

St Mary's Messenger

Happy August!

Grab a cold drink and get comfortable because this month's newsletter is a real doozie! (I think it is because a lot of us were perspired – oops! I meant “inspired” – by the hot weather.) Friends have called, emailed, and button-holed Tom and me with updates, suggestions, and articles. As a result, you have a mixture to choose from...(how cool is that?)

One serious letter comes our way from St Mary's Senior Warden Bill Adams. Everyone needs to read his note and then take action. (In a nutshell – our church needs money or we are going to have to make big changes to the way St. Mary's operates in order to function on the money we are receiving. Bill asks us to take responsibility for our church.) After I read Bill's letter I called him (and Richard, Tulisha, and Father Reid) up and started asking questions so I'd have a better picture of what he was saying. I've included a brief piece that spells out my understanding of St Mary's financial situation. (*I want to be upfront and admit full responsibility for any wrong statement it contains – God (and Tom) both know I am not a financial wizard.*) Anyway, this is forcing me to “grow up” and reprioritize how much money Tom and I give St. Mary's.

Richard Hammett is St. Mary's Stewardship Chairperson. He wrote a piece that complements Bill's letter. I appreciate his input because it put a lot of things into perspective – and gave me a better idea of what the church is asking from us. I hope you reach the same understanding that I did after reading his selection.

If you're looking for some good summer recipes (no cooking required) then you'll love the recipes that Marie and Janna have provided. Looking for a cheap dinner out and a few laughs? We've got you covered! Come to the parish hall at 6:30pm on Wednesday, August 3 at 6:30 for potluck dinner and “Stump the Chump” (starring Father Reid in the lead role).

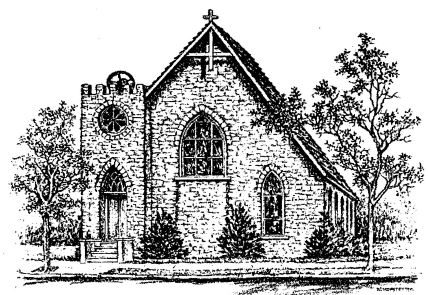
Jack Newsom, who is currently in the hospital (*Get well and come home, Jack!!*) took some great photos which I've included. Be sure to check these out! We resurrected the “classifieds” and “calendar” to keep you in the know about zumba, knitting classes, bible study, youth group, AA/AlAnon meeting time changes, and other offerings. JR McBryde sent in a great story about evil and Albert Einstein (you have to read it!)

Finally, if you love your iPhone as much as we do then check out the really cool apps and podcasts we found (If you download “Words with Friends” let us know and we'll get a game going.)

Oh - before I forget....August 21 is “Bring a friend to St. Mary's service”. The person who brings the most people to the 8:00 or 10:00 gets a prize....so mark your calendar and *get crackin'*!

Stay cool!

Tom and Mary



The View From the Pew....

Dear Fellow Parishioners –

I would respectfully request that you financially help St. Mary's in the upcoming months. Like all churches, many businesses, and many hard working people we are facing a financial challenge. As Father Reid stated in the January 2011 Parish Meeting, our operating budget for the year for the programs and support you requested and used was \$24,000 short. If current giving trends continue, this shortfall could grow to more than \$30,000 by year end.



Last winter we had great confidence that our parish would reduce this deficit but at the mid-year point we are woefully falling short. It costs \$2,900 a week to pay the daily expenses associated with a parish; lately our weekly contributions have averaged \$2,100 (but some weeks have been as low as \$600).

On top of the day-to-day expenses, we have also had to face some much needed repairs for our church. The church foundation, cracked wall, sagging floor, and air conditioning unit will cost around \$120,000 to repair. This will all but exhaust our cash reserve.

Recently I requested every member consider at a minimum a 13th month of giving - but even this will obviously fall short of our requirements. As we approach the annual Stewardship Campaign season I ask you to bluntly “dig deeper into your pockets” if you want to keep St. Mary's in sound financial status with the programs you desire. It requires a strong commitment and I know in my heart we are all up to the challenge.

Your Brother in Christ,

Bill Adams

Senior Warden

Mary's Take on Bill's letter:

I called Bill after reading his letter, and also spoke to some of the Vestry. This is the understanding I have about the situation. (Most of you probably already know this – and if you do, then skip down to Richard's article....AND if my understanding is wrong, I apologize).

Basically, the church has several different types of expenses – “operating costs” (lights, water, electricity – daily costs associated with keeping the lights on and the door open) and “capital costs” (repairing the church foundation, replacing air conditioning – that sort of thing). There are other “outlays” as well (like for mission work, etc.) but we aren’t talking about that here. As Bill states, St. Mary’s operating costs run about \$2,900 per week.

St. Mary’s receives most of its money from its parishioners – and our donations also fall into 2 different types. One source is “pledge/plate money” – this is the weekly (or monthly) donation we make when we pass the plate. This money goes to pay operating costs listed above. Our pledge SHOULD be 10% of our gross income. The offering plate shows anywhere from \$600-\$2,100 coming in. This means that EVERY WEEK St. Mary’s gets further and further behind. For example – if our weekly collection is \$600, then we get \$2,300 behind (\$2,900 expense - \$600 income). If the collection plate is \$2,100 then we fall another \$800 behind (\$2,900 cost - \$2,100). I don’t know about you, but this news is scary. Tom and I couldn’t run our family this way...and I don’t get how St. Mary’s can keep going if this trend continues.

The other income type is “capital campaign” money – and that is money raised to pay for the church repairs or to replenish funds used from reserves to pay for church repairs. That is partially what the Stewardship Campaign is all about. (Another part is about getting people to regularly attend and join St. Mary’s and make an annual pledge). Richard Hammett talks about both of these things in the next article....

Loaves and Fishes...

To the Parish:

I support the Senior Warden in his efforts in working to deal with our financial rough spots. He has identified the problems, as clarified by the Treasurer. The Stewardship Committee has also begun to address the problems in an effort to help the vestry and the parish find solutions. Father Reid has discussed solutions for some time, talked about stewardship extensively, and suggested ways of increasing active membership.



Increasing active membership is a central part of the lives of all congregations, and should be occurring in an ongoing manner, as parishioners pass away or move out of town. The best way to increase membership, according to Father Reid (and he's right, I believe), is for everyone to invite someone to come to our church or to return to active participation. Having had some success, we may not be able to succeed every time; at the same time, maybe it’s not the right time yet, or the right person, or the right whatever. We are called, then, only to keep trying.

In the next month or two, the Stewardship Committee will be making some suggestions for the vestry and parishioners. The suggestions will involve our core values: who we are, what we receive and what we have to give as Christians. As always, prayer helps.

Think positively! In times of trouble there are always opportunities, and we are not alone. Remember, five loaves and two fishes fed five thousand, and came back as twelve baskets full.

Yours, hoping to serve better The Shepherd,

Richard Hammett

...It's me again!

Okay, so if I get this right, the Stewardship Committee concerns itself with raising money in two different ways - by inviting people to join our faith community (St. Mary's benefits when the newcomers donate to the collection plate) as well as by committing to the Stewardship Campaign.

Talking to people about why we are Episcopalian and inviting them to St. Mary's is evangelism. Committing funds to pay for our current church repairs or build a "rainy day" savings fund to offset future structural problems is capital campaign. Both are important to St. Mary's survival.

I might take a skeptical view and think, "What good is my dinky contribution if the need is so great?" - or "Why should I embarrass myself by talking to someone about my church?" but these are wrong ways to think. If EVERYONE commits to St. Mary's - both financially and evangelically - then we will be strong. I can do this work in the knowledge that you know exactly how scary it is for me to talk to strangers about something as personal as my religion or to commit my funds - and you support my efforts. Similarly, I know I will support YOUR efforts.

I think it is like the loaves and fishes that Fr. Reid talked about on Sunday. In order for St. Mary's to keep its doors open all of us have to do our part - and it's not easy. But if we ALL do our best, then it will work - St. Mary's will survive and we will have a surplus of blessings.

I'm willing to give it a try...are you?

Cara Nichols invites you to come by **My Girls** (courtyard square) and say "hi!". She works Tuesday-Friday until about 3. (*I love the Flax clothes they sell – but I'm too short and stocky to wear them. Maybe when I grow up..*) The pimento sandwich is out of this world!! Neat

rock collections too....Tom and I have gotten quite a few stones. Go see Cara next time you're in town.

Summer Kitchen



Marie's Cantaloupe Cucumber Salad

Marie Morgan fixed this salad and I couldn't get enough!! I nagged her for the recipe to the point where she started hiding in the bathroom every time I came to church. It is perfect for these scorching summer days...

Ingredients:

- 1 medium cantaloupe - cut into bite size thin pieces
- 1/2 cup diced sweet red pepper --- (*I usually use the whole pepper*)
- 1/2 cup diced green pepper --- (*again - I use the whole pepper*)
- 2 cucumbers (peeled, cut lengthwise with seeds removed and then chopped)
- 2 green onions (scallions) sliced thin (*Marie says these are optional - but she likes 'em*)

Dressing:

- 1/4 cup cider vinegar
- juice of 1 large lime
- 2 T sugar
- 1/2 cup olive oil (*Rachel Ray calls this "EVOO" - Extra Virgin Olive Oil*)



Janna's Cowboy Caviar

Janna brought this "appetizer" to the last church potluck. It was so good that everyone started eating it before dinner was served. I made it tonight for dinner (we just put tortilla chips on our plates and spooned this over everything). DELICIOUS! (PS: Janna - I need a picture of you!)

- 1 can of Bush's black beans (*drained and rinsed until water runs clear*)
- 1 can of Bush's black-eyed peas (*drained and rinsed until water runs clear*)
- 1 avocado cut up into pieces
- 1 can of corn (*fresh or frozen corn also works*)
- 1 tub of pico de gallo (*medium or hot*)

Mix and refrigerate. You might want to add some garlic salt or Mrs. Dash (I had to do this because Tom bought mild pico de gallo by mistake). Serve with tortilla chips.

WILL POWER!

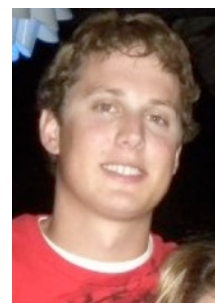
Pray for Will Mezger!



As all of you probably know, a member of our congregation is fighting for his life in University Hospital in San Antonio. On Sunday, July 17th, Will Mezger was in a horrific car accident on his way back to school at UTSA after a visit at home. He is very critical with many injuries, but the most crucial are injuries to his brain. It has been 2 weeks since the accident and the doctors and nurses are working diligently to keep his intracranial pressure low so that his brain can heal.

Will is 22 years old now (how time flies). It seems like just yesterday he was serving as an acolyte at our Altar, or going off to Camp Allen for a week, or making us all proud at the football games!

Please pray, pray, pray for Will and for his parents -- Bill & Katherine. As any parent knows, when our children are hurting we are also hurting, it rips our heart out. Also pray for Will's older siblings Lacy & Matt. And last, but certainly not least, pray for the caregivers in San Antonio that are working hard to bring Will back to good health!



Katherine has created an account with CaringBridge.org -- a website that allows her to update family & friends on Will's condition. It is a simple process to get signed up and you

can even select an option that will allow you to receive an email when Katherine updates the site. Keeping up with Will's progress allows us to focus our prayers specifically where they are needed. To access the site go to www.caringbridge.org/visit/willmezger.

Remember ... where there is a "Will", there is a way. I believe in miracles and the power of prayer, how about you? As of today there have been more than 17,000 visits to Will's CaringBridge site ... how about that for "Will Power"!!



Tulisha

Calendar News

Starting **Tuesday, August 2nd**, [AA](#) and [AlAnon/Al-ATeen](#) meetings will be at **7pm** – with one exception. Every 2nd Tuesday of the month is “Eat and Speak”, so potluck will be at 6:45-ish and the program will run from 8-9pm.

Wednesday August 3 @ 6:30: [Potluck Supper](#) and “Stump the Chump”

No [Adult Bible Study](#) during August – everyone is taking a breather (or vacation if they can afford it!)

Wednesday August 10 @ 6:30: Vestry meeting

Sunday August 21 – Bring a Friend to Church day (prize to parishioner who brings the most)
-- Columbarium ceremony following 10am service

August 22 – School starts
[His Kids Ministry](#) @ 5:30-ish at the Holiday House

Wednesday, September 7 at 5:30 [Youth Group](#) starts up

Sunday, September 11 at 8:45am [Godly Play](#) starts up

CLASSIFIEDS

Get your “Groove” On!

Have you ever laughed and sweat at the same time? I sure have – at **ZUMBA!** This summer my friend (Jeni Irvine) told me she was starting a Zumba class at the **old City Hall** on **Wednesday, Friday, and Saturdays at 10am**. Since the first class is free, I went to a class just to support Jeni – and to get a break from my 7am jog routine. Boy, did I have *fun*! This old stiff body of mine couldn't do a single move (and none of the other people could either). We spent the entire hour laughing and trying to rumba, salsa, and cha-cha. I've gone back several times since then.

There is something ridiculous about shimmying your shoulders while the sound-system blasts a guy singing, “I want you” (*ME? You want ME? Are you SERIOUS???*) Anyway, Marie and Alana Morgan crashed a session and they liked it too (Alana has some sweet moves!) Give it a try – you just might discover your inner Gene Kelley or Ginger Rogers.

Knitting and Crocheting 101

Cheryl Ann Wendele is an expert knitter and crochet-person (do you say crocheter?? That word looks *nasty*!) She also makes – and sells - knitting needles (hand waxed and beautifully beaded!). Cheryl Ann is interested in teaching people to knit and/or crochet. Her efforts will support and supplement our Prayer Shawl Ministry... Cheryl Ann will show us how to make caps/hats and socks! Right now she invites people over to her house (525-4456 or prayknitlove@yahoo.com) to knit at night. If Cheryl Ann gets a big enough crew, then the party will move to the Hirst House.

I’m a total flub at knitting and crocheting (I needlepoint) – but I’m willing to give it a try. This is NOT just a girl thing.....**REAL MEN KNIT**. (*True! See my brother-in-law?*)



JR McBryde Weighs In...on Evil and God

A university professor challenged his students with this question: “Did God create everything that exists?” A student bravely replied, “Yes, He did!” “God created EVERYTHING?” the professor asked. “Yes sir” the student replied. The professor answered, “If God created everything, then God created evil – since evils exists and according to the principal that our works define who we are, then God is evil.”

The student became quiet before such an answer. The professor, quite pleased with himself, boasted to the students that he had proven once more that the Christian faith was a myth.

Another student raised his hand and said, “Can I ask you a question, professor?” “Of course!” replied the professor. The student stood up and asked, “Professor – does cold exist?” “What kind of question is this? Of course it exists. Have you never been cold?” The students snickered at the young man’s question. The young man replied, “In fact, sir, cold does NOT exist. According to the law of physics, what we consider cold is in reality the absence of heat. Every body or object is susceptible to study when it has - or transmits - energy, and heat is what makes a body or matter have or transmit energy. Absolute zero (-460 degrees F) is the total absence of heat; all matter becomes inert and incapable of reaction at that temperature. Cold does not exist. We have created this word to describe how we feel if we have no heat.”

The student continued, “Professor – does darkness exist?” The professor responded, “Of course it does.” The student replied, “Once again you are wrong, sir. Darkness does not exist either. Darkness is in reality the absence of light. Light we can study, but not darkness. In fact, we can use Newton’s prism to break white light into many colors and study the various wavelengths of each color. You cannot measure darkness. A simple ray of light can break into a world of darkness and illuminate it. How can you know how dark a certain place is? You measure the amount of light present. Isn’t this correct? Darkness is a term used by man to describe what happens when there is no light present.”

Finally, the young man asked the professor, “Sir, does evil exist?” Now uncertain, the professor responded, “Of course – as I have already stated. We see it every day. It is in the daily example of man’s inhumanity to man. It is in the multitude of crime and violence everywhere in the world. These manifestations are nothing else but evil.”

To this the student replied, “Evil does not exist, sir – or at least does not exist unto itself. It is just like darkness and cold – a word that man has created to describe the absence of God. God did not create evil. Evil is the result of what happens when man does not have God’s love present in his heart. It’s like the cold that comes when there is no heat, or the darkness that comes when there is no light.”

The professor sat down.

The young man’s name – [Albert Einstein!](#)

Columbarium Update

Well the columbarium is up – and *beautiful!* Thanks to JR McBryde and Tulisha the remains have been respectfully and reverently moved from their old “in ground” location behind the church to their new home in the columbarium. A dedication and recognition ceremony is planned for Sunday, August 21 after the 10am service.

Refreshments will be served. All members of our St. Mary’s family are invited to attend – as are family and friends of the deceased. If you are interested in reserving a spot on the columbarium, please talk to Father Reid, Libby Bluntzer, or Kathleen Woodby.



Stained Glass Windows:



Have you noticed the wonderful Stations of the Cross windows in the Parish Hall? They really make a difference! We are almost half way done with this project...what a beautiful legacy these windows will be. They make a big difference in the quality of worship we are experiencing in the Parish Hall. Thank you to all the people who invested in this lovely tribute.

COMINGS and GOINGS...

Welcome to our newest family members - **Cheryl Ann Wendele**, **Janice Mitchell** & her children **Taylor**, **Travis** & **Katherine**, and **Norma Ortega**. Another member – **Lee** from San Diego – is a happy 10am attendee.

Let's all work together to make sure our new parishioners understand how to use the Book of Common Prayer along with the missalette and the Hymnal. I remember being overwhelmed at the prospect of juggling all these different texts.

iPhone Apps

Words With Friends: if you love scrabble, this is the game for you! You can get the free version or pay \$ 1.99 for the deluxe (no advertisement) version. The Harts (and Cheryl Ann, and others) are fighting some wicked games right now.

Angry Birds: I really dislike mass marketing – so I avoided Angry Birds for a long time. However, I have to say, this silly game makes everyone laugh. The point is that some mean green piggies have stolen eggs from the birds – and the birds are now angry and after the pigs. You put birds in a sling shot and try to knock the piggies out. Later versions have you trying to free birds from cages, fight off marmoset monkeys, etc. Free or cheap to get.

Shop Shop: keep your grocery list on your phone – and organize by store (I have an HEB page and a Walmart page). Free.

Shazam: If you've ever listened to the radio and wondered, "Who is singing that song?" then this is the app for you! This app will tell you who sings it, the name of the song, lyrics, and ask you if

you want to download it. (I've used this to try and stump Father Reid – with very limited success. That guy is a walking playlist!)

Ever Note: Take notes, tag pictures, create lists – very basic, very easy. I love this app and use it a lot to jot down notes (instead of digging through my purse for a pen that works). You can set it up to sync between your phone, computer, and iPad – so it shares data. If you really get good, you can coordinate with other people on their devices (haven't figured that out yet).

WOW - This newsletter is *Loooong*! Tom always says I talk too much...Here's proof it's true!

All my best - see you on Sunday.

Mary