I have found myself in a season of reflection, specifically on the mercies of God. Those scripture passages such as Lamentations 3:22-23, that speak of the Lord's steadfast love never ceasing and his mercies being renewed every morning. Or, like in Psalms 145:8-9, where David proclaims the mercy of the Lord coming through compassion and graciousness. As I read those, I just say Wow, Lord I want to know your mercies like those guys knew your mercies! I want to rest so deeply in your mercy that when I wake up, they are new, and I can live this day with nothing of the past plaguing me or distracting me.

The question is why can't I, why can't you live that way? There is good news, we can!

My children have learned that when they make a mistake and a consequence is necessary, there is a go to question, "Can we have grace and mercy?" That is a hard question to say no to and of course they have figured this out. Many times, we will consider and give the mercy and grace they ask for in the situation, although there are times where a consequence is needed for learning and discipline.

Our Heavenly Father has the character of mercy, and therefore when asked he gives abundantly. God's promise of mercy is complete for all who would desire and ask for it. There is the key; we have to humbly come before the Lord and cry out for his mercy to renew us and to restore us and he assures those who make that effort that those mercies are waiting in abundance.

In this season of thanksgiving, I find myself giving thanks and crying out in the same breath. Are you finding yourself under the shower of God's mercy? If not cry out and know that he will surely answer your cry and rain down mercies new every morning!

Wes
The United Thank Offering (UTO) ministry is rooted in the historic role of the women of the Episcopal Church as the primary source of support for the missionary work of the church. What began as an offering first collected at a Triennial Convention of the Women’s Auxiliary to the Board of Missions has grown to a grant making organization spreading blessings throughout the world. That first offering, $371.27 (probably a little less than $10,000 in today’s dollars) has grown to a program that granted over $1.5 million dollars in 2018.

Initially known simply as the “United Offering”, the name evolved to “United Thank Offering” to remind us to collect and share our “prayers and grateful offerings” in thanksgiving for the blessings of life. Giving reminds us of our thankfulness for God’s work in our lives and encourages our sharing those blessings and the Gospel with others. UTO also maintains a Memorial Fund, which was created to endow the operations and salaries for UTO, so that 100% of the offerings collected at the in-gatherings can be distributed through the grants programs.

If you wish to learn more about UTO, past and present, you can visit www.unitedthankoffering.com. The website now includes archives of all grants from 1883-2019. Current grant application forms and much more can be found online. We will also print and post some recent reports of UTO activity.

Holy Cross continues to have many blessings for which we can show our thanks. In our own lives, we can also find room to say thanks for God’s blessings, even when we may be struggling with tough issues. “Blue Boxes” to collect your coins and cash will be available if you need a replacement. Please clearly mark any cash or check donations as being “for UTO”.

Thank you for supporting this important mission work of the Church!

With a thankful heart!
Julie Barnard, UTO Coordinator

The United Thank Offering Prayer:
Gracious God, source of all creation, all love, all true joy: accept we pray these outward signs of our profound and continuing thankfulness for all of life.

Happy Thanksgiving!
**What’s Happening?**

### Advent Schedule for Altar Guild Teams

- **Dec. 1st** – Team 2 - Laurie Nabors, Sue Peterson, Deanna Booth
- **Dec. 8th** – Team 3 - Cindy Cole, Camille Turner, Andrea Mathews
- **Dec. 15th** – Team 1 - Charlotte Scarborough, Chris Patterson, Jo Grove
- **Dec. 22nd** – Team 2 - Laurie Nabors, Sue Peterson, Deanna Booth
- **Dec. 23rd** – All Teams – Greening of the Church
- **Dec. 24th** – All Teams – 5:30 & 10:30pm services
- **Dec. 29th** – Team 3 – Cindy Cole, Camille Turner, Andrea Mathews

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**A Message from Our Senior Warden**

Sunday October 13th, we gathered for the memorial service of our sweet Molly Gossage who passed away October 10th, 2019. Molly was a long-time member of Holy Cross and will be missed by all who were blessed to know her. Inga Strickland, Fran Branblette, Alyce Daniel, and Karen Krueger attended the annual ECW Diocesan Conference October 11-12 held at Noccalula Falls Park in Gadsden. Episcopal ladies from around the state were inspired as they listened to Reverend Mary Bea Sullivan who spoke about “The Invitation to the Table.” The Rt. Rev. John Kee Sloan also addressed the conference.

October 16th was our third Wednesday Night Dinner Program. After a delicious meal from Taziki’s, Father Wes led a discussion on the Scripture John 3:16. Thank you to Louise Wood and Fran Bramblette for their help with our dinner setup/clean up.

Sunday October 20th the ECW hosted a very successful Soup, Sweets & Cross Sale. Thanks to all our Holy Cross cooks for their delicious dishes and to Cindy Cole for leading recent cross making classes — we still have some beautiful beaded crosses available for sale.

I ask for your continued prayers as our pledge cards are being turned in. Father Wes, our Holy Cross Vestry and Staff are working diligently to plan for next year. Our 2020 budget will be dependent on your pledges, so if you are planning to make a pledge this year please do so as soon as possible.

Wishing everyone a Blessed and Happy Thanksgiving!

Cindy Wester, Senior Warden  
(205) 706-7187

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**Annual EFAC Conference**

(Evangelical Fellowship in the Anglican Communion) will be hosted by Cathedral Church of the Advent, beginning **Tuesday, November 5th through Friday, November 8th**. This year’s theme is *The Word of God Does the Work of God* and the keynote speaker is Vaughan Roberts, Rector of St. Ebbé’s Church (Oxford, England) and author of God’s Big Picture and several other books. Registration information is online at: efac-usa.org.

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**Cross Life Update**

Fall is finally here and CrossLife has plans to celebrate! On **November 15 and 16** we will be going on an overnight camping trip, stay tuned for more details. The following **Wednesday (Nov 20)**, we will be celebrating Thanksgiving as a group at James and Christina Patterson’s home. -Jason

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**Message to Altar and Flower Guild**

The greening of the church is scheduled for **Monday, December 23rd at 9:00am**.

All altar and flower guild members are to bring a snack to share, and I (Cindy) will provide the beverage. Christmas Eve services at 5:30 and 10:30pm will need to be covered as well.

- Cindy Cole
MEMORIES OF MAUREEN MOLLY GOSSAGE
(November 8, 1925 – October 9, 2019)

Molly was a fighter and a survivor, according to a memoir written in her own hand, where she recalls overcoming childhood illnesses, including meningitis, and later tuberculosis. As a native-born “Brit,” Molly’s life drastically changed after England and Germany declared war. She vividly describes the horrors of the German blitz (the nighttime bombing raids of London and other cities in England) and the nights she, her mother and sister spent in the cold, damp, underground “raid shelter” in her backyard. However, one good thing did come from this war, Molly met her future husband, Neal, an American soldier. Though separated when Neal was transferred back to the states, they continued their courtship by mail until Molly traveled solo across the ocean to his hometown in Heflin, Alabama. She stayed there until Neal was granted military leave to come home and marry his sweetheart. Afterward, they returned to base in Alaska and then moved to various bases. In California, their first daughter, Lynne, was born, and later in Texas, their first son was born but survived only two days. Later came the births of sons, Brett and Greg, and daughter, Andrea. When Neal left the military, the family settled in Trussville. However, tragedy struck, when as a teen, Andrea lost her life in a car accident. Molly’s strong faith and close relationship to God kept her lifted in spirit through life’s trials and tribulations. She wrote in her journal, “when you look back at life, it is a tapestry of colors woven together——bright and dark——happy and sad——hard and soft. We make pictures with what life has given us …if we mess up, it’s our own fault.”

Church of the Holy Cross misses you, Molly!

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TREASURER’S REPORT, THIRD QUARTER 2019

James Patterson

As your Treasurer, I believe that my primary responsibility is to keep the people of Holy Cross fully informed regarding the financial state of the Parish. I create monthly financial summaries for the Vestry, and these reports are included in the minutes for your access and review. I hope that my efforts are beneficial as all of us strive to make the best decisions regarding how we can share our gifts to support the mission of The Church of the Holy Cross.

After the first nine months of this budget year, I can say at best that we are “making ends meet”. The Vestry and staff are carefully managing expenditures. Despite some significant unexpected expenses for building repairs and maintenance, total expenses for the year have been held close to the amount budgeted, only exceeding our plans by 1.6%. Cost cutting measures are in place for the remaining three months of the year, and barring something unforeseen, I expect that we will finish the year with our total expenses coming in under the annual budget.

Unfortunately, news regarding Parish revenue is less positive. Contributions to our pledge commitments so far this year is less than 95% of what was expected. Thankfully, plate contributions have well exceeded what was projected, and have more than made up the difference. Overall, total revenues have exceeded budget projections by slightly more than 1%.

The Church of the Advent contributes generously to the financial needs of the Parish. Their contribution of $72,500.00 this year will make up more than 25% of our budgeted revenue. Under their commitment, this amount reduces each year, and for 2020 will total $55,000.00. We must each carefully consider our roles in mitigating the effect of this reduction on the mission of the Parish next year.

I look forward to the progress that will be made to bring our expenses and revenues into alignment. I ask for your prayers for the finance committee and the Vestry as difficult decisions are made to prepare the 2020 budget. I remain confident that God will provide for The Church of the Holy Cross, so that we can continue to serve our community.

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HAPPY Birthday TO YOU!
NOVEMBER

Jon Williamson 2
Jack Brannan 2
Matthew Shafer 3
Jack Wood 9
Mary Brooks Browne 10
Katie Amberson 22
Elliot Sharp 24
June Mckaig 29
Edra Perry 30