



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.

The Bells of St. Mary's December 2020

Message from the Senior Warden

Hello Family!

I bet you are wondering what is the status of our search for an interim priest and a full time rector. Well, as of today, 11/25/20, there are no names in the hopper. We continue to search.

In the mean time, Dani and the vestry are keeping the church operating on a relatively normal schedule. The supply priests are doing a fantastic job treating St. Mary's like their own family. It is a pleasure to participate in the Sunday worship services under their guidance. So now, get ready for Christmas Eve. There will be an in-person service at 6:30 PM on December 24th, but there are some special COVID instructions for in-person attendees. Please see Dani's comments elsewhere in this newsletter for those detailed Christmas Eve instructions.

And, it's not too soon to begin thinking about our annual congregational meeting to be held on Sunday, January 24th, 2021. You will hear more details about this in the coming weeks, but for now, just understand that important decisions will be made at that meeting, and most of all, the church leadership wants to know your thoughts, ideas, and suggestions for leading the church into 2021 and beyond. So, please put the date on your calendar, and plan to attend.

Have a great month, and may the Lord guide us while we are awake, and guard us as we sleep!

Marvin Miller
Senior Warden



Christmas Eve Service

Our Christmas Eve service will begin at 6:30 pm. There will be a short presentation by the children and youth, followed by the Holy Eucharist service with the Reverend James Morgan. Our organist, Grace Culbreath, will be providing beautiful and inspiring music for the service.

Because of COVID and St. Mary's desire to keep all who worship with us safe, there are a few very important protocols we will be following. We ask that if you plan on attending the Christmas Eve service, you call (979-345-3456) or email (stmmaryswc@centurylink.net) the church office with the number of people who will be attending no later than Monday, December 21st. This is so we can make sure we have the seating arranged to accommodate the social distancing required. We want everyone who feels comfortable attending in-person service to attend.

When arriving at the church, the ushers will let you know the pews that are available. Please remember that masks are required. There will be a sanitation station with hand sanitizer and extra masks before you enter the church. Instructions will be given before communion on how to procedure to the table and receive the wafer, the Body of Christ.

For those who prefer to stay at home, the Christmas Eve service will be Livestreamed on our Facebook site just as it is every Sunday.

Whether in-person or on-line, join us as we celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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

Angel Tree Project

What started as a board full of angels and grocery lists in the Narthex is now bare, for all the angels and grocery lists have been taken. If you are participating in the Angel Tree Project remember to bring the gifts or food to the church office on Monday, December 14th between 11:00 am and 4:00 pm. You can also bring them earlier. Just contact the office to let Dani know when you will be coming. Cash donations can also be placed in the envelopes in the Narthex to help with additional items. Thank you for making this Christmas special for the three families.



Poinsettias

The beautiful poinsettias that will adorn the church during the Christmas Eve service, have been ordered once again from Brookwood. If you would like to make a donation for the Christmas poinsettias, there are envelopes available in the narthex which you can place in the offertory plate. Donations can also be mailed to the church (PO Box 786, West Columbia, 77486) or made through PayPal on our website under the "Give" tab.

Please have all donations in by December 20th.

Volunteers Still Needed

As we prepare for a new priest, there are small but significant things that must be completed. If you have 30 minutes, one hour, a day, etc. that you can give to St. Mary's, there is a volunteer job for you. Help is needed in the office to go through outdated files and historical documents and pictures, and place labels on file folders. If you love gardening, volunteers are needed to weed and trim the rose garden. This is also a perfect opportunity for students who need volunteer hours for school or organizations. Contact the church office by email or telephone (979-345-3456). No amount of time is insignificant, and any amount of time would be greatly appreciated.



News from the Vestry

Gwynne Olson, Clerk

The vestry met Sunday, November 15, 2020.

Senior Warden's Report: Marvin Miller

Marvin reported on the status of hiring an interim Rector. The Diocese is verifying that a candidate is interested in the position, then Marvin will interview the candidate to see if he/she is a good fit for St. Mary's. Marvin also stated some important dates: St. Mary's Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 24, 2021. The 2021 Diocesan Council will be a virtual event, February 26-27. Bishop Doyle's office has informed St. Mary's that the Bishop will visit St. Mary's for Holy Eucharist Rite II on November 21, 2021. Due to the Bishop's schedule, the service will be at 8:30 am instead of 9:00 am.

A copy of the vestry minutes from November will be placed on the bulletin board in the Parish Hall once approved at the December meeting. The next Vestry meeting is Sunday, December 20th at 10:30 a.m.



Community Assistance

In November, we made several donations to the food pantry at Iglesia Centro Cristiano. We also helped one family with their rent and one family with food.

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

Message from Marvin Miller

A SMALL GOOD DEED

A man was asked to paint a boat. He brought his paint and brushes and began to paint the boat a bright red, as the owner asked him.

While painting, he noticed a small hole in the hull, and quietly repaired it.

When he finished painting, he received his money and left.

The next day, the owner of the boat came to the painter and presented him with a nice check, much higher than the payment for painting.

The painter was surprised and said "You've already paid me for painting the boat Sir!"

"But this is not for the paint job. It's for repairing the hole in the boat."

"Ah! But it was such a small service... certainly it's not worth paying me such a high amount for something so insignificant."

"My dear friend, you do not understand. Let me tell you what happened:

"When I asked you to paint the boat, I forgot to mention the hole.

"When the boat dried, my kids took the boat and went on a fishing trip.

"They did not know that there was a hole. I was not at home at that time.

"When I returned and noticed they had taken the boat, I was desperate because I remembered that the boat had a hole.

"Imagine my relief and joy when I saw them returning from fishing.

"Then, I examined the boat and found that you had repaired the hole!

"You see, now, what you did? You saved the life of my children! I do not have enough money to pay your 'small' good deed."

So no matter who, when or how, continue to help, sustain, wipe tears, listen attentively, and carefully repair all the 'leaks' you find. You never know when one is in need of us, or when God holds a pleasant surprise for us to be helpful and important to someone.

Along the way, you may have repaired numerous 'boat holes' for several people without realizing how many lives you've save.

Make a difference....

Jim Gentil

St. Mary's and Texas A&M University

For all you Aggies, future Aggies, or those who have a connection to Texas A&M University, St. Mary's was mentioned in the Fall 2020 edition of "the Guidon", the official magazine of the Texas Aggie Corps of Cadets Association. Dennis Davenport, Class of '01, wrote an article about the Reverend Ed Sterling, Class of '42. The Reverend Sterling was the rector at St. Mary's from June 16, 1957 to January 2, 1959. Dennis was able to find another connection between St. Mary's and Texas A&M. The architect who designed the church was Baldwin Young, Class of '32.

Here is the insert from the magazine that mentions St. Mary's.

"After attending the Seminary of the Southwest in Austin, Ed became the Rector at the recently established St. Mary's Episcopal Church in West Columbia, TX on June 16, 1957. There was an Aggie connection there. The church building was financed by the widow of a wealthy rancher. She was the aunt of Baldwin Young '32, a prominent architectural designer. He designed and oversaw the construction project. In getting established, Ed was introduced at the Angleton Rotary Club and was subject to some good natured ribbing. One member noted that he did not like the new Revised Standard Bible using the term "tax collector," as he was the county tax collector! He also caught a little flack as the only person there who was not Baptist or Methodist."

"Though Ed loved his ministry at St. Mary's, he missed the army and felt the call to serve as a Chaplain." " In January 1959, in a now or never move, he left St. Mary's, received a Reserve commission into the Chaplain Corps, and went back on active duty." (the Guidon, Fall 2020, Vol. 37, Issue 2, page 21)

Important Information from the Diocese

Unfortunately, as our online reach grows, we become more visible to internet scams. These scammers are plentiful and try and spoof identities phishing for money. This is not a "hack" because they have not broken into our systems.

Our systems are encrypted multiple times, and do not show any hack or breach of data to date.

What "spoofers" do is to mine data freely available on the internet. In our case, they target EDOT staff and clergy, impersonating Bishop Doyle or others via a fake email. This is called "phishing."

Unfortunately, these scammers even receive money from unsuspecting victims who just want to help.

Phishing emails as well as phishing text messages will continue to happen. We don't have control over that since anybody can create any email address and impersonate someone else. We can block email addresses internally but externally the only thing we can do is to communicate and educate one another regarding phishing emails and how to take precautions.

Please read the strategies below to make sure you don't become a victim.

The Bishops and Staff of the Diocese of Texas will NEVER

- send official requests from non-official email addresses (all of our email addresses end in @epicenter.org)
- request that you not call our office to confirm a request. You are always free to call us.
- ask you to purchase anything on their behalf without verbal confirmation and reasonable notice.

If you receive an email that

- appears to be from someone impersonating one of our staff (especially if the email address ends in anything other than @epicenter.org)
- requests that you urgently do them a favor but does not allow you to call our offices ("I'm in a meeting, so no calls, just reply to my email.")
- asks you to purchase gift cards or other cash-equivalent items

Please DO NOT reply!

You can report and block it through your email service provider.

Brayze Schill will be riding at the Junior World Finals in Fort Worth on December 3rd - 7th.

Trace Roddy's Little Neck Pee-Wee football team made the playoffs.

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

Braylee Schill was inducted into the Junior High National Honor Society. She was also elected treasurer of the FFA at West Brazos Junior High.

Reesie Cantrell's FFA Public Relations Team received 3rd place in District and 8th place in Area.

Abigail Roddy got first in Military, first in group routine, fifth in Basic Strut, and fifth in One Baton at the 2020 Fall Twirling Festival.



Camp Allen Events

Camp Allen is now accepting reservations for their summer camp program. It is open to all children and youth who have completed 2nd grade through 9th grade. For more information go to the Camp Allen website at campallen.org

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

Special thanks and gratitude to

- the Reverend Paul Wehner, the Reverend Jim Morgan, and the Reverend Jim Abernathy for serving as our celebrants during the month of November.
- Theata Miller, Dani Mikel, Wendy Hankins, Kendy Hankins, AJ Mikel, Brayze Schill, Dan Roddy, Colleen Matocha, Mary Stewart, Abigail Roddy, Travis Prater, Marvin Miller, Gwynne Olson, and Braylee Schill for serving as Worship Leaders during the month of November
- Susan Graham for serving as organist when Grace was on vacation.
- Amber Prater for setting up the Livestreaming on our Facebook site.
- Jackie Walker and Mary Stewart for co-chairing the Angel Tree Project.

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



Don't Forget

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.



Prayer Request

If you or someone you know is in need of prayer, 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

Sunday services are streamed on St. Mary's Facebook Live at 9:00 a.m.

December 1 - 21 - notify the church office if you will be attending the Christmas Eve service

December 6 - Sunday Service
All Saints' Day
Holy Eucharist: Rite II (9:00 a.m.)
celebrant - the Reverend Paul Wehner

December 13 - Sunday Service
Holy Eucharist: Rite II (9:00 a.m.)
celebrant - the Reverend Paul Wehner

December 14 - Angel Tree gifts and food need to be delivered to the church office (11:00 am- 4:00 pm)

December 16 - Angel Tree gifts and food are picked up by the families.
(noon - 2:00 pm)

December 20 - Sunday Service
Holy Eucharist: Rite II (9:00 a.m.)
celebrant - the Reverend Jim Abernathey
Vestry Meeting (10:30 a.m.)

December 20 - Last day to donate to the Christmas Poinsettia fund

December 23 - church office will be closed.

December 24 - Christmas Eve Service
Holy Eucharist: Rite II (9:00 p.m.)
celebrant - the Reverend Jim Morgan

December 25 - 26 - the church office will be closed.

December - Sunday Service
Liturgy of the Word

December Birthdays

Trace Roddy - December 6

Travis Weisinger - December 6

George Grosvenorl - December 7

Adam Schill - December 10

Jennifer Schill - December 12

Kendy Hankins - December 15

Daniel Mikel - December 19

Dani Mikel - December 22

Ben Anderson - December 25

Kirby Rapstein - December 31

December Anniversaries

Holly and Tommy Cantrell - Dec. 2

Colleen and Clint Matocha - Dec. 19

Tracy and Brian Lane - Dec. 29

St. Mary's Leadership

Vestry

Sr. Warden: Marvin Miller

Jr. Warden: Charlotte Blount

Clerk: Gwynne Olson

St. May'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.