pantry Vols.<br>9:45am Centering<br>Prayer<br>11am Bible Study<br><u>Noon</u> Advent<br>Worship<br>5:30pm Choir<br>5:30pm Youth<br>6:30pm Bell Choir | 11                                         | 12                                        | 13<br>Noon -2pm<br>Christmas<br>Open house<br>at the Rectory             |
| Advent Three<br>14<br>9am H. E. Rt. II<br>Daughters of the<br>King meeting<br>10am Breakfast<br><u>11am</u> H. E. RtII<br><br><u>Noon</u> Creative<br>Ministry Meets | 15                  | 16<br>5:30pm<br>Vestry meeting | 17<br>9am Pantry Vols.<br>9:45am Centering<br>Prayer<br>11am Bible Study<br><u>Noon</u> Advent<br>Worship<br>5:30pm Choir<br>5:30pm Youth<br>6:30pm Bell Choir | 18                                         | 19                                        | 20                                                                       |
| Advent Four<br>21<br>9am H. E. Rt. II<br>10am Breakfast<br>ECW & Men's mtg<br><u>11am</u> H. E. RtII &<br>Children & Youth<br>Christmas Pageant                      | 22                  | 23<br>Office Closed            | 24<br>Office Closed<br><b>Christmas Eve</b><br>Noon-H. E<br>Candlelight<br>Service<br>5:30pm-H. E.<br>Candlelight<br>Service                                   | 25<br>Office Closed                        | 26<br>Office Closed                       | 27<br>10-Noon<br>Dr. Campbell                                            |
| 28                                                                                                                                                                   | 29<br>Office Closed | 30<br>Office Closed            | 31<br>Office Closed                                                                                                                                            | <b>New Year's<br/>Day</b><br>Office Closed |                                           |                                                                          |

H. E =Holy Eucharist    Rt.II=Rite Two

Jan. 5, 2026--Office Opens

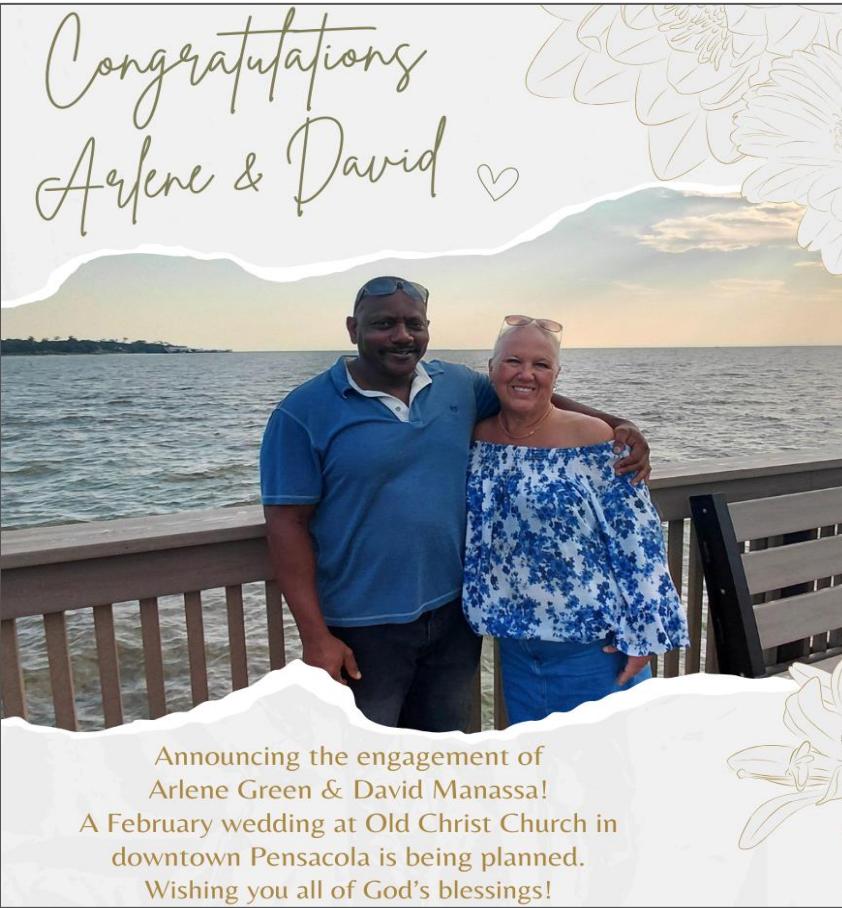
**Milton High School Christmas Outreach.** There are many homeless students at Milton High and we'd like to help them out this Christmas by giving food gift cards so they can get meals while they are on Winter Break. If you'd like to give to this outreach, you may write checks payable to St. Mary's, memo'd ' **MHS'**, or you can purchase fast food gift cards.

Donations and cards can be placed in the offering plate or taken to the church office during business hours.

You are a blessing for a Youth this Christmas. Thank you.

Merry Christmas  
Blessings





### The Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast

The Rt. Rev. James Russell Kendrick,  
Bishop

### St. Mary's Episcopal Church

The Rev. Leanne Beaumont, Rector  
850-623-2905  
[prieststmarys@gmail.com](mailto:prieststmarys@gmail.com)

#### Vestry:

Heather Lindsay--Sr. Warden-  
850- [dragonflypuma@gmail.com](mailto:dragonflypuma@gmail.com)

Don Thompson—Jr. Warden 2027  
850-572-0432 [dt1962@gmail.com](mailto:dt1962@gmail.com)

Ann Cole—2027  
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Julia Hotmer-Drao—2027  
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Melodie Rowland—2028  
850-291-4694 [musicodiemel@gmail.com](mailto:musicodiemel@gmail.com)

St. Mary's Episcopal Church  
6841 Oak Street, Milton, Florida 32570  
Office: 850-623-2905

Sunday Services at 9am & 11am  
"To build up one another in Christ."

Office Hours: Mon-Thurs, 8:30am to 1pm  
email: [stmarysmiltonflorida@gmail.com](mailto:stmarysmiltonflorida@gmail.com)  
website: <http://www.stmarysmilton.org>

*All are welcome!*

### Prayer Requests

#### Family

Barbara Johnson  
Beverly Younce  
Carol Culton  
Dotty Johnson  
Glennda Artinger  
Gina Braswel  
Henry Green  
Jim Miller  
Jack Bilbo  
Jim Longshore  
Jesse & Jennifer Reeves  
Janette Grey-Chsack  
Linda Nolan  
Robert Lenzo  
Sam Klauss  
Scott DeLoatc  
Sylvia Stern  
Vicki Blackmon  
Waylon

#### Our Friends

George Morado  
Kelley & Pam Edding  
Mary Raisler  
Sam

#### Military

Bradley James  
Cade Campbell  
Gabriel Bustillo  
Caleb Parks  
Christopher Vance  
Edward Estrada  
Fischer Morgan Lay  
Gage  
Kevin Murphy  
Lena Ryan  
Leo  
Lou Andrade  
Joshua Krause  
Nick Rinaire  
Phillip Holmes  
Taylor Emerson  
Tyler Hart  
Tom Ryan

Names are kept on the prayer list for 30 days. If a name needs to stay on the list, please submit a prayer card found in the pews.