



The Messenger

from St. Mark's

December 2018/January 2019

Advent and Christmas Offerings

Adult Formation

Annual Parish Meeting Report

Preparing to be a Joyful People

“Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light...”

- From the Collect for the First Sunday of Advent

When I was in summer school during seminary studying Koine Greek, I remember our professor going out of her way to help ease our anxiety. She said repeatedly, “anxiety does not allow for real learning.” It was a new thought for me, but it was definitely true for someone who does not have a particular affinity for language study. Anxiety does a lot more than serve as barrier to learning. It, and its darker twin of fear, serve to prevent us from being joyful people.

The holidays provide an interesting challenge. We are literally bombarded with an assault of carols, invitations to parties, and anxiety around what we need to accomplish—all supposedly in service of the joyful anticipation of the birth of Christ. But frenetic activity tends to ratchet up our anxiety and not invite us to joy. Then you add the myriad concerns of our world, from violence, to wildfires, to poverty, to broken relationships, one can indeed long for the “armor” of light.

Increasingly, I think of hope as a spiritual practice and not an emotion. I think we can make intentional decisions that choose hope over anxiety and fear. And there is not a better season in the church for entering that space than Advent. As we have in past years, we will shift our Sunday schedule. Someone last year said to me, “I love the intergenerational events and the combined service. It’s like a little respite you can take to get yourself grounded.” It was a wonderful way of thinking about what I think choosing community can do for us.

Despite being in the most “connected” age in history, many people feel increasingly isolated. Researcher John Cacioppo of the University of Chicago found in a study that at least 40% of people in the U.S. feel lonely at any given time, up from 20% in the 1980s. One of the great gifts of the church is the ability to provide gathering space to meet people in different stages of life and experience. Our hope is that our Advent offerings give you a particular way to join with one another. Whether it’s making an Advent wreath, attending the Quiet Evening, or simply joining one another in the combined worship, it is a chance to gather and remind ourselves we are a people of hope.

There will be many demands on your time in the coming months. I invite you to set aside some time to be with your St. Mark’s family. Allow yourself to say no to things that are adding to your anxiety and instead allow yourself the simple pleasures of fellowship, prayer, and community. The more we remind ourselves to practice hope, the more we will greet the birth of Christ with genuine joy.

Peace,

Beth +



The Rev. Beth Knowlton

Christmas Eve

December 24

3.45pm Prelude, 4.00pm
Holy Eucharist

6.45pm Organ Prelude,
7.00pm Holy Eucharist with
St. Mark’s Choir

10.00pm Prelude, 10.30pm
Holy Eucharist with St. Mark’s
Choir (with incense)

Christmas Day

December 25

One Combined Holy
Eucharist at 10.00am

First Sunday After Christmas

December 30

One Combined Holy
Eucharist at 10.00am

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Christian Identity In An Increasingly Polarized World - The Rector's Forum 2018-2019

The Rev. Elizabeth Knowlton, The Rev. Mary Earle, The Rev. Dr. John Lewis, and The Rev. Dr. Jane Patterson

“Once when Jesus was praying alone, with only the disciples near him, he asked them, ‘Who do the crowds say that I am?’ They answered, ‘John the Baptist; but others, Elijah; and still others, that one of the ancient prophets has arisen.’ He said to them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’”

- Luke 9:18-20

As followers of Jesus Christ, we believe that modeling our lives through our baptismal promises is a primary way we are formed as Christians. With so much division and polarization in our world, there can be a tendency to step away from practices that form us, and instead try to label and judge our identity in ways that do not allow for individual discernment and the particular expression each of us is called to offer to the world. This year we will explore in depth the promises we make and reaffirm in our baptismal covenant. The hope is that further reflection on these promises gives us a clearer understanding of who we are as Christians and why it makes a difference to us and our world. We will explore the history, theology, practices, and habits that help us to live a life that embodies an *“inquiring and discerning heart, the courage to will and to persevere, and a spirit to know and love God, and receive the gift of joy and wonder in all God’s works”* (adapted from the service of Holy Baptism, BCP p. 308).

Part III: How do we proclaim by word and example the Good News?

January 13 - 20

Part IV: How do we seek Christ in all persons, loving our neighbor as ourselves?

January 27 - February 24

Track 2: Planning for Life's Seasons

“As in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive”.

- I Corinthians 15:22

Our funeral liturgies often contain these words of St. Paul’s, in which he works out what it means to embrace faith in resurrection in the midst of daily life where death is a reality. In the first two meetings, The Rev. Doug Earle will present a basic theological foundation for the sessions that follow. Using scripture, The Book of Common Prayer, and the wisdom of theologians and artists, we’ll explore such questions as:

What does it mean (and not mean) to be human?

Where does death fit in God’s scheme for creation?

How do human freedom and God’s will fit in?

What would it look like if we fully embraced our mortality as we make our way between Alpha and Omega?

In each week that follows, we will take up important aspects of living well and explore the questions we face along the way.

January 13 - 20	Living Between Alpha and Omega: A Basic Theology
January 27	Health and Wellness
February 3	Preparing for a Successful Retirement
February 10	Estate Planning – What You Need to Know
February 17	Downsizing and How Adult Children Can Help (or Not)
February 24	Planning Your Funeral with the Church

Music from St. Mark's

DECEMBER 9
SUNDAY, 5.00PM

A FESTIVAL OF ADVENT LESSONS AND CAROLS

The choirs of St. Mark's sing a service in celebration of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

DECEMBER 15
SATURDAY, 3.00PM

CHRISTMAS CONCERT

The Texas Children's Choir will present a concert of Christmas favorites.

FEBRUARY 10
SUNDAY, 5.00PM

ORGAN CONCERT

Jon Johnson, St. Mark's Organist & Choirmaster, performs a concert on our Austin/Kegg Pipe Organ.

MARCH 3
SUNDAY, 4.30PM

PRE-EVENSONG RECITAL

SOLI Chamber Music Ensemble

MARCH 3
SUNDAY, 5.00PM

CHORAL EVENSONG FOR THE LAST SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY

Sung by the St. Mark's Choir under the direction of Jon Johnson.

APRIL 28
SUNDAY, 5.00PM

FIESTA CONCERT: THE FEAST OF ST. MARK

The St. Cecilia Guild presents Fiesta Concert featuring the St. Mark's Choirs and orchestra. This concert will include John Rutter's *Gloria*, and Flor Peeter's *Toccata Festiva*.

A Festival of Advent Lessons and Carols

Sunday, December 9

5.00pm

Advent is a season of both quiet reflection and joyful expectation. This service is intended to be a time of spiritual preparation, as we watch and wait for the coming of the Kingdom of God. Through our experience of sacred Word and music, the story of the coming of Christ gradually unfolds and deepens our understanding of God's message of love and redemption. The readings are interspersed with carols, choral music, and congregational hymns. The format for this service originated in England in 1918 at King's College, Cambridge, England, and thus began a tradition that is now almost 100 years old. This candle-lit service has been adapted by many churches all over the world as part of their Advent and Christmas worship.



Daughters of the King Epiphany Baby Shower



The St. Mark's Chapter of the Order of The Daughters of the King will host the annual Epiphany Baby Shower on Sunday, January 6 at 10.10am in Gosnell Hall. In the tradition of the Magi, bring a bagged or wrapped gift to celebrate. All baby and toddler gifts will be donated to Good Samaritan Community Services.

Items requested: diapers (sizes 3 and higher), pull-ups, new-born infant and toddler clothing (3months-5T), baby wipes, blankets, baby toiletries, and sleeper/PJ's. Please leave price tags attached or include receipt for accounting purposes. Cash donations for formula are also welcome.

If you have any questions, contact Denise Dahm by email dahmdr@gmail.com or by phone 210-863-6491.

Confirmation

Adult Confirmation

Led by The Rev. Matthew Wise

Adult Confirmation, Reception, and Reaffirmation class will be held on Wednesday evenings January 16, 30, February 13, 27, March 20, 27, and April 10 from 6.30-8.00pm. Each class builds on the previous class, so plan to attend every session. If you are interested in participating but know you must miss a class, it may be possible to participate at the confirmation service, but prior arrangements should be made. We will also gather at the Bishop Jones Center on Saturday, January 26 from 9.00am-2.00pm, where we will share a meal, meet the bishop, and cover some additional ground. The class is open all those seeking to be confirmed, received, or who would like a refresher. Confirmation will be on Sunday, April 28 at the combined 10.00am service. For more information, sign up online.

Youth Confirmation

Youth Confirmation is for 8th grade youth and any high school students who would like to be confirmed. The class will meet for eight weeks throughout the winter and spring during the 10.10am formation hour. The youth will be led in discussion of topics including: church history, the sacraments, becoming a young adult, the community of the church, and living a life of faith. Students are allowed to miss only two classes. Class dates are as follows: January 27, February 3, 10, 17, 24, March 3, 24, and 31. Youth will be introduced to a mentor on Wednesday, February 6 in the evening. Students will be expected to participate in the Day of Prayer and Service on Sunday, April 7, in a dinner with the Bishop during the week prior to Confirmation, and in a rehearsal for Confirmation Saturday, April 27. Confirmation will be held on the Feast of St. Mark Celebration Sunday during the 10.00am Eucharist on April 28. For more information, please contact Meredith Rogers at mrogers@stmarks-sa.org.

Advent Offerings

An Advent Quiet Evening

Wednesday, December 12 - 6.30-8.30pm
Bethlehem Chapel
Led by The Rev. Matt Wise

Slow down. Breathe deeply. And wait. These are some of the most difficult things for us to do in our busy, on-demand lives. Often times, they aren't comfortable and they seem counter-productive. So, come join us for a contemplative and quiet evening as we try and sync the pulse of our lives with the pulse of the season of Advent.

This will replace the Advent Quiet Day previously scheduled for 12/1. Register for the Advent Quiet Evening on the website home page. Click on the Sign Ups/Reservations button.



Sundays in Advent

Starting December 2

Morning worship services will be held at 7.45am and 10.00am every Sunday in Advent.

Programs begin at 9.00am in Gosnell Hall preceding the combined worship service at 10.00am. Breakfast will be provided.

Advent I Wreath-Making with teaching

We'll gather in Gosnell Hall at 9.00am to create our wreaths. The Rev. Matt Wise will lead us through prayers and readings for lighting your Advent Wreath. Each household will have the opportunity to create their own wreath. Children will remain in Gosnell Hall for Children's Chapel.

Advent II St. Nicholas Day

We will gather in Gosnell Hall at 9.00am. The children will leave their shoes in the hallway, and will have a visit from St. Nicholas. They will hear the story of St. Nicholas, participate in a craft, and eat a delicious breakfast. Children will remain in Gosnell Hall for Children's Chapel.

Advent III Christmas Pageant and Living Nativity

Our annual Christmas Pageant will be performed by the children at 9.00am in Gish Hall. Following the pageant, live animals including goats, ducks, sheep, and the famous "Seth the Donkey" will help us create our own living nativity - a great opportunity for families to take pictures and videos and to enjoy meeting the animals. Children will remain in Gosnell Hall for Children's Chapel.

Advent IV Las Posadas

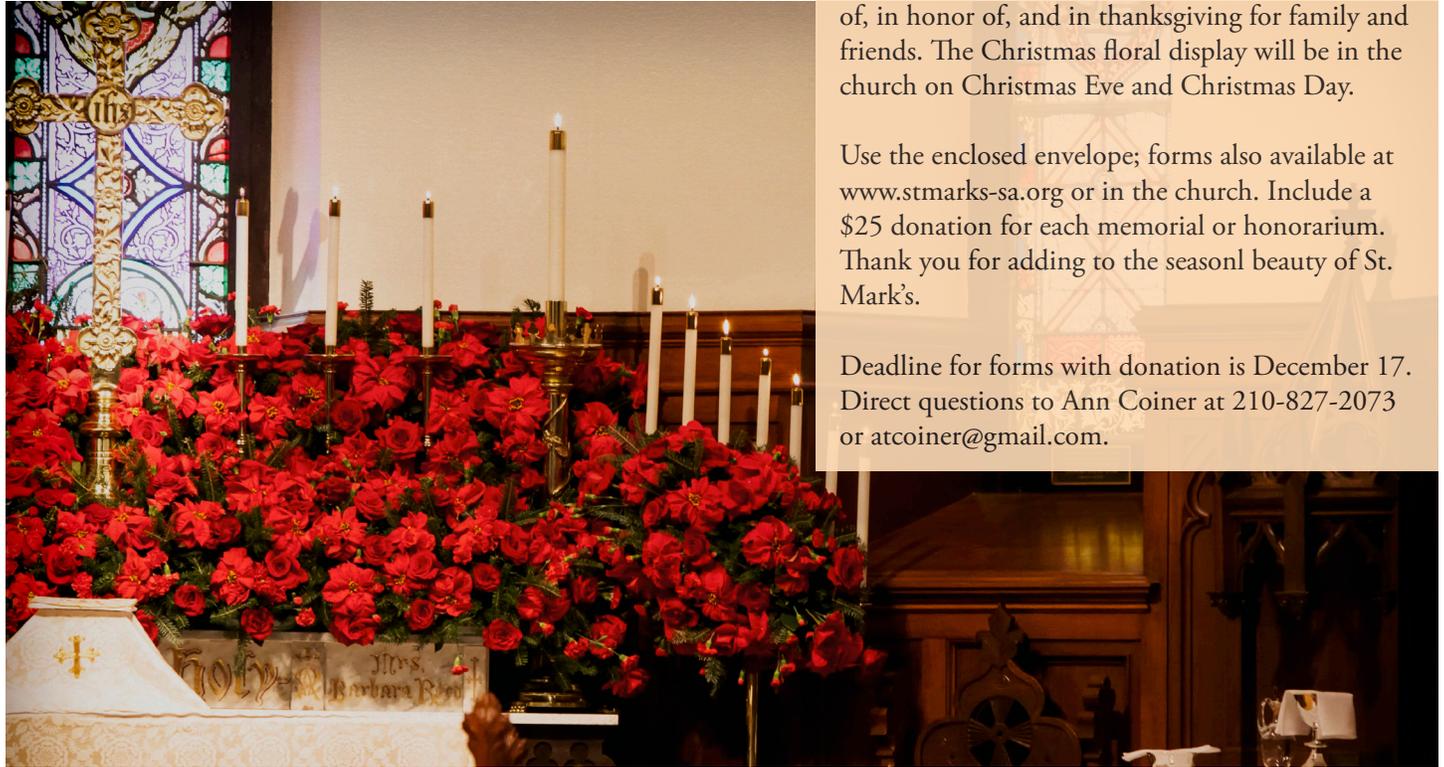
We'll gather at 9.00am to participate in this 400-year-old Mexican tradition. As we sing songs and parade through the church and the parish house, we'll re-enact Mary and Joseph's search for "posada" (lodging or accommodation) - a place to rest and to birth the coming baby Jesus. We "peregrinos" (pilgrims) will find our journey's end in Gosnell hall in a joyful celebration with food and a piñata. Children will remain in Gosnell Hall for Children's Chapel.

Christmas Pageant Rehearsal

Saturday, December 15
10.00am in Gish Hall

If you would like for your child to participate in the Christmas Pageant, please make plans to attend the rehearsal. Questions? Contact Abby Richards (arichards@stmarks-sa.org).

Christmas Flowers



Consider making a contribution to the Altar Flowers Fund for Christmas flowers in memory of, in honor of, and in thanksgiving for family and friends. The Christmas floral display will be in the church on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

Use the enclosed envelope; forms also available at www.stmarks-sa.org or in the church. Include a \$25 donation for each memorial or honorarium. Thank you for adding to the seasonal beauty of St. Mark's.

Deadline for forms with donation is December 17. Direct questions to Ann Coiner at 210-827-2073 or atcoiner@gmail.com.

Women of St. Mark's Christmas Luncheon

Thursday, December 13

11.30am-1.30pm

Hosted by the granddaughters of Patsy Steves

Feliz Navidad! You are invited to fiesta with the Women of St. Mark's at the annual come and go luncheon. Hosted by the granddaughters of Patsy Steves at 501 Grandview Pl, San Antonio, TX 78209. Valet parking will be available. RSVP by Friday, December 7 to rdugger@stmarks-sa.org or 210-226-2426.

Christmas to the Street

Saturday, December 8

Christmas to the Street began in 2004 as an outreach ministry led by the St. Mark's Youth and Kitchen Ministries. The goal was simple: provide a generous home-cooked meal of brisket and sausage with all the fixin's to our neighbors in downtown San Antonio.

The response and support from the community has continued to grow each year. Our volunteer base of over 150 youth and adults spend over 24 hours preparing, cooking, serving, and working to make these meals special. We serve at St. Mark's and Haven for Hope. Altogether, Christmas to the Street 2018 will serve over 2,000 meals to hungry men, women, and children.

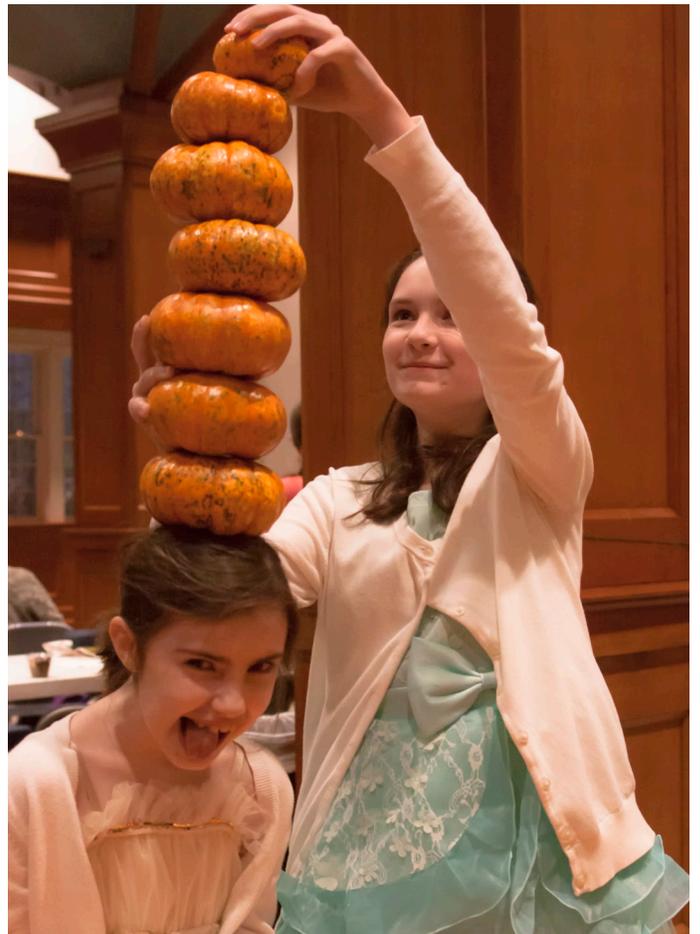
To volunteer at Christmas to the Street, visit the website home page. Click on the Sign Ups/Reservations button. If you would like more information on Christmas to the Street please contact Meredith Rogers by email at mrogers@stmarks-sa.org.



Blessing of the Animals and Founders Day



Blessing of the Costumes



Annual Parish Meeting

Thank you to all who attended the Parish Meeting. It was standing room only, as usual. The change to a Vestry slate affirmation afforded us the ability to conduct a more informative meeting. We not only affirmed the 2021 Vestry slate, but we also heard an update on our Outreach Grant process, outreach efforts, Treasurer's report, Rector's report, and debt relief challenge. All of these subjects would not have been possible to address had the parish not resoundingly affirmed the following for the 2021 Vestry class.



Brooks Englehardt



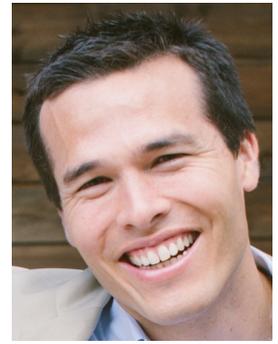
Emily Foster



Marisa Peterson



Trey Thompson



Chris Villa

Beth offered her thanks to the outgoing 2018 Vestry class: Joey Oliver, Agatha Wade, Dawna Boudreaux, and Angela Torres-Lopez. She then reminded parishioners that the Warden terms are now two years and staggered. A big thank you to Jan Briley for serving two years as the Junior Warden and thus a four-year Vestry term. I have completed my first year as Senior Warden and will continue as such for 2019.

The Outreach Grant process has allowed us to live more completely into our Core Vocation, *Feeding San Antonio with the Bread of Life*. The efforts at Crockett Elementary have been tremendous. More than 192 St. Mark's members donated 325 hours throughout the year. It has been one of the many ways that we have been able to better engage our immediate community within proximity to our Pecan Street address. We continued to aid and support St. Peter's in Rockport as they continue to rebuild their community. There were six work trips to Rockport and St. Peter's parish is eternally grateful for our support.

Our parish is financially sound as was conveyed in the Treasurer's report. Predictability is a main area of focus and this is achieved in large part through annual pledges of our members. Those that made, or are considering, pledges were thanked. When St. Mark's is given guidance on expected revenue, we are better able to support our ministries. So please consider making your household pledge if you have not already done so for 2019. St. Mark's depends on household giving for 74% of the annual budget.

In the Rector's report we heard a recap for our endowment initiative for 2018. Our goal is to build a \$6 million endowment fund. This would be twice our annual operating budget and give us additional predictability for future years. Since 2017, we have received nine gifts to our endowment, bringing us to \$3.5 million in total, thus we are more than half way to our goal!

We also learned that we are very close to extinguishing our debt. The elimination of our debt service (\$54,000 annually) would allow us to spend that money supporting our ministry efforts. The plan is that once we are relieved of the debt service payments, St. Mark's could hire a part time volunteer coordinator to more fully engage with our neighbors and empower our members to serve together through the church.

-- Submitted by Paul Allen, Senior Warden

In Remembrance and Thanksgiving (thru November 11, 2018)

MEMORIALS

Le Holder by his family, Laurie and Bill Benton, Molly Hanselman, Missy and Rick Stagers, M. Jean and David Stanley, Jakey and Martin Weilbacher

Dan Lane by Robert and Cappie Addison, Burson Campaigns, Missy and J.D. Fleenor, Chris Foster (BCW), Akin Gump Strauss Hauer and Feld LLP, Jill Hashimoto, Shelley and W. Jeffrey Kuhn, Edy George, Mary George, Tana and Francis Kay, Blanche Lincoln, Mrs. Elkin McGaughy, Albert McNeel Jr., Judith and Douglas McNeel, Beth and Reid Rainer, Pamela and Michael Smith, TBC Corp Marketing Department, Elizabeth and Cliff Waller

Willis McClung by Sue Bain, Mr. and Mrs. Baker Duncan, Mary and Doug Earle, Linda Jacobs, Elizabeth and Cliff Waller

Amanda Ocshe by Elizabeth and Cliff Waller

Ted Walker by Sally and Rhew Dooley

Barbara Yu by Elizabeth and Cliff Waller

ST. CECILIA GUILD

Lee Holder by Sue Bain, Ann Coiner

Carolyn Parchman by Pat Bridwell and John Lewis, Ann Coiner, Charles John, Laura and Weir LaBatt, Kathy Meade, President of Therapy Animals of S.A., Camilla Parker, Amy and David Phipps, Marnie Ross, Mary and Rick Thamm, Chica and John Younger, Allison and Josh Zeller

SPECIAL GIFTS

To St. Mark's **in thanksgiving for Ruby Merrill's 25 years of ministry** by Sue Bain, Polly and George Spencer, Tookie Spoor

To the Garden Fund **in honor of Deems Smith** by Jody Kelly

To St. Mark's **in thanksgiving for the ministry of Bob Brewer** by Polly and George Spencer

To St. Mark's **in honor of the baptisms of Henry Houston Harte and Christopher Maverick Martin** by Polly and George Spencer

Stewardship and Financials

We are off to a good start with pledges for 2019. Thank you to all who have submitted their pledges. We have received 186 pledges; that puts us at 60% of the number of pledges received last year. As we ready ourselves for Advent, please take the time to make your pledge for 2019. Our commitments to St Mark's and each other as a community determine how we live into our core vocation, Feeding San Antonio with the Bread of Life. Go online, mail in your pledge card, or give us a call. However you like to engage, we're depending on your generosity.



2018 FINANCIAL REPORT as of 10/31/2018

83.33% of annual budget	Actual (YTD)	Budgeted (YTD)
Pledge Revenue	\$1,423,712	\$1,483,233
Non-Pledge & Open Plate Giving	\$228,064	\$210,000
Seasonal Giving	\$12,445	\$10,000
Other Rev (parking lot, fees, carryover)	\$341,125	\$437,766
Endowment/Fund Revenue	\$272,906	\$194,160
Total Revenue	\$2,278,253	\$2,335,159
Total Expenses	\$2,163,333	\$2,294,408
Over/(Under)	\$114,920	\$40,751

\$1,670,817 in 2018 Pledges • 303 Pledges • Average Pledge is \$5,514 • Median Pledge is \$2,875

Clergy at St. Mark's

Parish Clergy: The Rev. Elizabeth Knowlton, Rector; The Rev. Matthew Wise, Associate Rector for Liturgy, Adult Formation, and Family Ministry

Making a Gift of Their Service: The Rev. C. Douglas Earle, Assisting Priest; The Rev. Mary Earle, Assisting Priest; The Rev. Dr. John Lewis, Co-director, St. Benedict's Work+Shop; The Rev. Mary Margaret Mueller, Assisting Priest; The Rev. Dr. Jane Patterson, Co-director, St. Benedict's Work+Shop

**24 hour pastoral care
emergency phone
210-507-0256**



Cafe Kairos, Wednesdays and Thursdays 5.00pm-6.30pm

Cost: \$8.00 adults | \$6.00 children (under 6 yrs old) - No Cafe Kairos December 26-27, January 2-3

December 5-6
Chicken Fried Chicken
Mashed Potato with Gravy
Corn
Garden Salad
Dinner Rolls
Dessert

December 12-13
Homemade Pizza With Pasta
Caesar Salad
Garlic Bread sticks
Dessert

December 19-20
Tamales with Chili
Spanish Rice
Charro Beans
Salad
Dessert

January 9-10
Chicken Strips
Macaroni and Cheese
Sautéed Broccoli
Garden Salad
Dinner rolls
Dessert

January 16-17
Meatloaf
Mashed Potato with gravy
Green Beans
Dinner Rolls
Garden Salad
Dessert

January 23-24
Baked Fish with Lemon Butter
Rosemary Potato
Garden Salad
Dinner Rolls
Dessert

January 30-31
Chicken Alferdo
Sautéed Broccoli
Garden Salad
Dessert

Photos in this Issue

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