

The Bells of St. Mary's - December 2019



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.



Preparation is one of the major themes of the Advent season. Sure, most of us are spending our time over the next four weeks getting prepared for Christmas by purchasing gifts, decorating our homes inside and out, and cooking (and eating!) delicious treats that are usually only made this time of year.

But the preparation we speak of that is part of Advent is less about “doing” things and more about being attentive to the birth of Christ anew in our hearts. It is about preparing the way of the Lord, how the prophet Isaiah foretold the preparations needed for the coming of the Lord by carving out roads in the desert, raising the low places and tearing down the mountains, making level the rough places and the uneven places. In other words, we are to make the way easy to travel, as if the Lord couldn't leap over mountains or make his way through the rocky terrain!

How do we make the path into our hearts more open for God to enter? That's the kind of preparation we are encouraged to do during the season of Advent. To seek to balance the busyness of this season with reflection and gratitude for the Christ who enters yet has never left. To be watchful for God's presence throughout our day in all that we do and say. To follow Mary's lead by saying “Yes” to the Divine Spirit's desire to enter our lives in a new way.

If you did not pick up a copy during our Advent Adventures, there are daily Advent spiritual practices photocopied and stacked on the table in the Parish Hall. Following these simple practices each day could be a way to prepare the way of the Lord, to make a place ready in your hearts for the Holy One of God, during these busy but sacred days!

Blessings,

The Mustard Seed Church

Sowing Seeds in the Community...

Angel Tree

What started as a fully decorated tree at our November Parish Dinner, is now bare, for all the angels and grocery bags have been taken. If you are participating in the Angel Tree Project remember to bring the gifts or food on or before 10:00 am Saturday, December 14th. Cash donations can also be placed in the envelopes in the Parish Hall to help with additional items. Thank you for making this Christmas special for the five families.

Honoring Our Military Personnel

The following "thank you" message was sent by Brandon Davidson, one of the military personnel who received a gift card and messages from St. Mary's.

Dear St. Mary's Episcopal Church,

Thank you for your generous gift and your continued support. It is an honor to serve our great nation. Thank you again for keeping my family and I in your thoughts and prayers. May God Bless the Church Family at St. Mary's Episcopal Church.

*Love,
Brandon Davidson*

Advent Illustrated

Come explore the art of Bible journaling with the guidance of Shyanne Roddy. No materials are needed. Just bring your Bible and enjoy an artful Advent Bible study. The group will meet in the Parish Hall at 5:30 pm on the following Thursdays: December 5th, December 12th, December 19th, and January 2nd.



December Parish Dinner

Our last Parish Dinner was wonderful and so well attended. Let's do it again on Wednesday, December 18th at 5:30 pm. Shyanne Roddy will be making chicken poblano soup as the main dish. There is a sign-up sheet in the Parish Hall for sides, drinks, and desserts. After dinner, we will decorate the Christmas tree and sing Christmas carols. Gather your family and friends and join us for this festive occasion.

Christmas Eve Service

On Christmas Eve, the children and youth will present the Christmas Pageant at 6:00 pm. The Holy Eucharist service will follow at 6:30 pm. Come join us as we celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.



Poinsettias

The beautiful poinsettias that will adorn the church during the Christmas Eve service, will be picked up from Brookwood on Friday, December 20th. If you would like to make a donation for the Christmas poinsettias, there are envelopes available in the narthex. You can place your donation in the collection plate or send it to the office. Please have all donations in by December 19th.



News from the Vestry

Gwynne Olson, Clerk

The vestry met Monday, November 18, 2019.

Rector Report: The Reverend Sharron Cox

Rev. Sharron stated she has been working on the preliminary budget for 2020. Regarding the Diocesan Council, Rev. Sharron stated that St. Mary's can have up to four representatives plus herself, making for a total of five representatives. She encourages St. Mary's to send the maximum of four representatives. It is a Friday night through a Saturday afternoon, February 7-8, 2020. Rev. Sharron also stated that during the KNG Ranch Meeting, the Hospital Trustees requested more time for discussion regarding the possibility of a sale of the Ranch. The next meeting is scheduled for January 16, 2020.

Senior Warden's Report: Charlotte Blount

Charlotte stated that this year's Stewardship Campaign is over. She is looking forward to Christmas.

Junior Warden's Report: Andrea Anderson

Andrea stated that all projects have been completed. Rev. Sharron stated that Dan Roddy suggested that we stage future construction projects making the Parish Hall restrooms the first project. The next projects will be the Narthex followed by paving the parking lot.

A copy of the vestry minutes will be placed on the bulletin board in the Parish Hall once approved at the December meeting.



Traveling Mary and Joseph

Mary and Joseph have begun their travels. If they visit your home, remember to take a picture or two, and send them to the church at stmaryswc@centurylink.net. Follow their travels by checking out St. Mary's Facebook page. Join us for the Christmas Eve service, when they will arrive at St. Mary's.

Vacation Time

Rev. Sharron will be on vacation from December 25th to January 1st. The Reverend Virginia Brown will be returning as our celebrant on Dec. 29th. The office will be closed December 24th through December 26th.

Message from Marvin Miller

Grieving from A to Z

From the book "Our Daily Bread"

Though He causes grief, yet He will show compassion.
LAMENTATIONS 3:32

Jerusalem was engulfed in flames, and the prophet Jeremiah wept. His prediction of divine judgement had largely gone unheeded. Now his terrible prophecy had come to pass with horrifying vividness. The short book of Lamentations records the prophet's grieving process over the destruction of Jerusalem.

Jeremiah organized the book around the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet, using a technique of alphabetic acrostics to aid the reader in memorizing the passages more easily. But using this technique also shows that he didn't cut short his grieving process. He took deliberate and intentional time to reflect upon and even to write down his heartbreak. You might say he was learning to grieve from A to Z.

In the midst of his grief, the comfort of God surfaced. Reminders of God's sovereignty and goodness gave the prophet hope as he faced the future: "The Lore will not cast off forever. Though He causes grief, yet He will show compassion according to the multitude of His mercies" (Lamentations 3:31-32).

If you've recently experienced a painful loss, remember to take adequate time to grieve and to reflect upon God's goodness. Then you will be able to experience His comfort and hope for the future.

To experience God's comfort
While you're suffering with grief,
Try to focus on God's goodness,
And He'll bring your heart relief.

God allows sorrow and tears today to open our hearts to the joys of tomorrow



Community Assistance

In November, there were three families helped. Funds were given to provide Thanksgiving dinner for one family, pay the electric bill for another family, and pay the water bill for the third family. Donations were also made to Columbia United Methodist Church for their Thanksgiving Basket Program.

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



Abigail Roddy was named Student of the Month for 2nd Grade at West Columbia Elementary School. She also won first place in the Telcoms Fire Prevention Art Contest.



Camp Allen Events

Holiday in the Pines (December 13-15, 2019) - Join us for a fun-filled family weekend at Camp Allen. Packages include two nights of hotel style lodging, six buffet meals, and camp activities for the whole family.

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.



Don't Forget

Bring your empty ink cartridges to the Parish Hall for recycling. Through Office Depot's Ink Cartridge Recycle Program, we can turn in up to 10 used cartridges each month for a credit of \$2 per cartridge. All brands and types are welcomed. This will help defray the cost of our office supplies.

Please check the table when entering the Parish Hall. Important information can be found there.

The bulletin board in the Parish Hall contains information, cards, news clippings, etc. that are frequently updated.

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.

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

Special thanks and gratitude to:

- all involved in making Advent Adventures possible. Shyanne Roddy, Colleen Matocha, Jackie Walker, Gwynne Olson, and Dani Mikel organized the event. Sue Davidson provided the cookies. Mary Stewart cut out the worship cards. Shyanne Roddy, Madeline Roddy, Abigail Roddy, Trace Roddy, Piper Roddy, Colleen Matocha, and Dani Mikel set up the tables and activities.
- those who helped box the Thanksgiving donations at Columbia United Methodist Church.
- those who cleaned up after the Parish Dinner.
- Charlotte and Mike Blount and Theata and Marvin Miller for providing the turkeys for the Parish Dinner.
- the men of ARM, Dan Roddy, Marvin Miller, Ed Logue, Kirby Rapstein, and AJ Mikel, for cleaning out and organizing the upstairs classroom.

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, you can fill out a prayer request card found in the pews or notify the office directly. 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.

December Birthdays

Jennifer Bridges - Dec. 2

Trace Roddy - Dec. 6

Travis Weisinger - Dec. 6

George Grosvenor - Dec. 7

Adam Schill - Dec. 10

Jennifer Schill - Dec. 12

Kendy Hankins - Dec. 15

Daniel Mikel - Dec. 19

Dani Mikel - Dec. 22

Ben Anderson - Dec. 25

Kirby Rapstein - Dec. 31

December Anniversaries

Tommy and Holly Cantrell - Dec. 2

Clint and Colleen Matocha - Dec. 19

Brian and Tracy Lane - Dec. 29

Dates to Remember

December 1 - Sunday Service (9:00 am)
Hospitality (10:00 am)
Mary and Joseph begin their travels.
Last Sunday to order tamales

December 3 - DOK meeting (5:30 pm)

December 5 - Yoga class (10:00 am)
Bible Journaling (5:30 pm)
Stewardship Cohort meeting (7:00 pm)

December 8 - Brotherhood (7:30 am)
Sunday Service (9:00 am)
Hospitality (10:00 am)
Christian Formation and Christmas
Pageant practice (10:20 am)
Delivery of tamales

December 12 - Yoga class (10:00 am)
Bible Journaling (5:30 pm)

December 14 - Angel Tree Project items
due (10:00 am)
Organizing and packing
Angel Tree Project supplies (10:00 am)

December 15 - Sunday Service (9:00 am)
Hospitality (10:00 am)
Christian Formation (10:20 am)
Angel Tree Project distribution
(12:00 - 2:00 pm)

Two From Galilee Book Club meets. (3:00
pm) place to be determined

December 16 - Vestry meeting (4:00 pm)

December 18 - Parish Dinner, Christmas
tree decorating, Sing-along (5:30 pm)

December 19 - Yoga class (10 am)
Bible Journaling (5:30 pm)

December 22- Brotherhood (7:30 am)
Sunday Service (9:00 am)
Hospitality (10:00 am)
No Christian Formation

December 24 - Christmas Eve
Christmas Pageant (6:00 pm)
Service (6:30 pm)

December 25 - Christmas

December 24 - 26 - Office closed

December 26 - 30 - Rev. Sharron is on
vacation.

December 29 - Sunday Service (9:00 am)
Celebrant: The Reverend Virginia Brown
Hospitality (10:00 am)
No Christian Formation

December 31 - New Year's Eve

St. Mary's Leadership

Rector

The Reverend Sharron Cox

Vestry

Sr. Warden: Charlotte Blount

Jr. Warden: Andrea Anderson

Clerk: Gwynne Olson

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.