



The Bells of St. Mary's

May Edition



Mary stood outside the tomb, weeping. Had she gone to the wrong tomb? But then, a man standing nearby asked her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" She thought he might be the gardener and replied, "If you have taken his body, tell me where it is, and I will keep it safe." And Jesus said her name, "Mary," and she knew who it was immediately. (Paraphrase of John 20:14-16)

I imagine that grief kept Mary from being able to recognize Jesus. But why is it so hard for us to see Jesus in our lives? Is it because we are busy, life is busy? Is it because we have so many distractions? Does it require superpowers? Or just new glasses?

Yes. Yes, yes, yes to all of the above! We are too busy. We are so easily distracted. We do need superpowers and new lens to look at our lives and the world in which we live to see God shining through every moment.

Practice makes perfect, my father used to tell my sisters and me when we were children. When it came to learning fractions, he drilled that lesson into me...along with the advanced arithmetic of fractions at age seven! While none of us are perfect or ever will become perfect, we can *perfect* our ability to see God at work in and through our lives by the simple practice of stopping, paying attention, sifting through the activities and events of our day to notice the weaving of God in and around each moment.

How do we as disciples of Jesus live resurrected lives? By noticing, paying attention, and seeking to uncover that God is never really far from us. The tomb is empty, remember, and Christ is out in the world among us!

Easter Blessings,

Invite Welcome Connect

You may have noticed a few new faces in some of the pews on Easter Sunday. We had some guests! Some were new to St. Mary's and others had never attended an Episcopal church service before. Either way it takes some courage to attend a church where you don't know a soul! We all know the feeling.... the trepidation of wondering if we're dressed appropriately, what comes next, should I go to the rail and receive communion, will anybody talk to me after the service?

A big part of the Invite Welcome Connect ministry includes loving our visitors as though they are honored guests. I hope everyone took this Easter opportunity to shake hands, welcome, and introduce yourself to our guests. Maybe, just maybe, it will be our warm hospitality that encourages them to revisit St. Mary's and provide us with more opportunities to make even deeper connections with each of them. And only God knows what that may mean for them and for us.



Parish Dinner

Our monthly parish dinners are an opportunity for all of us to gather together for no other reason but to share a meal and conversation.

There are no lessons, no studies, no agenda, just a time for fellowship.

The next dinner on Wednesday, May 15th beginning at 5:30, will be a celebration of the completion of Christian Formation, the end of school, and the beginning of summer. Hopefully, the weather will cooperate, because we plan on moving some of our activities outside with games for all and a water slide for young children. There will be plenty of food as Dan Roddy and his team of grillers make hamburgers and hotdogs. A sign-up sheet is in the Parish Hall for those wishing to provide fixings, desserts, chips, drinks, or potato salad. Bring your lawn chairs and come join the festivities.



Celebration for Bill Bullard

Bill Bullard has been with St. Mary's since September serving as our seminarian. He has been a welcomed and cherished member of our church family. His last service with us will be June 2nd where he will preach the sermon. Following the service, there will be a reception for Bill. St. Mary's has truly been blessed by his ministry.

Bill will graduate from the Iona School of Ministry the weekend of June 7th at Camp Allen. His Deacon Ordination will be June 22nd at 10:00 am at Christ Church Cathedral in Houston. If you are interested in attending his ordination, please let the office know so we can coordinate carpooling. His Ordination to the Priesthood will be in December or January. We will have more information about that service closer to the date.



Military Donation

Almost 69 years ago, the first Armed Forces Day was celebrated "in order for citizens to unite and honor our military heroes." (Google) Even in 1963, President John F. Kennedy wrote "Our Servicemen and women are serving throughout the world as guardians of peace--many of them away from their homes, their friends, and their families."

For several years, St. Mary's has made donations monthly to US Troops Not Forgotten, an organization that mails supplies to military units in dangerous areas. Instead of following this practice, we are now going to collect items once a year in honor of Armed Forces Day, which this year is Saturday, May 18th. Now until May 18th, a container is available in the Parish Hall to collect donations. Lists of suggested items can be found on the table next to the donation box. Please give generously as we remember those who have given so much for us.

Visitor From Our Past

Earlier in April, a former parishioner, Diane Roberts, came by the church. She is the daughter of the Reverend Charles W. Roberts, Jr. who was the rector at Saint Mary's from July 1965 to December 1969.

While revisiting the inside of the church and noting the changes that had been made, Diane also revealed some interesting information about St. Mary's. Did you know the church hosted dances after the home football games and had a theatrical group that performed throughout the diocese?

Father Robert's information was found in our original church directory. A photo album was also discovered with professional proofs of some of the parishioners from the late 1960s. Not only was Diane and her family in the album, but some of our present day parishioners were in there as well. The album has been placed in the Parish Hall so check out a younger Mary, Vickie, Charlotte, Kirby, and Lou.

Who Is Here When They Are Gone

Rev. Sharron will be gone from May 14th to May 19th for a continuing education program. While she is gone, Father Jim Morgan will be back to celebrate the Holy Eucharist on Sunday, May 19th.

Kathy Molnar, our organist, will be on vacation from May 12th to May 26th. For the three Sundays she will be gone, we welcome back Susan Graham as the organist.



Thursday Evening Bible Study (TEBS)

by Karen Logue

It's hard to believe that three years ago our small band of 5 bible study participants has now grown to 10 regular members and we have completed 7 books of the Old and New Testament with only a few more to go! There are lots of reasons to read the bible...

- To know God
- To learn the truth
- For direction and encouragement
- To grow spiritually
- To be able to defend your faith

This list could go on and on. In addition to these great reasons for reading the bible, you might want to consider some reasons for joining a bible study...

- Bible Study offers accountability
- Bible Study creates connections with others
- Bible Study provides encouragement
- Bible Study provides a place for unconditional love
- Bible Study fosters community with other denominations

If you are someone who has the desire to learn more about the Bible and get closer to God, our Thursday Evening Bible Study may be just what you are looking for. We meet every Thursday from 6-7:30 in the Parish Hall and everyone is Welcome!

Message from Marvin Miller

Easter Story

By Jim Gentil

Jeremy was born with a twisted body, a slow mind and a chronic, terminal illness that had been slowly killing him all his young life. Still, his parents had tried to give him as normal a life as possible and had sent him to St. Theresa's elementary school. At the age of 12, Jeremy was only in second grade, seemingly unable to learn.

His teacher, Doris Miller, often became exasperated with him. He would squirm in his seat, drool and make grunting noises. At other times, he spoke clearly and distinctly, as if a spot of light had penetrated the darkness of his brain. Most of the time, however, Jeremy irritated his teacher.

One day, she called his parents and asked them to come to St. Teresa's for a consultation. As the Foresters sat quietly in the empty classroom, Doris said to them, "Jeremy really belongs in a special school. It isn't fair to him to be with younger children who don't have learning problems. Why, there is a five-year gap between his age and that of the other students!" Mrs. Forrester cried softly into a tissue while her husband spoke. "Miss Miller," he said, "there is no school of that kind nearby. It would be a terrible shock for Jeremy if we had to take him out of this school. We know he really likes it here."

Doris sat for a long time after they left, staring at the snow outside the window. Its coldness seemed to seep into her soul. She wanted to sympathize with the Foresters. After all, their only child had a terminal illness. But it wasn't fair to keep him in her class. She had 18 other youngsters to teach and Jeremy was a distraction. Furthermore, he would never learn to read or write. Why spend any more time trying? As she pondered the situation, guilt washed over her. "Oh God," she said aloud, "here I am complaining when my problems are nothing compared with that poor family! Please help me to be more patient with Jeremy." From that day on, she tried hard to ignore Jeremy's noises and his blank stares.

Then one day he limped to her desk, dragging his bad leg behind him. "I love you, Miss Miller," he exclaimed, loudly enough for the whole class to hear. The other children snickered, and Doris's face turned red. She stammered, "why, that's very nice, Jeremy. Now please take your seat."

Spring came, and the children talked excitedly about the coming of Easter. Doris told them the story of Jesus, and then to emphasize the idea of new life springing forth, she gave each of the children a large plastic egg. "Now," she said to them "I want you to take this home and bring it back tomorrow with something inside that shows new life. Do you understand?"

"Yes, Miss Miller!" The children responded enthusiastically - all except for Jeremy. He just listened intently; his eyes never left her face. He did not even make his usual noises. Had he understood what she had said about Jesus' death and resurrection? Did he understand the assignment? Perhaps she should call his parents and explain the project to them.

That evening, Doris' kitchen sink stopped up. She called the landlord and waited an hour for him to come by and unclog it. After that, she still had to shop for groceries, iron a blouse and prepare a vocabulary test for the next day. She completely forgot about contacting Jeremy's parents about the assignment.

The next morning, 19 children came to school, laughing and talking as they placed their eggs in the large wicker basket on Miss Miller's desk. After they completed their math lesson, it was time to open the eggs. In the first egg, Doris found a flower. "Oh yes, a flower is certainly a sign of new life," she said. "When plants peek through the ground, we know that spring is here." A small girl in the first row waved her arms. "That's my egg, Miss Miller," she called out. The next egg contained a plastic butterfly, which looked very real. Doris held it up. "We all know that a caterpillar changes and turns into a beautiful butterfly. Yes, that is new life, too" little Judy smiled proudly and said, "Miss Miller, that one is mine."

Next Doris found a rock with moss on it. She explained that the moss, too, showed life. Billy spoke up from the back of the classroom. "My daddy helped me!" He beamed. Then Doris opened the fourth egg. She gasped. The egg was empty! Surely it must be Jeremy's, she thought, and, of course, he did not understand her instructions. If only she had not forgotten to phone his parents. Because she did not want to embarrass him, she quietly set the egg aside and reached for another.

Suddenly Jeremy spoke up. "Miss Miller, aren't you going to talk about my egg?" Flustered, Doris replied, "but Jeremy - your egg is empty!" He looked into her eyes and said softly, "yes, but Jesus' tomb was empty too!" Time stopped. When she could speak again, Doris asked him, "Do you know why the tomb was empty?" "Oh yes!"

Jeremy exclaimed. "Jesus was killed and put in there. Then his Father raised him up!" The recess bell rang. While the children excitedly ran out to the school yard, Doris cried. The cold inside her melted completely away.

Three months later Jeremy died. Those who paid their respects at the mortuary were surprised to see 19 eggs on top of his casket,all of them empty.

Let this Easter Season fill your emptiness with Love, Love, Love!



News from the Vestry

Gwynne Olson, Clerk

The vestry met Monday, April 15, 2019

Rector Report: The Reverend Sharron Cox

Rev. Sharron stated that she and Andrea met regarding a Disaster Awareness Plan. She gave an update on the 2019 goals. There is a Messy Church event in Houston in June that we can attend. Invite, Welcome, Connect will focus on Palm Sunday and Easter. Sharron suggested that the Invite, Welcome, Connect committee meet the Sunday after Easter during Christian Formation. The ASA Quarterly Report was filed.

Senior Warden's Report: Charlotte Blount

Charlotte stated that the Stewardship Co-Hort meeting on March 23rd was very informative. Dani, Sharon & Charlotte will attend the next meeting on May 4th. The meetings are to assist church leadership in understanding stewardship. The vestry may attend one of the meetings. The vestry will schedule a meeting with a Stewardship coach in June or July. St. Mary's is a sponsor of the San Jacinto Festival.

Junior Warden's Report: Andrea Anderson

Andrea stated that the painters have completed most of the painting of the Narthex and the minor fixes. They will need to come back to complete minor touch ups. All the air filters have been changed. We are awaiting a bid to repair the parking lot.

A copy of the vestry minutes will be placed on the bulletin board in the Parish Hall once approved at the May meeting.

Community Assistance



In April, there were three requests for assistance: two for rent and one for a hotel room for the night and groceries.

If you know of anyone needing assistance, please contact Tracy or Karen.

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

David Mikel completed the two-day MS 150 bike ride from Houston to Austin. His team raised over \$17,000 for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society.

Abigail Roddy got second runner up for the Little Miss of the Brazos.

Brayze Schill won the bareback riding competition in Bandera.

Tracy and Brian Lane welcomed their first grandchild, Harper Gray Lane, on April 3rd. She is the daughter of Taylor and Natalie Lane.

Madeline Roddy received first runner up for the Little Princess of the Brazos.

Ally Lane and the Columbia High School golf team placed 4th in the Regional Golf Tournament.

Trace Roddy made the 100 Club in his kindergarten class at West Columbia Elementary by counting to 100.

Braylee Schill finished 2nd in her age group at the Color Me 5K race in Angleton.

Ashlie Weisinger finished 1st runner up in the Little Miss of the Brazos.

Maddie Lane completed a semester of volunteer work for CHI St. Joseph Health Regional Hospital.



Camp Allen Events

Camp Allen Needlepoint Retreat (June 5-7) is a three-day, two night needlepointing retreat. Bring your own projects and acquire some new skills.

Summer Camp for Moms (July 19-21) is a time for moms to have a weekend of relaxation, renewal, and adventure. Optional activities include: the Blob, giant swing, Adventure Summit Course, skeet shooting, horseback riding, aquatics, archery, canoeing, paddleboards, giant water slide, hiking, cooking classes, painting and various crafts.

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.

- small bookcases for the Godly Play Room



Don't Forget

Please check the table when entering the parish hall. The Hospitality calendar and other important information can be found there.

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.

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

Special thanks and gratitude to:

- Gwynne Olson for organizing and leading the choral ensemble for our Easter service.
- Doris Grosvenor, Kendy Hankins, Piper Roddy, Bill Bullard, Wendy Hankins, Jackie Walker, Gwynne Olson, and Jennifer Bridges for the beautiful song they sang during the Easter service.
- Charlotte Blount, Mike Blount, Jennifer Schill, Sue Crutcher, and Holly Cantrell for picking up the Easter lilies from Brookwood.
- Robert Mikel and Sydney Hale for arranging the Easter lilies in the church.
- Marvin and Theata Miller for preparing their delicious Dutch Oven Lasagna for our April Parish Dinner.
- Everyone who provided the side dishes, desserts, and drinks for the Parish Dinner.
- Karen and Ed Logue, Marvin and Theata Miller, and Jackie Walker for providing meals for the Wednesday Christian Formation classes.

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

May 1 - Christian Formation for children and youth (5:15)

May 2 - Yoga class (10:00 am)
Bible Study (6:00 pm)

May 5 - Sunday Service - (9:00 am)
Hospitality (10:00 am)
Christian Formation (10:20 am)

May 8 - Last Christian Formation for children and youth (5:15)

May 9 - no Yoga class
Bible Study (6:00 pm)

May 12 -26 Kathy Mulnar is on vacation.

May 12 - Mother's Day
Brotherhood (7:30 am)
Sunday Service (9:00 am)
Hospitality (10:00 am)
Last Christian Formation (10:20 am)

May 14 - 19 - Rev. Sharron will be out-of-town.

May 15 - Parish Dinner - end of Christian Formation Celebration - (5:30 pm)

May 16 - no Yoga class
Bible Study (6:00 pm)

May 19 - Sunday Service with the Reverend Jim Morgan
Hospitality (10:00 am)

May 21 - Vestry meeting (4:00 pm)

May 23 - Yoga class (10:00 am)
Bible Study (6:00 pm)

May 26 - Brotherhood (7:30 am)
Sunday Service (9:00 am)
Hospitality (10:00 am)

May 30 - Yoga class (10:00 am)
Bible Study (6:00 pm)

May Birthdays

Reesie Cantrell - May 15

AJ Mikel - May 28

Jasey Hussey - May 30

May Anniversaries

St. Mary's Leadership

Rector

The Reverend Sharron Cox

Vestry

Sr. Warden: Charlotte Blount

Jr. Warden: Andrea Anderson

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.