

The Bells of St. Mary's March 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.



The month of March finds us in a season of transitions. Old man winter seems to be running out of steam. Signs of spring are popping up everywhere. We are not only entering a new season of nature but also a new season of the Church...Lent.

The gospel reading from Ash Wednesday always sets the tone for Lent. From his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is speaking of proper ways in which to express our devotion to God. Give for the benefit of others without drawing attention to ourselves. Pray always but be humble, don't draw attention to your personal piety. Explore how some food or daily habit could profit from a bit of "fasting."

That last one is a bit tricky for me if I read Matthew 6 literally and seek to fast from eating food. When I was young, I tried to give up liver for Lent...my parents pointed out that as a Lenten discipline I probably needed to refrain from eating food I actually liked! As I grew older and sought to try a fast from all food for a period of time as was the biblical fast we read about, I discovered that there was something about my metabolism that requires me to eat...or I get sick. So mostly I either find a particular food to refrain from indulging in during Lent, or I see if I can "fast" from a particular behavior that is not helpful to me or does not bring glory to God.

How will you observe Lent this year? Will you abstain from some food or behavior? Will you instead decide to take on a spiritual practice that will draw you closer to God? Either way, have a holy Lent by seeking to pay more attention to the movements of God and God's spirit throughout your day and throughout your life.

Blessings,

The Mustard Seed Church

Sowing Seeds in the Community...

A Way to Give Back: Blessings in a Backpack from the Community Assistance Committee

St. Mary's has volunteered to help West Columbia Elementary school with their Backpack program. This program provides food on the weekends for children in need. Backpacks are sent home on Friday with the children and contain non-perishable, kid friendly and easy to prepare food items such as:

- Canned veggies and fruit (with easy open tops)
- Canned meat, chicken, tuna, stews, ravioli or spaghetti (with easy open tops)
- Easy Mac and cheese
- Juice Boxes
- Snacks (granola bars, peanut butter crackers, etc.)
- Breakfast items (small boxes of cereal, cereal bars, etc.)

These items will be collected during the month of March. You may leave your items or donation at the entrance to the church. Thank you for being a blessing to others!

Proverbs 3:9-10: "Honor the LORD with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine."



March Parish Dinner

Our next Parish Dinner will be March 18th at 5:30 p.m. Gwynne and Bill Olson will provide the main entree, delicious spaghetti. All that are needed now are "all the fixins" and a hardy appetite. There is a sign-up sheet in the Parish Hall for those who would like to provide sides, salads, bread, drinks, or desserts.

Remember to invite your neighbors, family members, and friends. The more the merrier as we share together a wonderful meal, friendly conversation, and warm fellowship.



Diocesan Council Delegate Report

In February, we had the opportunity to attend our first Diocesan Council meeting held in Waco, Texas. We enjoyed learning about the Episcopal Diocese of Texas and representing St. Mary's as we voted on lay and clergy committee members and 1st readings of constitution amendments.

What we learned is that our Diocese is financially healthy as we do not have any debt. Under Chief Financial Officer Linda Mitchell's leadership, the Diocese of Texas is debt-free and has not needed to touch the available line-of-credit for the past four years.

Council was made up of 378 Lay Delegates and 173 Clergy Delegates, proving that as Bishop Doyle stated, the Episcopal Church is led by lay members. Each parish can send up to four delegates and all clergy to Diocesan Council, meaning that the majority of the votes lie in the hands of the laypeople. If you have never attended Diocesan Council, we urge you to attend. Next year it will be held in Galveston.

With an initial vote and then a subsequent run-off vote, it was a privilege to be with Rev. Sharron when she was elected as a member of the Church Corporation Committee. This committee oversees all property acquisitions, building projects, and the sale of property. We anticipate St. Mary's will benefit from the knowledge Rev. Sharron will gain from being on this committee.

We are grateful to have been a part of this important Diocesan Council and representing the parishioners of St. Mary's.

In Peace,
Bill and Gwynne Olson

Easter Lilies

The Easter Lilies have once again been ordered from Brookwood. They will be picked up on Thursday, April 9th. If you would like to go that day to Brookwood for lunch, shopping, and helping pick up the lilies, please let the office know by Friday, March 13th, before 3:00 p.m. Reservations will need to be made as soon as possible.

Donations for the Easter lilies will be accepted beginning Sunday, March 15th. If you would like to make a donation, envelopes will be available in the narthex and in the Parish Hall beginning that day. The envelopes can be placed in the offertory plate any Sunday before Easter. They can also be mailed to or dropped off at the church office.



Community Assistance

In February, one family was helped with rent, two families were helped with electric bills, and one family was helped with their water bill.

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

Holy Week Schedule

Palm Sunday - April 5th - 9:00 a.m. - weather permitting we will start in the Prayer Garden

Maundy Thursday - April 9th - 7:00 p.m. - Holy Eucharist and stripping of the altar

Good Friday - April 10th - April 10th - noon

Easter - Sunday, April 12th - 9:00 a.m. Flowering of the Cross will be before the service.



Good Friday Offering

The Good Friday Offering is an initiative of the Office of the Presiding Bishop which dates to 1922 when in the aftermath of World War I, the Episcopal Church sought to create new relationships with and among the Christians of the Middle East. From these initial efforts which focused on a combination of relief work and the improvement of ecumenical and Anglican relations, the Good Friday Offering was created. The first church-wide offering was received in 1923. (Office of Global Partnerships)

On Good Friday, there will be an offering plate placed at the entrance to the church for any donations to the Good Friday Offering. For those who cannot attend the Good Friday service, envelopes will be available in the Narthex during Holy Week or you can send your donation directly to the church office anytime during Lent, noting on the memo line "Good Friday Donation".

Here is the letter we received from the Most Reverend Michael B. Curry, Presiding Bishop and Primate of The Episcopal Church.

THE
Episcopal
CHURCH

Late Epiphany 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I greet you in the Name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

I am writing to you as we look ahead to Holy Week, with its focus on our Lord's sacrificial offering of love on the cross and our response in faith to that outpouring of love for us and for all of creation.

Love is at the heart of the meaning of the cross. Love is at the heart of the life Christ calls us to live. Love is at the heart of the movement Jesus began and which we live in our own time.

Love is at the foundation of the Good Friday Offering of our Church which provides an opportunity for every parish throughout our Church to be connected with the ministry of love and compassion carried out by our Anglican sisters and brothers throughout the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East.

I believe our partnership with those who keep the faith of Jesus alive in the region, where our Lord walked and began his movement, is a significant aspect of our work as part of the church catholic.

The Good Friday Offering provides hope and opportunity for students, patients, needy families and more in the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East. We do make a difference. This is important. I have witnessed this Jesus-inspired compassion and commitment at work with my own eyes.

I hope you will encourage the members of your congregation to participate in this effort. Information, including bulletin covers, inserts, and more, is available at <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/global-partnerships/good-friday-offering>. Any questions about this program may be directed to the Rev. Canon Robert Edmunds, our Middle East Partnership Officer. He can be reached at redmunds@episcopalchurch.org.

Thank you for considering this important witness to the love of Jesus across our Church. May God bless you and keep you always. I remain

Your brother in Christ,



The Most Rev. Michael B. Curry
Presiding Bishop and Primate
The Episcopal Church

The Most Reverend Michael Curry
PRESIDING BISHOP AND PRIMATE





News from the Vestry

Gwynne Olson, Clerk

The vestry met Sunday, February 23, 2020.

Rector Report: The Reverend Sharron Cox

Rev. Sharron gave a review of the Annual Meeting. In regards to the renovations to the Parish Hall restrooms and the Narthex, no one has approached her to share their perspective or concerns. She has also been in communication with David Fisher, Director of Foundations and liaison with the Church Corporation, regarding the renovations. Since we are not in need of a loan for the renovations, we do not need to go through the Church Corporation's formal approval process to move forward, but will consult with David Fisher regarding the next steps we need to take.

Rev. Sharron also gave a Diocesan Council Report and stated that the church assessment formula will remain the same this year. The Diocese recognized several new missions and new parishes at this year's meeting and emphasized missional communities since we are moving to era of non-traditional church services. There was a first reading of a constitution amendment to cover expenses of lay delegates to attend Council. Bishop Doyle presented a \$13m fund for racial justice projects to repair and commence racial healing in the Episcopal Church. Next year's Diocesan Council will be held in Galveston.

Rev. Sharron gave the next steps for the Reboot Grant for the youth stating the last meeting for the Youth Council is on March 1st. March will be a time of preparing a report to submit for the \$12,000 grant. She will need writers to assist in the writing of the report.

Senior Warden's Report: Marvin Miller

Marvin gave the vestry a copy of the Episcopal Church Foundation article "Five Things Every Vestry Member Should Know". He also gave the vestry a copy of the Vestry Resource Guide. He is looking forward to being Senior Warden this year.

Junior Warden's Report: Charlotte Blount

Charlotte stated the restroom renovation will begin sometime after Easter so we can have restrooms available during the busy church holy season.

A copy of the vestry minutes will be placed on the bulletin board in the Parish Hall once approved at the March meeting. The next Vestry meeting is Sunday, March 22 at 11:00 a.m.



Daylight Saving Time

Daylight Saving Time begins on Sunday, March 8, 2020 at 2:00 A.M. On Saturday night, set your clocks forward one hour (i.e. losing one hour) to "spring ahead".

(old Farmer's Almanac - Google)

Message from Marvin Miller

THE PRICE OF A MIRACLE

By Jim Gentil

One dollar & 11 cents

A little girl went to her bedroom and pulled a glass jelly jar from its hiding place in the closet.

She poured the change out on the floor and counted it carefully. Three times, even. The total had to be exactly perfect. No chance here for mistakes.

Carefully placing the coins back in the jar and twisting on the cap, she slipped out the back door and made her way 6 blocks to the Rexall Drug Store with the big red Indian Chief sign above the door.

She waited patiently for the pharmacist to give her some attention but he was too busy at this moment. Tess twisted her feet to make a scuffing noise. Nothing. She cleared her throat with the most disgusting sound she could muster. No good. Finally, she took a quarter from her jar and banged it on the glass counter. That did it!

"And what do you want?" the pharmacist asked in an annoyed tone of voice. "I'm talking to my brother from Chicago whom I haven't seen in ages," he said without waiting for a reply to his question.

"Well, I want to talk to you about my brother," Tess answered back in the same annoyed tone. "He's really, really sick... and I want to buy a miracle!"

"I beg your pardon?" said the pharmacist.

"His name is Andrew and he has something bad growing inside his head and my Daddy says only a miracle can save him now. So how much does a miracle cost?"

"We don't sell miracles here, little girl. I'm sorry but I can't help you," the pharmacist said, softening a little.

"Listen, I have the money to pay for it. If it isn't enough, I will get the rest. Just tell me how much it costs."

The pharmacist's brother was a well-dressed man. He stooped down and asked the little girl, "What kind of a miracle does your brother need?"

"I don't know," Tess replied with her eyes welling up. "I just know he's really sick and Mommy says he needs an operation. But my Daddy can't pay for it, so I want to use my money."

"How much do you have?" asked the man from Chicago.

"One dollar and eleven cents," Tess answered barely audibly.

"And it's all the money I have, but I can get some more if I need to."

"Well, what a coincidence," smiled the man. "A dollar and eleven cents---the exact price of a miracle for little brothers. "

He took her money in one hand and with the other hand he grasped her mitten and said "Take me to where you live. I want to see your brother and meet your parents. Let's see if I have the miracle you need."

That well-dressed man was Dr. Carlton Armstrong, a surgeon, specializing in neuro-surgery. The operation was completed free of charge and it wasn't long until Andrew was home again and doing well.

Mom and Dad were happily talking about the chain of events that had led them to this place.

That surgery," her Mom whispered. "was a real miracle. I wonder how much it would have cost?"

Tess smiled. She knew exactly how much a miracle cost...one dollar and eleven cents. plus the faith of a little child.

In our lives, we never know how many miracles we will need.

A miracle is not the suspension of natural law, but the operation of a higher law.

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

Piper Roddy received a 2 rating for her Solo at the UIL High School Choir Competition.

Abigail Roddy competed in the twirling competition in Needville and placed 2nd in Show Twirl, 2nd in Military, 5th in Basic Strut, 2nd in Miss Twirl, and 4th in Solo.

Haley Cantrell earned 1st place in Show Twirl at the twirling competition held in Needville. She was also a member of the Columbia High School relay team when they placed 3rd and 6th.

Braylee Schill earned 2nd place in the 2400 and 4th place in the 1600 representing West Brazos Junior High at their first track meet.

Kendy Hankins earned a Pawsitive Referral at Tenie Holmes Elementary in Bay City for 5th grade academic improvement.

Brayze Schill won the Bareback competition at the San Antonio Youth Rodeo. He is also is in first place in Bareback after the preliminary round and headed to the finals in the Jr. National Finals Rodeo in Arlington.

Robert Mikel and Sydney Hale are engaged.



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.

Family Campout is April 24-25. This one night family retreat is full of Piney Woods, starry skies, and wilderness fun! Packages include equipment for tent setup, outdoor cooking skills for three classic campout meals, outdoor living skills workshop, guided hiking, kayaking, and nostalgic campfire with skits and smores.

Summer Camp registration is now open, and sessions are filling up fast. St. Mary's pays for 2/3's of parishioners' fees.



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:

- David Mikel for fixing the printer in the office as well as serving as our technical advisor.
- James Beard for making sure the field across from the church is kept mowed.
- Marvin Miller, AJ Mikel, Kirby Rapstein, Brian Lane, Ed Logue, Dan Roddy, Theata Miller, Piper Roddy, Colleen Matocha, Donna Roddy, Rev. Sharron, Gwynne Olson, Jackie Walker, Karen Logue, and Dani Mikel for all their help at the Pancake Supper which included setting up, cooking, greeting visitors, serving, and cleaning up.
- Mary Stewart, Theata and Marvin Miller, Donna and Dan Roddy, and Jackie Walker for providing the food for hospitality during the month of February.

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

April 5: Palm Sunday (9:00 a.m.)
Hospitality (10:00 a.m.)

March 1: Brotherhood (7:30 a.m.)
Sunday Service (9:00 a.m.)
Hospitality (10:00 a.m.)
Christian Formation (10:20 a.m.)
Reboot Meeting (12:30 p.m.)

March 1-2: Small Church Network at
Camp Allen

March 2: DOK meeting (5:30 p.m.)

March 5: Yoga class (10:00 a.m.)

March 7: Daylight Saving Time is
tomorrow. Set your clock forward
one hour before going to bed.

March 8: Daylight Saving Time

March 8: Sunday Service (9:00 a.m.)
Hospitality (10:00 a.m.)
no Christian Formation

March 12: Yoga class (10:00 a.m.)

March 15: Brotherhood (7:30 a.m.)
Sunday Service (9:00 a.m.)
Hospitality (10:00 a.m.)
Christian Formation (10:20 a.m.)

March 16: Rev Sharron will be on
vacation.

March 18: Parish Dinner (5:30 p.m.)

March 19: Yoga class (10:00 a.m.)

March 22: Sunday Service (9:00 a.m.)
Hospitality (10:00 a.m.)
Christian Formation (10:20 a.m.)
Vestry (11:00 a.m.)

March 26: Yoga class (10:00 a.m.)

March 27: Reboot Grant Application due

March 29: Brotherhood (7:30 a.m.)
Sunday Service (9:00 a.m.)
Hospitality (10:00 a.m.)
Christian Formation (10:20 a.m.)

Christian Formation (10:20 a.m.)

April 9: Maundy Thursday (7:00 p.m.)

April 10: Good Friday (noon)

April 12: Brotherhood (7:30 a.m.)
Flowering of the Cross
(8:15 - 8:55 a.m.)
Easter service (9:00 a.m.)
Hospitality and Egg Hunt (10:00 a.m.)

March Birthdays

Marglet Arana - March 6

Ed Logue - March 9

Kurt Hankins - March 12

Jackie Walker - March 17

Doris Grosvenor - March 20

Tommy Cantrell - March 22

Theata Miller - March 24

Braylee Schill - March 28

Maddie Lane - March 30

March Anniversaries

St. Mary's Leadership

Rector

The Reverend Sharron Cox

Vestry

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

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.