

Musing from Mother Minerva

Happy Thanksgiving! There is much for me to be thankful for this year. I am honored to serve St. John's, an amazing faith community that continues to share its time, talent, and treasure. Each one of you has made it possible to have a mission filled year.

The Action Teams adopted at our annual meeting in January have been very successful. As I shared in this year's Stewardship Letter, the Pastoral Care Team is revamping our method of staying connected within the parish. The Care Team is holding services at Buckner Villa on a quarterly basis. In addition, the Pastoral Care Team has expanded its card ministry to include get well and bereavement cards.

The Growth Team walked the neighborhood. They met our neighbors and invited them to our church events. Thanks to them we had a successful pet blessing, Jamaica, and legal clinic. The Affordable Housing Team volunteered at Habitat for Humanity ReStore and partnered with Central Texas Interfaith to advocate the City Council to adopt a budget that includes a new minimum wage for city employees of \$20/hour, \$8 million in emergency rental assistance, \$3.1 million for long term job training, and increased AISD funding for after school enrichment programs and parent support specialists.

The Racial and Social Justice Team is not new at St. John's. They continue to lead our community in our efforts to become a Beloved Community. This team sponsored special classes in June, pilgrimage opportunities in Austin African American history, celebrating Pauli Murray and collecting more than \$700 for the Pauli Murray Scholarship Fund.

I am grateful for St. John's commitment to worship, learning, and celebration. The church's liturgical teams – vergers, altar guild, choir, ushers, readers, technology specialists – work together to craft beautiful Sunday services, special feast days and a successful annual bishop's visit. The Christian Formation Team offers five separate Christian formation opportunities to our congregation: lectionary bible study, special book study, Sacred Ground, bible study, and special classes. Your contributions to the Sunday coffee hour, convivio, and monthly birthday bash allows everyone to fellowship and celebrate.

I am grateful that there is a great respect for keeping our buildings and grounds in excellent shape so we can carry out our mission. Our campus continues to be cared for by our amazing Building and Grounds Ministry.

I am grateful that our mission is reaching new people. Newcomers have been participating in our Sunday services. The Sunday attendance has increased by 20 percent this year. We have had 13 people baptized, four people confirmed, and several new families are attending our services regularly. In December we will have a Newcomers Class with at least one adult person interested in baptism.

There is so much to be grateful for, but most especially for the love of Jesus Christ that allows us to be a people of hope. A hope that will sustain us today and always. A hope that will comfort us during challenging times. A hope that will embolden us to carry out our ministry knowing that Jesus is leading us to God's eternal kingdom.

Thank you all for allowing me to serve alongside you growing in discipleship. May we continue to bear fruit of love, joy, and peace.

With Gratitude,

Mother Minerva