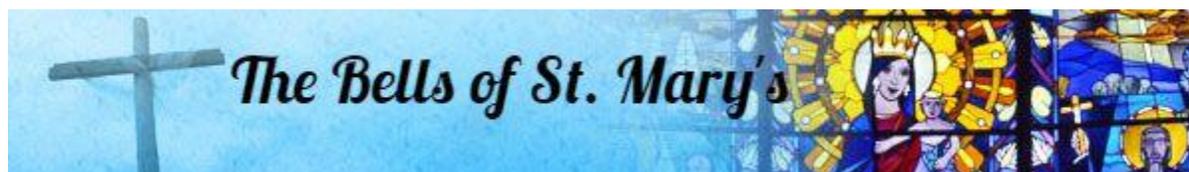


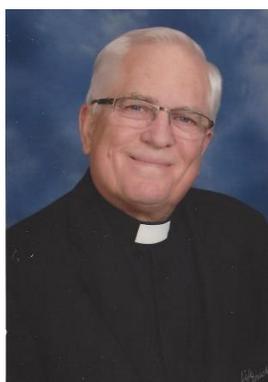


St. Mary's
EPISCOPAL CHURCH
The Mustard Seed Church

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



March 2021 Edition



Message from Father Paul

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 People of St. Mary's,

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 we hope 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. To help get you started, we are providing the Lenten Devotional, *Mending Our Hearts*, by Alice Camille, and it is available in our church office. In her introduction, Camille remembers how the Lenten season of 2020 was laid waste by a worldwide pandemic that interrupted our forty days of introspection and replaced it with more than a year of worry and imposed isolation. Therefore, she says, “We enter this new season of repentance with a lot on our minds and in our hearts. Let’s mend our world together, committing to the common good as we seek to heal body and soul. Let’s reimagine community through the benevolent eyes of Jesus.”

Her daily offerings are intended to do just that – to help us mend our hearts and to also be a viable part of mending our communities. Her Ash Wednesday reflection concludes, “to become the Beloved Community, we have to agree that hunger, homelessness, prejudice, and violence are intolerable and inhuman. We have to choose love and trust over fear and hate. Lent isn’t a season of small dreams – we’re taking a journey from death into life. We can afford to think big.”

I encourage us all to think big.

Faithfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul" with a small cross symbol at the end.

Message from the Senior Warden Gwynne Olson

Ash Wednesday began the Lenten season. Father Paul started a new service called Ashes to Go where people could drive up and he, with Travis’ help, administered ashes. He had the opportunity to minister to some folks that have never attended our church. We hope to make this an annual event.

Can I suggest you take a look at the bookcase in the Parish Hall and pick out a book to read during our season of Lent? There are some great offerings in the bookcase that are free for the taking. One is a famous devotional book, “God Calling”. There is also a Chronological Bible for those wanting to join the Adult and Youth Christian Formation class on Sundays after church. And I was amazed to find “Hillbilly Elegy”, which was made into a movie and recently aired on Netflix.

Also, please be in prayer for the vestry as we prepare for the rector search. Last Sunday we met with the Rev. Kellaura Johnson, Diocese Transition Minister. If you would like to be part of the Rector Search Committee, please let Dan Roddy, Colleen Matocha, or myself know. We thank you for your prayers for the vestry and St. Mary’s during this time of transition.

HOLY WEEK



WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Palm Sunday – March 28th

The Palm Sunday service will begin at 9:00 AM in the Prayer Garden beside the church. Following the Liturgy of the Palms, the congregation will process into the church, waving palm fronds and making joyful noises. Once most of us are inside, the processional hymn, *All Glory Laud and Honor* will begin. The service includes the traditional reading of the Passion of Christ by members of our congregation.

Maundy Thursday – April 1st

The service will begin at 6:00 PM. Maundy Thursday commemorates the first Eucharist, The Last Supper, when Jesus met with his disciples the evening before he was to be crucified. Please come and celebrate this special Eucharist led by Rev. Paul Wehner, as we remember the last days of our Lord Jesus Christ. At the end of the service, the altar guild will strip the altar as a visual reminder of the dark events of Good Friday.

Prayer Vigil - April 1st - April 2nd

(see [Virtual Prayer Vigil](#) article)

As disciples of today, we are the ones that Jesus asks to stay awake and watch as he prays and suffers in his final hours. Our plan is to do this by taking turns throughout the evening to be *virtually* “present” with the sacrament of his Body and Blood. We plan to livestream the first hour of our in-person prayer vigil, and then post it for others to watch as they pray at later hours of the night. More details about the Virtual Prayer Vigil will be emailed to St. Mary’s parishioners in a few weeks.

Good Friday – April 2nd

The service will begin at noon. The Good Friday service commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus, the day when our Lord Jesus Christ suffered “*death upon the cross so that we might be saved and become heirs with him of everlasting life.*” The liturgy of the day includes the Way of the Cross (a.k.a., Stations of the Cross), a moving reenactment of the walk that Jesus took from the place of his sentencing to the cross on Calvary. The service continues with intercession known as the solemn collects, and devotions before the cross. The Eucharist is not celebrated; instead, we will consume all of the reserved sacrament.

Holy Saturday – April 3rd

The morning after the crucifixion, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus took the body of Jesus and laid him in a new tomb. The liturgy this morning is a short prayer service that reminds us of the contribution of those two secret disciples, and provides an opportunity to reflect on God’s mercy in the quiet of a church that is empty of its usual decorations. The service also offers prayers and encouragement for some of St. Mary’s important disciples behind the scenes – our Altar Guild.

JOIN US ON MAUNDY THURSDAY FOR A
Virtual Prayer Vigil



Help us keep watch. Post on our Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/StMarysWC>

Beginning @ 7:00 PM Thursday, April 1st to

9:00 AM on Good Friday, April 2

Sign-up to "*stay awake with me for one hour.*"

Virtual Prayer Vigil for Maundy Thursday Evening is based on Mark 14.32-37.

Jesus and his followers went to a place called Gethsemane. He said to them, "Sit here while I pray." Jesus took Peter, James, and John with him, and he began to be very sad and troubled. He said to them, "My heart is full of sorrow, to the point of death. Stay here and watch." After walking a little farther away from them, Jesus fell to the ground and prayed that, if possible, he would not have this time of suffering. He prayed, "Abba, Father! You can do all things. Take away this cup of suffering. But do what you want, not what I want." Then Jesus went back to his followers and found them asleep. He said to Peter, "Simon, are you sleeping? Couldn't you stay awake with me for one hour? Stay awake and pray for strength against temptation. The spirit wants to do what is right, but the body is weak."

As disciples of today, we are the ones that Jesus asks to stay awake and watch as he prays and suffers in his final hours. Our plan is to do this by taking turns throughout the evening to be *virtually* "present" with the sacrament of his Body and Blood. We plan to livestream the first hour of our in-person prayer vigil, and then post it for others to watch as they pray at later hours of the night. More details about the Virtual Prayer Vigil will be emailed to St. Mary's parishioners in a few weeks.



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.

In a 2020 letter, The Most Reverend Michael B. Curry wrote “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.”

During the Good Friday service, the offertory plates will be set out for anyone who would like to contribute to the Good Friday Offering. Donations can also be mailed to the church, donated through our PayPal account on the website, or put in the mail slot on the Rector's Office door at the church. Make sure you indicate your donation is for the Good Friday Offering.



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

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



Flowering of the Cross

The flowering of the cross has been traced back to the 6th century. It is a beautiful way to symbolize the new life that emerges from Jesus's death on Good Friday. When you enter the church on Easter Sunday, the cross will be bare, waiting to be transformed into a new life of beauty and color. After the opening hymn and salutations, the congregation will be invited to put their flowers on the cross. We ask that everyone, old and young alike, take part in transforming an ugly symbol of death into a glorious sign of vibrant life. Bring your flowers from home, or take several from the baskets in the Narthex – we want our cross to be a magnificent reminder of God's glory.



Eggs Needed

Our annual Easter egg hunt is fun and exciting for all who participate. Once again, we are asking for parishioners to provide plastic eggs filled with goodies (candy, toys, coins, etc.). You can bring the eggs on or before Palm Sunday or wait until Easter morning. Children remember to bring your Easter baskets on Easter Sunday.



San Jacinto Festival

St. Mary's will host a beverage booth on April 17th and 18th during the San Jacinto Festival. Part of the net proceeds collected from the booth will benefit St. Mary's. All supplies will be provided by the Chamber of Commerce, except the volunteers. We need people to set up at the beginning and pack up at the end as well as man the booth in 2- or 4-hour blocks. Youth can gain service hours for their participation.

This is a great way to serve our community and get the word out about St. Mary's. A sign-up sheet will be available in the Narthex.

World Day of Prayer 2021

Friday, March 5, 2021

Columbia United Methodist Church
West Columbia, TX - Fellowship Hall
9:30 a.m. Coffee
10:00 a.m. Program

Please wear a mask - Tables will be placed for Social Distance

Questions Call - Methodist Church Office (979) 345-4642

Message from Marvin Miller

*** How to Love, God's Way ***

David was the fifth child in our family of eight kids. He was two years older than me and was born with Downs Syndrome. We lived in the "way outback" in south Alabama.

When I was a small girl, I was so totally embarrassed when people would stare at him as if he were a freak. He always noticed it, too. Many times he would ask the rest of the family why are they looking at me like that? We always told him it was because he was so handsome. But, I was still ashamed to be seen with him in public myself, and I was his sister.

One hot summer afternoon when David was 14 years old, he came running into the house sobbing loudly. His heart was breaking in two. Before I could get to him to see what was wrong, he had fallen down beside his bed and began to cry and pray. This was his prayer:

"God, why me? Why am I so different from everybody else? Nobody understands me. I just want to play with all the other boys and be like them. Why? Why? Why am I so different?"

My heart began to pound. My anger began to rise. I walked outside to see what had happened. My younger brothers said several boys from the neighborhood had been in our yard mocking and making fun of David after he asked if he could play with them. They broke his heart.

Remembering what I had just heard, my anger turned to rage. I went looking for those boys. They were still mocking David when I found them two houses away. I whipped 3 boys that afternoon, all bigger and older than me. I quickly ran home and confessed my fighting to Mom, before those boy's mothers could get to her.

David was still crying when I had gotten home. He stayed beside his bed for over three hours crying and praying to God. When he finally ended his prayer, he so quietly said to God:

"I want your will to be done in my life. Amen. Thank you, God."

Crying myself, I tried to comfort David that afternoon, but could not. He was too broken in spirit to hear me or to feel my compassion for him.

That was the first time I really knew that David fully understood how different he was. My image and view of him totally changed that afternoon. He became a strong focal point in my life. I loved him so dearly and took him with me everywhere when Mom allowed me to.

My admiration and respect for him knew no boundaries. He showed love to everyone he came in contact with. His life was centered around loving people unconditionally. He accepted everyone. He never spoke ill of any person. Even when people hurt his feelings, he forgave them immediately and hugged their necks.

It was many years later, when he died at 49 years of age, that 'I' received the answer to 'his' prayer. I realized the "why" of David's life.

Before he was placed on life support and was unable to speak to us, I was sitting on a short stool beside his hospital bed when David reached for my hand about 2:30 a.m. in the morning. He smiled at me, told me he loved me and asked,

"Sis, will you hold my hand when you know?"

I knew from the look in his eye that he knew something I did not even want to think about. I hugged him tightly, gave him a kiss on the forehead and agreed to hold his hand until he got better.

David's earthly body soon gave up. He could not fight to stay alive for us any more. I had been holding his hand and singing worship choruses to him for several hours. He left this life behind as I was singing "Amazing Grace."

So many people attended his funeral. He had touched so many different people. The main topic of conversation about David at the funeral focused on the way he had touched and loved so many people during his lifetime.

Then I remembered his prayer and this was God's answer. The reason David was born with Downs Syndrome, and the reason he was so different was so everyone who knew him could learn to love, God's way, by watching David shine with pure, unconditional, unflinching love, forgiveness and longsuffering. What a wonderful man my brother was!

My heart breaks each time I think of the physical and emotional suffering throughout his lifetime. But I smile each time I think of what he meant to so many people.

His reason for being was to teach us how to love. God's way.

~ Author Unknown ~



Community Assistance

In February, we helped one family with their electricity bill and one family with a water bill. We also provided meals from the Senior Citizen Center for one couple.

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!**

Brayze Schill won the San Antonio Youth Rodeo in bareback riding.

Under the direction of Grace Culbreath, our organist, all 41 Tidehaven High School and Junior High Choir entries in the UIL Region Solo and Ensemble Contest, received a Superior or Excellent Rating. Six of the high school students qualified for the Texas State Solo and Ensemble.

Braylee Schill was 2nd in the 2400 meter run and 3rd in the 800 at her first Jr. High track meet this season.

Hayden Culbreath placed 5th in the Seventh Grade Boys' Shot Put at his first track meet. He also received a Superior Rating on his Clarinet Solo at the UIL Region Solo and Ensemble Contest.



Camp Allen Events

Camp Allen's summer sessions are filling up quickly. Please go to their website at campallen.org if you are planning on sending your child to Camp Allen this summer. Sessions are available for children and youth who will be in 3rd - 10th grade during the 2021-2022 school year. St.

Mary's pays 2/3 of the cost for parishioners. Once your child is registered contact Dani to make arrangements for the remaining balance.

"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.

Horsemanship Day Retreats - March 6, March 15, May 15 - Camp Allen is offering day retreats for beginner and advanced riders, ages 12-17. The day starts at 9 a.m. and ends at 5 p.m. The morning includes instruction and care of horses followed by a picnic lunch. The afternoon will be spent riding through the Camp Allen trails.

Needlepoint Retreats - March 3-5, June 2-4, September 8-10, December 8-10 - Join fellow crafters in the Piney Woods of Camp Allen for a three day, two night needlepointing retreat. Bring your own projects and acquire some new skills.



Don't forget to set your clocks forward one hour before you go to bed on Saturday. You wouldn't want to miss church.



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 Kellaura Johnson and the Reverend James Morgan for serving as our celebrants in February when Father Paul was not available.
- Theata Miller, Dani Mikel, AJ Mikel, Dan Roddy, Colleen Matocha, Travis Prater, Shyanne Roddy, Adam Schill, Brayze Schill, Reesie Cantrell, Marvin Miller, and Braylee Schill for serving as Worship Leaders during the month of February.
- Amber Prater for setting up the Livestreaming on our Facebook site.
- Gwynne Olson, Bill Olson, and the Reverend Wehner for serving as delegates at the Diocesan Council.
- Marvin Miller, Dan Roddy, Adam Schill, Brayze Scill, AJ Mikel, David Mikel, and Dani Mikel for getting the church ready for the cold weather.
- Sherry Wehner, the Reverend Paul Wehner, Travis Prater, Amber Prater, Abigail Roddy, Shyanne Roddy, Brayze Schill, and Dani Mikel for preparing the church for Lent.
- Donna Roddy, Dan Roddy, Gwynne Olson, and Bill Olson for organizing and arranging the Parish Hall.
- Travis Prater and Father Paul for standing outside in the cold to administer ashes to those who drove up to the church on Ash Wednesday.
- Holy Comforter for providing St. Mary's with 10 "Lent in a Bag" bags.

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.

March 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.)

March 13 - Set your clocks forward
before you go to bed.

March 14 - Daylight Savings Time-2 a.m.

March 14- 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.)

March 21 - 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.)
Vestry Meeting (11:00 a.m.)

March 28 - Palm Sunday Service

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

March Birthdays

Marglet Arana - March 6

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

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
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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