

The Bells of St. Mary's

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The Reverend Sharron Cox is a fifth-generation Texan, born and raised in Texas City. A cradle Episcopalian, she was baptized and confirmed at St. George's Episcopal Church. She received her Bachelor of Science in Sociology and Business from Texas A&M University and was later awarded a Master in Business Administration from the University of Texas at Austin. While she has no confusion about which college sport team to support, Sharron is sympathetic to many college programs. After dabbling in banking and corporate real estate, Sharron spent twenty-two years in healthcare administration in finance and health policy, primarily working on the challenge of the uninsured and under-insured on behalf of various hospitals and other organizations. After years of serving her parish and the Diocese of Texas, Sharron finally gave-in to the "Hound of Heaven" and pursued ordination. She attended seminary at the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee and was awarded a Master in Divinity with honors in May 2014.

Before being called as rector by St. Mary's Episcopal Church in West Columbia, Sharron spent three-and-a-half years as first Curate and then Assistant Rector at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Waco. While there, she coordinated pastoral care and adult Christian formation. Among other projects, Sharron recruited lay leaders to receive training and begin a grief support program. Prior to seminary, Sharron was active in youth ministry over two decades in the Diocese of Texas. She was in the first graduation class of the Formation in Direction (FinD) program, a spiritual director training program within the Diocese of Texas and served as a spiritual director for eleven years, leading workshops, coordinating small groups, and teaching classes in Christian contemplative spirituality. Sharron is keenly interested in the intersection of faith, justice, and mercy through supporting local outreach and global mission work, particularly Amistad Mission in Bolivia, Thistle Farms in Nashville, and Agape International Mission in Cambodia.

Sharron is grateful to God that the unfolding of her life and ministry has brought her to work alongside the people of St. Mary's and the community of West Columbia. She is eager to see what God's transforming love is bringing about in both of these communities.



Annual Meeting

Mark your calendars and plan on attending our Annual Parish Meeting on Sunday, January 28th immediately following our church service. The Brotherhood of St. Andrew will be providing breakfast tacos. We will be voting on our new vestry members and delegates to the diocesan convention, reviewing 2017 and approving our 2018 budget. Please do not miss this crucial meeting. Your input is very important and valuable.



Traveling Mary and Joseph

Thank you to all who gave shelter to Mary and Joseph as they traveled to the stable near the altar of St. Mary's. They visited the homes of 10 families and you can see their travels by clicking below.



Christmas Eve Service

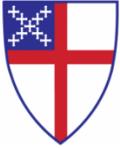
by Karen Logue

Our Christmas Eve service was a glorious event attended by parishioners, family, and visitors alike. The children did a superb job telling the story of Jesus' birth through the eyes of the animals and angels who witnessed our Savior's birth. Many thanks to Dani Mikel for working tirelessly to make sure our Christmas Pageant was a huge success. Refreshments were served in the Parish Hall following a service filled with carols, pageantry and the Holy Eucharist. It was a wonderful and joyful evening for all in attendance. Merry Christmas!



Parish Supper

Our January Parish Dinner will be held on Wednesday, January 17th beginning at 5 pm. The Millers' will be providing Marvin's famous Dutch Oven Lasagna. Bring a side dish, salad or dessert and join the fellowship. Invite your friends to come. If you missed last month's dinner, we had a grand time decorating the Christmas tree and singing Christmas carols.



Conventions

During 2018, we have the opportunity to attend two conventions, the Diocesan Convention in Waco and the General Convention in Austin. The Diocesan Convention for the Diocese of Texas will be held on February 15 - 18. St. Mary's will be sending two delegates to the convention. If you are interested in attending, please let a vestry member know. The delegates will be selected at our annual meeting on Sunday, January 26th.

From June 29th to July 13th, the Episcopal General Convention will be held and attended by Episcopalians from across the United States. This convention is held every three years with the last one taking place in Utah. Presiding Bishop Michael Curry will be speaking. All churches throughout Texas are asked to send volunteers to help with this very special event. You can find out more information by going to www.facebook.com/general.convention.2018.volunteers. Registration for volunteers opens The Feast of the Epiphany, January 6th.



Donations for the Military

In our parish hall there is a container by the door for donations to the West of the Brazos Military Support Group. Rees Sweeny, a member of our congregation, is involved in this organization. This organization supports all military branches and sends packages throughout the year to our service personnel overseas.

Each month specific items will be listed to purchase. The items for November are: paperback books, mice/rat traps (glue preferred), sunflower seeds, individual drink packets (ie-Gatorade), and coffee (single packets or 1# cans). They will also accept cash donations.

You can leave the items in the container at church and Rees will pick them up. This is an ongoing outreach program for our church.



Community Assistance

St. Mary's mailed 54 Walmart Gift Cards in the amount of \$100 per card to the families of West Columbia and our parish who were impacted by the floodwaters of Hurricane Harvey. Please continue to keep our church family members who were affected by the floodwaters in your prayers as well as those in our community who sustained damage. For many families, the cleanup is still an ongoing process and will continue to be burdensome for weeks to come.

If you know of anyone in need, please contact Karen or Tracy.



News from the Vestry

The vestry met Sunday, December 17th after the Sunday service.

Senior Warden's Report: Karen Logue

The parish dinner was well attended and the next one is scheduled for January 17th. The General Convention will be held in Austin this summer and an email was sent to the vestry asking for their help by providing a contact person and encouraging the parishioners to participate. Karen gave a report from the Search Committee and the Vestry Nominating Committee. She also reported that according to the Diocese, family members cannot serve on the Vestry at the same time.

Junior Warden's Report: Dan Roddy

The hole in the roof was repaired which should solve the squirrel problem. The water leak in the ladies' room is fixed. The exterior flood lights have been replaced. An estimate of \$3100 was given by EU-NEEK Painting to repair the plaster and paint damages in the church. Dan is going to be checking on repairing the problems with the organ.

Average Daily Attendance: Dani Mikel

The average Sunday attendance for November was 30.75.

Old Business

New Business

There was discussion about forming a team of trained ushers. Marvin will investigate an usher training program. The vestry worked on the budget for 2018.

The next vestry meeting will be Sunday, January 14, 2018.



Bible Study

Our Bible study will continue on January 4th as we begin our study of Ruth in the Old Testament. The book of Ruth is one of the greatest love stories ever told. Come join us and learn how the kindness and loyalty of Ruth, the stubbornness of Naomi and the protection of Boaz helped change the course of history. We meet each Thursday at 6 pm in the Parish Hall.

Christian One Liners

Thank you, Doris

- If God is your co-pilot, swap seats!
- God promises a safe landing, not a calm passage.
- The task ahead of us is never as great as the Power behind us.

Message from Marvin Miller

Unexpressed Gratitude

From the book "Our Daily Bread"

"Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good." Ps. 107:1

The whole reason for saying thanks is to let the giver of the gift know how much you appreciate something. Author G.B. Stern once said "Silent gratitude isn't much use to anyone."

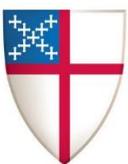
When our son was young, he sometimes needed to be reminded that avoiding eye contact, looking down at his feet, and mumbling some unintelligible words, was not an acceptable "thank you." And, after many years of marriage, my husband and I are still learning that it's important for us to continually express our gratitude to each other. When one of us feels appreciative, we try to verbalize it -- even if we've said it many times before about the same thing. William Arthur Ward said "Feeling gratitude, and not expressing it, is like wrapping a present and not giving it."

Showing our gratitude is obviously important in human relationships, but it's even more essential in our relationship with God. As we think about the many blessings we have received, do we express our thanks to Him throughout the day? And when we think about the amazing gift of His death and resurrection for forgiveness of our sins, do our hearts bubble over with awe and thanksgiving?

Take the reminder of Psalm 107:1 to heart each day: "Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good."

How great should be our gratitude
To God, our unseen Friend!
The volume of His gifts to us,
We cannot comprehend.—Hess

God's highest gift should awaken our deepest gratitude



What Do They Mean

In the Episcopal Church there are many specific terms. The **thingamajig** that the ushers carry to the altar and give the acolytes has a name as does the **pretty cover on the altar** or the **rope** around the acolyte's waist. Here is a list of terms in ordinary use in the Episcopal Church. Each month, new terms will be presented. The list is neither exhaustive nor definitive. See how many of these words you know.

Holy Communion: also **Holy Eucharist** or the **Lord's Supper:** the Christian sacramental meal, the Eucharist

Confirmation: the sacrament by which those who have been made members, by baptism, of Christ's Mystical Body, the Church, are given the gift of the Holy Ghost through the laying on of hands by the bishop

Congregation: group gathered in a particular church

The Corporal: a square piece of linen that is placed under the chalice for the celebration of the Eucharist



Reesie Cantrell as a member of the West Columbia Student Council shopped for kids with financial needs to help provide them with a special Christmas.

Haley Cantrell was elected to the West Brazos Jr. High Student Council. At the MA Twirling Competition she placed first in duet and 2nd runner up in show twirl.

Brayze was elected to the West of the Brazos Jr. High Student Council. He was named Boy Student of the Month for 7th grade.

Abigail Roddy received the Excellence Award at West Columbia Elementary School.

Braylee Schill made the UIL Social Studies team.

Aaron Mikel was accepted to Texas State University. He also was named as a first team all-district defensive player - outside linebacker and an academic all-district player.

Piper Roddy was elected to the West Brazos Jr. High Student Council. She also made the A-B Honor Roll.

Ashlie Weisinger made Student of the Month for first grade at West Columbia Elementary School.

Justin Hussey made the Dean's List at Sul Ross State University .

Hunter Weisinger was voted in as a member of the West Columbia Volunteer Fire Department. He was one of the responders at the Grosvenor's house after the car ran into their house.



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

There are several items that we would like to have at St. Mary's. If you would like to donate any of these items, you can bring them by the church office or leave them in the parish hall.

1. couch and/or love seat for the parish hall to replace the old ones that are there and in poor shape



2. paint brushes of various sizes to paint and decorate the walls in the Jr. High Christian Formation room
3. lab boards for the Jr. High Christian Formation
4. Bean bag chairs for the Jr. High Christian Formation room.

Thank you to the Mikel family for the donation of a bungee chair for the Jr. High group. Thank you to Sue Crutcher for the desk and filing cabinet for the office.

A Great Big Thank You

Thank you to Shyanne, Heather, and David for providing meals for our Wednesday night Christian Formation classes. If you would like to provide a meal, please get with Dani. There is a sign up sheet at the entrance to the church. We will need meals starting in January.



Don't Forget

Please check the calendar at the entrance to the church and sign up to provide food for Hospitality after church. We still have openings in February and the rest of the months after that.

Remember to look at the bulletin board in the Parish Hall. New information, cards, news clippings, etc. are added frequently.

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.

Dates to Remember

January 2- DOK (9:30 am)

January 4 - Bible Study (6:00 pm)

January 7 -Reverend Frances
Brotherhood (7:30 am)

January 10 - Christian Formation
(5:00 pm - 6:30)

January 11 - Bible Study (6:00 pm)

January 14 -Reverend Frances
January 17-Parish Dinner and Christian
Formation (5:00 pm)

January Birthdays

Hannah Hussey - January 1

Megan Hussey -January 2

Abigail Roddy - January 6

Ray Ledlie - January 22

Luke Davidson - January 28

Karen Logue - February 2

December Anniversaries

Michael & Charlotte Blount - January 2

January 18 - Bible Study (6:00 pm)

Dan & Donna Roddy - January 3

January 21 - Reverend Brown
Brotherhood (7:30 am)
Vestry Meeting

January 24 - Christian Formation
(5:00 pm - 6:30)

January 25 - Bible Study (6:00 pm)

January 28 -Reverend Morgan
Annual Meeting

January 31- Christian Formation
(5:00 pm - 6:30)

February 1 - Bible Study (6:00 pm)

Changes to the Directory

In the directory, please only delete the PO Box address for Carol Jones

Vestry Members

Sr.Warden KarenLogue
(kklogue@msn.com)

Jr. Warden Dan Roddy
(dkroddy@earthlink.net)

Clerk Marvin Miller
(mgminspections@earthlink.net)

Treasurer Dani Mikel
(danimikel87@yahoo.com)

Church (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.