

love is our tradition



We continue to gather and share worship in
real time on-line



St. Mark's Episcopal Church Annual Meeting January 31, 2021

**St. Mark's Episcopal Church
155th Annual Meeting
January 31, 2021**

Agenda

Call to Order
Opening Prayer
Approval of 2020 Annual Meeting minutes

Election of New Vestry Members

Recognition of outgoing members: Denis Riva, Nancy Munson,
Patrick McDuff

Rules for the Election/Affirmation

Presentation of the Candidates

Nominations from the floor

Business Meeting:

Treasurer's Report

Rector's Report

New Business

Closing Prayer

2020 Rector's Annual Report - January 31, 2021

Where does one begin a summary report about the year 2020? Here is my attempt.

I recently reread a novel by author Kent Haruf called *Our Souls at Night*. It is a compassionate and loving little novel in its simplicity but actually quite deep and complex. It's about a widow and widower up in age finding the courage to comfort and care for each other in the loneliness of the night. While the story may sound salacious or naughty to some people in its simplicity it is touchingly human with something of the divine about it. I am reminded of St. Irenaeus of the second century who said, "The Glory of God is a human being fully alive." We are most fully alive when we are tenderly loving and caring for each other.

We are always called as followers of Jesus to tenderly love and care for each other. The Gospel of John says, "What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." Just as for Addie and Louis in the novel the darkness is full of possibilities and hope for all of us.

In the midst of the fear and confusion of a pandemic that has created darkness for all of us, a deeper awareness of the murders of innocents that has wreaked havoc in our streets as racial injustice abounds, separation from the ones we love, and a political landscape that was heart-breaking and threatened the fabric of our democracy, at St. Mark's we continued trusting that Christ is with us as he promised and is the light in the darkness. And we kept the question, "What is God calling us to do?" in front of us as our guiding principle in our planning process not looking for magic methods to increase membership or metrics that promised a simple path forward. Malinda said, "We chose open-ended questions, questions that opened the door for the Holy Spirit to guide and lead us." We challenged ourselves to ask, "what does ministry outside the building look like?" This is the only way in which our community could possibly be true to and live into its call. These two questions have served us well. And never more so than in this last of year of pandemic-driven disruption, fear, and dislocation.

As Malinda reminded us on our staff call this Tuesday St. Mark's never stopped. We continued with shared worship. In the beginning of the pandemic and with the closing of the building we considered possible ways to keep worship going. Your clergy, staff and vestry made the decision to use ZOOM as this made it possible for us to spend some time together before worship as well as to worship as a community in real time. That decision came about because we know we are most fully alive when we are tenderly and lovingly caring for each other. We were so blessed to have Sarah with her knowledge of Zoom to allow this to happen without interruption of worship. As we grew more acquainted with ZOOM we added programs and meetings back in the mix. And we added the weekly Thursday Compline service.

We said - “let’s try,” and kept ministry moving with a summer of CARITAS service; the Food Pantry continued outside regardless of weather; the Christmas Boxes happened and 50 city residents who would not have had Christmas received gifts and knew that they were not forgotten. The ministry teams rose to the challenge of ministry without the building: Pastoral Care & the Floral Guild’s bouquets of love delivered with our Forward Day by Day booklet and Parish Life teaming up with them to deliver loaves of bread, and Parish Life figuring out how to provide a shared dinner - with another one coming up on Shrove Tuesday! We took faith into the home with bags of Vacation Bible School materials and program year storybooks and activities. We “watched” our children grow up via photographs in the weekly emails. From the outset we have stayed connected with each other through phone calls, emails, texts, letters, and yes – ZOOM!

And we continue to look forward to better days - if the virus has peaked and vaccinations can be more effectively distributed, we may see more opportunities to safely gather outdoors and we are optimistically planning for that possibility. We know the virus numbers drive our ability to do or not do these things, but we plan knowing that it might happen. We keep moving and knowing that we are most fully alive when we are tenderly loving and caring for each other. That’s what we do when we wear masks, socially distance, wash our hands, and receive the vaccine when it becomes available. These actions continue to be a matter of faith. It is for the sake of our own health, our own bodies, which are a gift to us from God, and for the sake of other people whom we are called to love as Jesus loved us. Bishop Goff reminds us that we as Episcopalians name three sources of authority for decision-making: Scripture, Tradition and Reason. We respect our tradition of engaging reason when we listen to and learn from science and research, as we are doing now. In the midst of so much emotion, fear and anxiety, holding fast to the commandment to love God, neighbor, and self becomes even more significant.

We are blessed with exceptionally gifted lay leaders in all of our Ministry Teams. I am grateful for the very fine ministry of our vestry, especially the outgoing Sr. Warden, Denis Riva, who has been a wise counselor for me and very able leader for the Vestry. Denis and the other outgoing Vestry members, Nancy Munson and Patrick McDuff, as well as all of the vestry members have exercised their ministry in an exemplary, congenial, collaborative, creative, faithful and gracious spirit. My style of leadership depends upon collaboration with the leaders of the church in determining what God is calling us to do. Jesus said “wherever two or three are gathered in my name I will be with them.” I trust that promise and depend upon that collaboration.

Early in 2020 we decided to postpone replacing the roof and the interior work. The light in the darkness of this is that we’ve had time to rethink how we will accomplish this work which will put us in a far better place financially and still accomplish the goal. In essence, our debt for the

roof will be much less. We plan to present our request for a loan to the Diocesan Missionary Society in March or April. Work should commence shortly after the approval. We will look at a reasonable time frame to do the interior work once the roof replacement is complete.

I would be remiss if once again I didn't thank our staff. These people work hard to support the ministries of St. Mark's. Steve Barnes continued to support the administrative work that is essential to a healthy church as he worked from home. Malinda Collier is invaluable in the work she does in supporting St. Mark's working with our lay ministries, creating effective communication with the church community, maintaining a connection with our young families, and being pastoral and caring in all she does - always with the good of this church as her first goal. I thank Meredith Franklin for her work as nursery attendant for the time we were able to gather in 2020. I am grateful to Karen Franklin who coordinates the Food Pantry and serves as our Register for the Vestry and Columba Parks who helps her. I thank Buck for his generosity with his time and preaching and good counsel. And I'm so thankful that Sarah and Dorothy accepted the call to join our ministry work at St. Mark's. Each of them continues to bless us and so many others in all of their responsibilities with their gifts of love and kindness. And I thank Suzanne Long for her ministry as Treasurer for the last few years. Thanks to your amazing generosity and faithfulness to the mission and ministry of St. Mark's we are in a healthy financial position. And that is also due in a big part to Suzanne's great money management skills. In 2020 we also had two long time staff members retire. Noah Cozart, our sexton, and David Wheeler, our organist and choir director retired after each served this church faithfully for over thirty years. We can not thank each of them appropriately or enough for what they contributed to the life of St. Mark's - a clean and ordered place to gather and beautiful music to the glory of God. A few years ago I said to you and I still whole-heartedly believe: "A living church is always in a process of change and growth; the Body of Christ is never finished, because God is not finished with us."

A colleague and friend John Maher says it well: "As the pandemic takes its course and we finally regather to worship in person there will be things we do that we have always done. We will always gather around the Table of the Lord for communion. We will always sing, pray, and worship together. We will always have fellowship around meals and shared work. We will also always find the paths to do these old things in new ways. We have been changed by the pandemic, even in ways we do not know yet. Never-the-less, we still worship the same Jesus, seek to extend the same Kingdom, and look to encourage each other as we always have."

We are indeed most fully alive when we are tenderly loving and caring for each other. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it. Christ is still with us as the light in the darkness.

Faithfully, David

Vestry Candidates

Jamie Francis

I was baptized and confirmed at Trinity Episcopal Church in my hometown of Wethersfield, CT. My wife, Caitlin, and I met in college at Penn State University. Upon graduation, she moved to Richmond to pursue a master's degree at VCU, and I followed her to Richmond in 2012. In fact, when I moved down here, we both lived just blocks away from St. Mark's in the museum district, though it took a few more years for us to step foot inside. We have 2 children, Will (4 years old) and Sam (1 year old) and currently live in Midlothian. I work in eCommerce sales for Highline Aftermarket, a major manufacturer and distributor of automotive chemicals and accessories.



We were married in the catholic church (at another St. Mark's in Northern Virginia where Caitlin grew up attending). When we found out we were expecting our first child, we knew we wanted to find a church in Richmond to grow our faith. We were moved by the words "all are welcome here", as it was so important for us to find a parish to raise our kids that instilled inclusion and acceptance. It had been at least 10 years since I had been to an episcopal service but we finally walked into the church we had passed hundreds of times over the previous years. Immediately after our first service, we agreed that this was where we wanted to bring our growing family. In the years since, we've been so fortunate to bring our family to St. Mark's, meet so many parishioners, and have our kids become involved in the growing children's ministry. We have been amazed at the support we've received during challenging times, as well as the sense of community during a time where gathering together has not been possible. We found exactly what we knew we needed at St. Mark's.

I would love to have the opportunity to serve our church moving forward, helping us continue to grow after what's been a difficult 2020 for so many. And I can't wait until we can all gather under one roof once again.

Shannon Heady

I was born in Muncie, Indiana and was baptized and raised in the United Methodist Church. I left this church, with my family when it became clear that the church was headed in a more conservative direction.



I moved to Virginia after finishing my Master's Degree in Social Work. I visited several churches but never found a good fit. Years later, my mother became a member of St. Mark's when she moved from Indiana. When my husband Lee and I were looking for a place to baptize our youngest daughter, Tess, my mother suggested we meet with Father David. From the first moment we met him, we felt like we were home. He was honest and genuine, answering all our questions in a relaxed, yet heartfelt manner. This made us want to learn more about the congregation.

Upon entering the doors of St. Mark's we found a welcoming, loving community full of genuine people. I will never forget watching the ushers treating our homeless guests like special friends, getting them something to eat and then eagerly welcoming them into the worship service. I knew then this was the place for my family.

Since joining the congregation of St. Mark's I have served on the Stewardship Committee, Co-chair of the Strategic Planning Committee, and been an active participant in the various forms of family and children's worship.

Currently, I am a principal with Head Down Strategies doing economic development and strategic planning. I have 3 children; Benjamin (14), Marguerite (10) and Tess (8). Additionally, I volunteer for various non-profits in the Richmond area and have a special focus on sexual and domestic violence services. I serve as the after school coordinator at William Fox Elementary school and do political organizing and fundraising work for various progressive candidates. My paid work experience is in both social work and economic development. I look forward to lending my time and talent to St. Mark's and continuing the growth and love of this special place.

Don Kyser

I was born and raised in Northeast Ohio and remain a dedicated and not long suffering anymore Cleveland sports fan. After stops in Pennsylvania and Upstate New York I moved to Richmond about thirty-six years ago. Elizabeth and I have been married for 25 years and have 2 daughters. Emily is twenty-one and in her last year at JMU and Meredith is eighteen and completing her first year at Allegheny College in Northwest Pennsylvania.



I will be retiring this June after working the past twenty-five years for Chesterfield County Schools. I started my career as a special education teacher and I am ending it as an elementary

school assistant principal.

Elizabeth and I began attending St. Marks about two years ago. Elizabeth grew up worshipping in an Episcopal church. I grew up not attending church, but spent my first two years in college going to the College of Steubenville which was a Franciscan school. Went there not for the religious experience, but because they offered me \$700 in scholarships - best offer I had.

Soon after Elizabeth and I started dating she asked if I was interested in going to a church service with her. She had been attending Christ Church Episcopal since she had moved to Richmond. I was interested in Elizabeth so naturally I was interested in going with her. The first service I went to happened to be Easter. While the pageantry of an Easter service was a bit overwhelming (and truth be told I do prefer a simple worship time), the message seemed to be directed at me.

The pastor, Paul Johnson, was a baseball fan like I am. He spoke about how each new baseball season was an opportunity to start over. Literally to have a new beginning, a new start. For many reasons this message resounded with me. That was the first day of our church, worship and service life together. It has indeed sometimes been a long and winding road. However, the payoff has been that we found St. Marks and from our first visit it has felt like home.

I am excited to have an opportunity to become more involved in the work of such a strong church community. I hope I can make a meaningful contribution on the vestry and I look forward to serving St. Mark's in many more ways in the future.

Vestry members serve a three-year team. Each member also serves on at least one ministry team of the congregation and reports on activities and needs of the teams to the full Vestry. Vestry meets the third Tuesday of each month at 6pm, and during its annual retreat in early February. The 2021 Vestry Retreat is February 5 & 6 via Zoom.

From Our Priest Associates: Revs. Sarah Kye Price & Dorothy White

A year ago, I attended my first parish annual meeting at St. Mark's. Little did I know that a few weeks later so much would change. I began 2020 excited to be working together with the Young Adults of St. Mark's to reignite their desire for a renewed young adult ministry; this ministry is now carried out through a combination of outdoor gathering and virtual connection led by Ryn Kennedy. I was also in the process of planning a Lenten psalm study with Dale Smith, and we were eager to engage our worshipping community in studying as well as learning to chant the Psalms (take note: you'll still have a chance this Lent via Zoom!). We gathered together on Ash Wednesday, and I found myself in the midst of a beautiful new thing, "Ashes to Ac-

tion” on the front steps of St. Mark’s. After that, things quickly shifted. Beginning in March, my time with St. Mark’s became fully immersed in a “ministry of Zoom” which for many challenged our style, comfort and familiarity of worship. Drawing upon my online teaching and learning experience...and plentiful Holy Spirit inspired prayerful creativity...what emerged has been a year where we have all learned, grown, adapted, and tried out new and different ways of being a community of love and service together. I have watched you all learn to love each other over Zoom on Sundays and again at Thursday Compline, and we have engaged in everything from a prayerful and meditative Good Friday liturgy to a festive family Christmas Pageant. We have truly learned to embrace virtual community, even when we have not been able to be physically present. We’ve been experimenting with ways to weave music into the liturgy, and adding resources that can be accessed on people’s own time, such as the virtual Stations of the Cross and virtual Lessons and Carols services. We’re now Zoom-ing our way through Bible Studies and discussion groups, and even parish dinners. My greatest joy has been working with you all to keep on loving and serving Christ in each other and figuring out safe and creative ways to do that, whether that is through virtual gatherings or Prayers on the Porch. Speaking of outdoor activities, every other Saturday, I also have the delight of serving with our Food Pantry and continuing to be in relationship with members of our community who lack adequate food and shelter. This year, we’ve been able to welcome a VCU Social Work Intern into our midst, Mattison Payne, who has a beautiful St. Mark’s connection of her own. Mattison works with the Food Pantries at St. Mark’s as well as St. Thomas’ in Northside, and with the Red Door feeding ministry at Grace and Holy Trinity across from Monroe Park. It’s a joy to supervise Mattison’s field placement and to bring my social work roles with students at VCU into the ministries engaged in our parish and others in our region. I also continue to serve the dioceses of Virginia and Southwestern Virginia as the Local Formation Director for the St. Phoebe School for Deacons which includes virtual Daily Morning Prayer that is open to (and attended by!) our St. Mark’s parish community. Things aren’t the same these days as they used to be, that’s true. But the heart and soul of St. Mark’s has found new ways to thrive, and I’ve been grateful to serve with you and allow the Holy Spirit to do amazing work among us.

Grace and Peace,
Sarah

Dear St. Mark’s family,

The word that comes to my heart/mind about ministry is, ***kaleidoscope***. God has ushered me through a season of working primarily with children. Now, God is using those experiences to continue to teach me a new way of “ministering/seeing.”

Nothing that I have been through is wasted. I see a *constantly changing pattern* emanating from a kaleidoscope of views. Your kindness and support in allowing me to serve is a gift that enhances my life and purpose. I am grateful. Thank you.

Here is an overview of my service as Priest Associate at St. Mark's for 2020

Started the year as a new member of the Standing Committee of the Diocese of VA.

Attended the "Rooted in Jesus" in Atlanta whose focus was on ministry beyond the walls of our churches/parishes. Presiding Bishop Michael Curry was among the speakers/preachers for this conference.

I preach monthly and have just completed a Advent/Epiphany Series on Womanist Theology.

Due to a joint request from Staff of the Diocese, I accepted the appointment as part-time Interim Vicar of St. Peter's Episcopal Church.

I am also serving as a Chaplain at Anna Julia Cooper Episcopal School. My primary responsibility is leading weekly chapel services at least three times a month.

Due to COVID Restrictions my physical presence at the church or office is based upon need.

I attend Staff meetings for the three churches as well as the monthly Vestry Meetings for St. Peter's and periodically at St. Mark's.

I attend and participate as Team Leader at meetings for the social justice organization Richmonders Involved to Strengthen Communities (RISC) on behalf of St. John's Church.

I co-teach classes (Fall and Spring) at the Virginia Union Samuel Dewitt Proctor School of Theology in support of The Rev. Dr. Robert Stamps. **While I am not an employee of Virginia Union, I do receive periodic compensation for my efforts.**

I serve 10 hours per week for St. John's and St. Mark's and 12-15 hours per week for St. Peter's.

Faithfully Submitted,

Dorothy+

Ministry Reports

Education and Formation:

Keeping it going during the pandemic:

By necessity, we re-focused our efforts on Zoom-based programs and faith-at home materials. Faith at home materials were distributed during our Fall "drive-by," by personal delivery or mailed to homes. The kits helped families to engage on their own time and in their own space with seasonal stories.

Childrens' Worship resumed shortly after the initial March shutdown. A blessing of this on-line time was the ability for Bill Crowder to once again be an active part of children and youth

ministry. He has been with us throughout this time and my plan is to keep him zoomed in as long as he wants to participate!

We hosted a hybrid Vacation Bible School using faith at home kits and Zoom sessions. The at-home materials were designed to stand alone so parents whose children were “zoomed-out” could still engage in fun and learning with their children.

The youth participated in an at-home justice and advocacy mission learning about Virginia government, inequities in our justice system, and how to use their voice in advocating for issues of interest to them. We were blessed to have Virginia Delegate Dawn Adams join us for a zoom session about the GA and she was wonderfully generous with her time and perspective on being a member of government. After reading the young adult version of *Just Mercy* one teen commented that he had no idea a kid his age could get locked up for life for something he didn’t do.

The Wednesday AM Bible Study reconvened via zoom in the spring and has continued its regular weekly morning sessions. We engaged in some very interesting race and racial justice study during the summer which will be translated into a curriculum for use in the church. The Young Adults Discussion group led by Ryn Kennedy continued to meet first and third Mondays. The OnBeing discussion group has just resumed on third Fridays at 12:15pm. We had a bang-up Advent/Epiphany series led by Rev. Dorothy introducing us to Womanist Theology, and we have an equally wonderful Lenten Series led by Rev. Sarah and Dale Smith on the Psalms to look forward to.

And we even managed to pull off a zoom Christmas Pageant!
Malinda Collier with Beth Wentworth & Karen Franklin, co-chairs


Evangelism:

A time for re-imagining!

We all agree. 2020 brought many challenges for our in-person communications and physical logistics for sharing the story of God’s love. However, it also encouraged us to look **beyond** the range of what had been “our norms” to discover new pathways and opportunities for inviting folks to worship, learn and participate in the ministries that reflect our belief in the gift of God’s grace.

Joyfully, just as the miracle signs of spring emerged, so did our creativity for remaining together in spite of the logistical differences posed by COVID. Through the power of ZOOM and a bit of Holy Agility, we found ourselves thrilled to see each other in small boxes that filled our computer or phone screens. To top it off, we could be “at church” or in a meeting without

driving, dressing or even daring to be seen! Parishioners who lived thousands of miles from Arthur Ashe Boulevard were again able to join us through the blessing of our ZOOM platform. With our virtual church doors opening one half hour before worship each Sunday, we offered time to check in, catch up, share personal news, share parish news and maintain (as much as possible) the fellowship that underpins the culture of St. Mark's. Soon, we were excited and comfortable asking our friends, neighbors, co-workers and family members near and far to share in our virtual worship service! With the forwarding of a ZOOM link, we all were evangelizing! The 2020 theme had evolved: **The building may be closed, but the church is open!**

As a congregation of Ministry Teams that work together to achieve our response to God's call, Evangelism was honored to team up with Outreach, Pastoral Care, Education, Parish Life and the Floral Guild on multiple occasions to develop and deliver innovative ways of getting or staying connected. 2020 brought us the "now popular" Ministry-at-Home bags, adorable floral doorstep bouquets and even a vehicle caravan through Richmond neighborhoods displaying signage that read St. Mark's  You! in route to "visit" safely-distanced waving parishioners at home.

Our On-the-Porch Series for 2020 included Ashes to Action for Ash Wednesday and Prayers on the Porch for most Sundays in the fall of 2020. With the highest regard for the safety of all, we were able to remain visible to our neighbors and passersby while offering words of comfort and healing during a most challenging year. In keeping with a long-standing tradition for Evangelism, we installed a new banner at our Arthur Ashe address in 2020! With a fantastic purple color and limited words, it let's folks know that St. Mark's is OPEN ONLINE @ stmarksva.org.

In March 2020, our Food Pantry/Soup Kitchen Ministry moved outdoors to the south parking lot. This ministry became the Food Pantry/Bagged Lunch Ministry instead! With food insecurity a pandemic outcome for so many of our neighbors-in-need, providing a grab-n-go model was the best way to continue God's work. Having an Outreach Ministry in the open space of our parking lot was a quiet and yet powerful visual for the surrounding residential community. Rather than hearing an evangelical proclamation, they could actually see our work for the benefit of those in need. That's Evangelism!

Throughout it all, we and YOU maintained our social media and online storytelling through posting, sharing, liking and commenting. Keep up the good work of letting folks know that LOVE is our tradition!

While 2020 brought challenges, as a congregation that seeks to invite and include, we pulled

together to stay together and together we found opportunities to explore, rediscover, and re-imagine ministry. And like we do always in all ways, we encouraged others to Join Us. *Suzanne Long – Evangelism Chair*

Justice & Advocacy:

The Justice and Advocacy Ministry began to define the difference between outreach and activism, and to discover and coordinate ways in which members of the St Mark’s community might take “bringing the kingdom” out into our secular world. The Ministry was still in the early organizational stages of determining how to proceed when the Covid Mess began last spring. In this past year, many of our parishioners have continued to support racial justice issues we first explored during our 150th celebration in a variety of ways, through peaceful protest and by working in the system to provide information on early voting and voters’ rights, among other efforts. We would like to expand and further define areas where we—as individuals as well as possibly the community as a whole—might bring our Christian response to our neighborhood and the world. Should you have an interest in helping with this Ministry, or simply have suggestions for ways we might engage in a particular area, please contact Penny Adams (NBFGinc@aol.com).

Penny Adams, Chair

Outreach:

As for everyone, 2020 was a challenging year for Outreach. The coronavirus epidemic forced us to temporarily suspend a number of ministries, and made us limit or restructure other ministries to insure the safety of parishioners and neighbors being helped. But, as always, our congregation rallied to support our community in creative, safe ways.

In mid March when Virginia instituted stay at home orders we suspended hosting the Wednesday night 12-Step Recovery Program. Often more than 100 people attend these meetings, so this was a significant impact to our community. We have not been able to resume hosting because we would exceed state and church rules for gatherings and use of facilities. In March we also suspended the twice monthly Saturday morning hot meal ministry. This mission involved close contact between volunteers and guests, so it could not be continued safely. Finally, we also suspended the annual collection of items for ACTS care bags, a mission already underway. We are currently holding on to the stockpile of items collected, as ACTS is supporting clients virtually and doesn’t need the items now. We’ll deliver the items as soon as ACTS needs them. Finally, we also suspended our mission to McGuire Hospital to deliver ice cream treats to our veterans receiving care.

But other missions continued. Over the summer we again collected school supplies for Anna Julia Cooper school. While the hot meal program was suspended, the twice monthly Sat-

urday morning Food Pantry kept rolling along. We continued to give out a bag of groceries, and other essentials (hats, gloves, hygiene kits, protective equipment, pet food, and so on..) to our neighbors in need. We replaced the hot meal with a packed lunch to go — a hearty sandwich, chips, cookies, fruit and drink. Of course, we also hand out kind words, smiles, and a few minutes of chat with everyone. Special thanks to Karen Franklin for leading the Saturday food pantry mission, and to Mickie Jones and Mandy Cline for leading the lunch-to-go program for the first distribution each month. Karen Kincaid, who founded the hot meal mission years ago, continued with program until July before leaving to move on to other mission opportunities. Quoting Malinda, “Karen's soup and breakfast fare provided both spiritual and nutritional sustenance for our guests. She will be missed!” To fill her spot, we’ve asked for volunteers to provide lunches for the second distribution each month. We’ve easily gotten volunteers signed up well into 2021.

Shortly after the virus outbreak, the Richmond based Underground Kitchen (UGK) shifted their business from serving gourmet meals in “popup” locations to cooking free meals for citizens, health care workers, and first responders. They partnered with several Richmond area Episcopal churches (including St. Mark’s) to use their kitchens to cook thousands of meals, and to use the Roslyn Retreat Center as a hub for packaging and distributing meals. For most of the summer UGK Chef Lori used our kitchen 3 days a week to cook large quantities of tasty soups that were packaged into meals and distributed throughout our community. In 2020 the Underground Kitchen delivered over 50,000 meals to food insecure homes in our community. Several members of our congregation also graciously volunteered at Roslyn to prepare meals for delivery.

In 2019 and early 2020 we catered numerous CARITAS events - e.g. classes, meetings and mock interview sessions. Last spring CARITAS suspended all events due to the virus outbreak, so our meal assistance was no longer needed. But with Suzanne Long’s leadership, we quickly shifted our mission to help CARITAS through other ventures. Throughout the spring and summer we delivered meals to neighbors that CARITAS had rescued from the streets at the start of the virus outbreak and placed in Richmond area hotels. Thanks to the generosity of our congregation, in June we donated 126 Kroger (and other) gift cards ranging from \$10 to \$25 to women in the CARITAS emergency shelter program. CARITAS was very grateful to have these cards to share with their guests who faced extra challenges in the unstable economy. In July, using funds left over from the card ministry, we packed and delivered care/gift bags to the CARITAS ladies. Each care bag had laundry supplies and quarters, dental care items, personal care products, and other goodies. You can consider this ministry a variation on the CARITAS Intake program we've hosted in previous years - only this time we provided care and kindness from a distance. Many thanks to all who donated funds to this ministry, and to those who sorted and packed, raided their quarter collections, and delivered the finished kits

to CARITAS.

In early December CARITAS moved into their new facility in Southside, a renovated warehouse complex in Southside. The facility houses an emergency shelter and 160 beds for women enrolled in the Healing Place for Women, a substance abuse recovery program. It also has 47 sober-living apartments for people transitioning from the substance abuse recovery program. It includes the furniture bank which accepts furniture for donation or sale to low-income households. So in 2021, our calls for service at CARITAS will continue to change. We will stay in close contact with them to provide support during the remainder of the virus outbreak and ongoing in their new facility. You can always follow the progress of this ministry through church emails and Facebook.

We've just finished the annual Christmas Gifts Program. Each year Councilwoman Reva Trammel provides a list of needy elderly residents in her area. Many of these people live alone and have no families. Our gifts are often all they receive for Christmas. Each person provides us with a list of desired items most useful to them. Typically they ask for simple things: winter clothes, jackets, shoes, blankets, quilts and other everyday necessities of life. This year we set a goal of providing gifts to 50 of these neighbors. Our goal was reduced a bit from last year to ensure everyone's safety during the virus outbreak. Despite a late start due to the fall elections, thanks to our dedicated congregation, we easily met our goal. In mid January we delivered our gifts to Councilwoman Trammel and her staff who will distribute the items to our neighbors.

It's nice to report that even in this time of forced limited contact, thanks to everyone's generosity of time and talents, we were still able to help our neighbors in creative ways. We encourage everyone to join us in 2021!

Approximate Mission Counts:

- 260 hot meals —> served at Food Pantry (pre-covid)
- 600 lunches to go —> handed out at Food Pantry (Mar to Dec)
- 850 bags of groceries —> handed out at Food Pantry (all year)
- 27 days of cooking —> by the Underground Kitchen in St. Mark's Kitchen (many gallons of soup cooked)
- 95 meals —> delivered to CARITAS events (pre-covid)
- 185 meals —> delivered to individuals in temporary housing on behalf of CARITAS
- 126 Kroger (or other) gift cards —> delivered to CARITAS
- 240 gift bags, hygiene and laundry kits —> delivered to CARITAS
- Carload of school supplies —> donated to Anna Julia Cooper students

- 50 giant Christmas gift boxes —> for the elderly in our community

Ed Street, Chair

Parish Life/Fellowship:

The Parish Life/Fellowship team reimagined its ministry minus the kitchen! Missing our Coffee Hour goodies, we did a summer's worth of "Shutdown Chef" recipes—sharing our favorites with each other. And they teamed up with Pastoral Care to provide home-baked breads as a holiday reminder of this communities' love. They even gave us a parish dinner—providing an opportunity for food and fellowship so enjoyed by this church. Parish Life is always looking for additional members. Long- or short-term commitments will do. If you don't want to be a regular Parish Life team member, we can always use help on a per-event basis. Please let one of the co-chairs know if you are interested. We are always appreciative of any help!

Mickie Jones & Mandy Cline, co-chairs

Pastoral Care:

Pastoral Care is a vital ministry in a healthy, supportive congregation. We respect the privacy of our parishioners while at the same time letting them know we care. During 2020, Pastoral Care has had to navigate the ramification of the COVID-19 virus and still be there for the parishioners and staff of St. Mark's. Pastoral Care rose to that challenge and used creative ways to continue to meet those needs while maintaining state safety protocols.

Pastoral Care continued to:

- Assist with the maintaining of the prayer lists through communication with the church office
- Members provide monthly correspondence through cards and phone calls with parishioners on the prayer list
- Pastoral Care partnered with the Floral Guild and Parish Life to continue providing support in a unique way. Pastoral Care delivered floral arrangements with the Daily Word to those on the prayer list.

As always Pastoral Care continued to practice discreet and respectful confidentiality

We continue to welcome new members and explore new ways to live out our goals outlined in the Strategic Plan.

Karen Franklin, Chair

Property:

This year our Church building will be 100 years old. Last year, at 99 years old (2020), our building was able to take a well-deserved rest and vacation for the remaining 9-1/2 months of 2020 starting in mid-March. As a result, as good stewards of our limited financial resources,

plus not knowing how the COVID-19 pandemic would affect our Church and people, we continued to be sensitive to cash flow issues and constraints to help ensure that there was enough money for other critical aspects of our Church business operations on a day-to-day basis. Overall, the above circumstances helped our Budget and allowed us to be more creative in the use of our Building, as well as our Front Porch and Parking Lot.

Our Church Property in 2020:

Originally were planning for the future of our physical Church building in terms of replacing our Slate Roof in 2020. Due to the deadly and disruptive COVID-19 pandemic, we were not able to proceed with this work in 2020.

Taking care of some of the daily, weekly or monthly ‘day-to-day’ items in 2020 was not as prevalent due to minimum use of our building as outlined above. As a result, 2020 continued to be a year of contemplation in determining when we would be able and in a financial position to start the construction process of the removal and replacement of our Church slate Roof for the long-term benefit and vitality of our Church building.

Although we were not able to proceed with our Slate Roof removal and replacement, the following items were worked on in 2020:

Here is a list of a few items we worked on over the last year – in 2020:

GROUNDS MAINTENANCE:

We lost the benefit of having our Grounds Maintenance work being performed by Arthur Vandenesse. Arthur started providing exterior property and landscaping upkeep back in 2017 based upon being recommended by Howard Pugh. However, Arthur decided to cut back on or eliminate his Landscape Maintenance Services in 2020 due to personal reasons. As a result, we are currently in a position of trying to identify and determine if there is another potential person or firm who can perform this work in both a careful as well as a cost-effective manner.

Our CHURCH PARKING LOT as an asset:

In an effort to generate some income to help pay for our Slate Roof removal and replacement, we finalized an agreement to outsource the marketing and management of our parking lot. City Parking is now marketing and managing our larger parking lot area without the smaller “Church Office” parking lot. Our underlying goal was to provide our parking lot as an asset as well as a resource to our surrounding neighbors and community at a “market rate” rental amount.

City Parking started the rental and management of our parking lot in March 2020, just before the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak and shutdowns of gatherings and restaurants started.

Our hope was to allow others to utilize our existing Parking Lot to generate parking lot income to effectively help our ability to borrow the money needed to remove and replace

our Slate Roof.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic we do not have any real history of what the real market demand and income will be from our Parking Lot. Therefore, this potential income is currently yet to be determined.

Our CHURCH PARKING LOT as an asset - continued:

Overall, once the pandemic situation has become much more stabilized, and people start attending major public events such as:

The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts – outdoor events in the gardens on Friday nights used to be very well attended and crowded,
Shamrock the Block,
Easter on Parade,
Octoberfest in the Parking lot of the former Benedictine School, now Cristo Rey – Richmond High School.

In the meantime, City Parking was very helpful in us being able to Rent our Parking Lot to the Virginia Film Office in order to attract a couple of films that are being filmed in Richmond. This was great income and even better exposure for St. Mark's serving our neighborhood.

In September 2020, we were also contacted about Leasing Fifty (50) Parking Spaces (out of 70 Spaces) in our main lot to help facilitate the major Sitework and Building Renovation project at the Virginia Museum of History & Culture. The Lease is now in the works to start sometime in February 2021. This Lease will generate \$ 1,667 in monthly income for St. Mark's every month for the next 5 to 6 months (February through July 2021). There is a chance they may extend this Lease beyond July 2021 on a "month-to-month" basis until the VMH&C is finished with their new Parking lot.

Regardless, once things get back to normal it might take a few months for people to take note of the use and benefit of utilizing our parking lot for short term as well as long term needs. If the demand for parking in our lot eventually gets to a point of being strong, it will help us with our planning and reliance of better income over a longer period of time in the future.

Property work we hope to accomplish in 2021:

Our CHURCH ROOF: Once we are in a position to submit our Loan Application with the Diocesan Missionary Society as well as obtain approval for a portion of the required funding, we will be in a position to start the removal and replacement of our existing Slate Roof. Once our Loan is approved for funding, it will take roughly 2 to 3 months to obtain the Slate materials in order to have the materials needed and ready to start our roof project. Once we start the Roof work, we anticipate it will take another roughly 4 to 6 months depending on the time of year, the weather and if any surprises pop up.

Repairs and re-painting of our: NARTHEX, SANTUARY, CHANCEL & ALTAR - Walls & Ceilings: We need to wait at least 6 to 12 months after our New Slate Roof is completed to allow the moisture to stabilize and dry out by not having a roof that leaks moisture into our walls before proceeding with any interior work.

Brent Graves, Chair

Worship:

Worship never stopped. We are very much aware of the good fortune of St. Mark's, in that we have persons involved in this parish whose skills and know how have allowed us to continue to meet uninterrupted Sunday mornings in a manner that allows for interactions and engagement, shared worship, and the ongoing growth of this church family as a community. Thursday evening Compline and Daily Morning Prayer with St. Phoebe's School was added to support members throughout the week.

The Worship Ministry Team found our work dramatically interrupted in March 2019 when COVID 19 necessitated the moratorium on gathering in person for worship. In consultation with the Rector, a decision was made to suspend monthly meetings of the team. While we did gather once on Zoom to simply "touch base", we were aware that the practical aspects of worship would be made for the foreseeable future by the clergy based upon a combination of the mandates of the Diocese, the emerging possibilities afforded by technology, and the trajectory of the pandemic. The Worship Ministry Team looks forward to being able to contribute to the ongoing planning for understanding possibilities and implementing strategies for going forward with in-person worship in its many forms when the time comes.

Karen Hardsion, Chair

St. Mark's Episcopal Church
154th Annual Meeting Minutes (Reconstructed)
January 26, 2020

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 12:05 PM by Rev. Niemeyer.

A quorum in excess of 10% of the parish members reported on the 2019 Parochial Report was declared by the Register, Karen Franklin.

Opening Prayer

The opening Prayer was led by the Rector

Minutes of 153rd Annual Meeting

The minutes are filed in the office and are available for review. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Election of New Vestry Members

Rules of the election were explained by the Rector.

The off-going vestry were appointed by the Rector as tellers.

The three candidates whose biographies were published in the bulletin were presented: Jeff Dussault, Ryn Kennedy, and Isabel Wescoat.

There were no nominations from the floor.

Three new Vestry members were elected.

A motion was made and seconded to keep Karen Franklin as Register. The motion was passed by majority of the congregation present.

Business Meeting

Suzanne Long, Treasurer, acknowledged all the support from the various ministry teams. Suzanne presented the budget overview and a written report highlighting the tremendous amount of support that is given from the parishioners.

Written reports from the Ministry Team Chairs had been submitted prior to the publication of the Order of the Annual Meeting bulletin and were included in the bulletin for the meeting.

Rector's Report:

Rev. Niemeyer encouraged parishioners to read the Rector's Report in the bulletin.

He stated that statistics help us understand our story better. We continue to grow in member-

ship and average Sunday attendance.

Emphasis was placed on the generosity of the congregation which has resulted in good financial health.

We have implemented our Long-Range Plan as a guide for us and our ministries together over the next three to five years. It is a living document to be reviewed often.

We are in the process of developing a Safety Team to make sure we are safe in this place.

With the retirement of Bishop Shannon Johnston at the last Annual Convention of the Diocese, Susan Goff became Ecclesiastical Authority and Bishop Suffragan. Oversight of the diocese is her responsibility until a new diocesan bishop is elected at a later time. We also welcomed Assisting Bishop Brook-Davidson to the diocese.

The Vestry worked on and approved a new set of by-laws in 2019.

Rev. Niemeyer offered special thanks to all who contribute to the church through the various ministries.

Appreciation was also expressed to the Vestry, especially the outgoing members – Mickie Jones, Amy Strite, Paul Williams. Appreciation for the commitment of the Senior and Junior Wardens and the church staff were also shared.

Having congregational approval and support of the Trustees we will enter upon a renovation that included replacing the roof followed by interior repair and painting, some lighting upgrades, and a new sound system. We will borrow the \$750,000 from the Diocesan Missionary Society.

Rev. Niemeyer expressed gratitude and honor for serving the parishioners of St. Mark's as Rector.

Questions

There were no questions from the floor

Close of Meeting

Fr. Niemeyer led the closing prayer.

The 153rd annual congregational meeting was adjourned by Fr. Niemeyer at 1:10 PM.

Karen Franklin, Register

Vestry Ballot Process

For voting purposes it will be helpful to have a paper and pencil handy to write down the code.

And only one person can vote on a device, i.e. if you log in together on one computer only one of you can vote on that computer so if you have a smart phone or tablet the second member of the household should use it.

Denis Riva, Nancy Munson, and Patrick McDuff will serve as our vote proctors with Rev. Sarah Kye Price managing the on-line link.



St Mark's

EPISCOPAL CHURCH

love is our tradition