

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." Matthew 19:14

CAMPAIGN NEWSLETTER 3

St. Mark's Episcopal Church

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COMING SOON

- January 20
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- January 27
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- February 10
First Fruits



Cultivating faith today and acting on faith tomorrow...



Future St. Mark's Education Building

... that is what Growing in Grace is all about!



THINK ABOUT THIS:
Your family's participation in "Growing in Grace" will be setting a great example to the children of our church.

As a parent or grandparent, we have an opportunity to teach our children the principles of giving in order to reach out to others in Christ's love.

Encourage your child or grandchild to give a little back to God, say, 10 percent of his or her allowance for three years. A \$10-a-week allowance would result in a \$1 a week or a \$156 gift to the church. They will be amazed at how much they can give by just donating a tiny portion of what God has given to them.

And don't forget to tell them, God loves a cheerful giver.

WOW!

Bet they never thought they could give the church that much! More importantly, what better example could you make, as a parent or grandparent, by encouraging them to try it?

After attending Godly Play each Sunday, Eloise, age 3, reminds us of such events as "the animals coming, two by two..." and "the Angel giving us GOOD NEWS!" Through her Christian education, she is beginning to know the gospel story, and more importantly, she knows she is loved by Jesus Christ. I believe it is our mission to provide a Christian education to the children of Fort Bend County.



Oliver, Sarah, and Eloise Baetz

We are blessed with a community of growing families, many of which are seeking an education for their children based on loving, nurturing values that mirror our Episcopal identity.

St. Mark's Episcopal Preschool will encourage spiritual, intellectual, and social development in young children. Through a developmentally balanced curriculum and daily chapel, our school will foster a love of learning and the teaching of Christian values.

In the fall of 2014, Bert and I are proud that Oliver will be in the first class of two-year-olds, and Eloise will join the first pre-K class. We truly are grateful for our family to receive the abundant blessings of the ministry of St. Mark's Episcopal Preschool.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

MINISTRY CELEBRATION, JANUARY 20

Immediately after the service on Sunday, January 20, you will be invited to participate in our Ministry Celebration. In a joyous fair atmosphere, every ministry team will be available to explain the mission of its ministry and the benefits of participating. Come see how each ministry is an important part of the St. Mark's family!

COMMITMENT SUNDAY, JANUARY 27

St. Mark's Commitment Sunday Service is the climax of our "Growing in Grace" stewardship campaign. Everyone in the parish will have an opportunity to participate during this time of personal, prayerful commitment. You will be asked to make two commitments: one to the annual operating budget and a second to the capital campaign for our new Education Building.



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"He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.'"
Mark 16:15-16

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Biblical Principles of Giving

THE STEWARDSHIP PRINCIPLE

Stewardship is the recognition that God owns all that we possess. It acknowledges that our Lord provides the resources for our life, and, through us, the resources for godly work and for the church. We are managers, overseers, of what God has provided for our life. We are accountable for all that has been placed into our life, not just for a portion of the amount. Our giving is an expression of our love and gratitude.

THE VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLE

Paul stated the voluntary principle when he said, "For if the eagerness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has – not according to what one does not have". (II Corinthians 8:12)

No one should determine the amount of another person's commitment. Each person and household is challenged to seek God's will in determining a personal giving commitment.

THE SACRIFICIAL PRINCIPLE

In the Old Testament people came to worship with a sacrifice in hand. The word "sacrifice" can be defined as "to set apart" or "to make holy." Sacrificial giving is the act of making sacred or setting apart, our financial resources for God. Jesus chose those who gave sacrificially as models for giving. The widow who gave two mites, the boy who gave his lunch, and the woman who gave her alabaster box of perfume are prime examples.

The Scriptures make clear that God measures the gift, not in relationship to others, but in relationship to one's resources and in what is left over after the gift. The Apostle Paul said, "For if the eagerness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has". (II Corinthians 8:12) And Jesus said, "From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required". (Luke 12:48)

"...the gift is acceptable according to what one has – not according to what one does not have".

II Corinthians 8:12

More Questions and More Answers

Q Will St. Mark's need to borrow money to fund the new Education Building?

A Yes. We will need a short-term interim bridge or "gap" loan. The construction costs will be incurred in 2013, while the Capital Campaign pledges will be paid over a three-year period, 2013-2015. In addition, it is likely that we will need to arrange longer term financing for the portion of the costs not covered by the Capital Campaign. We are expecting to investigate a number of options that may allow us to arrange low interest permanent financing.

Q Is the 2013 operating budget an increase from 2012?

A Yes. The 5% increase in the operating budget is intended to handle normal yearly increases in costs and to ensure that we will not have a deficit in the operating budget for 2013.

Q When do I begin paying my three-year commitment to Growing in Grace?

A We expect that you will begin paying your new operating pledge in January of 2013.

Q How will I know what to give?

A There is only one way to discern what your gift should be – prayer. All we ask is that you open your heart to the possibilities. And, don't be surprised at what you and God can dream about, together. So, ponder the gratitude you have for this life on earth, be open to the journey of prayer where he will reveal a vision of your help, and finally, continue to live in faith trusting where God will lead you.

Commitment of the Heart

A STATEMENT OF THE HEART

Many of us are asked, even expected, to make commitments in our lives. To commit means to pledge or make a promise to undertake a particular course of action. We make a commitment when we agree to take on a marriage, family, friendship, career or education, to name just a few. We commit to invest our time, energy, and money in those things we hold dear, those things we set as priorities in our lives.

So it is with our church as we begin the building of our new Education Building. Our willingness to financially commit to the future of St. Mark's Episcopal Church speaks volumes about our priorities as we wrestle with what this Christian community means to each of us.

Jesus expressed this truth about the nature of commitment when He said, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also". (Matthew 6:21) May each of us arrive at a financial commitment that faithfully reflects our hearts!

A PROCESS OF THE HEART

As you consider your own part in making a financial commitment to "Growing in Grace", these steps may assist you:

- † **PRAY** for guidance in reaching a giving decision which will be right for you and for the church.
- † Allow **FAITH** to become a part of your decision. Leave

room for God's help, and He will aid you with the decision you need to make.

- † Consider **SACRIFICE** as a way to set apart a portion of what you have, to give something you personally value, as a way of expressing your love for God and St. Mark's Episcopal Church.

WE ARE BEING ASKED TO MAKE TWO COMMITMENTS

- † The first is a financial commitment to the ongoing mission and ministry of St. Mark's. This is our annual pledge, and all of us are encouraged to consider making more of a commitment in our regular giving.
- † The second pledge is toward the new Education Building. The second pledge is a unique pledge because this is a unique chapter in our parish's history. Both of these pledges, our personal commitments, are integral to the future of St. Mark's growing in grace.

If it is all about people, then...
...perhaps we should hear what they have to say



Alexandra Arnold

I look forward to the new building for many reasons. First, it would give the youth a classroom and a place to learn and play games. We will be able to learn on a projector and our knowledge will grow in Christ. Secondly and lastly, this new building will provide a larger room for learning and prayer. We are a little crowded in the current room.



Jacob Thomas

Having a new Educational Building means we can have bigger youth classes! I could possibly invite more friends to church! If we have an educational building, it would feel more personal, almost like a branch of the church. It would help the youth classes, because we could have projectors, and other things, to help Mrs. Chris, Mrs. Jeanne, and all of the other teachers teach.