

The Bells of St. Mary's

February 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.



Seems like every now and then I get asked the question about my favorite piece of scripture. The question comes in different forms, like “If you were stranded on a desert island, which part of the Bible would be the most important for you to have?” Or simply, “What scripture guides you the most?” Usually I ask if I can have the whole Bible with me on the desert island or if I am limited to a book or a chapter or just a single verse. For the answer would be different if I had a packing limit or a page limit!

My favorite verse? Hands down, I would have to say Luke 5:16, “But [Jesus] would withdraw to deserted places and pray.” This reminds me to have balance in my busy life of go, go, go, by encouraging me to walk away from tasks that must be done and spend time with God in prayer.

If I could have a couple of verses, it would be Matthew 22:36-40. These verses sum up everything Jesus came to teach us, “...love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind...and love your neighbor as yourself.” It’s that simple, right? Love is always the answer to whatever life throws us.

But if I could have several chapters, well now that would be Matthew 5-7, known as the Sermon on the Mount. It starts with the “Blesseds” that turn the human way of living upside down. Really, blessed are the poor? the grief-stricken? the meek? Then Jesus continues with his teachings that point out to us how different God’s ways are from our ways. How if we were to follow the rules, we would still come up short... “*But I say to you*, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you!” Loving your neighbor just doesn’t go far enough in God’s kingdom...

Our gospel readings for a few weeks in February will be spent wandering through the Sermon on the Mount. Be prepared for confusion. Be prepared for discomfort. It’s like the publishers of our Bibles should have a blank page right before Matthew 5 begins that reads: Warning! Danger Ahead!

Blessings,

The Mustard Seed Church

Sowing Seeds in the Community...

Journals for the Discovery Program

St. Mary's will once again sponsor the fifth graders from West Columbia Elementary as they attend the Discovery Program at Camp Allen from February 11th to the 14th and February 18th to the 21st. Part of our sponsorship includes providing each student with a weatherproof journal. The parishioners write messages to the campers in these journals. Due to an error in shipping, only half of the journals arrived, and they will go with the first group. Once the other journals arrive, volunteers will be needed to write in them. Watch for announcements for when they arrive at the church.

Shrove Tuesday

The annual Pancake Supper will be Tuesday, February 25th, beginning at 5:00 p.m. Sponsored by the Brotherhood of St. Andrew as one of their outreach projects, this event is offered free to the public. Volunteers are needed to set-up, serve, and clean-up. Pancakes, sausage, juice, milk, and coffee will be served until the food runs out. Invite your family and friends to join us for wonderful food and warm, friendly fellowship.



Annual Meeting 2020

A scrumptious pot-luck brunch was enjoyed by all as we reviewed 2019 and looked ahead at 2020. New activities St. Mary's coordinated this past year were reviewed and reports given by the wardens and ministry leaders. Trends in membership and stewardship were also reviewed as were the 2019 financials and the 2020 budget. Andrea Anderson was thanked for her service on the vestry and new vestry members were added. Your vestry for 2020 is Marvin Miller, Charlotte Blount, Gwynne Olson, and Allan Dinsmore. It was announced that the vestry appointed Bill and Gwynne Olson as St. Mary's delegates to Diocesan Council to meet the earlier registration deadlines from the Diocese.

Those in attendance also looked over the architectural drawings for renovation of the Parish Hall restrooms and the Narthex of St. Mary's. Everyone present was in support of renovation – 2/3 of those in attendance supported renovation of both the restrooms and the Narthex while 1/3 only wanted the Parish Hall restrooms to be renovated. We now begin the process of getting on the schedule of a committee with the Diocese of Texas from which we are required to seek approval before embarking on renovations of our structures. In the meantime, those who voted to limit the renovations to just the restrooms are encouraged to talk to Dan Roddy or Rev. Sharron so that if there are concerns about the Narthex and the surrounding rooms that should be taken into consideration as we move forward we get that input!

Finally, we added our hopes and vision for St. Mary's in this new decade of the 2020s to the timeline in the Parish Hall. For those not in attendance, take some time in prayer and add your input via a Post-It note to the timeline!

Lent

Lent, the 40 days before Easter excluding Sundays, is the time Christians spend in penitence, prayer, and preparation for the celebration of the glorious resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ. The Lenten Season will begin with the Ash Wednesday service on February 26th at 6:00 p.m.

Because of the somberness of the season of Lent, there will be some notable differences in the Sunday service. "Alleluia" will be omitted. We will bury the "Alleluia" at the end of the service on Sunday, February 23rd. The services during Lent will begin with a silent procession and the Penitential Order. The *Gloria* will be replaced by a sung version of the *Kyrie Eleison*.

Lenten Book Study

As we did two years ago, St. Mary's will have a Lenten book study this year. Rather than use the Living Compass Lenten guide as before, we will be reading James Bryan Smith's *Hidden in Christ: Living as God's Beloved*. In this book, the author explores in depth Colossians 3:1-17 by taking a word or words from each verse in that passage and exploring them in more depth, seeing how they apply to our lives in Christ. Each chapter ends with suggestions on how we can use what we have learned as we reflect on this message throughout our day.

Individuals, couples, and families are encouraged to participate in this book study in whatever makes sense for your life and schedule! While the Christian Formation class will be going through the discussion questions at the end of the book on Sunday mornings during Lent following Hospitality in the Parish Hall, you do *not* have to attend the class to be a part of this book study and share this experience with others at St. Mary's. Occasional Facebook posts may be made to engage St. Mary's community with some of the themes that emerge from this passage from Colossians.

We are asking that a donation of \$5 per book be made to help defray the cost. But please do not let that cost prevent you from participating – speak to Rev. Sharron for assistance. You are encouraged to let us know of your interest in participating in one way or another by adding your name to the sign-up sheet in the Parish Hall so that enough books can be ordered and distributed by Ash Wednesday, February 26th.



Community Assistance

In January, one family was helped with rent and two families were helped with electric bills.

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



News from the Vestry

Gwynne Olson, Clerk

The vestry met Monday, January 20, 2020.

Rector Report: The Reverend Sharron Cox

Rev. Sharron reviewed the Annual Meeting Agenda with the vestry. And regarding the Reboot Grant, the next step is to submit the grant proposal in March.

Senior Warden's Report: Charlotte Blount

Charlotte stated that we have two Junior High students going to Y.E.S. (Youth Encounter Spirit) at Camp Allen on January 25th and 26th. It has been several years since we have sent students to this 6th – 8th grade youth event.

Junior Warden's Report: Andrea Anderson

Andrea led a discussion on the renovations of the restrooms and the Narthex. The vestry agreed that it would be in the best interest of St. Mary's if we moved forward on both projects.

The vestry approved the 2020 budget, which includes enough draw-down from the KNG participating fund endowment to cover the restrooms and Narthex renovations, provided the parish support moving forward with each at the Annual Meeting.

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

Valentine Boxes for College Students

There are three parishioners from St. Mary's, Maddie Lane, Aaron Mikel, and Justin Hussey, attending college this year. Once again, we will be sending each of them a valentine box full of goodies and letters of encouragement. In the Parish Hall, there will be a box for the donations until Sunday, February 9th. Please do not donate anything too bulky or heavy.

Possible items - all single servings:

candy

Ramen Noodles

Pens, mechanical pencils

Post-its

small snack packs - cookies, crackers, etc.

gift cards to national fast food restaurants

lip balm

notes of encouragement

valentine themed items

The boxes will be mailed Tuesday, February 11th.

Message from Marvin Miller

**The United States National Motto
"IN GOD WE TRUST"**

Lyrics to that song by Diamond Rio
article from Jim Gentil's website

You place your hand on His bible, when you swear to tell the truth.
His name is on our greatest monuments, an' all our money too.
An' when we pledge allegiance, there's no doubt where we stand:
There's no separation, we're one nation under Him.

In God, we still trust here in America;
He's the one we turn to every time the going gets rough.
He is the source of all our strength, the one who watches over us.
Here in America, in God, we still trust!

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

Abigail Roddy received the Academic Achievement and the 0-5 Conduct Marks awards at West Columbia Elementary. At Twirl in the Woods, Abigail got 5th place in Beginner's One Baton and 5th place in Prettiest Costume.

Ally Lane and the other members of the Columbia High School golf team placed first in the golf tournament held at The Wilderness in Lake Jackson. Ally had a personal best score of 105.

Luke Davidson made the A honor roll at Westside Elementary in Angleton.

Trace Roddy received the 0-5 Conduct Marks Award at West Columbia Elementary.

Braylee Schill made the A honor roll at West Brazos Junior High.

Wendy Hankins, head director for the Bay City High School Aristocats Dance Team, led her dancers to several awards at the Marching Auxiliaries South Houston High School Dance Competition. They won Sweepstakes, Outstanding Medium Classic Team, and first place in Jazz, Pom, Modern, and Novelty,

Natalie Rew, granddaughter of Mary Stewart and James Beard, received the Excellent Award in Kindergarten at West Columbia Elementary.

Reesie Cantrell and Braylee Schill attended YES at Camp Allen. YES, Youth Encounter Spirit, is for youth in Middle School and Junior High. "Y.E.S. helps foster a clearer appreciation of self, richer relationships with others, and a deeper experience with Jesus." (Diocese of Texas website.)



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.



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.

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

Special thanks and gratitude to:

- Andrea Anderson for serving on the Vestry as Junior Warden.
- Marvin Miller for agreeing to serve as Senior Warden for 2020.
- Allen Dinsmore for agreeing to serve a three-year vestry term beginning in 2020.
- Charlotte Blount for her service as Senior Warden and Stewardship Chairperson.
- all who brought food for our Parish Brunch.
- Mary Stewart, Theata and Marvin Miller, and Dani and AJ Mikel for providing hospitality during the month of January.

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.

Dates to Remember

February 2: Brotherhood (7:30 a.m.)
Sunday Service (9:00 a.m.)
Hospitality (10:00 a.m.)
Christian Formation (10:20 a.m.)

February 4: DOK meeting (5:30 p.m.)

February 6: Yoga class (10:00 a.m.)

February 7-8: Diocesan Council, Waco

February 9: Sunday Service (9:00 a.m.)
Hospitality (10:00 a.m.)
Christian Formation (10:20 a.m.)

February 10 - 14: Rev. Sharron is at Camp
Allen

February 13: Yoga class (10:00 a.m.)

February 16: Brotherhood (7:30 a.m.)
Sunday Service (9:00 a.m.)
Hospitality (10:00 a.m.)
Christian Formation (10:20 a.m.)

February 20: Yoga class (10:00 a.m.)

February 23: Sunday Service (9:00 a.m.)
Hospitality (10:00 a.m.)
Christian Formation (10:20 a.m.)
Vestry (11:00 a.m.)

February 25: Shrove Tuesday
Pancake Supper (5:00 p.m.)

February 26: Ash Wednesday Service
(6:00 p.m.)

February 27: Yoga class (10:00 a.m.)

February Birthdays

Karen Logue- February 2

Mike Blount - February 4

Brian Lane - February 13

Bonnie Cole - February 16

Dick McGuire - February 19

Dan Roddy - February 27

February Anniversaries

St. Mary's Leadership

Rector

The Reverend Sharron Cox

Vestry

Sr. Warden: Marvin Miller
Jr. Warden: Charlotte Blount
Clerk: Gwynne Olson
Treasurer: Allen Dinsmore

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.