



# Discerning Hearts

Newsletter of The Episcopal Community

“We are marked as Christ’s own for ever.”

Volume: 2026 Issue 05

## Honoring Mary in May



For centuries, people around the world have honored Mary in a special way during the month of May. This tradition, rooted in both liturgical practice and popular devotion, invites the faithful to reflect on Mary’s

role in salvation history and to imitate her virtues of faith, humility, and love. May, with its abundance of blossoms and new life, has long been seen as a fitting symbol of Mary’s purity and spiritual beauty.

Mary’s place in the story of salvation is unique. Chosen by God from all eternity, she was prepared to be the Mother of the Savior. At the Annunciation, she gave her wholehearted “yes” to the angel’s message, allowing the Word to become flesh. In doing so, she became the “New Eve,” whose obedience and trust in God opened the way for humanity’s redemption through Jesus Christ.

The custom of dedicating May to Mary can be traced back to medieval Europe, where springtime celebrations often included honoring the Mother of God. By the 18th century, the practice had spread widely, with churches and communities organizing special devotions, processions, and the crowning of Marian statues. The beauty of nature in May — flowers in bloom, longer days, and warmer light — became a natural reflection of Mary’s own virtues and her role in bringing the Light of the World into our midst.

Mary’s life offers a timeless example for all believers:

**Faith** — She trusted God’s plan even when it was mysterious.

**Humility** — She recognized that all her blessings came from the Lord.

**Charity** — She served others willingly, as seen in her visit to Elizabeth.

**Perseverance** — She remained steadfast at the foot of the Cross.

How can we honor Mary in our own way?

**Pray the Rosary daily**, meditating on the life of Christ through Mary’s eyes.

**Create a Marian prayer space** at home with flowers and an image of Our Lady.

**Read and reflect** on Scripture passages about Mary.

**Imitate her virtues** in daily life — humility, patience, and trust.

Dedicating May to Mary is more than a seasonal tradition — it is an invitation to grow

closer to the Mother who always leads us to her Son. As we honor her with prayers, flowers, and acts of love, we also honor the God who chose her to bring salvation into the world. In following Mary’s example, we learn how to say “yes” to God in our own lives, allowing His grace to bear fruit in us.



## Funds of the Community

Did you know that the community has established three funds to support different services around our Community?

**The Mary Magdalene Fund** supports the operations, work, and mission of The Episcopal Community. Funds may be used to provide services, materials, and communications that exceed the regular budget; to help with expenses of providing retreats, workshops and annual meetings; to defray costs of providing services at General Convention, and to help provide operational needs. Although donations may be made at any time, the major ingathering date is **Easter**.

**The Naomi Fund** assists retired clergy and members who because of medical situations, nursing home residency, loss of job, loss of home, or difficult life situations, are not able to pay their dues. No woman should have to give up her active membership and participation in The Episcopal Community because of lack of funds. Although donations may be made at any time, the ingathering date for this Fund is **Mother’s Day** since many of these women have been spiritual mothers to other women through the years.

**The St. Clare of Assisi Fund** is used for women and children in the United States experiencing major financial need. Although donations may be made at any time, the major ingathering date is set on or near her Feast Day **August 11<sup>th</sup>**



O God,  
grant unto me  
a **courageous** song for a  
weary throat,  
that my singing,  
amidst the divisive and  
discordant symphony  
of this time,  
I may yet hold fast to hope.

Amen

Bishop Deon K. Johnson



## Birthdays

Andi Silberman    Kathleen Nyhuis  
 Mary Shontz      Cynthia Sand  
 Lera Doneghy    Tory Riihimaki



## Vespers/Compline

03-May Patti Joy Posan  
 10-May Lorna MacDonald  
 17-May Barbara Harris  
 24-May Kathleen Nyhuis  
 31-May Chris Butterworth

*The office of Compline is the final office of the day. We see this as a time to check in and be together for just a little while. It is a joyful time and we hope you will join us! If you would like to lead compline, please contact Cynthia Sand at [cynthiasand53@gmail.com](mailto:cynthiasand53@gmail.com)*



## Event Calendar

*Meetings are on Zoom. All times Central time.*

### 2026

- Sunday Compline 6:00 PM
- Social Connect 4:00 PM
- Friday Morning Prayer 9:00 AM



## Recipe of the Month



### Flag Fruit Pizza

#### Ingredients

16.5 ounces sugar cookie dough softened, store-bought sugar cookie dough,  
 12 ounces cream cheese softened  
 ¾ cup butter softened, salted  
 3 cups powdered sugar  
 1 ½ teaspoons vanilla extract  
 1 pound strawberries fresh, 1 pound is about 4 cups of whole strawberries  
 6 ounces blueberries fresh, 6 ounces is about ¾ cups

#### Instructions

*Before you begin: Take the cream cheese, butter, and cookie dough out of the refrigerator at least 15-20 minutes before you start.*

Preheat the oven to 350°. Line a 10 x 15-inch rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper or oil the pan generously.

Rub a teaspoon of oil onto your hands and spread cookie dough out evenly on the greased pan.

Bake cookie dough for 17-18 minutes or until the crust just starts to turn a light golden brown around the edges. Let the cookie cool on the pan, about 15 minutes.

While the sugar cookie cools, add the cream cheese and butter together in a large bowl and cream together with an electric mixer until smooth. Add one cup of the powdered sugar plus the vanilla to the mixture, then again beat with an electric mixer until smooth.

Add the second cup of powdered sugar to the frosting mixture and again beat until smooth. Pour in the third and last cup of powdered sugar and beat until you have a smooth frosting. Spread about 2/3 of the cream cheese frosting evenly on the cookie crust once the cookie is cool to the touch.

Rinse and dry the blueberries and strawberries. Create a rectangle of blueberries for stars in the upper left corner of the large cookie.

Remove the stems from the strawberries using a hulling tool or a knife. Slice strawberries into ¼ inch slices. To get more slices per strawberry cut the strawberry vertically. Layer strawberries in four rows to create the flag strips. Place the remaining frosting in a frosting bag with a star tip. (see notes) or a plastic bag. Pipe frosting between strawberry rows to create white stripes.

Place the entire pan in the fridge for at least 20 minutes to chill. Slice into 15 pieces then serve and enjoy!



*Do you need a snail mail copy of Discerning Hearts? Contact Barbara Harris at [communication@theepiscopalcommunity.org](mailto:communication@theepiscopalcommunity.org)*



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