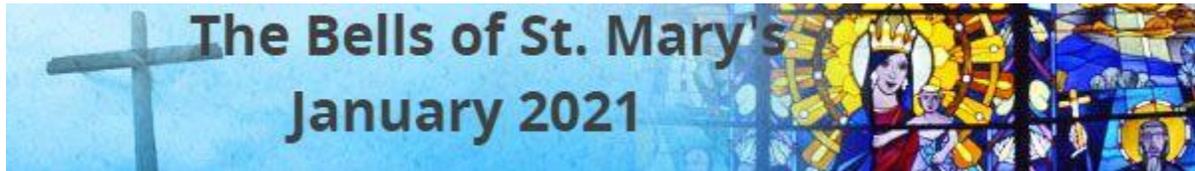




St. Mary's

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.



Message from the Senior Warden

Hi Ya Family!

The big news today is that your vestry is happy and excited to announce that Father Paul Wehner has agreed to serve as our interim rector. Father Paul (and his family) has served us as a supply priest for several weeks. Take a look at a short biography of Father Paul elsewhere, in this newsletter. Father Paul will lead our church service 2 or 3 Sundays per month, and work in the church office 2 or 3 weekdays per month. Please get to know Father Paul, his wife Sherry, granddaughter Amber, and grandson, Travis, and welcome them into the St. Mary's family.

The next big thing is the Annual Congregational Meeting, right here in the church sanctuary, immediately following the church service on Sunday, January 24th. The vestry will discuss church finances, highlights of 2020, plans for 2021, the ranch, elect new vestry members, and more. So, put it on your calendar: January 24th, 9:00 AM if you attend the church service, or 10:30 AM if you just want to enjoy the Annual Meeting. Let's make '21 better than '20!

Have a great year!

Marvin Miller
Senior Warden



Who will Serve?



There are so many ways to serve at St. Mary's. Two new opportunities are available, serving on the vestry and being a delegate to the Diocesan Council.

Charlotte Blount's and Marvin Miller 's terms on the vestry have expired and new vestry members are being sought. Although, we have for several years had a vestry with three members, we can have more. The vestry meets at least once a month and works together to support the congregation, make financial decisions based on the approved budget, develop ideas to promote St. Mary's and her mission, and listen to the parishioners' suggestions.

The Diocesan Council is the annual business meeting of the Diocese consisting of delegates from all congregations, college ministries, clergy, and lay heads of congregations. St. Mary's can have up to four delegates representing her at the Diocesan Council. Because of COVID19, the Diocesan Council will be virtual on Friday, February 26th and Saturday, February 27th, so instead of traveling the delegates get to stay home.

Before thinking you can't serve, think about all you have to offer and pray for guidance to see if one of these positions is right for you. If you are interested, call the office so your name can be presented at the annual meeting. Those who indicated on their pledge card an interest in the vestry or Diocesan Council have been included on the list to be presented.



Community Assistance

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

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



Valentine Boxes for College Students

There are three parishioners from St. Mary's, Maddie Lane, Aaron Mikel, and Ally Lane, attending college this year. This has been a difficult and unusual year for all three of them as they try to manage classes on-line and in-person.

Once again, we will be sending each of them a valentine box full of goodies and letters of encouragement. In the Narthex, there will be a box for the donations until Sunday, February 7th. Donations can also be brought to the church office or you can mail gift cards or monetary donations to PO Box 786, West Columbia, 77486. Please do not donate anything too bulky or heavy.

Help us let Maddie, Aaron, and Ally, who give so much to St. Mary's, know we are thinking of them and sending them our prayers.

If there are any other college students from St. Mary's that are not listed, please let the office know as soon as possible.

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.



News from the Vestry

Gwynne Olson, Clerk

The vestry met Sunday, December 20, 2020.

Senior Warden's Report: Marvin Miller

Marvin reported on the status of hiring an interim Rector. Marvin also stated that St. Mary's Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 24, 2021 and will be held in the Sanctuary where we will socially distance. The vestry continued to work on the 2021 budget.

Junior Warden's Report: Charlotte Blount

We are getting several estimates: replacing the linoleum in the bell tower, repairing the hole in the parking lot, getting the church power-washed, and repairing of the church pews.

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

Message from Marvin Miller

CHRISTMAS STORY

Paul received a new automobile from his brother as a Christmas present. On Christmas Eve, when Paul came out of his office, a street urchin was walking around the shiny new car, admiring it. "Is this your car, Mister?" he asked.

Paul nodded, "My brother gave it to me for Christmas." The boy was astounded. "You mean your brother gave it to you and it didn't cost you nothing? Boy, I wish..." He hesitated.

And Paul knew what he was going to wish. He was going to wish he had a brother like that. But what the lad said jarred Paul all the way down to his heels.

"I wish," the boy went on, "that I could be a brother like that."

Paul looked at the boy in astonishment, then impulsively he added, "Would you like to ride in my automobile?"

"Oh, yes, I'd love that."

After a short ride, the urchin turned and with his eyes aglow, said, "Mister, would you mind driving in front of my house?"

Paul smiled a little. He thought he knew what the lad wanted. He wanted to show his neighbors that he could ride home in a big automobile. But Paul was wrong again.

"Will you stop where those two steps are?" the boy asked.

He ran up the steps. Then in a little while Paul heard him coming back, but he was not coming fast. He was carrying his little polio-crippled brother. He sat him down on the bottom step, then sort of squeezed up against him and pointed to the car.

"There she is, Buddy, just like I told you upstairs. His brother gave it to him for Christmas and it didn't cost him a cent. And some day I'm gonna give you one just like it...then you can see for yourself all the pretty things in the Christmas windows that I've been trying to tell you about."

Paul got out and lifted the little lad to the front seat of his car. The shining-eyed older brother climbed in beside him and the three of them began a memorable holiday ride.

That Christmas Eve Paul learned what Jesus meant when he said:

"It is more blessed to give..."

Jim Gentil



2021 Bible Reading Plan

For Christian Formation in 2021, we will read the Bible Chronologically (in date order) and journal what we hear from God in the Scriptures. It only takes about 20 minutes a day. You can choose when to read. Some people read in the morning, some during their lunch hour, and others at bedtime. Free Bible reading journals are available to everyone and can be picked up after church or from the church office. The journal has the reading schedule, as well as an example of how to journal your Bible reading, plus many more features. We begin meeting January 10th after church. You can join us in the Parish Hall or contact Dani about getting set up on a Zoom call. I hope you will join us!

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

Shyanne Roddy was accepted into the Alpha Epsilon Sigma Chapter of Kappa Delta Pi, the international honor society in education. She was also accepted into a paid internship at Brazosport Independent School District with first grade at the Bess Brannon Campus.

Maddie Lane made the Texas A&M Dean's List for the Fall Semester with a 4.0.

Brayze Schill placed 7th at the Junior World Finals in Novice Bareback.

Trace Roddy made the A/B Honor Roll and received no conduct marks for the 2nd Nine Weeks grading period at West Columbia Elementary.

Braylee Schill placed 5th in Grit Fitness' Crash Dash Women's Division.

Reesie Cantrell made the A/B Honor Roll for the first semester at Columbia Brazoria High School.

Abigail Roddy made the A/B Honor Roll and received no conduct marks for the 2nd Nine Weeks grading period at West Columbia Elementary.

Haley Cantrell made the Varsity Soccer Team at Columbia Brazoria High School. She also made all As for the first semester.



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.



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

- the Reverend Paul Wehner, the Reverend Jim Morgan, and the Reverend Jim Abernathy for serving as our celebrants during the month of December.
- Theata Miller, Dani Mikel, Wendy Hankins, Kendy Hankins, Reesie Cantrell, AJ Mikel, Brayze Schill, Dan Roddy, Colleen Matocha, Abigail Roddy, Travis Prater, Shyanne Roddy, Adam Schill, Marvin Miller, Gwynne Olson, and Braylee Schill for serving as Worship Leaders during the month of December.
- Amber Prater for setting up the Livestreaming on our Facebook site.
- Jackie Walker and Mary Stewart for helping in the church office.
- AJ and Dani Mikel, Dan and Donna Roddy, the Hankins Family, Colleen Matocha, Jackie Walker, Mary Stewart, the Roddy Family and Cecile and Ronnie Johnson for providing gifts and food for the Angel Tree Families.
- Dan and Donna Roddy, AJ and Dani Mikel, and the Hankins Family for donating toward the purchase of the poinsettias.
- Reesie Cantrell, Brayze Schill, Braylee Schill, Jacey Hussey, Abigail Roddy, Trace Roddy, and Madeline Roddy for participating in the Christmas program.

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.

Dates to Remember

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

January 1 - The Reverend Paul Wehner begins his position as our interim rector.

January 3 - Sunday Service
Holy Eucharist: Rite II (9:00 a.m.)
celebrant - the Reverend Jim Abernathey

January 6 - Church office closed.

January 10 - Sunday Service
The Baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ
Holy Eucharist: Rite II (9:00 a.m.)
celebrant - the Reverend Paul Wehner
Christian Formation
Children - Godly Play (10:00 a.m.)
Adult/Youth - Bible Journals (10:00 a.m.)
Vestry meeting (10:30 a.m.)

January Birthdays

Hannah Hussey - January 1
Megan Hussey - January 2
Abigail Roddy - January 6
the Reverend Paul Wehner - January 20
Luke Davidson - January 28

January 10 - February 7 - donations accepted for the Valentine Boxes for our college students.

January 17 - Sunday Service
Holy Eucharist: Rite II (9:00 a.m.)
celebrant - the Reverend Jim Abernathey
Christian Formation
Adult/Youth - Bible Journals (10:00 a.m.)

January 24 - Sunday Service
Holy Eucharist: Rite II (9:00 a.m.)
celebrant - the Reverend Paul Wehner
Annual Meeting (10:30 a.m.)

January 31 - Sunday Service
Holy Eucharist: Rite II (9:00 a.m.)
celebrant - the Reverend Paul Wehner
Christian Formation
Children - Godly Play (10:00 a.m.)
Adult/Youth - Bible Journals (10:00 a.m.)

January Anniversaries

Charlotte and Mike Blount - January 2
Donna and Dan Roddy - January 3
Gwynne and Bill Olson - January 17

St. Mary's Leadership

Vestry

Rector: the Reverend Paul Wehner
Sr. Warden: Marvin Miller
Jr. Warden: Charlotte Blount
Clerk: Gwynne Olson