



Office for
Transition
Ministry

Ministry Portfolio

Full Portfolio (last updated Aug 21, 2017)

St. Mary the Virgin, Northwest Texas

1001 S. Goliad, Big Spring, TX 79720, United States

Contact:

Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge | Receiving Names until 09/30/17.

mehmer@nwtdiocese.org

Weekly Average Sunday
Attendance (ASA)

31

Number of Weekend
Worship Services

1

Number of Weekday
Worship Services

1

Number of Other per Month
Worship Services

Current Annual
Compensation

Cash Stipend

Housing / Rectory Detail

Utilities

SECA reimbursement

Compensation Available for
New Position

\$73000

Housing Available for

Pension Plan

**We're in compliance with
CPF requirements.**

Healthcare Options

Negotiable

Dental

Yes

Housing Equity Allowance in
budget

No

Annual Equity Amount

Vacation Weeks

**One month, including 5
Sundays (standard)**

Vacation Weeks Details

Continuing Education Weeks

2 (standard)

Continuing Education Weeks
Details

Continuing Education
Funding in budget

**up to/including
\$500/year**

Sabbatical Provision

Yes

Travel/Auto Account

Yes

Other Professional Account

Yes

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Describe a moment in your worshipping community's recent ministry which you recognize as one of success and fulfillment.

Every unselfish act of love produces that one defining moment of fulfillment - a parishioner sweeping sidewalks every Sunday morning; laypersons leading Bible studies and evening prayer week in and week out; professionals never taking payment for hours and hours of career-specific tasks. We measure success by these selfless acts of love and service.

How are you preparing yourselves for the Church of the future?

Our worshipping community at St. Mary's is fiercely protective of the traditions of the Episcopal Church while at the same time recognizing the changing nature of secular society. Our collective sense of balance has been thrown off by this shift into a post-Christendom culture. As we Christians try to find our place among this evolving world, we continue to adhere to the conviction and comfort that Jesus Christ has been alive to humankind for two thousand years and is Eternal. With the knowledge of His unchanging and unconditional Love to fortify us, we are aware that we must begin shedding our "that's how we've always done it" entrenchments. We must attempt to redirect our efforts to outreach and discipleship, not because we will be in any way comfortable with the concept of change but because Christianity must not be allowed to simply drift into complacency. The future leaders of our parish church must help us pursue with purpose and thought, a vision which leads us deeper into discovery of what our role needs to be and the steps for implementation.

Please provide words describing the gifts and skills essential to the future leaders of your worshipping community.

visionary, team-builder, effective communicator, results-driven administrator

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Describe your liturgical style and practice for all types of worship services provided by your community.

The parish at St. Mary's enjoys the familiarity and structure provided by the Book of Common Prayer and most Sunday Eucharistic services are done in Rite II. During Advent we change to Rite I and continue that until the Christmas season. We also have Morning Prayer approximately once a month and normally use Rite II there as well. We have evening prayer each Wednesday and also follow the Rite II office. While we enjoy the structure the Book of Common Prayer affords, our music director mixes things up nicely with a great variety of musical arrangements to include trombone solos, vocalists, hand bells, and recorders.

How do you practice incorporating others in ministry?

When we think about ministry we look at the wide range of gifts the people of St. Mary's have and attempt to match those gifts with a corresponding interest. Through experience we have learned that asking people to involve themselves in something for which they have no affection is an assured formula for failure. The many facets of liturgical worship give us an opportunity to have people participate in the function of that worship service. Coffee hour, potluck lunches, donation of time and talent to the military's needs, Salvation Army Angel trees and St. Andrew's Fall Festival are just some of the many volunteer projects which connect peoples' passions with tangible works. Since 1997, the Education for Ministry class has continued to provide an avenue for parishioners and community members alike to learn about their own ministry. Both within and beyond the church walls, these activities have allowed people to remain engaged and active, two key components of any good ministry.

As a worshipping community, how do you care for your spiritual, emotional and physical well-being?

The hallmark of our parish life is our liturgy and Holy Eucharist on Sunday mornings coupled with the call of fellowship after the worship service. Few people leave the nave without dropping by the Parish Hall to give a wave good-bye or drink a cup or munch a cookie. The emotional nourishment of 'coffee hour' lasts well past the physical nourishment. For some parishioners, church life is so ingrained it would be unthinkable not to stop by during the week to bring supplies, check on the church secretary, clean out a drawer or shelf, or pray in the chapel. Just about the time we get discouraged, someone, and hardly ever the same one, comes up with an idea to do a small outreach project or buy new kneelers or have a party for the parish. Our organized prayer team's only criteria for membership is that one have a prayer life and maintain confidentiality when asked. Formal pastoral care committees might not exist at this time but, presently, the beauty of our system is that many of us are living out the concept of "priesthood" when it comes to taking care of each other.

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How do you engage in pastoral care for those beyond your worshipping community?

As you leave our church sanctuary to exit into our courtyard and the outside world, you will see a sign hung over the inside doorframe that reads, "Servants Entrance." It is a reminder to all inside our church that our true purpose in life is to serve others outside the church. Living that purpose manifests itself through a variety of activities embraced by gifted servants: providing home communion to those unable to attend services; providing coats in the winter and fans in the summer; providing needed school supplies to teachers and survival supplies to the military. Two of the most ambitious projects conceived and built by our church were an Episcopal School, which operated from 1960-2001, and Canterbury Retirement Home, which provides housing in the form of 179 units and still operates today. Though it has been recently transferred to another faith-based, non-profit corporation, members of St. Mary's still serve on the Board of Directors. We also cannot forget those persons who show up at the door of the church looking for aid and comfort. This is how being a Christian has one of its greatest rewards for those present at the church when that call comes.

Describe your worshipping community's involvement in either the wider Church or geographical region.

Members in the church have participated in mission trips to Nicaragua with members of the local Methodist church for the past six years. These were ambitious medical, educational, and restorative undertakings to remote areas of that country. Each year at the Easter Service, the United Thank Offering is collected and processed to the front of the Nave as our children and adults participate in the flowering of the cross. Choir members participate in the annual Thanksgiving event at the local First Presbyterian Church, and the Trunk or Treat costume and candy parade at Halloween is a big hit in the community as an ecumenical activity with First Christian Church. We also engage the world community through prayer especially in times of stress or disaster praying on a regular basis for the leadership of the Episcopal Church and global leaders of all kinds.

Tell about a ministry that your worshipping community has initiated in the past five years. Who can be contacted about this?

Since 2010, Wednesday mornings have been filled with the sound of chatter, laughter, serious conversation, prayer, and a profound love of Christ and respect for what His Word means to each of us. Begun by Reverend Barbara Kirk-Norris, the hour-long sessions started as a way to introduce members to each other in an informal setting with easy-going conversations and a scripture reading. Soon, at Reverend Kirk-Norris' invitation, a few community members dropped by for coffee and while still attending other local churches, became permanent fixtures at St. Mary's on Wednesday mornings. When Reverend Kirk-Norris left in 2013, two lay persons took the reins without missing a beat. The discussions continue to be friendly but have evolved into an even more focused theological format due to the ecumenical make-up of the community and parish participants; it is a blessing to all involved. Contact persons: Charla Lewis or Johnny Smith.

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What is your practice of stewardship and how does it shape the life of your worshipping community?

As we expended effort to keep our church family intact without a full-time rector, something happened in our church this year without us even being conscious of it: a visible and tangible growth in our resources in the face of dwindling membership. As we individuals gave ourselves to God and each other through our time, our talents, and our finances, we lived out the parable of loaves and fishes.

What is your worshipping community's experience of conflict? And how have you addressed it?

Conflict of some nature seems to be inherent in the DNA of Christians for they are particularly good at creating it. St. Mary's is not free from that tendency. Unfortunately, the General Convention of 2003 (and the fact that our priest voted in favor of the ordination) brought a great schism to St. Mary's and resulted in the loss of many of the lay leaders of the church. Fr. Jim tried valiantly to bring some light to the issue but was only marginally successful in stemming the outflow of people, money, and talent. As a consequence, since Fr. Jim left in 2007, St. Mary's has lacked the inspired leadership to adequately resolve disputes that have arisen whether minor or major. We simply know each other too well, as with most families, to allow a leader to emerge among the lay ministry for any length of time. There is a solid core of hardworking and dedicated individuals who are alive and well at the heart of St. Mary's. It is our belief that small parish ministries can be the most rewarding work there is, and that under the guidance of a motivated spiritual leader we can be a positive and unified voice for Christ in our community.

What is your experience leading/addressing change in the church? When has it gone well? When has it gone poorly? And what did you learn?

"For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope" (Jeremiah 20:11, NRSV). We at St. Mary's are grateful that God knows the plans He has for us. Without the security of that promise, we would be too fearful to make substantive change. To begin to address the status of a congregation with a full-time priest to one without, we conducted an extensive survey to determine not only the qualities we seek in a rector but also to pinpoint our own collective congregational personality. The encouraging part of the process was that approximately 90% of the regular attendees completed the survey, which demonstrated their interest in the subject. The disheartening part of the process was in realizing how many different visions, or lack thereof, existed among the regular worshipping community. But rather than throw up our hands and say, "Oh well, we'll never agree so what's the use," we chose to find a common thread in our varying opinions and to pursue it. The lesson we learned is that with God, all things are possible as long as we hold out hope in His plan for us. St. Mary's has a tenacious hold on hope.



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Prior Incumbents

Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
Edson Way	Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge (Part-time)	2016-04	2017-04

Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
Barbara Kirk-Norris	Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge	2008-12	2013-05

Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
Kelly Conklin	Interim	2007-09	2008-12

Jim Liggett, Rector, 1994-02 - 2007-07

Church School	Number of Teachers/Leaders for Children School	Number of Students for Children School
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Number of Teachers/Leaders for Teen/Young Adults School	Number of Students for Teen/Young Adults School	Number of Teachers/Leaders for Adults School	Number of Students for Adults School
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Day School	Number of Students for Day School	Number of Teachers for Day School	Number of Total Staff for Day School
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Worshipping Community Web site: <http://www.stmarysbst.org/>

Media Links:

> <https://www.facebook.com/StMarysBigSpring/>

Online References:

Languages Significantly Represented:

English

Provide Worship or Classes in:

English

A PDF Profile can be found here:

http://www.stmarysbst.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Church_Profile_2017.pdf

References

Bishop:

806.763.1370 / bishopmayer@nwtdiocese.org

The Rt. Rev. J. Scott Mayer

Diocesan Transition Minister

806.763.1370 / mehmer@nwtdiocese.org

The Rev. Cn. Mike Ehmer

Current Warden/Board Chair

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Mr. Robert Miller

Previous Warden/Board Chair

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Mr. Jerry Worthy

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Mrs. Emily McCann

Parish/Institution

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Mr. Joel Miller

Local Community Leader

432.425.2325 / verna.davis@suddenlink.net

**Mrs. Verna Davis
Finkenbinder**