



Break the bonds!

Imagine the possibilities...

Stories from the Imagine Gatherings

Over the past month, over twenty people opened their homes to host Imagine Gatherings. At these fun and social events, participants enjoyed food, wine and fellowship, and shared their vision for a Saint Margaret's five years in the future. The results are both hugely varied and singularly focused!

The question was this: *In five years, I want St. Margaret's to be...*

Here's some of what you said:

- Full of children
- Debt free
- Joyful!
- Lively!
- Inclusive
- Tithing to outreach
- A community center for the arts
- Welcoming to newcomers!
- More diverse
- Fully staffed for children and youth ministries
- Filled with music!
- Connecting the generations
- The Rock

- Overflowing with volunteers
- A center of spiritual education and worship

There are so many more ideas and focuses, and we will be sharing them all with you over the next few weeks! At this time, we want to thank all our hosts, our coordinators and especially all those parishioners who took the time to come and share their dreams for St. Margaret's.

- submitted by Connie Anderson

Attend a [Virtual Imagine Gathering](#)

We want to hear everyone's dreams for the future of St. Margaret's. By finding the common threads in the Imagine Gatherings discussions, the Vestry intends to develop a shared vision for St. Margaret's goals and mission, setting priorities for the future.

If you were unable to attend an Imagine Gathering, or had an inspiration after you left yours, we still want to hear from you. Much of the material that was discussed is available on the Break the Bonds [blog](#). Please review the materials and then send us your responses to the posted questions.

God may choose any one of us to share His vision for our future. Help us make sure we don't miss a word of it. What is He saying to you?

Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening. 1 Sam 3:9

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Stone Soup

Almost everyone is familiar with the old folk tale about the soldier who wandered into a village looking for a meal and got the cold shoulder from the villagers. At one level, that story can be seen as a clever tale about how the soldier tricked the villagers into feeding him by making soup from a stone. But on a deeper level, I see the story as one of scarcity versus abundance. When the soldier arrived at the town he found everyone concerned that they would not have food enough for themselves, and hoarding what



they did have. They were living out scarcity. As the story progresses, one by one the villagers discover they do have something they can spare. As each one brings out a different vegetable to add to the

pot, gradually the stone soup becomes something rich and flavorful. And as the soup bubbles, the villagers become richer, too. As they gather around the soup pot, they find that together they have much more than they thought they had individually. They have begun to live in abundance.

I see a lot of parallels between Stone Soup and the Break the Bonds campaign. As a community, I feel that we have begun living in scarcity. We have drawn the circle of what we believed we could accomplish tighter and tighter. My hope is that the Break the Bonds campaign becomes Stone Soup for us. I am hoping that as we each bring out the proverbial vegetable from our larder, we find that as a community we have more than enough. I believe we will find that as a community we are already rich.

- submitted by Christina Burnett

All-Church Brunch, December 11

Join us in Bristol Hall on December 11 at 10 am for a delicious brunch celebrating the life we enjoy in community with each other. There will be only one service that day at 8:45 am, so that the entire parish can gather for a morning of fellowship.

Following brunch, parishioners will share stories of their lives at Saint Margaret's, we will have a presentation on the results of the Imagine Gatherings, and we'll receive an update on what advance givers have pledged to "Break the Bonds".

During the event, children preschool age and older are invited to attend the Children's Saint Nicholas Party. Child care will also be provided in the nursery for infants and toddlers.

See Mary Armendariz in the narthex or call her at 425-xxx-xxxx to reserve your spot at this free event.

Children's Saint Nicholas Party

On December 11, while the adults are in Bristol Hall enjoying a meal and hearing stories about the parish, the children of Saint Margaret's will be having a Saint Nicholas party in the undercroft, assisted by the youth of Saint Margaret's. They'll have a feast, learn about the real man of God behind the secular Santa Claus legend, create a seasonal craft project, and possibly receive a visit from the old saint himself.





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How does the giving process work?

During this year's stewardship campaign, parishioners will be asked to make two pledges: one for the annual operating budget and a second to eliminate the debt. The debt reduction pledge can be spread over three years.

On Sunday, December 4th, there will be an Advance Commitments event at the church for the purpose of receiving early financial pledges. Anyone who would like to make an early, inspirational financial commitment to our campaign is welcome and invited to attend. For those who wish to take part in the Advance Commitments, a member of our campaign committee will be asking for a visit with you prior to the event on December 4th. Contact Jeff Webber at 425-xxx-xxxx if you would like to participate in this way.

On Sunday, December 18th, we will have our Commitment Worship services. On this day, all who have not made an advance commitment will be invited to submit their pledges as an act of worship. For those unable to attend on December 18th, a member of our campaign team will follow up to receive your commitment.

The Teapot

Betty was going through her silver and china one day wondering what she would do with them. Her children's and grandchildren's lifestyles had no place for silver and china. She had no one to give her keepsakes to who would appreciate them, and she lamented her disappointment to a friend. Her friend suggested a gift to the church. However, Betty didn't

know how much the items were worth. One day she took the silver teapot her grandmother had given her in for appraisal, and to her surprise, she discovered that she had an authentic Paul Revere silver teapot. The appraiser told her it was probably worth \$14,000 to \$15,000 at auction. She promptly sold it and gave the proceeds to her church. Often we find treasures in unusual places if we look at things from a different perspective. There are other opportunities for giving when we are not sure we have enough liquid assets to help our church.

- submitted by Johanna Padie



If you're 70½, you can make a tax-free transfer from your IRA to St. Margaret's until Dec. 31

Under a tax provision that is scheduled to expire on Dec. 31, taxpayers age 70½ or older may make tax-free transfers of up to \$100,000 per year directly from their IRA to charities.

You can make distributions directly to one or more charities from your traditional or Roth IRA, as long as you are at least 70½ when you transfer the gifts. Such gifts can be made without increasing your taxable income or withholding. Additionally, funds transferred from your IRA to a charity will NOT subject your Social Security income to higher tax levels, and will count toward your minimum required distribution.

For more information, contact Johanna Padie at 206-xxx-xxxx.

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Break the bonds! Campaign Calendar

- December 4:
Advance Commitments Gathering
An opportunity for those who wish to make early, inspirational financial commitments to our campaign.
- December 11:
All-Church Brunch and Children's St. Nicholas Party
The entire congregation is invited to celebrate the life we enjoy in community with each other.
- December 18:
Commitment Worship
During worship services, we will all be asked to make our financial commitment to the future of Saint Margaret's.
- January 15:
Annual Meeting and Celebration
Review the results of the Break the Bonds campaign, and discuss how it changes the shape of St. Margaret's future.

Day of Prayer is a Success

Over 90 people participated in the Day of Prayer at St. Margaret's on Saturday, Dec. 5. Between 8 am and 6 pm, there was a stream of people coming through the church to pray for our members and our collective future.

At the end of the day, the pile of prayers that had been collected was burned, letting the smoke carry the prayers up to God.

Steward of the Viola

The landowner in the parable of the laborers said, "Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me?" So I asked myself, "What DOES BELONG to me? Does ANYTHING actually BELONG to me?" And I thought about my 1850 Italian viola. It was made by an 18th/19th century family of well-known violinmakers, and I am fortunate to be in possession of it. I know that I am simply a caretaker of this rare instrument for this time period, and I remain humbled by this honor. Of course, an exchange of money took place in order for me to have the viola and play it, but, in time, I will pass it on to the next person, whom I hope will use it and care for it, and it will continue to make beautiful music for others for generations to come. So I do not "own" the viola as something I can keep forever.

Others have played it before me, and others will play it after me. I am simply a steward of it for a number of years during its life, which has already exceeded my lifetime. This beautiful instrument will continue to be passed on to others for many years to come. Perhaps this is what God is telling me about all of my material goods. These material objects, whatever they may be, are in my keeping to use for the glory of God, and have been granted to me for a brief time in the greater scheme of things.

It is my hope that the parables we will study together will become food for thought and that perhaps we can all be challenged and inspired to have our ears and hearts opened to what God is saying in a new and previously unimagined way!

- submitted by Carolyn Wyman

