

ST. MARK'S CHAPEL — WARDEN'S ANNUAL REPORT

SCOTT SHAFFER

UNION CHURCH, 1004 IITH ST., PORT ROYAL, SOUTH CAROLINA

1/24/10

“Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. You know that when you were pagans, you were enticed and led astray to idols that could not speak. Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says “Let Jesus be cursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except by the Holy Spirit.

“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.” 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

This St. Paul reading to the Corinthians about spiritual gifts I believe is appropriate for what we do at St. Mark's and what we did over the last year. Actually, this reading was the epistle for last Sunday, which some of you heard here in Union Chapel and some of us heard on St. Simon's Island at the concluding communion service of January Adventure. January Adventure is always an exhilarating, inspiring experience, and this time was no exception being with 300 other progressive Christians from many, many denominations (Methodist, by far, being in the majority). The emphasis is always on diversity and inclusivity, and on this weekend, in particular, the emphasis was on Jesus proclaiming the Kingdom of God to be here and now.

We looked at Jesus as a model for how we should treat each other as opposed to putting an emphasis on how bad we might be. Actually, even the full name for January Adventure is appropriate for St. Mark's. It's called **A January Adventure in Emerging Christianity**. In our own Vision statement, we declare that St. Mark's is an evolving maturing community of Christians dedicated to being and becoming a total ministry community primarily shaped by a commitment to the doctrine and worship of the Episcopal Church.

Looking back over last year, we continued to be an evolving community. We experienced two physical relocations for St. Mark's Chapel. Having moved from the Sea Island Motel, we held our first service on Palm Sunday at the Masonic Lodge in Port Royal. This move enabled us to begin morning services as opposed to the late afternoon services which we had enjoyed since forming St. Mark's 6½ years ago.

Our experience at the Masonic Lodge was a brief one, and in November, we moved here to this wonderful historic Union Church forming a mutually helpful partnership with the Historic Foundation of Port Royal. Our association with the Foundation is a good match with our having, for the first time, a real church building and their fulfilling their desire to once again have regular services in this church. While this may be our first church building, it is by no means our first experience as a church.... We have always been a church.

Since that early November first service here, our attendance has almost doubled at 40 to 50 communicants per service. We also were able to have the very first ever Christmas Eve service in our own chapel and, in several weeks, we will celebrate the first Ash Wednesday service in our new location.

One of our first acts at the Masonic Lodge was the commissioning of three lay ministers to chair what we refer to as our SWEEP ministries. The SWEEP acronym stands for service, worship, education, evangelism/growth and pastoral care. I'll have more to say about that later. Indicative of our commitment to lay ministry were three illuminating and excellent lay led services which were conducted by members. And we continued to have wonderful clergy support from our Chaplain Bob Hansel and our Chaplain Emeritus Roger Smith.

We, at St. Mark's, have attempted to focus on mission and last year was no exception. We encourage our members to discover their own spiritual gifts. This raises the question of where do we serve? Our two major outreach projects are the Family Promise Program which we co-host with St. John's Lutheran Church four times last year... even including this past New Year's Eve weekend. During that week, 15 St. Mark's members participated in that ministry.

We also continue to have 6 or 7 St. Markers who are active in the Good Neighbor Medical Clinic. Additionally, we have several members who help with Habitat for Humanity. Financially, we contribute to all three of those endeavors in addition to the National Episcopal Church and the Episcopal Relief and Development Fund, HELP of Beaufort, CAPA, and the Dominican Republic Project of All Saint's Episcopal Church-Hilton Head.

Obviously helpful for those financial donations we make, have been increases in the budget over time. From 2008 to 2009, our budget increased \$6,000, up to \$25,000. The projected budget for 2010 anticipates an additional increase of \$7,000 for a grand total of \$32,500.

In addition to the spiritual gifts for mission outreach, we are developing a Christian education program for youngsters and oldsters. There will be a retreat, which you will hear more about, for St. Mark's at the end of February// Roger Smith has been conducting weekly Bible studies on the Gospel of St. Luke// we have a book study group that meets monthly// and a prayer group that meets monthly as well. During the year, our website under the capable hands of Bob Pinkerton, was expanded and improved.

St. Markers worked laboriously under the auspices of the Episcopal Forum of South Carolina, along with help from some members of All Saints-Hilton Head, to organize and co-sponsor a conference in Bluffton concerning "What Happens When the Leadership of a Diocese Decides to Disassociate itself from the National Episcopal Church." With Walt Cabe as the presenter, we reached over 70 people.

Looking back, 2009 was an exciting, busy year for us. As was emphasized at the January Adventure conference last week, God's Kingdom **is** now, and we continue to try to be part of it. One of the favorite sayings of our Chaplain Robert Hansel is that "you already have what you need." The prayer for us is that we continue to use what we have wisely and continue our journey in peace, patience, and acceptance.