

St. Mark's Episcopal Church

Blessed to Be a Blessing



"I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you,
and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing."

Genesis 12:2

Blessed to Be a Blessing

Stewardship can best be described as "life after baptism." In baptism, we receive new life, and we are called to live our Christian life in faithful response to God's blessings continually and forever bestowed upon us.

Over the next three weeks, your stewardship commission invites you to consider your offering of time and talent with the campaign *Blessed to Be a Blessing*. Beginning this Sunday, we will hear members of the parish share how they have been blessed in their blessing others. The campaign will culminate with our annual celebration of the St. Mark's Feast Day on Sunday, April 26 when we will have one service and celebrate all things St. Mark's.

Every one of us will have an opportunity to commit or recommit our time and talent to the mission and ministry of St. Mark's. We will make those commitments in our one service of worship at 11:15am, and following the service, we will celebrate with a fish fry accompanied by some of the finest bluegrass music this side of the Brazos.

Save the date, April 26, and begin to prayerfully consider your blessings and offering yourself to be a blessing to others.

Acolytes/Chalice Bearer

Adult and children assist in various ways during worship.

Crucifer – the minister who carries the cross at the properly appointed times and assists the celebrant in setting the table at the Eucharist. In our parish, the crucifer also bears the first chalice during the time of communion.

Torchbearer – the minister who lights the candles before the service, carries the torches at the properly appointed times and extinguishes the candles after the service.

Gospel Bearer – the minister who carries the gospel book at the properly appointed times. In our parish, the gospel bearer also bears the second chalice during the time of communion.

Contact: Benno Scheibner (Adults) barbs4@earthlink.net
Sarah Peters (Youth) smmpeters@hotmail.com

Adult Christian Formation

Adult Christian Formation comes in several flavors, and at St. Mark's one of our most enjoyed adult classes involves Bible study. We have developed a simple, four-step method that anyone, regardless of their 'Bible-study-maturity', can embrace and make their own. Come join Adult Christian Formation on Sunday mornings from 10:15am to 11am!!

Contact: Rob Hamon nukee00@gmail.com

Altar Guild

The Altar Guild prepares the church for all worship services cares for our altar, our fine linens, and the flowers in preparation for all services. Individuals work in teams and serve one week per month. Teams meet once a week (during their service week) to set up the altar for the Sunday services.

Contact: Dorothy Dawlearn dawlearndot@aol.com

Choir

The St. Mark's Choir is made up of and seeks out different kinds of "critters" from all walks of life: men, women, young, old, singles, and couples. At present there are about 10 choir members. The choir director is Steve Godowns. The Choir provides musical leadership at the 10:00 am service and prepares special music for the more festive seasons of the Church Year. This special music has included hymns, carols and anthems with brass accompaniment. The St. Mark's Choir offers opportunities for Christian fellowship throughout the year. Choir members take care of each other and seek to help and support each other during times of joy and crisis. If this sounds like the group for you, come join the St. Mark's Choir! Sing high! Sing low! And clap your hands!

Contact: Steve Godowns sgodowns@comcast.net

Christian Formation Grades 7-12

All youth in grades 7-12 are invited to attend Christian Formation Class in classroom E every Sunday at 10:10. There are two curricula that are used for the class including *Parables Remix* which is a study of the parables Jesus told in a modern day context and *Real and Relevant* which focuses on daily applications of scripture using short movie clips. Lively discussions revolve around these lessons and how the themes presented can provide the youth with some guidelines for their own lives. Themes this year have and will include spiritual gifts, miracles, questioning faith, God's unconditional love, trust in God's plan, influences of society, separation from God, the value of having and knowing life's purpose and building a closer relationship with God. Chris Abbott teaches the class.

Contact: Chris Abbott christinedabbott@gmail.com

Church Historians

St. Mark's has an extremely rich and wonderful history, bringing people to Christ for sixty years. Over these years, scores of people and events have shaped what our church is today, creating a story of the life of St. Mark's since its beginning. The ministry team of Church Historians is a new ministry created to review the historical materials and collections of the church

to determine how to best update, preserve, and interpret these materials. Responsibilities of the Church Historians include the following:

- 1) Thanks to church members in the past, St. Mark's has photographs, newspaper clippings, and documents that make St. Mark's history come alive. The Church Historians will decide how to best organize and preserve this historical material and then implement ways to share this history with current parish members.
- 2) The Church Historians will establish archives to house up-to-date materials that they feel should be kept for future congregations. They will document events and collect materials to add to the historical record of St. Mark's.
- 3) The Church Historians will support the annual celebration of our heritage on St. Mark's Feast Day and on other significant anniversaries.
- 4) In recognition of St. Mark's 60 years of worship services, our Historians will lead the parish in 2015 in the creation of a time capsule that will be opened in 2040.

Why does church history matter? Learning about our history helps us learn about ourselves. St. Mark's present-day location, its architecture, its worship style, its organization, its ministries and countless other aspects of our church life are rooted in the history of our parish. Seeing how God has been at work in the past helps us see how God is at work in the present. Understanding where we have been helps us set goals about where we need to go in the future and inspires us to action. History is ministry!

Contact: Barbara Scheibner barbs4@earthlink.net

Daughters of the King (DOK)

Empowered by the Holy Spirit, our vision as Daughters of the King is to know Jesus Christ, to make Him known to others, and to become reflections of God's love throughout the world. The Order of the Daughters of the King is a spiritual sisterhood of women dedicated to a life of Prayer, Service and Evangelism. We have made a commitment to Jesus as our Savior, and we follow Him as Lord of our lives. We are an Order for women who are communicants of the Episcopal Church. An Order is a community under a religious rule; especially one requiring members to take solemn

vows. We don't just enroll as members and attend meetings; we take life-long vows to follow the Rule of Prayer and Rule of Service. The Daughters of the King at St. Mark's is a group of wonderful women who are devoted to God and God's call on their lives. We have grown greatly over the last three years. Being a member of the Order of the Daughters of the King Mary of Bethany Chapter (St. Mark's chapter) is a great way to grow spiritually through community.

Contact: Isobel Gotschall

bbell04@yahoo.com

Caron Marble

cmarble164@aol.com

Disaster Planning Task Force

As Texans, we are very aware that hurricane season is arriving soon. In our homes, we plan and prepare for the season, and we pray that we will never need to use our family's plan. As a church, we need to plan and prepare, not only for hurricanes but for other disasters that we don't like to think about such as floods, tornadoes, fires, chemical explosions and terrorism.

Preplanning is the key to being ready for any disaster. When a church knows in advance how they will protect church property and care for their people in the event of a disaster, they are better prepared to minister to their community. The local church is a major thread in the overall fabric of a community's disaster defenses. An organized disaster response is an effective ministry through which we become instruments of God's healing and hope.

St. Mark's Disaster Planning Task Force will develop our disaster plan addressing how the church will do the following when a disaster is imminent or has occurred: minister to the needs of its members; ensure the availability and usefulness of the church property; maintain the delivery of existing ministries, and provide outreach to the public.

This Task Force will write and communicate our disaster plan but will not necessarily have the responsibility of activating the plan. Therefore, the time commitment related to serving on this Task Force is of short duration.

When should we develop this disaster plan? Right now! A disaster may occur at any time. Having a disaster plan, even a draft, will help St. Mark's

respond and recover by providing written guidelines. This plan is one of the more important documents that we in the church can create, ensuring the safety of church members and helping to save our church assets for the future.

Contact: Barbara Scheibner barbs4@earthlink.net

Episcopal Church Women (ECW)

The Episcopal Church Women (ECW) provides the leadership role in preparing for parish meals and special events like the Annual Easter Egg Hunt and this year's Women's Retreat.

Contact: Bettye Newberry l.newberry@sbcglobal.net

Episcopal Youth Community

St. Mark's has an active and growing youth group (7th – 12th grade). This year we have reorganized and have a new Youth Room upstairs for us to "Hangout" with our friends. We meet most Sunday's from 4pm-6pm where we challenge each other with topical discussions concerning our faith. This year, we have spent lots of time figuring out who we are and where we are going as a group. We have goals and our purpose statement is – "St. Mark's EYC Ministry exists to **REACH** the youth in our community/our friends, and **CONNECT** with other Christians, to help **PRAY/GROW** in our faith, and to challenge ourselves to grow and to **DISCOVER** our Ministry and **HONOR** God with our life."

We enjoy going to Concerts together, our Gaga Pit, and helping others with a worship service each month at the Greatwood Retirement Home, San Mateo Food Fair, Special Olympics, and other St. Mark's Outreach projects. Come join us or we always can use Prayer Buddies, Chaperones, we love Food, or would just like to "Hangout" with you and talk. If you want to help or check us out .

Contact: Rock Moen jmoen@acosta.com
Vince Arnold vincea@bsilab.com

Godly Play for Children

St. Mark's goal is to provide a wonderful area for our church and school children to have a "hands on" experience as they enjoy sacred stories of our Christian faith through the art of story-telling and visual engagement. Our children are invited into these sacred stories through the effective Godly Play resources and materials. Jerome Berryman the creator of Godly Play states, "Godly Play teaches children the art of using Christian language – parable, sacred story, silence and liturgical action – helping them become more fully aware of the mystery of God's presence in their lives. Ages 2+, always looking for volunteers to help with this growing ministry, if interested, please contact either Suzanne Mottin or Caroline Moen.

Contact: Suzanne Mottin Suzanne_b_mottin@oxy.com or
Caroline Moen moenc2013@gmail.com

Hospitality

We have 12 teams for hosting, one team for each month. Each team has a leader/coordinator with a team of 2 or 3 members. The teams are responsible for putting out church purchased items such as cookies, cheese and crackers, frozen grapes, and other finger foods. The team can also purchase the food for the church by coordinating with Melissa Hamon. The teams designate who does what for each Sunday in the month. As you feel led, please sign up to be a team leader, a team member, or if you want to be on the supply shopping team.

Contact: Melissa Hamon mhamon@stmarksfortbend.org

KIDS HOPE USA

Kids Hope pairs church members with at-risk kids in supportive, mentoring relationships that help a child feel loved and valued. We spend one hour per week at Cora Thomas Elementary School. We read, talk, play games and sometimes help with math. Each mentoring relationship is wrapped in prayer by a prayer partner. We occasionally will need the help of a substitute mentor when the regular mentor may be unavailable.

Please consider one of these wonderful ways to reach out and help a child

who needs us! You'll be so glad you did.

Contact: Lisa Arnold

lisaarnold4u@yahoo.com

Kids' Kingdom

All children in grades 1-6 are encouraged to attend Kids' Kingdom classes in classroom G in the education building at 10:10. This spring the Kids' Kingdom group will be studying Adam and Eve and the Ascension of Jesus. The Adam and Eve unit will include activities such as a "press conference" with Eve, illustrations done with torn construction paper, watching a video and making "Cookie Creation/Cookie Destruction" all while learning that God's great love offers us forgiveness for our sins. In the Ascension of Jesus unit, the students will develop a timeline to show the forty days between the resurrection of Jesus and his Ascension and the ten days further to Pentecost, construct a megaphone to broadcast the good news of Jesus Christ, write songs to celebrate the Ascension and produce a "freeze drama" to highlight the events of the Ascension all to teach that the Ascension of Jesus empowers the disciples to continue Jesus' ministry as we await his return. All of those fun activities are designed to reinforce the lesson and message presented in the Bible story. Kids' Kingdom follows a rotation model with Christine Ronning, Sara Hawkes, Sarah Baetz, Jane Marshall, Sandy Barkerding and Dorothy Valencia all serving as teachers and Chris Abbott organizing and lessons and overseeing the class.

Contact: Chris Abbott

christinedabbottg@gmail.com

Knitting Guild

Do you love to crochet or knit? Then this is the ministry for you! The Knitting and Crochet Guild do most of the work on their own at home, however, they might get together on a Saturday for a time of fellowship, to discuss upcoming projects, and to learn from one another. All levels are welcome! In the past we have made scarves and hats for The Seamen's Church Institute and prayer shawls for those in need of comfort and prayer. We are currently collecting prayer shawls, which is an ongoing ministry of our guild. We will start collecting scarves and hats this year for Lord of the Streets in the Fall of 2014 and continue through January 2015. Lord of the

Streets is a ministry supported by the Diocese of Texas that assists the homeless in the Houston area. If you have any questions or would like more information you can contact Sarah Peters.

Contact: Sarah Peters smpeters@hotmail.com

Lay Readers

The oral tradition of reading Scriptures aloud has been part of the church's worship since the church was born. The story has been told from one generation to the next, and we carry on with this tradition at St. Mark's while the lay readers read the lessons, Psalms, and prayers of the people during our worship.

Contact: Fr. Bert bbaetz@stmarksfortbend.org

The Men of St. Mark's

The Men of St. Mark's is a group dedicated to building stronger relationships: between men and God, between men and St. Mark's, between men and their families and between men and their friends.

The group meets twice a month (on the 2nd and 4th Mondays) at 7 PM in the Parish Hall. The meetings include socializing, kolaches, a short inspirational video and discussion, chocolate chip cookies, planning for future events and prayer.

Throughout the year there are other special activities where we get to know each other better, while serving God, St. Mark's and each other. Events have included planting sod, cooking for the craft fair, serving soup and salad to the congregation during Lent, and helping men in need.

But it is not all work. When we are not busy serving God, we watch Texans games together, play golf and gather together for eating manly food, shooting, juggling, bird watching, stargazing, playing hillbilly golf and breaking bones in our feet. Join us!

Contact: Benno Scheibner barbs4@earthlink.net or any other man.

Sewing Guild

The Sewing Guild of St. Mark's (known affectionately as the "Sewing Sis-

tahs") is a friendly group of ladies who get together once a month --usually on a Wednesday --and socialize, sew, and have a pot luck. All of our sewing projects are specifically chosen for one purpose--to further the love of Christ. We're growing! Last year we worked on three projects--this year we're aiming for four--happy, colorful quilts for TX Children's Hospital, cheerful pillowcases for the kids staying at Fort Bend Women's Shelter, little girls' dresses for South Malawi and Haiti, and hoodie/scarves for Lord of the Streets--a mission for the homeless supported by our Diocese.

If you want to participate but can't because of work or family obligations, we will accommodate you by fixing up a "homework kit" with fabric and pattern. I want to encourage you to sign up, pick up your pincushion and scissors and come have a happy, sewing experience!

Contact: Jeannie Reaves reaves4jeanne@yahoo.com

Social Outreach Ministry

St. Mark's has a Social Outreach Ministry that plans and spearheads a number of outreach projects each year. We believe that reaching out to our community and the world creates a better place to live for those less fortunate, while enhancing our experience of God. Jesus Christ teaches that through opportunities to give, we grow and benefit greatly as we serve others.

This ministry is looking for caring souls who want to make a tangible difference in the lives of others. Each team member needs to be motivated by compassion and inspired to plan and implement an outreach project that will better our community, our country, or our world. We heartily welcome new members and new ideas on how to best help those in need.

Contact: Arlene Rivenes arlenerv@comcast.net

Spiritual Direction

Within each of us dwells the desire to find meaning beyond the moment; to discover our true selves; to grow closer to God. Spiritual Direction encourages one to explore a closer relationship with God. As you reflect deeply on the experiences of your life you begin to recognize God's presence and grace in new ways. Spiritual Direction is "holy listening" with

the Holy Spirit as the true “director”. The privilege and responsibility of the spiritual director is to journey with you as you deepen your relationship with God. The journey takes place in the context of confidential one-on-one sessions. For more information or to set up a meeting please contact Susan Pinter, Spiritual Director, Graduate of “Formation in Direction” of the Diocese of Texas.

Contact: Susan Pinter

spinter@stmarksfortbend.org

St. Mark's Episcopal School

St. Mark's Episcopal School opened its doors August 25, 2014 with 13 students. Three of the four classrooms opened, each with a certified teacher and a trained classroom assistant. Currently, 27 students are enrolled. 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.

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.

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. Based on nurturing Christian values which mirror our Episcopal identity, St. Mark's Episcopal School integrates spiritual formation, joyful discovery, and playful creativity into our daily curriculum, enabling children to reach their full potential.

In addition to weekly Chapel, every Wednesday at 9:10am, Godly Play is taught weekly in each classroom. Godly Play teaches children the art of using Christian language – parable, sacred story, silence and liturgical actions – helping them become more fully aware of the mystery of God's presence in their lives.

St. Mark's Episcopal School is a Texas State Licensed facility. We are currently working to become accredited with the Southwestern Association of Episcopal Schools (SAES).

The staff is small but mighty. As our school grows so does the need volun-

teers in the office and in the classrooms. Our enrollment is steadily increasing, the possibility of adding another certified teacher and a teaching assistant is on the horizon.

Our school would appreciate and encourage anyone who could give of their time and talents.

A few opportunities are:

Come to the school as a guest reader.

Come to the school and share your career with the students.

Volunteer in the school office one or two days a week.

Volunteer the first Friday of each month in the After School Care Program from 2:30-4:00 during our staff meetings.

Work with community leaders for marketing opportunities and community outreach.

Come to the school and lead a Fun and Fitness Program.

Organize our growing library for the students and staff.

Possible teacher and teaching assistant positions available for the 2015-16 school year.

Substitute teachers and teaching assistants are always needed.

St. Mark's will host eight weeks of Summer Discovery Camps beginning in June with an extended day program available. Volunteers are needed for both morning camp sessions and afternoon enrichment programs.

St. Mark's Episcopal School is a ministry that mirrors our Episcopal identity as it provides an exemplary early childhood education program. Volunteers are always welcome and encouraged.

EXEMPLARY STANDARDS FOR EXEMPLARY RESULTS

Contacts:

HEAD OF SCHOOL: Tracey Little

school@stmarksforbend.org

OFFICE MANAGER: Jerri Carington

schooloffice@stmarksfortbend.org

St. Mark's University

The goal of St. Mark's University is to engage the community in learning about a variety of subjects from a Christian perspective. We will offer

many learning opportunities such as: financial planning, parenting classes, strengthening marriage workshops, fitness instruction, language courses, understanding mental health, life skills, etc., using trained lay persons or outside resources.

Since this is a new ministry, we are looking for suggestions of topics of interest, and also for people who are interested in leading a class. If you have suggestions, would like more information, or are interested in leading a class, we would love to hear from you!

Contact: Alysoun Marks alysounmarks@gmail.com

Ushers and Greeters

How would you like to be a part of a ministry that welcomes people into our Sunday worship? We are looking for additional ushers and greeters for our 9:00 and 11:15 services. For our 9:00 service we have 2 greeters and 2 ushers and at the 11:15 we have 2 ushers.

Ushers and greeters share hospitality to visitors and parishioners every Sunday morning. Responsibilities include greeting all who enter the church, distributing service bulletins and collecting the offering. In addition, ushers assist those with special needs, help ensure that seating is available for all in attendance, and check that the church has a clean appearance after the service. If you are interested in being a part of this very important ministry.

Contact: Melissa Hamon mhamon@stmarksfortbend.org.

Vacation Bible School

Please join us for Vacation Bible School as we learn how God's love melts a FROZEN heart. Based on the truth found in 2 Thessalonians 3:5, "Direct your hearts into God's love", our week this year (June 15 - 18), will provide lots of cool ways to learn more about how God's love can make a cold heart feel warm again!

Each day children after small group time in their Igloos and a large group worship time in the Ice Castle will be escorted by ELSA through Bible lessons, snacks, crafts, and games based on daily themes.

This is a new Ministry to St. Mark's and needs many volunteers to be successful, and help us create an inviting time for the children of our community and their parents. If you are interested in volunteering or helping with any of our committees, please contact Rock Moen!

Contact: Rock Moen jmoen@acosta.com

Stewardship Commission

Michelle D'Antuono (Chair)

The Rev. Bert Baetz

Lou Cloninger

Lyle Marshall

Rock Moen

Jason Purifoy

Dorothy Valencia

St. Mark's Episcopal Church

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St. Mark's 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.