

ST. MARK'S MINISTRY REPORTS FOR 2015

ADULT CHRISTIAN FORMATION

Coordinator & Vestry Liaison: **Patty Crower**

Committee Members

Anne Marie Irwin, Katey Seibels, Linda Finnin, Scott Shaffer, Barney Forsyth

St. Mark's University (SMU) is a lay-led group that meets on Monday evenings from 5:30-7 in the Center. SMU folk decide study topics by vote—high “vote getter” being the next class. We function as an adult education group, a support group, and a prayer and service group. All are welcome. We invite you to join SMU. We had a busy year in 2015 and 2016 promises more adventures in learning.

Last January, many St. Markers joined with Unitarian Universalist members for a five-session class called “Love your Muslim Neighbor.” In February we studied “Painting the Stars,” a twelve-session series that celebrated the communion of science and faith. In June, Linda Finnin led us for four-sessions on the life and writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. During August, Wendy Decareau led us in a five-session class on the Legacy of St. Francis. In September, George Utter led a five-session study on “What It Means to Be Christian.” We had an evening of “Pizza with the Presiding Bishop” when we attended via DVD the homily preached by Michael Curry at his installation. This was followed by three sessions on Thanksgivings (in the Old Testament, the New Testament and the 21st Century). Then we spent two Advent sessions reading and discussing the gospel reports about the coming of the Messiah.

In addition to our “academic” considerations, we prepared soup for our soup suppers during Lent.

Last spring Mike Seymour arranged for a weekend retreat at Mepkin Abbey. On the second Sunday of Easter Dianne Mullis-Waddell led us in an evening of Songs with Suds. We sang some old favorite hymns and had eleven different kinds of beer for tasting. Charlie and Mandy Keith were the only people with magnificent voices, but we all had a good time.

Ideas for the coming year include sponsoring a “movie night” with a DVD about the history of the Washington National Cathedral. Mike Seymour is also making arrangements for another retreat at Mepkin. We have several more DVD classes planned with varied topics including the story of Anglicanism and one on the Story of the Episcopal Church.

Thank you Alison Davidow for your encouragement and support, and thank you Ken Kraft, Jim Crower and Gary Macnew for your technical support. Together we are learning more about the Body of Christ.

CHILDREN'S CHRISTIAN FORMATION

Coordinator: **Sally Dombay**

Committee Members

Susie Kearney, Judy Utter, Lee Shaffer

The Children's Christian Formation committee decided not to offer Children's Chapel this year as we lost a couple of participating families over the summer. However, we did try to continue our Sunday School education offering, “Seasons of the Spirit,” a multi-age lectionary-based program. Unfortunately, we have not had any children attend. Susie Kearney also offered a

Sunday morning program for youth (middle and high school) based on the *Chronicles of Narnia*, but this also was discontinued because of lack of interest.

The St. Mark's Nursery, headed by our nursery attendant Linda Goodman and supported by volunteers from the congregation was available for children and infants at all services in 2015, but in January 2016, coverage was reduced to the 11:00 a.m. service only, because of lack of demand. We will continue to monitor congregational needs.

EVANGELISM

Coordinator: Mike Seymour

Evangelism at St. Mark's means reaching out, in love, to the world—modeling the Christian approach of gracious inclusiveness and acceptance. St. Mark's "evangelism" includes such things as: Trunk or Treat, partnerships with other faith denominations, advertising throughout our community in an effort to make St Marks' activities and presence visible in Port Royal and the Beaufort County area; following up with our visitors to reinforce St. Mark's welcome and acceptance; and distributing "love bags" weekly to our services' visitors and newcomers.

We have started a contemplative prayer time that meets on Tuesdays and will encourage those within and outside our congregation to take retreats at the Trappist monastery, Mepkin Abbey. People from our community have chosen to join us in prayer which allows St. Mark's another avenue of evangelism. A grief group has been formed so that we may reach out to those who are hurting in our church family and in Beaufort community.

We seek all ways to be the loving hands and voice of Christ for any in need be they youth, the elderly, homeless or the discouraged.

MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

Coordinator & Vestry Liaison: Teege Culp

Committee Members

Jim Crower, George Utter, Bob Culp, Beth Campbell, Jim & Debbie Phelps

We renewed the leases for both the Center and the Union Church, established a Building and Grounds Committee and did a "clean-up" of our new lot in early Dec 2015. Another is planned for early spring. Carter Hoyt was hired as a part-time Program Associate in October to coordinate, facilitate and support the efforts and activities of the Parish Life, Christian Formation, and Outreach and Mission Committees. In November the Rev. Jim Dannals announced his resignation as Interim Rector, and with his help, we were blessed to be able to retain the services of the Rev. Jon Coffey as our new Interim Rector for the next year.

OUTREACH

Coordinator: Alison Davidow; Vestry Liaison: Westley Byrne

Committee Members

The Rev. Patricia Turk, Scott Graber, Judy Utter, Quitman Marshall

2015 saw a significant change in the outreach ministry at St. Mark's—a change from the historically incremental approach to giving to one that stresses matching St. Mark's resources with our outreach "passions" and seeking accountability from ministry recipients.

We started the year, as we had in years past, with a budgeted list of donations to specific organizations. The list was developed because individuals and/or groups from the parish had

worked with these organizations and found them to be expressions of the words “*to love and serve the world*” from St. Mark’s mission statement. St. Mark’s also set aside a small fund for unanticipated outreach needs. During the year the entire list of organizations was supported through St. Mark’s budget; for several organizations, St. Mark’s donations were used as “matching funds” that effectively doubled our donation. The attached list shows the organizations (both budgeted and assisted by the small fund), necessary notes about the funding, and, with great appreciation, the names of St. Mark’s contacts.

In the summer, at the request of Fr. Dannals, an Outreach Steering Committee was established with Linda Jones as the Vestry coordinator. Under Linda’s experienced watch, the committee came to view outreach as a coordinated effort focusing on both needs and St. Mark’s resources. The committee, composed initially of the Rev. Patricia Turk, Scott Graber, Judy Utter, Quitman Marshall, and Alison Davidow, started its work in the fall by conducting a series of Adult Education sessions in which the participants, following the “People of the Way” format endorsed by the Episcopal Church in South Carolina, identified our “passions” for outreach.

The outreach committee, now with the able guidance of Westley Bryne, recently retired from a non-profit herself, began to match St. Mark’s passions with its resources. The committee: (1) conferred with St. Mark’s treasurer, Bob Pinkerton, about how St. Mark’s could respond flexibly to donation requests; (2) initiated an outreach plan with funding criteria for every organization requesting donations; and (3) began a strategy for publicizing this plan, beginning with St. Mark’s annual meeting.

Here is the draft plan:

Draft Purpose Statement

Toward fulfillment of St. Mark’s mission to love and serve the world, the Outreach Committee dedicates itself to supporting the passions of the St. Mark’s congregation to promote reconciliation and the end of racism; to help children and the elderly; to feed the hungry, including providing soup; to respond to those who lack transportation; and to ensure that our commitment to serve beyond our walls is known throughout the community.

Draft Plan

The Outreach Committee will make recommendations for funding based on these passions and monies budgeted by St. Mark’s Vestry. Within that framework, priority for funding will be based on community needs as reflected in surveys and other assessments, resources already available to the requestors, and geographic proximity.

Our purpose and plan – together, our Giving Criteria – will be made available to all agencies and other groups who apply for financial support from the St. Mark’s congregation. Further, the criteria will be disseminated to parish members interested in having St. Mark’s support specific ministries, to the end that all requests are evaluated against the same standards.

The Outreach Committee heartily thanks its Vestry Coordinators for their invaluable assistance; to Anne Errington, a new member of the Committee; and Carter Hoyt, St. Mark’s program associate, who helps us coordinate this growing program. The Committee also calls on all members of St. Mark’s to actively engage in *loving and serving the world*.

PARISH LIFE

Coordinator & Vestry Liaison: Bonnie Connolly

Parish Life encompasses activities that provide opportunities for celebrations, fellowship, and fun. Successful events in 2015 were the annual Epiphany oyster roast with 80-plus people attending, the blessing of the animals on St. Francis of Assisi Day, receptions for confirmations and a baptism, and a farewell brunch for our departing interim rector, Jim Dannals. Foyer groups, organized by Mike and Maggie Seymour, allow small groups of members to get to know each other better by meeting once a month in each other's homes for covered dish dinners.

PASTORAL CARE

Coordinator: Ken Kraft

Committee Members

Barbara Pinkerton, Anne Errington, George Utter, Patty Crower

This ministry reaches out to those in need of care because of illness, infirmity, or loss. A prayer group headed by Barbara Pinkerton maintains a list of people requesting prayers and prays for them regularly. Meals, transportation and home support can be arranged in cases of need. This year individual St. Mark's members provided meals for the families of two parishioners who passed away. Also, St. Mark's has four Eucharistic Visitors (Ken Kraft, Anne Errington, George Utter, Patty Crower) who are licensed by the Bishop to take communion to the sick and shut in.

STEWARDSHIP

Coordinator: Jerry Sonnabend

Stewardship is just not a fall pledge event but a year-long effort to continue to grow our giving of the three big items: our time, our talent and our money for the furtherance of St. Marks mission. Thanks to all those who shared the giving message of their witness at the services in October and November. They included Scott Graber, Bob Anderson, Charlie Davis, Anne Errington, Quitman Marshall, Sally Mayse, Shannon Duffy, and last but not least our own Jon Coffey.

We had hoped to increase our pledge amount by 15-20 percent, but this year's drive had a mixed outcome, maybe reflecting the unsettled time we are going through. We had the same number of pledges (78) as in 2015 with some varying pledge amounts.

Thirty-four families increased their pledge amount while only eight pledges were decreased, with nine pledges from 2015 that have not yet been finalized. We are hopeful that these nine will provide the surge that lets us realize about a 7 percent increase in the pledge amount from 2015 (\$192,000 to \$201,000).

The following is a breakdown of the 2016 Pledges:

PLEDGE AMOUNT

NO. OF PLEDGES

\$10,000 +

2

\$8,000-\$10,000	0
\$6,000-\$8,000	4
\$4,000-\$6,000	7
\$2,000-\$4,000	23
\$1,000-\$2,000	23
\$1- \$1,000	19

Each new year brings with it significant challenges, and I believe the members of St. Mark's are ready to meet them in a loving and generous way. God the Giver is always present in our lives, so rejoice and be thankful

WORSHIP

Coordinator: George Utter

In the custom of a lay-led congregation, which St Mark's was in the beginning and will continue to be for the foreseeable future, we are blessed to have a number of souls who assist each Sunday with multiple functions. These include, among others, acolytes, ushers, sacristans, chalice bearers, lay readers, gospel bearers and the vestry person assigned each Sunday. Since we all come from other churches in our journey here to St Mark's, there are numerous ways of "doing things" in worship. We are attempting to establish what we do as custom at St Mark's, keeping in mind that we are part of the Episcopal Church and we do follow The Book of Common Prayer. Toward that end, a small group has been working with Jon, our interim rector, to revise a previously written "Guide for Liturgical Ministries." If all goes well, this will be available next Sunday.

We also recently purchased albs for gospel bearers and acolytes in adult and youth sizes. We are seeking to consolidate worship items in the vestments closet in the Center or in the storage closet at Union Church.

We have conducted some mentoring and instruction with our five acolytes and that activity will continue on an occasional basis. For the adults, we plan to go over the specifics of the changes in the "Guide for Liturgical Ministries" as well as observations on how we can standardize our worship procedures. The date set for that is January 31, between the services from 10-10:45 a.m.

We are blessed with the volunteers that we have and hope only to strengthen our liturgical practices as we attempt to remove as many burdens as possible from our celebrants.