



“Advent begins in the dark.” These words open and permeate a series of Advent sermons preached by Episcopal priest and author, the Rev. Fleming Rutledge, from the mid-1980s and 1990s. This darkness she is referring to is not to the natural dwindling of daylight at this time of the year. Rather, it describes the despair and hopelessness felt by people as a result of world events. Her sermons describe the courage that Advent requires of us to face that darkness and not run away from it too soon to get a cup of Christmas cheer.

Another pastor who understood the importance of speaking the truth in a world that wanted to ignore the harsh facts was Dietrich Bonhoeffer. As the powers and principalities of his time were promoting hateful rhetoric and using violence and hate to conquer, he didn’t shy away from heading into the dark times with words of challenge and hope.

As World War II was developing, Bonhoeffer established an underground seminary in the German village of Finkenwalde. The twenty-three students there had their days structured around times for the ancient monastic practice of praying with scripture (*Lectio divina*), Bible study, prayer, silence, and meditation. They also had set times for hymn-singing, morning and evening worship, Compline, and academic work. As Charles Marsh put it in his book, *Strange Glory*, “the students soon understood that they were not there simply to learn new techniques of preaching and instruction but a new way of being a Christian.” The lectures Bonhoeffer gave at Finkenwalde would later be published as the book *Life Together* and would become widely translated and read.

Marsh tells a story in his book about an incident in Bonhoeffer’s life that continues to fascinate, inspire, and challenge me. He tells of the time when a young man, a historian, who attended some of these Finkenwalde lectures, named Wilhelm Niesel, told Bonhoeffer that he was suspicious of all of his spiritualism. In response, Bonhoeffer invited him on a rowing expedition on the Oder Sound which overlooked a large field full of German soldiers marching and fighter planes taking off and landing. Bonhoeffer spoke of this new generation of people being strictly disciplined and formed for hardness and cruelty. He said that a different kind of formation is required to go against this training. Bonhoeffer spoke of how the spiritual formation he was aiming for had to be stronger than this kind of military and cultural formation that was ever present in their society. The two of them rowed back to the shore in silence.

This story reminded me that spiritual formation is counter-formation. It goes against the culture of our time which is forming us every day, whether we realize it or not. Where we live, who we spend time with, what news we watch, what church we go to, where we work, and a variety of other factors are forming us all the time; we just might not be aware of it.

In Paul’s letter to the Romans, he wrote “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind” (Romans 12:2). This verse reminds us that our Christian call is to be aware of what is forming us and who we are becoming. Are we becoming more Christ-like, or not? Are we doing all we can to “strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being” as we promised

at baptism? Are we persevering in resisting evil? We can only do these things with God’s help.

As Benedictines, we are guided by the *Rule of St. Benedict* which instructs us that “The love of Christ must come before all else” (RB 4:21). We live this out by loving the Christ that comes to us in each guest and visitor, through our daily rhythm of worship, and by our life of prayer on behalf of the world. The Christian life, especially the monastic life, has been - and continues to be - a counter-cultural witness of what single-minded devotion to God can look like when lived out in community.

In 1944, Bonhoeffer had been imprisoned for a year. With the war raging on, he wrote a letter to his friend from prison with these words, “May God in his mercy lead us through these times; but above all, may he lead us to himself.” May that be the prayer for us as well.

Advent begins in the dark. In this darkness, let us be assured of this: we will find God.

- Sr. Hannah, CSM

Inside this issue

- * Advent Reflection, p. 1
- * Associate News, p. 2-3
- * Continuing Service, p. 3
- * Reflections on the Organic Prayer Program Internship p. 3-5
- * “Reflection on St. Mary’s” p. 6
- * Sr. Hannah Shares News from CSM, p. 7
- * St. Mary’s Chronicles, p. 8

Associate News



Sr. Elizabeth Grace, CSM after twenty years of leading the Associates program, it is time for me to step down and pass on this responsibility to Sister Madeleine Mary.

It has been an honor and delight to have worked with you. We have prayed and played together; we have shared and sat in silence together. I have especially enjoyed your correspondence, our chats in person or by Zoom, and your visits to Sewanee. I have also appreciated your gracious hospitality when I have visited you. Thank you so much for all you do in the world and for who you are!

I have lived in Community with Sr. Madeleine Mary for the past sixteen years. She, as Prioress, used her gifts to lay a firm foundation for the Sisters; we have grown in number and in depth. It has been a joy for me to see her imagination, her creativity, and her energy used for "the common good" of the Sisters. I look forward to seeing the Associates program continue its growth, in number and in depth, during the Community's Sixteenth Decade of Praise.

Please know that you and Sr. Madeleine Mary have my full support and prayers, as you go forth into the present and future "to love God and neighbor, to love yourselves and all creation."

In Christ and with deep joy,
- Sister Elizabeth, CSM

Sister Madeleine Mary also has some words to share,

Dear Associates,

First, I'd like to thank Sr. Elizabeth for her many years of service, her thousands of hand-written notes and telephone calls, and her organization of the annual retreat. I'm sure she will continue to share her wild jokes, her reflections, and joyful, generous spirit with all of us as she gets a little relief from some obligations. I know I myself have more energy as a result of letting go of the duties of being Prioress. And now, I hope to use that new-found energy in new ways that will help our Associate groups to grow and, hopefully, become more connected both with the Community and with other Associates. I think that it is very important for us deepen our bond and appreciation of each other in community as much as we can, especially given the divisions we daily experience in our country, our world, and sometimes, even in our churches and families. We need to be a force for good, for care, healing, and reconciliation, especially now.

Already, thanks to the skills of our new postulant, AJ, the Sisters have been updating our Associate information and creating a database for future mailings and digital communications.

As postage costs continue to rise, I hope to use email, Mailchimp, e-cards, and periodic, online Zoom gatherings alongside our regular mailings, to increase our connection. I'm also mapping all our present Associates to identify where we already have groups of Associates and where we need to grow. Where possible, I would like to encourage more relationship among the Associates in their own local areas and maybe even some group activities together to foster greater awareness and growth in those local areas. (Don't worry, I'm



Sr. Madeleine Mary, CSM

not thinking of meetings, rather I want to encourage more quiet days or conversations about Benedictine topics, fun events that might strengthen your sense of community within your local groups and would serve to introduce other people to the idea of taking on a Rule of Life and becoming Associates.)

Periodically, I might also ask some of you to share your story as an Associate in our Mailchimp newsletters. — **You** are Associates "on the ground," an extension of the Community and its ministry in your location. So, you can help the Sisters immensely by wearing your medal, sharing your story and your prayer requests, encouraging others to join, praying for each other and for the Community, and by supporting the Sisters and your church communities in whatever way you can.

For those of you who do not consider yourselves technologically savvy, we will still have printed or written communications. However, I would encourage you all at least to invest in an inexpensive Amazon Fire Tablet or something similar so that you can enjoy the full experience of better connections with other Associates and with the Sisters.

In the near future, I will be sending you a form, either digitally or in print, so that you can give us your updated contact information and your preferences concerning how you want to participate with the group. If at all possible, I would like to host an Evening Prayer Service with a short meditation in Advent for all those who would like to attend.

Right now, I am thinking that we could have such a gathering each Advent and Lent to draw us together in corporate prayer and meditation. (In case you don't know, the Sisters already live-stream Compline on most weekdays for those who wish to pray with us.) With your permission of course, I also would like to involve each of you in praying for each other as you share your prayer concerns.

Likewise, I would like to remind you to write your annual report before the year's end, so that I can get to know you more quickly, and know how you are keeping your rule as well as any other information or prayer requests that you might have.

These are just some of the ideas that I have. I'm sure that more will develop as our bond deepens and I hear from you. I look forward to meeting all of you, both here and in your town, and am already anticipating your presence at the next annual retreat. Until then, may your Advent be a journey through endings and new beginnings and your Christmas be a blessed encounter with the Christ born among us.

Blessings,
- Sr. Madeleine Mary, CSM

session. Sister Elizabeth remembered his reading of TS Elliot's "Journey of the Magi" on Epiphany. Bob served as a retreat leader for the June silent retreats, sponsored by the Sisters.

We give thanks for the opportunity to have shared many years in Sewanee with Bob and Barbara.



All Souls' Day Observance

One of the powerful memories Sister Elizabeth has from visiting Sister Ines years ago was their observance of All Souls' Day because of their liturgy. This year, it started at 2pm in the afternoon on November 2nd with the reading of the names of all the departed from 1972 to 2024. What an example of faithful remembrance! We are grateful for Sr. Ines and her ministry of prayer, service, and witness to the monastic life in the Philippines.

Continuing Service

Sister Ines continues to be active in her work in the Philippines. There, twice a week, she joins a small group of our Associates in making handcrafts out of old newspapers and calendars. They have started making Anglican rosaries as well. They continue to gather for their regular monthly Eucharist. The Associates appreciate this time of fellowship together.



Sister Ines, CSM

Sr. Ines has joined a group of lay people at the Church of St. Mary the Virgin to work on the translation of the English version of the Old Testament to Igorot. Sr. Ines is working on a portion from the first book of Samuel. She enjoys working on this translation.

On August 15th, the Feast of St. Mary the Virgin, eight of our Associates gathered together for the Eucharist. Two of them are Lay Eucharistic Ministers. They take turns reading the Prayers of the People. After Mass, they gather together for Bible sharing. The last Sunday of August was Fruit Offering Sunday. During the offertory, people lined up from the church door to the altar carrying their produce on top of their heads. Then they marched to the altar and had their offerings blessed. Sr. Ines said that it went along very well with the gospel message about material and spiritual feeding.

In Memoriam



The Rev. Dr. Bob Hughes

It is with sadness that we share the news that our dear friend and Associate, the Rev. Dr. Bob Hughes, died on Sunday, October 20th in Illinois, where he had moved with his wife Barbara in 2015 to be closer to their family.

Bob and Barbara Hughes became Associates of the Community on February 2, 1983. Most Sundays when they lived in Sewanee, they worshiped with the Sisters. Bob would sometimes preach and celebrate at the convent. He and Barbara joined the Sisters for our three-hour Good Friday service most years. Bob was a lover of music, church, God, and good food. We remember his singing bass on Sunday mornings. His voice later changed to tenor after one lung was removed due to cancer. We could count on Bob to come to the convent for any major feast when the seminary was not in

Reflections on the Organic Prayer Program Internship



Cece Constantino

By: Cece Constantino

When I think about my experience as a summer intern at the Community of St. Mary, I realized that

I learned many things from the program! A big part of what I gained was just getting to see how God functions in people's lives in everyday ways. I discovered that it is very hard, in our day-to-day lives, as we do the same things over and over again, to say, "All of this is from God." But the internship helped me realize that the normal day-to-day moments are all gifts from God.

I really enjoyed the rhythm of the internship program; going from working in the garden to going to chapel. This pattern helped tie these two kinds of work together for me. This way of life is very structured, and I was drawn to it

because I struggle with structure in my own life. I discovered there is something divine about that kind of life. You are living your life as a stable force. There is power in the stability of working together and praying together. I had never before considered that strength of stability.



Cece trimming the rutabagas outside

The idea of having structured prayer was not something that I was used to, nor was having quiet time alone with God. I grew up in an evangelical church and didn't start going to an Episcopal Church until I was around 17 years old. I was not very familiar with the Daily Offices when I started the internship. The realization that so many people in the world are praying at the same time was powerful for me.

One of my favorite experiences from the internship was the Zoom call with a previous Old Testament instructor at the School of Theology at the University of the South, Dr. Collin Cornell. The topic was about violence in the Old Testament. I was really confused about that and he answered our questions about this topic. It helped me realize that, as a reader of the Bible, we can still see God moving and working through all that violence and how can God work through even horrible things that happen.

Now that I am back in school at Sweet Briar College in Virginia, I'm carrying with me all that I've learned from being an intern. Before I left the convent, I took photos of the books in the convent library that I wanted to read. They have such an impressive library! As I'm reading these books, I'm remembering my time at St.

Mary's. And, of course, missing the convent cat Sophia!

This summer internship has had a profound impact on the way I see Christianity. Most specifically, having seen the role of women in the Episcopal Church has been inspiring. I had seen women priests in the Episcopal Church before, but I grew up in a church where women were to be seen, not heard, and this summer was the opposite of that. Seeing women make a commitment to God and also be able to be themselves and take leadership roles in the church, like being able to preach and be spiritual guides, helped me grasp the way that women can truly be involved in religion. I am grateful for my experience with the Sisters and for their impact on my spiritual formation.



Abby Cronan

By: Abby Cronan

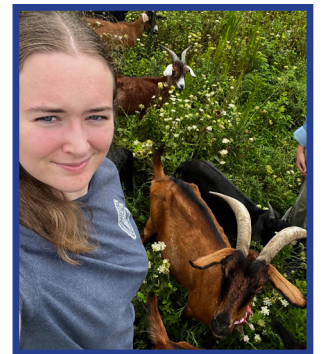
On my drive to Sewanee, Tennessee this May, I was scared. I had never been away from my

home state of Virginia for longer than a few weeks, but when I heard about the Organic Prayer Program from my advisor at James Madison University (JMU), I knew I had to go. I am a Religious Studies student, and I dream of a world in which faith communities come together to tackle climate justice. My personal interest is the relationship between agriculture and faith communities. Where better to go and learn about this than with the Sisters of St. Mary, who live this idea every day?

Upon arrival, the two other interns and I jumped quickly into our new routines. My favorite part of this daily routine was the four hours of garden work with Paul, the groundskeeper, because of how much I learned. I

was learning firsthand all about soil quality, different kinds of plants and how to care for them, and about the bugs in the garden. I was worried about the weather and the water. I shoveled dirt and poured water on my hair to stay cool. I was getting to experience a taste of the hard work that our food producers put in all the time.

Throughout the internship, I was able to meet some of these food producers during our weekly Friday field trips. I was most struck by a farm that practiced rotational grazing as a form of regenerative agriculture. The land was practically destroyed and devoid of soil and most plant life as a result of strip coal mining, but the practice of rotational grazing was slowly creating a soil layer where grass and other plants could grow, where previously there had only been the few stubborn woody plants that managed to grow through the rocky ground. This showed me the resilience of our environment and the perseverance of farmers, and the way agriculture can adapt to help the environment recover.



Abby posing with a goat at Solace Farms in Coalmont, Tennessee

Getting to see the systems that our food comes from helped me to better understand the relationship between food and "us", and to have a stronger understanding and appreciation of the work of agricultural workers. This fall, I am graduating from JMU and applying to study food security in graduate school. I want to study the food supply chain and eventually have a career related to creating more sustainable food networks between producers and consumers. The experience I have had with the Organic Prayer Program will help

me to be a better advocate for people who I will work with in the future, and watching the Sisters interact with their community, both at the convent and through their work with the Community Action Committee Food Pantry, has given me a framework for building selfless relationships based on hospitality through food.



Claire Sims

By:
Claire
Sims

Until this year, I never liked the icebreaker conversations that inevitably come with

the start of a new semester at college. "How was your summer, what did you do?" All of the standard questions had me wracking my brain trying to find an interesting detail to share. That changed when I first saw the befuddlement on a professor's face when I casually said, "I lived and worked at a convent."

Few people know what to say after that statement, but, if they asked any follow-up questions, I would tell them that my summer at St. Mary's changed my life in ways I am still trying to understand. When I applied to be a summer intern for the Organic Prayer Program, I had no idea what to expect. I had never even met a nun until I hopped on a Zoom call interview with Sister Hannah. All I really wanted was to get out of my hometown and work outside. A garden on a mountain 200 miles from home sounded perfect to me. At the very least, I would have a fun story about the time I gardened at a convent.

But my experience at St. Mary's is so much more than a fun story. I learned how to tend to a garden, and I ate food from plants that I cared for. I saw so many species of fungi and insects and spiders, and my environmental

science-loving heart sang at the sight of them. I gained a bit of experience in composting, and I harvested more lavender than I have ever seen in my life. More than that, though, I found community. I found connection to people, to the earth, to myself, and to God.



Cece and Claire excitedly pointing out the peach tree beside our groundskeeper, Paul

I grew up in a very restrictive sort of Christianity that made me believe that I would never be enough. I was told that I served a perfect God who only accepted perfect worship from people with perfect faith. As an anxious queer girl with many questions about God, I assumed that all of my facets disqualified me from connecting with the Christian faith. I eventually gave up on the church and reckoned with the idea that I would never have a meaningful relationship with God.

Then I found the Episcopal Church and, soon after, St. Mary's. My whole understanding of faith and Christianity flipped on its head. Daily prayer services at the convent took me by surprise. There were female priests, gay priests, and people from all different backgrounds and beliefs.

No one was made to feel unworthy. Mistakes were welcomed. I clumsily rang the bell and misread words in scripture during prayer services, and no one ridiculed me for my missteps. People asked for my thoughts without telling me what to believe. They respected me even after they saw that I was human. And it soon occurred to

me that I never needed to be perfect to know and serve God; I just needed to try.



Claire, Cece, and Abby harvesting our lavender

My summer at St. Mary's taught me that God works through imperfections. Imperfect hands tend to imperfect seeds that grow into imperfect foods that nourish imperfect bodies, yet the cycle continues. Life does not stop when a mistake is made, nor does the life-giver. I cannot offer perfect faith and worship to God, but I can learn and grow from my mistakes. God will love me anyway. Even when I had resigned myself to a life without faith, God brought me to people that would offer me the care and compassion that I once felt unworthy of. The Community of St. Mary in Sewanee truly changed my life for the better, and I am forever grateful for my time spent there.

**Have you considered a
planned gift or
leaving a bequest
to the Community of St.
Mary?**

*You can make a tax-deductible gift
by check or by an online donation
to "The Sisterhood of St. Mary"*

**"Reflection on St. Mary's"
By: Phylicia McFaddin**



Phylicia McFaddin

"Behold, how good and how pleasant, the dwelling together of kindred as one. It is like the good oil on the head." (Psalm 133)

In the commentary on Psalm 133 in *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament*, the author writes that this Psalm is part of a group of Psalms (Psalms 120-134) titled "Songs of the Ascents." Because Jerusalem is on a hill, no matter where one comes from, one always "goes up." Jerusalem is the place for the coming together of the people of God, celebrations and commemorations, and acknowledgment of the goodness of God.

One of the gifts I have received that I reflect on to remember God's favor in my life is when I arrived at St. Mary's Convent in the middle of a rainy night for the first time. Up on the hill, I found my Jerusalem. I arrived late and was unsure if I would disturb the home. I did not know what to expect or where I was going. My nearly eleven-hour drive from Dallas, Texas, was based on an exciting anticipation to see what this monastic community would be like. I had found St. Mary's by searching the Episcopal Church website for monastics. Eight months prior, I had joined a Benedictine community and started reading the *Rule of Benedict* daily. The words of St. Benedict in the Prologue, "Run while you have the light of life," tugged on my heart. I heard the call of the Holy Spirit drawing me to join a community so that I could be a student in the Lord's service. Now, I was driving on rainy, dark roads up into the hills, where I would either

drive off the side of the hill or arrive at my new spiritual home; I was hoping to arrive at a new spiritual home, and I did. I remember Sister Elizabeth greeting me outside the convent doors, never minding the rain, and approaching me with her beautiful smile and arms open, welcoming me in from the long rainy drive. I entered the quiet convent with the Sisters' cat, Sophia. She was sitting inside as if to greet me with eyes saying, "We have been waiting for you," while Sister Hannah was standing stately and quietly smiling. It felt like home.

I chose St. Mary's as the place to be an Oblate because of the presence of the Holy Spirit and the love of God I felt among the Sisters and the community around them. I am currently in my second year of Oblate training. With the help of God and the community, I will become an Oblate in late Spring 2025. Since the training, I have attended the summer retreats and the Martyrs of Memphis weekends. Both are exciting times, but I will discuss my experience with the community during the Martyrs of Memphis weekend.



Phylicia, the Rt. Rev. Phoebe Roaf of the Episcopal Diocese of West Tennessee, and Sr. Hannah at St. Mary's Cathedral in Memphis in September 2023 at the consecration of the renovated cathedral

The Martyrs of Memphis weekend has become a new yearly tradition I hope to continue for years. It was a time to connect with other Associates across the country and hear their stories about how they became associated with the community. Community Associates graciously opened their homes for lodging to those visiting

from out of town and hosted dinners during the weekend for everyone to connect. I also met those related to Sisters of the community from long ago. The first weekend I went in 2023 was the consecration of the newly renovated St. Mary's Cathedral. I was honored to celebrate with the Sisters, and the city of Memphis, the Sisters' legacy of spiritual heroes who displayed life-sacrificing courage for those affected by yellow fever and the historic role that the cathedral community played during the Civil Rights movement after the assassination of Martin Luther King. I visited the Lorraine Motel Museum, the Peabody Hotel with the marching ducks, and the Memphis Botanical Gardens. I discovered terrific coffee shops, barbeque, and delicious dining. These weekends were an opportunity for fellowship and a reminder of how God brings together people who want to do his will and love one another across geography and generations. I am blessed to be a part of such a rich history of faithful Christians who demonstrated their love and mercy for those rejected by society. The Community's legacy and the lives of the Sisters and Associates, past and present, have been spiritual teachers for me in terms of what it looks like to seek God with a singleness of heart that leads to love of God and neighbor.



Our Associate, Carol Iverson, with our long-term Organic Prayer Program intern, Sydney, and Phylicia at Martyrs Hall at St. Mary's Cathedral in Memphis in September 2024

Nancy DeClasise-Walford, in her chapter, "Introduction to the Songs of the Ascents," from the commentary I first referenced, writes, "A basic act

of hospitality enter the homes of others was to wash the visitors' feet and pour soothing and refreshing oil on their heads. Oil and dew are metaphoric symbols of blessing that celebrate the goodness and pleasantness of those who dwell together in unity." God graciously allowed me to understand the words of Psalm 133 for myself through the hospitality of the Sisters and my weekends in Memphis.

Sr. Hannah Shares News from CSM

When I reflect on all that has happened since our last newsletter, certain patterns emerge. We have experienced both times of transition and stability. We have also had new ministry opportunities and, perhaps most exciting of all, we have had growth!



Sr. Hannah, CSM

August was a month of transition. At the beginning of the month, we said goodbye to our three Organic Prayer Program summer interns Cece, Abby, and Claire, by giving them a farewell party to thank them for all of their hard work. A few weeks later, we welcomed our long-term Organic Prayer Program intern Sydney Dudley.



Sydney Dudley

Sydney graduated in May from James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia with a BA in English and

Religious Studies. She discovered the internship program while researching contemporary Religious Orders for a paper in one of her classes, and she decided to apply because she is passionate about exploring her faith by engaging with creation. She is also excited to learn more about what monastic life is like in the Episcopal Church. We are so glad she is with us!

September started out as a month of stability with Sister Madeleine Mary being invited to be the guest speaker at St. Mary's School for girls in Memphis. Our Community ran St. Mary's School between 1873 and 1910, and we are grateful to have this ongoing connection with the school, which we re-established last year. We also participated in our annual pilgrimage to Memphis for the Martyrs of Memphis weekend. Sr. Madeleine Mary was the guest preacher at St. Mary's Cathedral in Memphis and also gave a presentation about our Community. Sr. Felicity and our intern Sydney were also in attendance for this important weekend. Around a week after this occurred, I attended the annual Conference of Anglican Religious Orders in the Americas (CAROA) Superiors Meeting at the Community of St. John Baptist in Mendham, New Jersey.



Photo from the annual CAROA Superiors Meeting at the Community of St. John Baptist in Mendham, New Jersey

We are grateful for these opportunities to continue our relationships with both St. Mary's School and Cathedral in Memphis as well as with the Superiors of the Episcopal Religious Orders.

The end of September was a very exciting time to celebrate growth! We welcomed our new postulant, AJ Boots near the end of the month. Our Associate, the Rev. Dr. Jo Ann Barker, was the presider at this admission service. AJ had known us for three years while she was a seminarian at Sewanee. She is from New Hampshire, was ordained to the diaconate in June, and will be ordained to the priesthood in January. In response to the many questions AJ has received regarding the nature of her dual vocation, she has explained, "Helpfully, the Rule of Benedict is quite clear regarding priests within a Benedictine community, with the monastic vocation being the primary focus and identity. In my case, priesthood will simply be part of my ministry within the Community." We ask your prayers for her ongoing discernment.



Top row: Sr. Hannah, our postulant AJ, and Sr. Elizabeth

Bottom row: The Rev. Dr. Jo Ann Barker, Sr. Madeleine Mary, and Sr. Felicity

October and November provided us with new ministry opportunities as we were invited to go out to speak at churches in Alabama, Arkansas, and Texas for in-person visits. We were also asked to Zoom in for a community forum at St. David's Episcopal Church in Michigan!

As we observe this Advent season of expectation and preparation, we wait in joyful hope for the coming of Christ both in the future and within us and among us.



The Community of St. Mary
Southern Province
1100 St. Mary's Lane
Sewanee, TN 37375
Ph. 931-598-0046; Fax. 931-598-9519
Website: communityofstmarysouth.org
Facebook: Community of St. Mary, Southern Province
Instagram: StMarysConvent

St. Mary's Chronicles 2024

August 1: We had our farewell party for our summer Organic Prayer Program interns Cece, Abby, and Claire.

August 6: Sr. Madeleine Mary preached at a joint service with area Episcopal churches for the feast of the Transfiguration at St. James Episcopal Church in Midway.

August 15: We had our Organic Prayer Program Commissioning Service for our new long-term intern Sydney Dudley. The Rev. Amanda Gott, Interfaith Chaplain at the University of the South, was our celebrant and preacher.

August 25: Sr. Hannah was invited by the Rev. Cynthia Seifert to be the guest preacher at the Episcopal Church of the Epiphany in Lebanon, Tennessee and to lead the adult forum. Sr. Hannah was connected to this church by our Associate, the Rev. Mary Anne Akin.

August 29: Sr. Madeleine Mary was a respondent on Deep Green Faith's Zoom presentation on Franciscan Spirituality by our friend, the Rev. Jim Pappas.

September 6: Sr. Madeleine Mary was the guest speaker at St. Mary's Episcopal School in Memphis in their chapel.

September 8: Sr. Madeleine Mary was the guest preacher at St. Mary's Episcopal Cathedral in Memphis and also gave a presentation about

our Community. This was part of the Martyrs of Memphis weekend event

September 27: We welcomed our new postulant, AJ Boots, during our Evening Prayer service.

October 9-13: Our longtime Associate, the Rt. Rev. Dr. Craig Anderson, retired Bishop of South Dakota, and his wife Lizbeth stayed with us. He presided and preached at multiple services in our convent chapel.

October 13: Sr. Madeleine Mary was invited by the Rev. Mike Harber to be part of their Christian formation program at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Auburn, Alabama.

October 18-20: On October 18th and 19th, Sr. Hannah led a two-day retreat for the St. Monica's Daughter of the King Chapter in Hot Springs, Arkansas. On Sunday, October 20th, she was invited by our Associate, the Rev. Mark Nabors, to preach at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Hot Springs.

October 20: Our dear friend and long-time Associate, the Rev. Dr. Bob Hughes, died.

October 23: Sr. Madeleine Mary was invited by the Rev. Molly Short, Chaplain at St. Andrew's Sewanee School, to be the guest preacher in their chapel.

October 26: Sr. Hannah and Sr. Felicity

participated in the annual Trail of Tears Commemorative Walk in Winchester, Tennessee. Sr. Hannah serves on the walk committee.

October 29: Sr. Madeleine Mary attended the Celebration of Life for our former advisor, Dr. William Davis.

November 9: Sr. Felicity, Sr. Madeleine Mary, and AJ attended the Community Action Committee's 50th anniversary celebration in Sewanee.

November 10: Sr. Hannah was the guest preacher at Christ Church Cathedral in Nashville, Tennessee at the invitation of our friend, the Rev. Richard Wineland.

November 13: Sr. Hannah and AJ were invited by our former summer intern, Lou Bullock, to speak about our Community at a "Coffee and Conversation" event at the Community Engagement House in Sewanee.

November 16: Sr. Hannah led a Benedictine retreat at the Church of the Incarnation in Dallas, Texas. She got connected to this church through our Oblate-in-training, Phylcia.

November 24: Sr. Madeleine Mary and AJ were invited by Rev. Joe Kennedy to Zoom with his church, St. David's Episcopal Church in Lansing, Michigan, and speak about our Community in its Sunday forum series.