



The Bells of St. Mary's December Edition



Happy New Year!!

Huh? It's only the beginning of December, not January! But the season of Advent ushers us into a new season in the Church. In Advent, we celebrate what was, what is, and what is to come. We celebrate the birth of a baby long ago which brought God among us who is still with us. And we wait for when the Christ returns. Joan Chittister writes "Advent is about learning to wait. It is about not having to know exactly what is coming tomorrow, only that whatever it is, it is of the essence of sanctification for us." What this means is that the waiting of Advent, and frankly the spiritual practice of waiting throughout our lives, makes us holy. Waiting allows us to seek the presence of God and enables us to grow more and more into the likeness of Christ as we patiently wait to see the unfolding of God's action in our lives each day.

Rather than be caught up in all the busy-ness of preparing for Christmas, I encourage you to enter into this waiting more deeply this year by examining what it is you are waiting for in your life and explore how that waiting can lead to Emmanuel, God With Us.

O come, O come Emmanuel!

Blessings,



KNOW YOUR HYMNS!

Know your Hymns – Advent, Christmas, and the Feast of Epiphany

Advent hymns are generally one of the most well-known hymns of the liturgical year...well, except for Christmas, of course! So the hymns that follow are those that might not be so well-known at St. Mary's...that is, until this year! A treat this year in the liturgical calendar is that the Feast of Epiphany (January 6) falls on a Sunday, woo hoo!!

To reflect the change in the church calendar, we will make a minor change in our service music. Please note that during the season of Advent, beginning on December 2nd, we will sing an ancient hymn, the *Trisagion*, repeating it three times, instead of the *Gloria*. By the end of Advent, you should have this one down cold!!

Alert! Alert! A Change in Service Music During Advent...

Instead of singing the *Gloria*, Hymn S-280, after we pray the Collect for Purity, we will be singing the ancient hymn, the *Trisagion*, Hymn S-102. Here is a video with just the music – the words are given the first time through on the video. This hymn is sung a total of three times.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h38YyASf_C4

Hymns for Sunday, December 2

Opening Hymn – Hymnal 73 *The King shall come when morning dawns*

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YBas98ncl_c

Hymns for Sunday, December 9

Offertory Hymn – Hymnal 68 *Rejoice, rejoice believers*

This is a familiar tune, set to different words appropriate for Advent.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4BjRuOHnh8E>

Closing Hymn – Hymnal 54 *Savior of the nations, come!*

This is a new hymn for us – the music on this video for it is beautifully done!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ldb56S3ZQ7M>

Hymns for Sunday, December 16

Offertory Hymn – Hymnal 65 *Prepare the way, O Zion*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i2vtX5d2TN0>

Closing Hymn – Hymnal 640 *Watchmen, tell us of the night*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uXwhu8G-Knk>

Hymns for Sunday, December 23

Opening Hymn – Hymnal 74 *Blest be the King whose coming*
Another familiar tune (think Palm Sunday) to words of Advent.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B2tnyqjldU>

Closing Hymn –Hymnal 437 *Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6RvAvEQJHcs>

Hymns for Sunday, January 6

Gospel Hymn – Hymnal 112 *In the bleak mid-winter*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U0aL9rKJPr4>

Closing Hymn –Hymnal 135 *Songs of thankfulness and praise*

This is another familiar tune but with different lyrics than we have sung before.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aAXyAXjrVM8>

The Mustard Seed Church Sowing Seeds in the Community...

St. Mary's & The DOK's Christmas Angel Basket Program

Christmas is a time to share our love for one another . . . and as we prepare to welcome the newborn Christ into our hearts, homes and lives, we need to remember the example set forth by Jesus for all of us.

With your generosity, we will be helping **5 families** with a total of **11 children** by providing food and gifts. We know your generosity and caring spirit will come through to help fill this important need for those within our communities. We thank you in advance for your assistance.

There are **Angel Tags** listing information about the children hanging on the small Christmas tree in the Parish Hall. Under the tree, are **Grocery Bags** with the list of food items needed. There are two different grocery lists and each family will receive the items on both lists. You can take an **Angel Tag**, a **Grocery Bag**, or both. If you take an **Angel Tag**, please provide at least two presents for the child and wrap the gifts with the child's name on a label. Monetary donations are also welcomed. (If you write a check please make it to: St. Mary's Episcopal Church)

All items, food and wrapped gifts, need to be brought to the Parish Hall by 10:00 am on Saturday, December 15th. You can bring them before that date.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call Dani @ 979-345-3456 or any DOK member. Also contact Dani if you would like to help box up the items on December 15th or distribute them on December 16th.

"If there is a poor man among your brothers in any of the towns of the land that the LORD your God is giving you, do not be hardhearted or tightfisted toward your poor brother." Deuteronomy 15:7

"A generous man will himself be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor." Proverbs 22:9

Ringling of the Bells for Veterans' Day



The children and youth participated in the Bells for Peace as they "joined with Americans everywhere to toll bells as a solemn reminder of the service and sacrifice of veterans of World War I and all veterans." The bells were rung on November 11, 2018 at 11 a.m., the Centennial of the Armistice.

Thanksgiving Basket Project



Thank you to all who helped pack the boxes for the Thanksgiving Basket Project at Columbia United Methodist Church. In record time, we were able to pack 40 boxes which were distributed to needy families before Thanksgiving. Also thank you to those who stayed at St. Mary's to clean up after the Parish Dinner so others could leave immediately to help at the Methodist Church.

100% of you said, "Yes!"

St. Mary's overwhelmingly said "Yes!" when asked if you wanted to invite the community to our pet blessing next year. And almost 78 percent supported serving a meal next year as well.

Eighteen members completed surveys either online or via hardcopy. Some of the overall comments about what "worked right" included:

Fun was had by all!

The welcome to the community worked well.

It was very well-organized. It went so well – I can't add anything.

I loved this event!

The pre-planning and the advertisement was good.

Ideas communicated included moving the hot dog cooking outdoors so that pet owners would be more likely to stay and eat. Having more events for the pets was also suggested. Survey respondents were thrilled with the results of the lemonade stand.

Most respondents were willing to distribute flyers around town and make posts on their social media to publicize the event.

Having the Blessing of the Animals on the first Sunday afternoon in October was supported by the majority of respondents. Most also liked the idea of expanding the time frame to include a few more activities or events.



Traveling Mary and Joseph

Just as Mary and Joseph of old traveled a great distance to reach Bethlehem, our Mary and Joseph will be traveling before arriving at church on Christmas Eve. The Mary and Joseph statues of our Nativity will be visiting the homes of our parishioners. If you would like for them to stay with you, please sign your name to the sheet in the Parish Hall or contact the church office (979-345-3456) and leave a message. Mary and Joseph will stay at your house one or two days, and then you pass them on to the next family. The family that has them Christmas Eve will bring them to the Christmas Eve service and place them in the stable before the service begins. How long each family keeps Mary and Joseph will be determined by the number of families that sign up. Mary and Joseph may not have been welcomed at the inn in Bethlehem, but they are welcomed in the homes of St. Mary's family!



The Advent Wreath

During the season of Advent, a wreath with 4 candles placed in a circle representing the 4 Sundays of Advent can be used as a way to prepare for the coming of Christmas. A fifth white candle, The Christ Candle, can be placed in the middle of the circle. Each Sunday a new candle is lit and a prayer is said. There are many possible ways to use the Advent wreath. Here is one way.

December 2nd

Light the first candle for hope.

“Loving God, give light to our eyes and peace to our hearts. Help us watch and wait in hope for the coming of Jesus. Amen.”

December 9th

Light the first candle and then a second candle for peace.

“Creator God, fill us with a sense of peace and love. Help us to listen to your voice in our lives each day. Amen.”

December 17th

Light the first two candles and then a third candle for joy.

“Living God, fill us with joy and wonder in all your creation. Help us to keep our hearts and hands open to others. Amen.”

December 23rd

Light the first three candles and then a fourth candle for love.

“Jesus, you are our greatest gift. Fill our homes with love and make us ready to receive you. Amen.”

December 24th

Light the four candles that form the circle and then the white Christ Candle in the center.

“Living God, thank you for coming to live among us. Help us to live with hope, peace, joy and love. Amen”



Parish Dinner

Our December Parish Dinner beginning at 5:30 on December 19th will be a special gathering. Heather and David Mikel will be preparing chicken spaghetti for everyone to enjoy. Bring a side dish, salad, drinks, bread, or dessert to share. There will be a sign-up sheet in the Parish Hall so you can indicate what you will bring and so duplicates will be avoided.

Following the dinner, we will decorate the Christmas tree and sing Christmas carols. Just as we have done for the last two years, we will decorate the tree with ornaments from our Parish Family. This way, your family Christmas will be part of our church family Christmas. No need to buy the ornaments. Just bring those extra ones that won't fit on your tree anymore. The ornaments from previous years will be added to the tree as well.



Christmas Eve Service

On Christmas Eve, the children and youth will present the Nativity Story at 8:00 pm. The Holy Eucharist will follow. Come join us as we celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Message from Marvin Miller

THE BRICK

From the book "Positive Spiritual Living"

A young and successful executive was traveling down a neighborhood street, going a bit too fast in his new Jaguar.

He was watching for kids darting out from between parked cars and slowed down when he thought he saw something.

As his car passed, no children appeared. Instead, a brick smashed into the Jag's side door!

He slammed on the brakes and backed the Jag back to the spot where the brick had been thrown.

The angry driver then jumped out of the car, grabbed the nearest kid and pushed him up against a parked car shouting, 'What was that all about and who are you? Just what the heck are you doing? That's a new car and that brick you threw is going to cost a lot of money. Why did you do it?'

The young boy was apologetic. 'Please, mister...please, I'm sorry but I didn't know what else to do,' He pleaded. 'I threw the brick because no one else would stop...'

With tears dripping down his face and off his chin, the youth pointed to a spot just around a parked car.

'It's my brother, 'he said 'He rolled off the curb and fell out of his wheelchair and I can't lift him up'

Now sobbing, the boy asked the stunned executive, 'Would you please help me get him back into his wheelchair? He's hurt and he's too heavy for me.'

Moved beyond words, the driver tried to swallow the rapidly swelling lump in his throat.

He hurriedly lifted the handicapped boy back into the wheelchair, then took out a linen handkerchief and dabbed at the fresh scrapes and cuts.

A quick look told him everything was going to be okay. 'Thank you and may God bless you,' the grateful child told the stranger.

Too shook up for words, the man simply watched the boy push his wheelchair-bound brother down the sidewalk toward their home.

It was a long, slow walk back to the Jaguar. The damage was very noticeable, but the driver never bothered to repair the dented side door.

He kept the dent there to remind him of this message: 'Don't go through life so fast that someone has to throw a brick at you to get your attention!'

God whispers in our souls and speaks to our hearts. Sometimes when we don't have time to listen, He has to throw a brick at us. It's our choice to listen or not.



Ashlie Weisinger, Abigail Roddy, and Trace Roddy present Rev. Sharron with a gift from the Wednesday night Christian Formation children's group.



Poinsettias from Brookwood

Our trip to Brookwood is booked. Reservations are for 11:45, so in order to have time to shop before lunch, we will meet at the church at 9:00 on Thursday, December 20th. After lunch, we will load up the poinsettias and bring them back to the church. If your plans change and you are not able to go, please let Dani know so she can contact Brookwood.

If you would like to make a donation for the Christmas poinsettias, there are envelopes available in the narthex. You can place your donation in the collection plate or send it to the office. Please have all donations in by December 20th.



News from the Vestry

The vestry met Monday, November 26, 2018.

Rector Report: The Reverend Sharron Cox

Rev. Sharron and Dani presented information about the current office computer and printer and the need for their replacement. Based on the information given, the vestry voted to replace them immediately to take advantage of the current sales. Rev. Sharron gave a report on the recommendations of the Vestry Nominating Committee. The committee presented one candidate and also recommended that the number of vestry members be reduced to three. In recognition of the retirement of Bishop Dena Harrison, the vestry approved the donation of \$50 to her retirement "purse". Rev. Sharron also discussed the Diocesan Council meeting on February 21st - 23rd and the need for at least two lay people, although we could send up to four delegates.

Senior Warden's Report: Karen Logue

Karen is working on a Greeters' Ministry.

Junior Warden's Report: Andrea Anderson

Andrea was not present. A report was given concerning a dead limb on a tree outside the Parish Hall. An estimate will be sought to remedy the problem.

Financial Report: Dani Mikel

Dani gave a report on the 2019 Stewardship Campaign pledges. The number of pledges increased over 50% and the amount pledged increased over 60%.

Discipleship Report

Rev. Sharron gave a report on the special services conducted during the month of November. She also plans on scheduling lector training in January. The next Parish Dinner will be on December 19th at 5:30 with Heather and David Mikel providing the chicken spaghetti. At the dinner we will decorate the Christmas tree and sing Christmas carols.

Mission Report

The diocese approved the use of the Parish Hall for an exercise class. Rev. Sharron will meet with the leaders to iron out the details. The Daughters of the King are organizing a Christmas giving project that will benefit 5 low income families.

Evangelism

Karen discussed plans to introduce the "Messy Church" ministry to our congregation between March and May of next year. She and Gwynne Olson are working on the project.

Calendar

- The next three vestry meetings will be on December 17th, January 21st, and February 18th at 3:00.
- The Annual meeting will be January 27th and will include a meal.
- Rev. Sharron will be on vacation from December 26th through January 1st.

A copy of the vestry minutes will be placed on the bulletin board in the Parish Hall.



TEBS (Thursday Evening Bible Study)

by Karen Logue

Our TEBS group is studying the gospel of Luke. We meet each Thursday at 6:00pm in the fellowship hall and everyone is welcome to attend! Come join us and learn how Luke's gospel differs from the other two synoptic gospels of Matthew and Mark.



Community Assistance

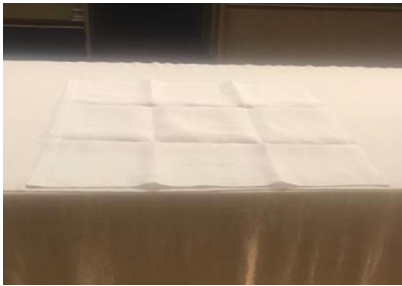
In November, one household was helped with a rental payment. A donation was also made to the Columbia United Methodist Church to help with their Thanksgiving Basket project.

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



Are You Smarter Than An Acolyte

In the training conducted by Rev. Sharron, the acolytes learned the names of the implements used during Holy Communion, the parts of the church, the items worn by the acolytes, and other correct terminology in the Episcopal Church. Below are four pictures. Can you match the correct name to each picture? The word choices are **pall, cruet, alms basin, corporal, stacked chalice, ambry**



A. _____



B. _____



C. _____



D. _____

Reesie Cantrell made the West of the Brazos Jr. High 7th grade basketball team.

Braylee Schill won 5th place in Chute Roping and 6th place in Goat Tying at the Chute and Barrel Junior Rodeo Series.

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

Ally Lane was inducted into Power Set at Columbia High School. "POWER SET is a unique program for young women with an aptitude for or interest in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM)."

Hunter Wesinger has joined the Air Force and is at basic training in San Antonio.

Brayze Schill won the year end Championship in Bareback and Saddle Bronc and the All Around Cowboy Title at the Rock You Pro Youth Tour. He will be competing at the Jr.NFR/Mini Bareback World Championship in Las Vegas from December 6th - 10th.



Camp Allen Events

Holiday Steak Dinner **December 5**

When **Thanksgiving** leaves you tired of cooking and eating leftover turkey, join us for Holiday Steak Dinner at Camp Allen. Our halls will be decked with boughs of holly, and a cash bar will be available. This is a perfect opportunity to enjoy the **Christmas** season with a holiday gathering for friends, family, or clients.

Holiday in the Pines **December 14-16**

Get ready for a rustic- classic Christmas at Camp Allen's Holiday in the Pines family weekend! Enjoy two nights of hotel lodging, six delicious meals, and activities for all! Activity options: blown snow, sledding, rock climbing, giant swing, boating, Adventure Summit Course, Swimming, massages, horseback riding, Discovery Dome theatre, **Sunday** worship service, campfire with s'mores, ladies tea, photos with Santa, family movie night, live bird & reptile classes, guided hikes, fishing lessons, hayrides, moon jump, archery, holiday-themed crafts, and more!

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.

- outdoor canvas folding chairs for the youth room
- 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:

- Charlotte and Karen for providing the turkey, stuffing, and gravy for our November Parish Dinner. Thank you also for all who brought the other food and beverages to make the dinner complete.
- Donna, Dan, Karen, Andrea, and Ed for setting up and decorating for the reception for Bishop Monterroso and our newly confirmed parishioners, Gwynne, and James.
- The DOK for organizing the Christmas Angel Project.
- Bill Bullard and Susan Graham for providing the music while Kathy was on vacation.
- The youth and children who participated in Bells of Peace.
- Heather Mikel for making seat covers for the chairs in the Godly Play room.
- David Mikel for researching and ordering the new office computer and printer.
- All who provided baked goods for and bought from the Youth's bake sale.
- Dan, Wade, and Ed for the power washing performed to make St. Mary's sparkle for Bishop Hector Monterroso's visit.

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

December 2 - Sunday service (9:00 am)
Christian Formation (10:20 am)

December 5 - Christian Formation (5:30)
December 6 - Bible Study (6:00 pm)

December 9 - Brotherhood (7:30 am)
Sunday Service - (9:00 am)
Christian Formation (10:20 am)

December 12 Christian Formation (5:30)

December 13 - Bible Study (6:00 pm)

December 16 - Sunday Service (9:00 am)
Christian Formation (10:20 am)

December 19 - Parish Dinner, Christmas
tree decorating, and singing
Christmas songs (5:30)

December 20 - Bible Study (6:00 pm)

December 23 - Brotherhood (7:30 am)
Sunday Service (9:00 am)

December 24 - Christmas Eve Service
(7:30 pm)

December 26 - January 1st - Rev.
Sharron is on vacation

December 30 - Sunday Service (9:00 am)
with The Reverend James Ely

December Birthdays

Trace Roddy - December 6

Travis Weisinger - December 6

George Grosvenor - December 7

Adam Schill - December 10

Jennifer Schill - December 12

Daniel Mikel - December 19

Jennifer Landreneau - December 21

Dani Mikel - December 22

Ben Anderson - December 25

Kirby Rapstein - December 31

December Anniversaries

Tommy & Holly Cantrell - December 2

Clint & Colleen Matocha - December 19

Brian & Tracy Lane - December 29

St. Mary's Leadership

Rector

The Reverend Sharron Cox

Vestry

Sr. Warden: Karen Logue
Jr. Warden: Andrea Anderson
Clerk: Marvin Miller
Charlotte Blount

Answers to Are You Smarter Than An Acolyte?
A. corporal..... B. ambry..... C. pall..... D. cruet

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.