

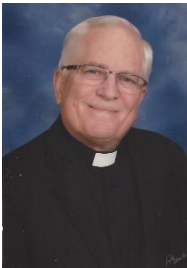


St. Mary's
EPISCOPAL CHURCH
The Mustard Seed Church

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



February 2023 Edition



Message from the Father Paul

Here is a copy of the letter Father Paul presented to the congregation at the annual meeting.

"May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God." (Romans 15.5-7)

Dear people of St. Mary's,

As I begin the third year of our "interim" time together, I want to express how grateful my family and I are to be part of such a loving and resilient congregation. Change is always difficult, and our faith is often tested when we have to face change and uncertainty in our lives. Therefore, I want to express my deep appreciation to all of you for your faithfulness and perseverance. Not only have you experienced the uncertainty that comes with a change in church leadership, but also the real threat of a pandemic that never seems to end. In addition to those things, we have also lost several very dear members of our St. Mary's family, and that makes us very sad. But you are still standing firmly on the solid ground of our shared faith, and I look forward with eagerness to our upcoming year together.

As you will read in the reports from Gwynne and Dan and Jackie, St. Mary's had very busy 2022. We not only made significant improvements to our buildings and grounds, we also stepped out into our community in several new ways. And your vestry has big plans for continuing to invest in both of those areas in 2023, particularly in projects for the younger ones in our population. For example, St. Mary's children will soon have the excitement of new playground equipment; approximately 100 fifth graders from W. Columbia Elementary will have the thrill of spending 4 days and 3 nights at Camp Allen's Discovery Camp; and the W. Columbia Little League will have improved facilities on which to practice this season!

And while we do those things with no expectation of return, our shared hope of course, is that people will hear of us and hopefully come and visit. And we want to be ready to welcome them to our church. St. Paul reminds us to: *“Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you.*

Your vestry and I are reading *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations*, which is my favorite book about church growth. It is written by a Methodist bishop named Robert Schnase, and it details the five characteristics (or practices) that he believes are most responsible for successfully growing a church. The first practice that he describes is *Radical Hospitality*.

Schnase says practicing radical hospitality means *exceeding people's expectations* when you welcome them. And it also means *being willing to make changes* in the way that you have always done things, in order to attract, keep and assimilate new people into our congregation.

The most important piece is to understand the difference between being a friendly community and just being a community of friends. A friendly community cannot do enough for its visitors. A community of friends finds the same people to hang out with each Sunday and rarely notices if there is a new person in the room. Jesus routinely demonstrated radical hospitality by offering strangers more than just a warm handshake; instead, he offered himself. I believe that we can do the same, and I pray that our culture will be one that fervently desires to share the good news of Jesus Christ and sincerely offers the best of ourselves to each new person. All of us serve as the “official greeters” of St. Mary’s - not just those who stand at the front door. I hope that you will join your leadership and me by taking that responsibility very seriously. As it is said, “People will forget what you said, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

In closing, I want to thank you for inviting my family and me to be part of the family of St. Mary’s. We so appreciate the radical hospitality that we received, and we love the spirit of this place. I absolutely believe that St. Mary’s can and will make a difference for God’s good in the world.

May God bless you and keep you always.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul+".

Fr. Paul Wehner+

Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that, some have entertained angels without knowing it. (Hebrews 2.13)



On January 27th, Father Paul, Dan Roddy, David Mikel, and Dani Mikel joined Mosaic team members Marcus George and Courtney Allensworth for an Exterior Hazard Check of two neighborhoods in West Columbia. Mosaic will take the information gathered and send letters to the homeowners letting them know of potential hazards if a hurricane or major storm hit our area.

On Thursday, February 9th, Father Paul and Sherry Wehner, Donna and Dan Roddy, and Dani and AJ Mikel attend a dinner hosted by Mosaic in Action. At the dinner, Mosaic presented their focus for 2023 and announced they were the recipients of a major grant to be used to help veterans. Also during the dinner, St. Mary's was presented the Mosaic in Action 2022 Partnership Award.

Mosaic in Action has provided for the parishioners of St. Mary's Emergency Document Bags, a waterproof bag to ensure essential files are in one safe and accessible location if evacuation is necessary. The bags are available in the Parish Hall.

During the month of February, it is Mosaic in Action's intent to work on residences in West Columbia on the 23rd and 24th. If you would like to volunteer or visit with the Mosaic in Action team on the dates listed above between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m., contact Marcus George, Construction Supervisor, at 214-914-2646 or marcus@mosaicinaction.org.



Ashes to Go
Ash Wednesday
February 22, 2023
St. Mary's Episcopal Church
On Clay Street (between cones and sidewalk)
3:00 PM to 5:15 PM

Discovery Program



Father Paul, Dan Roddy, Donna Roddy, Shyanne Roddy, and Dani Mikel saw the first group of 5th graders as they left for the Discovery Program at Camp Allen. Abigail Roddy is among the 5th graders in this group.

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner



Pancake Supper

The annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper will be Tuesday, February 21st, in the Parish Hall from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. or until the food runs out. The Brotherhood will be preparing the food, but they need help with setup, cooking, serving, and cleanup. Let Dani or one of the members of the

Brotherhood know how you can help.

The meal is free to the public, so invite your family, friends, and neighbors. What a great time to celebrate the day before Lent.

Service Project During Lent

Beginning Sunday, February 26, and running through Sunday, April 9th, St. Mary's will be collecting canned goods and non-perishable items including toilet paper, paper towels, and diapers, to benefit the Food Pantry at Columbia Methodist Church. When out shopping, pick up a few extra items and drop them on Sunday in the basket in the Narthex or Parish Hall.

Let us share with others who have so little.



Burying the Alleluia

Since during Lent we do not say Alleluia, it is our custom here at St. Mary's to Bury the Alleluia at the end of our service the Sunday before Lent. This year that Sunday is February 19th. This part of the service is traditionally conducted by the children and youth.

A Lenten Experience

I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word. (BCP, 265)

Dear friends,

The above words are read on Ash Wednesday as an annual reminder that the season of Lent is a very special time in the church calendar. It is the season in which we are dedicated to self-examination and reflection about our spiritual lives. And our hope is that as we discover more about our inner beings, that we will also enjoy a closer and more meaningful relationship with God.

According to the Book of Mark, Jesus was sent by the Spirit into the wilderness immediately after his baptism. He stayed there for forty days, and his wilderness experience was an essential part of his preparation to do the work of God. Our Lenten season of forty days is also intended to be a wilderness experience of sorts. We are encouraged to pray, to eat less, to study God's Word, and to meditate during Lent. It is a time of discipline rather than a time of plenty.

However, it is important to remember that our purpose is not to go without; our purpose is to grow within. As Joanna Leiserson says in the introduction to her devotional, *A Grown-Up Lent*, "The question is not 'What will you give up for Lent?' or even 'What will you do for Lent?' but rather 'Who will you be in Lent' and even 'Whose will you be in Lent?'"

In our Sunday School time during Lent, we will explore similar questions, as we consider how to make Lent a meaningful time for us. We will watch the movie *Chocolat* - a humorous and engaging story about a town that struggles to maintain its long-held Lenten traditions. Please join me for a series that will challenge us to ponder why we do some of the things we do in the name of our religion.

May God bless you and draw you ever closer to him this Lent.

Faithfully yours,
Fr. Paul+

Ash Wednesday

Prior to our Ash Wednesday service on February 22nd, soup and salad will be served in the Parish Hall beginning at 5:00 p.m. The service will begin at 5:45 p.m. with the placing of the blessed ashes on the foreheads of worshippers and the celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

Children's Choir

Beginning Sunday, March 5, Gwynne Olson will be leading a choir program for children and youth. There is no age limit as long as they have a desire to sing. They will meet right after church in the classroom upstairs for 15 minutes. They will learn the basics of singing and will perform for the church on designated Sundays. Gwynne will have more details during the first class.

Message from Marvin Miller

A NORMAL DAY

Normal day, let me be aware of the treasure you are. Let me learn from you, love you, bless you before you depart. Let me not pass you by in the quest of some rare and perfect tomorrow.

— Mary Jean Irion

St. Mary's Website

St. Mary's website has several continually updated tabs.

Under the "Calendar" tap there are events and services listed for each month. The calendar is kept up-to-date and edited as new events and services are added. If you click on the event or service, more details will pop up.

The most recent Upcoming Events will now be featured on the front page of the website. This will make it easier to remember what will be happening, so you don't miss anything.

The service bulletin for the upcoming Sunday service can be found under the Worship tab.

A new Photo Gallery has been added and will continually be updated with the latest pictures. Check out what has been going on since the beginning of Advent 2021.

Our website is stmaryswestcolumbia.com. You can access it using the link below or at the top of the newsletter.



Community Assistance

During December and January, the committee approved funds to help 3 families or individuals with their electric bills and 2 families or individuals with rent.

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



2023 Flower sign up

The forms to sign up for 2023 flower offerings are in the Narthex. Please stop by and sign up to honor or celebrate special days in your life. The cost is \$50, to be paid in advance.

For more information call the church office at 979-345-3456.

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

December and January

St. Mary's received the 2022 Partnership Award from Mosaic in Action.

Abigail, Trace, and Madeline Roddy, AJ Mikel, Theata Miller, Gwynne Olson, and Dan Roddy were the winners of our 2nd annual Crockpot Cookoff.

Jennifer Landreneau and Aaron Mikel completed the Dopey Challenge at Walt Disney World which consists of a 5K, 10K, half marathon, and full marathon over 4 consecutive days.

Abigail Roddy received first place in Modeling, fourth place in Presentation, third place in Military Strut, and sixth place in Basic Strut at a twirling competition in January.

AJ and Dani Mikel completed the 5K at Walt Disney World.

Travis Prater was awarded the Star Rank in Boy Scouts. He is also a member of the stage crew for the Briarwood School's Spring theater production of *Alice in Wonderland*.

Aaron Mikel graduated from Texas State University with a degree in Engineering Technology - Electrical Engineering.

Quentin Culbreath received a "One" on his Vocal Solo and Tuba Solo. He also received a "One" as a member of the Madrigal Ensemble from Tidehaven at their Region Solo and Ensemble Contest.

Madeline Roddy received fifth place in Modeling, fifth place in Solo, second place in Military Strut, and third place in Basic Strut at a twirling competition in January.

Amber Prater is the Technology Coordinator for the Briarwood School's Spring theater production of *Alice in Wonderland*.

Hayden Culbreath received a "Two" on his Clarinet Solo and a "One" as a member of the Madrigal Ensemble from Tidehaven at their Region Solo and Ensemble Contest.

Robert Mikel completed the half marathon at Walt Disney World.



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.

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

Special thanks and gratitude to

- Theata Miller, Gwynne Olson, Bill Olson, Dan Roddy, Colleen Matocha, Dani Mikel, AJ Mikel, Marvin Miller, Shyanne Roddy, Abigail Roddy, Trace Roddy, Wendy Hankins, Kendy Hankins, Jasey Hussey, Jay Wiggins, Travis Prater, Tracy Lane, Sherry Wehner, Brayze Schill, Braylee Schill, Jennifer Schill, Jackie Walker, Ouida Thomas, and Adam Schill for serving as Worship Leaders in December and January.
- Amber Prater for setting up the Livestreaming on our Facebook site, monitoring the feed during the service, and responding to those viewing on-line.
- Gwynne and Bill Olson, Theata and Marvin Miller, Colleen Matocha, and the Brotherhood for providing treats for our December and January Hospitality and Fellowship.
- Theata and Marvin Miller for stapling the service bulletins.
- Mary Stewart for organizing the children's bags for Sunday service.
- Sherry Wehner, Gwynne Olson, Theresa Crawford, Vicki Vrazel, and Ouida Thomas for providing sugar cookies for our Advent Activity.
- Shyanne Roddy for leading the card making for our Advent Activity.
- Hannah Hussey, Shyanne Roddy, and Dani Mikel for helping with the Nativity Pageant.
- Abigail Roddy, Bo Wright, Cesylie Guizar, Trace Roddy, Madeline Roddy, Jasey Hussey, and Kaylea Anderson for participating in the Nativity Pageant.
- Bill and Gwynne Olson for organizing our float for the Light Up the First Capital Parade.
- all who helped decorate our float and/or participated in the Light Up the First Capital Parade.
- Dick McGuire, Dan Roddy, Donna Roddy, John Rectenwald, Marvin Miller, Theata Miller, and AJ Mikel for making the Breakfast Tacos for our Annual Meeting.
- the Reverend Mark Crawford for serving as celebrant while Father Paul was gone.

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



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.



Camp Allen Events

Applications are now being accepted for Camp Allen summer camp. St. Mary's pays 2/3 of the cost for camp. Once you have registered your child, let Dani Mikel know. If you need more information visit the Camp Allen website or contact Dani.

February Birthdays

Mike Blount - Feb. 4

Quinten Culbreath - Feb. 9

Brian Lane - Feb.13

Bonnie Cole -Feb. 16

Dick McGuire -Feb. 19

Dan Roddy- Feb. 27

February Anniversaries

Dates to Remember

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

February 5 - Sunday Service - Holy Eucharist: Rite II (9:00 a.m.)
celebrant - the Reverend Paul Wehner
Children's Sunday School

February 5 - Hospitality and Fellowship (10:00 - 10:30 a.m.)

February 5 - Youth and Adult Sunday School and children activities
(10:30 - 11:15 a.m.)

February 7 - 10 - 5th graders attend the Discovery Program at Camp Allen

February 12 - Brotherhood (7:30 a.m.)

February 12 - Sunday Service - Holy Eucharist: Rite II (9:00 a.m.)
celebrant - the Reverend Paul Wehner
Children's Sunday School

February 12 - Hospitality and Fellowship (10:00 - 10:30 a.m.)

February 12 - Youth and Adult Sunday School and children activities
(10:30 - 11:15 a.m.)

February 12 - Vestry Meeting (11:15 a.m. - 1:15 p.m.)

February 14-17 - 5th graders attend Discovery Program at Camp Allen

February 19 - Sunday Service - Holy Eucharist: Rite II (9:00 a.m.)
Burying the Alleluia
celebrant - the Reverend Nan Doerr
Children's Sunday School

February 19 - Hospitality and Fellowship (10:00 - 10:30 a.m.)

February 19 - Youth and Adult Sunday School and children activities
(10:30 - 11:15 a.m.)

February 20 - 23 - Strengthen with Prayer Exercise Program (8:00 a.m.)

February 21 - Pancake Supper (5:00 - 7:00 p.m. or until the food runs out)

February 22 - Ashes to Go (3:00 - 5:15 p.m.)

February 22 - Soup and Salad dinner (5:00 - 5:30 p.m.)

February 22 - Ash Wednesday Service - Holy Eucharist (5:45 p.m.)
celebrant - the Reverend Paul Wehner

February 24-25 - Diocesan Council in Galveston

February 26 - Brotherhood (7:30 a.m.)

February 26 - Sunday Service - Holy Eucharist: Rite II (9:00 a.m.)
celebrant - the Reverend Paul Wehner

February 26- Hospitality and Fellowship (10:00 - 10:30 a.m.)

February 26 - Youth and Adult Sunday School and children activities
(10:30 - 11:15 a.m.)

St. Mary's Leadership

Vestry

Rector: the Reverend Paul Wehner

Sr. Warden: Gwynne Olson

Jr. Warden: Dan Roddy

Clerk: Colleen Matocha

Outreach Chair: Jackie Walker

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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.