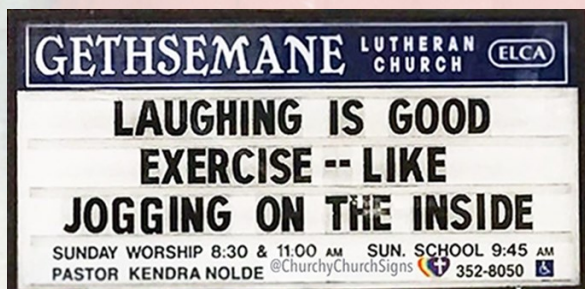


# The Red Door

## St. Mary's Episcopal Church

February 2023

### RAMBLINGS FROM THE RECTOR



*Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect. (Romans 12:2)*

Christianity is an amazing faith. At its core is an understanding that everything dies (ends) and out of that death comes resurrection (something new and alive). But how many of us actually live as if we believe this? Far too often we (myself included) cling, as if our lives depended on it, to those things whose time has clearly ended. This is especially true when talking about “church things.” We don’t want things to change. It feels like we have failed if a long time ministry comes to an end. We feel like we can’t properly worship if our worship space looks different or if something changes in the liturgy. We lament the coming end of our congregations when we look out and see our numbers significantly reduced from “the good old days when the church was full.”

What do these feelings say about the strength of our faith? What do they say about our willingness to look for what God is doing today instead of looking back and holding on to what God has done in the past?

Do not be conformed to this (or any) age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind!

This is the constant cycle that God has ordained for us. No matter how strong our resistance, God is continually speaking to us in new ways. It is important for us to remember where we came from, but at the same time we need to be ready to step into the unknown of God’s call for us today. We need to do some internal jogging, shake ourselves up, and let go of our fear so that we can take joy in what God is doing today.

*Rev Warren Huestis*

### PARISH READING

#### Extracted from the clutter on the Rector’s desk! **Change and the Small Church**

By Roy L. Spore On March 22, 2022 Leading Ideas

Roy L. Spore believes that decline and death are not inevitable for smaller rural churches. While smaller churches are often skeptical of change imposed from the outside, many find new life and energy for ministry when a new vision emerges from within the congregation itself.

Countless studies of the local church in today’s society bear out a profound truth: churches that were once dynamic and vital now suffer from an aging membership, decline in attendance, economic crises, and an absence of youth and children. This fact is especially true in rural areas, where churches tend to be small, community and family oriented, and very traditional. Each year scores of these churches close their doors, unable to counter the trends that bring about their decline, and even more fall into a downward spiral of hopelessness.

Change is all too often presented as an either-or choice and church leaders are caught up in a tug-of-war between what they have been and what others think they should become. Yet, while this scenario seems to be the accepted norm, is it the inevitable future of these churches? Many would say “yes” to this question, citing what they believe to be the cause: a fundamental trait in smaller, rural churches, expressed in the now-trite phrase, “But we’ve never done it that way before.” There is a perception that these churches would rather die than change. Thus, while their community/neighborhood changes around them, the church seeks to remain the same, holding on tightly to the past to preserve what little they have left and guarding the traditions that they once held dear.

#### **Must change be a tug-of-war?**

While this is certainly true of some churches, it must not be taken for a general principle. The majority of churches that I have encountered would do almost anything to keep their doors open and their ministries vital. It is not that they are afraid of change: they fear that making changes will rob them of their identity and heritage, both of which have provided meaning for their lives. Change is all too often presented as an “either-or” choice and church leaders are caught up in a tug-of-war between what they have been and what others think they should become. It is quite possible that the future of these churches does not depend on who wins this battle and that, in fact, even engaging in the tug-of-war at all may be a source of decline and despair. Perhaps the future of the small, rural church rests on a very basic understanding of who we are and what we are called to be.

We make a serious mistake when we assume that the reason for the decline of the small church is that they do not know how to “do” church. Most of these churches have endured →

# VESTRY

# Vestry Report

John Joy, Sr Warden  
Charles Everhart, Jr Warden  
Richard Davis  
Judy Franklin

open

Andrea Harner

Newsletter editor—John Glaze

*Submissions to THE RED DOOR are welcomed. © items cannot be published without consent of the owner.*

## ANNUAL MEETING

## 22 JAN 2023

### Jeopardy!

In our never-ending quest to educate our congregation while having fun, we will be having a game of Jeopardy! The questions will be about St. Mary's history, the people, the building, the priests and more! Start thinking about building a TEAM of 3 to 5 to compete. Details and rules will be forthcoming, as well as the date! (*Is the Jeopardy jingle playing in your head?*)

## Annual Meeting Sunday, January 22, 2023

Please join me as we look back over the past year and let us start by giving thanks. I would like to thank all of you who help and work at St. Mary's--Vestry members, Rich, Andrea, Judy, Charlie, Maggie, our Secretary, John, our organist and Tech coordinator, Dea Flinn, our Altar Guild stalwart, and anyone else I may have overlooked. These folks were all instrumental in overcoming a number of bumps in the road as they helped make the move to our new temporary worship space as smooth as possible. Another shout out to Lynn, Shirley and Connie for their help with coffee hour and carry-ins. A special thank you goes to Rev. Terri Thornton for her spiritual and practical leadership during 2022. I would also like to thank our Missioner, Rev. Michael Ralph and Rev. David Getreu for their assistance and support during the year.

Below please find a brief summary of some of the key items (I know I have forgotten something!) faced and addressed during 2022:

- Continued the ongoing legal action to recover as much of the damages incurred by St. Mary's during the HVAC work done during the new addition construction, both in the new building and the sanctuary. Work continues to try to recover the significant amount of financial harm done by the HVAC contractor and lack of oversight from the general contractor. We are optimistic this will to go trial and be settled this year.
- While we regret the loss of long-time member, Carlene Phillips, we were blessed to be remembered financially in her will. We are also grateful for the donation from John Glaze as well.
- We obtained from the Diocese a COCL (Commission on Congregational Leadership) grant for \$30,000 for 2023, \$24,000 for 2024, and \$18,000 for 2025. This money will be a huge blessing as we enter our new partnership with All Saints to share a Priest-In-Charge, Rev. Warren Huestis.
- We were also blessed to see many new faces in church on Sunday, some of whom have been attending regularly. We look forward to strengthening and growing our spiritual community during the New Year.

Please join me in continuing to pray for St. Mary's and its attendees. As Rev. Terri is fond of telling us, "We may not get what we want, but God will provide what we need." I trust that 2023 will be a year of discovery, opportunity, and progress as we continue God's work for our church, our community, and our world. There will be some bumps along the way as things like the flooring in the Sanctuary is completed and the sharing of Rev. Warren proceeds, but I am confident that, with God's help, St. Mary's will end 2023 in the best possible manner. Best wishes to each of you for the New Year.

*John Joy*, Senior Warden

→ for generations; many of them have been bastions of hope and deliverance within their communities through the hardest of times. In myriad ways, these churches have given more than they have received. We owe to them a huge debt of gratitude for being the church in places where without them there would be no guiding force within the community. Instead of dismissing their leadership as archaic and irrelevant, we should honor them as the saints, learn from them how to face hardship, and celebrate with the many triumphs of their legacy.

### Glimpsing an authentic new vision

Much of the resistance to change encountered in smaller churches comes because implementing change implies abandoning the past. Small rural churches are not doomed to failure and death. Many of these older congregations have found a new life and a new energy for ministry by catching a glimpse of new possibilities, but that new vision is almost never imposed upon them by an outside source. In a small church, the recommendations of consultants and the strategies of judicatory emphases are generally received with skepticism and doubt. Yet when the vision emerges from within the leadership of the church, it is received in trust, especially when it reflects the heart of the congregation and members have had a voice in its emergence.

If the small church is to move into the future with a sense of hope, it must find that hope in a new vision that comes from God. Fishing in unproductive waters will seldom produce that hope. Leaders must be willing to make some changes in the way they do certain things. But they must also learn from the past, honoring their saints and their heritage, learning from them, and using the experiences of God's work in the past to guide them into what God will do in the future. They must place their relationship with God at the heart of everything they do and learn to trust God's leading, even if it doesn't make sense to them or goes against the status quo. Doing this brings about a sense of partnership that inevitably leads to the presence of miracles and the inclusion of others.

*This article is adapted from Productive Leadership: A Guide for Ministry in the Small Church (Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2021) by Dr. Roy L. Spore. www.wipfandstock.com. The book is also available at Cokesbury and Amazon. https://www.churchleadership.com/leading-ideas/change-and-the-small-church/*



With the destruction phase of the sanctuary project, we have been given a great gift! You may think your editor has lost it (again), but, stay with me and I'll explain. Removal of the marble side panels has revealed a look into the history of the sanctuary heretofore unknown by any person living today. We have been able to reconstruct an idea of the look of our sanctuary as it was built. This supplements the information we already knew, or at least suspected.

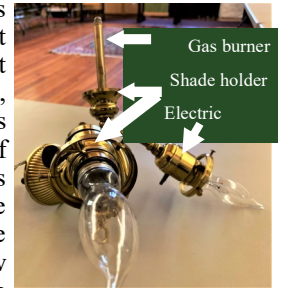
As I have previously told you, Rev. Louis Durr, who was our priest for 19 years early in the 1900s, in memory of his parents, paid for a major upgrade to the sanctuary. He is responsible for all of the marble in the building, including the altar, side panels and the mosaics we see surrounding the altar. We now suspect that, when the side marble slabs were installed, the walls above were re-plastered, bringing the surface of the walls out about 2 to 3 inches.

just an initial layer meant only to be covered up by the next photo. Here, you can see that there is a border painted a lighter color than the larger expanse. The border seems to be a cream color with a narrow red border.



You may remember that Chris Duckworth, grandson of Eddie Ayres (pharmacist and son of a sexton), gave us a light fixture which family lore said came from St. Mary's. Up until now,

we were only relying on the story from the Ayres/Duckworth family. The fixture has is designed for two electric light bulbs, as well as a gas burner. When electric was first installed in Hillsboro, as with most places, it might work continually, or it may go out without notice. Therefore, fixtures often were fitted with electric as well as gas. Up till now, we had no proof that the church was ever fitted for this type of lighting. With the opening of the wall, we found conduit for electric inside the wall, as well as gas pipes. We now have a much higher level of confidence that this light, in fact, did come from St. Mary's.



Remembering that when the building was constructed, there was no gallery included in the building. As you know, there is wainscoting in the foyer of our building currently. Originally, this wainscoting extended completely around all three walls of the building. When the gallery was built, we assume that the break in the vertical expanse of the panels was placed at the same height as that wainscoting.



Foyer wainscoting

This next photo shows the sanctuary wall as viewed now. Note the bottom of the current plaster section



tion of the wall. Below that, you see the original wall extending down about 12-14" and below that is the original inner layer of stone. This area was originally covered with the wainscoting the same as currently in the foyer. The photo to the right is a closer view of this area.



Now, how do we know this plastered area was the original wall? If you notice at the top, the newer plaster stands out from the older section. We know that this was not



Electric conduit  
Gas pipe

More discovery has shown that the original wall was green before being covered over. In this photo, you can see that this (or at least part of it) appears to



be wallpaper. Evidence is the difference of color not being in a simple line as a

change of color in paint might be, but swirls. Also, viewed up close, the white edge of the vertical line appears to have been torn, also indicating the probability of paper. What is very certain is the fact that we shall never know the exact facts and can only suppose this evidence points to our suppositions as being true.





**February**  
**1 - Deanna Flinn**  
**2 - Jennie Harner**  
**5 - John Joy**  
**7 - B J Gee**  
**27 - Charles Everhart**

# The Red Door

St. Mary's Episcopal Church  
234 N. High St.  
Hillsboro, OH 45133



GUESS WHAT'S COMING TO ST. MARY'S



## Lector & Intercessor Schedule

<b>1st week</b>	<b>Betty &amp; Jim Heathcote</b>
<b>2nd week</b>	<b>Connie Reynolds &amp; Dea Flinn</b>
<b>3rd week</b>	<b>Carol &amp; John Joy</b>
<b>4th week</b>	<b>Rich Davis &amp; Connie Reynolds</b>
<b>5th week</b>	<b>Connie Reynolds &amp; Dea Flinn</b>

## ST. MARY'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH INFORMATION

The Diocese of Southern Ohio  
St. Mary's Episcopal Church  
234 N. High St Hillsboro, OH 45133  
937-393-2043

The Rev. Warren Huestis  
Rector

The Rev. Terri Thornton  
Transitional Priest

SUNDAY WORSHIP - 10:00 am  
IN PERSON & *Streaming on Facebook*  
COMMUNION FOR THE HOMEBOUND—  
Sunday after service.

*We strive to be safe and make our parishioners and guests feel safe and welcome!*

**WEB SITE:**  
[www.smehillsboro.weebly.com](http://www.smehillsboro.weebly.com)