



ST. MARGARET'S

ECUMENICAL & RETREAT CENTER

January - April 2026



All Welcome!

So here we are, approaching a new year. It's interesting, the onset of a new year, and how individuals decide to 'tackle' it. Does one set goals that he/she wishes to achieve? New habits? Dropping this; adding that? Have a particular focus to set one on the path that they've been wanting to travel? It's a time of excitement I think in that the proverbial slate is clean, a chance to begin again if one should wish.

As we begin 2026, I hope that part of your time will be spent with us at St. Margaret's and Emmaus House. I am truly humbled by the thoughtfulness and generosity of our community. I put a need out to you and you answer it willingly and without trumpet (or in my world – bagpipes!) or fanfare. Thank you for that! We are so very fortunate for this community of caring and compassionate friends – and for that I thank you.

Thank you for blessing us with your friendship, your talents, your treasures – both physically through the stuff and financially that allows us to purchase the stuff that our folks need.

Enjoy this issue of our newsletter. We've compiled a whole lot of opportunities for us to spend quality time with God and one another.

Wishing you peace,

Judy

Judith H. Reilly
Executive Director



To learn more about any of our events or volunteer opportunities, for lunch and monthly dinner reservations, or to inquire about a personal or group retreat, please email info@stmargaretshouseny.org or call 315-724-2324.

Our regular office hours are Monday - Friday from 8:00AM to 4:00PM.

Please note: St. Margaret's will be closed from Christmas Eve through New Year's Day.

A Note From Father John LaVoe

With Advent, Christmas, and very soon Ash Wednesday and Lent at hand, three things may interest you. As of December 3rd, our Wednesday noon Holy Eucharists began at 11:45 AM. The reason is that a fifteen minute head start will help – in the kitchen, the dining room, AND allow more time in the chapel.

Second, I'm hoping we can go deeper with psalms in Lent. Are psalms poems, prayers, or songs? Are they somber, outrageous, or puzzling? They're not like gospels, epistles, history, laws or prophets, yet there's nothing "hard" about them. Register for two free sessions that make sense of psalms, and answer your questions. Make a highway in the Old Testament that sheds light on Palm Sunday, Good Friday, Easter and more! See for yourself: on Wednesday February 18; then, part 2, on Wednesday March 4, 1:30 to 3:00 (or 3:30 TBD), at St Margaret's House.

Finally, remember you're welcomed to find peace, tranquility, serenity, and a quiet, holy time in St Margaret's living room, library, or (in good weather) enjoying the grounds. St Margaret's is an ecumenical atmosphere open to all. Call with any questions.



In Peace,
The Rev. Father John LaVoe
Chaplain

*Best Wishes to You and Yours for a Merry Christmas and
Peace Filled New Year from All of Us at St. Margaret's!*



↻ **Community Volunteer & Donation Opportunities** ↻

It Takes A Village | Tuesdays from 2:00 to 5:00 PM

Our social action-oriented initiative volunteers at the St. Margaret's Food Pantry at Grace Church on Tuesdays. Please contact us if you would like to sign-up. If you are unable to help on Tuesdays, perhaps consider donating toiletries, reusable bags, or shelf stable foods. Gift cards to Aldi's or BJ's are also appreciated. *Many thanks for your continued generosity and to the Episcopal Diocese of Central NY!*



Shelf Stable Goods for Grace Church Food Pantry | Ongoing

St. Margaret's is accepting toiletries, coffee, and shelf stable goods (cereal, pasta, rice, dressing, canned goods, peanut butter, etc.) for the Grace Church Food Pantry that supports our community members who are food insecure. Donations can be dropped off at St. Margaret's. *Thank you!*

Your Neighbors Service Project | First Fridays of the Month, Ongoing



Help support your neighbors with a group of volunteers who reach out to the homebound in the Greater Utica area, the majority of whom are frail, elderly, and/or disabled and often lack the support of friends and family members. Please contact Judy for containers and instructions. Volunteers are welcome to prepare any number of meals that include: a main dish, starch, vegetable, and freezable dessert (like crisps, cobblers, or cookies). Please drop off your donations during our regular business hours on First Fridays (8am to 4pm) or reach out if you need a different time. Your Neighbors, Inc. is a local non-profit organization. *New participants are always welcome!*

Friends of Emmaus House | 2nd Wednesdays at 10 AM

Our group of volunteers meets monthly to help support the needs of Emmaus House, Utica's only emergency shelter that serves women with children. Support is provided by holding fundraisers and hosting outreach events including the annual open house, among other manners. We meet monthly on 2nd Wednesdays to determine needs and find solutions to those needs. *New members are welcome!*

Helping Hands at St. Margaret's | Ongoing

If you would like to volunteer at St. Margaret's, we are in need of assistance with projects in our library and gardens, as well as volunteers to assist with events and our Altar Society to assist with our weekly Holy Eucharist, held Wednesdays at 11:45 AM. Please call or email for more information and to get involved. *Thank you!*

Ongoing Events

Weekly Activities

Worship Services Wednesdays at 11:45 AM

Zoom and In-Person Worship Services - All Welcome!

Please contact St. Margaret's for the information to join by Zoom

Wednesday Lunches at 12:30 PM

Please make a reservation by the Friday before - Suggested donation \$15

Monthly Activities

Men's Group | 1st & 3rd Wednesdays from 10:30 AM to 11:45 AM

Meant to be a time of fellowship and exploration, Father Nick Smith will begin each week by asking "What is saving your life today?" Is it spiritual practice? Is it coffee? Is it some curious enigma? Let's find out and share our conclusions!

Conversations with Father John | 2nd Wednesdays at 1:30 PM

Join us for conversations about faith hosted by Father John LaVoe.

Caregiving Support Group | 3rd Mondays at 2 PM

Facilitated by the Rev. Deacon Barbara Groves, the group's focus will be to provide a place for folks who are caregivers to gain support for themselves, and exchange ideas to help care for loved ones at home.

Grief Support Group | 3rd Fridays at Noon

St. Margaret's continues to host a peer facilitated grief support group for anyone experiencing loss - new members are welcome to join.

Coffee and Conversation with Rev. Deacon Jean | 4th Wednesdays at 1:30 PM

Join The Reverend Deacon Jean Skinner for conversations about faith. Please consider bringing a few cans of food for our food pantry as a donation.

Monthly Dinners: Dine In at 5:30 PM and Take Out at 6 PM

Suggested Donation \$19; Please reserve your seat by the preceding Wednesday.

January 20th	Pot Roast with Glazed Carrots and Mashed Potatoes
February 17th	Spaghetti with Meatballs, Sausage, Garlic Bread
March 24th	Corned Beef & Cabbage
April 21st	Grilled London Broil with Potatoes

Special Events

Book Club with Judy - 3rd Thursdays from 10:30 to Noon

Please register one week prior to each session. Feel free to bring snacks to share!

January 22nd	<i>How To Human</i> by Carlos Whittaker
February 19th	<i>Closer Than Your Next Breath</i> by Susie Larson
March 19th	<i>The Opposite Life</i> by Alex Seeley
April 16th	<i>A Jesus Shaped Life</i> by Lisa Harper

Ash Wednesday | February 18th at 11:45 AM

St. Margaret's weekly Holy Eucharist will include the Imposition of Ashes for Ash Wednesday. All are welcome.

Lenten Study | February 23rd to March 23rd, Mondays at 2 PM

Join Rev. Deacon Barb Groves for this year's Lenten study, based on James Moore's book, *Give Up Something Bad for Lent*. We are invited to seek God's help to focus on eliminating one habit or attitude that is destructive. Imagine giving up envy, jealousy, self-pity, apathy, procrastination, gossip, resentment, or negative thinking. How much better would your life be? Please register by February 16th.

Psalms Come Alive with Father John | Feb. 18th and Mar. 4th at 1:30 PM

Are psalms poems, prayers, or songs? Are they somber, outrageous, or puzzling? Speakers and those addressed change without warning. They're not like gospels, epistles, history, laws or prophets, yet there's nothing "hard" about them. Register for two sessions that make sense of psalms, and answer your questions. Wednesday, February 18th, and Wednesday, March 4th from 1:30 to 3:00 PM.

Lent - A Season of Prayer, Reflection, and Renewal



Please call (315) 724-2324 or email info@stmargarethshouseny.org to learn more about any of our events and to register.

Come Make a Joyful Noise Ceilidh | March 12th at 1 PM

Come and enjoy music and songs by friends of St. Margaret's House from 1:00pm to 3:00pm! Seasonal refreshments and time for wonderful conversations included.



Praying In Color with The Rev. Janet & Ann | March 18th at 1:30 PM

There are so many ways of praying suggested in so many places. Perhaps that means many people have some difficulty with praying? Sybil MacBeth addresses this concern in her book, *Praying In Color*, and offers one possible path.

If you are attracted by color and enjoyed (or still enjoy coloring), you might find this form of connecting with God helpful. No artistic talent needed! Bring your crayons, markers, or colored pencils and join us on March 18th at 1:30 to explore praying in color. If you don't have your own crayons, come anyway, as we will have plenty to share and will provide paper as well. - Janet Stengel & Ann Hodgins

Prayer Through Act with The Rev. Janet Stengel | April 9th at 1:30 PM

How is your prayer life lately? Do you pray only once in a while? Or maybe you think that you don't know how to pray. Come join in a (two) hour discovery of the many kinds of prayer.

JS will lead us in learning that there are many more ways than the Lord's Prayer or the Rosary to open ourselves to God. You'll find that some prayers are energizing; some calming; and some even enjoyable and fun. Even God likes to hear our joys!

Through the time we spend together we will listen and learn, then have time to practice the prayers we've learned about. Surely you will go away with new understandings that will help your prayer life to be deepened.

Presentation and Discussion about Mission Work | April 15th from 1:30PM to 3:30PM

How might God be calling us to care for our neighbors through mission work, whether it is right here at home or across the globe? Please join us for a presentation by the Rev. Deacon Dorothy Pierce and Cindy Adamowsky on the many ways God calls us to serve others in need. Learn how each one of us can contribute! Come and sample some delicious treats originating from India! Please register by April 8th.



Service Project with Deb Skinner | April 20th from 9am to 3pm

Please come and share a joyful day of community sewing at St. Margaret's House. We will be making bags for the women at Emmaus House to carry their personal care products. This project is beginner friendly as Debbie will walk you through the steps needed. All that is needed is a sewing machine in good working order and basic sewing supplies. Everything needed for the bag will be included in a kit. If you want to participate but don't wish to sew you can sign up to cut fabric for kits or iron. Please be sure to sign-up early to ensure that everyone will receive a kit and instructions. Please register by April 14th. We will order out for lunch, please bring \$ or your lunch.



Sacred Sites Tours of 2026

We are excited to announce our tours for 2026, which are organized in collaboration with *Tours By Design*. Please call or email for a reservation form.

National Shrine of the Divine Mercy, Stockbridge, MA | June 8th at 8:30 AM

Experience the beauty of the Berkshires and the serenity of the National Shrine of the Divine Mercy—a perfect day of prayer, reflection, and renewal. We will meet at St. Margaret's for an 8:30 AM departure and arrive at the Shrine around 11:30 for a four-hour visit. We will then depart at 3:30 PM for a group dinner, returning to St. Margaret's around 8 PM. Cost per person is \$125 and includes: Round trip motorcoach via Hale Transportation, a visit to the National Shrine of Divine Mercy, and group dinner at Michael's of Stockbridge. Gratuity for drivers is separate.

Joshua at Sight & Sound Theatre, Lancaster, PA | Overnight, July 27th at 7:30 AM

Experience one of the most redemptive stories of the Bible as it comes to life in this brand-new original stage production. We will meet at St. Margaret's to hop on the bus, which will depart at 7:30 AM on July 27th, and return to St. Margaret's the following day around 8:00 PM. Prices include transportation, lodging, and most meals: \$465 twin; triple \$445; quad \$435; and single \$550. \$100 deposit due upon registration. Gratuity for drivers is separate.

For more information or to register for any event, please call or email
St. Margaret's: 315-724-2324 or info@stmargaretshouseny.org

St. Margaret's, Friends, & Events!



Photos: Winter at St. Margaret's, Conversations, Sacred Sites Tour, Father John blessing prayer shawls lovingly made by Shelly, The Rev. Deacon Jean, Judy with donations and more donations, Service Project with Deb Skinner

Emmaus House

Thank you to all who donate necessities and niceties to the women and children staying at Emmaus House!

Friends of Emmaus House is a group of volunteers who provide support to help meet the needs of the house & guests. This is done through donations, fundraisers, and our annual Open House. We meet monthly on 2nd Wednesdays at 10 AM to determine needs and find solutions to those needs. *New Members Welcome!*



Serving Women & Children
Since 1983

Monetary Donations: Donations can be mailed to St. Margaret's or made through our website: www.stmargarethshouseny.org. All checks should be made out to "St. Margaret's." Please write "Emmaus House" in the "for" line if you would like your donation to go to Emmaus House. All donations are tax-deductible.

Donations in Kind: Emmaus House graciously accepts donations in kind to include New Home Welcome Kits and Hygiene Supplies, clothing, household goods, towels, shower shoes, slippers, laundry baskets, and underwear and pajamas for all ages/genders.

We will also be accepting donations to host Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, and Easter Dinner for our guests at Emmaus House.

Donations may be dropped off at St. Margaret's. Please call if you have questions.



Photos: Donations for Emmaus House and Friends of Emmaus House Outreach

Personal & Group Retreats at St Margaret's

St. Margaret's has meeting spaces for group meetings and overnight retreats. We also welcome members of the community to come and stay at St. Margaret's for personal retreats. Those staying at St. Margaret's have use of the house, library, and chapel during their stay. There are many quiet sitting areas for relaxation and contemplation. We have a lovely path to the Wayside Cross on our grounds. Personal retreats are unguided and offer guests a chance to unwind and reconnect with themselves.

Guest rooms are \$65 per night and include overnight accommodation and use of the house and the guest kitchenette, which has a refrigerator, microwave, toaster, and instant hot water for tea and coffee. Groups of five or more can also have meals included for a total cost of \$100 per night per person.

If you would like to plan a meeting or retreat, please contact us for additional information and scheduling.



Photos: St. Margaret's Chapel, Living Room, Library, and Grounds.

CONTACT INFORMATION & RESERVATIONS:

Phone: 315-724-2324 | Email: info@stmargarethouseny.org



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47 Jordan Rd - New Hartford NY - 13413