

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

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

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



WE NEED HELP
DECORATING THE
RECTORY

Tuesday, December 2nd
at 10:00am

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



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 1st 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"



Second Sunday of
Advent

Join us on the 2nd 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"



Third Sunday of
Advent

Join us on the 3rd 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?"



Fourth Sunday of
Advent

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 candymcguyre@gmail.com.

MINISTRY
SPOTLIGHT

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.



CHRISTMAS EVE
Candlelight
SERVICES

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24
NOON AND 5:30PM
AT ST MARY'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Experience services filled with beautiful carols, inspiring messages, and the gentle glow of candlelight that symbolizes peace and hope.

"SON OF GOD. LOVE'S PURE LIGHT..."

December

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

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

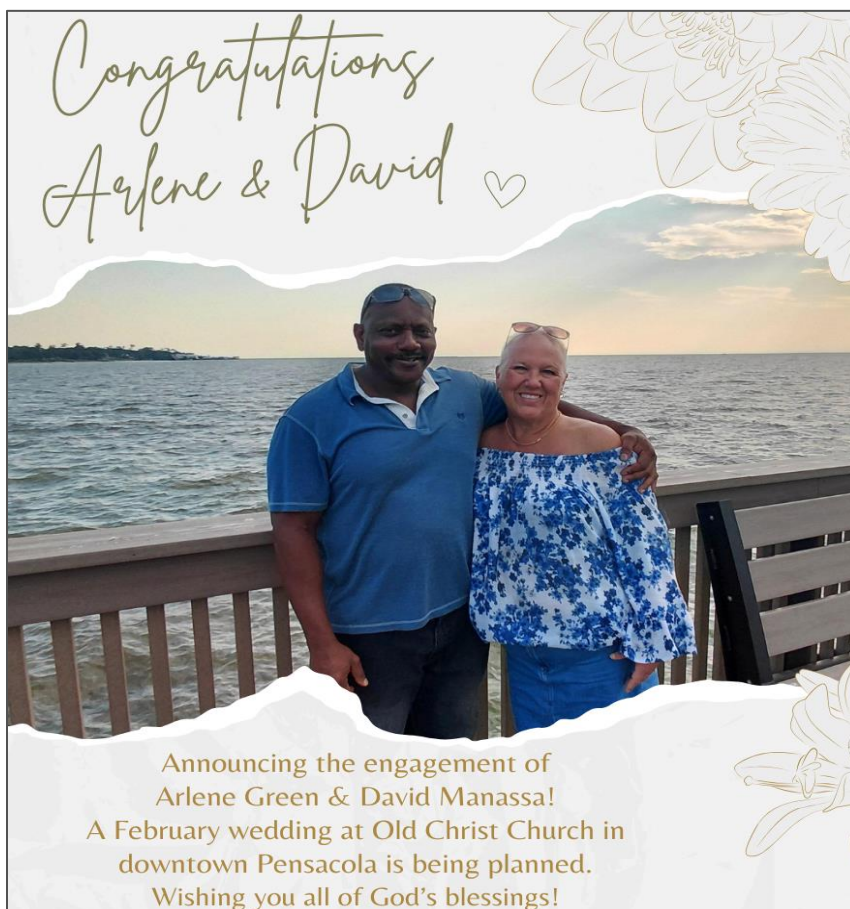
Jan. 5, 2026--Office Opens

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.





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

Vestry:

Heather Lindsay--Sr. Warden-
850- dragonflypuma@gmail.com

Don Thompson—Jr. Warden 2027
850-572-0432 dt1962@gmail.com

Ann Cole—2027
850-516-1775 sailo328@yahoo.com

Julia Hotmer-Drao—2027
518-596-4000 hotmermurphy@gmail.com

Melodie Rowland—2028
850-291-4694 musicodiemel@gmail.com

December Birthdays

12/06 Omar Iung
12/09 Lindsay Burns
12/26 Adam Willis-Meche
12/25 Ken Brooks
12/27 Jason English

December Anniversaries

12/03 Daniel & Mirella Savage
12/20 Ron & Christine Firmin

If we missed your special day,
please email the church office
to be added to the
Birthday/Anniversary list.

Prayer Requests

Family

Barbara Johnson
Beverly Younce
Carol Culton
Dotty Johnson
Glennnda 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.

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
website: <http://www.stmarysmilton.org>

All are welcome!