

Martha Lee Kuersteiner Scholarship Fund

Scholarship amount grows! Applications for the annual Martha Lee Kuersteiner Scholarship of St. Mary's Circle are due on April 15, 2024. St. John's members who have completed at least one semester of college (or equivalent) may apply for this \$2,000 scholarship to help support their college education. Read on for information about the 2024 scholarship award, as well as how the scholarship came to be, and a rundown of some past scholarship recipients.

What is St. Mary's Circle?

This women's group was founded at St. John's in 1933 for the purposes of fellowship and to help support projects that improve parish life. While St. Mary's meets a variety of church needs, their primary project is to provide a needs-based collegiate scholarship in the spring of each year.

About Martha Lee Boone Kuersteiner

Martha Lee Boone Kuersteiner was a beloved community and civic leader in Tallahassee. She served on the vestry at St. John's and was a member of St. Mary's Circle. A claimed descendant of Daniel Boone, she was the widow of Dr. Karl O. Kuersteiner, Dean of the School of Music at Florida State University. While raising their family of eight children, Martha Lee was named "Mother of the Year" by the *Tallahassee Democrat* in 1952. She served as state president of the Junior Women's Club, and the Junior League of Tallahassee established a community achievement award in her honor. She assisted with the founding of the Kappa Kappa Gamma Sorority at FSU and served as President of the FSU University Club. She was a board member of the Florida Heritage Foundation. These are only a few of her accomplishments. To know Martha Lee was to be inspired by her desire to help others achieve success and grow in love with Christ.

History of the Scholarship

In the early 1980s, while working on his degree at Sewanee (the University of the South) a young St. John's parishioner named Everett Puri was faced with a problem. His father had become seriously ill and there was the possibility Everett would not be able to return to school. When word reached St. John's Episcopal Church, Martha Lee Kuersteiner, a close friend of the Puri family, stepped in and rallied members of St. Mary's Circle to help provide this young man the funds necessary to continue his college education.

Quite a few years later, Everett Puri repaid this gift with one of his own in the form of a cash donation from the sale of stock he owned. Puri asked that St. Mary's Circle and St. John's use this money to establish a scholarship fund for another aspiring college student who might need financial assistance. He requested that the fund be named after his loving friend, Martha Lee Kuersteiner. Everett Puri went on to graduate from college. He is now a

broker with J.P. Morgan Securities, a past Trustee of Sewanee, and he serves on the University's Board of Regents.

The initial gift from the sale of the stock resulted in approximately \$1,200. St. Mary's matched this amount to purchase a Certificate of Deposit. Through interest and other gifts and memorials to the fund, the CD steadily increased in value. The first award of \$500 was made in the spring of 1998. The award has been presented every year since 1998. In 2009, the scholarship was raised to \$750 and by 2022 the amount has increased to \$1,500. Just this year, the amount was again increased to \$2,000.

Scholarship Winners

Now in its 26th year, Shanya Singer, choir member and co-leader of the Joyful Noisemakers, was the 2022 St. Mary's scholarship recipient. She followed Neil Strayer who spent a year studying in Dublin, Ireland. The first recipient was Andy Ashler who returned to active parish life at St. John's and served on the vestry. Others include Cecilia Graham Varnum, daughter of Jim Graham and granddaughter of the Rev. Lee and Betty Graham; Michel Lester Gregory and Mary Hall Lester Chambers, daughters of Trilly Lester; Cecelia Zucconi-Evans, longtime choir member; Fraleigh Krause, daughter of Robin Krause; Marissa Hall, who is now our Assistant Choir Director; plus, Tom and Sam Doxsee and Cassie LaJeunesse.

2024 Scholarship Eligibility

Applications are currently being accepted for the 2024 Martha Lee Kuersteiner Scholarship, a \$2,000 need- and merit- based award. Members of St. John's who have successfully completed at least one semester (or equivalent) of college and are known to have participated in worship are eligible to apply. To be considered for the scholarship, students must share a completed application, a current college transcript, a written essay, and two letters of recommendation, one of which must be from the church rector. ***Completed application packets must be emailed in pdf format or dropped off at the church office by April 15, 2024.***

Applications are also available in the church office. Please contact Marianne Bryant with any questions at mariannebryant@gmail.com or (850) 508-2964.

SAINT MARY'S CIRCLE
SAINT JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Martha Lee Kuersteiner Scholarship Application

Your completed application form, with required enclosures, must be received by April 15, 2024. The grant awarded will be announced in May 2024. This year's grant is \$2,000.

Your Name: _____	Parents' Names _____
Your Address: _____ _____	Parents' Address (if different) _____ _____
Your Marital Status: _____ Number of Children: _____	Number of Siblings: _____
High School: _____ City/State _____ Graduation: _____ HS GPA _____ College: _____ Major: _____ Proposed Graduation: _____ College GPA _____	
Please attach a copy of your college transcript to date.	
Are you a member of Saint John's? _____ How long have you attended? _____ If fewer than five years, where did you previously attend? _____	
Rector's Name: _____	
List any other scholarships to which you have applied:	Please list any scholarships you have received:
Recommended: _____	
Rector's Signature	Church
On Separate Sheet answer the following: (1) What are your plans following college? (2) Briefly describe your need for this scholarship. (3) If you receive this scholarship, what impact do you perceive it will have on your remaining time in college? (4) Please attach an essay (maximum 300 words), typed, double-spaced, describing the role the Church has played in your life, thus far, and the role you anticipate for it in the future.	
We also request two letters of reference and a recent picture of yourself. This application, transcript, essay, letters of reference and picture must be sent to: St. Mary's Circle, c/o Saint John's Episcopal Church, 211 North Monroe Street, Tallahassee, FL 32301 Or emailed to MarianneBryant@gmail.com in pdf format.	