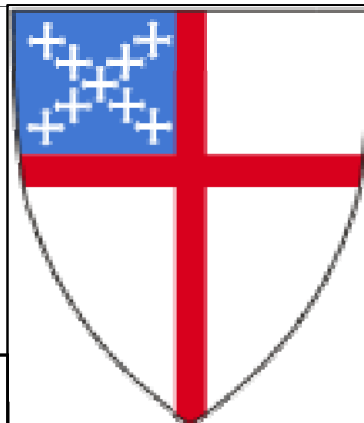


St. Luke's Episcopal Church

Cypress Mill, TX

"Heaven in the Hills"

November/December 2011 Newsletter



A Message from Father Bye...

Maranatha

"There is a change coming in our lives." That is the spirit of the Advent season that begins just two Sundays from now, the last Sunday of this month. The Greek word "MARANATHA," found in both First Corinthians and Revelation, speaks to that spirit most completely. It may be correctly translated as either "our Lord has come" or "come Lord". While the first is a proclaiming of truth the other is a plea for such truth to come. The two used together in the same context is most appropriate for the Advent season.

As we anticipate his coming in the celebration of his birth at Christmas we would say, MARANATHA. However we would also say it in proclaiming his presence among us and within us in this very moment. Finally would say it in relation to the Eucharistic prayer in the mass when we respond, "Christ has died, Christ has risen, Christ WILL COME AGAIN", in reference to the parousia or second coming.

Although the season is about the anticipation of that which is to come, it is also about that which is here already. For instance, Advent is a time for planning and preparing for the celebration of the Christmas season and the feast of the Epiphany. Yet it is also about resting, remembering, quiet celebrations with family or friends, taking the time to really read those Christmas cards sent by them and perhaps even time set aside for listening to your own choice of music of the season. Advent is really intended to be a quiet time of reflection even as we are about our preparations.

Such preparations for most of us usually include shopping for gifts and it is commonly a source of some resentment about what Christmas now appears to be about. I once read that when receiving a gift we should consider the effort that was involved in acquiring the gift for us as part of the gift. Conversely, when we are the giver and caught in the frustration of the shopping world, remember that this too is part of the gift and is for the giver perhaps the most important part of the gift. This sort of perspective can lead to a new outlook on Christmas for some of us. For all of us though there is the appearance of John the Baptist in the Sunday advent readings to remind us of the true depth of preparation that is available to us. Just as John called God's people to repentance, so we are also called during Advent to make more room in our lives for the Lord's coming to us (MARANATHA). So, the church has given us the great gift of the Rite of Reconciliation (confession with a priest) to facilitate the sort of change of heart that can make this a very special Christmas indeed.

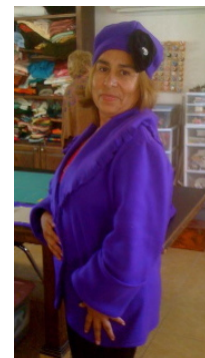
One might see all of this advent preparation as just another list of things to be added to an already long list of Christmas "stuff". And so it might be if not accompanied by intentional consistency of worship and reception of the Holy Eucharist. This, bolstered by increased devotion to prayer and meditation during the advent season of preparation will insure in us all that is necessary for this to be a holy time of refreshment, while in our hearts we will daily say MARANATHA, MARANATHA.

Fr. Bye +

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Photo: Our sewing mission in Piedras Negras. See story on page 7.



Important Dates

(Refer to the “Services & Events” found on page 3 for more important dates)

November 20: Consecration Sunday (see paragraph below)

November 23: Thanksgiving Eve celebration of the Holy Eucharist at 11 a.m.

December 4: Annual Meeting (“Mission vs. Parish Vote”)

December 18: The Service of Lessons & Carols will be at normal service times

December 24: Select from two “Christmas Eve Services”, 1) An “early, family-oriented service” begins with congregational singing of Christmas carols at 5 pm. Followed by a children's homily, will start at 5:30 PM. 2) A “late service” with singing of carols at 10:30 p.m., with the rest of the service beginning at 11 p.m. This “late service” includes an unimaginably lovely, old-world arrangement of music that is a Christmas gift in itself.

December 25, Christmas Day: Holy Eucharist @ 10:15 AM (no 8 AM service)

February 16-18: Diocesan Council

May 3-6: Cursillo #257, Mustang Island, Father Bye will serve as the Spiritual Director

Note: For the most current information on church events please refer to the website calendar found at <http://www.stlukes-cm.org>

Consecration Sunday, November 20

On Sunday, November 20, we will be able to give back to the Lord a portion of all that He has given us. Each family will have an opportunity to place their pledge cards on the altar for a special blessing both services. This is a tradition in many churches that we look forward to at St. Luke's. There will be a meal following the second service. Tamales will be provided, and we are asking for sides and dessert to go with them. An announcement will be made at the luncheon of the total amount pledged.

Important Contacts...

Vicar - Tommy Bye ; 817-308-5850 ; Email: byetommy@yahoo.com
Church Office - 830-825-8001

Bishop's Committee Contact Information

Sandy Hodges, Senior Warden Home: 830-644-2345, Cell: 512-663-9745;
scroftshodges@gmail.com
Scott Dawson, Treasurer, 210-748-0238
Don Gray, 512-496-3583
Tom Peterson, 512-264-0336
Jorn Budde, 512-695-6057
Jim Furber, 830-868-4437
John Stephenson, 830-825-3334
Lonnie Ragsdale 830-693-2492 Rita Reiner 830-825-3335

We Need Your Photos!!

Please email your photos (or download to a CD) of St. Luke's events to Don Gray for use in future newsletters and in other church publications. The photos will be stored on the Church's “Shutterfly” web album for access by staff and certain parishioners. Parishioners with access to the web album are encouraged to upload their photos directly to the web album.

Schedule of Lay Readers, Acolytes, and Greeters

Find the schedule at St. Luke's website, <http://www.stlukes-cm.org>. It provides the schedule for several months in advance and will be updated every month or so.

St. Luke's Services & Events

Sundays

8:00 AM: Holy Eucharist (no music)
9:15 AM: Adult Christian Education (Swope Parish Hall)
9:15 AM: Christian Ed class for Teens (Swope Parish Hall)
10:00 AM: Children's Sunday School (Swope Parish Hall)
10:15 AM: Holy Eucharist (with music)
10:15 Children's education (Swope Parish Hall)
11:15 AM: Coffee and snacks (Swope Parish Hall)

Other Days

Monday 9:00 AM: Morning Prayer
Tuesday 9:00 AM: Morning Prayer
Tuesday 9:30 AM: Women's Bible Study (Swope Parish Hall)
Thursday 6:30 PM: English as a Second Language Class (Swope Parish Hall)
Wednesday 9:00 AM: Morning Prayer
Wednesday 11:00 AM: Holy Eucharist
Wednesday noon: Women's Small Group (Cursillo Reunion, Swope Parish Hall)
Wednesday 12:30 PM: Men's Small Group at Casa Mesa restaurant, on Hwy 620 near Hwy 71, in front of Home Depot

From the Senior Warden

As this year draws to a close, I reflect on the past two years, that I have served as the Sr. Warden for St. Luke's. It has been a very blessed time for me and one that I shall always cherish. God has so blessed this church family, and he certainly blessed me by giving me the opportunity and privilege to serve Him and you. Through you, I know I have become closer to Him. I remember how fearful I was when Father Bye, out of the blue, asked me to serve as Sr. Warden. I said to him, "I don't know if I can do this. I don't really know anything about being a Sr. Warden." He assured me I would find my way if I trusted in the Lord to guide me. He then said, "Sandy, never refuse the Lord's call and He is calling you." I did answer the call and am so glad that I did. It is impossible for me to express the gratitude I feel about my service to St. Luke's and to all of you. I have felt so much support, encouragement and love throughout the past two years. Each one of you in your own way, has taught me something about faith, trust, giving, caring, helping and loving.

As I leave this position, I look forward to following the next person that has been called to serve. As you all gave me, I will give to them my support, encouragement, energy and respect. I will work hard to continue the ever "Expanding Ministries" and good works at St. Luke's. It has been a joyful time for me, full of blessings and thanksgivings for which I am grateful.

With each task I was given, I tried to serve to the honor and glory of God. That was my hope and my prayer. With your help I believe we did.

Faithfully,
Sandy Hodges, Sr. Warden

Mission to Parish Status

PROCEDURES

We will be voting on whether we move to Parish status at our **Annual Meeting on December 4.**

Following are the procedures for assuming Parish status as outlined in Canon 18, section 9.

1. A meeting of the communicant members of the church must be called by the minister- in -charge.
2. A written announcement of the meeting must be issued at least 5 days prior the meeting.
3. All members 16 years of age an older shall have the right to vote on the matter.
4. If the majority of the communicants votes against becoming a parish then the subject is tabled and no further action is required. If the majority of the communicants vote in favor of becoming a parish then the following steps are taken.....

Additional Steps:

1. A majority of the communicants of the congregation, sixteen years of age or older, shall sign the following statement...”We the undersigned, being communicants of St. Luke’s Cypress Mill, a mission situated in Cypress Mill in the County of Blanco, State of Texas, being desirous that the status of said mission be changed to that of a parish, do request that our desire be acted upon at the next annual Council of the Diocese of West Texas. Witness our hands, this ___day of _____in the year of our Lord.”
2. The Bishop’s Committee shall prepare evidence of the ways and means by which the parish shall be supported.
3. The communicants at such meeting shall elect a provisional vestry for the parish, such election to be conducted according to the requirements of the canon providing for the elections of a vestry.
4. The bishop’s committee of a mission desiring parish status shall report all proceedings, with copies of record of organization, to the annual Council at the next meeting, furnishing evidence that the provisions of Section 10 of Canon 18 have been complied with.
5. This information shall be referred at least 30 days prior to Council to the Committee on Status of Parishes and Missions
6. The Committee on Status of Parishes and Missions shall report before the Council adjourns, with its recommendations, and the Council may by resolution provide for the advance of the congregation to parish status.
7. At Council, when the application for parish status is approved the new parish is entitled to an increase in delegates.
8. The provisional vestry takes office following the adjournment of the Council approving.
9. The secretary of the Diocese shall notify the warden and the minister-in-charge of the action of the Council.

Additional Comment: If a mission is approved for Parish status there will be a parade of the members of that church at the annual Council.

For questions please call Father Bye or a member of the Bishop’s Committee.

What's Happening at St. Luke's

As usual, lots of things are happening at St. Luke's...

Annual Meeting...Please plan to attend the annual meeting on **December 4**, following the 10:15 service. We will be officially voting on moving from Mission to Parish Status, the new Bishop's Committee members and delegates to council. Please bring your favorite finger food and/or dessert. Your participation in this meeting is very important to St. Luke's. See you there.

Water Tanks...St. Luke's is looking to purchase two water tanks to serve as fire protection for St. Luke's Church, Cypress Mills and other neighboring communities. The tanks will hold approximately 60,000 gallons of water and be equipped with universal connections for access by all VFD's. Donations are being sought from all community residents and a grant from the LCRA will be submitted for matching funds. The cost of the project is approximately \$50,000 for both tanks installed. If you would like to contribute to this worthwhile project please contact Jim Furber, Jorn Budde or John Stephenson. It was noted at the "Disaster Meeting" held in October that water resources were lacking in our area due to the drought, leaving fire departments to return to Johnson City for water. With these tanks St. Luke's will be a key resource for many.

"Disaster Ministry"... A meeting on "Disaster Preparedness" was held October 4, at Swope Hall to discuss the recent fires. Approximately 85 people attended. People from Hays, Blanco, Burnet and Travis Counties were represented. Numerous officials such as fire chiefs, EMS personnel, Blanco County Sheriff, Judge and our commissioner were present. There was much discussion about improving communication, St. Luke's role as a point of contact during disaster, traffic control on the various roads and byways and much more was discussed. A group is continuing to work on this effort and a second meeting will be forthcoming. Stay tuned. Contact persons for this ministry are: Christie and Rick Schroeter, Sandi and Pat Burlison, Shirley and Ralph Bishop and Sandy Hodges.

Church Parking...We are excited to announce that planning is underway to improve our handicap accessible parking area in front of the church. In the very near future you will see more and expanded spaces for those with special needs to include spaces for vans. It is hoped the planned improvements will make it easier to access all church facilities and grounds for everyone.

Thanksgiving Eve Service... There will be a Thanksgiving Eve celebration of the Holy Eucharist on Wednesday, Nov. 23 at 11 a.m.

Lessons and Carols...The Service of Lessons and Carols will be at the normal service times on Sunday, Dec. 18.

Christmas Services...To celebrate the birth of our Lord, the church is bathed in white candlelight and bedecked in greens. A creche is given a place of honor up front. On Christmas Eve, Sat. Dec. 24, there will be an "early, family-oriented service" beginning with congregational singing of Christmas carols at 5 pm followed by a 5:30 service which will include a children's homily. There will also be a "late service" with singing of carols at 10:30 p.m. on the 24th, with the rest of the service beginning at 11 p.m. This "late service" includes an unimaginably lovely, old-world arrangement of music that is a Christmas gift in itself. Then, because Christmas Day falls on Sunday this year, we will have one Sunday service only, at the normal time of 10:15. There will be no Christian Education that day.

Youth Seeking Work... Mercy and Peace Preston are available to work as part of their effort to raise money for upcoming mission trips.

Les Petits Chanteurs Come to Cypress Mill

Their name may mean “the little singers,” but their powerful sound and the impact of their coming to Cypress Mill were anything but small. On Tuesday, September 27, Les Petits Chanteurs and a chamber ensemble from Holy Trinity Cathedral in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, put on a concert the likes of which St. Luke’s has not witnessed before. At about 4:30 p.m., the parish hall was suddenly filled with the sound of happy voices and young boys exploring rooms and finding places to practice and change into concert attire. They soon gathered to rehearse, and those parishioners present were treated to a sneak preview of angelic music that was later to reverberate throughout the hall. Concert and congregation members enjoyed a delicious catered barbeque dinner, eating at tables inside and on the porch (because, of all things, it was raining!) decorated with fall flower arrangements in mason jars and straw hats. One parishioner remarked at the delightful sight of young Haitian boys speaking French moving in and out among local ranchers, each group thoroughly enjoying the other.

The choir was surprised with a welcome in French by Peace Preston. They sang selections in French, English, and Creole. The unexpected and most welcome rain wasn’t the only evidence of God’s grace poured out upon us that evening. During some of the livelier chamber tunes, some of the boys invited members of the audience to dance. Soon people were up dancing all over the room, following the Lord of the Dance in joyful celebration of music, fellowship, and the brotherhood of believers.

The evening concluded with a reception to wish the choir Bon Voyage as they departed for California. Parishioners gathered to pray over concert members, asking the Lord to return the blessing they had given us: “Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your lap. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.” Luke 6:38.

-Beth Preston



During the Warm-up



During the Performance

The Spirit of St. Luke's



In the stillness, dawn is breaking,
Bird and beast alike are waking,
But One is there Whose watch is
keeping;

You will never find Him sleeping.
He holds the answers we all seek,
He, the Spirit by the creek.

He moves now, quickly, o'er the
waters,
He, Who gave us sons and daughters.
He, the Source of all the living,
Ever loving, freely giving,
Finds us, fills us as we pray,
He, the Strength for each new day.

How His filling stirs, excites me,
And to action now incites me.
I must go, for He is calling.
With Christ my Guide, I fear no
falling,
No condemnation, no rebukes:
He, the Spirit of St. Luke's

-Beth Preston
(photo taken by Rita Reiner, February
25, 2010)

PIEDRAS NEGRAS MISSION

MEDICAL FAIR

December 10 has for many years been the day the parishioners come to El Buen Pastor to receive their Christmas food bags, often a new blanket, and afternoon celebration. This seemed like a wonderful time to reach the most people with medical testing. As they receive their bags, they may proceed to the other stations set up to check their blood pressure, blood sugar, and attend a class of instruction for breast exam. These are the medical testings and education requested by Father Miguel. We have a doctor, two medical practitioners, nurses, and other volunteers available, and three are fluent in Spanish. Volunteers are always needed on big projects like this, whether to help with food bags, crowd control, or other needs. If you are available and interested, please let the church office know. Volunteers stay in a secure school dorm and costs are very minimal. As last year, we will also gratefully accept money toward purchase of rice and beans for the food bags. Make the donations to the church office marked "rice and beans".

SEWING

Those attending the sewing class in October made a jacket and chose their favorite color from purple, turquoise, pink, black, gray, yellow and cream. Some made a matching hat from the pattern. A few even added their own flower design!



We had not brought fabric for a project they could take home this year since they have been busy sewing bags, aprons and working on denim shirts to sell. They were so excited about their jackets and I'm sure they made a splash with all the vibrant colors when they wore the to church. We will be organizing a pattern cut out day at church very soon to have bags ready to sew when we go back the first of December. The women will be working to add to what we have to sell at Bishop's Council in February. Watch your email regarding the date. We will meet in Hill House and go through what fabrics we have. If you have any large pieces of denim or heavy fabric for a bag, please bring it. Much of what we have a smaller pieces.

CONSTRUCTION

Our construction team will be planning dates in the future for small projects in the colonias, an activity building in the colonias, and the possibility of another single family dwelling. Workers from the church are hired for the projects and those receiving the home also work. More information and dates will be forthcoming. Our diocesan World Mission office has a slogan concerning world mission:



WE CAN PARTICIPATE, PRAY OR PAY. All three areas are essential to any success of mission projects. Our grant received from the World Mission office was a fifth of what we received the year before, so if you feel called to help support these projects, it will be appreciated.

-Connie Bye

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