

St. Mark's Chapel
Warden's Annual Report
January 23, 2011

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Port Royal, SC 29935

Opening with the Collect for Second Sunday after Christmas:

O God, who didst wonderfully create, and yet more
wonderfully restore, the dignity of human nature: Grant
that we may share the divine life of him who humbled
himself to share our humanity, thy Son Jesus Christ; who
liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the Holy Spirit
one God, for ever and ever. *Amen*

Last year, this report was largely dedicated to the evolution of St. Mark's beginning with the initial founding in November 2003 and working through home church locations, services at the Room by the Bay of the Sea Island Inn, and for a brief period in 2009 services at the Port Royal Masonic Lodge. In November 2009, we moved to this historic Union Church in Port Royal for the first service on Advent Sunday. Here we have enjoyed a very pleasant, beneficial partnership with the Historic Port Royal Foundation which was pleased to once again have this wonderful, historic building used on a regular basis for the worship of God.

Cooperation with the Historic Port Royal Foundation has been possible through our contacts with the Foundation president, Anna Ellerbe, who has been so graciously supportive and helpful. Our clergy support has been excellent led by our Chaplain, Bob Hansell, with able assistance from Chaplain Emeritus, Roger Smith, and our frequent supporting minister for many St. Mark's years, Jack Nietert. Additionally, we have a list of about 8 volunteer supply priests located in the area, most of them retired, who have stepped up to fill in when necessary. Many of these saints conducted services during Chaplain Hansel's absence in the winter.

So my view as of last year's meeting was that of St. Mark's in a mode of evolution. My sense is that we spent the year 2010 in maturation. This being our first complete year in Union Church, we have focused on many of the plans and goals which were established in a Chapel retreat last February. Of 21 such foundations/wishes, we have progressed in most all areas, but I note 6 to be really strong areas of maturation for us. They are: the work with families with children, promoting a sense of community (including becoming involved Port Royal activities), practicing unity and meaningful diversity with committed lay leadership and gifted clergy, encouraging visitors to become members and the incorporation of expanded music into our worship program.

Our commitment to children and Sunday school this year was a major one with our entering into an agreement to rent the previous Twenge law office as support space. This followed a search of

the area for the best located, most appropriate, and least expensive space. We decided to enter into this agreement realizing there was some financial risk involved but also realizing that providing adequate space for our Sunday School program was non-negotiable. Since then, we have found the space, obviously, useful for other St. Mark's activities as well such as weekly Bible study, book study groups and our chapel committee meetings. We still would possibly entertain the notion of working with a suitable co-tenant if one becomes available. We also are beginning to explore the possibility of sharing the space for a reasonable expense compensation with another community service group, which would thus become a major outreach program for St. Mark's Chapel.

One sign of our maturation was reflected in our initial service of Holy Baptism, JAC Cadien was the first, and then later performed the role of the Christ child in the first ever Christmas pageant . Sunday school programs are in full swing; although it still is a small group, we expect continued growth. No one who saw it will ever forget the Christmas pageant in all its enthusiastic splendor. Nor will we forget a youthful, Spanish moss bearded Isaiah staring in a Sunday School rendition of scripture during a pre-Advent chapel service.

Our attendance continues to grow with usually over 50 in regular attendance and a record of 101 attendees on the Christmas pageant Sunday. The lay ministry leadership of St. Mark's is continuing the focus of spreading the word and our ministering to each other and to the outside primarily through the "SWEEP Program." This stands for Service, Worship, Education, Evangelism/growth and Pastoral care, and you will hear about this ministry structure later in today's meeting.

We have continued in our outreach ministry to Family Promise, the partnership with St. John's Lutheran and St. Peter's Catholic to homeless families. We have members who continue working with the Good Neighbor Medical Clinic, in particular the Medi-Assist part. Other members have worked with Habitat for Humanity, and we provide financial support for the Episcopal Research and Development Fund, the Hilton Head All Saints Episcopal ministry to the Dominican Republic as well individual participatory support of HELP and CAPA.

We are in the planning stages of increasing our association with the All Saints Parrish on Hilton Head. So far, we have coordinated on some Christian education endeavors in which our DRE has assisted them. We are considering a forum of regular clergy exchange, perhaps monthly or quarterly, and will continue to be supportive of their Dominican Republic outreach. Under the leadership of Angie Twenge, St. Mark's held the first Halloween Trunk or Treat on Paris Avenue. Under the auspices of the Evangelism Commission, chaired by Alison Davidow, we participated in the Port Royal Christmas parade and won third prize, and we decorated a Hospice Christmas tree.

Our music program now includes more musical selections during each service and provides an opportunity for those wishing to participate in a "pop-up choir" to do so. The expansion of this ministry under Diane Mullis-Waddell, has been spectacularly on key.

A major focus this year was the establishment of a formal pledge drive under the leadership of Paul Wiske. That successful drive more than doubled the budgeted pledge receipts category for

this year with 35 pledges and a pledge budgeted total of over \$41,000. That success will, obviously, help us defray the major expense of the St. Mark's Annex on Paris Avenue and hopefully enable a future increase in our contributions to outside agencies and ministries.

Now for some super news! A meeting last Wednesday with the Bishop of South Carolina here at St. Mark's Chapel was extremely encouraging in gaining support for increasing our association and shared ministry with the All Saints Parrish. We will also have support in developing a Confirmation procedure as well as a process for the licensing of lay chalice administrators. Bishop Lawrence was very cordial, respectful, attentive and even humorous at times. We believe that he now sees the Chapel from a whole new perspective and was pleased with what he saw. We did not get into serious discussion about mission status for now. However, it was very clear that we see that as our eventual goal, and he seems content with that.

There is no question that we continue to be guided by the Holy Spirit and that this first full year in Union Church has been one of successful maturation, continuing to provide the foundation for our growth spiritually and educationally.

I want to have one final sad note in reminding you that our chaplain of the last two years will be leaving in May to become the Vicar at the Church of the Resurrection in Little Switzerland, North Carolina. This is a six-month position, and he will be back in South Carolina in October. However, our intent is to locate someone who will be able to take over the priestly leadership of St. Mark's Chapel. We are not panicked about this. We have had changes before, and our lay leadership has always stepped up and provided the efforts necessary to keep St. Mark's on the move and growing. As indicated earlier, in Roger Smith and Jack Nietert, we have two stalwart contributors to St. Mark's over the last years, and both expect to continue working with us. We also have a cadre of other padres willing to step in when necessary. Obviously, we will keep the Chapel community posted as developments occur. In the meantime, I encourage your prayers, continued support of St. Mark's Chapel and your contributions to our continuing maturation.

I would like to close today with a stanza from St. Patrick's Breastplate with which many of you will be familiar. It is actually a prayer composed in the first person "me." I considered changing the pronouns to "us" to include all of St. Mark's but decided that took away from the artistic integrity of the prayer itself. Consequently, please understand that when I say "me" I am not talking about Scott Shaffer alone but the St. Mark's community in its entirety. I think this prayer captures the essence of St. Mark's.

Christ be with me, Christ within me, Christ behind me,
Christ before me, Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and restore me,
Christ beneath me, Christ above me, Christ in quiet,
Christ in danger, Christ in hearts of all that love me,
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.
I bind unto myself today.