

St. Mark's

EPISCOPAL CHURCH



**Report to the Annual Parish Meeting
January 26, 2020**

**St. Mark's Episcopal Church
Annual Parish Meeting
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Agenda**

1. Opening Prayer & Call to Order
2. Rector's Report
3. Senior Warden's Report
4. Junior Warden's Report
5. Finance & Stewardship Report
6. Head of School Report
7. Appreciation & Presentation of Gifts
8. Closing Prayer & Adjournment

Rector's Report — The Rev. Susie Comer

I would like to begin by thanking the quiet helpers among us, who welcome and repair; set up and take down, who also cook, greet, teach and give in so many ways. Thank you so much! We appreciate you so very much. You are blessing, a gift from God!

I've been at St. Mark's for a year and 4 months now and I am grateful to be able to serve as your rector; as we are the episcopal presence in this corner of Fort Bend County. 2019 was a year in which I was still getting to know St. Mark's people and culture better. I was experiencing the cycle of the year and church events for the first time and gaining a deeper understanding of who we are, and who we can be together.

Construction out on FM 762 is finishing up and the sea of mud throughout last spring is now a thing of the past and with that done, we got our Electronic Sign out of storage and reinstalled. We are much easier to see from the road! Remember counting telephones to find our entrance?

One of the most pressing issues that I noticed after arriving here, is that St Mark's needed to live within its means as a church. For the previous three years before I arrived, St. Mark's has ended the year in the red and creative efforts had to be made to make ends meet.

Stewardship is not just raising money in the Fall or recruiting financial pledges for the coming year. Faithful stewardship involves, being thoughtful and wise in the use of those funds. Controlling our necessary expenses, enabling funding ministries well so that St. Mark's flourishes and we can be the active body of Christ in the world.

2019 has been a year of implementing ways we have found to pare down our budget, and potentially, making our church more outreach, formation and mission oriented, and less focused on maintaining. We have made great progress. This year in 2020, our expenses will be \$20,000 less than last year. But we are not done yet. Our continuing financial goal is to increase our income.

The tight finances, plus shifting our payroll to be done in house, has meant that financial questions and challenges come up throughout the week. Our bookkeeper has been a part-time position, done one day a week. In order to solve this, the decision was made to shift how the bookkeeping is done, distributing it throughout the work week. Bookkeeping will shift from Sandy Barkerding's shoulders, to Kimberly Hart's, who is in the office throughout the week, and has handled the church's bookkeeping in the past, beginning February 1 of this year.

I am deeply grateful for the multitalented Sandy and her faithfulness and willingness to do what is best for St Mark's. Sandy has worked faithfully at St. Mark's as our bookkeeper for several years and her work has grown beyond the assigned hours for that position. Kimberly has the skill and experience to take it on in her expanded responsibilities with her role as Parish Administrator. Appropriate checks and monitoring will be in place.

The creative and resourceful, Melissa Hamon, has worked at St. Mark's for several years and her job description has changed several times. We have big flip flops to fill as we work to be intentional in our welcoming and organized in our parish life together. We will work together in committees to make these aspects of our life together thrive.

Both Sandy and Melissa are women of multiple talents and faithful church members, who give and serve among us in multiple ways. Please embrace their return to their roles as church members and thank them, please thank them for their work.

There are so many people who work very hard and have given generously in so many ways. I would like to focus on a couple.

I would like to talk about education and formation in our church building. Two of the quiet people who work to make it happen.

I am deeply grateful to Chris Abbott, who is an educational powerhouse. Implementing quality curriculum for our children and youth; and teaching the youth formation class. We are blessed to have her and her zeal. It takes planning, many emails and texts to recruit teachers that are safeguarded, assisting in the classes. Her expectations for a high standard of commitment and involvement have been enriching our children and youth for several years now. We are blessed by God to have her in our church. Through her influence the EYC is being reinvigorated in 2020.

Jerri Carrington has been quietly and very competently running St Mark's Preschool over this last year. She is managing their finances, staff and student enrollment, and it has been a joy to work with her. I believe that her skills and abilities are very underrated. She is an excellent resource for both our church and our preschool. We are able to influence and shape children and families by having a preschool that teaches with the bible and liturgy, and the importance of living lives of compassion. The teachers, teaching assistants and aides work thoughtfully and cooperatively to provide an outstanding educational faith based environment for children in our community.

This year has been a banner year for our music program. Our music ministry is thriving. We have had several events and wonderful musicians. We even played before a baseball game! We increased the vestry to 9 members in 2019. Having instated three classes of three. It has helped spread the burden of responsibilities for the vestry. I am grateful for these leaders' faithfulness and hard work. They have borne their charge to care for St. Mark's with genuine concern and I am grateful to work with each one of them.

2019 has been a year in which the Strategic Planning committee met for months developing goals for us to follow into 2023 and the development of a new vision statement.

Pastoral care of church members has been an important part of my work in 2019. From family crises, to long hospital stays, to families grieving the loss of precious family members, families celebrating marriages and new babies. The care and nurture of each other has been critical. I am grateful for Daughters of the King. They have deepened their commitment to prayer and pastoral care in 2019. They have visited, provided food and prayer to many.

I remain grateful for a church staff that are friends as well as coworkers. We share a camaraderie as we get our church work done. Many thanks for your efforts and commitment to Melissa, Sandy, Tom, Kimberly, Reuben and Andrew. Melissa's decision to resign does align with our need to save money and also aligns with her own changing family priorities. God has been at work in that decision, which I accepted with regret, but understanding. Separate from that staffing change.

When you are not here, we miss you! We know many of you travel, are sometimes ill, have baseball and other sports that demand your time; but we truly miss you when we don't see you on Sunday.

Please, whatever happens politically in this coming year in our nation, please keep coming to church. We have been the church across the centuries, in many adverse situations. We are the household of God, Christ's body in the world. Whatever happens, we are going to still keep praying for our leaders and we will still keep praying for sound government, peace and understanding.

2020 will be one in which we will take up the tools and work together. Money may be tight, but we have prayer, hands, voices, minds and hearts. For example, at VBS this year, we will have the theme, "Joy to the world. All the boys and girls, joy to the fishes in the deep blue sea, and joy to you and me." Our biblical focus will be Psalm 8. You'll see a sign up at the back, pick a date and pick how you would like to help.

You will see around the sanctuary; different needs we have in our church life. Are you so busy that only Sunday is a time that you can give? Okay, find a way to help on Sunday. Can you help once a month, twice a month or every week?

Our physical plant, needs care. Our building and grounds. Jon Eiche needs strong hands and knowledgeable folks to attend to physical plant stuff. What skills do you have? Can you install a light switch or fix a toilet? We need you. Can you saw branches or clear out underbrush, you are needed!

Part of our ongoing vision is to be welcoming and encouraging of all. Can you put together welcome bags? Walk up to a visitor and welcome them? Give them a bag and walk them to the parish hall after church and introduce them to folks? Our welcoming committee, headed by Charlie Phillips, needs you.

We have events throughout the year that will be organized under the Fellowship Committee. St. Mark's Day, Pentecost, Fish Fry, Rally Day, Confirmation Sunday, Easter Egg Hunt and Vacation Bible School to name a few. Watch for these events and sign up to volunteer. We always need folks to set up, take down and organize food serving.

Our pledge campaign in the Fall of 2019 was, "rooted and grounded in love", with the emphasis on the depth, connection of our faith and our relationships as the family of God in this place. This year, our theme will be "Christian Hope". "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead".
1 Peter 1:3

May the living hope that has been born in us, inspire and dwell within us this year.

Rev. Susie Comer
Rector

Senior Warden Report — Mr. Brad Knecht

Almighty and everliving God, ruler of all things in heaven and earth, hear our prayers for this parish family. Strengthen the faithful, arouse the careless, and restore the penitent. Grant us all things necessary for our common life, and bring us all to be of one heart and mind within your Holy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen - BCP pray For the Parish, p. 817

I would like to begin this Senior Warden Annual Report by telling you what a privilege it has been for me to serve you this year. I would like to thank the members of the Vestry and Reverend Susie for all of their support and important work in leading our church family through the year. I hope that you feel, as I do, that St. Mark's is poised for a wonderful future ready to embrace and support our community by knowing Jesus and making him known.

This year started as a transition year. Our newly hired Rector, Reverend Susie Comer, started in October of 2018 and was forced to hit the ground running. The Church's budget was being crunched again due to low projected income. The St. Mark's School had recently released the Headmistress and their finances were being reviewed monthly by the Vestry. Finally, expense reducing projects were wrapping up. It was a busy beginning to the year.

Reducing the server system to minimize our IT expenses was the last big project to wrap up from the previous year. This project moved all of the Church's computing needs to a cloud based software and data system that eliminated the need for expensive servers and maintenance. It also allowed for staff email to be managed by a third party web server instead of being housed in house. This is important because a power or internet outage at the Church no longer prevented staff communication to our congregation. This project also eliminated the need for expensive service contracts to maintain an oversized system.

The road construction continued to be a topic of conversation throughout the year. Fortunately, the County finalized plans for the ROW (Right Of Way) of Reading Rd. that will run through our property. This enabled us to install our monument sign. It now sits refurbished with color panels and bright LEDs right on the corner of FM 762 and what will be Reading Rd. Many thanks to Rock Moen for his work on getting the sign upgraded and stored while the road plans were being finalized.

Along with the road construction, other changes are happening around our church and school. With that in mind, our Vestry commissioned a Strategic Planning Committee chaired by Barbara Scheibner. Many thanks to her and all who served on that committee. A new mission statement for our church was developed along with goals and ideas to lead us towards 2023. We have a lot of potential here at St. Mark's that can be realized with us being of one heart and mind in Christ's church.

This sentiment was echoed by Bishop Hector Monterroso when he visited in September and confirmed or received 17 members of our family. Bishop Monterroso was very complimentary of St. Mark's as members of the Vestry expressed our strengths and challenges. He quoted Proverbs 29:18 - If we have no vision, the people will die. He was encouraged by our goals and vision and could see the potential that we will work to realize.

We are so blessed here at St. Mark's for our thriving Music ministry. The concerts and programs that have been performed by the St. Mark's Choir lead by Tom Thompson are an incredible asset to our community. The sky's the limit for this ministry, so we must continue to support and build up this group within and outside of our buildings.

I feel this entire year has been an exercise in transition. There have been many discussions and moments of discernment within the Vestry over the year. I am proud to say that I was a part of a team that continued to stay unified and work together to figure out the best outcome for the entire community.

I believe the most attractive aspect of St. Mark's is the warm, friendly nature of our church family. As long as we hold onto this as our way of bringing Jesus Christ to the world, we will be successful in all our goals and endeavors. Thanks again for allowing me to serve in such a rewarding way, as Senior Warden. I have grown spiritually through this journey, and I look forward to serving in other roles. I can't wait to see all the ways St. Mark's impacts Fort Bend County and beyond.

Peace be with you,

Brad Knecht

Junior Warden Report — Mr. Kim Janke

We have had a great year at St. Mark's. With all of your help, we have been able to do maintenance and repairs for the church facilities without always having to call outside contractors for these repairs. I would like to thank Dwayne Dawlearn for all that he has done for the parish.

Road projects are moving along and work on FM 762 should be completed soon. I would continue to ask that you be patient and safe when coming to or leaving from our church functions.

Our church sign has been moved and is working well. Continue to monitor it for upcoming events.

New contracts for waste disposal have been renewed with a savings to the church of more than 50%. The 5 year fire sprinkler system inspection is being done and will be completed soon.

Thank you to all that have stepped up and contributed their time and talents to the betterment of St. Mark's.

Kim Janke

Finance Report – Mr. Lee Leaman

Balance sheet for 2019

In 2019 we needed to use \$15,000 as a transfer from Wells Fargo into our checking account. This was done for liquidity needs in the Summer of 2019. In 2020, \$80,000, prepaid pledge has been received which will resolve the question of liquidity for 2020. The vestry voted to pay the \$15,000 back to the Wells Fargo account. Our loss for 2019 will go from \$3,650 to \$18,650, as a result.

Income and Expenses for 2020

Income is very close to the budgeted amount this year. Expenses will remain the same or less in all areas of the church except for, electricity and music. These have been raised. Expenses for this year going forward have been reduced by approximately \$20,000.

We have a matching grant offer of \$30,000, and are seeking matching moneys from church members. Without this grant **and** our match, we will be in a world of hurt. I think it is easily possible to reach this goal.

Liquidity will not be an issue for the first 2/3 of the year, because of the prepaid pledge mentioned above.

We are due \$14,500 from SMES as final payment on their note.

On the expense side - roughly a flat budget, with a few minor adjustments.

2020 St. Mark's Operating Budget

Approved Budget January 21, 2020

INCOME

Pledge Payments	215,000
Confirmed Non Pledge	15,000
Matching Grant Offer	30,000
Matching Grant Payment	30,000
Non Pledge	9,000
Plate Offering	4,000
Misc. Income	3,000
Music - General	4,000
SMES - Bookkeeping	1,200
SMES - Insurance	1,600
TOTAL INCOME	<u>312,800</u>

EXPENSES

Rector	79,189
Staff	74,000
Supply Staff	2,200
Benefits	27,330
Diocese Assessment	25,249
Admin	6,980
Insurance	25,406
Utilities	30,900
Building & Grounds	21,750
Outreach	800
Christian Formation	2,010
Ministries	6,150
Music	7,500
Other	3,650
TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>313,114</u>

EXCESS EXPENSE OVER REVENUE **(314)**

St. Mark's Episcopal School Report — Mrs. Jeri Carington, School Director

This year our ministry has 25 students, plus one scheduled to start in February. We are running three classrooms, plus morning and afternoon BAC. We continue to advertise through Facebook, word of mouth and our sign. Through ongoing generous donations of parish members we continue to be able to offer scholarship to students who otherwise would not be able to afford to attend.

Melissa Hamon has accepted the role of Chaplain for our school. We are blessed to have seven dedicated employees, including Melissa. We are looking to hire two afternoon workers and expand our substitute list.

We want to extend our gratitude for the generous support of the congregation at our Gala last April and ask that you mark your calendars for our upcoming Gala on Friday, April 24. This is a key piece of our financial budget. We were able to end the 2018-19 School year on budget, and continue to operate in the black this fiscal year. As a result, we were able to pay back half of the loan last summer and we anticipate being able to repay the outstanding balance this summer! We are eternally grateful for the loan extended to us by St. Mark's Episcopal Church. This financial support has allowed us to continue our combined mission to bring children up in the way of the Lord.

*Train up a child in the way he should go,
And when he is old he will not depart from it.*
Proverbs 22:6

God bless you,
Jeri Carington

Newcomer Coordinator — Mrs. Melissa Hamon

This year has been a year for new families at St. Mark's. Even with road construction we had many families visit and join St. Mark's. It is the welcoming atmosphere that our church is so well known for that brings people in and makes them want to become be part of our family. As we proceed in 2020, it will be up to all of us to be the welcoming church that we are known to be. We will need to work as a team to refill the church information in the pews and to make welcome bags for our visitors. We are a church family that continues to grow and in 2020 will grow even more.

Acolytes/Chalice Bearers – Mrs. Kathy Barzilla

Being an acolyte is a great way to learn about the importance of the liturgy in the Episcopal Church. You get the opportunity to grow in faith by serving others during the service. We have several Crucifers and sometimes Gospel Bearers scheduled at services.

We are so thankful for the consistent involvement of our youth and adult acolytes who are all very dedicated to serving in this capacity. We continue to have growth in both our adult and youth acolyte ministries and are excited about training more adults to serve as Crucifer and the possibilities for more youth Gospel Bearers and Torch Bearers in 2020. Kathy Barzilla serves as the acolyte trainer and we can train acolytes at any time. If anyone is interested in serving as an acolyte at St. Mark's, please contact Reverend Susie Comer at scomer@stmarksfortbend.org or Kathy Barzilla at kat102193@windstream.net.

Adult Christian Formation – Rev. Susie Comer

Adults in our church have had a variety of ways to grow and learn in 2019.

Tuesday Brown Bag Bible Study, covered the first 10 chapters of Genesis in the Spring and The Revelation of John in the Summer and covered the Parables of Jesus in the Fall of 2019. We are studying the miracles of Jesus throughout the Spring of 2020.

Sunday Adult formation, had a series of church members for classes in Lent and in the Fall. Rev. Susie Comer covered the words we use for where and how we worship.

EfM – Education for Ministry, is led by the very capable Rob Hamon. EfM is a 4 year program of intensive study, the Bible, Church history and Christian Ethics. We have a shared program with Calvary Episcopal Church and the group meetings alternates between the churches. Every fall term a new class starts.

A Confirmation Retreat was held for both adults and youth. It was taught by Rev. Susie Comer, Melissa Hamon, Rob Hamon, and Charlie Yates.

Lenten Wednesday Series was based on Biblical Motifs from, *The Crucifixion*, by Fleming Rutledge.

Altar Guild – Ms. Bettye Newberry

St Marks Altar Guild had a busy and productive year. The altar for Easter and Christmas were gorgeous. We had baptisms and a Bishop visit along with, every Sunday service. I want to thank the members: Ruthie Hurta, Caroline Moen, Isobel Gotchal, Ann Knauth, Helen Tanner, Lisa Arnold, Susan Hylton, Sandy Barkerding, Suzanne Mottin, Bonnie Knecht, Delores Baldwin, our oil angles Charlie and Sally Yates. Also, our supports who have added flowers for our altar each Sunday. Also, Tom Thompson who helped arrange the poinsettias perfectly. Now a big thank you to our extra helper, Brad Knecht who is always there to help with moving our larger items. It's been a pleasure to work with each and everyone of you and your dedication to the church.

Christian Formation Grades 6-12 – Mrs. Chris Abbott

Secondary Christian Formation serves students in grades 6-12. The goal of the secondary Christian Formation class is to provide the youth with a study of scripture that has direct applications to their daily lives.

Following the suggestion of Jamie Martin-Currie from the Diocese of Texas, the 6-12 grade class used the *Real and Relevant* curriculum in 645³. The lessons provided the youth with an opportunity to dig deeper into the scripture reading, God, Jesus and their faith. Movie clips were often used to emphasize a point and bring current day issues to light following the scripture reading.

The class carefully followed *Lent Madness* to track the competition as the thirty-two nominees competed for the Golden Halo. The group learned quite a bit about the nominees and was interested in the competition as it progressed. A *Lent Madness* Pep Rally was held on Palm Sunday so the whole parish could be aware of the "faithful four candidates" in the competition. St. Mark's was featured in a *Lent Madness* video post from Scott Gunn, the editor of *Forward Day by Day*. He also challenged St. Mark's to have a pep rally again next year.

Themes in the spring included Epiphany, baptism, the Holy Spirit, gifts, talents, purpose in life, love, temptations, trials, friendship and peace. Themes in the fall included what it means to be a Christian, eternity, the parable of Lazarus, suffering for the Gospel, the Ten Commandments, forgiveness, All Saints' Day, prayer types and beliefs and convictions.

Chris Abbott teaches the class and communicates with both the parents and youth via email and text to give everyone a preview of what to expect in that week's lesson.

Special thanks go to Dr. Charlie Yates for his service as a substitute for Chris Abbott. Additional thanks go to Isobel Gotschall, Charlie Yates, Gray Baldwin and Frank D'Antuono for their participation to satisfy the requirements of Safeguarding God's Children. Their dedication to this program makes it possible.

Daughters of the King (DOK) – Mrs. Melissa Hamon

St Mark's Daughters of the King group currently has 18 members. Average attendance at monthly Sunday meetings is 8-10. Each month the DOK meet, items were brought for Melissa Hamon to distribute to Helping Hands. Monthly meetings also offer a devotion or lesson shared by one of the members. In 2020 we are starting a Max Lucado book study, "Before Amen". This book is about the power of a simple prayer. The Daughters continue to provide meals to those who are ill or infirm. Meals are prepped and placed in the designated freezer at the church. Those meals are delivered by a daughter. In early spring the Daughters plan to have a tea to offer women of the church a chance to hear more about our group and begin to discern whether they are called to this lifetime commitment.

Episcopal Church Women (ECW) – Ms. Bettye Newberry & Mrs. Barbara Scheibner

If you are a woman and attend St. Mark's, you belong to Episcopal Church Women (ECW)! The National Episcopal Church Women was created to support all women in their Mission and Ministry in the world; empowering the women of The Episcopal Church to carry out Christ's work. The vision of ECW is for all women of the Episcopal Church to "become a vibrant blend of all ages, coming together as a peacemaking, healing part of the Church. We aspire to be a God spark – shining and sharing the love of Christ".

To this end, St. Mark's ECW makes a difference by touching lives through fellowship, spiritual growth and outreach. In 2019, as always, the women of St. Mark's provided the leadership role in preparing for parish meals and special events and being integral members of parish ministries.

March was a busy month for ECW as it held its spring retreat at The Leaman's Eagles Nest Ranch. This retreat was designed for fellowship, spiritual growth, cooking togetherness, and both "freeform" and planned activities. Tours of the ranch and "getting to know you better" group sharing were favorite treats. We were excited that Rev. Susie was with us to officiate at a special Eucharist outside. Also, in March the ECW facilitated the Dinner Group Kick-off at The Swinging Door Restaurant. It became clear that many members of our congregation needed help in preparing meals because of illness. The ECW came together to prepare many meals that could be stored in our freezer and be ready to distribute to church members needing help.

In November the ECW prepared and hosted a wedding shower for St. Mark's Music Director and his partner.

In December ECW celebrated with its annual Women's Christmas Brunch and Gift Exchange. This celebration is in its ninth year and always features many unique gifts and delicious brunch dishes to share.

For more information about ECW, please contact Bettye at l.newberry@sbcglobal.net.

Episcopal Youth Community – Rev. Susie Comer

We were delighted that Joy Ani was the Youth delegate from the Southwest convocation, at Diocesan Council at The Woodlands, in February, 2019. In 2019 our youth enjoyed several activities together. They had the Souper Bowl of caring in January, helped with the Easter Egg hunt by setting out the eggs for the kids on Easter Sunday, they helped out with the kids at Vacation Bible School and at the Wednesday Family Fun Nights in the Summer. In the Fall, they went to the water park in September, and had a lock in in October, followed by the JDRF walk. Our youth also helped out with the Lenten Fish Fry and remained busy with their various roles in leading worship on Sunday, as gospel bearers, Crucifers, readers, ushers, and in our Handbell Choir. Our youth represent at least 5 different school districts in our area. EYC is an opportunity to form relationships based on a shared walk with Christ. Plans are in place for a thoughtful, active schedule this Spring of 2020!

Godly Play for Children – Mrs. Jeanne Reaves

For our preschool age group we teach Godly Play, an imaginative method of presenting stories from the Bible to young children in a specially prepared environment. Beautifully crafted items as well as everyday objects are used in the presentation. Children are encouraged to share their thoughts after the stories are presented through answering “wondering questions” and simple art. This year Christine Powell, Crystal McCelvey and Jeanne Reaves shared the teaching of these stories with assistance from Justin Bond. The stories that were presented were: The Circle of the Church Year, The Holy Family, The Flood and the Ark, The Great Family, The Ten Best Ways (the Ten Commandments), Advent, and Holy Baptism. The following parables were presented: The Good Shepherd, the Good Samaritan, the Sower, and the Mustard Seed. In the spring the stories of Easter were told in a series of seven events. The Mystery of Pentecost, Jesus and the Twelve, and the Crosses were also presented. The Good Shepherd and World Communion, the last presentation, reminds the children of God’s love for us. Attendance for the Godly Play class varied from 0 to 8 throughout 2019. I’m hopeful we can find ways to encourage attendance in 2020.

Kids’ Kingdom – Mrs. Chris Abbott

Kids’ Kingdom provided Christian Formation for students in the first through fifth grades during 2019. The goal of Kids’ Kingdom is to provide the youth with a Bible background presented in a unit format. A unit consists of several weeks of a single Bible story that is reinforced with activities that the students find fun and interesting. The majority of the lessons are adapted from the *Workshop Rotation Model* website. The weekly lesson plans are developed and written for the teachers. Each student maintains a journal to record the memory verse and their answers to the reflection questions. At the conclusion of a unit, the Kids’ Kingdom youth share with the parish by showing their completed projects. Chris Abbott oversees the program which includes writing the weekly lesson plans, coordinating the teacher assignments, sharing pictures of the group activities via email, printing pictures for the youth bulletin board in the parish hall, communicating weekly via email with the students and their families, maintaining the classroom environment and having all supplies for the various activities on hand and ready to use each week.

Spring 2019

During the spring term Kids’ Kingdom units included Noah, Easter and the miracles of Jesus. Prior to the beginning of Lent, the children constructed alleluia banners that were “locked away” on Shrove Tuesday and then were unlocked to celebrate Easter. Activities in the spring included measuring the size of the ark, constructing a pretzel ark, doing a readers theater, baking dog treats, water color painting, building dioramas, filling egg cartons with items to represent all phases of the Easter story and baking pretzel fish.

Fall 2019

During the fall term the focus was on Moses. Examples of activities including making Moses figures, 10 Commandment plaques, mosaics, baking unleavened bread and making baby Moses baskets out of shredded wheat.

Kids' Kingdom teachers this year have included Amy Wacker, Stacy Krajinovic, Mary Anne Simicek and Shan Harris. Rhonda Yamauchi, Ruthie Hurta and Helen Tanner served as assistants. Each week one adult is responsible for teaching and the other adult assists in order to satisfy the requirements of Safe Guarding God's Children. Kids' Kingdom would not be possible without these dedicated individuals.

The Men of St. Mark's – Mr. Benno Scheibner

The St. Mark's Men's Ministry continued to be active in 2019 with activities planned around the group's objectives:

- Spiritual growth
- Building of Relationships
- Engagement with the St. Mark's family
- Service – helping to build God's Kingdom
- Fellowship and Food

Regular meetings were held at 6:30p.m. on the second and fourth Monday evenings of each month (exceptions for Holidays, summer and special events). At each meeting, we get to know each other better, watch a short video and learn from each other through discussion. Topics for videos and discussion have included such areas as discipleship, forgiveness, mourning and prayer. Kolaches, donuts, chocolate chip cookies and/or jerky are furnished.

In 2019, we enjoyed two *Gathering of Men* events at the Leaman's Eagles Nest Ranch, one in May and one in October. At each Gathering, over twenty adult men and young men attended all or part of the three-day event. New friendships were made and existing relationships were strengthened. Some men explored the ranch, some played Euchre, some watched sports, and some just sat by the fire pit and relaxed. Much manly food was eaten. At our October Gathering we were honored to have Tom Thompson, Music Director, with us to do a presentation for us on the history and importance of our hymns. Rev. Susie was also with us as an honorary Men's Group member for both Gatherings.

A group of St. Mark's men also meets Thursday mornings at the Whataburger in Richmond for breakfast and fellowship. See Dwayne Dawlearn for more details on the breakfast meeting.

Music & Choir – Mr. Tom Thompson

It has been such a blessing to be a part of the Music Ministry at St. Mark's. Brent and I have been so warmly welcomed into this community and I am so grateful to God for allowing us the opportunity to love where we are. The choir is doing very well; in 2019, we presented the Easter oratorio, *The Passion*, in April. We had a ball put together, *Sentimental Journey: A USO Show*, in September. In December, we presented *From Darkness to Light: A Service of Lessons & Carols*. We will continue to lead the congregation in worship each Sunday, as well.

The handbell choir is doing very well. We play regularly throughout the year. In May, the choir and handbells had the opportunity to sing and ring the National Anthem for a Skeeters baseball game at Constellation Field. We will be doing that again on Tuesday, May 5, at 6:00 p.m.

In April, the choir, handbells, and chamber ensemble will premiere, *Mass for Easter*, a new major work being composed especially for the Music Ministry and congregation of St. Mark's. This will be presented on Sunday, April 19, at the 10:00 a.m. service of worship. Please mark your calendars now, as you will not want to miss this special multi-cultural worship experience.

I still would love to be able to develop a children's choir program, so please direct any interested persons to me (281.748.4746 or tthompson@stmarksfortbend.org).

We greatly appreciate your love, encouragement and support, and we covet your prayers as we continue to grow and do wonderful things for God's kingdom.

Nursery Ministry – Rev. Susie Comer

We provide a safe and comfy space for everyone's littlest ones on Sunday mornings, starting at 9 a.m. We have two safeguarded nursery workers present so that parents can worship and drop off their kids to head to formation or choir practice. They can retrieve kids as developmentally appropriate for Eucharist together. Please note! We love children in worship, but if they are not happy and you as a parent are distracted, this ministry provides you with a way for all the family members to be happy to be at church on Sunday. We also provide Nursery care for other services and events.

Sewing Guild – Mrs. Jeanne Reaves

The Sewing Sisters were exceptionally productive in 2019. Here are the numbers: 100 scarf/hoodies for Lord of the Streets; 19 pet quilts for the Ft. Bend Animal Shelter; 77 quilts for TX Children's Hospital; 14 book pillows (including books) and 134 colorful pillowcases for the Ft. Bend Women's Shelter. All of this work while having a good time! We meet every other Wednesday from 10am - 2pm. Contact Jeanne Reaves if you are interested in joining the fun.

Social Outreach Ministry – Mr. James Osoba

2Cor 9: 6 - 9 Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. As it is written:

"They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor; their righteousness endures forever"

As it was written in the previous Parish Report in January 2109, one of the Christian obligations of a church is provide services to the community and to those people who may not otherwise have access to services. Paul reminds us of this obligation in the scripture quoted above. These services are demonstrations of our Christian love for our less fortunate neighbors in the Fort Bend community and a Christian use of our Time, Talents and Treasures.

St. Mark's, during the year just ended, demonstrated this love in various ways including:

St. Mark's Giving Tree - a ministry committed to giving assistance gifts to infants, children and teens in crisis through the Rainbow Room for children in CPS, Court Appointed Special Advocates agency.

Seniors At Greatwood Retirement Community - A ministry dedicated to sharing surplus calendars with the seniors residing in this community.

St. Mark's Helping Hands - a ministry dedicated to assisting households with emergency food and clothing on a short term basis through donations to Helping Hands.

During 2019, St. Mark's outreach was expanded to include the following actions:

Donation of school backpacks to Common Threads which liaises with Lamar CISD to provide needy children with school supplies

Donation of Toiletries to Common Threads, utilizing some of the donations provided for the school backpacks, at the request of Common Threads

Donation of 20 sleeping bags to Montrose Homeless shelter in Houston; this was matched by donations from two individuals and in conjunction with The Bridge Church for a total of 84 sleeping bags.

Donation and Assembly of Manna Bags by St. Mark's Youth for distribution to Montrose Homeless Shelter. Donations were also solicited in Greatwood Knoll subdivision and those items that were not suitable for homeless were donated to the Fort Bend Women's Shelter.

2019 was the beginning of a more active outreach program; 2020 we hope to enhance our outreach program in the additional following areas:

Continue and expand the programs of 2019 with emphasis of strengthening a linkage/liaison with Calvary Episcopal Church with a possibility of linkage also to a Fort Bend Interfaith Council.

Expand Episcopal Youth participation with emphasis on the Action Team

Investigate a linkage with Attack Poverty after school programs; they provide after school tutoring and mentoring for at risk children in the impoverished neighborhoods of Richmond/Rosenberg at their facility in North Richmond.

Continue discussions with Fort Bend Family Promise on a quarterly (one week per quarter) of homeless families at St. Mark's. These are families drawn from the FBISD and LCISD school records and vetted by Fort Bend Family Promise. At this time, St. Mark's has the needed facilities but lacks the required lay staffing to perform. If we can combine with another church(es) to share this load, we can become an anchor church for Fort Bend Family Promise.

Enhance St. Mark's participation, youth and adults in the Cure Walk Team

Continue our relationship with the Fort Bend Women's Shelter

Liaise with Common Threads during both the school year and the vacation season on the needs of the children

Investigate a relationship with Free The Captives Organization (Sex Traffic Victims Assistance). This organization needs assistance with holiday meal provision and fund raising events

The plans for calendar year are based on active participation by all members of the St. Mark's congregation. We are not looking so much for Treasure as for Time and Talent. Together, we can accomplish great things even in a small way. St. Mark's has demonstrated many times over that it is an active and loving member of the Richmond/Rosenberg/Sugar Land communities. Let us make 2020 even better.

Strategic Planning Task Force – Mrs. Barbara Scheibner

The purpose of the Strategic Planning Task Force is to discern the future financial, program and facility needs for St. Marks and to develop plans responding to those needs. In 2019 the Task Force followed a strategic planning process that included needs assessment, a visioning session focused on 2023, a study of our mission field demographic data, and goal definition for *Vision 8689*.

An important part of the needs assessment was the implementation of a parish-wide survey asking church members for their ideas and opinions on the future directions of our church. Survey takers were asked to envision what they “saw” happening at St. Mark’s for themselves and their families over the next four years.

Survey responses, along with information from the Task Force visioning sessions, were used to define ten strategic goals for St. Mark’s for *Vision 8689*:

- 1) Strengthen caring relationships as St. Mark's continues to grow.
- 2) Embrace a variety of Episcopal worship experiences.
- 3) Carry out an outreach plan based on an analysis of community needs and our abilities to serve.
- 4) Develop and implement an overall strategy for achieving our mission of bringing people to Christ.
- 5) Create and implement a multi-year land use and facilities plan that meets the needs of our growing congregation.
- 6) Strengthen the Pastoral Care Ministry that, with the rector, meets the special needs of the sick, the elderly, the homebound, and those experiencing loss.
- 7) Devote financial and human resources to creating a thriving youth ministry.
- 8) Develop a larger team of skilled and dedicated lay leaders and staff.
- 9) Ensure that financial contributions to St. Marks are used effectively in support of our mission and vision.
- 10) Increase the number of participants active in Christian Formation at each age level.

Action items and timelines for each of these goals are being defined with the help of church staff and lay ministry leaders. This definition of action items will ensure that the expertise and experience of individuals across the parish will be relied upon when charting our path forward.

Vacation Bible School – Rev. Susie Comer

We had a happy and busy VBS in June of 2019, with the theme of “To Mars and Beyond”. Many thanks go to our numerous volunteers: Tom Thompson with Music, Sandy Barkerding and Charlie Powell for opening, Justin Bond for Bible Study, Rev. Susie Comer for Science, Melissa Hamon and Amy Wacker for Arts and Crafts, Alysoun Marks, Rhonda Yamauchi, Isobel Gotschall, Jonathan Powell, Addison Powell, Alice Hylton, Summer Johnson, Kimberly Hart, Michelle Buckner, Nessie Green and many others!

Sunday Food Ministry - Ms. Isobel Gotschall

We have 7 teams that we are rotating on Sunday mornings and we would like a few more teams in the rotation. The teams bring light snacks like, cookies, fruit, chips, nuts, etc. If you are interested in hosting on Sunday mornings or to get more information please contact Isobel Gotschall.

Give thanks for the many members of our body

Vestry (2019)

Brad Knecht (Sr Warden)
Kim Janke (Jr Warden)
Chris Abbott
Faith Fidelis-Ojah
Brandon Fletcher
Isobel Gotschall
Susan Hylton
Lee Leaman
Bettye Newberry

Executive Admin. Assistant

Kimberly Hart

Newcomer Coordinator

Melissa Hamon

Financial Secretary

Sandy Barkerding

Organist

Tom Thompson

School Director

Jerri Carington

School Interim Education

Director

Lynnett Alderson

School Board of Directors

Rev. Susie Comer
Michelle Tripulas (President)
Susan Hylton
Jan Leaman

Treasurer

Vince Arnold

Nursery Attendants

Michelle Buckner
Shakira Patni
LaDawn Fryer

Sexton

Reuben Luna
Andrew Vasquez

Stewardship Team

Rev. Susie Comer (Chair)
Bill Abbott
Brad Knecht
Kimberly Hart

Finance Committee

Rev. Susie Comer
Lee Leaman
Sandy Barkerding
Vince Arnold
Brad Knecht

Audit Committee

Vince Arnold
Ruthie Hurta
Gray Baldwin
Frank D'Antuono

Vergers

Kathy Barzilla
Phyllis Janke
Benno Scheibner
Jon Eiche

Choir

Sandy Barkerding
Roger Barkerding
Bob Carington
Jerri Carington
Jennifer Griffiths
Kemi Ani
Jeanne Reeves
Faith Fidelis-Ojah
Bettegene Coyle
Debbie Thomas
Julie Stuckey
Brent Lee
Marilyn Turner
Bill Brawn
John Barzilla
Bart Little

Handbells

Brad Knecht
Cameron Knecht
Brent Lee
Precious Ani
Suzanne Mottin

Handbells Cont'd

Samuel Hylton
Debbie Thomas
Sue Lane McCulley
Juliette Ani
Julie Stuckey
Iruo Fidelis-Ojah
Nefe Fidelis-Ojah

Chalice Bearers

Kevin Cranston
Dwayne Dawlearn
Jon Eiche
Melissa Hamon
Kim Janke
Brad Knecht
Cameron Knecht
Bonnie Knecht
Kathy Barzilla
Barbara Scheibner
Benno Scheibner
Charles Powell

Gospel Bearers

Cole Harris
Hannah Harris
Ashton Knecht
Cameron Knecht
Trevor Johnson
Tim Cranston
Alice Hylton
Samuel Hylton
Mellie Simicek
Addison Powell
Iruo Fidelis-Ojah
Nefe Fidelis-Ojah
Princess Fidelis-Ojah
Kade Wacker
Bella Eavenson

Lay Readers

Lisa Arnold
Sandra Barkerding
Kathy Barzilla
Bob Carington
Rob Hamon
Ruthie Hurta
Phyllis Janke
Peggy Wyatt

Give thanks for the many members of our body

Lay Readers Cont'd

Mary Anne Simicek
Tori Eavenson
Adriana Krajnovic

Altar Guild

Lisa Arnold
Delores Baldwin
Sandy Barkerding
Ann Chrisman
Michelle D'Antuono
Isobel Gotschall
Elisa Hughes
Ruthie Hurta
Susan Hylton
Bonnie Knecht
Suzanne Mottin
Bettye Newberry
Dorothy Valencia
Sally Yates
Charles Yates

Wedding Guild

Dorothy Dawlearn
Bettye Newberry

Ushers

Vince Arnold
Dwayne Dawlearn
Kim Janke
Rock Moen
Charles Yates
Brad Knecht
Ashton Knecht
Cameron Knecht
Trevor Johnson
Cole Mottin
Barbara Scheibner
Suzanne Mottin
Charlie Phillips
Don Jozwiak
Marion Jozwiak
Ron Wyatt
Joy Ani
Precious Ani
Juliet Ani
Sarah Cranston
Will Cranston
Emma Cranston

Ushers Cont'd

Jennifer Cantu
Gisella Atilano-Cantu
Natalia Atilano-Cantu
Amy Wacker
Blayne Wacker
Kade Wacker
Kaylie Wacker
Bryce Wacker
Brayden Wacker
Mackenzie Sills
Susan Hylton
Alice Hylton
Samuel Hylton
Thomas Hylton
Iruo Fidelis-Ojah
Nefe Fidelis-Ojah
Princess Fidelis-Ojah

Tellers

Kathy Barzilla
Alysoun Marks
Brad Knecht
Roger Barkerding
Kim Janke
Rhonda Yamauchi
Susan Hylton
Bettye Newberry
Lee Leaman
Chris Abbott
Brandon Fletcher
Isobel Gotschall
Faith Fidelis-Ojah

Daughters of the King

Chris Abbott
Sandra Barkerding
Kathy Barzilla
Nancy Brown
Jerri Carington
Ann Chrisman
Dorothy Dawlearn
Isobel Gotschall
Melissa Hamon
Alysoun Marks
Jeanne Reaves
Barbara Ricklin
Barbara Scheibner
Sara Hawkes

Daughters of the King Cont'd

Deborah Burns
Marion Jozwiak
Peggy Wyatt
Ann Yager

**Christian Formation
for Adults**

The Rev. Susie Comer
Rob Hamon
Brad Knecht
Elizabeth Wolf
Terri Fletcher
Chalie Yates
Melissa Hamon

**Christian Formation
for Youth**

Chris Abbott
Charles Yates
Frank D'Antuono
Isobel Gotschall
Gray Baldwin

Kids' Kingdom

Chris Abbott
Mary Anne Simicek
Shan Harris
Rhonda Yamauchi
Helen Tanner
Amy Wacker
Stacy Krajnovic
Ruthie Hurta

Strategic Planning Task Force

Barbara Scheibner, chair
Rev. Susie Comer
Brandon Fletcher
Susan Hylton
Kim Janke
Bonnie Knecht
Brad Knecht
Jan Leaman
Lee Leaman
Alysoun Marks
Bettye Newberry
Christine Powell

Give thanks for the many members of our body

EYC

The Rev. Susie Comer
Chris Abbott
Rob Hamon
Melissa Hamon
Alysoun Marks
Justin Bond
Kemi Ani

Godly Play

Jeanne Reaves
Justin Bond
Crystal McCelvey
Christine Powell

Outreach Ministry Leader

Jim Osoba

The Sewing Guild

Lou Cloninger
Sally Yates
Marilyn Turner
Jeannie Reaves
Bettegene Coyle
Joan Little
Rhonda Yamauchi
Betty Von-Maszewski
Isabel Gotschall
Ann Chrisman
Dorothy Dawlearn
Kemi Ani
Gail Scholer
Mas Nash

ECW Chairs

Bettye Newberry
Barbara Scheibner

Men's Group

Ministry Leaders

Benno Scheibner

VBS Volunteers

Rev. Susie Comer
Kimberly Hart
Krystal Hart
Melissa Hamon
Sandy Barkerding
Tom Thompson
Brent Thompson
Isobel Gotschall
Summer Johnson
Alysoun Marks
Phyllis Janke
Chris Abbott
Amy Wacker
Alice Hylton
Charlie Powell
Jonathan Powell
Addison Powell
Justin Bond
Ann Moore
Naseem Green
Michelle Buckner
Clarissa Munoz
Alexia Landry
Hayleigh Gaskin

St. Mark's Episcopal Church

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www.stmarksfortbend.org

Mission Statement

Our mission is to know Jesus Christ and to make him known.

Vision Statement

We at St. Mark's Episcopal Church have a vision for our future. We will nurture strong caring relationships within our church family and work together to meet the needs of our neighbors through outreach. We will commit to meaningful worship experiences with a vibrant music component. We will prepare for growth by developing a campus plan which utilizes our unique, beautiful campus space. We will devote ourselves to Christian formation at all ages and will create a thriving youth ministry. And we will implement an effective overall strategy for achieving our mission of knowing Christ and making him known.

Core Values

Gracious. In our relationship with Christ, God welcomes us home, and we, in turn, offer gracious hospitality to all those whom God leads to our church.

Rooted. Our worship and liturgy are rooted in the rich tradition of the Episcopal Church, drawing on the wellspring of customs from the ancient church through those of today.

Authentic. We are an authentic people, true to our Christian identity, and genuinely thankful for the gift of our gathering and for the sacred space of our church.

Christ-centered. We are the church, the Body of Christ, and we therefore have Jesus Christ at the center of our life; for in the risen Christ we live and move and have our being.

Empowered. Jesus commissions us to go to all nations with his good news, and we, the people of St. Mark's, are empowered by the Holy Spirit to proclaim by word and example the Gospel in Fort Bend County and beyond.