

# St. Mark's

EPISCOPAL CHURCH



**Report to the Annual Parish Meeting  
January 22, 2017**

**St. Mark's Episcopal Church  
Annual Parish Meeting  
January 22, 2017  
Agenda**

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

## **Rector's Report — The Rev. Bert Baetz**

*Almighty God, whose Son our Savior Jesus Christ is the light of the world: Grant that your people, illumined by your Word and Sacraments, may shine with the radiance of Christ's glory, that he may be known, worshipped, and obeyed to the ends of the earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, now and for ever. Amen.*

Dear St. Mark's family,

Last year we made a statement about our mission at St. Mark's: our mission is to know Jesus Christ and to make him known. In my reflections on 2016, I am sure we accomplished the mission God has given us at St. Mark's, and he has led us into a new year with a fresh opportunity to know Christ more deeply and to make him known to our broader community.

We know that baptism is only the beginning of a new life in Christ, and in an effort to know Christ more deeply, at the beginning of 2016, I invited all of us to take more seriously the vows we make in our own Baptismal Covenant.

With an earlier Lent, we were able to dig deeper into the promises of the Baptismal Covenant in our Lenten Series which was based on the Covenant we make with God. It's always a pleasure to partner with Calvary for our series, and the speakers provided us much to ponder in our hearts and minds.

We also discovered a healthy rhythm in Lent with hosting the Lenten Series and Friday Fish Fries on alternating weeks. This schedule provided one special event each week in Lent, and it offered a variety of opportunities for us to know Christ and make him known, especially considering our Fish Fries reach the wider community and benefit our Youth Scholarship Fund. I am particularly grateful to our Director of Parish Life, Melissa Hamon, and all the men and women who provide the gracious hospitality of our Lenten suppers and Fish Fries.

Shortly following the season of Lent, I led a confirmation class for adults on Sunday mornings. With a class larger than we have had in recent years, the diverse group created a positive energy in the classroom. With so many different experiences bringing new members into the Episcopal Church, we were all enriched by one another's questions, comments, and willingness to mature in the Christian faith expressed through the Episcopal tradition. I am grateful for Charlie Yates and his leadership, as he taught a concurrent Confirmation class for our seventh and eighth grade youth.

On Sunday, June 5, Bishop Andy Doyle visited our parish, and on that day, he confirmed, received, reaffirmed, or baptized twenty-two members of our parish. Once again, in the preparation for confirmation and with Bishop Doyle among, we were able to accomplish our mission to know Christ more deeply in the midst of the St. Mark's body. Also, on the day of the bishop's visit, along with the confirmations, Bishop Doyle commissioned a group of us for our mission trip to the Port Aransas and Corpus Christi community. The day of the bishop's visit captured our mission at St. Mark's in that we are seeking to know Jesus Christ and to make him known.

The group of nine of us arrived in Port Aransas on Sunday, June 5, and we spent the better part of the week in prayer, fellowship, and service. We served two organizations in the area: the Corpus Christi Food Bank and Mission 911. All of us were especially fulfilled by the work and relationships cultivated through our work at Mission 911, which is a ministry helping to bring homeless neighbors off the street and reintegrate them into society.

We particularly enjoyed working alongside the residents of Mission 911, and our group was no doubt transformed by the grace of God through our time together in fellowship and service. The mission trip was a parish-wide experience in that those of us who went on the trip were supported by prayer partners, and we were able to share our experience with the rest of the parish. It was yet one more opportunity to know Christ and to make him known.

The month of June was a time to break from the typical program (school calendar) schedule, and so our mission trip and Vacation Bible School ministry provided different opportunities to know Christ and to make him known. With the summer box office hit *Finding Dory* in the water of our culture (pardon the pun), we planned our VBS program based on the prequel. The theme for this past year's VBS was *Finding Nemo — Let God In*, and we executed another successful VBS program in that first week of June.

I appreciate Melissa Hamon's organization with the mission trip and her leading the Vacation Bible School program. I encourage you to read her report on these two significant summer ministries. I am also grateful for the mission trip's cooking team and the VBS team that put flesh to these important ministries in the parish. This past summer, we once again participated in the Lunches of Love ministry by collecting food and drink items for the lunches, and in July, a group from our parish participated in making the lunches for the underprivileged children in our community. Lunches of Love is an exceptional ministry founded by the good people of First United Methodist, Rosenberg, and we are fortunate to partner with our fellow Christians in the Fort Bend County to make Christ's love known through such an important ministry.

This past summer, I was delighted to partner with the Rev. Kristin Sullivan in teaching a special summer Christian Formation class for all ages: the Gospel According to U2. The band U2 has established itself as one of the most famous rock bands of all time, and we used the band's stories and music to shed light on certain truths we know in the Christian faith and life. This was an unconventional and yet engaging way for us to further know Jesus Christ through such popular icons of our culture.

In the fall, we took on a new initiative that involved the entire church and school community. We hosted our first Trunk or Treat and Chili Cook-Off. On Saturday, October 28, we opened up our church and school parking lot to the greater Fort Bend County for a trunk or treat event, and we had such strong participation and support from both members of the parish and families from our school. Under the direction of Kim Janke, concurrent with the trunk or treat, we hosted a chili cook-off at the church and school. The entry fees (donations) for the chili cook-off helped benefit our school ministry in that those donations went toward a matching grant campaign for the school program. Please read the report from our Head of School, Dr. Suzanne Welch, for more information on the success of that campaign as the campaign involved so many from inside and outside our parish. The Trunk or Treat and Chili Cook-Off event was another opportunity for us to open our doors at St. Mark's and live into our mission to make Christ known.

It has been an objective of our parish to make our fine facilities available to the greater community, and through some of our own initiatives and parishioners, we have seen this realized. In the early fall, through our ministry of St. Mark's University, and under the leadership of Alysoun Marks, we offered a Financial Peace Class that was offered to people inside and outside our parish. Also, Lisa Arnold invited friends from the greater community to join her at our church for the meeting of the Plant Empowered Fort Bend group. I would encourage you to consider your church as a place for community gatherings for we can certainly make Christ known through the gracious hospitality shared at St. Mark's.

Several years ago, when we first imagined the ministry of our school, we believed those families served by the school ministry would become integral to our greater St. Mark's community. We are transform-

ing lives through the ministry of our school. Our ministry through the school is a gift to our greater Fort Bend County community with an open and welcoming invitation for school families to become more involved in the parish life of St. Mark's. It is remarkable to note how our school families have become a significant piece of the fabric of our parish. Last year twenty-nine people in our parish were either confirmed, received, reaffirmed, or baptized, and fifteen of those twenty-nine have representation in our school.

Our St. Mark's feast day in April has become a wonderful day for our entire church and school family to come together and celebrate all things St. Mark's. Also, for the past two years, our Advent Hanging of the Greens service has become a joyous occasion for the church and school families to come together. We enjoy hearing the St. Mark's School Angel Choir and sharing in table fellowship at the potluck dinner that follows. We are continually blessed by one another in this growing family of St. Mark's Episcopal Church and School.

Healthy churches with healthy leaders raise up new leaders for ministry, and in the year 2016, Rock Moen, Mary Moen, and Vince Arnold worked with Suzanne Mottin and Bonnie Knecht so that Suzanne and Bonnie would take full responsibility in leading our Episcopal Youth Community (EYC) ministry. Suzanne and Bonnie have been energetic in their leadership and maintain such a strong commitment to that group, providing a safe and nurturing environment for our youth.

I am grateful for Dorothy Dawlearn and her years of dedication on the altar guild, especially as our director of the Altar Guild. In a series of fruitful conversations, Dorothy and I discussed her passing her responsibility to a new leader and to whom she might hand such an important responsibility. Dorothy still participates in a number of ministries in the parish, including the Sewing Guild, and Dorothy shows all of us that there is no such thing as "retiring" from the life of discipleship. In the year 2016, the baton of leadership on the altar guild was passed to Bettye Newberry, and with such a solid foundation laid by Dorothy and previous altar guild directors, Bettye has faithfully led her team to play a most integral role in elevating our worship to the glory of God. The altar guild is vital to our mission to know Jesus Christ and making him known.

Our mission is only achievable through our ministries of worship, formation, outreach, and all of our ministries are held together by the glue of our relationships with God and one another. It is a privilege to be in the ministry with you. We worship together, and I get to lead you in worship. We study God's Word together, and I get to be with you on the journey of Christian formation. Together we reach out in God's love, and I get to be with you in making Christ known. In the past year, I am grateful for the opportunities to serve at the San Mateo food fair with several of you and join many of you in our outreach initiatives. Since we started our KidsHope mentoring ministry, I am committed to serving as a mentor myself. I always look forward to my one hour each week spent with my mentee. With my fellow mentors supported by our prayer partners, I know we are making a difference in the lives of these at-risk children we serve at Thomas Elementary. We are making Christ known through our ministry at Thomas because by our presence and support of them, those children will know that they are children of God.

Every year, in my report to the parish, I note the ways in which I continue to serve our greater diocesan family and the broader church. At the 168th Diocesan Council, I will have completed my three-year term on the Standing Committee. Our committee functions in providing counsel to the diocesan bishop, and it has been an honor and pleasure to serve our bishop in this capacity. The Standing Committee also meets the canonical requirement in giving consent for persons to become candidates for Holy Orders, consent for ordinations, and consent to elections of bishops in other dioceses. Over the past three years, my fellow committee members and I interviewed some of the finest candidates in the country for Holy Orders, and we all ought to feel encouraged about the future leaders in the Episcopal Church.

In the fall of 2015, at the bishop's request, I began co-facilitating the curate program for newly ordained clergy. My partner, the Rev. Beth Fain, and I supported the newly ordained clergy through their first year of ministry, and in the fall of 2016, Beth and I began to facilitate the program that helps these same clergy develop important skills to potentially lead a congregation. The First Time in Charge Program supports the newer clergy, particularly as their roles evolve and they discover new pastures for their ordained ministry.

I also continue to enjoy my responsibility as a member of the Camp Allen Board of Trustees. It's exciting to be a part of the strategic planning for the larger operation of Camp Allen while knowing how Camp Allen benefits our parish and local community. Camp Allen Summer Camp is at the heart of the mission of Camp Allen, and a number of children and youth from our parish can testify to the life-changing experience of Summer Camp. We will continue to make camp possible for all the children and youth in our parish, and while we continue to grow in our relationship with Thomas Elementary, we hope to provide Summer Camp opportunities for those at-risk children we serve outside our parish as well. We are all part of a greater diocesan family, and Camp Allen is our camp which provides us even yet one more ministry through which we know Jesus Christ and make him known.

If the season of Epiphany can be captured in one word, that word would be "light." In this time of year, our prayers, hymns, and Bible stories often back to the theme of light, and I am particularly struck how we receive the light and share the light through our life of worship, formation, and outreach. We come to know Jesus Christ, the light of the world, through our life of worship and formation, and we are enlightened to then share the Light with the world.

On the first Sunday after the Epiphany, we baptized Savannah Munoz, and like I often do at the time of the baptism, I invited the children and youth to gather around the font. Knowing that I might invite the children and youth to touch the water, one young boy rolled up his sleeves before I said prayers over the water. That is an icon for us: the young boy rolling up his sleeves at the baptismal font. We gather at St. Mark's to hear the Word read and proclaimed. We gather at St. Mark's to partake in the Sacraments. We gather at St. Mark's to share in each other's lives. We gather at St. Mark's to know Jesus Christ. We roll up our sleeves around the baptismal font, and we leave our sleeves rolled up because we know we have a job to do outside the walls of our church. We are illumined by Word and Sacrament so that we may shine with the radiance of Christ's glory. I look forward to the year 2017 and the Light to shine through our mission and ministry at St. Mark's.

Faithfully,



The Rev. Bert Baetz

Rector

St. Mark's Episcopal Church

*I thank and give thanks for the many members of our body*

**Vestry (2016)**

Barbara Scheibner (Sr Warden)  
Allan Holley (Jr Warden)  
Alysoun Marks (Jr Warden)  
Kathy Barzilla  
Ruthie Hurta  
Brad Knecht  
Rock Moen  
Sarah Peters  
Arlene Rivenes  
Charles Yates, Jr.

**Executive Admin. Assistant**

Kimberly Hart

**Director of Parish Life**

Melissa Hamon

**Financial Secretary**

Sandy Barkerding

**Organist**

Dr. Steve Godowns

**Interim Organist & Music Dir.**

Mary Alice Fields

**Head of School**

Suzanne Welch

**School Board of Directors**

The Rev. Bert Baetz  
Kim Janke (President)  
Michelle D'Antuono  
Janice Knight  
Jan Leaman  
Nick Joseph

**Treasurer**

Dorothy Valencia  
Charles Yates

**Nursery Attendants**

Beverly Dixon  
Michelle Buckner  
Shakira Patni  
Jenny Carter  
Lauren Mاتيacio  
Michelle Harrell

**Sexton**

Reuben Luna

**Strategic Planning  
Task Force**

The Rev. Bert Baetz  
Kathy Barzilla  
Ruthie Hurta  
Kim Janke  
Brad Knecht  
Lea Leaman  
Alysoun Marks  
Rock Moen  
Arlene Rivenes  
Barbara Scheibner  
Charles Yates

**Growing in Grace**

**Follow-up Committee**

Bill Abbott  
Chris Abbott  
Kathy Barzilla  
John Barzilla  
Bart Little  
Benno Scheibner  
Barbara Scheibner  
Rhonda Yamauchi

**Stewardship Commission**

Rock Moen (Chair)  
The Rev. Bert Baetz  
Lou Cloninger  
Scott Duff  
Melissa Hamon  
Greg Kirkland  
Jason Purifoy  
Dorothy Valencia

**Finance Committee**

Charles Yates (Chair)  
Sandy Barkerding  
Jennifer Kirkland  
Mary Moen  
Dorothy Valencia

**Audit Committee**

Charles Yates  
Vince Arnold  
Dorothy Dawlearn

**Audit Committee (Cont'd)**

Mary Moen

**Budgeting Committee**

Jennifer Kirkland (Chair)  
Charles Yates  
Gray Baldwin

**Vergers**

Kathy Barzilla  
Allan Holley  
Phyllis Janke  
Sarah Peters  
Benno Scheibner

**Choir**

Sofie Caruso  
Jerri Carington  
Celia von Mering  
Bettegene Coyle  
Jeannie Reeves  
Mary Moen  
Kimi Oluwakemi  
Debbie Thomas  
Marilyn Turner  
Cambrey Wilhelm  
Jacob Thomas  
Bart Little  
Bill Brawn  
Bob Carington  
John Barzilla  
Sandy Barkerding

**Chalice Bearers**

Sandy Barkerding  
Kathy Barzilla  
Mat Coyle  
Dwayne Dawlearn  
Allan Holley  
Kim Janke  
Phyllis Janke  
Sarah Peters  
Susan Pinter  
Benno Scheibner  
Jacob Thomas  
Will Moen  
Caroline Moen  
Alexandra Arnold

*I thank and give thanks for the many members of our body*

**Torchbearers**

Vincent Arnold  
Hannah Harris  
Dalton Ronning  
Elizabeth Ronning  
Jorge Valencia  
Ashton Knecht  
Cameron Knecht  
Trevor Johnson

**Lay Readers**

Alexandra Arnold  
Lisa Arnold  
Sandra Barkerding  
Kathy Barzilla  
Michael Black  
Bob Carington  
Bettegene Coyle  
Mat Coyle  
Romesh Draviam  
Rob Hamon  
Sara Hawkes  
Kathy Hynson  
Ruthie Hurta  
Phyllis Janke  
Sarah Peters  
Debbie Thomas  
Will Moen  
Brett Mottin  
Stephanie Udayan

**Altar Guild**

Lisa Arnold  
Sandy Barkerding  
Nancy Brown  
Ann Chrisman  
Jeri Culberson  
Michelle D'Antuono  
Dorothy Dawlearn  
Isobel Gotschall  
Elisa Hughes  
Ruthie Hurta  
Jennifer Kirkland  
Bonnie Knecht  
Jan Leaman  
Caron Marble  
Suzanne Mottin  
Bettye Newberry  
Barbara Ricklin

**Altar Guild (Cont'd)**

Sally Yates

**Wedding Guild**

Sarah Baetz  
Dorothy Dawlearn  
Bettye Newberry

**Ushers**

Vince Arnold  
Gray Baldwin  
Delores Baldwin  
Sandy Barkerding  
Roger Barkerding  
Frank D'Antuono  
Michelle D'Antuono  
Dwayne Dawlearn  
Ruthie Hurta  
Kim Janke  
Rock Moen  
Chris Harris  
Charles Yates  
Scott Duff  
Brad Knecht  
Cole Mottin  
Sara Hawkes

**Greeters**

Vince Arnold  
Gray Baldwin  
Delores Baldwin  
Sandy Barkerding  
Roger Barkerding  
Frank D'Antuono  
Michelle D'Antuono  
Dorothy Dawlearn  
Kim Janke  
Rock Moen  
Dorothy Valencia  
Chris Harris  
Sara Hawkes  
Scott Duff  
Brad Knecht

**Tellers**

Benno Scheibner  
Ruthie Hurta  
Bart Little  
Jason Purifoy

**Tellers (Cont'd)**

Melissa Hamon  
Charles Yates  
Rock Moen  
Frank D'Antuono  
Arlene Rivenes  
Kathy Barzilla  
Alysoun Marks  
Barbara Scheibner  
Brad Knecht  
Roger Barkerding  
Sara Peters

**Daughters of the King**

Chris Abbott  
Sarah Baetz  
Sandra Barkerding  
Kathy Barzilla  
Nancy Brown  
Susie Brown  
Jeri Carington  
Ann Chrisman  
Jeri Culberson  
Dorothy Dawlearn  
Isobel Gotschall  
Melissa Hamon  
Caron Marble  
Alysoun Marks  
Sarah Minkert  
Susan Pinter  
Jeanne Reaves  
Barbara Ricklin  
Barbara Scheibner  
Jennifer Kirkland  
Sara Hawkes

**Spiritual Formation**

Susan Pinter

**Christian Formation  
for Adults**

The Rev. Bert Baetz  
Rob Hamon  
Bonnie & Brad Knecht  
Alysoun Marks  
Charles Yates



*I thank and give thanks for the many members of our body*

**Christian Formation  
for Youth**

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

**Kids' Kingdom**

Sara Hawkes  
Sarah Baetz  
Dorothy Valencia  
Christine Ronning  
Chris Abbott  
Carolyn Duff  
Sandy Barkerding  
Brett Mottin

**EYC**

Vince Arnold  
Bonnie Knecht  
Rock Moen  
Mary Moen  
Suzanne Mottin

**Godly Play**

Suzanne Mottin  
Sarah Peters  
Delores Baldwin  
Jennifer Cantu  
Sarah Baetz  
Caroline Moen  
Mary Moen  
Rock Moen  
Brett Mottin

**Outreach Ministry Leader**

Arlene Rivenes

**Kids Hope Leadership**

Lisa Arnold – *Director*  
Arlene Rivenes – *Match Support  
Coordinator*  
Rhonda Yamauchi – *Communica-  
tions Coordinator*

**Kids Hope Mentors**

Lisa Arnold  
The Rev. Bert Baetz  
Delores Baldwin  
Isobel Gotschall  
Darryl Mottin  
Arlene Rivenes  
Sally Yates  
Carolyn Duff  
Hazel Morris

**Kids Hope Prayer Partners**

Sarah Baetz  
Gray Baldwin  
Allan Holley  
Ruthie Hurta  
Mary Moen  
Charlie Yates  
Benno Scheibner

**The Sewing Guild**

Lou Cloninger  
Sally Yates  
Marilyn Turner  
Jeannie Reaves  
Bettegene Coyle  
Mary Lane  
Joan Little  
Rhonda Yamauchi  
Betty Von-Maszewski  
Isabel Gotschall  
Ann Chrisman  
Dorothy Dawlearn  
Kimi Oluwakemi  
Joan O'Neill

**ECW Chairs**

Jennifer Kirkland  
Bettye Newberry

**Men's Group**

**Ministry Leaders**

Dwayne Dawlearn  
Benno Scheibner

## Senior Warden Report — Mrs. Barbara Scheibner

*The past is history  
The future is a mystery  
But today is a gift  
Which is why it is called  
The present.*

Surely the present time at St. Mark's is a gift from God! Today we have worship with a loving church family, expand our horizons in Christian Formation, forge strong relationships through fellowship, and receive the comfort of pastoral care and prayer during our times of need.

What did we accomplish in 2016 in support of these gifts?

In February 2016, after three years of faithful giving by the St. Mark's family, the Growing in Grace (GIG) Building Campaign ended well above the amount committed to in February 2013. The total amount pledged in February 2013 was \$521,110 and the total amount received three years later was \$668,077. In 2016 a capital projects budget from the remaining GIG funds was created for capital expenditures in our future.

The Vestry established a more effective Finance Committee structure under the direction of Dr. Charles Yates, the 2016 Chair of our Finance Committee. St. Mark's will have lay people specializing in insurance coverage, financial reporting, financial analysis and forecasting, banking, and planned giving. In addition, the Financial Audit Committee of St. Mark's examined the financial records of the church and found that all financial records were in accordance with the principles set forth by the Episcopal Church.

One of our church's strategic goals is to ensure a strong connection between the church and the school with mutual support. To advance this goal, the Vestry voted in 2016 to financially assist our school by covering all shared expenditures, giving \$2500 to our school to help establish an 18-month-old classroom, and forgiving a \$19,000 loan given to the school by the church.

The Vestry's goal was to end FY2016 with a surplus of funds in our operating budget; we are ending the year with a budget deficit. Simply put, we took some leaps of faith that have been more challenging than anticipated. The capital campaign and building of the Education Building were amazing success stories, but we planned for more substantial growth in church membership and in school enrollment. We have staffed for growth, and we have planned for and implemented programs that a much larger church would offer. We took leaps of faith that will benefit our community for years to come.

One of our strategic goals is to develop a team of lay leaders with strong management and leadership skills. To advance that goal, Ministry Leaders Forums were held in which church leaders acquired new ideas on management and leadership, shared information across ministries, and used other leaders as sources of assistance and different viewpoints. In addition, fiscal responsibility was decentralized pushing it down to ministry lay leaders to develop and track their own budgets.

The resurrected Jesus Christ appeared before His disciples and said, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you". (Matthew 28: 19-20a) As all disciples of Christ, the 2016 Vestry embraced what is known as The Great Commission and pledged to invite at least one person to church each quarter. In addition, the Vestry wants to encourage other lay leaders, as well as all church members, to extend church invitations as we strive to stay an "inviting" church.

Much excitement and work centered around the establishment of a Road Projects Committee led by Mr. Rock Moen and Mr. Lee Leaman. Throughout 2016 the church has been preparing to negotiate with the Texas Department of Transportation related to Right of Way due to the Crabb River Road Expansion project. This expanded road in front of our property will be a four-lane raised divided roadway with turn lanes. In addition, Fort Bend County is planning a Reading Road extension in front of our church to the south of our property. In a few years, St. Mark's will be perfectly situated and visible on an active corner.

St. Mark's future is a mystery, but what we do know is that it is in St. Mark's DNA to energetically move forward. We have never been a timid group: from starting a new church in a Girl Scout hut in 1954, to building a church building on Avenue N in Rosenberg, to moving our church from Avenue N to our current building in 2008, expanding with a \$2.4-million-dollar plus Education Building, and starting a school. We can envision a future in which St. Mark's is a growing church located on the corner of FM762 and Reading Road surrounded by new homes in the field across the street and behind us. Perhaps at that time we will start a capital campaign to build a new sanctuary. What we know is that we will, with God's help.

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barbara Scheibner". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and connected.

Barbara Scheibner

## Junior Warden Report — Mrs. Alysoun Marks

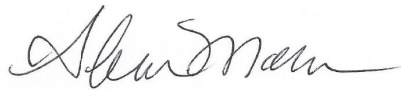
Proverbs 24: 3-4 “By wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established; by knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches.”

I am very grateful to the people of St. Mark’s, past and present for their wisdom and understanding in establishing what I now consider to be my “forever church home.” Caring for this home is a large undertaking, which requires the efforts of many people. I appreciate the support and help of all of those involved. When I agreed to take on the responsibilities of Junior Warden, I was very aware that it was outside my comfort zone, but was assured that I would have help. I did, indeed, receive much help!

This year was sprinkled with the usual maintenance of equipment and systems, up-keep of the church grounds, the parish work-day and the removal of some dead trees that were posing a threat to our buildings. We started a pictorial history of our church in the upstairs hallway, and we expanded our bulletin boards in the Parish Hall, so that parishioners can keep up with what is going on in all of our various ministries. We also managed to expand our services into catching feral hogs. Our biggest undertaking this year was to develop a new system to care for our church home in the future, by way of a Property Commission. Due to our parish growth and the tremendous responsibilities it requires to care for our church and school, it was felt that we needed to involve more of our family members in this process. I have laid the groundwork for the development of this commission, with a lot of help from others. I feel very comfortable in handing it over to the capable hands of Brad Knecht, to implement and empower this commission in 2017.

I like to remind myself that creating a home is more than chairs and tables, pews and prayer books. When we make decisions that are wise, it will help us sustain our home for years to come. As scripture tells us, wisdom, understanding and knowledge will fill our home with pleasant and precious riches.

Respectfully submitted,



Alysoun Marks

## St. Mark's Episcopal School Report — Dr. Suzanne Welch, Head of School

*Jim Watkins defines strength by using a river, "A river cuts through a rock, not because of its power, but its persistence."*

*Mattie Stepanek stated, "Unity is strength . . . when there is teamwork and collaboration, wonderful things can be achieved."*

Last year, we adjusted our sails and moved on. This year, we are focused on working as a team. I am truly blessed to work with a group of educators who are willing to collaborate, be persistent and give grace to others. Wonderful things are happening at St. Mark's Episcopal School.

The mission of St. Mark's Episcopal School is to encourage spiritual, intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development in young children through an enriched curriculum, rooted in the Christian faith. Within a nurturing Christian community, St. Mark's Episcopal School builds in each child the foundation for good character and a lifelong love of learning. St. Mark's Episcopal School philosophy is to foster an early childhood education which honors the unique value and beauty of all children as creations of a loving, empowering God.

St. Mark's Episcopal School integrates spiritual formation, joyful discovery, and playful creativity into our daily curriculum, enabling children to reach their full potential. At St. Mark's Episcopal School, the curriculum is designed to provide learning experiences that have measurable learning objectives at each age level. The classroom units provide a broad range of content that is socially relevant, intellectually engaging and personally meaningful to the children. The units incorporate a variety of approaches and teaching methodologies that meet the needs of a wide range of learning differences. The learning areas are pre-reading, writing, math, science, social studies, art, music, fine motor and gross motor development, and social/emotional development. Throughout the Active Learning Centers in each classroom, the teacher allows the children to link their life experiences with each unit that is being taught. A variety of age appropriate learning opportunities provide individual and group interactive learning experiences with selected materials.

We began the 2016-17 school year with a new budget that was cut as much as possible. Our general budget was cut to the bone. We were able to greatly reduce our budget, and with the Loving Hands matching campaign and other donations, we are moving toward financial balance. Our Rainbow Fish campaign provided school supplies to help off-set our school supply budget. Through the grace and blessings of the Church, we were able to provide the supplies students need for a quality educational program.

Since August 25, 2014 our enrollment has grown from 13 to 36 students as of this week. Our capacity for enrollment is 65 students with five classrooms open and operating. Our goal is to increase enrollment. I still hear some people say, "I did not know this school was here". We have been working hard to increase public awareness of our wonderful school. Teachers, Staff, Board Members and Church Members have helped by passing out pens with our information, sending goodie baskets to targeted schools in LCISD, putting up lawn signs, participating in Skeeters Festival of Lights, being a part of the Trunk or Treat, increasing our Facebook presence, manning a recruitment booth at Just Between Friends, and adopting the domain name of [www.smes.rocks](http://www.smes.rocks) (this domain name takes you directly to the school website). Please join us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/stmarksrichmondTx](http://www.facebook.com/stmarksrichmondTx). Please like and share our page. We are now working to increase the presence of our Twitter account. Join us on Twitter.com by searching @stmarksrichmond.

We have begun the process of partnering with the Boy Scouts to help provide Eagle Scout Projects. We have identified four projects for the partnership. We need storage cabinets for our materials and equipment, picnic benches on the playground, a nature trail, and an outdoor nature area and garden. We are hoping the nature trail will be a project we can share with the Church.

On January 21 we will began our Strategic Planning sessions with David Madison. We will develop a strategic plan for growth that will support the strategic plan of the church. It is such an exciting time at St. Mark's, and great things are happening!

We began the 2016 year with learning about the Three Wise Men, Animals, Matter, and celebrating National Hat day. In February we celebrated 100 days of school and predicted if the groundhog would see his shadow. We observed solids, liquids, gases, and plants. We observed Lent, the last supper, and celebrated the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We had a successful Gala where we went on a Safari Adventure and raised funds for the school. We began the new school year with a welcome back picnic for families, and participated in the first Trunk or Treat. We have had a visit from the Richmond Sherriff's Department including a helicopter, K-9 Unit, and SWAT vehicle! The students learned to Stop, Drop, and Roll with the Richmond Fire Department, and we were blessed with two visits from the Tooth Fairy! In 2016 we celebrated the traditions of Thanksgiving by having families sit down for a meal. We observed Advent, learned about the nativity, and celebrated the birth of Christ. We also learned about St. Nicholas and were graced by a visit by St. Nicholas including coins being left in student shoes. I love the way teachers integrate our Chapel lessons into the classroom. They are able to bring the lesson of the week into our daily practices, and continue to promote the loving grace of Christ by using loving hands to help others. We promote exemplary standards for exemplary results.

Our Chapel program is a blessing. Our Chaplain makes the Bible stories come alive through student interactions and a wonderful flannel board. She integrates academics into the stories, and then helps teachers with follow up activities in the classroom. When learning about Jonah, students used a rope to measure how long the Whale was that swallowed Jonah. Goliath comes and makes a special visit, and the walls of Jericho actually come tumbling down! Everyone is welcome to attend Chapel on Wednesday mornings! Come and enjoy a mid-week reminder of God's love.

St. Mark's Episcopal School is a Texas State Licensed facility, and we are a member school of the Southwestern Association of Episcopal Schools (SAES). Our full-time and part-time staff include a variety of highly trained and talented professionals. Our faculty and staff are focused on student needs, and understand we are caring for a parent's most precious gift from God.

#### Faculty and Staff

Head of School – Dr. Suzanne Welch

Office Manager – Jerri Carington

School Chaplain – Lynnett Alderson

18 Month Classroom Teacher – Karina Martinez

Toddler Classroom Teacher – Lynnett Alderson

Toddler Classroom Assistant – Michelle Buckner

Three Year Old Classroom Teacher – Mary Paul

Three Year Old Classroom Assistant – Clarissa Munoz

Four Year Old Classroom Teacher – Amanda Raska

Bridge to Kindergarten Classroom Teacher – Kati Kocian

Four Year Old and Bridge to Kindergarten Classroom Assistants – Kris Bliss and Debbie Ontiveros

Before Care Program – Debbie Ontiveros and Clarissa Munoz

After Care Program – Hadley Perez, Amy Escobar and Shakira Patni

We are blessed with volunteers. We want to thank the church members who have given of their time to substitute in the classrooms, help in the office area, and help with events. Without your help and support we would not be able to continue our mission. We are always looking for volunteers, let me know if you want to help.

Generous supporters and contributors have made it possible for our school to extend scholarships and tuition assistance to several of our school families. The entire St. Mark's school faculty and staff have contributed to our Annual Fund which continues to support educational initiatives that tuition does not cover.

St. Mark's Episcopal School is a ministry that mirrors the Episcopal identity as it provides an exemplary early childhood education program rooted in Christian values. We welcome all volunteers and invite everyone to drop by for a visit. Volunteers are always welcome and encouraged.

I feel I have found my home and my calling, and I sincerely thank you for the opportunity to serve as Head of School.

## **Director of Parish Life — Mrs. Melissa Hamon**

As I have looked over 2016, the first full year of being the Director of Parish Life, I find myself looking back with a smile on my face because of all the wonderful things I was able to help with or facilitate this year. I often get asked what does a Parish Life Director do? As I look back on 2016, I can honestly say that the D.P.L (Pronounced Dipple) does a lot of different things from assisting the junior with management of the property to hosting parish wide events, to making sure classrooms are set up with the appropriate AV equipment, tables and chairs. In this report I will go over some of the highlights of our parish life.

The first ministry that comes to my mind is the Newcomer's Ministry because that is the first ministry that most people encounter when they walk through the doors of St. Mark's. Our great team of ushers and greeters do a wonderful job of making sure everyone that walks through our doors is greeted with a smile and a feeling of home, even if it is their first visit. Our ushers make sure that everyone is comfortably seated, the environment is comfortable and are there for questions and directions. Our greeter ministry will be getting a new mission in 2017. The greeters will be shepherds to our newcomers and take a larger role in welcoming them to our church. Stay tuned for more details on this evolving ministry.

Our Hosting Ministry was quiet this year. We continued serving church purchased snacks and had a few people assisting me in making sure the snacks were available at the coffee hour. Many people requested a desire to "spruce up" the Hosting Ministry and bring it back to a form of what we used to do before we had the Education Building. Members wanted to move back to bringing snacks and treats to share. This move is beginning in 2017. So far the response has been fantastic!

As we have moved past the season of Growing in G.R.A.C.E., we also changed our most important membership tools, the Newcomer's Class. This year we updated the PowerPoint presentations to reflect our growth and new church logo. We continue to have the classes on Sunday afternoons, which seems to work best for most of our families. Father Bert and I conduct the classes and we all have lunch together, but with the new presentations, we are able to streamline the class so that our families can spend more of their Sundays together. We continue to follow up the following Sunday with the Liturgy of Belonging which formally introduces the new members to the congregation.

During 2016 we hosted a pancake supper for Shrove Tuesday, 3 Lenten Dinners with Calvary Episcopal and 2 Fish Fries. I realized just how much is involved with all of these events when our Sexton, Reuben Luna, was out for this season on the church calendar with knee replacement surgery. I cannot thank those persons enough that stepped up to help with shopping, preparing, set up, and clean up. It was a force of true teamwork and I invite everyone to be a part of this team for the 2017 Lenten season. We will have a pancake supper, 2 Lenten dinners and 3 fish fries. All are welcome to be a team member!

In 2016 I had the pleasure to work with two junior wardens that made my job much easier, as property management is not my strongest talent. With their help and the help of our administrative executive assistant, I learned a lot about fire pump systems, lawn maintenance, pest control, plumbing, air conditioning and electrical systems. With the addition of a school, our building is subject to inspections that are not only good for the safety of our children but for the entire congregation. These inspections make our property safer for all. With the help of a parishioner with a background in emergency management, we were able to put together an disaster plan St. Mark's. For 2017, I look forward to a partnership with a new junior warden. We are planning for a building commission in the very near future, so we are looking for parishioners with knowledge or expertise in building services that we would be able to call to look at an issue and help make a decision as to how to handle the issue or problem. If you are interested in being a part of this commission or know someone who would be, please let me, or the junior warden know.

As we say goodbye to 2016 and look forward to 2017, I can't wait to see what God has in store for St. Mark's. It is a journey that we go through as a family, together.



## Finance Report – Mr. Rock Moen

For St. Mark's 2016 was a year of transition and transparency. We worked together to better understand our needs and the needs of our school ministry. The St. Mark's 2016 fiscal year operating budget, approved by the Vestry a year ago, projected revenue of \$432,500 which included Shared Use Income from our School of \$43,000 which we did not receive and expected revenue from Pledge Commitments of \$355,000 of which we received \$337,328.44. Through additional Non Pledged donations, a \$20,000 transfer of funds from our Participating Fund, and better managing of our expenses we reduced our 2016 actual deficit to \$19,996.

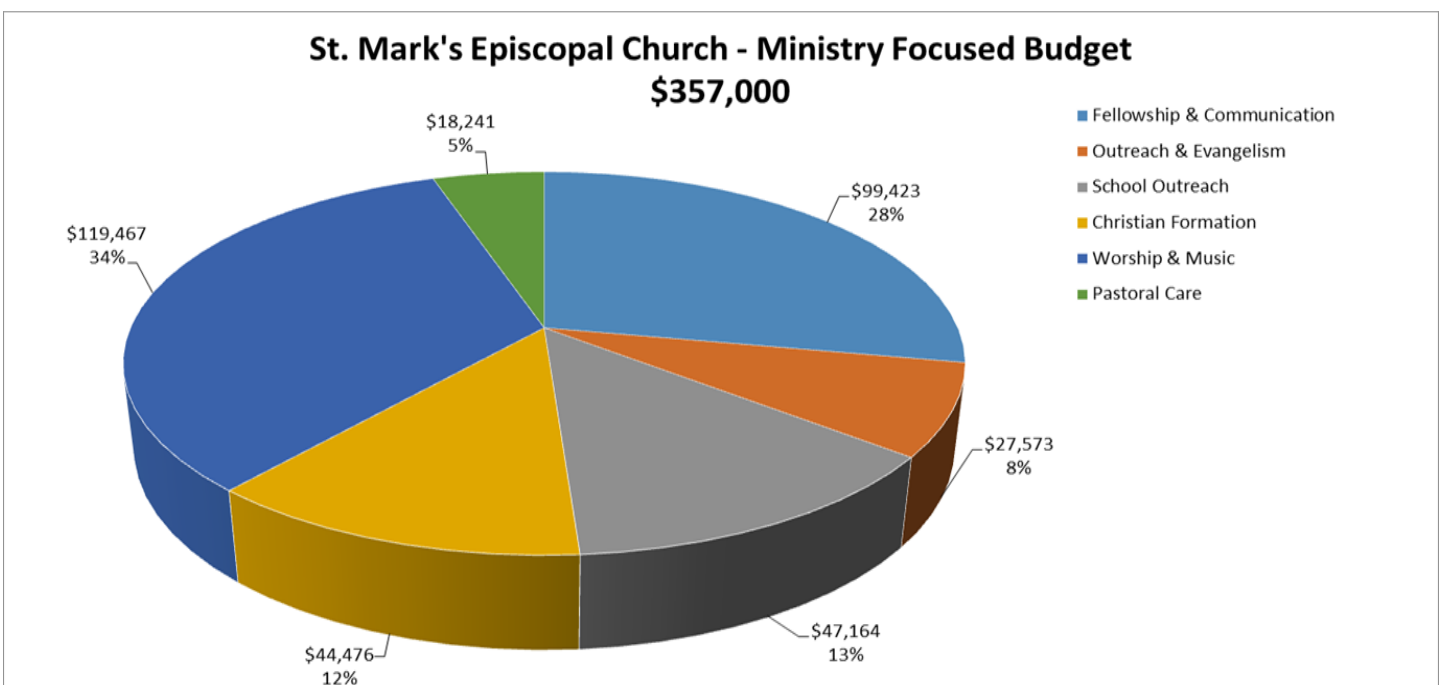
Additionally, we have worked with our School Ministry forgiving a loan of \$19,000 where for our action \$19,000 was matched by a generous donor and given to the school for additional financial support. For our 2017 Budget, our school has agreed to a Shared Use Contribution of \$4,980 annualized resulting in a transparent budget for both our School and our Church for 2017. Through our Stewardship Campaign we are grateful for the same pledged revenue as we received as actual in 2016. After careful and diligent considerations from our Finance Committee and Vestry, we have completed and approved 2017 budget. God has provided everything that we need and every opportunity to grow our Ministries throughout our community with no deficit.

St. Mark's has reserve / emergency funds invested through the Episcopal Church Participating Fund. We operate both our School and our Church with "No Debt".

The Growing in Grace Capital Campaign ended officially in February 2016 where we received \$21,979 in 2016 resulting in over \$525,000 against pledges to the campaign and \$142,511 in non pledge support. Funds remaining in the capital campaign account will be available as seed money for future capital improvements to our campus.

A financial audit of St. Mark's was conducted during the summer of 2016 under the leadership of Charles Yates. No problems were found with the accounts or with our processes and procedures.

Below is our Ministry Focused Budget 2017 Pie Chart providing detail of our actual budget. Please notice the Symetry of our Budget where we have half our Budget – Fellowship / Communication, Outreach / Evangelism, School Outreach as "Outreach" / \$174,160, 49% with the other half of our Budget – Worship / Music, Christian Formation, Pastoral Care is "Inreach" / \$182,184, 51%.



St Mark's Episcopal Church  
 Budget Entry - 01 GENERAL FUND - 2017  
 Revised by Vestry Action 1/8/17 (2)

	<u>Annual</u>	
<b>INCOME</b>		
<b>CONTRIBUTIONS</b>		
Pledge Payments	336,001.00	
Non-Pledge	11,000.00 (2)	
Plate Offering	6,000.00	353,001.00
<b>MISCELLANEOUS INCOME</b>		
Miscellaneous Income	200.00	
Pre-School Shared Use	4,980.00	5,180.00
<b>Subtotal Income</b>		<b>358,181.00</b>
 <b>EXPENSES</b>		
<b>STAFF COMPENSATION</b>		
<b>RECTOR</b>		
Rector's Stipend	45,142.10	
Rector Housing	29,747.30	
Rector SS Reimbursement	12,322.66	
Pension - Rector (Q)	15,698.17	102,910.23
<b>STAFF</b>		
Dir. of Parish Life	30,000.00	
Financial Secretary	6,070.00	
Parish Administrator	22,279.00	
Organist/Music Director	25,000.00	
Nursery Workers	5,470.00	
Sexton-Luna	14,400.00	
403b Employer for Hamon	2,700.00	
403b Employer for Hart	2,005.00	
403b Employer for Luna	1,296.00	109,220.00
<b>SUPPLY CLERGY &amp; ORGANIST</b>		
Supply Clergy	2,070.00	
Supply Organist	1,500.00	3,570.00
<b>EMPLOYER EXPENSES</b>		
Employer - SocSec/Medicare	7,896.00	7,896.00
<b>DIOCESE OF TEXAS</b>		
Assessment	21,032.00	
Insurance Assessment	2,380.00	23,412.00
<b>ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSE</b>		
Cell Phones	720.00	
Computer-Software	500.00	
Copier Maintenance	5,200.00	
Miscellaneous	450.00	
Office Furniture/Equip.	250.00	
Office Supplies	3,500.00	
Payroll Processing	3,300.00	
Postage/Stamps	500.00	
Website Hosting (Y)	480.00	14,900.00
<b>INSURANCE</b>		
Comm. Insurance (Q)	16,000.00	
Workman's Comp	3,000.00	19,000.00
<b>UTILITIES</b>		
Electricity	16,700.00	
Gas	500.00	
Phone & Internet Lines	14,465.00	31,665.00

St Mark's Episcopal Church  
 Budget Entry - 01 GENERAL FUND - 2017  
 Revised by Vestry Action 1/8/17 (2)

	<u>Annual</u>	
<b>BUILDING</b>		
Alarms - Fire & Burglar	1,780.00	
Elevator Maint. Contract	3,840.00	
Furniture & Equip	500.00	
Inspections/Compliance	1,700.00	
Kitchen/Bath/Cleaning Sup	2,200.00	
Network Maint. Contract	6,000.00	
Pest Control Contract-Q	1,500.00	
Repairs/Maintenance	6,000.00	
Trash Removal Contract	3,600.00	
Water Test Contract-Q	<u>2,400.00</u>	29,520.00
<b>MINISTRIES &amp; PROGRAMS</b>		
<b>OUTREACH</b>		
Kids Hope	1,000.00	
Local Outreach	<u>1,000.00</u>	2,000.00
<b>CHRISTIAN FORMATION</b>		
Godly Play - CF	100.00	
Kids Kingdom - CF	250.00	
Youth - CF	200.00	
Adult - CF	200.00	
Forward Day by Day	200.00	
Confirmation/Baptism Gift	300.00	
VBS	250.00 (2)	
Lenten Series	<u>300.00</u>	1,800.00
<b>GROUPS &amp; MINISTRIES</b>		
Stewardship Ministry	500.00 (2)	
Spiritual Formation Ministry	200.00 (2)	
ECW Ministry	400.00 (2)	
Men's Group Ministry	300.00 (2)	
Prime Timers Ministry	400.00 (2)	
Altar Guild Ministry	1,000.00	
EYC Ministry	1,200.00	
Newcomers - Ministry	700.00	
Sewing Guild Ministry	<u>450.00</u>	5,150.00
<b>MUSIC</b>		
Music General	<u>600.00</u>	600.00
<b>CLERGY ACCOUNTS</b>		
Rector's Disc Fund	600.00	
Rector's Hospitality	600.00	
Clergy Continuing Ed	<u>750.00</u>	1,950.00
<b>IN PARISH EXPENSES</b>		
Special Events	500.00	
Sunday Hospitality	250.00	
Liturgy Worship Supplies	400.00	
Nursery Supplies	50.00	
Christmas Pageant	<u>50.00</u>	1,250.00
<b>CONVENTIONS &amp; SEMINARS</b>		
Diocesan Council	1,400.00	
Leadership Development	<u>100.00</u>	1,500.00
<b>Subtotal Expenses</b>		<u>356,343.23</u>
	<b>Balance</b>	<u><u>1,837.77</u></u>

## **Acolytes/Chalice Bearers – Mrs. Kathy Barzilla & Mr. Benno Scheibner**

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 a Verger, Crucifer, two Torch Bearers and sometimes a Gospel Bearer scheduled at services. St. Mark's has three Vergers that lead processions and prepare the nave for worship: Kathy Barzilla, Phyllis Janke and Benno Scheibner.

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 Torch Bearers in 2017. Benno Scheibner and Kathy Barzilla serve as the acolyte trainers. We can train acolytes at any time. If anyone is interested in serving as an acolyte at St. Mark's, please contact Benno Scheibner at barbs4@earthlink.net or Kathy Barzilla at Kat102193@windstream.net.

## **Adult Christian Formation – Mr. Rob Hamon**

Adult Christian Formation. Bible study is personal and communal. It takes both sides of the coin to complete the picture, and our Sunday morning Adult Christian Formation classes examine several ways to do both. These sessions introduce, then practice, communal study methods. This means we use both class time as well as personal study to seek and better know God's word.

### **Romans 12.1-2**

1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God — this is your true and proper worship. 2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Why do you think Bible study is such an important part of a Christ filled life? Lets' 'renew our minds' ...

God directs us to do so

To know His Word is to better know Him, as did Jesus

Frequent and deep bible reading will develop an "appetite" for God

Jesus fought off temptation by quoting scripture

### **2 Timothy 3.16-17**

16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

And, of course, to study the Bible is to know the truth.

### **John 8:31-32**

... Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. 32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

So, just how did we pursue the 'renewing of our minds' in 2016? During the Winter and Spring seasons we continued our study of the Acts of the Apostles, going deeper into how the early church spread the word from Jerusalem, to Judea and Samaria, and by witness, to the 'ends of the earth'. This is "The Great Commission" from Jesus, as we read in Mathew 28.16-20. We found ourselves gaining a better understanding of God's will in the early church as we revisited the stories of the Apostles, Disciples, Christian Jews and Gentiles and, of course, the missions of Paul.

Fall found us pursuing a different course of study using the Kerygma method. *Kerygma* is a Greek word meaning 'proclamation' and is used by Paul in his 1<sup>st</sup> letter to the Corinthians. Of the many courses they offer, we chose for our first set of classes their "Listening to Scripture: Strategies for Interpreting the Bible". The course introduced six skills or strategies that enable learners to uncover enough about scripture that they can begin to understand the meaning it might have had for its first readers and hearers. Learning what the text meant is the study's first objective. From there, we go further to see just what the text means; just what is the message for us as Christians today.

Finally, we closed the year with a focused study during Advent; another Kerygma course: "Hallelujah: The Bible and Handel's Messiah"; a study for both the music lover and the biblical seeker. The class offered a careful examination of the scriptural texts that give Handel's oratorio, *Messiah*, its biblical foundation and we then listened to appropriate portions of the composition to appreciate the beauty of the story of Christ's prophetic birth through glorious music and inspired singing. The course will visit with Handel once again during the season of Lent as we see how the maestro envisioned the Passion and Resurrection of our Lord woven through music and voice.

There is a quote from one of the Kerygma resources that best describes just what our Adult Christian Formation is all about. "You are about to embark on a wonderful journey with a number of companions. This time together has the potential for building relationships among those who participate, for increasing their knowledge and appreciation of Scripture, and for providing a time of spiritual nurture and renewal. May this be a period of fruitful study and reflection for you and those who join you on the journey."

### **Altar Guild – Ms. Bettye Newberry**

St Mark's has an awesome Altar Guild team. Members are Lisa Arnold, Ruthie Hurta, Michelle D'Antuono, Suzanne Mottin, Jeri Culberson, Sally Yates, Ann Chrisman, Bonnie Knecht, Sandy Barkerding, Jennifer Kirkland, Isobel Gotchel, Elisa Hughes & myself.

Every week we are responsible of setting up for communion & also for Baptism's, Holy Week, Easter, Pentecost, Advent & Christmas. All are dedicated to do the Lords work.

We would welcome new members to our team.

### **Children's Chapel – Mrs. Anne Geraci & Mrs. Shan Harris**

Children's Chapel was started in the fall of 2014. We started meeting the first Sunday of the month during the 9:00am service. In the last few years, we have anywhere from 4 or 5 to 9 kids in attendance each time. (And we would love to grow that number!)

In the summer of 2016 we made significant changes to the format. That fall we started meeting on both the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays and envisioned our chapel to more accurately mimic a traditional service. We added an Order of Service, Crucifer and Acolytes to our existing the Creed, Bible Lesson and Prayers of the People (with each child's contribution to the prayer list).

We meet at the side doors and process to our chapel (classroom D). Each kid shares a special prayer with an acolyte (a member of the Kid's Kingdom aged-kids) and then we sing our welcome song and the kids take their place in the "aisles". We say a creed, sing more songs and have a "sermon" from a wonderful educational tool called "The Jesus Storybook Bible". We then do a Prayers of the People and during this the Acolyte reads each of the child's special prayer request. We finish with a song and process back to "big church" before communion.

## **Christian Formation Grades 7-12 – Mrs. Chris Abbott**

Following the suggestion of Jamie Martin-Currie from the Diocese of Texas the 7-12 grade class continues to use the “Real and Relevant” curriculum. Chris Abbott adapts the lessons and teaches the class each week. The curriculum follows a lectionary based format. Scripture readings are most often based on the New Testament, but occasionally an Old Testament reading is also used. The lessons provide the youth with an opportunity to dig deeper into the scripture reading, God, Jesus and their faith. The lesson often includes a video clip that demonstrates the lesson that is being taught that week. During the spring term themes included baptism, gifts from the Holy Spirit, temptation, role models, loving one another, friendship, betrayal and Pentecost. For example, *Back to the Future II and III* were used during the discussion of avoiding temptation and role models. Themes during the fall included what it means to be a Christian, forgiveness, betrayal, beliefs, convictions and the parable of Lazarus. Using *Swing Vote*, for example, helped the class discuss betrayal and forgiveness. The grade 7-12 Christian Formation budget allows for the purchase of those older movies to be used in class. The group participates in lively discussions and connections are made between the scripture lessons and their daily lives. Attendance has ranged from a high of twelve to a low of five with an average of seven.

In addition to the “Real and Relevant” curriculum, 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 supportive of the voting that found Dietrich Bonhoeffer as the 2016 winner of the Golden Halo.

Other instruction included time spent learning about the selection of new saints by the Catholic Church including Saint Teresa, Wreaths Across America as a tribute to American veterans and the traveling exhibit of the Sistine Chapel at the Texas State Fair. Students were encouraged during Lent to make use of additional devotional materials online or in hard copy.

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.

## **Daughters of the King (DOK) – Mrs. Alysoun Marks**

The mission of the order of DOK is the extension of Christ’s Kingdom through prayer, service and evangelism. Our St. Mark’s members have faithfully focused on our mission throughout the year, even when they could not always attend the meetings. We remain dedicated to praying for those in need, as well as being of service to our ministries at St. Mark’s and in the community. We are excited about the possibility of adding several new members this year. I have been honored to serve as president the past two years, and feel grateful to Melissa Hamon for taking on this role in 2017.

## **Disaster Task Force – Mr. Rob Hamon**

St. Mark’s Episcopal Church is well aware of the potential for danger inherent in a fallen world. And while we cannot plan for all contingencies that may come our way, we most certainly can plan ahead for many of them and thus, ‘build our house upon the rock.’ This document is such a plan.

We have been blessed with a set of facilities that supports our mission of Knowing Christ, and Making Him Known. And we have been guided by Scripture to be good stewards of these gifts. In light of these facts, we believe it wise to embrace the lesson from Matthew and plan for those contingencies that may impact our ability to carry out our mission. Beyond stewardship of our church, we also need to embrace those whom God would send our way during times of crises and serve them as well.

## Plan Objectives.

1. Carry out our stewardship responsibilities to ensure they continue to fulfill God's will during times of crises. This requires preparation in advance of any such crisis, ensuring God's people are kept safe as the first priority.
2. Serve and assist those in need prior to, during and following any of the crises described in this plan.

Now that we have a plan in place it is our hope that early in 2017 we will be able to have drills and practice run-throughs to ensure we have the appropriate tools and people in place for any emergency that may occur here at St. Mark's. We would also want to be prepared as an outreach organization to be a help to the surrounding community. This document will be our guideline.

## **Episcopal Church Women (ECW) – Mrs. Jennifer Kirkland**

The ECW had its second annual retreat at The Leaman Ranch. Our friend, the Reverend Kristin Sullivan, was our guest speaker and presented a beautiful program.

We also had a Summer Kickoff Wine & Cheese party at the home of Bonnie Knecht. This was a great time of fun and fellowship and we hope to continue this celebration.

We finished the year with our Annual Christmas Ornament Exchange, which is always a wonderful time of fellowship!

## **Episcopal Youth Community – Mrs. Bonnie Knecht & Mrs. Suzanne Mottin**

EYC is comprised of our 7th through 12th grade students. During the Fall, we met once to twice monthly for Bible study, devotions, food, games, and general hanging out. Some of the meetings are hosted at our youth's homes. In October, the youth participated in a joint EYC meeting with Calvary Episcopal Church. In December, several of the youth participated in the CYCLE bike build at Reliant where they worked to assemble bikes to be given to at-risk students. Also in December we enjoyed a Christmas party and celebration.

## **Godly Play for Children – Mrs. Mary Moen & Mrs. Suzanne Mottin**

Godly Play is thriving and growing from 10:15 to 11:05am every Sunday, in our very special classroom!

Our curious and loving children are ages 3 to Kindergarten. And our class size has grown to 12 children, including someone always bringing a friend. Some Sundays we even have to borrow chairs from other classroom - God is good!

The class starts with a simple parable, which usually reflects our lessons for the day. We use simple Christian language and visuals, to teach our children about God's presence and abundant love for all of us

Our teachers include Suzanne Mottin, Sarah Peters, Jennifer Cantu, Brett Mottin and myself. Thank you to our parents for sharing your precious child with us, we are blessed!

## **Growing in Grace Follow-Up – Mrs. Barbara Scheibner**

The Follow-up Committee continued to publish and mail newsletters to parish homes sending the last issue in June 2016. Over the three-year period of the capital campaign, the Committee created and sent

out thirty-one newsletters informing the parish about, not only the progress of the Education Building, but also events and programs happening throughout the church. I want to thank Rhonda Yamauchi and Bill Abbott who were artistic creators of these newsletters, Chris Abbott who contributed articles, and Bart Little who diligently ensured that the newsletters got to people's homes.

The Committee also helped to plan and carry out the celebration of the capital campaign's conclusion during the church's 2016 St. Mark's Feast Day festivities. Thanks to Chris Abbott, we all were invited to write words of thanks to God that in the future will be planted with a tree with marble plaques honoring all those who contributed time, talent and treasure to the capital campaign.

### **KIDS HOPE USA – Mrs. Lisa Arnold**

We are very fortunate to be in our 3rd year of mentoring. During 2016 our mentors continued to nurture relationships with children at Cora Thomas Elementary School. Ten mentors spent one hour each week with their children reading, playing educational games and talking about life.

We closed out our 2nd year, the 2015 - 2016 school year, with celebrations at school during Volunteer Appreciation Week and a separate KHUSA mentor and staff lunch for the administrators and mentors to get to know each other better. A great time was had by all. The Yates very generously provided our lunch.

The children are really enjoying the program. Some children and mentors have been paired for all three years. These children are now in the fifth grade! We'll miss them next Fall.

We began the 2016 - 2017 school year with 8 mentors. We are always in need of more mentors, subs and prayer partners. If you have an hour per week and would like to enhance the learning potential and life of a child, please let me know!

Arlene Rivenes and I attended the 2016 KIDS HOPE USA Regional Conference in Houston in January. We enjoyed great speakers and breakout sessions to learn new games to share with our mentees. Following the conference, I attended the Directors' Luncheon. I met many area directors and heard stories of how their groups work with their schools. It's always interesting and helpful to get other perspectives.

In November, I hosted a directors gathering here at St. Mark's. Several area directors attended along with Lori Cyr, the Houston Area Coordinator who supports the directors. We hope to hold these gatherings more often and share ideas between the different groups.

I am always grateful for the time our mentors, prayer partners and leadership members give to our program. I know we're impacting young lives and we are definitely filling our hearts at the same time.

### **Kids' Kingdom – Mrs. Chris Abbott**

Kids' Kingdom provides Christian Formation for students in the first through sixth grades. 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 adapted 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 and maintaining the classroom environment. Attendance has ranged from a high of eleven to a low of four with an average of six. Kids' Kingdom teachers this year have included Sandy Barkerding, Dorothy Valencia, Sarah Baetz, Sara Hawkes, Carolyn Duff, Amy Wacker and Christine Ronning. 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. Special thanks go to Brett Mottin who also added his assistance on multiple Sundays. Kids' Kingdom would not be possible without these dedicated individuals.

### ***Spring 2016***

Kids' Kingdom units during the spring included a study of the parables of the Sower and the Good Samaritan, Jesus calling his disciples, Peter and Pentecost. During the lessons on the parable of the Sower the students completed a seed mosaic, "baked" four different types of soil and answered situation questions following a video. During the study of the parable of the Good Samaritan the students made chicken pot pies to share with the less fortunate, read a drama titled, "The Good Spatula" and compared the parable to *Horton Hears a Who*. The disciples and Peter unit found the children making disciple "trading cards", writing texts and tweets to and from God, baking pizza "fishes" to share and designing help wanted posters. Prior to the beginning of Lent the children constructed Alleluia banners that were buried on Shrove Tuesday and then dug up to be used to celebrate Easter.

### ***Fall 2016***

The eleven weeks of Kids' Kingdom in the fall included an Old Testament study with eight weeks looking at Joseph and three weeks studying Joshua. Activities in the Joseph unit included making "Yeah and Boo" cards, presenting a readers' theater titled, "Joseph's Cool Coat", illustrating hieroglyphic scrolls, developing timeline stepping stones of Joseph's life, and playing Jeopardy. By far their favorite activity was completing the tie-die technicolor pillowcases. To study Joshua, the students completed maps of the tribes of Israel, dramatized the walls of Jericho falling down with lunch bags filled with newspaper and constructed dioramas to illustrate life in Joshua's time.

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

The St. Mark's Men's Ministry continued to be active in 2016 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 are held at 6:30 on the second and fourth Monday evenings of each month (exceptions for Holidays, summer and special events). At each meeting, we have chocolate chip cookies and jerky, get to know each other better, watch a short video and learn from each other. Topics for videos and discussion have included discipleship, forgiveness, mourning and prayer.

In addition to the regular meetings, special meetings/activities are held throughout the year. In 2016, the Men of St. Mark's made the exceptionally good pancakes for Shrove Tuesday, provided the food for a Lenten church supper, set up tables for special events, watered trees and held work days at the church to clean, repair and weed. We are particularly excited that The Outback (man cave) has been finished off

and is ready for some male camaraderie.

In 2016 there were two **Gatherings of Men**, one held in February and another in October, at the Leaman's Eagles Nest Ranch. At each Gathering, over twenty men and young men attended all or part of the three-day events. New friendships were made, relationships were strengthened. Some of us shot guns, some explored the ranch, some played Euchre and some just sat by the fire pit and relaxed. Rob Hamon led us in Bible studies, and Father Bert celebrated Eucharist for us in the outdoors. We did not burn anything down, and no one went to the hospital. Much manly food was eaten.

A group of St. Mark's men also meets Thursday mornings at the Whataburger in Richmond to solve the world's problems. See Dwayne Dawlearn or Mat Coyle for more details.

### **Mission Trip – Mrs. Melissa Hamon**

In early June of 2016, a group from St. Mark's embarked on a mission trip to Port Aransas to work in Corpus Christi for three days. We headed down to Port Aransas in an SUV and a trailer pulled by another SUV. Our work crew consisted of The Rev. Bert Baetz, Melissa and Rob Hamon, Jennifer Kirkland, Barbara Scheibner and her granddaughter Camille, and Dorothy Dawlearn. Our cook team was Lee Leaman and Bettye Newberry. We were also blessed to have our lodging provided to us at no charge by a very generous family. None of the participants knew how our lives would be changed by our experiences over the next few days.

We had the pleasure to work with the homeless mission, Mission 911. Their philosophy is that they don't believe in handouts, but in offering a helping hand to those in a crisis who sincerely want a positive change. Their primary objectives are to reach out to the "hard to work with" population in their community and provide them with shelter, meals, food supplies, transportation, opportunities to learn and use a skill, and a place to worship and learn more about God's grace. We divided up into a few small groups and cleaned garage areas, clothing donations areas and an apartment that had been recently occupied for several years and was in bad shape. I think that I can speak for all of us in saying that we all met at least one resident that resonated with us. We could identify with them and understand what was going on in their lives. I personally bonded with a few women that had issues with children with ADHD, an issue that my family deals with daily.

We also worked with the Food Bank of Corpus Christi. This place was amazing with how organized they were and what an incredible process they have for distributing food to Corpus Christi and surrounding counties. The Food Bank of Corpus Christi reduces hunger in South Texas through food distribution and nutrition education. We were in 2 groups here. One group worked in the egg washing and crating area and the other in the food storage warehouse. We worked several hours sorting food donations and then putting together 4 pallets with 50 food boxes each. We all found the work rewarding and educating.

At lunchtime each day, our fantastic cook team brought us lunch. They also cooked us incredible breakfasts each morning and awesome dinners in the evening. Each morning we had morning prayer and closed the day with evening prayer.

We want to thank all the prayer partners that prayed for us daily. That prayer energized us all to get through a lot of hard work and to be the hands and feet of Jesus to minister to those we encountered. Your prayers meant so much to all of us.

## **Music & Choir – Mrs. Mary Alice Fields**

Since beginning as interim organist and music director at St. Mark's Episcopal Church in November of 2016, I have been impressed by a number of things. Father Bert, the church staff, the choir, and the congregation have been welcoming to me and supportive of the music program and what we have been able to contribute to worship thus far. I am particularly grateful to the choir for their gentle, faithful, sensible, talented, and flexible transition from a known leadership to mine, a complete unknown. From the start they have been a prayerful and hopeful presence. I am greatly encouraged for the future of the church as a whole when I see the excellence of what all of you are doing here and the extent of the outreach you provide. I look forward to continued vitality and growth in the music program in the coming year.

## **Nursery Ministry – Mrs. Melissa Hamon**

Our nursery provides wonderful care to our youngest members. This year has been a year of growth and change in the nursery. With Lauren Matiaco leaving to take on the job of being a new mother and Michelle Harrell going to school full time, we found ourselves blessed with an entire new staff. Beverly Dixon joined us first and then Michelle Buckner and Shakira Patni became a part of our team. Having three caregivers on staff provides flexibility for our staff and for scheduling. We have been able to offer more nursery care at special functions, Wednesday studies and special celebrations. We have also added a sign in and sign out procedure. Our caregivers are now able to text parents during the service if they are needed. Because of the addition of a new 18month old class, our nursery furniture and toys have been upgraded to comply with daycare standards. The room is decorated with new bright colors and it is a wonderful place for our little ones to learn from our nursery team.

## **Sewing Guild – Mrs. Jeanne Reaves**

Among the women of the Bible is Tabitha which means Dorcas or Gazelle. Tabitha was full of good works and acts of charity. Her story is referenced in Acts 9:36-43. I believe there's a bit of Tabitha (or Dorcas) in each of our Sewing Sistahs at St. Mark's. As we work on our various projects we often share our thoughts about the people who may receive a warm head covering, a baby quilt, a blue jean bag full of toiletries, a special pillowcase just for them, a sweet sundress, or a Nativity set for a young child.

In 2016 our group made:

19 cutouts of felt Nativity sets for young families at St. Mark's

51 colorful pillowcases for the children at Ft. Bend's Women Shelter

26 recycled jeans purses with toiletries for the ladies at Ft. Bend Women's Shelter

5 little girls' sundresses for Ft. Bend Women's Shelter

39 baby and toddlers' quilts for Texas Children's Hospital

50 fleece scarf/hoodies for Lord of the Streets, a service for the homeless operated by the Diocese of Texas

The Sistahs are thankful for the support of the congregation in helping us to carry on this mission.

## Social Outreach Ministry – Mrs. Arlene Rivenes

“I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another.” (John 23:34)

Social Outreach would like to ***thank all those who contributed*** their time, talent and treasures to the various St. Mark’s Social Outreach Programs during 2016. Highlights follow:

**1) Lunches of Love.** The *First United Methodist Church* in Rosenberg founded and runs this worthy program for poor children in Fort Bend County since 2009. During *June, July and August of 2016*, St. Mark’s collaborated with this church in their *Lunches of Love* program, an outreach effort which provides free nutritious sack lunches to low-income children during weekends, extended holidays, and summer vacation. St. Mark’s helped as follows:

a. Donation of Designated Food

We collected jars of peanut butter & jelly, boxes of cereal & crackers, and 100% fruit juice for their food bank. Every other week of summer vacation, these items were delivered to the First Methodist Church.

b. Preparation of Meals

A group of church members traveled to First Methodist Church in Rosenberg in July to actually assist in assembling the lunches needed for delivery that day.

c. Participation in a Fundraising Event

Church members were also given flyers which invited them to dine at *Gringo’s Restaurant* on two different dates during the summer, when the restaurant donated 20% of dining transactions to the Lunches of Love program.

d. Financial Donation

A \$1000 donation was made to Lunches of Love from the Social Outreach budget. Also the website [www.lunchesoflove.net](http://www.lunchesoflove.net) was provided for those wanting information on making personal monetary donations.

**2) Mark’s “Giving Tree”.** Christmas is a time of wonderful traditions. A favorite at St. Mark’s is the *Giving Tree*. This year our generous giving of gifts assisted infants, children and teens in crisis. These requested gifts were taken to the *Rainbow Room*, a volunteer charitable organization dedicated to helping Fort Bend children who are currently under the care of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. Their website [www.fbr.org](http://www.fbr.org) was provided for those seeking more information.

**3) Child Advocates of Fort Bend County (CAFB).** The mission of CAFB is to provide a voice, heal the hurt, and break the cycle of abuse. Startling statistics reveal that child abuse is a silent epidemic in our county.

a. Broadened Awareness

In November of 2016, church members were again reminded about the seriousness of this silent epidemic via a large banner and CAFB literature in the fellowship hall. Their website [www.cafb.org](http://www.cafb.org) was provided for those seeking more information.

b. Voices for Children Tours

All year long, parishioners were invited to take a tour of the CAFB facility in Rosenberg to discover the impressive help that is offered to these abused children. A list of tour dates and times was posted in the fellowship hall.

c. Participation in a Fundraising Event

Church members were encouraged to buy tickets to the *CASA Christmas Home Tour* on December 9 & 10, 2016. Proceeds from these tickets benefit Child Advocates. Some church members acted as hostesses for these home tours.

d. Financial Donation

A \$1000 donation was given to CAFB from the Social Outreach Budget.

**4) Abused Women of Fort Bend County.** Several times a year, social outreach directed church members' attention to women (and their children) who are abused in our county. The PennyWise (PW) stores is an arm of this important program.

a. Awareness of PennyWise Resale Centers

Everything sold at the PW resale centers is used to *assist women and children survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault* in Fort Bend County. Locations of these PW resale centers in *Richmond, Stafford, Missouri City and Mission Bend* were given to church members. Also provided were websites for Liz Moreno (Volunteer Manger) [lmoreno@fortbendwomenscenter.org](mailto:lmoreno@fortbendwomenscenter.org) and Joy Dowell (PW Director) [jdowell@fortbendwomenscenter.org](mailto:jdowell@fortbendwomenscenter.org) for those seeking further information.

b. Donation of Materials

In spring of 2016, church members donated new or slightly-used blankets, jackets and sweaters to be sold at the PW resale centers. In the fall of 2016, members donated white sheets, pillowcases and towels. All donations were delivered to the PW stores. Some parishioners also donated especially-nice ladies' clothing for the abused women to wear on interviews for prospective jobs.

c. Financial Donation

A \$1000 donation from the social outreach budget was given to PW for the abused women shelter.

**5) Blood Center** In February (the month of love), church members were encouraged to donate blood at the Gulf Regional Blood Center to possibly help save a life and diminish a family's anguish. Address of the blood center in Sugar Land on Sweetwater Blvd. was provided. Walk-ins are invited.

**6) Seniors at Greatwood Retirement Community** In the last few months of 2016, church members were encouraged to donate extra calendars that were sent to them as 2017 was approaching. These calendars were given to seniors at *Greatwood Retirement Home* to help them keep tract of their schedules and to brighten up their rooms.

**7) Meals On Wheels (MOW).** In another attempt to help seniors, the Meals On Wheels program of *Fort Bend Seniors* was presented to church members. This is a program that focuses on providing older adults with regular, hot meals. These meals are offered to all persons 60 years of age+ who are unable to cook for themselves, regardless of income.

a. Awareness

Literature regarding this program is periodically displayed in the fellowship hall. The website [www.FortBendSeniors.org](http://www.FortBendSeniors.org) is provided.

b. Participation

Several members of St. Mark's are currently delivering meals to seniors on assigned routes *each and every week* of the year. This is one of our ongoing programs, spanning two years to date.

c. Financial Donation

A \$1000 check was given to Fort Bend Seniors from the local outreach budget.

**8) Child Mentoring.** After initiating this project as a social outreach effort, the *Kids Hope USA* model was implemented. This program required many hoops to jump through to finally get it started two years ago. Actual mentoring of the children began in *January of 2015* and continues to date. Approximately 10 parishioners got themselves qualified to work with young children within this model. Mentors see their mentees *each and every week* of the school year. It is one of our ongoing programs.

**9) Social Outreach's Impact on the Church Budget.** The following monies from the church's operating budget were donated to outreach programs during 2016:

- a) \$1000 to Lunches of Love (LOL);
- b) \$1000 to Child Advocates of Fort Bend County (CAFB);
- c) \$1000 to Penny Wise Resale Stores (Abused Women of Fort Bend); and
- d) \$1000 to Fort Bend Seniors

### **Spiritual Direction – Mrs. Susan Pinter**

Spiritual Direction at St. Mark’s in 2016 has been an ongoing journey with God for both my directees and myself.

I attended a retreat with a spiritual director from my FIND graduating class at Camp Allen in July of 2016. It was a much needed time away, with a deepening of faith and commitment for both of us.

The room for Spiritual Direction on the second floor of the school building continues to be used and is most welcoming and comfortable.

In October of 2014 I was made national chaplain of the World War II Glider Pilot Association. At the October 2016 Reunion meeting of the Glider Pilots I chose and led all the prayers and blessings for meetings and meals. This year I was also charged with reading the names of the deceased at the memorial service. My training in spiritual direction is so important in fulfilling this honorable position with grace and confidence.

I am listed as a working Spiritual Director on the Episcopal Diocese of Texas web site on the FIND page that lists FIND graduates who are actively working in spiritual direction.

I am a member of Spiritual Directors International and listed on their website.

I am actively meeting with my directees and am looking forward to continued growth of this ministry in the coming year.

### **St. Mark’s University – Alysoun Marks**

St. Mark’s University has had another successful year. We have, once again, been blessed with the time and talents of Brad and Bonnie Knecht in leading parenting classes from a Christian perspective. A new addition to our classes this year was Dave Ramsey’s Financial Peace Class. We attracted attendees from outside our parish, which was a step forward in reaching our goal of engaging the community in learning! We are planning on offering another Financial Peace class in the fall. In 2017, we hope to look for more ways to support the needs of our parish and community.

### **Strategic Planning Task Force – Barbara Scheibner**

To know Jesus Christ and make him known.

St. Mark’s mission statement above provides the reason we exist, guides our decisions, and impacts our actions. With our eyes on this mission, the Vestry, serving as the Strategic Planning Task Force in 2016, voted to emphasize the following strategic objectives for 2016 and to guide our path into the future:

- *Goal: Welcome all people into our church family through evangelism.*
- +In order to increase the average Sunday Attendance by 20%, each Vestry member will invite at least one person to church each quarter and report back to the Vestry on success.
- +Encourage other lay leaders to extend church invitations using the twelve steps to becoming an invit-

ing church.

+Offer free facility use to all parishioners and at least five outside organizations.

● *Goal: Expand the physical spaces for worship and use our beautiful outdoor setting in a wise way.*

+Commission an architectural firm to design a site plan for our campus.

+Conduct an appraisal of all our church land in preparation for negotiations with the county and state.

+Secure our water supply by drilling a well or by other means.

+Establish a high-functioning Building Commission to ensure building and grounds maintenance.

● *Goal: Improve financial systems.*

+ Recruit eight new trained tellers for the Sunday collection.

+ Establish a process for planned giving and effectively publicize it.

+ Re-evaluate the church's insurance policies to find cost-savings.

+ Complete an inventory of the church's and school's assets.

● *Goal: Make available a wider variety of groups that meet real needs and interests.*

+Continue to grow the ministry that meets the needs of youth increasing membership by 10 percent.

+Establish a ministry that meets the needs of older adults and implement at least five activities or events under this ministry.

● *Goal: Engage the community in learning through the St. Mark's University.*

+Increase the funding to offer classes and support groups for learning practical life skills from a Christian perspective: relationships, financial planning, physical and mental health, etc. led by trained lay or outside resources.

● *Goal: Cultivate a culture of stewardship that motivates all people to share God's gifts of time, talent, and treasure with St. Mark's.*

+All Vestry members, lay ministry leaders, and Rector tithe or work toward the tithe.

+Each current pledger increases his/her pledge by at least 1% of income.

+100% of all parishioners offer up a signed pledge during the stewardship campaign.

● *Goal: Serve God's children in need through Social Outreach.*

+Increase participation in Social Outreach programs by 10% percent.

Other important strategic goals for the St. Mark's parish through 2017 are:

● *Staff for growth and improve administrative, financial, and communication systems.*

● *Develop a team of lay leaders with strong management and leadership skills.*

● *Strengthen caring relationships as St. Mark's continues to grow.*

● *Increase the number of parishioners active in Christian Formation at each age level.*

● *Provide a broad spectrum of Episcopal worship experiences.*

The parish was involved in 2016 in working on achieving one or more of these twelve strategic goals. This annual report describes the richness of achievements and triumphs that occurred in 2016 as we strived to meet these goals and move forward into 2017.

**Vacation Bible School – Mrs. Melissa Hamon**

If you entered into the Parish Hall in late June of 2016, you would have found yourself surrounded by the beautiful undersea world of Dory and Nemo. This year's VBS theme was "Finding Nemo: Let God In". When you feel lost...LET GOD IN! When you don't understand...LET GOD IN! Even though you are strong...LET GOD IN!

For three wonderful days our young children experienced an undersea adventure learning about these three themes through music, crafts, Godly Play Stories and snacks. Each day our children would come in and go to their beach blankets with their shepherds and helpers. We had a special worship time under the sea and Father Bert talked with them about the theme of the day. Our own shark led the children through a morning of Bible lessons, songs, snacks and crafts.

This year we had 30 wonderful children attend our VBS program. Our ages ranged from Pre-K 3 to third grade. Many of the children were from our congregation and our school. We also had several children from the surrounding community join us. I want to send a special thank you to all of the adults and youth that spent a lot of time preparing, teaching and praying with us. It takes a lot of hands and hearts to put a VBS together and I had the best team around!





## **St. Mark's Episcopal Church**

**7615 FM 762**

**Richmond, TX 77469**

**(281) 545-1661**

**[www.stmarksfortbend.org](http://www.stmarksfortbend.org)**

### ***Mission Statement***

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

### ***Vision Statement***

We are a people growing in our love for God and our neighbors through a life of worship, formation, and service.

### ***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.