

Matt's Missive

November 2023

Priest's Point of View

MERRY CHRISTMAS

I know it is a little early, but I wanted to let you know of an early Christmas present the Lord God has given St. Matthew's - a new Rector. His name is Cristopher Robinson. As shared earlier, Cristopher will begin his ministry on Monday, December 4th. He is excited to join you in your faith journey. I have known Cristopher for 18 years as a priest, co-worker, and friend. It has been a blessing. He brings with him energy, enthusiasm, a quick wit, a sharp mind, and a deep love of the Lord. He is an engaging preacher and teacher. Let me quote Dr. Seuss, with Cristopher, "Oh, the places you'll go." One gift you can give to Fr. Christopher is to wear your name tags, please. If you don't have one, call the office and get one.

Every new beginning starts with an ending. My last Sunday with you will be December 3rd. I will miss you. You have been very gracious and accepting of me. It has been a blessing and a joy to be with you these 10 months (has it been that long?). You are small, but you are faithful and strong, worship centered, and outreach oriented. You love one another and enjoy being together. All those attributes are contagious and will attract new members.

Please know that you will always be in my prayers.

God bless you and those you love.

Fr. Chuck

P.S. Remember, Honor God and Bless Others.

PLEASE JOIN US—Sunday, December 3, 2023

SINGLE SERVICE at 9:00 A.M.

Immediately After the 9:00 AM Service in Creasy Hall

Parish Meeting

Tamales & Trimmings Potluck

Celebrate & Thank Fr. Chuck!



Our Mission: We serve Jesus Christ as a community rich in the Episcopal tradition by welcoming the seeker, providing a caring family, encouraging spiritual growth, and reaching into our neighborhood and world.

Introducing Our Next Rector

By Diane Woods



Fr. Cristopher Robinson will begin serving as our rector on Monday, December 4th. He has a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from Rice University and a Master of Science in Engineering from the University of Texas at Austin. Fr. Cristopher received a Master of Divinity from the Seminary of the Southwest. He is currently in a Doctor of Ministry program at Baylor University's Truett Seminary. His formal coursework is complete and anticipates a completion date of the Fall 2024.

Fr. Cristopher was ordained on January 11, 2006. He began his ordained ministry as a curate at St. Thomas with Fr. Chuck. He served at St. Thomas for a little over three years. Fr. Cristopher served as rector of Epiphany Church & School in Kingsville and St. Francis in San Antonio, interim rector at Trinity in Victoria, and vicar of St. Andrew's in Brackettville. He has served at summer camps for youth almost every year of ordained ministry and has led multiple weekend retreats for high school and college students. Fr. Cristopher has served on diocesan committees and commissions as requested by the bishop.

Fr. Cristopher is married to Kristina, and they have two sons, Michael (22) and Zachary (16). His hobbies are varied, including reading, cooking, and various games. He currently volunteers as the chaplain for the baseball team at Our Lady of the Lake University. This is just a brief introduction. The search committee found Fr. Cristopher to be approachable and easy to talk to, and we look forward to getting to know him better. We hope you do as well.



Annual Bishop Visit



The Rt. Rev. Dena Harrison
Retired Bishop Suffragen of Texas

The Rt. Rev. Dena Harrison and her husband joined us on Sunday, October 22, 2023 for the dedication and renaming of the education building to the Vellom Education Building in honor of Fr. Tim and Ann Vellom.



Dedication of the Vellom Education Building



Guests of Honor: Hannah, Sarah Grace, Ann, and Fr. Tim.



Group photo



2023 Stewardship Upcoming Key Dates

“Our generosity is informed by the simple theological truth that God has blessed us infinitely with all of the gifts of Creation. Our lives, our labor, our love is devoted to the mission of the Church when we take stock and realize that our lives and our response to God’s generosity are Rooted in Abundance.”

November 26: GENEROSITY SUNDAY – estimate of giving cards for 2023 will be available for completion in the parish hall after the service.

December 3: GRATITUDE AND BLESSINGS SUNDAY – completed estimate of giving cards to be blessed during the services.



2023 Fall Clean Up

Many thanks to all who participated in our fall clean up—to all who participated on the group day, Saturday, October 21st, and those who chose to complete tasks on a different day. These are just a few of our volunteers—we weren’t able to catch everyone who helped.



Can you tell who’s on the other side of the door?



Hospitality Notes

By Melissa Mudge

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. (Romans 12:9-13)

Many Thanks

Thank you, people of St. Matthew's, for the support and contributions, for the work you do to take care of the physical needs of our church. Even though they are just buildings, these structures provide shelter and a background for our worship and fellowship. The walls hold us together and soak up the love we have for each other and for those outside our doors.

Thanks so much for the relatives who are "visiting" us in the Parish Hall. Hopefully, they have enjoyed being in place as we go about our daily/weekly church activities. What a great time having people we loved snuggled up around us.



On-Going Hospitality

- ♦ Morning Coffee Fellowship after each Sunday Service.

8:00 Service—morning coffee and snacks will be ready about 8:45.

10:00 service—coffee and snacks will be ready about 10:45.

Thanks to new host families, we have been able to revise the schedule for two services. A few more volunteers would help spread the rotation to one time per month.

- ♦ Hospitality Committee – Volunteers are needed to prepare food, set up, serve, and clean-up at some of our church related activities. If you would like to be "hospitality on call," please let me know.

Give it – To Go

Please pick up a bag to give away to someone who needs it. These bags can travel in your car and then be given as you like.

Finished bags are available in Creasy Hall with a water bottle, snacks, a wash cloth, soap, toothbrush, toothpaste, and black socks.

There is room to add anything else, such as: long sleeved tee shirt/sweatshirt, sunscreen, feminine hygiene products, an additional pair of socks, or a gift card to a fast-food establishment. The person to whom you might give this bag is experiencing difficult times and has limited resources, so think about portability.

Items needed at this time include deodorant, small shampoo/conditioner, body lotion, and sunscreen. No hotel samples please, not much product and too much trash. Please start collecting sturdy carry all bags, we are almost out. Thanks so much.

(Continued on next page)

Hospitality Notes (Continued)

Special Events

- ♦ December 3, 2023—Tamales and Trimmings—Pot-luck luncheon and deck the (Parish) Hall.
Please join us for a brief Annual Meeting, followed with yummy food and fellowship. Add your decorative touches to our parish hall and share the love with Fr. Chuck on his last day with us. It will be a great day!!
- ♦ December 10, 2023—We welcome Fr. Cristopher and Another great reason to eat cake!!!

And with the Christmas season come **gifts** –

Our **talents** are the gifts we give to each other and to the world.

To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom; and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy; to another discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses. (1 Corinthians 12:7-11)



Military Outreach Ministry

By AGCS Arlene Stalvey, USN (ret)



Are you riding on the SmallShip Minnow surrounded by many, many sharks? Is your anxiety and fear in your current circumstance mounting? You really do know the answer. The solution is that you need a bigger boat. Climb aboard the SS Living God. Your ride will support you through any crisis. The vessel upon which you travel in your life will guide you. Instead of watching for sharks, look for the Lighthouse.

Vestry Notes

By Shawn Cooksey

The vestry will meet on November 21st. An update from that meeting will be included in the December Missive.

Approved Projects Which Require Funding (Any amounts appreciated)

- > New Drip Irrigation for Memorial Garden (\$5,676)
- > New shed (approximately \$10,000-\$14,000)
- > LED sign

Donations for the above projects or general support may be made online at <https://onrealm.org/stmattsuc/give/now> or you may find more information about donating on our web page [here](#). We are grateful for all donations.

RACAP NEWS

by: Kathy Ercoline

Thank you so much for your generous contributions to the “RACAP Holiday Basket Program” on Harvest Sunday. “The Holiday Basket Program” continues through December. If you did not have an opportunity to contribute to the Harvest Sunday collection, donations will be accepted until the **second Sunday in December**. Food for the Christmas baskets include: **Chicken broth, Flour Granulated Sugar (4 lb. bag), Brown Sugar (1 lb.), Canned Green Beans and Corn, Evaporated Milk, Stuffing Mix, Canned Pumpkin, Yams, Fruit Cocktail, and Cranberry Sauce.**

Many of you have already supported the Holiday Basket Program with cash donations... thank you...thank you! Monetary donations provide fresh produce, turkeys, and perishable items for the food baskets. Also, your donations provide Christmas gifts for RACAP applicants. Checks and cash donations may be placed in the offering plate, or you can bring your donations to the church office during the week. Office hours are 9:00 am-12:00 pm. Your cash donations should be in an **envelope marked “RACAP Christmas.”** Checks should be made out to St. Matthew’s and **marked “RACAP Christmas” in the memo line.**

With everyone focused on the holidays, day-to-day food items become scarce. The pantry is open five days a week for food distribution. **All non-perishable foods, cash, and hygiene and paper products are accepted,** but current, specific needs are:

Canned Fruits	Canned Tomato Products	Ramen	Dried Beans
Rice	Canned Meats	Muffin Mix	Mac n Cheese
Meat Helpers	Canned Beans (not green beans)	Canned Soup	Jello
Toothpaste	Shampoo	Dish Soap	Laundry Detergent
Feminine Hygiene Products		<i>Pet Food is Always Accepted</i>	

Please continue to keep Lisa Loftus, RACAP’s Program Director, in your prayers, as she continues to heal after her surgery three months ago. Get well soon, Lisa! Kathy Stone, Assistant Director, is doing an outstanding job keeping the pantry running smoothly during this, the busiest time of the year. The local community is blessed to have both wonderful ladies working for RACAP.

As the pantry continues to “Feed their sheep,” **remember RACAP in your prayers.** We give thanks for the pantry; the volunteers; and the many churches, organizations, and individuals who support RACAP with food and cash donations. That we are here and that we continue to provide services that other agencies cannot provide. Thank you for donating to RACAP and keeping us in business for over 40 years!”

October 2023 Pantry Assistance

of Families assisted: 162

of People assisted: 463

of Pantry Visits: 101

of People fed: 277

Estimated value of food given: \$25,406
(Some clients receive assistance for rent,
prescriptions, and gasoline.)

Each and every one of your contributions
helps someone in some way!

“Thank you for helping us help others.”

December Birthdays

*You have made known to me the path of life;
you will fill me with joy in your presence,
with eternal pleasures at your right hand.
(Psalm 16:11)*

Faith Kenealy-O'Connor	Richard Guerrero
Lynn Tidwell	Maribeth Likins
Janet Clere	John Sampson
Natalie Copley	Willow Black
Jennifer Bloodsworth	Kathy Mulligan
James Odom	



Happenings Around The Diocese

Camp Capers Mid-Winter Camps I, II, and III: January 2024. Registration is open for Mid-Winter Camps at Camps Capers, the first three weekends of January 2024. Mid-Winter Camps are opportunities to recharge midway through the school year, reuniting with camp friends and making new ones, while growing and learning in faith.

The submission **DEADLINE** for the Missive is the 15th of the month. Any late submissions will be in the next month's issue.



EPISCOPAL DIOCESE of West Texas Announcements

Diocesan Immigration & Refugee Ministries has issued an urgent request for baby clothing, bottles, infant formula, other supplies, and volunteers for the Plaza de Paz Respite Center in response to increasing numbers of families with toddlers and babies at the center. New and gently used infant and toddler clothing (sizes Preemie to 4T) can be delivered to the Bishop Jones Center. Needed items may also be purchased through their [Amazon List](#) and [Walmart List](#). The delivery address is: Plaza de Paz, 111 Torcido Dr., San Antonio, TX 78209-5642. Click [here](#) to contact Flor Saldivar, Director of Immigration Ministries, for more information and to volunteer.

The diocesan office at the Bishop Jones Center will close in honor of Thanksgiving on Wednesday, November 22 and reopen on Monday, November 27. If needed, the staff email directory is available online, at dwtx.org/staff.

The diocesan Christian Formation Committee has released their recommended Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany resources. [Click here](#) to read more.

Love Honduras, a ministry that provides preventative medical care to animals and vision screenings to children in Honduras, will open applications for its 2024 Vet and Vision Mission trip on Saturday, November 18. The mission trip will take place from Saturday, May 18 through Friday, May 24, 2024, and is open to anyone. Love Honduras will be accepting trip applications through Sunday, December 31, 2023. [Click here](#) for more information and to submit your application.

Announcing Magdalena Crittenden's Retirement

On November 2, Magdalena Crittenden, a member of the diocesan staff since 1999, informed Bishop David Reed of her decision to retire, effective immediately. Her decision was prompted by her desire to live closer to children and grandchildren, who are out of state. “Magdalena was often called ‘the Voice of the Diocese’,” Bishop Reed said. “While I am so sad that she has retired, we can all be glad for her that she has taken this opportunity to enjoy her children and grandchildren.” Read more [here](#).

Announcing Meg Grant as New Director of Marketing and Communications

The Episcopal Diocese of West Texas is pleased to announce Meg Grant as the new Director of Marketing and Communications. In this role, she will be responsible for all aspects of communication for the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas. The work will include planning, creating, managing and directing for all media communications as well as developing strategies for communication programs and support for work of the various ministries. Read more [here](#).

The Investiture of the 11th Bishop of West Texas

The Bishops of the Diocese of West Texas request the honor of your presence at the Recognition and Investiture of the Rt. Rev. Dr. David G. Read on Friday, December 1, at 6:30 p.m. during Evensong at St. Mark's, San Antonio. During the service, the people of West Texas will recognize and receive Bishop Read and promise to uphold him in this ministry. In the Diocese of West Texas tradition, Bishop David M. Reed will pass the diocesan crozier to Bishop David G. Read, signifying his new role as Bishop Diocesan. Registration is not required to attend. Read more [here](#).

2024 Summer Camp Registration Now Open

Registration is now open for 2024 Summer sessions for Camp Capers Summer Camp, Mustang Island Family Camp, and Duncan Park Summer Camp and Family Camps at dwtx.org/events. A variety of sessions are on the schedule for 2024, including mid-winter camps, summer camps, family camps, and weekend retreats ensuring that there is something for everyone. Don't miss your chance to enjoy these fun and exciting camping experiences! Read more [here](#).

From The Episcopal Church

The Joint Budget Committee of the Executive Council will hold open hearings via Zoom to receive feedback from the wider church on the 2025-2027 working budget. The working budget was presented to the Episcopal Church Executive Council during its October 24-27 meeting and is available publicly for review and input. Click [here](#) to read more.

Building on 20 years of partnership, the United Thank Offering and Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM) are teaming up for the 4th annual Great EpisGopal Race. Beginning November 20 through the 28, this virtual event offers multiple ways—run, bike, swim, hike, paddle board, and more—to participate and raise funds to support refugee resettlement and other EMM programs. Click [here](#) to learn more.

DECEMBER CALENDAR						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 Investiture 11th Bishop of DWTX 6:30pm St. Mark's	2 Kathy Coolidge 3-9pm (CH)
3 <i>Single Service</i> Worship 9am (C) Parish Meeting 10ish (CH) <i>Celebrate & Thank</i> Fr. Chuck Tamales & Trimmings 11am (CH) Kiwanis 5-6pm (CH)	4 Staff Meeting 9am (L) Prayer Meeting 12pm (L) AA Meeting 8-9pm (CH)	5	6 HOME 10am-3:30pm (CH, C, CEB) Eucharist 11am (ARC)	7 AA Meeting 8-9pm (CH)	8 HOME Piano Recital 6:30pm (C)	9
10 Worship 8 & 10am (C) Sunday School 9:15am (L)	11 Staff Meeting 9am (L) Prayer Meeting 12pm (L) AA Meeting 8-9pm (CH)	12 Vestry Meeting 6pm (CH)	13 HOME 10am-3:30pm (CH, C, CEB) Eucharist 11am (ARC)	14 AA Meeting 8-9pm (CH)	15	16
17 Worship 8 & 10am (C) Sunday School 9:15am (L) Kiwanis 5-6pm (CH)	18 Staff Meeting 9am (L) Prayer Meeting 12pm (L) AA Meeting 8-9pm (CH)	19	20 HOME 10am-3:30pm (CH, C, VEB) Eucharist 11am (ARC)	21 AA Meeting 8-9pm (CH)	22	23
24 <i>Single AM Service</i> Worship 9am (C) <i>Christmas Eve Carols</i> 7:15pm (C) <i>Christmas Eve Service</i> 7:30pm (C)	25 <i>Christmas Day Service</i> 10am (C) <i>Office Closed</i> <i>No Prayer Meeting</i> AA Meeting 8-9pm (CH)	26 <i>Office Closed</i>	27 Eucharist 11am (ARC)	28 AA Meeting 8-9pm (CH)	29	30
31						
C – Church; CH – Creasy Hall; VEB – Vellom Ed Building; L – Library ARC – Army Residence Community						

DECEMBER 2023 SUNDAY MINISTRY SCHEDULE

Ministry	December 3 1 st Advent Single service 9AM	December 10 2 nd Advent	December 17 3 rd Advent	December 24 4 th Advent Single service 9AM	December 31 1 st Sunday after Christmas
Altar Guild	Terry May Suzanne Milton	Kimberley Erwin Diane Woods	Pam Calvert Janet Clere	Terry May Diane Woods	Terry May Suzanne Milton
8 AM Reader	1 service only	Joan McClain	Max Hopkins	1 service only	Suzi Hopkins
8 AM Greeter/Usher	1 service only	Ben McClain	Shawn Cooksey	1 service only	Jayne Dunlap
8 AM Coffee	1 service only	Suzi Hopkins	Joan McClain	1 service only	Melissa Mudge
Server	Mendell Morgan	Sean Francis	TBD	Terry May	Wayne Mudge
10 AM Reader	Janet Clere (9:00)	Liz Sampson	Maribeth Likins	Diane Woods (9:00)	Susan Brown
10 AM Greeters/Ushers	Max Hopkins (9:00) Melissa Mudge	Kathy Ercoline Bill Ercoline	Terry May Diane Woods	Arlene Stalvey (9:00) Shawn Cooksey	Wayne Mudge Ted Whittier
Prayers of the People	Ted Whittier	Maribeth Likins	Liz Sampson	Susan Brown	Sean Keane-Dawes
Newcomer Visits	Terry May Diane Woods	Ellen Yelverton	Terry May Diane Woods	Ellen Yelverton	Terry May Diane Woods
Home Communion	No Home Communion	Mendell Morgan	No Home Communion	Ellen Yelverton	No Home Communion
Prayer Ministry	Ellen Yelverton	Mendell Morgan	Maribeth Likins	Ellen Yelverton	Mendell Morgan
10 AM Coffee	Not Needed	Kathy Ercoline	Diane Woods	Jayne Dunlap (9:00)	Melissa Mudge
Audio Visual	Wayne Mudge	Terry May	Ted Whittier	Wayne Mudge	Terry May
Lockup/Security	Janet Clere	Richard Guerrero	Shawn Cooksey	Jayne Dunlap	Maribeth Likins

Almighty God, You have called St. Matthew's to be a holy fellowship of believers and disciples. We give you thanks and praise for calling The Rev. Cristopher Robinson to be our new Rector. We thank You for guiding the Search Committee in their work and discernment in prayerfully selecting Cristopher. We ask you to bless him with grace, wisdom, and compassion, to lead us in the path You wish us to go. May we all work together for the building up of Your Kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SEPTEMBER 2023 FINANCIAL REPORT

Monthly	Pledge	Plate	Other	Total	2023 YTD	Pledge	Plate	Other	Total
Operating Income Received	\$12,091	\$1,238	\$2,817	\$16,146	Operating Income Received	\$149,777	\$15,600	\$44,009	\$209,386
Operating Income Budgeted	\$15,132	\$1,917	\$736	\$17,785	Operating Income Budgeted	\$136,192	\$17,250	\$12,227	\$165,669
	Monthly	YTD				Monthly	YTD		
Overall Operating Expenses	\$17,840	\$199,419			Outreach	\$1,382	\$7,219		
Budgeted Operating Expenses	\$15,480	\$210,746							

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