

The Bells of St. Mary's

April Edition



St. Mary's
EPISCOPAL CHURCH
The Mustard Seed Church

The mission of St. Mary's is to unite all people into a relationship with God and each other in Christ.



When friends or family call, I tell them that my mother and I are “hunkered down.” That seems to describe “sheltering in place” or “stay at home orders” or even “self-quarantine.”

But the more I think about it, “hunkered down” sounds a little paranoid. Yes, we are taking precautions and taking this Covid-19 bug very seriously. I am staying at home, not just because the County Judge finally ordered us to do so, but I am staying at home for my protection, my mother’s protection, and to protect all those I encounter as well. I am staying home not out of fear, but out of respect, respect and love for my neighbors. Respect and love for the thousands of medical personnel I had the privilege to know in my twenty-two-year career in health care who are now risking their health and their lives to care for those sick with this coronavirus. Respect and love for God whose son battled the devil in the wilderness by quoting Deuteronomy 6:16, “Do not put the Lord your God to the test.” (Matthew 4:1-10, NRSV) I am using all the recommended hygiene precautions for I am not going to do anything to test God and God’s love for me!

It seems we are being called to live more deeply into the paschal mystery I have preached and taught about here at St. Mary’s. The paschal mystery is the pattern of Jesus’ life...suffering, death, and resurrection. That was the movement of Jesus of Nazareth’s life. But we also see it in our own lives as well. Perhaps it was suffering and death of a dream for our life, ultimately leading us into transformation, resurrection, new life. Maybe it was a loss of a friend or family member that caused us to suffer and something inside us to die. But new life eventually began, transformation took place. We move through the cycle of the paschal mystery all of our lives until that day we experience our final death and our rising to new life in the heavenly kingdom of God.

As we attempt to walk through the church’s annual remembrance of the final days Jesus lived here on this earth, it will be different this year. Instead of getting to our regular pew, waving our palm fronds, watching as the Altar Guild strips the altar bare on Thursday, kneeling for the Solemn Collects on Good Friday, and having that glorious day on Easter morning...we will be sheltering in place, obeying stay at home orders. It will be up to each one of us to walk the way of Jesus, remembering his final days on earth, his final meal with his friends, his surrendering all of who he was to the cross and entering into the darkness of the tomb. There will be services conducted on Facebook Live, but each of us needs to

confront our loss, our suffering...all the while knowing that resurrection and new life is just around the corner.

Yes, we are living the paschal mystery this year. Join me when you can at our services online during Holy Week. Pray for our world, our country, our state, and our community. Pray for one another. Call and support one another. And remember, resurrection happens. It always does.

Blessings,



The Mustard Seed Church Sowing Seeds in the Community...

A Way to Give Back: Blessings in a Backpack

Thank you to all who were able to donate to this project before we had to stay at home for church. The items donated were given to West Columbia Elementary School and will be distributed to their students during their food distribution on Mondays and Wednesdays. They are very appreciative of the help we have provided.

Camp Allen

Besides summer camp, there are lots of other programs and meetings held at Camp Allen throughout the year. Our youth, children, and adults have experienced the beauty of site as well as the friendliness of its staff and the delicious variety of the meals served.

Here is part of a message we received by email from Camp Allen:

“Some have asked how they can help support Camp Allen. With our 2020 camp scholarships funded, our greatest need is for our valued staff. We have established The Grace Fund [link](#) on our website for donations to assist our 61 loyal hourly staff in housekeeping, food services, and groundskeeping that will be short of their normal hours with no guests present.

We are constantly praying for our staff, our leaders, our government, our world, and you! Now more than ever, we are so grateful for the passion and dedication of our board, our clients, and our donors who continue to support our mission. We hope you, your families', and your loved ones remain safe and in good health during this challenging time.”

Their website is campallen.org.



Prayer List

The Prayer List for St. Mary's will be emailed weekly. If you need anyone added, email the church at stmaryswc@centurylink.net. If possible, please make sure they are aware you have requested they be added to our list. You can also email the church if someone is no longer in need of prayers for healing.

Please include those needing healing, those in the military, and those celebrating birthdays and anniversaries in your prayers.

St. Mary's PayPal

The business side of St. Mary's is doing well. We are able to keep up with our phone messages, mail, bills, paperwork, etc. Our main concern is our church family and their well-being as well as West Columbia, the surrounding communities, and our nation.

There has been some concern about pledges and offerings to the church. As Rev. Sharron indicated in one of her Coronavirus messages, family comes first, and your main concern should be your family's needs. If, however, you do want to pay part or all of your monthly pledge or make a donation to St. Mary's, there is a new way it can be done.

Thanks to Gwynne Olson we have a PayPal account. By going to our webpage, www.stmaryswestcolumbia.com, and clicking on the "GIVE" tab at the top under "St. Mary's Episcopal Church", you can use your credit card to make a donation. Of course, donations and pledges can also be mailed to the church's post office box (PO Box 786, West Columbia, 77486) or placed in the mail slot on the Rector's Office door at the church.

Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, *coming down from the Father of lights... (James 1:17)*



Good Friday Offering

The Good Friday Offering is an initiative of the Office of the Presiding Bishop which dates to 1922 when in the aftermath of World War I, the Episcopal Church sought to create new relationships with and among the Christians of the Middle East. From these initial efforts which focused on a combination of relief work and the improvement of ecumenical and Anglican relations, the Good Friday Offering was created. The first church-wide offering was received in 1923. (Office of Global Partnerships)

In the letter from The Most Reverend Michael B. Curry that was in the March newsletter, he wrote "The Good Friday Offering provides hope and opportunity for students, patients, needy families and more in the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East. We do make a difference. This is important. I have witnessed this Jesus-inspired compassion and commitment at work with my own eyes."

Since we will not be in church on Good Friday, donations to the Good Friday Offerings can be mailed to the church, donated through our PayPal account on the website, or put in the mail slot on the Rector's Office door at the church. Make sure you indicate your donation is for the Good Friday Offering.



News from the Vestry

Gwynne Olson, Clerk

The vestry met Sunday, March 22, 2020.

Rector Report: The Reverend Sharron Cox

Rev. Sharron stated the draft of the Reboot Grant Application has been written. The due date has been extended from March 27 to April 1, 2020 due to COVID-19. She had a zoom call with Bishop Ryan and the earliest face-to-face Worship Service has been delayed to May 10, 2020. Rev. Sharron is looking for innovative ways to have Holy Week Services. We have upped our monthly community assistance amount to \$1500 beginning in April and until further notice to assist those in need. One idea was to obtain \$100 HEB gift cards to give out to those in need.

Senior Warden's Report: Marvin Miller

Marvin did not have anything to report.

Junior Warden's Report: Charlotte Blount

Charlotte stated a light on the outside of the church has been replaced for a capital expenditure of approximately \$1,400. She also stated that now is a good time to renovate the restrooms.

A copy of the vestry minutes will be placed on the bulletin board in the Parish Hall once approved at the April meeting. The next Vestry meeting is Sunday, April 19th at 11:00 a.m.



Camp Allen Events

Although all activities for April and possibly all of May are suspended, there is one major activity planned for 2021.

"Camp Allen is celebrating its 100th year-Centennial milestone in 2021. We hope you will make plans well in advance to attend the official celebration at camp on May 1st 2021." (Camp Allen)

Message from Marvin Miller

ARE YOU UP TO IT? The 7 Ups...

1. **Wake Up!!** - Decide to have a good day.

"This is the day the Lord hath made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." - Psalms 118:24

2. **Dress Up!!** - The best way to dress up is to put on a smile. A smile is an inexpensive way to improve your looks.

"The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." - I Samuel 16:7

3. **Shut Up!!** - Say nice things and learn to listen. God gave us two ears and one mouth, so He must have meant for us to do twice as much listening as talking.

"He who guards his lips guards his soul." - Proverbs 13:3

4. **Stand Up!!** - . . . for what you believe in. Stand for something or you will fall for anything.

"Let us not be weary in doing good; for at the proper time, we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good..." - Galatians 6:9-10

5. **Look Up!!** - . . . to the Lord.

"I can do everything through Christ who strengthens me". - Philippians 4:13

6. **Reach Up!!** - . . . for something higher.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not unto your own understanding.

In all your ways, acknowledge Him, and He will direct your path." - Proverbs 3:5-6

7. **Lift Up!!** - . . . your Prayers.

"Do not worry about anything; instead PRAY ABOUT EVERYTHING."

- Philippians 4:6



Community Assistance

In March, one family was helped with groceries.

If you know of anyone needing assistance, please contact Tracy Lane, Jackie Walker, or Karen Logue.

Colleen Matocha passed her Special Education Certification Test. She is now a certified special education teacher for grades pre-k through 12th grade.

Haley Cantrell earned 1st place in the 200 at the El Campo High School Track Meet.

Braylee Schill earned 1st place in the 2400 and 2nd place in the 800 representing West Brazos Junior High at their second track meet.

Brayze Schill finished 6th in the world in Bareback at the American/Jr. National Finals Rodeo qualifier held in Arlington.

Congratulations **NICE GOING!**
GREAT! Way to Go!
Yea! **FELICITATIONS**
CHEERS Take A **BEST**
BOW! **WISHES!**



Don't Forget

For those that are working at home and having to use their printer, remember to keep your empty print cartridges for St. Mary's. All brands and types are welcomed. We have been turning in 10 cartridges a month, earning a \$20 credit. This greatly helps defray the cost of our office supplies.

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

Special thanks and gratitude to:

- The Reverend Sharron Cox for her spiritual guidance and leadership during this difficult time and for continuing worship outside the four walls of St. Mary's.
- Gwynne Olson for setting up PayPal.
- Colleen Matocha, Gwynne Olson, and Shyanne Roddy for helping with our technology needs.
- The Reverend Sharron Cox, Ally Lane, Piper Roddy, Haley Cantrell, Reesie Cantrell, Brayze Schill, Braylee Schill, Colleen Matocha, and Gwynne Olson for participating in the Palm Sunday reading.
- Shyanne Roddy for piecing all the parts of the Palm Sunday reading together.
- Mary Stewart and Ed and Karen Logue for providing the food for hospitality during the month of March.

You are awesome, and St. Mary's greatly appreciates all you did.

Prayer Request

If you or someone you know is in need of prayers, please notify the office by email or phone. The prayer list will be updated each month, so if prayers need to continue for an individual person please fill out a new card or let Dani know. Prayers for the sick and those in need are the joyful duty of the Christian community. Help us keep our parish prayer list current by notifying us of those in need of prayer and when those listed are no longer in need.

Dates to Remember

Sundays: Morning Prayer on St. Mary's
Facebook Live at 9:00 a.m.

Sundays: Lenten Study on Zoom at 10:00
a.m.

Wednesdays: Compline on St. Mary's
Facebook Live at 8:00 p.m.

April 12th: Brotherhood Zoom Internet
Meeting at 7:30 a.m.

April 19th: Vestry Meeting at 11:00 a.m.

April Birthdays

Saren Case - April 9

Scout Case - April 9

Kip Olson - April 20

March Anniversaries

Dorothy and Dick McGuire - April 4

Shyanne and Wade Roddy - April 24

St. Mary's Leadership

Rector

The Reverend Sharron Cox

Vestry

Sr. Warden: Marvin Miller

Jr. Warden: Charlotte Blount

Clerk: Gwynne Olson

St. Mary's Episcopal Church, corner of 16th and Clay Street, West Columbia
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The Bells of St. Mary's is a monthly newsletter for members and friends of St Mary's Episcopal Church. Submissions for publication should be sent to the church office on or before the 25th of the month prior to the publication.