

ST. MARK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

THE LION'S TALE

VOLUME 2018, ISSUE 3

SEPTEMBER/DECEMBER 2018



St Mark's
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

love is our tradition

To do the Work we have been given to do...

Every Sunday we gather to celebrate the marvelous story of our redemption in Christ. Many people are involved in making those celebrations happen, even during the summer months when attendance is typically lower than the rest of the year. All of the different elements that make up the worship experience, carefully crafted and arranged, come together lovingly as we celebrate our faith life as a parish family.

We remind ourselves that our weekly celebration calls us into a deeper awareness of our baptism. During certain times of the year, and with the celebration of a baptism during a Sunday worship, we are called upon to renew our baptismal life and commitment. The questions that are asked in the Renewal of Baptismal Vows in the Book of Common Prayer remind us that baptism calls us into a way of life that gives us a share in the mission of Christ in the world. We are renewed in our faith in the Sunday worship and charged at the end of each service to be "sent" out into the world to do the work we have been called to do.

Over the last few months we have reflected, through the Long Range Planning process, on this shared mission of the church. In particular, we have looked at how we carry that mission out in our own community. Through our stewardship of time (all too precious for most of us!), talent (we all have something to offer), and treasure (pocketbooks close to our hearts!), we give of ourselves, each in our own unique way, to support the work of the Church of St. Mark's and the wider Church.

Our various ministries demonstrate ways in which parishioners give their lives in service. Stewardship flows from four principles of service. We seek to serve more than to be served. We use our time, talent, and treasure, to serve Christ in and through others. We strive for sacrificial giving as our way of life based on the example of Christ's own sacrifice for us. And our need to give is more important than the church's need to receive.

I offer sincere thanks to all of the servants who have lived stewardship so that St. Mark's can do all of the wonderful ministry that we do. Thanks to all who in the next few weeks will be making new or renewed commitments to follow Jesus's example. The Sunday before I left for a medical procedure I used a passage from the Jewish Prayer Book to close the service. I think it speaks volumes to us and others about this place called St. Mark's. It says:

Days pass, and the years vanish, and we walk sightless among miracles. Fill our eyes with seeing and our minds with knowing. Let there be moments when your Presence, like lightning, illumines the darkness in which we walk. Help us to see, wherever we gaze, that the bush burns, unconsumed. And we, clay touched by God, will reach out for holiness and exclaim in wonder, "How filled with awe is this place..."

Blessings, David



SHARED MINISTRY: VESTRY NOMINATIONS

The Responsibilities of the Vestry:

Leadership through envisioning, engaging, empowering, energizing and exemplifying.

Management through planning, (budgeting, allocating resources, setting objectives), organizing (policies and procedures), staffing (hiring, coaching performance, evaluation, compensation), controlling (monitoring results, corrective action, re-planning). *The Vestry Resource Guide*, ECF pp. 7-10

All vestry members should strive to the best of their abilities to:

- have a love of God and demonstrate a commitment to following the way of Christ;
- be active in and knowledgeable about the congregation, its programs and governance;
- be fair, interact well with people and strive to earn the respect of all the members of the congregation;
- purposefully strive to “check one’s ego at the door” in order to work for the benefit of the whole congregation
- have enthusiasm and vitality for this ministry; offer talents to support the church’s ministry;
- pray for the leaders and members of the congregation.
- commit time to vestry meetings, committee work; vestry retreat, regular worship; congregational events, annual meeting; (our Vestry meets monthly on the 3rd Tuesday at 6pm, the annual retreat is in early February, the Annual Meeting in late January)
- pledge annual financial support;

In January 2019 we will elect three new Vestry members. Vestry members serve for three years. Mike Gephart, Dolores Ramiza, and Sam Shute are this year’s nominating team. If you are interested in learning more about Vestry service, please chat with one of them.

SHARED MINISTRY: FINANCE



Operations Update as of July 2018

November Budgeted Pledge Income:

\$155,827.00 Actual

\$142,041.65 Pledge

Our operations budget continues to be managed such that we have not had to go into the principal of our investment account. Pledge income continues to be strong. Please keep your pledge current as it helps us better manage cash flow.

Average Sunday Attendance: YTD - 121 (July)

We reached our 2018 goal of 98 pledges totaling \$260,775!

It's not too late to make your financial commitment to St. Mark's.

Grab a pledge card today or pledge on-line, go to the green GIVE button and follow the links to the on-line pledge card. **Many thanks to all who pledged!**

Your generous pledge reduces our reliance on the investment account for operations, allowing the principal to grow and earn interest to fund capital projects and improvements.

LONG RANGE PLANNING UPDATE/BUILDING:



Discerning Our Call in Community: Planning Process 2018 Update Presentation to the Congregation is Sunday, October 14 at noon

We have completed the major parts of the planning process and are now ready to share with the Congregation the fruits of this process. Our Planning Team reconvened in mid-June and reviewed the second round focus group work on the major themes: Outreach, Inreach, the Business of the Church, and Visibility. The Vestry reviewed the draft plan in July and endorsed sharing it with the congregation. This plan is a living document designed to help keep us on course through regular review and evaluation to both center ministry in mission and values, and to measure progress. St. Mark's leadership will continue to engage with this plan on a regular basis to both measure our progress and help us discern new goals.

The plan will be posted on the website in early October, emailed to the congregation on October 5 and a limited number of paper copies available in the church on October 7 & 14. Congregational input will be received through October 28.

Planning Team members: Co-chairs Suzanne Long & Shannon Heady, Jo Tyler, Joe Kelly, Phoebe Davis, Wes Kaufman, Dan Hartman, Andrea Lofton, Linda Strickland, Mickie Jones, Karen Franklin, Isabel Wescoat, Tamara Orr, Denis Riva, and Dustin Landers.

Building Repair and Renovation—2019

Our Property Team has been hard at work gathering information and estimates for the roof replacement and interior repair and renovation. More details to come as they are settled but as of now we expect to begin roof work in early 2019. The roof will be taken off, repaired and replaced in sections. Once we are confident of the roof work we can begin on the interior of the church. Plaster will be repaired, the interior repainted and other repairs made as needed.

We will also be sealing the exterior walls and replacing the damaged and aged storm windows. The lexan replacement material is clearer and less likely to discolor with age providing a much improved exterior appearance. New lexan panels are on the Boulevard windows—check them out!

Financing options and diocesan permissions are being investigated and secured. We have a strong building team at work.



SENT MINISTRY: OUTREACH



Beyond the Summer Slump: A Summer of Service

Often during the summer months, religious and other organizations find a “slowdown” in activity and attendance. It’s called the Summer Slump. At St. Mark’s this summer, we DIDN’T have it! To the contrary, we spent the summer enjoying our servant ministries by offering food, fellowship and a “cool” space for folks to hang out.

CARITAS Intake brought 32 women to our building nightly as they gathered to meet the bus that would take them to their overnight site. We provided yummy snacks and cold beverages, and what we did **beyond** that was what really made the difference for them! Our choir members sang for the ladies and invited them to sing along. We shared information about our pipe organ and they heard sounds from an organ like many had never heard before. The ladies played bingo, and all won prizes including bus passes & coupons for free burgers and fries at McD’s. On one Wednesday night, the ladies became so inspired by the piano selections played by a talented church member that some actually stood beside the piano in the Nave in order to sing a solo: It was unrehearsed, totally organic and awesomely God-filled. The ladies received visits from a Michael Jackson clad dancer, two of our doggie celebs (Princess Shadha and the esteemed Leonard Smith) and they were gifted some Broadway show tunes via the talents of generous friends of St. Mark’s who are local piano students. The month-long ministry topped off on a high note with a Tea Party complete with floral headwear! Though the ladies rode off for their next adventure, our service ministries rolled on through the summer.

Our Outreach Hospitality Ministry which serves a meal and provides take-away groceries on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays of each month continued through the summer with selections **beyond** that of a soup kitchen. Our guests always receive a selection of fresh fruits and items commensurate with the season. On one occasion this summer, our guests received tuna salad sandwiches. When asked how they felt about that offering, some admitted that they had prayed for tuna salad to be served that day! For sure, The Holy Spirit guides our outreach hospitality ministers!

Our Bagged Lunch Ministry for the benefit of our CARITAS partner (The Healing Place) provided 180 prepared and delivered lunches to our neighbors in recovery this summer. The ministry gave us the opportunity to go **beyond** serving our neighbors inside our facility. While we enjoyed the fellowship of packing the lunches at church, the bonus blessing of delivering the lunches to the recipients gave us the chance to meet and greet them where they live and work!

Over the upcoming year and beyond, as CARITAS continues toward completion of their new shelter facility (transitioning overnight guests from church partners to that facility) they won’t be looking to us for intake or nighttime accommodations, but they will be counting on us for food and fellowship in their new space. These community opportunities will align well with our ability to manage activities inside and around our building as we undergo renovations to our own church facility. Stay tuned as our outreach teams present exciting ways to “go beyond” our building to serve our neighbors.

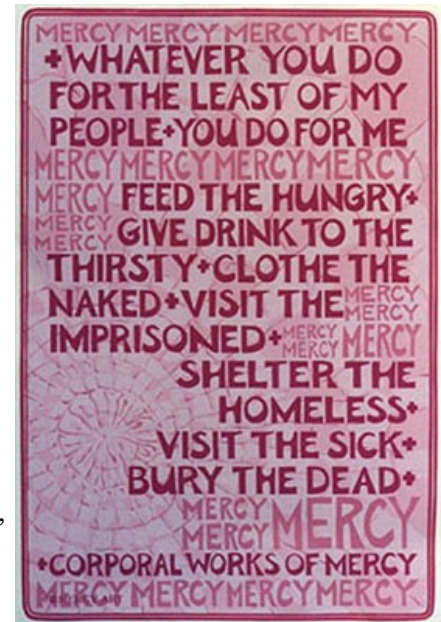
SENT MINISTRY: OUTREACH

Outreach Hospitality Ministry: Food Pantry & Soup Kitchen: How you can help

Pack bags before each distribution on the
2nd and 4th Saturdays, and
Serve on 2nd & 4th Saturday mornings, 9-10:30am

Donate food for the bags: Tuna, Vienna sausages, canned chicken or Spam, Hearty soups, stews, or chili, Pork and beans, Canned ravioli or spaghetti O's, Mac & cheese mix, Fruit or applesauce cups, Vegetables, Granola bars, Pop tarts, Single serving instant oatmeal or grits, Peanut butter, Packaged crackers, Single serving water or juice, Pudding cups, Cookies.

Pastries, donuts, and muffins are also welcome



Reminder...the Food Pantry Ministry can provide hospitality only through your generosity. Please remember to pick up some easy open proteins, canned pasta, veggies, nutrition bars, fruits, soups or hearty stews.

Toiletry Items for Food Pantry: As you travel and stay in hotels/motels, please pick up the small toiletry items offered to you. Our Food Pantry Guests are grateful to receive them.

Soup Kitchen is both 2nd and 4th Saturdays, 9:00—10:30am

Come and help serve and share fellowship with our Food Pantry guests. Donations of fresh fruit (especially oranges and bananas) are welcome. Contact Karen Kincaid, 233-4215.

Wednesday Night 12 Step Group Hosts:

Provide a St. Mark's presence in the building during this important support ministry to those in recovery. Wednesday evenings from 7:00-9:00pm. Sign-up on-line or on paper in the basement hallway.

**To share in this ministry of presence and giving please contact Ed Street,
ed.streetva@gmail.com. Thank you!**

SENT MINISTRY: TELLING OUR STORY



You Belong Here

A product of our long-range planning process was the sharing of our story—in each of the focus groups and planning team meetings there was time made for each participant to share their story of coming to St. Mark's and staying at St. Mark's. No surprise, we have a powerful story of welcome, hospitality, and call.

Story is what connects us as a people. Story is what our faith is built upon. Telling St. Mark's story is telling the story of what church can and should be, perfect—no, but always striving to better hear the call of God in our lives and the call to be present, to participate and to follow. One focus group team expressed it well - *Find your passion or bring it.*

Telling our story is a community effort. We need content creators - writers and photographers, not professionals but those willing to chronicle an event or experience. Our new website is a powerful tool for sharing story, our weekly emails another means to share story, and social media a fertile field for being the good news in an often overwhelming sea of despair and division.

And speaking of Social Media... **Social Media Sunday is September 30.**
Post your church photo and story. And share it with us on Facebook & Twitter.
Instagram is coming!

Interested in knowing more? Contact Malinda, dre@stmarksrva.org

GATHERED MINISTRY: FELLOWSHIP

Come On Now—Everyone Wants to have Fun!

Where better than at St. Mark's with friends new and old

Parish Picnic Sunday, September 23



Bryan Park, Shelter #1

Join us for church and a barbecue lunch to follow. Parking, restrooms, playground and duck pond are adjacent to the shelter

Please rsvp by September 16

Lunch Bunch

**Meets Second Sunday after the
10:30 service**



Contact Phoebe Davis,
pdavis@ahmdirect.com or
Karen Franklin, forpop247@gmail.com to
join the Bunch

Christmas Dinner 2018—December 9 at 6pm

Please join us for a fun and festive Christmas dinner. Bring an appetizer and special beverage (the church will have coffee, iced tea, soft drinks & milk).

Have a seat, enjoy conversation over your appetizers and salads, relax and get in the holiday spirit. Dinner will be served buffet style with dessert to follow.

**Please rsvp to dre@stmarksra.org by November 25
so the elves can shop.**

GATHERED MINISTRY: WORSHIP AND MUSIC

A Brief History - Early in the 1990s, it was recognized that St. Mark's Church was in possession of a remarkable acoustic particularly suited to music. Encouraged by our conducive acoustic, the choir grew with a determination to present fine quality though relatively uncomplicated music in tandem with a dignified liturgy. Our *corps* of volunteers increased steadily as our "paid" members waxed and waned as circumstances and resources dictated. Like most churches today, St. Mark's constantly has to evaluate and prioritize demands on its resources and in 2010 determined it would no longer fund paid singers. As a result, the Friends of Music venture was initiated in order to save our lone paid singer, a soprano on whom the section depended. Other sections of the choir (Alto, Tenor and Bass) had grown to sufficient strength that they could continue our work unaided by paid singers.

The Function of the Choir - Music in liturgy is to provide the vehicle for the text it carries, like the setting for a fine jewel. The choir is responsible for:

- leading the other members of the congregation in the spoken elements of the liturgy,
- providing leadership in the musical portions of the liturgy sung by the entire congregation (hymns and sung parts of the liturgy),
- bringing to the liturgy a musical offering of the first-fruits of our musical and artistic culture, usually an anthem at the Offertory, on behalf of the entire congregation.

Recent Choir Developments - Last year, for a variety of reasons and circumstances, the choir found itself with no volunteer sopranos and only one paid soprano holding the section. Luckily, we found two sopranos who were able to join us, and in the same process found a tenor who could sing with us and relieve the pressure on our three existing tenors. At the moment we have three paid sopranos (no volunteers), and one paid tenor supplementing the three volunteer tenors. **These singers are funded through our Friends of Music donations and other donations designated by the donor for the paid singers.**

Some Facts About Our Choir:

- ♦ Choir members are devoted to 45 services per year.
- ♦ Each Choir member devotes up to 65 hours per year to rehearsal and 57 hours to liturgy.
- ♦ Choir members contribute a total of 1180 hours in service per year.
- ♦ Choir members have combined years of service & experience totaling 203 years!
- ♦ Choir members serve in other ministry areas including Altar Guild, Flower Guild, Parish Life, Vestry, Worship Team, and on the Executive Committee



**All Saints Sunday
is November 4
Bring your 2019 Giving Card**

GATHERED MINISTRY: EDUCATION AND FORMATION



Coffee & Conversation

Sunday Mornings
9:30am in the Library

Join us for a discussion of the Sunday readings – how they apply to life when written—and today. It will enrich your worship experience and deepen your understanding of the Bible.

LECTIO: GUIDED BIBLE READING

Lectio Study Group—On-line Bible Study

As Christians, we are called to read and learn about our faith so that our life together as a community, our ministries, and our spirituality can grow stronger. Here we integrate how God is present in the daily experiences of our lives and the dynamic relationship we have with God. The study of Scripture offers us such an opportunity. If you have an interest, a small group is using an online Bible Study called *Lectio*. They gather on first Fridays at 8am, Carytown Panera with Fr. David for coffee or breakfast to discuss the material. If you have an interest in this method of study please contact Fr. David at rector@stmarksrva.org to join the group.

The study materials are available on-line through Seattle Pacific University
<http://blog.spu.edu/lectio/>.

BUCK'S BIBLE BONANZA

WEDNESDAY NIGHTS 7:00 - 8:00 PM
THE LIBRARY

A study of the books of the bible.
Open to everyone.
Currently reading Joshua

Come find out what it feels like to
wander 40 years in the wilderness

WEDNESDAY AM BIBLE STUDY

WEDNESDAYS AT 10:00AM

Resumes on September 19
Meetings held in the Library.
Currently reading

*Exodus, Numbers and Deuteronomy—
parallels in the Old Testament*

GATHERED MINISTRY: EDUCATION AND FORMATION

Small Group Opportunities: *On Being*, and Fellowship Groups

On Being is an award-winning public radio conversation and podcast. *On Being* opens up the animating questions at the center of human life: What does it mean to be human, and how do we want to live? *On Being* explores these questions in their richness and complexity in 21st-century lives and endeavors. Discover more at onbeing.org. The podcast is free and reaches a global audience via SoundCloud.

O
B E I N G

The OnBeing group meets Third Fridays at 12:15pm. Bring lunch!

For more information contact Malinda, dre@stmarksrva.org

Fun and Fellowship

During our Welcome Back Sunday Coffee Hour we'll have the opportunity to gather at tables organized around fellowship and opportunities. Check out the offerings and sign up to be part of dinner or lunch groups, movie or theater, museums and events, walking, etc. We'll also have information about upcoming ministry opportunities and how to get involved with CARITAS, PRIDE, Christmas boxes, 12-step hosting, and more. Groups will self-lead, i.e. if you want to go to the movies with friends put out the email and organize your posse - OR establish a day and time and we'll put it on the church calendar.

BOO! FUN—Halloween 2018

Come join your fellow ghouls and goblins on the church steps, Wednesday, October 31 for our BOO-fest. We'll hand out treats and foil tricks from 5– 8pm. Share Halloween decorations (will be returned!) or join in the fun making them.

Come in costume, we'll supply the scary music and candy.



GATHERED MINISTRY: EDUCATION AND FORMATION



Children's Worship resumes Sunday, September 9 at 10:30am

Please invite friends to join us in our Godly Play story, songs and prayers. The children are honored in the processional and then join together downstairs to hear and tell the lessons of the season and the day.

During the early Fall we will hear the stories of The Great Family: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, St. Francis, All Saints, and the Road to Bethlehem.

Children's Worship is best suited for children ages 4-11, but we welcome younger children with a parent to be with them and older youth to serve as readers and helpers. Children return at the Peace to share the Eucharist with their family.

St. Francis Fun and Learning Day is Saturday, October 6 from 10am—noon

Advent Fun and Learning Day is Saturday, December 15 from 10am—noon.

Youth Works

A new Teen Learning Class cohort will form in 2018. The teen learners and the family commit to an 18-month period of learning and service (we take the summer off). This class provides a safe space for our youth to ask questions about our faith and practice, to get to know one another better, and, if they desire, to be confirmed after completing the class.

Best for grades 6 and up. Contact Malinda to learn more, dre@stmarksrva.org

Ministry Opportunities:

Our teens participate in all aspects of church life serving as acolytes, lectors, intercessors, parish life servants, feeding ministry service, assist with children's worship, and tellers. If your young person is looking for their place in the church please talk with Malinda or Father David.

Fun & Fellowship: Families welcome!

Let's go to the State Fair! Sunday, September 30. 3-6pm.

Apple Picking at Carter's Mountain, Saturday, October 20

Halloween Fun on October 31, 5-8pm

Contact Malinda Collier, dre@stmarksrva.org with questions and if you want to share in this joyous ministry.





St Mark's
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

love is our tradition

ST. MARK'S
EPISCOPAL
CHURCH

520 N. Boulevard
Richmond, VA 23220
Office: 804-358-4771
Fax: 804-358-2397

Dates to Remember:

Welcome Home Sunday: September 9

Picnic at Bryan Park: September 23

October 6: Worship Assistants Training

Blessing of the Animals: October 7

Long Range Plan Presentation: October 14

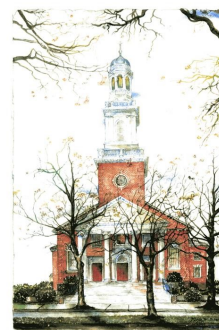
All Saints Sunday: November 4

Parish Christmas Dinner: December 9

Christmas Pageant: Sunday, December 23

2nd & 4th Saturdays: Food Pantry

Sunday Worship Times: 8:00 & 10:30 am



www.stmarksrva.org—check it out, check it often!

ST. MARK'S STAFF

The Rev. J. David Niemeyer, Rector rector@stmarksrva.org or therev.jdavidniemeyer@gmail.com

The Rev. Charles D. (Buck) Aiken, Jr., Associate Rector buckman356@comcast.net

Malinda Collier, Director of Lay Ministry dre@stmarksrva.org

David L. Wheeler, Organist & Choirmaster wheeler.david10@gmail.com

Steve Barnes, Church Administrator office@stmarksrva.org

Karen Franklin, Feeding Ministry Coordinator forpop247@gmail.com

Meredith Franklin, Nursery

Noah Cozart, Sexton

Pastoral Emergency: 804-690-6807

ST. MARK'S VESTRY

Senior Warden:

Mike Gephart

Junior Warden:

Mickie Jones

Suzanne Long, Treasurer

Karen Franklin, Register

Patrick McDuff

Nancy Munson

Dolores Ramiza

Denis Riva

Sam Shute

Amy Strite

Paul Williams

THE DEADLINE FOR THE JANUARY—MAY
ISSUE OF *THE LION'S TALE* IS FRIDAY,
DECEMBER 14