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Christmas 2009

# The Messenger

of St James' Church, Texarkana, Texas

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## From the Rector

Dear parishioners and friends of St James',

Singing and music mark this time of year as no other. We sing because we believe. St Augustine tells us that *Those who sing pray twice*.

As I write this in the midst of Advent, I think in particular of the *Magnificat*, that song of praise sung by the Blessed Virgin Mary when her cousin Elizabeth greeted her as the Mother of the Lord (Luke 1:46-55): "My soul doth magnify the Lord." Since the 4<sup>th</sup> century it has been the Church's night canticle (see BCP, p. 65).

The *Magnificat* is poetry, but it is no lullaby! In the first part, our Lady sings of herself, and of what is happening to her: *My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit doth rejoice in God my Savior*. In the second part, the Virgin sings of something cosmic, something political, something much larger than herself: *He hath showed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble and meek. He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away*. This is a song of revolutionary change, of upheaval. This is not a cutesy carol.

If a person is hurt often enough, deep enough, defeated and pushed down enough, before long, he will become withdrawn, quiet, silent. Tyrants prefer it that way. Think of how people live under totalitarian regimes.

I often remember this truth at funerals. When death comes near, we often fall silent or lapse into the trite: "He's better off now," or "This too shall pass," or the one I really hate, "It's God's will." Most of us know that these words are so inadequate that silence

is the best policy. We resign ourselves, adjust, and quietly adapt.

But at a Requiem Mass, the Church makes us sing! Through our tears we sing, even if we don't feel like it. Singing at times like that is pure, defiant, revolutionary revolt in the face of death's presence. Death and tyrants hate singing.

The joy of our Lady's motherhood was to be laced with much pain. But yet, her faith enabled her to sing. And when we sing the challenging hymns of Advent, or the joyous carols of Christmas, we soar into the presence of God who, by becoming Emmanuel—God-with-us—revolutionized human history and our ultimate destiny.

So sing, and let the deep joy of the Incarnation fill you with hope.

*Let the heavens rejoice  
and let the earth be glad  
before the Lord,  
for he is come!*

**Wishing you love, joy and peace  
this Christmastide.**

Fr Douglas Anderson  
Sandra Kennedy  
Mary Nell Short  
Andrew Clark  
Ariel Williams

# A History of St James' Church, continued.

by Laverne McCurry, 1961

*This manuscript was found amongst the papers of the late Anne Cleveland.*

In May of 1885 the school house behind the church was made into a rectory. There was no parish house or educational facilities of any kind. Sunday school classes were held in the pews of the nave of the church. Quite a bedlam of voices (believe me) with each class trying to hear and be heard above the nearby class which was doing the same thing! In this year, 1886, the trustees authorized the sale of the larger triangular property on the Arkansas side of the town and the money was invested for profit, the small triangle, having on it a house occupied by the fire company was cleared away and Major Norwood authorized to try to sell the land for \$1,500.00, which eventually did not succeed for it later was sold for \$2,500.00 to the Daughters of Confederacy.

The congregation having outgrown the small chapel, the vestry under the leadership of the Rev. A. W. Higby in 1893, undertook the erection of a larger wooden building and Mr. A. Bobstruber contracted to complete same according to plans and specifications for \$5,487.53 which was fully paid by June 4, 1894 and Bishop Garrett consecrated the edifice. St. James now paid \$1,303.00 on the pipe organ and carpets. It was a manually pumped instrument and we "old timers" recall dear old Mr. Maddux, the crippled janitor, faithfully heaving away in the little dark cubbyhole just large enough for his old chair behind the organ.

In the year 1895 a charter for membership in the National Order of the Daughters of the King was granted to seven loyal church women, Miss Maude Sevier (later married to Mr. Tom Singleton), Mrs. Lula Stout, Mrs. Stella Higby, Mrs. P. M. Orr, Mrs. F. W. Offenhauser, Mrs. Joe Huckins and Mrs. Laura Alston. They assumed the duty of providing all furnishings of the altar, the communion wafers, making and laundering the linens, preparing the altar for all services, securing flowers for its beautification, preparing the font for baptisms and cleaning it, visiting the sick, afflicted and shut-in and in many ways assisting the rectors of the parish for over 52 years when its charter was relinquished and

return to National Headquarters in New York. This was a matter of great, great sadness for those women who had so faithfully kept their vows of prayer and service for so long a time!

Father Higby resigned in 1896 and was succeeded by the Rev. W. L. Tearny who served until 1897 and was succeeded by the Rev. W. K. Lloyd whom the Governor of Texas appointed to be chaplain in the Volunteer Infantry. Mr. W. Jones served in 1898 for a short time and departed to study for Holy Orders at Sewanee's University of the South.

I came into the parish about this time as a little girl from the State Line Methodist Church where I had been baptized in infancy – much of the succeeding will be of things known to me and of records in parish archives. I've loved the church greatly for I was confirmed and married in it and my beloved father and mother and husband were buried from it. My memory of things of importance is actually quite reliable. In the minutes of the vestry meeting, I find my name was added as the only woman on the Building Committee for the erection of the new brick church along with my husband who was treasurer of the Building Fund in January, 1928.

In 1898, the Rev. Percy T. Fenn came rector and served for seven years to be succeeded by the Rev. Henry Knott in 1906. During his stay, the rectory which had been purchased on the Arkansas side of town at 8<sup>th</sup> and Beech Streets was exchanged in the purchase of the Dr. D. S. Williams property at 7<sup>th</sup> and Wood Streets in Texas at a cost of \$1,650.00. This was later sold and funds added to the church Building Fund. The church still owned no educational or recreational facilities and all young people's activities were held through the generosity of that beloved church woman, Mrs. Ben Collins, in the spacious grounds surrounding her home at the intersection of 10<sup>th</sup> and Pine Streets which is now occupied by Wadley Hospital., or if inclement weather prevailed. I recall how her lovely home was overrun by many exuberant boys and girls! ☪

*To be continued.*

## January Birthdays

Haleigh Silveira	1
Melayna Brown	1
Gail Crisp	2
Irene Wright	2
Diane Akin	3
Glen Wile	4
Lyn Blackmon	5
Richard Lawrence	5
Beth Carson	9
Scott Bruner	9
Allison Burke	10
Emma Anderson	10
Maddie Anderson	10
Tom Collins	11
Pam Chasteen	13
Corinne Hunter	14
Kate Chambers	14
Carter Adams	15
Bo Bean	18
Kaye Baxter	19
James-Michael Hubrel	19
Marcia Collins	20
Jack Hehmeyer	21
Howard Davis	22
Brad VanZandt	22
Lindsey Hackett	22
Cynthia Cowdery	22
Tom Coleman	26
Caleb Adams	26
Marissa Johnston	26
Gail Carlisle	27
Charles Cook	27
Walt Forehand	27
Jeremy Lawrence	27
Jessica Jones	27
Frnak Hamlin	28
Megan Schroeder	29
Richard Wright	31

## January Anniversaries

Joe & Peggy Kososki	2
Mark & Lyn Storey	9
Basil & Janet Hoag	11
John & Susie Stanley	12
White & Bobbie Holman	14
Mike & Melinda Asher	16
Alan & Bobbie Trimble	17
Chuck & Ruby Firmin	18
Richard & Debby Wright	31

## February Birthdays

Kevin Hagar	1
Emerson DeLoach	1
Claire Patterson	2
Elsa Burroughs	3
Nancy Malone	3
Sarah Douglas	4
Gary Knaupe	5
Pat Works	8
Meredith Power	10
Judie Firmin	11
Joe Knight	11
Todd Shores	11
Melissa Cook	12
Andrew Burke	12
William Cullipher	13
Charlie Trammell	14
Shelby Anderson	14
Martha Marshall	15
Penny Williams	15
Lara Jolley	16
Mason Miller	16
Andi Sue Townsend	17
Jenny Baxter-Bartlett	17
Charles Jean	17
Nick Williamson	18
Punkin Waddle	18
Caroline Purtle	18
Stephanie Powell	19
Gina Wakefield	22
Cecile VanZandt	23
Robert Torrans	23
Josh Gerber	23
Grace Higgins	23
Shari Keller	24

## February Anniversaries

Billy & Suzanne Hackett	14
Chet & Lois Moore	17
John & Tommie Fountoulakis	25
Russ & Lisa McDermott	25

# Long Range Planning Questionnaire

Thank you to all who completed the online survey. The Long Range Planning Committee has studied the results and is at present formulating goals and plans for the next 3-5 years. The Vestry will review the suggestions from the committee and make the final decisions about the plan. A summary of the results is presented here for your review.

## Demographics

There were 131 total responses, 60% from women. The age breakout was:

- 40-59 – 47%
- 60+ – 35%
- <40 – 18%

Almost 75% of respondents are married, 12% are divorced, 9% are single and 6% are widowed.

The average number of years the respondents have attended St. James is 21 years.

- 34% have attended 10 years or fewer
- 27% have attended 11-20 years
- 39% have attended more than 20 years

Of the 96 who have been associated with at least one other denomination:

- 34 were Methodist
- 24 were Baptist
- 18 were Catholic
- 28 were other Christian denominations
- One came from a non-Christian background

## Worship and Music

Respondents ranked Worship as the most important aspect of St. James and as the primary reason they attend. This correlation speaks

to a strong belief in our liturgical practice and our place in the community of faith.

- 76% responding stated that one reason for attending was because of worship and liturgy
- 63% responding placed Worship: Liturgy and Music as the most important aspect of St. James Church
- 69% responding attend once a week and 23% attend 2-3 times a month
- 74% attend 10:00am Mass and 26% attend 7:45am Mass
- 67 respondents stated that their attendance at worship services has stayed the same, 23 stated it had increased and 11 stated that it had decreased.

## Identified Strengths

- Clergy and Sermons were rated as very good with many positive responses for sermons and no negative comments on sermons
- Music and Choirmaster received very positive responses
- Liturgy
- Staff
- Worship

## Identified Opportunities

- More youth involvement in worship
- Incorporate hand bells more with music
- Training for lay servers, readers, ushers, etc

## Communications

There were 127 responses with 97% of the responders indicating that email was the preferred method of receiving news and other information about the parish. Over 90% of those responding receive Father Doug's Knee Mails. More than half of respondents would be

willing to become a "fan" on the Parish Facebook page.

Of the St. James communication efforts the Rector's Knee Mail received the highest percentage of responses as an effective form of communication with 91%. This effort is followed closely by the Sunday Bulletins with 89% effectiveness. The Prayer request email came in 3<sup>rd</sup> with 80% effectiveness.

The remaining communication efforts, The Messenger, website, flyers and postcards, all came in with a 70% effectiveness rating. There were very few responses in the other available options indicating a neutral, not effective or no opinion response.

The St. James website appears to be an underutilized communication tool at this point and as such is an area of opportunity for us to develop and improve. 27% of responders visit the site at least monthly while 15% never visit the site. Most responders (68%) who visit the website are seeking information about parish events and programs. 65% look at the photos taken at church events and 51% are checking the "servers" schedule.

## Christian Education

Christian Education is ranked as second most important to the people who participated in the survey. This is significant because only worship is more important to the members of St. James. 40% indicated that they attend St. James for the Christian Ed opportunities. Most respondents indicated that their personal participation in Christian Education has remained

about the same. Overall the majority of respondents are satisfied with the Christian Education programs at St. James Church. There were a number of very positive remarks in praise of the Christian Education staff and volunteers. A majority of survey respondents did not have personal experience with the education opportunities for children and youth – this can be correlated with the demographic statistics of the survey participants which indicates a majority of survey respondents do not have children living at home

There were a large number of survey respondents who indicated a “no response” to questions concerning adult education programs. This would seem to indicate there was a significant lack of participation in adult education opportunities. This would also seem to indicate there is a great opportunity for members of St. James to significantly grow the level of participation in the adult education programs. There were several indications that other church activities, like choir rehearsal schedules, limited individual participation in Christian Education programs.

The survey indicates that there is a primary concern regarding the Christian Education programs for the young children, teens, young adults, and particularly the EYC program. There were also concerns expressed that there were not enough Christian Education opportunities for the young adults, ages 18 to 25. A number of respondents indicated a preference for small group Bible study programs or programs like Beth Moore Bible Study.

A majority of survey participants would like to see the Christian Education grow with increased participation across all age groups and as stated above, respondents rank it high in importance. That being said, it appears that the majority of survey participants don't actually participate in the Christian Education opportunities that are available at St. James Church.

#### **Parish Life**

Many respondents (55%) began attending St. James because a family member brought them or they transferred their membership from another parish in Texarkana or elsewhere. 19% first came as a result of a personal invitation from a member of the clergy or a friend. For 7%, the Episcopal Church was a compromise between the Roman Church on one side and a non-liturgical tradition on the other. Another 7% percent came because of the liturgical nature of our worship. The remaining 12% came for a variety of reasons including exposure to our parish through St. James Day School or Alpha.

Most (70%) of the respondents felt at home at St. James within several months. For the other 30%, it took six months or more to feel at home. Assimilation of newcomers was identified as an area where improvements are needed.

Survey respondents currently attend St. James for a variety of reasons with the top three being Worship and Liturgy (77%), the Sacraments (74%) and the clergy (67%).

- 48%-55% attend for fellowship, preaching, family and friendships, obligation and spiritual guidance  
- 38%-40% attend for Christian Education or Music

- 18% attend for the service opportunities

Asked to rank five areas in order of importance, Worship: Liturgy and Music received the highest rank. The other four are Christian education, Pastoral care and counseling, Evangelism, and Service to the community.

Two thirds of respondents reported that their attendance/service at worship or social functions has remained the same over the past two years. For those whose participation has changed, more have increased their participation than decreased. The exceptions are service in both parish programs and parish social functions. Reasons stated for the differences include changes in work, school or travel schedules, becoming a server and conflicts between choir and Christian education.

Three quarters of respondents have used the Recreation Center for non-parish related functions including birthday parties, swimming or meetings. Only 20% of respondents have used the pool in the past two years. Most of those who have used the pool used it less than 10 times.

Most respondents think Fr. Anderson is effective in his role as priest and pastor. Our non-clergy staff are also highly rated.

Participants in the programs offered at St. James are generally satisfied with them. However there are many parishioners who are not involved; some for scheduling reasons and others whose needs are not met by the existing programs. q