



N O V E M B E R 2 0 1 1

ST. MARY'S MESSENGER

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Dear Brothers and Sisters,

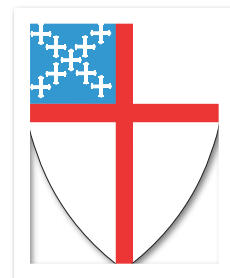
It has been three years since we began our journey together. Much has changed, and yet much remains the same. As I prepared to write my article for this month I looked back at the first one that I did for the Messenger in November 2008. I have decided to republish it this month as it anticipates what we are already engaged in, the giving to God what God has given into our stewardship. There are some differences - it's not raining and we are also raising money for the church building. I ask you to consider or reconsider deeply your commitment to God's mission here in Lampasas through the work of St. Mary's. May God bless you in your discernment.

November 2008

As I contemplate the much needed rain that is falling outside the idea of God's grace in our lives is what it brings to mind. That grace is the genesis of all that we have: family, friends, and talent just to name a few. God's grace, just like the rain today, falls on the "just and the unjust" as the Good Book says, it also falls on the grateful and the ungrateful. The rain also takes me to the contemplation of what our responsibility is to the work of the church and how we support that work. Jesus, at the end of Matthew's Gospel, called the disciples to baptize and make continuous learners of all the world, and before that we are told that we are to feed the hungry, visit the prisoner, care for the sick, clothe the naked, and invite in the stranger. These are things that we promise to do every time that we renew our Baptismal Covenant^[1], which is the basis of our relationship with God.

It is that time of year where we are asked to make a commitment to the work of God in Lampasas. We do that by pledging a portion of our monetary resources to that work. But stewardship is not only about that. Stewardship is also about our time and our talent. The decisions that we make about those three things are spiritual in nature and between ourselves, our families, and more importantly our God. The bible reminds us that our very existence is a gift that is shared with us by God. The logical extension of that fact is that all that we have is also a gift shared with us by God.

Very soon we will be asked to enter into an inward journey of spiritual reflection about our talent, time, **and** treasure. The decision of what we will give back to God in order for the church to do its work is spiritual in nature because it is about our relationship with God; it is about being grateful for what God has graciously shared with us. Our act of stewardship is a spiritual exercise that brings about growth in our relationship and communion with God.





The biblical idea of the tithe, 10%, is a goal that can be reached and one that has been upheld by The Episcopal Church. It is not a mandate, it is an invitation. There are many ways to work toward that goal one of which is incremental in nature. Many years ago Marie and I began to work toward tithing by incrementally increasing our percentage each year. The starting point is between you and God. No one knows what our particular circumstances and commitments are except ourselves. The idea is that we examine our commitments and make a decision on what we will give back to God with the commitment to increase that each year by some percentage to reach that biblical goal of 10%. As we begin this process we need to remember that every financial decision we make is a spiritual one. This spiritual exercise is one that we do as a

family. It is an exercise that will bring us closer to God and more in touch with our own understanding of money and what it means in our life.



As we begin the spiritual exercise of monetary stewardship remember that it begins with God, because the deciding factor should come from our relationship with God and not from the culture in which we live. We first examine our relationship with God, and then ask what God would have

us do as we make our commitment to the work of St. Mary's, God's church here in Lampasas.

I pray for God's blessing and presence with us as we make this spiritual decision and as we enter into a deeper relationship with God.

Peace,

Fr. Reid



St. Mary's is on FaceBook

Check it out - and LIKE it! This is a BIG step forward to the digital age....(Tom and I are still trying to figure out just how to USE FaceBook - all the different "walls" and "info" and "messages" mix us up.) But you know, if Jesus was in human form today - HE'd probably use FaceBook, so we'd better learn!

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/St-Marys-Episcopal-Church/>

Maybe we'll link to the newsletter on FaceBook? (WOW...can that be done?) Just one more way to let the world know what St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Lampasas is all about...21st century evangelism - without a doubt!

Words to Live By...

ALWAYS
REMEMBER
YOU ARE BRAVER
THAN YOU
BELIEVE
STRONGER
THAN YOU
SEEM AND
SMARTER
THAN YOU
THINK



"I've observed over and over that people seem to get a much deeper sense of fulfillment out of something they've done as an act of service than out of the things they do for themselves."

actor Edward Norton (founder of **Crowdrise**)

Everything starts with faith. Faith causes us to see good things in the future, and because of this we develop a vision of success and prosperity in life.

Casey Treat, *The 3 Essentials: All You Need for Success in Life*





We aimed to please at "Squared Silly"

No goblins or ghosts showed up at St. Mary's booth on Saturday, October 29 in Lampasas! Fr. Reid valantly defended several pumpkins with well-stocked water pistols. Booth visitors were invited to show off their

gunslinger prowess by water-pistolng the pumpkin candles into submission. Tulisha and Marie rewarded victors with bags of treats. Last we heard, over 300 mini-visitors carved a notch in their gun belt.

For What It's Worth...Mary's Thoughts on Stewardship

I know I'm not the brightest lightbulb in the pack...so it takes me a while to think things through. We've all heard Fr. Reid, Senior Warden Bill Adams, Richard Hammett, and Tulisha Carson discuss stewardship. After all that, I figured it was time I did some homework. This is what I learned...

Wikipedia defines Stewardship as "a responsibility to take care of something belonging to someone else." It also says: "religious stewardship is a major part of teaching in Christianity and Islam (*Islam? That's an interesting idea!!*) For example, Green Christianity emphasizes stewardship as a Bible-based environmental outlook (*that fits us to a "T"*). Financial stewardship is based on the belief that God is the true and ultimate owner of each person's possessions, and that one is accountable to God for the acceptable care and use of those possessions (*that matches what Fr. Reid has repeatedly said - almost word for word!*). Stewardship can also refer to Jesus Christ's accountability to God the Father for the Christians that have been entrusted to Him or how to use your resources for God. (*Now isn't THAT something? Jesus is "our" Steward? This means He wants a relationship with me - and cares what happens to ME! WOW.*)

Our Episcopal Church says stewardship is more than money. Both the Texas Episcopal website www.epicenter.org as well as the national Episcopal website, http://www.ecusa.anglican.org/109299_ENG_HTML.htm said:

Stewardship is not a choice. The choice is whether or not we will be good stewards or poor stewards.

(The Rev. P. Lance Ousley)

Stewardship as a concept beyond money...Stewardship is everything we do with all we have been given...
(Al Curry, Member of Diocese of Texas Stewardship Commission)

Wisely employing God-given human resources, abilities, and relationships; sharing the material resources we hold and giving them in service, justice, and compassion; providing for future generations, sharing in the life, worship, and responsible stewardship of the Church and of its mission. Both for the individual and for the community, stewardship is a joyful act for the sake of God's world.
(Standing Rules of the Ecumenical Stewardship Center)

Okay, so money is just one facet of stewardship (an important facet - but it is not the “whole enchilada”). Some other ways in which the church recognizes stewardship include:

• How we treat others

- Do we show respect towards our significant others, family, coworkers, angry/drunk/indigent/sick?
- Do we recognize Christ in the shelf-stocker or postal clerk?
- Do we show respect towards others by letting them experience consequences of their actions (or do we “play god” and bail them out?)

• Our responsibilities to St. Mary's - and the world-wide Church

- As one of the many stewards of the children in our congregation - are we doing all we can to prepare our younger generation for the future?
- Are we honestly tithing as much as we should (or can)?

• How we treat things

- The earth (are we wasteful - or do we conserve resources? do we recycle? are we aware of nature?)
- Do we take care of our pets (walk them, give fresh water, play with them)
- Personal property (upkeep and maintenance, not excessive buying)
- Money (saving, debt reduction)



• how we treat OURSELVES

- do we take care of ourselves? (watch weight? exercise? drinking? smoking?)
- do we control our negative thoughts?
- do we spend time in prayer?
- do we let people use us as doormats (do we let others “dump on” - or take advantage of us?)

And....this raises a whole new set of ideas. If I accept that I am a steward of myself, then that means I have to take responsibility for my spiritual growth. (a NEW and SCARY concept to this former Catholic!!) I checked with Fr. Reid and he said I was right. This means that I should sign up (on my own!) for a workshop or a class. I can follow email newsletters, blogs, and websites. I can attend the upcoming Episcopalian jazz festival in Houston; or attend a Camp Allen event: <http://www.campallen.org/calendar/>. I can read Forward Day by Day and really follow Fr. Reid's Daily Devotion. I'm game - how about YOU?

ECW Taco Soup

Forget Thanksgiving - the REAL day to eat to your heart's content was Friday, November 4! That's the day that the ECW rolled up their sleeves and made some SERIOUSLY good food. **Mary Halvorson** (#1 to those who know) MC'd the event, while **Linda Joseph** and **Libby Bluntzer** were Delivery Gals to those who couldn't make it to the Parish Hall. We had lots of soup, rolls, crafts, baked goods - and St. Mary's famous taco soup and chocolate cake. (**Fay Mullins**' angel food cakes brought in \$50 each!!) **Kathleen Woodby** made some really cute doggie coats, while Libby's crafts put Martha Stewart to shame. **Bunnie Johnson** brought in embroidered cards, bookmarks, and napkins. **Ara Van Winkle** was head of sales for the craft booth. **Terry Sherman** was unanimously voted an "honorary Episcopalian Church Woman" and proved that real men are part of the ECW (serious thanks to Terry for cheerfully helping out - he washed, carried trash, did all the "running" #1 said they grossed almost \$3,000 (!!)). Mary reported they served about 89 people in the Parish Hall, and delivered over 100 meals (hope Libby and Linda didn't spill any soup!). The final profit is still to be determined (after costs are subtracted). This money will go towards supporting local missions in the Lampasas area.

HERE WE GO..... RELAY FOR LIFE -



The 2012 Relay for Life Lampasas website is up and running. I still have to sign on and register the St. Mary's team. (The reason it isn't done yet is really dumb - I forgot our user name and password!!) The Lampasas District Coordinator told me a new team in Lampasas recently held a rodeo and already raised \$7,000 in one weekend!!! YIKES! Start thinking about some creative and easy ways we can raise money before the relay event. We are thinking about selling those rubber band bracelets - apparently that is the newest fad. What do you think? (Maybe we

should have a Taco Soup luncheon...!)

Cursillo Update:

3 unnamed parishioners (ok...Fr. Reid doesn't count - so 2 unnamed parishioners) are at Cursillo this weekend at Camp Allen. We send our prayers and love to them during this time of spiritual growth.

(You know what this means? **Deacon Millie** will give the sermon this Sunday -

YEAH!) Tom and I really enjoy her sermons - so we are looking forward to this

Sunday. How many of St. Mary's family members have participated in a Cursillo weekend? This is a form of stewardship, you know, and we can all benefit. Let's make 2012 the year to Cursillo!



Granola Cereal

Here is a tasty way to start your morning. My sister sent me this recipe over 30 years ago, and we have made it ever since (she is a REALLY good cook!!). It is GREAT over ice cream, or mixed with yogurt, or (my favorite) - warm from the oven with milk. Change up the dried fruit and nuts to suit your own tastes. I found the best way to mix it is in a roast pan...

Ingredients:

4-5 cups uncooked oatmeal (either quick or old fashioned work - we like old fashioned)

1 cup dried milk

1 cup wheat germ

1 cup coconut

1 cup raw sunflowers

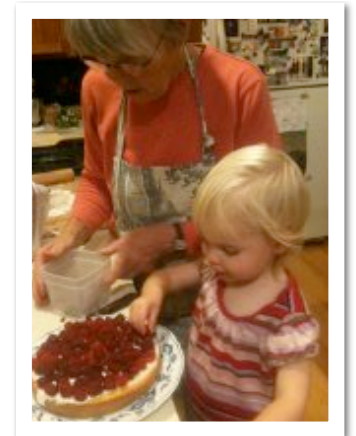
1 "healthy" tablespoon cinnamon

several cups of dried fruit (we use a variety: raisins, cranberries, tart cherries, apricots, apples, etc.)

1+ cups of chopped (or whole) nuts (we use variety: walnuts, pecans, almonds)

1/2 cup vegetable oil

3/4 cup honey



My sister and her granddaughter making raspberry cake!

Directions:

Mix everything in the roast pan (use your hands - it's easier). Bake in 275-325 oven for about 20 minutes. Stir it up, and put back in oven for another 15 minutes or so. Store in airtight container. (This freezes well, and makes GREAT gifts).



Columbarium Update

Our Columbarium will be changing.....can't believe it ! Both of the front sides, Section A and Section C, will have niches placed in them some time in January. If you've been waiting for either of those sections to open, here's your chance to select your niche. Because there will only be 9 niches per side, availability to pick one will be first come first serve. Several families have already made their selections. If your plan is ready to take shape contact Father Reid, Kathleen or Libby and we can answer any questions that you may have.

Another bit of news is that the Columbarium area will be getting a facelift. Jane Weiser will be visiting several memorial gardens to gather landscaping ideas for our Columbarium area. So keep your eyes on that spot and be ready for the little surprises that will appear.

Your Committee
Father Reid
Libby Bluntzer
Kathleen Woodby

His Kids

Richard Williams is amazing. His devotion to his children is a testament to our mission, serving God's children. Richard is battling cancer but he continues to be a mentor to his precious flock.

This past October, St. Mary's fed about 45 children and lots of adults. The food volunteers. were crucial to making this possible - YOU ARE AMAZING! Thank you to all who help us each month and to those who haven't joined us, please know that you are invited any time. It is a rewarding opportunity to make a difference.

November 28th is our next meal and the sign up sheet has already been posted.

Libby Bluntzer

WILL MEZGER UPDATE



We are excited to hear that Will continues to improve. His latest move (on November 3) has placed him at the Center for Neuro Skills (CNS) in Irving, Tx. Katherine and Bill report that Will has an apartment there with one room-mate. Katherine writes: “Will is responsible for his own cooking, laundry, packing a lunch, etc. Each morning, he boards a van & goes to the therapy center....The therapists already expressed amazement when they read the extent of his injuries & realize Will's accident only occurred 4 months ago. More reminders of our blessings.” Will is improving so much that he recently made his own posting on the Caring Bridge website: “Hello

everyone, its willie. Finally leaving this hospital on wednesday, yea hoo!! Just me righting on here to thank yall for righting me and praying me. good bless y'all all.” If you'd like to keep up-to-date with Will's progress, check out the Caring Bridge website: <http://www.caringbridge.org/visit/willmezger>

Just sayin' ...

For the record, I have to report that Tom Hart gets my vote for “best husband”. This summer he constructed a clothes line that is the best I've ever used. It stretches a long distance, has a nice concrete walk-way (so no chiggers in the sheets). Lots of clothespins, and he even rigged it up so the lines don't sag. Silly to say, but hanging up clothes is one of my real pleasures in life - I avoid using the electric dryer as much as I can. Thank you, Tom !!



Well, that's it for this month! Hope you all have a happy and healthy November. Let us know what you're up to, so we can include it (and photos) in the December issue...

Tom and Mary