

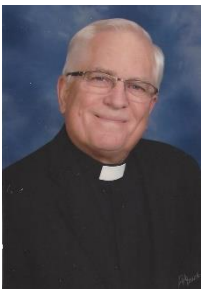


St. Mary's
EPISCOPAL CHURCH
The Mustard Seed Church

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



February Edition



Message from the Father Paul

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

2021 INTERIM RECTOR'S LETTER

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. And God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. (1 Corinthians 12:12-13, 24-27)

Dear people of St. Mary's,

St. Paul wrote often about the importance of the early Christian communities to gather together to support one another. Staying united together in their worship of God in Christ and in their love and care for one another, was of paramount importance to Paul. Over and over again, he emphasized the importance of unity for the wellbeing and the faithfulness of both the church and its individual members. Paul wrote that without the support of the church community, the temptations and forces of the world would be too much to withstand on one's own. Therefore, tending to the health of the church body is all-important, and his letters go into great detail about how that should be done.

If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.

Christine D. Pohl, professor emeritus of Christian ethics at Asbury Theological Seminary, writes the following in her book about the important traits of healthy congregations:

“The character of our shared life in congregations, communities and families has the power to draw people to the kingdom or to push them away. How we live together is the most persuasive sermon we’ll ever get to preach. While the beauty of loving communities does not replace the importance of the verbal proclamation of the gospel, Jesus explicitly linked the truth of his life and message to our life together.”

As I begin this time of transition with all of you, this is the message that I want us to keep in mind. After almost a year of distancing and masking and staying away, I am sure that many of you are feeling disconnected and separated from each other. Therefore, it is our Community itself, that I want us to find ways to regenerate and nurture together. And I believe that this work of community is too important to wait for the next rector before beginning. Your vestry and I promise to make sure the building and grounds are taken care of and the bills are all paid, but we need every one of you to have a community. As St. Paul said, all members are equally needed to form the Body of Christ. Please resolve to have a regular Sunday practice of tuning us in or showing up in person – we have plenty of room to socially distance if you decide to come. Most importantly, stay in contact with each other and with your church leadership. I will be in West Columbia every Tuesday from 8:30 to 5:00, and my primary purpose is to connect with the Body of St. Mary’s and to help you reconnect with each other, so call or come by. In the meantime, I will be trying to call each of you.

Of course, the other important work of this transition is calling the next rector of St. Mary’s, and we will get started with that work with a visit from the Rev. Kellaura Johnson, Transition Minister for the Diocese of Texas, will be with us on Sunday, February 21, for worship and then to talk to our vestry about the process of the rector search. Rev. Kellaura is a delightful person, and I know you will enjoy her preaching and her message about transition.

My final offering to you this morning is words of encouragement. It is so easy to allow the things of the world to get us down and cause us to forget that God is bigger than our worldly cares and concerns. It is easy to be discouraged and defeated by the pandemic and its horribly negative effect on our way of life. But God calls us to stand above worldly concerns and trust in his love and care for us.

Jesus said, *“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life?”*

Indeed, let us agree to be about our mission of uniting all people into a relationship with God and each other in Christ. Amen.

Your servant in Christ,



Burying the Alleluia

As is our custom here at St. Mary’s, we will be Burying the Alleluia at the end of our Sunday service on February 14th. This part of the service is traditionally conducted by the children and youth.

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 17th at 5:30 p.m.

Because of the somberness of the season of Lent, there will be some notable differences in the Sunday service. The Lenten services will use the Penitential Order and the Decalogue, plus Eucharistic Prayer C and other changes. "Alleluia" will be omitted. The Church has a custom of omitting the "Alleluias" typically proclaimed throughout its liturgy. It generally takes us a few weeks to get that through our system, so no worries if an "Alleluia" slips out now and again!



Ashes to Go

Ash Wednesday
February 17, 2021
St. Mary's Episcopal Church
On Clay Street (between cones and sidewalk)
4:00 PM to 5:30 PM



2021 Adult and Youth Christian Formation

Join us for Christian Formation after church. We are currently reading through the Bible chronologically. In February, we will read Exodus, Leviticus, and begin the first few books of Numbers. You haven't started reading yet? No problem. Start when you can. And if you don't get to the readings? Join us anyway!

If you are unable to attend in person but would still like to participate, please contact the office by Thursday of each week and a Zoom conference will be set up. You will then be sent an email with the Zoom invitation.

Journals are available that list the daily readings and allow for daily reflection and journaling. If you would like a journal, please contact Gwynne Olson or the office.



Annual Meeting Report

Sunday January 24, 2021

Interim Rector Report: The Reverend Paul Wehner

Rev. Paul addressed the congregation at the Annual Meeting. He gave his background from leaving a secular oil and gas international sales position to being called to go to seminary. Rev. Paul also spoke about how much we have to look forward to as a church family, and how much St. Mary's is blessed with different resources. There are a lot of good seeds within this church, and we have so much to look forward to.

Senior Warden's Report: Marvin Miller

Marvin recapped 2020 saying it was a rough year due to the shut down in March because COVID-19. Rev. Sharron live streamed church services from her kitchen table during the shut down. But good things came in spite of the the shut down. We are having in-person services and living streaming our services which has doubled the amount of people who attend. Our investment account made up what it lost at the beginning of the shut down. The restrooms in the Parish Hall have been renovated and an ADA accessible family restroom was added. Rev. Sharron left us on September 20, 2021 so she could be closer to her elderly mother, which was a blessing for Rev. Sharron. And as of January 1, 2021, Rev. Paul has joined us as our part-time Interim Rector.

Junior Warden's Report: Dan Roddy on behalf o Charlotte Blount

Dan gave a report on the capital improvement items that were completed in 2021 including the restroom renovations, addition of the ADA family restroom, the renovation of the Rector's office, and carpet on the breezeway and front steps of the church. For 2021, Dan said that we will power wash the church, install a ramp at the breezeway Sanctuary door, replace flooring in the bell tower and Sacristy, and renovate the Narthex due to inadequate ventilation.

Incoming Senior Warden's Report: Gwynne Olson

Gwynne states that for Adult Christian Formation, we are reading the Bible in chronological order in 2021. Although we did not get the Reboot grant in the Fall of 2020, we are still planning to move things forward for the older youth. The Narthex Remodel got delayed due to the remodeling inside of the Parish Hall. We had unexpected expenses we had to take care of within the bathroom remodel including a roof leak, and new flooring. She also thanked Charlotte Blount for her service on the vestry for the past three years. She acknowledged Charlotte as being a member since the church opened. Gwynne also acknowledged Marvin for his time as Senior Warden for the past year. He was Head of the Congregation last year when we were without a Rector.

If you would like a copy of the approved budget for 2021 or a copy of the packet handed out at the annual meeting, please contact the church office and it will be mailed to you.



Valentine Boxes for College Students

Sunday, February 7th, is the last Sunday we will be collecting donations for the Valentine boxes we are sending to our five college students, Aaron, Maddie, Ally, Kip, and Saben. Help us let them know we are thinking of them and sending them our prayers during this difficult time.

Donations can also be brought to the church office before February 7th. 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, grocery stores, Walmart, Target

lip balm

notes of encouragement

valentine themed items

novelty items

The boxes will be mailed Tuesday, February 9th.



EASTER FLOWERS

It is time to order the Easter flowers that add to the beauty of our church at Easter. The suggested donation is \$15 per plant. Please return this form with your check to the church office or drop in the alms basin on Sunday. Call Dani at the church office with questions. (979) 345-3456

Deadline to order is April 14th.

I wish to order _____ Easter Flowers. I enclose \$_____.

Name _____

Dedications: To the Glory of God and

In Memory of

In Thanksgiving for

Attach extra sheets if necessary. You can print this form and fill it out. Additional forms will be available in the Narthex or church office.



News from the Vestry

Gwynne Olson, Clerk

The vestry met Monday, January 10, 2021.

Interim Rector Report: The Reverend Paul Wehner

Rev. Paul attended the vestry meeting. He and vestry reviewed and discussed the annual meeting agenda and procedures. He assisted the vestry in finalizing the 2021 budget. Columbia Elementary School cancelled Discover Camp for the 5th graders due to COVID-19.

Senior Warden's Report: Gwynne Olson reported on Marvin Miller's behalf

Gwynne stated that the Rev. Paul Wehner began his position as St. Mary's Interim Rector on January 1, 2021. Regarding the KNG Ranch, negotiations between the three ranch co-owners concerning the Listing Agent contract are continuing. The Rev. Kellaura Johnson, EDOT Transition Minister, will train the vestry on our rector search at the February 21, 2021 vestry meeting.

Junior Warden's Report: Charlotte Blount

Charlotte stated that she had no report.

Financial Report: Dani Mikel

Disbursements for December

General Expense: \$6511.26
Community Assistance: \$1250
Special Gifts: 270.38
Flowers: \$97.20
Total: \$8128.84

Income for December

Plate/Pledge Offering: \$2673
Special Gift Income: \$20
Flower Income: \$70
Interest: \$2.67
Total: \$2765.67

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

Message from Marvin Miller

MEMO FROM GOD

To: YOU
Date: TODAY
From: GOD - The Boss!
Subject: YOURSELF
Reference: LIFE

This is God. Today I will be handling All of your problems for you. I do not need your help. So, have a nice day. I love you.
GOD

P.S. And, remember.... If life happens to deliver a situation to you that you can not handle, do not attempt to resolve it yourself !! Kindly put it in the SFGTD (something for God to do) box. I will get to it in MY TIME. All situations will be resolved, but in My time, not yours.

P.S.S.

Once the matter is placed into the box, do not hold onto it by worrying about it. Instead, focus on all the wonderful things that are present in your life now. If you find yourself stuck in traffic; Don't despair. There are people in this world for whom driving is an unheard of privilege.

Should you have a bad day at work; Think of the man who has been out of work for years. Should you despair over a relationship gone bad; Think of the person who has never known what it's like to love and be loved in return.

Should you grieve the passing of another weekend; Think of the woman in dire straits, working twelve hours a day, seven days a week to feed her children.

Should your car break down, leaving you miles away from assistance; Think of the paraplegic who would love the opportunity to take that walk.

Should you notice a new gray hair in the mirror; Think of the cancer patient in chemo who wishes she had hair to examine.

Should you find yourself at a loss and pondering what is life all about, asking what is my purpose? Be thankful. There are those who didn't live long enough to get the opportunity.

Should you find yourself the victim of other people's bitterness, ignorance, smallness or insecurities; Remember, things could be worse. You could be one of them!

Should you decide to send this to a friend; Thank you, you may have touched their life in ways you will never know!

Now, you have a nice day,
God



Community Assistance

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

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

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

Braylee Schill made all As during the first semester of 8th grade at West Brazos Jr. High.



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.

If you register your child for Camp Allen's summer program, please let the office know as soon as possible. St. Mary's provides scholarships for our parishioners.

"Searching for a secluded get-a-way this Spring?" Camp Allen has the perfect answer. Hotel room, three meals a day, a variety of optional activities, and a beautiful setting are all included. "Spring Stay" is available March 10-12, March 12-14, March 16-18, March 26-28, April 23-25, and May 28-30. More information can be found on the Camp Allen website.

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

Special thanks and gratitude to

- the Reverend Jim Abernathey for serving as our celebrant in January when Father Paul was not available.
- Theata Miller, Dani Mikel, Wendy Hankins, Kendy Hankins, AJ Mikel, Mary Stewart Dan Roddy, Colleen Matocha, Abigail Roddy, Trace Roddy, Travis Prater, Shyanne Roddy, Adam Schill, Gwynne Olson, and Braylee Schill for serving as Worship Leaders during the month of January.
- Amber Prater for setting up the Livestreaming on our Facebook site.
- Heather and David Mikel and AJ Mikel for cleaning the Prayer Garden.
- John Ahrens, from Planet Ahrens, for volunteering his time to help when we have problems with our video and sound equipment. He also spent two days setting up our new microphones before the Christmas Eve service.
- Marvin Miller for serving as our Senior Warden, Stewardship Chairman, and Head of Congregation during 2020.
- Charlotte Blount for her service on the vestry the last three years including serving as Senior Warden, Stewardship Chairwoman, and Jr. Warden.
- Dan Roddy and Brian Lane for all their work as our representatives for the KNG Ranch group.

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.

February 7 - Sunday Service

Holy Eucharist: Rite II (9:00 a.m.)
celebrant - the Reverend Paul Wehner
Christian Formation
Adult/Youth - Bible Journals (10:00 a.m.)

February 7 - Last day to donate to the Valentine boxes for college students

February 14- Sunday Service

Holy Eucharist: Rite II (9:00 a.m.)
celebrant - the Reverend Paul Wehner
Burying the Alleluia
Christian Formation
Children - Godly Play (10:00 a.m.)
Adult/Youth - Bible Journals (10:00 a.m.)

February 17 - Ashes to Go
(4:00 PM to 5:30 PM)

February 17 - Ash Wednesday
Holy Eucharist: Rite II (5:30 pm)
celebrant - the Reverend Paul Wehner

February 21 - Sunday Service
Holy Eucharist: Rite II (9:00 a.m.)
celebrant - the Reverend Kellaura Johnson
Vestry meeting and training (10:30 a.m.)

February 28 - Sunday Service
Holy Eucharist: Rite II (9:00 a.m.)
celebrant - the Reverend Jim Abernathy
Christian Formation
Children - Godly Play (10:00 a.m.)
Adult/Youth - Bible Journals (10:00 a.m.)

February Birthdays

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

Vestry

Rector: the Reverend Paul Wehner
Sr. Warden: Gwynne Olson
Jr. Warden: Dan Roddy
Clerk: Colleen Matocha

St. Mary's Episcopal Church, corner of 16th and Clay Street, West Columbia
PO Box 786, West Columbia, Texas 77486
979-345-3456 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.