



THE COMMUNITY OF ST. MARY  
SOUTHERN PROVINCE  
**THE MESSENGER**



Volume XXX, Issue 1

Pentecost 2021

This last year has been a difficult one for all of us. People are grieving for those who have died from COVID, COVID-related health complications, as well as unrelated deaths that could not be dealt with as we would wish. People have died from gun violence and racist attacks in our country, and from war, disease, and starvation in other countries. Often, victims have died without the physical presence of their families and friends, without sacraments, or comforting words. Doctors, nurses, hospice workers and other support staff have been overwhelmed with cases, difficult decisions over resources, long work hours, and the relentless presence of death. Governments have struggled to maintain balance, foster peace, and meet the needs of their people, while dealing with attitudes and actions- sometimes within their own ranks- that would rather promote misinformation, denial, and conspiracy theories that have no grounding in reality.

In the midst of all this, we have celebrated small victories that have been the thread of hope for us.



*A sign of resilient hope*

Many people have reached out to help others through music, art, dance, photography, blogs and books, Zoom

programming, neighborhood services, livestream religious services, and spiritual messages on Facebook, etc. Crisis has opened us to new ways of doing things, new ways of claiming our humanity and our dignity. Disaster has revealed our character, personally and corporately, and has given us the opportunity to become more aware of others, more reflective, more sacrificial in our gift of self, and more human. And while some always exploit disasters for personal gain, many others continue to offer hope, celebrate generosity, and practice joy to conquer negativity, hate, and fear.

Though many in our country are beginning to feel some relief, we still are not out of the crisis. Many countries, like India and parts of South America, are still facing huge losses. It will take us years to process, grieve, and learn from all that we have experienced. It will take perhaps even more time to deal with all the problems that have been caused as a result of COVID or have merely been better exposed by this period of crisis. Our deep desire to "get back to normal," may tempt us to forget what we have experienced. We may want to race back into activity to buffer ourselves from painful memories and from pondering the hatred and racism that surfaced among us while fear and conspiracy theories reigned. Let us be careful and remember whose we are, whom we follow, and what we believe.

God has been with us throughout our chaos, our fear, and our losses, as well as our moments of hope and celebration. But perhaps, sometimes, our grief, fear, or sorrow have blinded us to that reality or numbed us to God's palpable presence. If that is so, remember God's presence now. In this Pentecost we are beginning

to experience a little more freedom of movement, greater ability to be together with friends and family, and a little less fear and more hope.

The Holy Spirit, the giver of life, even now is renewing us and all creation. In the beginning, the Spirit brooded over the dark waters of chaos and birthed new life from it. God's creative power continues now to birth new creation among us, though it will need our care to help it grow and flourish.



*This Tiger Swallowtail caterpillar is a sign of new life*

Prayer, reflection, memory, self-examination, work and discernment are our means of participating with God in that new creation. With the Spirit's help, we can co-create with God and usher in new life, new life that is directed by love, informed by the truth, and evident in lives of concern, justice and care for all creation. May it be so.

*Inside this issue*

- \* Pentecost Reflection, p.1
- \* Associate News, p.2
- \* Continuing Service, p.2-3
- \* Reflections on St. Mary's, p.3-5
- \* Sr. Madeleine Mary shares news from CSM, p.5-7
- \* St. Mary's Chronicle, p.8

## Associate News



Dear CSM Associates,

"Associates are men and women, lay and ordained, who wish to commit themselves to a rule of life and to friendship

with the Community." (Quote taken from the CSM Associate Guide pamphlet). Since the last newsletter, we have received 3 new Associates: Kiersten Ellis from Tuscaloosa, AL; Michael Thompson from Rising Fawn, GA; Larry (L.B.) Blackwell from Chattanooga, TN.



Kiersten Ellis, Associate

I wanted to share with you some of the ways Associates have offered friendship in the past six months. The Rev. Scott Lee, a priest Associate who lives nearby, filled that sacramental need several times by celebrating, preaching and blessing metals, etc. that we needed in order to continue our ministry during the pandemic. Another Associate came in May and cleaned most of the white crosses in the Sisters' cemetery; we were preparing for a funeral later in the month. One Associate reconnected with us through our website.

"A rule of life needs to be flexible because we and the world around us are changing." (Also from CSM Associate's pamphlet). I imagine that many of you have adjusted your rule of life during COVID. I was touched when I learned that some of our Associates, the Revs. Judith and Fletcher

Comer and L.B. Blackwell, offer and lead Compline regularly online. Another Associate sometimes rises very early on Sundays and attends, by Zoom, a service in England. Visits to family and friends were often done by computer, phone and letters.

Last year we were unable to offer our June silent retreat; we missed seeing many of you, especially our Florida contingent. This year we decided to connect with you by Zoom; we will have a picnic on June 25 and a quiet day on June 26. Sr. Hannah, our newly life-professed Sister and seminary graduate, will be our leader. The meditations will be on "The Forgotten Names of God." The retreat will be recorded and available on our website. We plan to offer an in-person silent retreat next June.

I gave a Zoom talk to confirmands in the Diocese of Newark in April; the subject was a rule of life. As I was preparing for the talk, I looked over some of the material that the Diocese had given its confirmands. I discovered some gems for a rule of life that I want to share with you:

**BRAIN REST!** "Giving your brain a break is an important part of taking care of yourself and making yourself more whole."

**POSITIVE CONSTRUCTIVE DAYDREAMING!** "Daydreaming has an important function of unfocusing the brain." It can improve our cognitive health.

**PLAY AND FUN!** "We play because we need to feel joy, laughter and love. Play lowers stress, allows us to relax and enjoy being alive. Play connects us to people we love and it can also bring delight to our time alone."

Thank you for your friendship to the Community. Be flexible and take some time to review your rule of life; may it help you as you transition into summer.

With hope and joy.

- Sr. Elizabeth Grace, CSM

**Ever consider putting St. Mary's in your will?**

**Want to help St. Mary's ministry?**

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

## Continuing Service

After eight Saturdays of taking the Virtual Lay Training Course, June 20th to August 8th, Sr. Ines and her companions graduated on November 7th.

There were thirty-four participants, six of whom came from the Church of St. Mary the Virgin in Sagada. Graduation was held at the Cathedral of All Saints in Bontoc. Priests from different churches in the Mountain Province came to attend the occasion. It was a joyous occasion although the crowd was limited because of COVID.



Sr. Ines, CSM



Sr. Ines, CSM and her classmates at her Virtual Lay Training Course Graduation

The CSM Associates in the Philippines meet monthly for Eucharist. At the January Eucharist, Sr. Ines gave a reflection on humility and forgiveness, and spoke about St. Agnes. The Associates discussed the challenges



of the pandemic with Sr. Ines after the Eucharist. They decided they wanted to take turns sharing their own reflections on the lessons during the monthly Eucharist. But by January 29th, the area went on lockdown with no mass gatherings except during burial services. This lockdown continued into February and March.

We are grateful for the ongoing work and ministry of Sr. Ines!

## Reflection on St. Mary's by L.B. Blackwell

A few years ago I learned about a place called the Ayres Center for Spiritual Development, located in Sewanee. Since I live in Chattanooga, about an hour's



L.B. Blackwell

drive southeast from Sewanee, I decided to visit the Center. On the day of my visit, the weather was mild and clear. After briefly touring the lobby and peeking into one of the meeting rooms at the Center, I wandered around the grounds, taking in the view from the ridge. A retreat or workshop seemed to be in progress. People were scattered in small groups or singly among the chairs, benches and other seating areas behind the main retreat building. I found a large flat rock and sat facing the view of the valley: blue sky above, sloping dark green forest below.

After lunch, I decided to walk the gravel roads that crisscrossed the property. One road stretched back along the forested lane, and at the head of the lane was a familiar sign. It said, Episcopal Church, and the white arrow at the bottom pointed down the lane. Intrigued, I walked down the tree-lined path. Intrigue blended with enchantment as I walked past a raised-

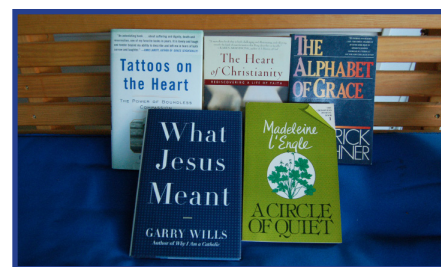
bed garden enclosed in a fence with rustic, tree-branch posts. Farther on, a quaint and simple structure, perhaps a guest house of some sort, stood alone just off the lane. A carved wooden sign near the building read: *Ora et Labora*. I was pretty sure I'd seen that Latin phrase somewhere before, but I couldn't quite remember what it meant, though it had a monastic connection in my mind.

I reached the end of the lane after a few more minutes of walking and found myself looking at a curious building: Cinder-block gray, with a small chapel on the left, and a bell tower reaching toward the treetops. A windowed walkway, through which I could see the expansive view from the ridge on the other side, connected the chapel to the rest of the building. Intrigue and enchantment were joined by a still, small urge that guided me to the chapel door. A paper taped to the glass stated service times and welcomed all to attend, except on Mondays, when the chapel was closed to the public. The next service was set to begin in just a few minutes. I checked my watch, considered how long I had before I needed to get home, and opened the door.

In the year or so leading up to that first unplanned visit to St. Mary's Convent, I had been on a slow, uncertain course back toward my religious roots. Raised in a fundamentalist Evangelical church, I had grown up thinking I had a corner on the truth about God, and that others, particularly other "unenlightened" Christians, were to be feared, avoided, or converted. In my early twenties I began to move away from that narrow view, and by the time I reached thirty, I could no longer comfortably call myself a Christian. Part of this spiritual evolution involved immersing myself in the writings and teachings of other traditions, particularly Hinduism and Buddhism. Eventually, I started a regular meditation practice and began to feel spiritually grounded.

Within a few years, however, I began

to notice a subtle but growing desire to be part of an established faith tradition. The problem, as I saw it at the time, was that while I knew I couldn't return to the Christianity of my childhood and adolescence, the Hindu and Buddhist traditions felt too unfamiliar to provide the connection and community I sought. I had become, as Marcus Borg puts it in his book *The Heart of Christianity*, "a lover of faith seeking a faith to love." Fortunately, through the writings of Christians like Borg, Barbara Brown Taylor, Richard Rohr, Gregory Boyle, Kathleen Norris, Frederick Buechner, Rachel Held Evans and many others, I discovered a mature and honest Christian faith that I could learn to love. At the same time, I knew I could not love from the sidelines, through books and ideas. If and when I did find a community of faith, I wanted to dig in, put down roots, and contribute to the life of the community. I did not want to be a bystander.

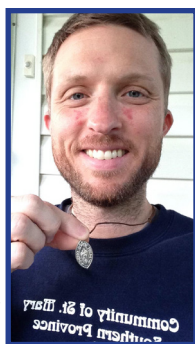


Books that gave L.B. a renewed vision of Christianity

And so, on that first visit to St. Mary's, after the brief Noon Office and a delightfully forthright and wide-ranging conversation with Sr. Madeleine Mary, I noticed a pamphlet in a rack near the front door. The pamphlet offered information about the Community's Associate Program, and I snatched it up. The pamphlet led me to Sr. Elizabeth, with whom I shared the outline of my journey and my desire for connection to a community of faith. Sister EG, as she signs her emails, introduced me to the concept of a rule of life and shared resources to help me develop a rule of my own. I found the practice a helpful way to see the big picture of my spiritual life: its strengths, its weaknesses and its limitations.

I continue to tweak my rule, as circumstances change and the Spirit moves.

*L.B. showing his Associates' medal*



In May of this year, I was formally received as an Associate of the Community of St. Mary. As I write these words, I am looking out the front room windows of the Sr. Mary Anselm Hermitage. The leaves bend and twist in the late morning breeze. A Carolina wren briefly alights on the window, peers inside where I sit in the recliner, then darts off. I have made several personal retreats in this room since my first fortuitous stroll down that forested lane, seemingly following only my curiosity, wondering whether and where I might find the mature and honest faith I longed to love.

### Reflection on St. Mary's by Jerusalem Jackson Greer

"Ultimately it is the land and what it knows that sustains life; and it was



*Jerusalem Greer*

to the land that we had to take our children before it was too late." - Phyllis Tickle, from the prologue of her *The Farm in Lucy* series.

Fifteen years ago this is the sentence that changed my life. The sentence that is still changing my life today. The sentence that eventually led me to the Community of St. Mary, Southern Province.

This sentence appears in each of the

prologues for *The Farm in Lucy* series by the late and great Phyllis Tickle, yet each and every time I read them, I would cry, a river of tears streaming down my face uncontrollably. And I had no idea why.

In a conversation with a friend about how she knew it was time to pursue her calling to be an Episcopal priest, she mentioned that the fact that she cried at every ordination service she attended was a bit of a tip-off that her time had come to follow suit. I have never cried in an ordination service (though I have sat and waited to see if I would) but the half a dozen or so times I would read Phyllis's prologue (and I read these books seasonally) the waterworks were turned on and my heart felt as if it would come out of my body with longing. The only explanation that ever made sense of those tears is this: those books, and in particular that prologue, awoke a desire in me that I never even knew I had. A light switch flipped on in a previously undiscovered room of my heart, and a longing for something I didn't understand, for a life for which I had no context, for a way of being in the world for which I had almost no vocabulary. A conversion had begun. We - my family and I - were being called to the land, not so we could escape the world, but instead so that we could be more fully engaged with the very terra firma that sustains us, putting our hands and hearts into the soil in order that we might not seek to change it, but to be changed by it. And so to the land we had to go. And more importantly, for this story - to the land I had to go.

Of course, as is typical of callings, it took longer than we expected - a farm didn't just manifest itself overnight. It would take a full decade for us to make our way from the city to the country, and in the interim, unsure if that call was real, I would write an entire book about our family's experiment in living the Benedictine vows of Stability, Obedience, and Conversion of life through the lens of Jeremiah 29:4-14, right where we were,

instead of where we longed to be.



*Book by Jerusalem Greer based on the Rule of St. Benedict*

And then, it all changed. A decade after my tears first landed on Phyllis's words, we found ourselves with a mortgage for a house, an outbuilding, a pond and 8 acres in rural Arkansas, on a small farm we call Preservation Acres.

Over the past seven years we have learned a lot about each other, about God's work in us and in the world, and about what it means to love our neighbors - animal, mineral, vegetable - as ourselves. We have made mistakes, and we have accomplished more than we probably realize. And we have shared our farm with others as we are able. But through it all one question has continued to nag me, in what I call a "Holy Spirit itch."

*"How is the deep call that I know in my soul, that pulled me to this life, meant to be manifested in the world?" "How is my call to ministry and my call to the farm connected, how are they to be woven and embodied together?"*

Over the years, as this core question grew louder and louder, and the itch became more and more persistent, I began searching for the path that would provide the answers. Did I need to deepen my theological training? Undergird my career in ministry more formally somehow? Was the priesthood the way forward? The diaconate? Seminary? What about a master's program in leadership, theology, Anglican studies? And if so, which one?

In an attempt to find my path, I was accepted into one divinity school, and



completed a nine-month creation care certificate through another, but neither scratched the itch.

And then, within a timespan of ten days towards the end of that certificate program, I was reminded of Benedict, and my connection to, and affection for, his Rule three separate times. And at each of these three occurrences, when this part of myself I had left dormant for several years, was reflected back to me, my spirit leapt for joy. And I wondered, could this be the way forward? Could my Holy Spirit itch be a desire to deepen my vocation, not advance my career?

Years ago, when my children were little, I remembered reading a Kathleen Norris book in which she mentioned her journey to become an Oblate. At the time, my stage of life was such that I could not conceive of adding one more thing to my life, but now... Well, now my children are young adults, my job is very different from the one I had in those early days, and it has space built in for continuing formation, and travel.

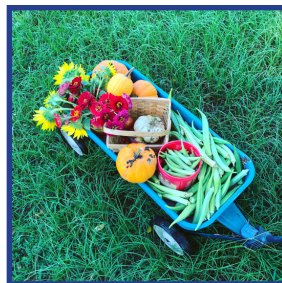
So, I began to research the Oblate opportunities. And I knew three things for certain: I desired to be a part of a community of Sisters, I desired a monastic order within The Episcopal Church, and I desired a robust process. I had a hunger to learn, a thirst to be formed - I wanted to submit to a season of intentional discipleship. And underneath it all - I wanted, but dared not hope for - a connection to the land.



*Jerusalem's garden ready for planting*

With the same burst of energy as our arrival at the farm seven years ago, I suddenly found myself on the virtual front stoop of the Community of St. Mary's Southern Province. A

community whose geographical location was situated at one of those "thin places" in my life at Sewanee. And there, on their front page was something called an Organic Prayer Program, which had something to do with prayer and planting. There, in the history, was a connection to St. Mary's Cathedral in Memphis – the very place I first met Phyllis Tickle, and would later attend her funeral. And there, under the tab "Join" was a two-year oblation formation process, filled with books and reflection, prayer and community. And there was Benedict. Blessed Benedict, and his Rule, being lived out on a farm. A farm with fruit trees and lavender fields, where the Sisters made jams and jellies and other items from their bounty. Where people come to rest and restore, learn and pray, plant and harvest.



*Jerusalem's garden harvest*

"The Oblates of the Community of St. Mary, Southern Province, make up an auxiliary body of the Community. Oblates live as lay extensions of the Community. Our Oblates serve the Community by broadening its ministry and representing it in places and ways that the Community desires. They live in the world, following an interpretation of the Benedictine Rule and the values it expresses that is consistent with their life situation."

Reading those words on the Community's website, my heart leapt again, and the tears fell. Was it possible that I, and our farm, could be an extension of the Community? Could my work in lay ministry, and the work of Preservation Acres, both be a sort of satellite location of St. Mary's Southern Province out in the world? Could my call to ministry and my call to the land find rest and new life in this expression? Could this be

my vocation?

With shaky hands I sent Sr. Madeleine Mary an email, indicating my interest in the Oblate program, praying that I would be accepted. And thankfully, gratefully, I am happy to report that I was, and I have begun the process (rather clumsily at times, but isn't that how any practice begins- badly?) of discerning my call to be an Oblate of CSM.

This story is both 15 years, and 15 months in the making. It is a beginning, and a middle, and maybe even an ending (maybe that itch?). It is a story about calling, and hopefully also about listening, and I also think it is a story about wholeness. But that is for another essay.

### Sr. Madeleine Mary Shares News from CSM

Through the centuries, monastics have often remembered

the dying at the office of Compline. Last December, the Sisters, in fact, added a spoken intention to that office in order to focus our prayer. We say: "We

offer this office in praise of the divine majesty, in acceptance of the day's work, and as an act of intercession for all those who will die tonight." It occurs to me now that that intention has been our nonverbal intention throughout the pandemic. Always our ministry is in praise of God, about living in response to reality and meeting the needs of our society, accepting both the blessings and the trials of the day, and about prayer for the world, especially for those who will die.

With regard to our work, we have,



*Sr. Madeleine Mary, CSM*

of course, continued our normal weekly tasks: services, intercessions, providing spiritual direction, offering hospitality in our guest areas, selling goods online through the local farmers' market, working on house and grounds upkeep, and training our dog Ellie. However, given the church season of this period, we particularly focused on the prayer aspects of the intention I mentioned. We began with a virtual Advent Quiet Day entitled "A Vision of Angels" through which we pondered how God has been present with us, guiding and comforting us, through the ministry of angels in both Old and New Covenants and even into our own time. And later, we celebrated an intimate, but COVID sensitive, Advent Thank-you Party for our employees and our Oblate, Karen DeBruler. It was a time of offering thanks for all they do to keep the convent, the chapel and its worship services, and our grounds in good order so that our ministry can proceed smoothly.



*Our very excited and surprised Oblate, Karen DeBruler, at our Annual Advent Thank-You Party*



*Our employees Carol Collins and Leonard King at our Annual Advent Thank-You Party*

On Christmas Eve, our chapel

was fully decorated and with the participation of those present, the liturgy, the music, and the sermon given by the Rev. Dr. Julia Gatta made a beautiful celebration of praise and thanksgiving for Christ's birth and presence among us. We all left that night much blessed.



*The Rev. Dr. Julia Gatta preaching at our Christmas Eve Service*

Christmas Day Dinner was, likewise, a joyful and intimate occasion, and though celebrating all the holy days around Christmas without guests and with no Eucharists was a very different experience, our prayers continued, and the Sisters took turns offering short homilies on Sundays and major feasts to enhance each celebration. After Christmas Day we used our quarantine time to have our employees paint several parts of the convent, get equipment repaired or replaced, clean out and reorganize sheds, and make a few outdoor renovations. The Sisters, in turn, met for annual chapter, engaged in creative activities for a few days, and enjoyed a corporate in-place vacation together in addition to our long retreat.

Epiphany and our in-place vacation time was interrupted by the January 6th insurrection as well as the racial unrest sparked by that attack and the way it was handled. At the same time, we also were making preparations for Sr. Hannah's Life Profession Service, which we celebrated on January 16, 2021. That service was a ray of hope in the midst of so much rage and suffering. Our bishop visitor, the Rt. Rev. John Bauerschmidt, and his wife as well as a small group of friends helped us make that occasion a beautiful and joyful liturgy of new life that spurred on our work that followed.



*Sr. Hannah, CSM at her life profession with the Rt. Rev. John Bauerschmidt*



*Sr. Hannah, CSM receiving her ring from the Rt. Rev. John Bauerschmidt*

We wanted, then, to acknowledge and accept the struggle of racism and violence that was ripping our country apart. We also wanted to give people a way to become more educated and aware, to process the issues, and hopefully work for change. We were, therefore, all very grateful for the program that Dr. Catherine Meeks later offered us on racial reconciliation. She masterfully guided us in recognizing the systemic racism that has existed in our country for some time and aided us in discussing it and identifying ways that we could address it.



*Dr. Catherine Meeks, our guest speaker for our January Zoom program, "Racial Healing in the Era of Multiple Pandemics"*



In 2021, along with Zoom programs and meetings, we also began to have Eucharists with music and sermons on Mary feast days. We observed Holy Week and Easter with some Eucharists for a limited congregation. Then, as the vaccine became available and an increasing number of people were vaccinated, we allowed a small number of people to attend Morning and Evening Prayer and began to celebrate the Eucharist on Sundays with a limited group. Our prayer times, Eucharistic celebrations, birthday and anniversary festivities, and our Zoom workshops and quiet days helped us and others who attended to process the needs of the times, lift up sporadic joys, and deal with the pain and grief that we all were experiencing.

It is not surprising, therefore, that with all the upheaval, sickness, etc. unleashed during this pandemic, that our intercessions became an even greater part of our ministry, along with undertaking various forms of communication with the isolated, visiting the sick and taking communion to the quarantined, when that became possible. We engaged virtually with others through programs, dealing with various subjects and needs besides racial reconciliation- including one's spiritual journey, the history of Constance and Her Companions, and rule of life. We also several times met with Associates by Zoom to pray and celebrate the lives of Associates who had died during COVID. And, during this time, we received a new Associate in a Zoom gathering, received two others in our chapel, and began a new Zoom class of Oblates-in-formation.

The pandemic made us re-think and expand how we connect with and support those we serve. At the same time, the occasional in-person events that we managed really made us appreciate the value of in-person community. We enjoyed sharing our grounds with occasional visitors, with a small group of students from St. Andrew's School who weeded

and prayed in our labyrinth,



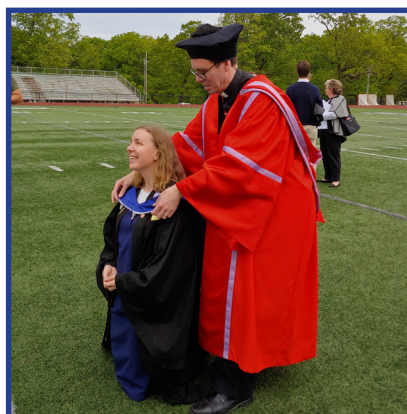
*Students from St. Andrew's Sewanee in our labyrinth*

and with young people from Camp Discovery whom Leonard King, our gardener, taught about the plants in our garden.

We were also privileged to celebrate Sr. Hannah's graduation with her seminary class (in-person) and to have Bishop Rob Skirving, the Chancellor, celebrate the Eucharist and share breakfast with us a few days later.



*Sr. Madeleine Mary, CSM; Sr. Elizabeth, CSM; Sr. Hannah, CSM; Associate Michael Thompson; Sr. Felicity, CSM; Oblate Karen deBruler; and Associate the Rev. Scott Lee at Sr. Hannah's graduation*



*Sr. Hannah, CSM receiving her Master of Arts in Theology hood from the Academic Dean, the Rev. Dr. Ben King*

Similarly, when the family of Carol Utlaug, a long-time Associate, asked to have a burial service and interment of her cremains in our cemetery, we were deeply touched to help organize and participate in that outdoor service with her family and members from her church. All of these encounters helped us recognize what we had been deprived of during quarantine and made us more deeply appreciate the blessings of personal connection and corporate worship that we have often taken for granted.

Ironically, that renewed appreciation of community made the Eastern Province's decision to leave the Episcopal Church extremely poignant and sad for the Sisters to deal with, but that reality is also part of "accepting the day's work." Our grief, our response and our continued ministry are our ways of accepting reality, praising God and interceding for the world in its brokenness. As a result of their decision, we have had some additional work laid upon us, and there has been some misunderstanding by the public about who we are and how this decision affects us. So, let me clarify for you again that this province will remain in the Episcopal Church and continue its life and ministry as before. As one Associate commented- "the beat goes on." Unfortunately, we now live on, as Mother Miriam said to us, as "the remaining remnant of the Community of St. Mary in the Episcopal Church" - along with our beloved centenarian from the Western Province, Sr. Mary Grace. Fortunately, this Province has been financially independent for some time, and thanks to good health and the generosity of many, we have fared well during the pandemic. So, you can expect us to continue on vibrantly and joyfully "in praise of the divine majesty, in acceptance of the day's work, and as an act of intercession for all those who will die tonight."

Blessings and prayers for you all!

## St. Mary's Chronicle

**December 5** – Sr. Madeleine Mary led an Advent quiet day, as part of our Zoom program series, on “A Vision of Angels.”

**December 18** – We had an Advent Thank-You party for our employees Carol Collins and Leonard King, as well as our neighbor and Oblate, Karen deBruler, who volunteered her time to help us during the pandemic.

**January 16** – Our Bishop Visitor, Bishop John Bauerschmidt, came to celebrate and preach, and receive the vows of Sr. Hannah at her life profession.

**January 30** – We had a Zoom program by Dr. Catherine Meeks entitled, “Racial Healing in the Era of Multiple Pandemics.”

**February 27** – Sr. Madeleine Mary led a Zoom Lenten quiet morning with the title “Turning, Turning, Till We Come Round Right” as part of our ongoing Zoom program series.

**March 4** – Sr. Hannah was a guest speaker on Zoom for the Episcopal Women's History Project's Lenten Series. She spoke about Sr. Constance and Her Companions.

**March 5** – Some students from St. Andrew's Sewanee came to volunteer and pray in our labyrinth garden.

**March 14** – Kiersten Ellis was received as an Associate via Zoom.

**March 21** – Sr. Hannah was invited by the Rev. Dr. Walter Brownridge to be a Zoom speaker at ‘The Rector's Forum: Sacred Conversations,’ a program series that explores the realities of race and faith in modern American society, for Christ Church Episcopal at Grosse Point, Michigan. The topic of her presentation was “From Greed and Loss to Generosity and Joy.”

**March 25** – Michael Thompson was received as an Associate in-person in our convent chapel. Sr. Elizabeth and Sr. Hannah hosted a Zoom Evening Prayer for the Feast of the Annunciation with some of the Community's Associates in Memphis, TN. The service was offered in thanksgiving for the lives of Iolis Carruthers and Mickey Mitchell, Associates of the Community who died earlier in 2021.

**April 24** – Our communications manager, Casey Perkins-Lawrence, led the Zoom program “The Spirituality of Yoga.”

**April 29** – Sr. Elizabeth was interviewed by the Rev. Clay Calhoun, Associate Priest at Church of the Holy Apostles in Collierville, TN, on the radio program ‘Faithfully Memphis’ on WYXR 91.7 FM. That evening, Sr. Elizabeth was welcomed by Bishop Carlye J. Hughes as a speaker at “Faith Forward: The Journey Toward Confirmation,” an online formation program for its candidates for Confirmation, Reception, and Reaffirmation for the Episcopal Diocese of Newark. Sr. Elizabeth spoke about the value of a Rule of Life and how that has helped shape her own life story. She also met with a small group of adult confirmands afterwards.

**May 1** – L.B. Blackwell was received as an Associate in-person in our convent chapel.

**May 16** – Sr. Hannah graduated from seminary at the University of the South with a Master of Arts degree in theology. She completed this degree in December 2020, but walked with the class of 2021.

**June 4** - We had 21 students from Camp Discovery come and volunteer their time working in our garden.



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