

THE MESSENGER

from St. Mark's

February/March 2020

Offerings in Lent

Christmas to the Street

Member Spotlight





“Gracious Father, whose blessed Son Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be the true bread which gives life to the world: Evermore give us this bread, that he may live in us, and we in him; who lives and reign with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen”
 - Collect for the Fourth Sunday in Lent

It’s hard to believe that the season of Lent will begin with Ash Wednesday on February 26. With the scaffolding event this fall and the rallying of the community to end the year with strength and purpose, it feels like this next piece of our liturgical observances will have additional invitations for us. We already made it through the Advent/Christmas season and found creative ways to let the facility issues we have experienced draw us more deeply into answering the call of our common life. The Vestry, on its annual retreat in early February, will continue to discern ways in which we can work at reconstruction issues, while not losing sight of the bigger work that Jesus is calling us to engage in.

The damage to our building will take a while to repair. We are still in the process of finalizing bids, assessing the full damage, and making plans for the reconstruction. I said at the beginning it was going to take millions and months, and that has remained true. I look forward to a more definitive reconstruction schedule and will be sharing that as soon as it is in place. It will be a slog and will take longer than any of us would prefer. So, when confronted with such a task, it is crucial that we

don’t lose sight of why we are here. We are here to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ and share it with love and compassion.

Lent is a perfect season for engaging these questions. It is a time of stripping away and asking how we can more deeply engage in the work that God calls us to. It is a time of reflection and taking the time and space to ask who we are and be reminded whose we are. Last year in our small group gatherings, there was a desire named to do more interfaith relationship building. Rabbi Mara Nathan and I have been delighted to see such a strong turnout each month as we have gotten to know our neighbors at Temple Beth-El. We look forward to traveling together this year in a joint pilgrimage to further deepen our learning and our ties to one another.

We will continue this Lent to have a Day of Prayer and Service, and Music in the Park will take a slightly different form. Since we will still be without a commercial kitchen, we will have a one-time evening event with two bands from last year. Join us on Tuesday, March 31 from 6.30-8.30pm (more information on the following pages.) We look forward to welcoming the newest addition to the Fraser family this season and have made plans for The Rev. Ann Fraser’s maternity leave. Our beautiful season of musical offerings will also continue with Evensong + on March 22 and Ars Lyrica Houston on March 27. We will have our annual Easter Egg Hunt and Picnic as well! It will be a holy season and I invite you to take seriously your own engagement in our community, your prayer practices, and the role your faith has in your day to day life.

God has called each and everyone one of us to this particular season in our lives. How might you respond?

Peace,

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ADULT FORMATION

Wrestling Required - Changed By Our Encounters With God

The Rev. Beth Knowlton, The Rev. Ann Fraser, and The Rev. Matt Wise
10.10am
The Radius

Change is almost always difficult and can sometimes even be painful. In the story of Jacob (Genesis 35), Jacob has a wrestling match that breaks his hip, but changes his very identity. This class is intended to help us dig deeply into our own spiritual journeys, invite us to wrestle with how we experience God, ourselves, and each other, and to challenge us to engage our faith in ways that might actually change who we are. This forum begins with a 15-20 minute teaching led by clergy and laity from around The Episcopal Church. (These teachers are trusted colleagues and friends of your St. Mark's clergy and we very much look forward to their participation with us in this forum!) The class continues with table conversations in small groups facilitated by intentionally crafted discussion questions.

SHROVE TUESDAY

February 25
5.30pm Dinner in the Pecan Street Courtyard
6.30pm Talent Show in the Church

Join us for St. Mark's Annual Talent Show and Supper. This event is one of the social highlights of the year. Don't miss this opportunity to showcase your talents and have lots of fun with fellow parishioners. Bring your family and friends. If you have an act you'd like to share, we want to hear from you! Contact Meredith Rogers at mrogers@stmarks-sa.org.



LENT

Early Christians observed “a season of penitence and fasting” in preparation for the Paschal feast, or Easter. The season now known as Lent (from an Old English word meaning “spring,” the time of lengthening days) has a long history. Originally, in places where Easter was celebrated on a Sunday, the Paschal feast followed a fast of up to two days. In the third century this fast was lengthened to six days. Eventually this fast became attached to, or overlapped, another fast of forty days, in imitation of Christ’s fasting in the wilderness. The forty-day fast was especially important for converts to the faith who were preparing for baptism, and for those guilty of notorious sins who were being restored to the Christian assembly. Today, in the western church the forty days of Lent extend from Ash Wednesday through Holy Saturday, omitting Sundays. The last three days of Lent are the sacred Triduum of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday. In addition to weekly Lenten Holy Eucharists on Sunday morning (including the chanting of The Great Litany, a collection of prayers for communal repentance, on the first Sunday of the season), the season of Lent is observed at St. Mark’s with the following offerings:

ASH WEDNESDAY

Wednesday, February 26

The first of the forty days of Lent, and named for the custom of placing blessed ashes on the foreheads of worshipers, Ash Wednesday is one of the Proper Liturgies for special days. The ashes are a sign of penitence and a reminder of mortality, and are imposed with the sign of the cross. This liturgy includes the clergy, on behalf of the whole church, inviting the congregation into the observance of a holy Lent, “*by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God’s holy Word*” (BCP, p. 265).

Ash Wednesday Services:

- 7.00 am Ash Wednesday Liturgy with Holy Eucharist, Rite I
- 12.00pm Ash Wednesday Liturgy with Holy Eucharist, Rite II
- 7.00pm Ash Wednesday Liturgy with Holy Eucharist, Rite II (Children’s Chapel available)

I COME WITH JOY

Lenten Quiet Day

Saturday, March 7

9.30am-2.00pm

Led by The Rev. Mary Earle

Sometimes we make the mistake of thinking that Lent is a time for focusing solely on our mistakes, sins, and injuries to ourselves and others. Far from it. While confession and repentance are necessary, they are only a part of the essence of this liturgical season. Lent invites us to live in the hope that comes from God’s love for us - the love that will not let us go. We are invited to remember that prayer offered at baptism, for the gift of joy and wonder in all of God’s works. We will discover that Lent is an invitation to travel the road to Easter joy.

Lunch will be provided. To sign up, visit our website (www.stmarks-sa.org) and click Sign Ups/Reservations.

DAY OF PRAYER AND SERVICE

Sunday, March 29

“And now, Father, send us out to do the work you have given us to do...” We pray at the end of each Holy Eucharist that God would send us forth, fed, and ready to engage in kingdom work out in the world.

Our annual Lenten Day of Prayer and Service gives us a hands-on opportunity. Volunteers are invited to worship at the 9.00am service that day, where they will be commissioned and sent out to serve at various sites across the city.

We’ve teamed up with many of our partner organizations and Outreach Grant recipients to provide a wide variety of opportunities for our members to contribute to the work of these agencies. Projects may range in type from sorting donations, to gardening or other beautification work, meal prep, or packing. Several of the projects are appropriate for families with children to serve together. The nursery will be open for the duration, for nursery-aged children (6 weeks – 5 years old).

Sign Ups will be available mid-February online! To sign up, visit our website (www.stmarks-sa.org) and click Sign Ups/Reservations, and choose the project where you would like to make a difference.

MUSIC IN THE PARK

Tuesday, March 31

St. Mark's presents a new iteration of Music in the Park! With the scaffolding collapse limiting the useful spaces we have in our Parish House, we have the opportunity to reimagine some of our favorite offerings of the year. This year, rather than hosting weekly concerts and serving lunch, we will be offering one BIG concert for the wider San Antonio community.

The St. Mark's stage (in Travis Park) will host veteran Music in the Park performers, The Rick Cavender Band and Q: The Music of Queen. Talented musicians Rick Cavender (member of St. Luke's) and Albert Steves (member of St. Mark's) bring their two bands to the stage in back-to-back performances, with the first set starting at 6.30pm. Food trucks will be present around the park, so dinner is available for purchase, though the concert itself is being offered free of charge. There will be opportunities for volunteers to help with set up and tear down – if you're interested in being a "roadie," please email The Rev. Matt Wise at mwise@stmarks-sa.org. Here is some more information about these exciting bands:

The Rick Cavender Band

For over thirty years, The Rick Cavender Band has livened up many events on the local, national and world scene. Perfect for "the Texas Connection," the band gives a full tour of contemporary country artists such as George Strait, Lady Antebellum, Brad Paisley, Alan Jackson, Garth Brooks, Brooks & Dunn, the Mavericks, Kenny Chesney, and Tim McGraw, or they can travel



back in time with traditional selections from Ray Price, Bob Wills, Marty Robbins, or Asleep at the Wheel. They are also well known for their covers of vintage Rock n Roll from the 50s, 60s, and 70s. Blending harmonies from five vocalist and fine instrumentalists, The Rick Cavender Band puts on a show you don't want to miss!

Q: The Music of Queen

Using the music and visuals of a live Queen show as the template, Q: The Music of Queen recreates to the excitement and spectacle of one of rock's most iconic bands. Featuring a set list filled with stunning vocal and guitar harmonies, Q will take you through the 21 year history of Queen, from the early days to their triumphant performance at Live Aid in 1985. Every detail of the music has been painstakingly recreated so that the experience of a Q show is nothing short of spectacular!

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER SERVICES

SUNDAY, APRIL 5 - PALM SUNDAY

7.45am Holy Eucharist, Rite I
9.00am Liturgy of the Palms, Holy Eucharist Rite II
10.10am Palm Sunday Festival with live animals
11.15am Liturgy of the Palms, Holy Eucharist Rite II

HOLY MONDAY, HOLY TUESDAY, HOLY WEDNESDAY

12.00pm Holy Eucharist, Rite II

THURSDAY, APRIL 9 - MAUNDY THURSDAY

7.00pm Maundy Thursday Service with Holy Eucharist, Rite II

FRIDAY, APRIL 10 - GOOD FRIDAY

7.00am Good Friday Liturgy with Communion from the Reserve Sacrament
12.00pm Good Friday Liturgy
1.00pm Stations of the Cross

SATURDAY, APRIL 11 - HOLY SATURDAY

1.00pm Holy Saturday service

SUNDAY, APRIL 12 - EASTER DAY

6.00am The Great Vigil, Lighting of the New Fire, Holy Baptism, and First Eucharist of Easter, with incense. Breakfast to follow.
9.00am Festal Eucharist, Rite II
11.15am Festal Eucharist, Rite II with incense

On the night of September 19, I was sent a message with a news story about the state of our building. I quickly jumped in the car and rushed downtown. I sat awe struck looking at the twisted mass on top of our Parish House. As a self-proclaimed “Martha”, I started making preparations in my head, ready to try to move the debris myself so we could get back to the regular flow of the program year. I was telling Derek, one of our beloved sextons and first on the scene that evening, about how I thought we would be back to normal by Christmas. He laughed.

While we were not back to normal, there was never a question as to whether or not this event would happen. Gene Alderman was the Youth Minister when construction of the Parish House began in 2006. In my conversations with him this year, I learned that in 2006, there was a question as to how we would do Christmas to the Street without a building. It was then they decided to change the meal to barbeque and cook it all outside. And so, the barbeque meal began, now an integral part of the meals we serve! We needed to find a new way to do Christmas to the Street this year, so beginning in October, we gathered an extremely capable team of leaders and got to work. Every detail was looked at with a fine-toothed comb to create a delicious meal and a welcoming space for our neighbors.

The high school youth arrived on Friday evening and worked tirelessly for six hours on the first floor of the Parish House. They bagged pickles and onions, panned green beans and coleslaw, carried the food back to the Ben E. Keith truck/cooler in the parking lot, and then prepped the Parish House for the next set of volunteers on Saturday morning. The Pit Crew cooked over 1,000 pounds of pork all night long in the parking lot so it would be ready in time for our lunch on Saturday. Saturday morning our middle school youth joined us to create a hospitable space on the lawn of the Pecan Street Courtyard. In the Parish House, our adult volunteers, under the direction of Shea Pollom, donned aprons to begin to pull and cut pork. At 11.30am, we opened the gate and welcomed people to join us for a meal on a beautiful Saturday afternoon.

One of my favorite parts about Christmas to the Street is that we have the opportunity to eat with the folks that we are serving. Many of our downtown



neighbors can be overlooked and have shared that people won't even make eye contact with them - they come to Christmas to the Street, we look them in the eye, bring them their meal, break bread with them, and share in conversation. After this holy gathering, we had some of our amazing volunteers head over to the Haven for Hope campus to cook the sides and then serve 1,250 meals at the Society of St. Vincent De Paul and San Antonio Food Bank.

Thank you to Gene Alderman, Pat Bridwell, Mike Duffey, Labatt Foods, Ben E. Keith, HEB, and all of our volunteers who put their time, love, and efforts into this event. This wonderful weekend would not have happened without each of you!

-- Submitted by Meredith Rogers, Director of Youth Ministries



MUSIC FROM ST. MARK'S

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23

4.30pm - Pre-Evensong Recital: Dr. Carolyn True
5.00pm - Festal Choral Evensong for Epiphanytide sung by the Treble and Adult Choirs under the direction of Jon Johnson; Samuel Gaskin, organist.

SUNDAY, MARCH 22

4.30pm - Organ Recital: Graham Schultz, Associate Organist/Choirmaster, Church of the Incarnation, Dallas
5.00pm - Lenten Solemn Choral Evensong sung by the St. Mark's Treble and Adult Choir under the direction of Jon Johnson; Samuel Gaskin, organist.

FRIDAY, MARCH 27 AT 7.30PM

Alamo Baroque presents: *Ars Lyrica Baroque Concert*

From The Musical Offering to Brandenburg Concerto No. 5 and "Ich habe genug", delight in the sounds and spirit of a master shared in the sacred space of historic St. Mark's.

SUNDAY, MAY 3 AT 5.00PM

Spring Concert

The St. Mark's Choir and St. Cecilia Guild present praises of the season with the music of Gerald Finzi, John Rutter, and William Walton. Highlights include *Te Deum - Collegium Regale* by Herbert Howells, *God is gone up and Eclogue for Piano and Strings* by Gerald Finzi, and *Grand Choeur Dialogue for brass and organ* by Eugène Gigout.

SUNDAY, MAY 17 AT 5.00PM

Choral Evensong with St. Paul's Episcopal Church and Montessori School

The Choristers of St. Mark's will once again join voices with St. Paul's Junior Choristers and the St. Cecilia Choristers of St. Paul's Episcopal Montessori School in a fitting end to their season-long partnership.



OUTREACH GRANTS

The 2020 cycle of Outreach Grants opens this spring, with grant applications posted online and accepted March 1-31. This year, the Outreach Grant Committee will be awarding two types of grants:

A Bread of Life Grant will be awarded to a single recipient. This 3-year partnership provides an agency with \$20,000 per year, for three years, toward work that reflects the heart of the St. Mark's Core Vocation *Feeding San Antonio with the Bread of Life*. A successful applicant will be able to demonstrate opportunities for a vibrant relationship with St. Mark's, including a variety of opportunities to volunteer.

A number of Core Vocation Grants will be awarded to applicants whose work corresponds to this year's focus of *Feeding the hungry with real food*. Preference will be given to projects that address basic needs, though the committee welcomes applications that relate to the other aspects of our Core Vocation: feeding those hungry for knowledge and meaning, as well as beauty and creativity.

If you are involved with a non-profit whose work fits with these stated values of our community, please encourage them to apply beginning March 1 at www.stmarks-sa.org/ministries/outreach.



“There wasn’t a whole lot.” New member Brian Bondari, when asked recently about his experiences with religion growing up, remembered a childhood of only sporadic church attendance. His father was Zoroastrian. His mother, Lutheran. Common ground did not come easily in religious matters. His father, Khorsand Bondari, arrived in the United States on a student visa in the mid-1960s from Iran. He married a woman from Iowa. From that marriage came two sons, both raised in Southern Georgia, a place that still feels like home to the family. Brian Bondari, with his wife Katrina, have recently joined St. Mark’s with their three children.

“My father studied in Iran and won a prestigious scholarship from the University of Tehran. Winning top prize in the university’s exit exam earned him an invitation to dinner with the Shah of Iran. At that dinner he was seated next to the Shah, who leaned over to him and asked him where he’d like to go for graduate study. ‘We will send you wherever you’d like to go in the world.’ And my father said, ‘Iowa State University.’ He wanted to study animal genetics. He got his Masters and Ph.D. from Iowa State. There he met my mother, a Norwegian Lutheran farm girl. And the rest is history.”

Since 2011, Bondari has taught music composition and theory at Trinity University. Admired by students for his long hair and his understated wit, for the past decade he has taught, cajoled, and inspired students learning to explore their creativity through music. He teaches courses in Class Composition, Electronic Composition, Music Theory, and private lessons. This past October his newly composed symphony received extensive media coverage as one of the highlights of the university’s 150th anniversary year. Like some of his other works, the Symphony No. 2, “Trinity,” drew inspiration from Ancient Greece, in this case the Logos, Pathos, and Ethos of classical rhetoric. The 25-minute work played to a sell-out hall on campus.

Bondari grew up singing and playing the piano. From Tifton, Georgia, he went on to attend Valdosta State University. Music composition, he says, emerged from his love of musical theater. But he never expected to make his career as a composer. “It was the 1990s. The musical *Rent* was big back then. I loved that music. I would go to the piano, pick out the tunes by ear, and try to harmonize them. When I couldn’t get the music quite right I would make something up. And that’s how it started.” He took piano lessons. There, too, he would sometimes make



up things on his own.

Encouraged by his professors at Valdosta State, he applied to graduate school. He went on to earn his doctorate in music composition at the University of Kansas. Katrina also earned her Ph.D. at the University of Kansas studying theater. Before children came along they used to spend summers together in university-led theater programs in Greece, each contributing artistically to productions they helped put on in ancient outdoor amphitheatres.

At St. Mark’s the Bondaris participate in family activities with their three young children, Lawrence, Emma, and Eva. “My kids have thoroughly enjoyed Children’s Chapel and VBS,” he says.

It’s been quite a journey for Brian. With a father who was Zoroastrian, he says, there literally was no place their family could have worshipped in Southern Georgia when he was growing up. No temples at all. But Brian’s father stayed Zoroastrian his entire life. He maintained his beliefs but didn’t worship. His son came to appreciate the Zoroastrian creed of “good thoughts, good words, good deeds,” and as he got older he began to see how Christianity overlaps with the beliefs of the ancient Persian religion. “Those three wise men? They’re Zoroastrian,” Bondari smiles. Later, as a teenager he was confirmed in the Lutheran church, but he had to keep it secret from his father to maintain family harmony.

And the Episcopal Church? “You know, the older I’ve become, the more the rituals of the Episcopal Church appeal to me. I suppose it’s because we’re both interested in the ritual and tradition of ancient theater.”

-- Submitted by Carl Leafstedt

FINANCIALS

St. Mark's ended 2019 in a solid financial position, finishing the year in the black (with revenues greater than expenses). Total giving and income generated for operations supporting our parish community was right on budget – thank you for your generosity! Expenses were less than budgeted for normal operations, in part due to the impact of the scaffolding event in September. Because of the damage sustained, some expenditures we had initially anticipated for the Parish House occupancy were not incurred, in other cases expenses came in lower than anticipated. While some activities, like catering, were disrupted, others were reimagined and remained on schedule.

Thanks to all of you who make and meet your pledges, as well as to those who give without pledging. Your giving is critical to St. Mark's fiscal well being, and pledging continues to be the primary indicator of member support. Thanks to all who have already pledged for 2020. Through mid-January, we have 265 pledges in hand (89% of our budgeted goal) and hope to exceed the 308 pledges received in 2019.

As we continue efforts to rebuild, please know the costs of those efforts are tracked separately from our operating budget. Mitigation and stabilization costs as of year-end approximated \$684,000 and were covered by our insurance company. Construction bids are being evaluated, and we will continue to work through the process in consultation with our insurance company.

2020 will be a busy year!

With appreciation,



Lisa Uhl
Treasurer



Dina Aboul Saad
Director of
Advancement

2019 FINANCIAL REPORT as of 12/31/19

100% of annual budget	Actual (YTD)	Budgeted (YTD)
Pledge Revenue	\$1,685,489	\$1,724,000
Non-Pledge & Open Plate Giving	\$266,480	\$267,000
Seasonal Giving	\$23,963	\$20,000
Other Rev (parking lot, fees, carryover)	\$554,119	\$559,333
Endowment/Fund Revenue	\$329,117	\$288,503
Total Revenue	\$2,859,168	\$2,858,836
Total Expenses	\$2,717,920	\$2,848,836
Over/(Under)	\$141,248	\$10,108

\$1,525,260 in 2020 Pledges • 265 Pledges • Average Pledge is \$5,756 • Median Pledge is \$3,000

CLERGY AT ST. MARK'S

Parish Clergy: The Rev. Elizabeth Knowlton, Rector; The Rev. Ann Benton Fraser, Associate Rector for Outreach, Pastoral Care, and Parish Life; The Rev. Matthew Wise, Associate Rector for Liturgy, Adult Formation, and Family Ministry

Making a Gift of Their Service: The Rev. Michael Chalk, Rector Emeritus; 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



IN REMEMBRANCE AND THANKSGIVING (THRU JANUARY 17, 2020)

MEMORIALS

Ellen Maverick Dickson by Eugenia and Linda Bertetti, Karen Kelley and Merritt Clements, Ellen Jockusch, Barbara and Elkin McGaughy, Jim and Katie Reed, Mary Lynne and Kyle Rote, Jr., Jill and George Vassar, Elizabeth and Cliff Waller

Agnes Barnes Harwood by Barbara and Elkin McGaughy, Edith Sweeney

Maria Mendoza by Jill and George Vassar

Betsy Welmaker O'Connell by Sally and William Hawkins, Annabelle McGee, Camilla Parker, Polly and George Spencer, Tookie and David Spoor

SPECIAL GIFTS

To St. Mark's **in honor of Paul Allen, Sr. Warden**, by Jill and George Vassar

To St. Mark's **in honor of Kate Crone** by Tanya and John Crone
To Clergy Discretionary Fund **in thanksgiving for Beverly Bryars and Martha Steves** by Paula Philbin

To St. Mark's **in honor of Chica Younger** by Nancy and Chris Allen

To St. Cecilia **in honor of the adult choir** by Colleen Grissom
To the Horizon Endowment **in appreciation of the 2019 staff** by the St. Mark's community

PHOTO CREDITS

Cover photo: Nicole Segovia

Photos in this issue provided by: Brian Bondari, Rachel Dugger, The Rev. Ann Benton Fraser, Eric Nelson, Patrice Oliver, The St. Mark's Youth