



## The Bells of St. Mary's

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And serve each other according to the gift each person has received, as good managers of God's diverse gifts. 1 Peter 4:10

The theme for Stewardship this year is Journey to Generosity. It is not just meaning the giving generously of our treasure, but also of our time and talent.

Our in-gathering of the pledge cards will be Sunday, December 3rd. Hopefully you have had a chance to pray and contemplate before filling out your card. The vestry would love to have 100 percent response. Remember, no amount is too small and what you pledge is not set in stone. No one hounds you if you are unable to give the amount indicated or serve with your time and talent. Things can change during the year. If your situation changes, just let the Dani know, so the books and worship leaders can be adjusted.

A wooden offering plate will be passed during the offertory for the cards and Father Benson will say a special blessing over them. If you have already turned in your card, it will be in the offering plate. Pledge cards will of course be accepted after December 3rd.



The word Advent means “coming.” It is a time to slow down, be quiet and meditate about the real meaning of Christmas. These four weeks before Christmas are a time to prepare our hearts and our lives as we wait for the coming of Jesus. We focus on the promise that God made to his people and how that promise was fulfilled in Jesus. Advent is also the beginning of the liturgical year. The season begins on the fourth

Sunday before Christmas and ends on the day before Christmas. It may be a time for new beginning for us as Christians.

In antiquity, purple dye was very expensive, so purple came to signify wealth, power and royalty. Therefore, purple is the color for the season of Advent, which celebrates the coming of the King. Many churches use blue in Advent which signifies hopeful expectation and is traditionally associated with the Virgin Mary.

At the entrance to the church there are Advent calendars but not the traditional ones where you open a door for each day in December. These calendars are designed to help you reflect on the meaning of Advent and the preparation of the coming of Christ in our lives. There are three different calendars to choose from as well as a sheet with ideas on how to use the calendar.

Also you can be part of the Anglican Communion’s Global Advent Calendar. It’s an innovative way to engage in the season of Advent with people all over the world. Simply respond to the daily meditation emailed to you with images and prayers that speak to your heart. Your images and prayers will appear in the Advent Calendar with others from around the world. Join us as we anticipate the coming of Christ, the fulfillment of our deepest longings. Find out more by going to [www.adventword.org](http://www.adventword.org).



## Traveling Mary and Joseph

Just as the Mary and Joseph of old traveled a great distance to reach Bethlehem, our Mary and Joseph will be traveling before arriving at church on Christmas Eve. The Mary and Joseph statues of our Nativity will be visiting the homes of our parishioners. If you would like for them to stay with you, please sign your name to the sheet at the entrance of the church or contact the church office (979-345-3456) and leave a message. Mary and Joseph will stay at your house one or two days, and then you pass them on to the next family. The family that has them Christmas Eve will bring them to the Christmas Eve service and place them in the stable before the service begins. How long each family keeps Mary and Joseph will be determined by the number of families that signs up. Mary and Joseph may not have been welcomed at the inn in Bethlehem, but they are welcomed in the homes of St. Mary's family.



## Christmas Eve Service

Our Christmas Eve service will begin at 8:00 pm with Father Jim Morgan as our celebrant. The service will include a presentation by our youth. Following the service, the vestry will provide refreshments in the parish hall. If you need a ride to the service, please leave a message at the church (345-3456) or contact Karen or Dani. Come join us as we celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

If you would like to donate to the Christmas flower fund, please place your donation in the offering plate before Dec. 21st and mark it Christmas flowers.



## Parish Supper

Our Parish Dinner is gaining popularity and we hope you will join us for our next gathering. Heather and David Mikel will be preparing Chicken Spaghetti and garlic bread for everyone to enjoy. Bring a side dish, salad or dessert to share and plan on attending Wednesday, December 13th at 5:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall. We will also be decorating the Christmas tree in the parish hall and singing Christmas Carols. See you there!!!



## Church Christmas Tree

In the parish hall, there is a Christmas tree which we will decorate on Wednesday, December 13th. This is early for Episcopalians, since usually decorating the tree is not done until the fourth Sunday of Advent. This year the 4th Sunday is also Christmas Eve, so it was decided to combine the tree decorating with our Parish Dinner and include the singing of Christmas Carols.

Just like last year, we are asking families to bring one or more ornaments from their home, so that your family Christmas will be part of our church family Christmas. You don't need to buy any ornaments. Just bring those extra ornaments that won't fit on your tree anymore. It would also be great if your children want to make an ornament. The ornaments from last year will be added to the tree as well. If you are not here on December 13th, bring your ornaments on Christmas Eve and add them to the tree. The tree will stay up until Epiphany, which is 12 days after Christmas.



## TRIP TO BROOKWOOD

December wouldn't be complete without a trip to the Brookwood Community. Once again, we will travel to Brookwood for lunch and shopping. If you weren't able to join the group last December or before Easter, make plans to join us on Thursday, December 21st. We will meet at the church at 9 am and should return by 3 pm. If you have not already RSVP'd with Dani, please let her know as soon as possible so she can contact Brookwood.



## Conventions

During 2018, we have the opportunity to attend two conventions, the Diocesan Convention in Waco and the General Convention in Austin. The Diocesan Convention for the Diocese of Texas will be held on February 15 - 18. St. Mary's will be sending two delegates to the convention. If you are interested in attending, please let a vestry member know. The delegates will be selected at our annual meeting on Sunday, January 26th.

From June 29th to July 13th, the Episcopal General Convention will be held and attended by Episcopalians from across the United States. This convention is held every three years with the last one taking place in Utah. Presiding Bishop Michael Curry will be speaking. All churches throughout Texas are asked to send volunteers to help with this very special event. You can find out more information by going to [www.facebook.com/general.convention.2018.volunteers](http://www.facebook.com/general.convention.2018.volunteers). Registration for volunteers opens The Feast of the Epiphany, January 6th.



## Donations for the Military

In our parish hall there is a container by the door for donations to the West of the Brazos Military Support Group. Rees Sweeny, a member of our congregation, is involved in this organization. This organization supports all military branches and sends packages throughout the year to our service personnel overseas.

Each month we will list specific items to purchase. The items for November are: paperback books, small body and hand lotion, small sewing kits, adult coloring books and colors, and toilet paper . They will also accept cash donations.

You can leave the items in the container at church and Rees will pick them up. This an ongoing outreach program for our church.



## Community Assistance

St. Mary's will be mailing Walmart Gift Cards to the families impacted by the floodwaters of Hurricane Harvey next week. Please continue to keep our church family members who were affected by the floodwaters in your prayers as well as those in our community who sustained damage. For many families, the cleanup is still an ongoing process and will continue to be burdensome for weeks to come.

The vestry approved the sending of a Walmart gift card to the ministry of Judy Wright and Mary Fredericksen who are helping the flood victims in a small community in Rosharon called "Little Cambodia". The card will be used to help purchase Christmas gifts for the children in the community.

If you know of anyone in need, please contact Karen or Tracy.



## News from the Vestry

The vestry met Sunday, November 26th after the Sunday service.

### *Senior Warden's Report: Karen Logue*

City Hall was finally able to provide the list of names of the citizens of West Columbia who had major damage due to Hurricane Harvey and the flooding that followed. Gift cards and a note from St. Mary's will be sent out in the next few weeks. The funds were provided by donations and the Community Assistance fund. The Search Committee continues to meet and is making progress. The Nominating Committee is compiling a list of nominees for the vestry.

### *Junior Warden's Report: Dan Roddy*

Lights are being replaced or fixed throughout the church, parish hall, and outside area. Areas inside the church need painting. Dan will get an estimate of the cost.

**Average Daily Attendance: Dani Mikel**  
The average Sunday attendance for October was 31.

### ***Old Business***

The revised funeral pamphlet was approved with minor corrections.

### ***New Business***

Church security was discussed. Marvin will contact local law enforcement for recommendations. The next monthly Parish Dinner was set for December 13th at 5 pm. The Annual Diocesan Convention in Waco was discussed and the vestry voted to send two delegates. A donation to "Little Cambodia" was approved. The Expense portion of the budget was discussed. The Income portion will be discussed at the next vestry meeting. The use of memorial funds to purchase a Virgin Mary statue for Mary's Garden was discussed. Karen will find out the cost before a decision is made.

The next vestry meeting will be Sunday, December 17th



## **Bible Study**

The Thursday evening Bible Study of the Book of Acts will be ending soon. We plan to resume our study in January with another book from the New Testament. Please think about joining us in January for study and fellowship. We meet at 6pm in the Fellowship Hall.

### **Ten Reasons to Read the Bible**

- 1. Reading the Bible shows us God's character.**
- 2. Reading the Bible teaches us to imitate God.**
- 3. Reading the Bible helps us discover our next step.**
- 4. Reading the Bible keeps us from sin.**
- 5. Reading the Bible helps us to renew our minds so we can know God's will.**
- 6. Reading the Bible allows us to be certain of what God said. The Bible is our final authority.**
- 7. Reading the Bible allows us to receive the desires of our heart.**
- 8. Reading the Bible is how we learn about the gospel.**
- 9. Reading the Bible gives us courage.**
- 10. Reading the Bible helps us to be fruitful.**



# Music and Hymns

The church has purchased a copyright license to over 300,000 hymns, which means we are not limited to the hymns in The Hymnal or Come Celebrate. If you know a hymn you would like included in the worship service, give the name to Dani. She will check to see if it is on the copyright list and try to get a copy of it to print for Kathy and the congregation. Please try to make it a hymn others would know or you may be singing a solo. Let's make a joyful noise unto the Lord.

## Message from Marvin Miller

### Waiting

(From the book, Our Daily Bread)

**Blessed are those who wait for Him --- Isaiah 30:18**

Autumn is hunting season here in Michigan. For a few weeks every year, licensed hunters are allowed to go out into the woods and hunt for various species of wildlife. Some hunters build elaborate tree stands high above the ground where they sit quietly for hours waiting for a deer to wander within rifle range.

When I think of hunters so patient when it comes to waiting for deer, I think of how impatient we can be when it comes to waiting for God. We often equate "wait" with "waste". If we're waiting for something (or someone), we think we are doing nothing, which, in accomplishment-crazed culture, seems like a waste of time.



But waiting serves many purposes. In particular, it proves our faith. Those whose faith is weak are often the first to give up in waiting, while those with the strongest faith are willing to wait indefinitely.

When we reach the Christmas story in Luke 2, we learn of two people who proved their faith by their willingness to wait. Simon and Anna waited long, but their time wasn't wasted: it put them in a place where they could witness the coming of Messiah (vv.22-38).

Not receiving an immediate answer to prayer is no reason to give up faith.

Not ours to know the reason why  
Unanswered is our prayer,  
But ours to wait for God's own time  
To lift the cross we bear

Waiting for God is never a waste of time.



## What Do They Mean

In the Episcopal Church there are many specific terms. The **thingamajig** that the ushers carry to the altar and give the acolytes has a name as does the **pretty cover on the altar** or the **rope** around the acolyte's waist. Here is a list of terms in ordinary use in the Episcopal Church. Each month, new terms will be presented. The list is neither exhaustive nor definitive. See how many of these words you know.

**Christening:** a popular term for Baptism

**Ciborium:** a covered chalice or receptacle for holding the Hosts

**Collect:** a brief prayer that "collects" or sums up the petitions of the people

**The Confession:** a confession and repentance to God for wrongdoing and a request for forgiveness



Reesie Cantrell received the Reward of Excellence for 6th Grade at West Columbia Elementary.

Ben Anderson has a wonderful job at O'Riley's while a senior at Columbia High School.

Abigail Roddy and her level one cheer team placed first at the Region Cheer Competition.

Aaron Mikel and the Sweeny Bulldogs have won their last two playoff games and have advanced to the regional competition.

Piper Roddy and her level two cheer team won first place at the Region Cheer Competition.



## Camp Allen Events

There are many events that take place at Camp Allen during the year. When the church office receives information about an event, it will be posted on the bulletin board. If you are interested in something posted, let Dani know and she will get you more information.

### Upcoming Events

December 6 - Holiday Steak Dinner

December 8 - 10 - Holiday in the Pines

There are several items that we would like to have at St. Mary's. If you would like to donate any of these items, you can bring them by the church office or leave them in the parish hall.



1. couch and/or love seat for the parish hall to replace the old ones that are there and in poor shape
2. paint brushes of various sizes to paint and decorate the walls in the Jr. High Christian Formation room
3. lab boards for the Jr. High Christian Formation
4. Bean bag chairs for the Jr. High Christian Formation room

Thank you to the Davidson family for photo albums and containers.

## A Great Big Thank You

Thank you to Dan, Marvin, Karen, Ed, AJ, and Theata for providing meals for our Wednesday night Christian Formation classes. If you would like to provide a meal, please get with Dani. We will need meals starting in January.

## Christian One Liners

Thank you, Doris

- Don't put a question mark where God put a period.
- Forbidden fruits create many jams.
- God grades on the cross, not the curve.



# Don't Forget

Please check the calendar at the entrance to the church and sign up to provide food for Hospitality after church. We still have openings in November and the rest of the months after that.

Remember to look at the bulletin board in the Parish Hall. New information, cards, news clippings, etc. are added frequently.

The "Take a Book, Share a Book" bookcase is located in the Parish Hall. If you see a book or tape you like, take it. If you have books you would like to donate, add them to the bookcase.

## Dates to Remember

December 3 - Reverend Benson, Ingathering and Blessing of the Pledge cards

December 6 - Christian Formation (5:00pm - 6:30)

December 7 - Bible Study (6:30 pm)

December 10 - Reverend O'Brien

December 13 - Parish Dinner and decorating the Christmas tree

December 14 - Bible Study (6:00 pm)

December 17 - Reverend Brown Vestry Meeting

December 21 - Ladies' trip to Brookwood (9:00 am)

December 24 - Reverend O'Brien (9am)

December 24 - Reverend Morgan Christmas Eve Service - 8:00 pm - hospitality following

December 31 - Reverend Ferguson

## December Birthdays

Trace Roddy - December 6

Travis Weisinger - December 6

George Grosvenor - December 7

Adam Schill - December 10

31

Jennifer Schill - December 12

Daniel Mikel - December 19

Jennifer Landreneau - December 21

Dani Mikel - December 22

Ben Anderson - December 25

Kirby Rapstein - December 31

## December Anniversaries

Tommy and Holly Cantrell - December 2

Clint and Colleen Matocha - Decembe 19

Brian and Tracy Lane - December 29

## Vestry Members

### Changes to the Directory

Sr.Warden Karen Logue  
([kklogue@msn.com](mailto:kklogue@msn.com))

Jr. Warden Dan Roddy  
([dkroddy@earthlink.net](mailto:dkroddy@earthlink.net))

Clerk Marvin Miller  
([mgm inspections@earthlink.net](mailto:mgm inspections@earthlink.net))

Treasurer Dani Mikel  
([danimikel87@yahoo.com](mailto:danimikel87@yahoo.com))

Church ([stmaryswc@centurylink.net](mailto:stmaryswc@centurylink.net))

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.