

Introduction

The Novena is a traditional Catholic prayer practice. An individual, a group, a family or a community holds an intention for nine days. The prayer that is repeated daily for nine days is generally a way of asking God for a special help or blessing.

*This Novena, respecting the pious tradition of Catholic prayer, is meant to be a prayerful foundation to contemplate **the meaning of the mission of St. Margaret of Scotland** as we engage the search for new school leadership in our administration and classrooms. Values drawn from the mission statements of school and parish help us reflect on our identity – personally and institutionally. This reflection is done in the form of prayer, rather than simply in group discussion because *the conversation is incomplete without God*. Our identity and mission derive from God’s action and our response in faith. And we seek the active energy of the Holy Spirit as we move forward.*

Make it your own! The prayer as given here is adaptable to various needs. It may be prayed in a group or privately. The lighting of a candle, an ancient symbol of prayer, can add to the experience of the Novena. Praying outside surrounds us with God’s great beauty and reminds us of his care for each of us – his loved ones. Since our community will be praying this Novena over the course of the school’s spring break, we will integrate our prayer into some of our weekend Masses, and then pray from our homes most days, trusting that God will unite us in spirit no matter where we are when we pray.

The Order of the Novena.

- The Novena service can begin with a bell chime, a hymn, or silence.
- *Intercessory prayers*, suited to the day’s theme, may be expanded into additional sharing of community needs and intentions.
- *Reflection questions* within the Novena may be revisited at the end of each day’s prayer. We invite you to share your personal reflections on the mission value of the day with the parish by emailing ffc@stmargaretstl.org. These reflections will be gathered anonymously and shared with the search committee to consider the community’s sense of mission as it relates to our search priorities.

We are confident that participation in this Community Novena for Catholic Education will yield benefits to those who take up the practice, and to the efforts of the St. Margaret of Scotland community.

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

Matthew 7: 7-8

MISSION STATEMENTS

St. Margaret of Scotland Parish is a diverse urban Catholic parish. Inspired by the Holy Spirit and the Example of our patroness, we are called to be a vibrant voice and beacon of the Catholic faith in our neighborhoods. We proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ in work and action by

- Praying and celebrating as a Eucharist community,
- Educating children and adults to live a full Christian life in today’s world,
- Serving others with unconditional generosity, and
- Living just lives and working for a more just society.

St. Margaret of Scotland Parish School is a diverse, urban, vibrant and inclusive Catholic community. We are committed to providing an outstanding learning environment for children, pre-kindergarten through eighth grade, in which they are challenged to meet their academic potential and recognize their giftedness in body, mind and spirit. Our students embody the example of our patron saint by becoming responsible leaders and caretakers of our community through works of service and social justice.

I. WE ARE COMMUNITY
March 14, 2026

Hymn

Option I. All Are Welcome

Gather 915

1. Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safely live,
a place where saints and children tell how hearts learn to forgive.
Built of hopes and dreams and visions, rock of faith and vault of grace;
here the love of Christ shall end divisions:
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

2. Let us build a house where all are named, their songs and visions heard
and loved and treasured, taught and claimed as words within the Word.
Built of tears and cries and laughter, prayers of faith and songs of grace,
let this house proclaim from floor to rafter:
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

Option II. They'll know we are Christians

Gather 904

We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord, (2x)
And we pray that all unity may one day be restored:

Refrain

And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love,
Yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.

We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand, (2x)
And together we'll spread the news that God is in our land: **Refrain**

We will work with each other, we will work side by side, (2x)
And we'll guard human's dignity and save human's pride: **Refrain**

Prayer

Leader:

+ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Let us pray as one:

All:

Good and Gracious God,
We come before you as the community of St. Margaret of Scotland,
gathered today to pray a Novena for clarity of mind and heart
during this search for new school leadership.
We ask you, O God, for support and strength,
direction and guidance,
joy and peace
as we seek to be people who share a common faith, concern and destiny.
Lead us the way we need to go, as our story unfolds before us.
We make this prayer, filled with hope,
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading

From *The Long Loneliness* by Dorothy Day

We cannot love God unless we love each other, and to love we must know each other. We know Him in the breaking of bread, and we know each other in the breaking of bread, and we are not alone any more. Heaven is a banquet and life is a banquet, too, even with a crust, where there is companionship. We have all known the long loneliness and we have learned that the only solution is love and that love comes in community.

Response

Leader At dawn, fill us with your merciful love;
All we shall exult and rejoice all our days.

Leader Let your deed be seen by your servants,
All and your glorious power by their children.

Leader Let the favor of the LORD our God be upon us;
All Give success to the work of our hands.
O give success to the work of our hands.

Word of God

Ephesians 4: 18b-20

Be filled with the Spirit,
addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,
singing and playing to the Lord in your hearts,
giving thanks always and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ
to God the Father.

Questions for Reflection – *After leader reads questions aloud, all pause to reflect during one minute of silence.*

- How is life in community at St. Margaret's a source of joy and gratitude for you?
- In what ways should our embrace of the value of community impact decisions about our search for new leadership at our school?

Petitions

Leader: Christ hears and saves all who hope in him. Let us bring him our needs.

That our school will foster a spirit of cooperation and interdependence, welcoming and cultivating the sharing of our full humanity; we pray...

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

That our children will experience the encouragement, guidance, safety, and love of community at St. Margaret of Scotland; we pray... **R.**

That our community, inspired by the first Christians, will grow into a model of sharing and mutuality, and become a living experience of Gospel values; we pray... **R.**

For what else shall we pray?

Individuals may offer intentions.

Prayer of Saint Margaret of Scotland

[\(video offering here\)](#)

Leader: Let us recall our mission as together we pray:

[PRAYER IS PRINTED ON BACK OF COVER PAGE](#)

Optional, following Novena:

Share your reflections from above questions, focused on the mission value of the day. You are welcome to email ffc@stmargaretstl.org. Comments received may be shared with the community and those who search for our new staff members.

II. WE ARE DIVERSE

March 15, 2026

Hymn

Option I. Where Charity and Love Prevail

Gather 774

Where charity and love prevail,
There God is ever found;
Brought here together by Christ's love,
By love are we thus bound.

No race nor creed can love exclude
If honored be God's name;
Our family embraces all
Whose Father is the same.

Option II. Jesu, Jesu

Gather 538

Refrain Jesu, Jesu, fill us with your love, show us how to serve the neighbors we have from you.

Neighbors are wealthy and poor,
Varied in color and race,
Neighbors are nearby and far away. *Refrain*

These are the ones we should serve,
These are the ones we should love:
All these are neighbors to us and you. *Refrain*

Prayer

Leader:

+ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Let us pray as one:

All:

Good and Gracious God,
We come before you as the community of St. Margaret of Scotland,
gathered today to pray a Novena for clarity of mind and heart
during this search for new school leadership.
We ask you, O God, for support and strength,
direction and guidance,
joy and peace
as we seek to be people who celebrate our diversity
while we pursue a deeper unity.
Lead us the way we need to go, as our story unfolds before us.
We make this prayer, filled with hope,
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading

from Principles for Interfaith Dialogue by Ronald Rolheiser, OPI

Throughout history, great thinkers have grappled with the problem of the one and the many. And, consciously or unconsciously, all of us also struggle with that tension between the one and the many, the relationship between unity and diversity; but perhaps this not so much a problem as it is a richness that reflects the over-abundance of God and our human struggle to grasp that over-abundance.

Perhaps the issue of religious diversity might be described in this way:

Different peoples, one Earth. Different beliefs, one God. Different languages, one heart. Different failings, one law of gravity. Different energies, one spirit. Different scriptures, one word. Different forms of worship, one desire. Different histories, one destiny. Different disciplines, one aim. Different approaches, one road. Different faiths – one mother, one father, one earth, one sky, one beginning, one end.

Response

Leader At dawn, fill us with your merciful love;
All we shall exult and rejoice all our days.

Leader Let your deed be seen by your servants,
All and your glorious power by their children.

Leader Let the favor of the LORD our God be upon us;
All Give success to the work of our hands.
O give success to the work of our hands.

Word of God

1 Corinthians 12: 13-26

[\(video offering here\)](#)

[I]n one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit.

Now the body is not a single part, but many. If a foot should say, "Because I am not a hand I do not belong to the body," it does not for this reason belong any less to the body. Or if an ear should say, "Because I am not an eye I do not belong to the body," it does not for this reason belong any less to the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, God placed the parts, each one of them, in the body as he intended. If they were all one part, where would the body be? But as it is, there are many parts, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I do not need you," nor again the head to the feet, "I do not need you." Indeed, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are all the more necessary, and those parts of the body that we consider less honorable we surround with greater honor, and our less presentable parts are treated with greater propriety, whereas our more presentable parts do not need this.

If [one] part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part is honored, all the parts share its joy.

Questions for Reflection – *After leader reads questions, all pause to reflect during one minute of silence.*

- How does our ability to acknowledge and respect both differences and commonalities honor God?
- How might St. Margaret's commitment to diversity impact the skills and traits needed for school leadership?

Petitions

Leader: Christ hears and saves all who hope in him. Let us bring him our needs.

That our school will foster a spirit of inclusion so that all of God's children feel the warmth of God's loving touch, we pray...

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

That our children will grow in the wisdom that will enable them to call out what is broken, inhumane and sinful in all cultures, including their own, we pray... **R.**

That our community will grow in grace to recognize the image of God in the uniqueness of each person so that in diversity we may experience unity, we pray... **R.**

For what else shall we pray?

Individuals may offer intentions.

Prayer of Saint Margaret of Scotland

Leader: Let us recall our mission as together we pray:

[PRAYER IS PRINTED ON BACK OF COVER PAGE](#)

Optional, following Novena:

Share your reflections from above questions, focused on the mission value of the day. You are welcome to email ffc@stmargaretstl.org. Comments received may be shared with the community and those who search for our new staff members.

III. WE ARE VIBRANT

March 16, 2026

Hymn

Option I. City of God

Gather 857

1. Awake from your slumber! Arise from your sleep!
A new day is dawning for all those who weep.
The people in darkness have seen a great light.
The Lord of our longing has conquered the night.

Refrain:

Let us build the city of God. May our tears be turned into dancing.
For the Lord our light and our love has turned the night into day.

2. We are sons of the morning; we are daughters of day.
The One who has loved us has brightened our way.
The Lord of all kindness has called us to be
a light for all people to set their hearts free. **Refrain**

Option II. This Little Light of Mine

Gather 651

[\(video offering here\)](#)

1. This little light of mine I'm gonna let it shine (3x)
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.
2. Everywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine (3x)
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.
3. Jesus gave it to me, I'm gonna let it shine (3x)
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

Prayer

Leader:

+ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Let us pray as one:

All:

Good and Gracious God,

We come before you as the community of St. Margaret of Scotland,
gathered today to pray a Novena for clarity of mind and heart
during this search for new school leadership.

We ask you, O God, for support and strength,
direction and guidance,
joy and peace

as we seek to be people who reflect your radiant light
and live in your abundance.

Lead us the way we need to go, as our story unfolds before us.

We make this prayer, filled with hope,
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading

i thank You God for most this amazing
day: for the leaping greenly spirits of trees
and a blue true dream of sky; and for everything
which is natural which is infinite which is yes

(i who have died am alive again today,
and this is the sun's birthday; this is the birth
day of life and of love and wings: and of the gay
great happening illimitably earth)

how should tasting touching hearing seeing
breathing any-lifted from the no
of all nothing-human merely being
doubt unimaginable You?

(now the ears of my ears awake and
now the eyes of my eyes are opened)

e.e. cummings (1894-1962)

Response

Leader At dawn, fill us with your merciful love;
All we shall exult and rejoice all our days.
Leader Let your deed be seen by your servants,
All and your glorious power by their children.
Leader Let the favor of the LORD our God be upon us;
All Give success to the work of our hands.
O give success to the work of our hands.

Word of God

Ephesians 5: 8-15

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.
Live as children of light,
for light produces every kind of goodness and righteousness and truth.
Try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.
Take no part in the fruitless works of darkness;
rather expose them, for it is shameful even to mention the things
done by them in secret;
but everything exposed by the light becomes visible,
for everything that becomes visible is light.
Therefore, it says:
"Awake, O sleeper,
and arise from the dead,
and Christ will give you light."

Questions for Reflection – *After leader reads questions aloud, all pause to reflect during one minute of silence.*

- Where have you seen evidence of the energy of new life and renewal at St. Margaret of Scotland?
- How might our understanding of vibrancy inform our prayers for new leadership?

Petitions

Leader: Christ hears and saves all who hope in him. Let us bring him our needs.

That our school will be empowered and inspired by our mission and strive to welcome the energy of new leadership with a flexible and hospitable spirit; we pray...

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

That our children will be actively engaged in intellectual, social and spiritual formation that will permanently enrich their lives; we pray..., **R.**

That our community will respond with generous hearts and lives: encouraging, challenging and supporting the baptismal call to ministry and discipleship; we pray... **R.**

(opt.) For what else shall we pray?

Individuals may offer intentions.

Prayer of Saint Margaret of Scotland

Leader: Let us recall our mission as together we pray:

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Optional, following Novena:

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IV. WE ARE JUST
March 17, 2026

Hymn

Option I. Send Down the Fire

Gather 593

Refrain:

Send down the fire of your justice, Send down the rains of your love;
Come, send down the Spirit, breathe life in your people, and we shall be people of God.

1. Call us to be your compassion, Teach us the song of your love;
Give us hearts that sing, Give us deeds that ring,
Make us ring with the song of your love. **Refrain**
2. Call us to learn of your mercy, Teach us the way of your peace;
Give us hearts that feel, Give us hands that heal,
Make us walk in the way of your peace. **Refrain**

Option II. Let Justice Roll Like a River

Refrain:

Let justice roll like a river, and wash all oppression away;
Come, O God, and take us, move and shake us,
Come now, and make us anew, that we might live justly like you

1. Take from me your holy feasts, all your off'rings and your music;
Let justice flow like waters, and integrity like an ever-flowing stream. **Refrain**
2. You have been told the way of life, the way of justice and peace;
to act justly, to love gently, and walk humbly with God. **Refrain**

Prayer

Leader:

+ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Let us pray as one:

All:

Good and Gracious God,
We come before you as the community of St. Margaret of Scotland,
gathered today to pray a Novena for clarity of mind and heart
during this search for new school leadership.
We ask you, O God, for support and strength,
direction and guidance,
joy and peace
as we seek to be people who hunger and thirst for justice,
striving to live rightly.
Lead us the way we need to go, as our story unfolds before us.
We make this prayer, filled with hope,
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading

From *Following Christ in a Consumer Society* by John F. Kavanaugh, S.J.

[\(video offering here\)](#)

Social action is not the preserve of some special-interest group. It is an imperative of faith. This is true not only because of the content of the New Testament and the nature of the vocation to which Christ calls men and women; it is also true because there are social conditions which minimize the very possibility of experiencing love, hope, and faith. Destitution, degrading prisons, world hunger, and armament are affairs of spirituality. The human spirit is at stake, not 'just' the human body.

Response

Leader At dawn, fill us with your merciful love;
All we shall exult and rejoice all our days.

Leader Let your deed be seen by your servants,
All and your glorious power by their children.

Leader Let the favor of the LORD our God be upon us;
All Give success to the work of our hands.
O give success to the work of our hands.

Word of God

Matthew 25: 31-46

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him,
he will sit upon his glorious throne,
and all the nations will be assembled before him.
And he will separate them one from another,
as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.
He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

Then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father.
Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.
For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink,
a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me,
in prison and you visited me.'

Then the righteous will answer him and say,
'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink?
When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you?
When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?'
And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you,
whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.'

Then he will say to those on his left,
'Depart from me, you accursed,
into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.
For I was hungry and you gave me no food,
I was thirsty and you gave me no drink,

a stranger and you gave me no welcome, naked and you gave me no clothing, ill and in prison, and you did not care for me.'

Then they will answer and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison, and not minister to your needs?'

He will answer them, 'Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me.'

And these will go off to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

Questions for Reflection – *After leader reads questions aloud, all pause to reflect during one minute of silence.*

- What does it mean to you that the work of justice is “an imperative of faith”?
- In what ways does the doing of justice impact our decisions regarding school personnel? What do we need to do to make that a reality?

Petitions

Leader: Christ hears and saves all who hope in him. Let us bring him our needs.

That our school community continues to act in ways that respect the dignity of each person, and values each contribution made for the common good; we pray...

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

That our children might have their needs met so that they thrive as members of the St. Margaret’s community; we pray... **R.**

That our community remembers, always, to reach out to those on the margins of society, recognizing that all are members of the Body of Christ; we pray... **R.**

*(opt.)*For what else shall we pray?

Individuals may offer intentions.

Prayer of Saint Margaret of Scotland

Leader: Let us recall our mission as together we pray:

[PRAYER IS PRINTED ON BACK OF COVER PAGE](#)

Optional, following Novena:

Share your reflections from above questions, focused on the mission value of the day. You are welcome to email ffc@stmargaretstl.org. Comments received may be shared with the community and those who search for our new staff members.

V. WE ARE LEARNERS

March 18, 2026

Hymn

Option I. Guide my Feet

Gather 864

Guide my feet while I run this race (3x)
For I don't want to run this race in vain.

Stand by me while I run this race (3x)
For I don't want to run this race in vain.

Option II. Wisdom, My Road

We Celebrate 847

1. Long before my journey's start, when in my youth I searched in my heart,
I would pray for her, wait for her, Wisdom, my road, my goal, and my star.
2. From the blossom to the seed, long has she filled my cup in need,
May I cling to her vine, taste of her wine, Wisdom, my life, my perfect design.
3. When I stretched my hands to the sky, When in despair my soul raised a cry,
I was saved by her gaze, led in her ways, Wisdom, my love, the light of my days.

Prayer

[*\(video offering here\)*](#)

Leader:

+ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Let us pray as one:

All:

Good and Gracious God,
We come before you as the community of St. Margaret of Scotland,
gathered today to pray a Novena for clarity of mind and heart
during this search for new school leadership.
We ask you, O God, for support and strength,
direction and guidance,
joy and peace
as we seek to be lifelong learners in pursuit of knowledge,
wisdom, and understanding.
Lead us the way we need to go, as our story unfolds before us.
We make this prayer, filled with hope,
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading

“Janet Erskine Stewart, RSCJ, Educator *Par Excellence*” by Janet Reberdy, RSCJ

We must kindle in the minds of children the ambition to do something more, whether it be in literature, art, science, or work for others; they must give themselves to the great Cause, by self-sacrifice to be in some sort initiated into its spirit, and identified with it, and thus to make it worthwhile for others as well as for themselves that they have lived their life on earth. There is a price to be paid for this, and they must face it; a good life cannot be a soft life, and a great deal, even of innocent pleasure, has to be given up, voluntarily, to make life worth living, if it were only as a training in *doing without*.

Response

Leader At dawn, fill us with your merciful love;
All we shall exult and rejoice all our days.

Leader Let your deed be seen by your servants,
All and your glorious power by their children.

Leader Let the favor of the LORD our God be upon us;
All Give success to the work of our hands.
O give success to the work of our hands.

Word of God

Psalm 78: 1-8

Attend, my people, to my teaching; listen to the words of my mouth.
I will open my mouth in story, drawing lessons from of old.
We have heard them, we know them; our ancestors have recited them to us.
We do not keep them from our children; we recite them to the next generation,
The praiseworthy and mighty deeds of the LORD, the wonders that he performed.

God set up a decree in Jacob, established a law in Israel:
What he commanded our ancestors, they were to teach their children;
That the next generation might come to know, children yet to be born.

In turn they were to recite them to their children,
that they too might put their trust in God,
And not forget the works of God, keeping his commandments.

They were not to be like their ancestors, a rebellious and defiant generation,
A generation whose heart was not constant, whose spirit was not faithful to God.

Questions for Reflection – *After leader reads questions aloud, all pause to reflect during one minute of silence.*

- At SMOS, how does self-sacrifice for a greater Cause fit into the life of learning?
- As we look for our next school leaders, what are the defining stories and experiences of our history to pass on?
- What does this current moment challenge us to ask of the next principal and of our parish community, for our health of teachers and staff and for our children’s learning?

Petitions

Leader: Christ hears and saves all who hope in him. Let us bring him our needs.

That our school will foster a passion for learning and the humble quest for truth in every member of the school community, we pray...

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

That our children will retain the wonder and receptivity of infancy as they advance in the discipline of educational practice toward the integration of a rich intellectual life, we pray... **R.**

That our community will love learning, not as a badge of achievement or a ticket to financial success, but as a joyful element of fulfilling our potential, unlocking the exceptional within each of us, and supporting virtuous living, we pray... **R.**

For what else shall we pray?

Individuals may offer intentions.

Prayer of Saint Margaret of Scotland

Leader: Let us recall our mission as together we pray:

[PRAYER IS PRINTED ON BACK OF COVER PAGE](#)

Optional, following Novena:

Share your reflections from above questions, focused on the mission value of the day. You are welcome to email ffc@stmargaretstl.org. Comments received may be shared with the community and those who search for our new staff members.

VI. WE ARE SERVANTS

March 19, 2026

Hymn

Option I. Make Me a Channel of Your Peace

Gather 893

Make me a channel of your peace. Where there is hatred let me bring your love,
Where there is injury, your pardon Lord, And where there is doubt true faith in You.

Make me a channel of your peace. Where there's despair in life let me bring hope,
Where there is darkness, only light, And where there's sadness, ever joy.

Oh Master, grant that I may never seek so much to be consoled as to console,
To be understood as to understand. To be loved as to love with all my soul.

Make me a channel of your peace. It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
In giving of ourselves that we receive, and in dying that we're born to eternal life

Option II. The Servant Song

Gather 831

1. Will you let me be your servant, let me be as Christ to you?
Pray that I might have the grace to let you be my servant, too.
2. We are pilgrims on a journey, we are trav'lers on the road.
We are here to help each other walk the mile and bear the load.
3. I will hold the Christ-light for you in the night time of your fear.
I will hold my hand out to you, speak the peace you long to hear.
4. I will weep when you are weeping, when you laugh I'll laugh with you.
I will share your joy and sorrow till we've seen this journey through.
5. When we sing to God in heaven, we shall find such harmony,
born of all we've known together of Christ's love and agony.
6. Will you let me be your servant, let me be as Christ to you?
Pray that I might have the grace to let you be my servant, too.

Prayer

Leader:

+ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Let us pray as one:

All:

Good and Gracious God,
We come before you as the community of St. Margaret of Scotland,
gathered today to pray a Novena for clarity of mind and heart
during this search for new school leadership.
We ask you, O God, for support and strength,
direction and guidance, joy and peace,
as we seek to be people

who serve the needs of others and confront the problems of our society.
Lead us the way we need to go, as our story unfolds before us.
We make this prayer, filled with hope,
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading

from *To Teach as Jesus Did: A Pastoral Message on Catholic Education*

The experience of Christian community leads naturally to service. Christ gives his people different gifts not only for themselves, but for others. Each must serve the other for the good of all. The Church is a servant community ...so that [people] may more fully realize their human potential and more readily enjoy life with God now and eternally.

But the Christian community should not be concerned only for itself. Christ did not intend it to live walled off from the world any more than He intended each person to work out [his or her] destiny in isolation from others. Fidelity to the will of Christ joins his community with the total human community. "Thus the mission of the Church will show its religious, and by that very fact, its supremely human character." (The Church Today, 11) No human joy, no human sorrow is a matter of indifference to the community established by Jesus. [T]his requires that ... [we] be involved in seeking solutions to a host of complex problems, such as war, poverty, racism, and environmental pollution, which undermine community within and among nations. Christians render such service by prayer and worship and also by direct participation in the cause of social reform.

It is imperative that the Church render the service of educational ministry today. Many institutions in society possess much larger material resources and thus can do far more to meet [people's] material needs. None, however, has the unique resources of vision and values entrusted to His community by Jesus Christ. To suppose that the Church's mission of service is somehow less urgent in today's world than in the past is to fail to recognize [the] enduring spiritual need [of humankind] and the unique capacity for meeting that need possessed by the Christian community.

Response

<i>Leader</i>	At dawn, fill us with your merciful love;
<i>All</i>	we shall exult and rejoice all our days.
<i>Leader</i>	Let your deed be seen by your servants,
<i>All</i>	and your glorious power by their children.
<i>Leader</i>	Let the favor of the LORD our God be upon us;
<i>All</i>	Give success to the work of our hands. O give success to the work of our hands.

During supper,
fully aware that the Father had put everything into his power
and that he had come from God and was returning to God,
[Jesus] rose from supper and took off his outer garments.
He took a towel and tied it around his waist.
Then he poured water into a basin
and began to wash the disciples' feet
and dry them with the towel around his waist.

...(W)hen he had washed their feet (and) put his garments back on
and reclined at table again, he said to them,
"Do you realize what I have done for you?
You call me 'teacher' and 'master,' and rightly so, for indeed I am.
If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet,
you ought to wash one another's feet.
I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you,
you should also do."

Questions for Reflection – *After leader reads questions aloud, all pause to reflect during one minute of silence.*

- How does St. Margaret's community challenge each of us to take on Christ-like service for the "total human community"? How might this translate for the qualities of the new school leadership we seek?
- How does the St. Margaret community consider the needs of the children of God? What characteristics should we foster in ourselves to help us meet those needs?
- How are we, as a parish and school community, and as individuals, called to be in service to our new leadership?

Petitions

Leader: Christ hears and saves all who hope in him. Let us bring him our needs.

That our school may follow the path of Christ with acts of service to those who have needs, we pray...**R.** Lord, hear our prayer.

That our children will continue to develop a desire to worship God with their hearts, minds and with their deeds so that others may be strengthened through their service, we pray... **R.**

That our community will follow the example and the command of Jesus, humbly embracing the tasks of service in the world, to become a transformative presence in our neighborhood, we pray... **R.**

For what else shall we pray?

Individuals may offer intentions.

Prayer of Saint Margaret of Scotland

Leader: Let us recall our mission as together we pray:

[PRAYER IS PRINTED ON BACK OF COVER PAGE](#)

Optional, following Novena:

Share your reflections from above questions, focused on the mission value of the day. You are welcome to email ffc@stmargaretstl.org. Comments received may be shared with the community and those who search for our new staff members.

VII. WE ARE CATHOLIC

March 20, 2026

Hymn

Sing a New Church

Gather 818

Verses

1. Summoned by the God who made us rich in our diversity
Gathered in the name of Jesus, richer still in unity.

Refrain

- Let us bring the gifts that differ and, in splendid, varied ways,
sing a new church into being, one in faith and love and praise.
2. Radiant risen from the water, robed in holiness and light,
male and female in God's image, male and female, God's delight. **Refrain**
 3. Trust the goodness of creation; trust the Spirit strong within.
Dare to dream the vision promised, sprung from seed of what has been. **Refrain**

Prayer

Leader:

+ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Let us pray as one:

All:

Good and Gracious God,
We come before you as the community of St. Margaret of Scotland,
gathered today to pray a Novena for clarity of mind and heart
during this search for new school leadership.
We ask you, O God, for support and strength,
direction and guidance,
joy and peace
as we seek to be one body, the People of God,
the hands and feet of Christ.
Lead us the way we need to go, as our story unfolds before us.
We make this prayer, filled with hope,
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading

Pope Francis, from his homily May 15, 2022

Brothers and sisters, may this message be the core of our own faith and all the ways in which we express it: "...not that we loved God but that he loved us" (1 Jn 4:10). Let us never forget this. Our abilities and our merits are not the central thing, but rather the unconditional, free and unmerited love of God. Our Christian lives begin not with doctrine and good works, but with the amazement born of realizing that we are loved, prior to any response on our part. While the world frequently tries to convince us that we are valued only for what we can produce, the Gospel reminds us of the real truth of life: we are loved. A contemporary spiritual writer put it this way: "Long before any human being saw us, we were seen by God's loving eyes. Long before anyone heard us cry or laugh, we were heard by our God, who is all ears for us. Long before any person spoke to us in this world, we were spoken to by the voice of eternal love" (H. NOUWEN, *Life of the Beloved*). He loved us first; he waits for us; he keeps loving us. This is our identity: we are God's loved ones. This is our strength: we are loved by God.

Response

[\(video offering here\)](#)

<i>Leader</i>	At dawn, fill us with your merciful love;
<i>All</i>	we shall exult and rejoice all our days.
<i>Leader</i>	Let your deed be seen by your servants,
<i>All</i>	and your glorious power by their children.
<i>Leader</i>	Let the favor of the LORD our God be upon us;
<i>All</i>	Give success to the work of our hands. O give success to the work of our hands.

Word of God

John 13: 34-35

I give you a new commandment: love one another.
As I have loved you, so you also should love one another.
This is how all will know that you are my disciples,
if you have love for one another.

Questions for Reflection – *After leader reads questions aloud, all pause to reflect during one minute of silence.*

- Does our St. Margaret's community reflect the certainty that each one of us, and those we encounter, are deeply loved by God? In what ways? And in what ways do we need renewal?
- What would it look like for love to motivate every decision in our search for new school leadership?

Petitions

Leader: Christ hears and saves all who hope in him. Let us bring him our needs.

That our school might stand as sacrament for all, a place where Christ's love is encountered and becomes us daily, we pray...

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

That our children might learn to claim their God-given gifts and use them for the good of all, we pray... **R.**

That our community might grow in the unity to which Christ calls all people who heed the Gospel call, we pray... **R.**

For what else shall we pray?

Individuals may offer intentions.

Prayer of Saint Margaret of Scotland

Leader: Let us recall our mission as together we pray:

[PRAYER IS PRINTED ON BACK OF COVER PAGE](#)

Optional, following Novena:

Share your reflections from above questions, focused on the mission value of the day. You are welcome to email ffc@stmargaretstl.org. Comments received may be shared with the community and those who search for our new staff members.

VIII. WE ARE CALLED AND GIFTED

March 21, 2026

Hymn

Simple gifts

Gather 828

'Tis the gift to be simple, 'tis the gift to be free, 'Tis the gift to come down where we ought to be;
And when we find ourselves in the place just right, 'Twill be in the valley of love and delight.

When true simplicity is gained,
To bow and to bend we shan't be ashamed; to turn, turn, will be our delight,
Till by turning, turning we come 'round right.

Prayer

Leader:

+ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Let us pray as one:

All:

Good and Gracious God,
We come before you as the community of St. Margaret of Scotland,
gathered today to pray a Novena for clarity of mind and heart
during this search for new school leadership.
We ask you, O God, for support and strength,
direction and guidance, joy and peace
as we seek to claim our gifts and hear your call.
Lead us the way we need to go, as our story unfolds before us.
We make this prayer, filled with hope,
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading

From *A Tree Full of Angels*, by Macrina Wiederkehr, OSB, p. 15

[\(video offering here\)](#)

The waters of baptism flowed over me
And no original sin was seen.
Rather, the Eye of God beheld
A tiny mass of bones and flesh
soul and spirit
infinite possibility
pure process
new, empty, and free,
free to choose
 good or evil
 light or darkness
 life or death
 grace or sin.

You are the salt of the earth.
But if salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned?
It is no longer good for anything
but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

You are the light of the world.
A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden.
Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket;
it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house.
Just so, your light must shine before others,
that they may see your good deeds
and glorify your heavenly Father.

Questions for Reflection – *After leader reads questions, all pause to reflect during one minute of silence.*

- In what ways does the SMOS community help you to recall your “hidden splendor” and “call home your scattered powers”?
- What about the St. Margaret’s community is salt and light? How are we called to share it through the ministry of school?

Petitions

Leader: Christ hears and saves all who hope in him. Let us bring him our needs.

That our school will fulfill its mission by celebrating the gifts of the past and embracing the challenges of the future, we pray...

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

That our children will fully develop their gifts and become responsible leaders and caretakers of our community, we pray... **R.**

That our community will respond creatively to the movements of the Spirit, discerning the signs of the times and interpreting them boldly, we pray... **R.**

For what else shall we pray?

Individuals may offer intentions.

Prayer of Saint Margaret of Scotland

Leader: Let us recall our mission as together we pray:

[PRAYER IS PRINTED ON BACK OF COVER PAGE](#)

Optional, following Novena:

Share your reflections from above questions, focused on the mission value of the day. You are welcome to email ffc@stmargaretstl.org. Comments received may be shared with the community and those who search for our new staff members.

IX. WE ARE THE SPIRIT OF ST. MARGARET
March 22, 2026

Hymn

Option I. St. Margaret of Scotland School Anthem

[*\(video offering here\)*](#)

Saint Marg'ret of Scotland, blessed patron of our school,
As a Christian and a ruler you let Christ be your rule.
In your good example there's a lesson we must heed:
To love our God and neighbor well in thought, word and deed.

As students and disciples we must strive to do our best
That we can share the gifts with which our lives have been blessed;
Wherever our futures lead, whatever lies in store,
May the Spirit of Saint Marg'ret be with us evermore.

Prayer

Leader:

+ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Let us pray as one:

All:

Good and Gracious God,
We come before you as the community of St. Margaret of Scotland,
gathered today to pray a Novena for clarity of mind and heart
during this search for new school leadership.
We ask you, O God, for support and strength,
direction and guidance,
joy and peace,
as we seek to embody the example of our patron saint,
becoming responsible leaders and caretakers of our community
through works of service and social justice.
Lead us the way we need to go, as our story unfolds before us.
We make this prayer, filled with hope,
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading

From *St. Margaret Queen of Scotland* by Lucy Menzies

Her people had free access to her. There was a stone called St. Margaret's Stone near Dunfermline, on which tradition says she used to sit so that anyone in trouble might come to her. Her charity was unbounded; she thought of her poorest subjects before herself. Every morning "at the first hour of the day" (though she had already spent many hours in prayer and the saying of the Psalms) nine little orphans were brought to her. "When the little ones were carried to her, she did not think it beneath her to take them upon her knee and to get their pap ready for them and this she used to put into their mouths with the spoon which she herself used . . . The Queen did this act of charity for the sake of Christ, as one of Christ's servants."

It was also the custom at Dunfermline that any destitute poor should come every morning to "the royal hall"; when they were seated round it, then "the King and Queen entered ... With the exception of the chaplains and a few attendants, no one was permitted to be present at their alms deeds. The King on one side and the Queen on the other, waited on Christ in the person of His poor."

The daily observance is an allegory of Margaret's life; service of God and her fellowmen before service of self. Dr. Skene, the eminent historian, gives this judgment on her character, "For purity of motives, for an earnest desire to benefit the people among whom her lot was cast, for a deep sense of religion and great personal piety, for the unselfish performance of whatever duty lay before her and for entire self-abnegation, she is unsurpassed." And he adds, "No more beautiful character has been recorded in history."

Much as she did for Scotland, Margaret was greater than her greatest work. Her achievements were great, but the selfless spirit in which she achieved them was greater still. As Cassian said, "The height of perfection and blessedness does not consist in the performance of wonderful works but in the purity of Love. For all these things shall pass away and be destroyed, but Love is to abide for ever."

Response

<i>Leader</i>	At dawn, fill us with your merciful love;
<i>All</i>	we shall exult and rejoice all our days.
<i>Leader</i>	Let your deed be seen by your servants,
<i>All</i>	and your glorious power by their children.
<i>Leader</i>	Let the favor of the LORD our God be upon us;
<i>All</i>	Give success to the work of our hands. O give success to the work of our hands.

They came to Capernaum and, once inside the house, he began to ask them,
"What were you arguing about on the way?"
But they remained silent.
They had been discussing among themselves on the way who was the greatest.
Then he sat down, called the Twelve, and said to them,
"If anyone wishes to be first, he shall be the last of all and the servant of all."
Taking a child he placed it in their midst,
and putting his arms around it he said to them,
"Whoever receives one child such as this in my name, receives me;
and whoever receives me, receives not me but the one who sent me."

Questions for Reflection – *After leader reads questions aloud, all pause to reflect during one minute of silence.*

- How is the Spirit of St. Margaret promoted and made manifest in our community?
What areas call for renewal?
- What are the implications for our school administration, faculty, school board, and parent groups as we consider St. Margaret's model of leadership?

Petitions

Leader: Christ hears and saves all who hope in him. Let us bring him our needs.

That our school will honor St. Margaret, teaching and living her story through each generation in word and practice, we pray...

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

That our children will develop the desire to change the world, and the confidence and skills of St. Margaret's holy leadership, we pray... **R.**

That our community will unite in witness to the Gospel, and seek the common good in all our institutional decisions..., we pray... **R.**

For what else shall we pray?

Individuals may offer intentions.

Prayer of Saint Margaret of Scotland

[*\(video offering here\)*](#)

Leader: Let us recall our mission as together we pray:

[PRAYER IS PRINTED ON BACK OF COVER PAGE](#)

Optional, following Novena:

Share your reflections from above questions, focused on the mission value of the day. You are welcome to email ffc@stmargaretstl.org. Comments received may be shared with the community and those who search for our new staff members.

Prayer of St. Margaret of Scotland

Loving God,
You call your people to holiness and create among them models of
kindness.

We thank you for the life of St. Margaret of Scotland:

*a woman of leadership and hope in a confusing world;
a wife and mother excelling in patience, dedication and love;
a teacher supported and inspired by a life of learning;
a generous friend and a loyal servant to the poor and helpless;
a model of Christian faith and constant prayerfulness.*

As we build our faith, help us to grow rich in the values of St. Margaret:
That *faith, hope and love* might inspire

our presence in the city and neighborhood,
our relationships with family and friends,
our concern for the education of the young,
our care for the poor and the weak,
our community's prayer in word and sacrament.

Bless our parish and our school;
Let it be for us a community of love and sharing,
and a source of life and grace;
Let it be a witness to our neighbors
of your life, your presence and your love.

Through Christ, Our Lord,
Amen.