

The Magnificat



"Thus you shall bless the Israelites: You shall say to them: The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace." (Numbers 6:23-26 NRSV)

Peace. Protection. Blessing. These are the things that we hope for those we love, and for ourselves. This ancient prayer from the Book of Numbers describes the prayer of our hearts. It is my favorite prayer blessing, and I often use this blessing at the end of a service, or in other situations in which I am asked to give a blessing. These words of comfort resonate in my heart.

However, we live in a world where loss of peace and loss of protection can perhaps also feel like the loss of the blessing of God. Has he abandoned us? Where did Jehovah Shalom flee to? This sense of peace and protection for those who honor and serve God provides a sense of stability and protection as we traverse life's difficult challenges. What then do we do if we experience sorrow, loss, or tragedy; how do we rationalize these times of conflict while still maintaining an assurance of God's blessing of peace within our heart?

The sixth chapter of the book of Judges in the Old Testament presents a reminder of the Lord's blessing even during times of sorrow and difficulty. The Israelite people were besieged by the Midianite tribe. They were suffering terribly. It seemed that the Lord had abandoned them, but he had not! He heard their prayers and sent words of peace through an angel to the servant Gideon. The Lord reminded them of his love and protection.

When we go through times of sorrow or uncertainty, we often find that God sends us angels of mercy to remind us of our worth in him, and his love care to us. It can be in the form of priests, friends, family, neighbors, or even complete strangers that minister to us in words or deeds so that we are reminded of God's love towards us. Sometimes it is difficult to hear God's whispers of compassion, especially if we, like Gideon, are living in the middle of times of strife. But, through the angels of our lives, God confirms, "Peace be to you." (Judges 6:23a)

Gideon, strengthened by these words of peace, builds an altar, and called it "Yahweh Shalom"; The Lord is peace (Judges 6:24). The blessing had not departed from them! God was still there. He was still listening. God is also our Yahweh Shalom; he always holds us in the tender embrace of his loving care through all of the ups and downs of our lives.

We have the opportunity to become messengers, angels, to each other as we assure and reassure our commitment to each other through this reciprocity of peace. We can offer peace in words and deeds. We honor peace through respect and trust. We show actions that ensure that we stand firm, proclaiming that peace will prevail. These are truths we hold on to in times of distress. It is not easy. But through this mutual gifting towards each other we become ministering angels through our love in God.

We cannot always be protected from sorrow in this life. But through sorrow, we can claim the truth of our covenant heritage; that we are recipients of peace and protection through the blessing of the God of Shalom. We claim this for ourselves, for our families, and for each other.

May we enter 2025, with all of the joy, sorrows, uncertainty, and hope that it will bring, knowing that God is ever near us and his blessing goes before us and sustains us.

So, for all of us I pray,

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

Amen,

Mother Leanne+





Join St. Mary's for Parish Breakfast every Sunday at 10:10am. Sunday, Jan 5th, breakfast is, hosted by the Men's group. Jan. 12 is a Potluck breakfast; please bring a dish to share. Jan. 19, the ECW hosts breakfast and Jan. 26, breakfast is hosted by the Vestry and the Daughters of the King. Volunteers are always welcome, especially when it comes to cleaning up. Donations are always appreciated. We hope to see you for this time of fellowship—all are welcome!

MALAWI MISSION UPDATE

PLEASE HELP FIGHT HUNGER

Father John needs our help!

Father John's parishioners have recently been struck with a cyclone. St Mary's would like to sponsor the purchasing of large bags of Maise that Father John will distribute to his parishioners and those in need.

Each bag of Maise is \$35 for a 50 kg bag.
Any donation amount will help.
Please submit your donation by January 19th.

Thank you for your support.

The poster features a photograph of two men, one in a white shirt and one in a yellow shirt, holding a large white bag. The background is blue with yellow decorative elements, including a heart shape and a stylized plant.

Offering Envelopes & Numbers; Why we use them in church.

Offering envelopes have been a longstanding tradition within the church and have many benefits. They are a convenient way to contribute financially to the church, providing privacy while allowing you to support ongoing ministries and programs. We encourage you to use them regularly as a tangible reminder to give. Envelopes are provide in the church pews or you may contact the office to receive a bundle of 60.

Each giving household of St. Mary's has what we call an Envelope Number. This number helps us to record offerings for individual end of year Giving Statement which may be helpful for household tax recording. If you do not know or have an Envelope Number, please contact the office to be assigned one. Simply write this number on the envelope or check when you give your tithe or a designated donation.

It is important to know that any amount, however small or large, is meaningful and helps sustain the financial operations and will be used responsibly to support St. Mary's and our ministries.

stmarysmiltonflorida@gmail.com Church office: 850-623-2905



United Thank Offering--How it Works: Start Collecting in January for our February offering. Pick up your UTO box and practice gratitude! Thanks for the GOOD THINGS that HAPPEN EVERY DAY: For LITTLE THINGS like a good parking spot on a busy day, sunshine for your family picnic a birthday card from a friend. For BIG THINGS like recovery from serious illness, a new job, forgiveness and reconciliation after a long dispute. AS YOU GIVE THANKS, put some coins or dollars into a blue United Thank Offering BOX, or set aside an offering reminder for later. On Sunday, Feb. 2nd bring your box or a check in a United Thank Offering envelope, to St. Mary's for the UTO Ingathering. Your thanksgivings unite with other's prayers & thankful quarter, dimes & dollars from across the Episcopal Church to support God's missions around the world. Boxes and Envelopes will be available at St. Mary's for you to pick up and take home. For more information about UTO go to their website at this link. <https://unitedthankoffering.com/>



Make A Difference!

Feeding the

5,000

Sunday

In support of the St Mary's Food Pantry, the first Sunday of each month is Feeding the 5,000 Sunday. Please bring non-perishable food items to place in our little red wagon. *Thank you!*

Help us help the community of Milton who are in need of food.

Fill the wagon that is located in the church, with non-perishable food donations that will be used to fill the St. Mary's Food Pantry.

The first Sunday of each month the wagon will be pulled up the aisle of the church for a special blessing.

The pantry is open every Thursday from 9am to 10:30am. Thank you for supporting this important ministry.

January, 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			New Year's Day ¹ Office Closed	Office Closed 2 9am—Food Pantry open	Office Closed 3	4
Epiphany 5 Feeding the 5000 9am: Worship 10am: Men's Group hosting breakfast 10:15am: Children's Ministry 11am: Sunday School 11am: Worship	6	7	8 9:45am Centering Prayer 10:30am Bible Study 11:30am Holy Eucharist/Healing 5:30pm Choir 6:30pm Bell Choir	9 9am—Food Pantry open	Office Closed 10 Students for Ministry	11 Students for Ministry
Baptism of Our Lord Maize Offering 12 9am: Worship 10am: Potluck Breakfast 10:15am: Children's Ministry 11am: Sunday School 11am: Worship	13	14	15 9:45am Centering Prayer 10:30am Bible Study 11:30am Holy Eucharist/Healing 5:30pm Choir 6:30pm Bell Choir	16 9am—Food Pantry	Office Closed 17	18 Catechism/Formation J. Taylor
Maize Offering 19 9am: Worship 10am: ECW hosting Breakfast ECW Meeting & Men's Group Meeting 10:15am: Children's Ministry 11am: Sunday School 11am: Worship	20 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Office Closed	21	22 9:45am Centering Prayer 10:30am Bible Study 11:30am Holy Eucharist/Healing 5:30pm Choir 6:30pm Bell Choir	23 9am—Food Pantry	Office Closed 24	25
26 9am: Worship 10am: Vestry & Daughters of the King host breakfast 10:15am: Children's Ministry 11am: Sunday School 11am: Worship	27	28	29 9:45am Centering Prayer 10:30am Bible Study 11:30am Holy Eucharist/Healing 5:30pm Choir 6:30pm Bell Choir	30	31	

January Birthdays

1/03 Blake Steede
1/06 Jennifer Reeves
1/07 Chuck Sturtevant
1/08 Shirley Henning
1/08 Mimi Hamilton
1/09 Joel Hamilton
1/17 Dorothy Davenport
1/18 Julie Capps
1/28 Heather Lindsay

January Anniversaries

1/07 Joel & Mimi Hamilton
1/16 Dave & Nikki Presley

The Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast

*The Rt. Rev. James Russell Kendrick,
Bishop*

St. Mary's Episcopal Church

Priest in Charge:

*The Rev. Leanne Beaumont
(850)217-3730*

Vestry:

Mary Salinas—Sr. Warden—2024
850-777-7882 mlydia10@gmail.com

Julia Hotmer-Drao--Clerk--2028
850-525-4685 candymcguyre@gmail.com

Don Thompson—Jr. Warden--2028
850-572-0432 dt1962@gmail.com

Wayne Hamilton—2025
850-418-0350 episjay7@gmail.com

Ann Cole--2028
850-516-1775 sailo328@yahoo.com

Prayer Requests

Family

Jack Bilbo
Zoe Bilbo
Ben Bilbo
Jessica Morawski
Jim Longshore
Jesse & Jennifer Reeves
Michael Johnson
Sam Harris
Shelby & Russ Jarrett
Vicki Blackmon
The English Family
Tom Gee & Family

Our Friends

Gregg Bleamer
Kristie
Mary Raisler

Military

Anthony Cunningham
Bradley James
Christopher Vance
Edward Estrada
Fischer Morgan Lay
Kevin Murphy
Lena Ryan
Joshua Krause
Nick Rinaire
Phillip Holmes
All the Military around the world

WEEKLY OFFERINGS AT ST. MARY'S

WEDNESDAYS

Centering Prayer--9:45 am, in the church.

Contact Caroline Thompson for information.
cthompson57@gmail.com or 850-572-6130.

Adult Bible Study--10:30am, in the hall.

All are invited to the Bible study. Please join us!

Wednesday Holy Eucharist with Prayer—11:30am, in the church.

Get through your week with this inspiring Holy Communion service. All are welcome!

St. Mary's Choir & Bell Choir Rehearsal—5:30pm the choir meets and immediately

following, at 6:30pm, the Bell Choir meets. Join us—come sing and ring!

THURSDAYS

Grocery Blessings Food Pantry—Thank you to everyone who has donated food or funds to the pantry, your giving and donations are a huge blessing to those within our local community. The food pantry is open from 9am to 10:30am, in the hall.

St. Mary's Episcopal Church
6849 Oak Street, Milton, Florida 32570
Office: 850-623-2905
1pm

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

email: stmarysmiltonflorida@gmail.com

Office Hours: Mon-Thurs, 8:30am to

Sunday Services at 9am & 11am.
Wednesday Holy Eucharist at 11:30am.

