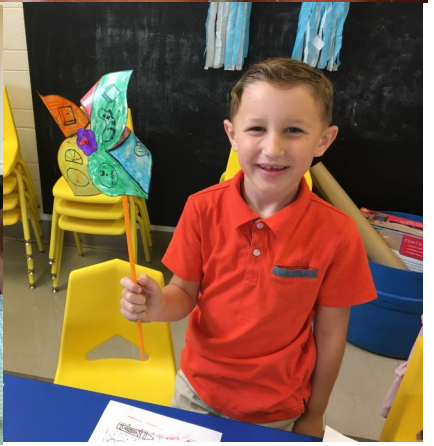


love is our tradition



St. Mark's Episcopal Church 158th Annual Meeting January 28, 2024

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158th Annual Meeting
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Agenda

Call to Order
Opening Prayer
Approval of 2023 Annual Meeting minutes

Election of New Vestry Members

Recognition of outgoing members: Jamie Francis, Shannon Heady,
Don Kyser

Rules for the Election/Affirmation

Presentation of the Candidates

Nominations from the floor

Business Meeting:

Treasurer's Report

Rector's Report

Closing Prayer

From Our Rector:

Dear Beloved in Christ,

As I prepare for my first, Annual Parish Meeting, with you, I do so continuing to carry the joy I discovered, in my first days of ministry here, nearly one year ago. I am most grateful for the work and discernment of the the search team, led by Sanford Eberly and Mike Gephart. In the process that brought me to you, I could tell that sincerity and joy for ministry was at the heart of the St Mark's community.

Upon my arrival, I found a parish working together with excellent lay leadership, and very effective ministry teams. In an environment such as this, I was able to come in and observe, listen, and perceive what is the culture of this place. I discovered a community that was delighted in my presence, but not stuck in ambiguity while I acclimated myself.

In my time of transitioning to St Mark's I have felt a healthy balance us of learning from each others' likes and dislikes; and allowing each to take the lead or the backseat in turn. With all of our discoveries about one another, grace has abound; good will has prevailed; and curiosity displaced judgement.

As I affirm the strength of our lay ministries here at St Mark's; I must add to that affirmation the stabilizing effect of the parish's Strategic Plan. The Vestry and Staff, have utilized the flexible structure of the strategic plan to evaluate and adapt ministries as time has progressed. And the four pillars of the plan: ***Out-reach, In-Reach, Running the Church,*** and ***Visibility and Membership,*** each hold within them space for our varied ministry teams.

During the vestry retreat last year we reflected on prior goals within our strategic plan, and set new ones that made sense for the present moment. We will continue this process of reflection and setting new goals at the upcoming vestry retreat next month.

As I have settled into my ministry at St Mark's this past year, the time finally arrived to assemble a team to tackle the work of our capital repair projects. To this end, in the fall of last year, the vestry appointed a Capital Campaign Team, head-

ed by Beth Wentworth. The other team members include: Laura Hicks, Don Kyser, and Wes Kauffman; with additional support from Mickie Jones, Howard Pugh, Suzanne Long, Scott Pennington, and Shannon Heady.

As we continue to organize and plan the capital campaign, you can expect to hear more about this project in the coming months, with an official launch date later this Spring.

I also want to take time in this report to acknowledge the various pastoral moments in the parish's life this past year. We were blessed to have Bishop Gayle Harris, visit the parish on the second Sunday of Easter; and during her visit we confirmed, Phillip Jones, Fred Crowley, and Jeanette Wiley; Norah Thompson was received into the Episcopal Church; and we baptized Odin and Griffin Landers, and Louisa and Isabel Savory.

In addition to the sacramental offices from Bishop Harris' visit, we also baptized Ethan Williams and Aggie Hahn this year. We celebrated and blessed the marriage of Jeanette Wiley and Tia Cilyk. And in 2023 we also commended our beloved friends: Pat Pearman, David Lenz, David Whitlow, and Nancy Munson to their eternal home in the light of God's nearer presence.

In addition to our local, pastoral ministries, we have continued to partner with our Central Richmond Region of Episcopal Churches to collaborate on shared ministry. Perhaps the highlight of this collaboration came about for the Pride Eucharist which took place at St Paul's in downtown Richmond during Pride Fest Week.

So much of our work as a parish family is being present to one another in joys and sorrows, and everyday in-between. Our Pastoral Care and Parish Life ministries have helped us stay connected in fellowship. Our Worship Team and various choirs, guilds, vergers, ushers, and acolytes have given us meaningful gifts that have aided in our worship and devotion to Christ. While our Property, Finance, Personnel, and Stewardship Teams have provided logistical and stabilizing support for our facilities, finances, and staff. Our Evangelism, Outreach, and Education Teams have given us a vision to see beyond ourselves and into the life of

our neighbors. You will find reports from these various ministries in this booklet.

In all of the above listed ministry teams, we have faithful and dedicated leadership that have guided our way; and for them we are deeply grateful. But, I would be shortsighted if I missed this opportunity to encourage new leadership to grow in these well cultivated fields. From the outset of my ministry, a number of lay leaders have approached me to express their gratitude to serve in ministry, but they also, expressed their concerns for succession planning in their various areas of ministry.

A true gift of strong, lay leadership, is that we can do many ministries with many hands. But a blind spot in strong, lay leadership is that raising up the next generation of leaders can, unintentionally, fall to the wayside if not addressed. So, with our blessing of strong, lay leadership we must also build up our fellow parishioners with opportunities to share that leadership.

As we embark on the Year of Our Lord: 2024, we have wonderful work to continue, but also new work to pursue. We have a wealth of lay leadership that gives of time and talent; and a growing capacity to incorporate new leadership in these same practices. If you are actively involved in a ministry, consider how you might invite someone to join you in your ministry; consider how you might shepherd someone into a leadership (or co-leadership) role.

In closing, I want to express my deep gratitude and sincere joy to you all for calling me to be your rector. I want to thank our vestry and ministry team chairs for their leadership and their grace in welcoming and easing me into a new environment. I want to thank everyone who has taken me up on the offers for coffee and conversation; and especially, those who have reached out to me to initiate those moments. I am all the richer for knowing you each more personally.

A special word of gratitude goes to Shannon Heady, Don Kyser, and Jamie Francis, who are rolling off of their 3 year vestry term. Thank you for devoting 3 years to our parish leadership team, and thank you to your families for gifting us your presence for those evening meetings and other necessary times of ministry.

And last, but furthest from least, I want to thank our parish staff: Malinda, Amos, Steve, and Buck. You all have made coming to St Mark's a daily delight. I love your cooperation, initiative, and sincere hearts for the ministry you do. You are models for grace, generosity, and, commitment. Thank you for all you do and being exactly who you are!

Beloved, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and always; therefore, let us continually offer a sacrifice of praise to God, for that is the fruit of lips who confess his name. Do not neglect to do good and share what you have for such sacrifices are pleasing to God." And the blessing of God almighty + Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be upon you and remain with you always. Amen.

Yours in Faith, Benjamin +

Vestry Candidates

Becky Adams

I am honored to be nominated to St. Mark's vestry.

I was born and have lived most of my life in Richmond. Mostly retired from my career in the medical field as a licensed clinical social worker, I now stay busy with delivering meals for FeedMore, racial reconciliation activities, and caring for rescue horses. My interests include: hiking, travel, dance, playing piano, life-long learning at the University of Richmond, and appreciating the arts.



I grew up attending Tuckahoe Presbyterian Church. Later, I married Edgar Adams, an Episcopal priest from Philadelphia, and we found our church home at St Mark's in around 1996. I served a term on the vestry once before, and am currently Chair of Pastoral Care and sing with the Choir.

During my approximately 27 years at St. Mark's, I have been supported in times of loss and rejoiced with in my happiest moments. I have been, and will continue to be, committed to this congregation. St. Mark's truly is a family—a wholeness with not only room for every one, but appreciation and love for every one.

I can think of no other congregation in Richmond living out a purer expression of God's Love.

I appreciate the opportunity to serve on the vestry.

Gay Frugard

It is an honor and privilege to be nominated to serve on the vestry of St Mark's Episcopal Church!! I joined the church back in 2001, after attending for about 6 months! I had been attending a Lutheran church, and a friend invited me to the Christmas Eve service! I felt very welcomed and began attending on a regular basis. I got confirmed that following year!!



I have been very active in in my 20 some years as a member of St Mark's! I have served on the vestry, was a member of the search committee for Father David Niemeyer, and been on multiple standing church committees. Each has been challenging and incredibly rewarding! My continued membership has given me a warm loving church family that has strengthened my relationship with God and enhanced my spiritual walk! I am truly blessed!!

Kate Williams

I grew up in Ossining, NY and moved south to study biology and education at the University of Richmond in 2008. I fell in love with the area and have been a teacher in Henrico since graduating in 2012. I currently teach biology at Douglas Freeman High School, and serve as a member of the Instructional Leadership Team and as a leader of the Equity Team-work that I feel very passionate about.

I started attending St. Mark's with my then-boyfriend Paul Williams in 2014. We were both immediately struck by how welcoming the community was. Love is truly a tradition at St. Mark's. Church shopping ceased immediately, as Paul and I both felt this was the church for us. We were married in Cooperstown, NY in 2015 and since then have grown our



family to include Max (5), Ethan (20 months), and our dog, Lucy (she prefers to keep her age private.) I am proud to have had both of our children baptized at St. Mark's and look forward to their future experiences as members of this congregation dedicated to serving others. I am humbled and grateful to have the opportunity to be a part of the vestry.

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 .

Ministry Reports

Education and Formation:

Formation programs continued to regain some of their pre-covid strength.

Children's Worship continues to incorporate Zoom which allows for Bill Crowder to zoom in from Mexico and children from their homes. We hosted several in person Fun & Learning Days for our younger children and incorporated some of our youth in the Food Pantry ministry. This year our Christmas Pageant was during the 10:30am service and we had 25 children take part – two on their first visit to the church!

Several important adult formation groups are ongoing. *Sacred Ground* continues with its second circle, and *Prophetic Faith* which is a Justice & Advocacy study completed its first cohort and the second began this January. Both of these emphasize the formational work needed to better understand ourselves, our past, and our community. *Community Reads* morphed into *St. Mark's Reads* and we began with a study of civil rights activist and priest, Pauli Murray. This winter we are reading *The Color of Law* and will incorporate some of its themes in our Lenten Series. The Wednesday AM Bible Study and Buck's Bible study continue weekly. The Young Adults Discussion group led by Ryn Kennedy continues to meet weekly and Ryn is expanding their ministry to take on Youth Ministry.

Rev. Benjamin led our Advent Learning Event. The Lenten series was different in

2023, Dinner Church was led by our Worship Team and offered a new way to experience worship and formation.

Malinda Collier with Beth Wentworth & Karen Franklin, Co-Chairs

Evangelism:

Fully in our Groove!

2023 was an important and successful year for our parish and our congregation! We shared time together in worship, fellowship and ministry. We invited our neighbors to “Join Us”. We engaged on social media. We posted pictures and videos of our celebrations and work at church or in our community. We welcomed folks for service, learning, dinners, lunches, picnics and for coffee breaks. We supported our neighbors-in-need while we supported our parishioners in times of joy and sorrow. We were present in each other’s lives as we reminisced about our past and thoughtfully planned for our future as a parish. And we did all that with our new Rector, Benjamin, and his new wife, Elsie and their young, vibrant family! All in all, we extended LOTS of invitations and shared lots of good stories in 2023. That’s what Evangelism is about – inviting folks to join in as we share the stories about the Good News of God in our lives.

So, just how do we “see the signs” of Evangelism around St. Mark’s? Some indications are obvious and others are a bit less, but effective nonetheless! Let’s start with the obvious - exterior banners announcing our regular or special/seasonal service times. That’s an easy and ongoing way for our neighbors and passersby to know about us and when we’re home. Our tower is a beacon of light at night and a landmark in the sky by day. The Ascension Window glows over the parking lot starting at dusk. Our seasonal porch décor with a beautifully flowered cross at Easter and our Advent/Christmas trees draped in lights clearly indicate our joy of celebration. Psst! They also provide nice photo opportunities for us and our neighbors! By the nature of our worship services, we found ourselves on the porch during Lent and Easter for “Ashes to Go”, the Palm Sunday Procession and the Great Vigil of Easter. To further enjoy the use of our asset on the boulevard, our 2023 Porch Series of Events included Sundae Sunday in June (that was yummy!), CARITAS Backpack Drop-off in July, Blessing of the Animals and Boo Halloween Fun in October and Marathon Cheers in November. Being out-

side is a great way to meet our neighbors, have them see us in action and pass out dog treats to our furry friends! We never go out without our dog treats!

Inside the church, our Greeters and Ushers welcomed old-timers and newcomers, found connections in conversation and invited people to enjoy food and fellowship at Coffee Hour. Our announcement period shared about ministry opportunities, upcoming events and group meetings. Benjamin graciously extended a weekly invitation to fill out a contact card to have a chat or a coffee with the Rector! Printed materials like our “all-in-one-place” bulletin supported our worship service while helping to explain some of our traditions to those who may be new to the Episcopal Church. We made beautiful music, displayed gorgeous floral arrangements, processed and recessed, Zoomed and recorded, set and unset, spiffed and polished and performed all the ministries necessary (overt or covert) to benefit our largest weekly public program – Sunday Service! And back by popular demand in 2023, Neighborhood Meals! Parishioners and friends of St. Mark’s gathered together as teams to setup, cook, serve and clear in October and November. Supported by the skills of THE BEST Parish Life team in any church’s history, in 2023, we ate well, ate often and in the presence of new friends or those we have loved for a long time. Whether at a special event or seasonal series, weekly Coffee Hour, or small group meeting, as we evangelized with food, we lived into the experiences of God in our lives.

Behind the scenes, our ongoing Evangelism work included keeping our website updated with program information, pictures and videos of our ministries at work, learning opportunities, details of our history and our core beliefs - all of which provide “online shoppers” with an understanding of us even before they visit us. What we hear from in-person visitors is that our website actually prompted them into our presence after making a virtual visit online. E-communications, Facebook, Instagram and Nextdoor engaged our followers to click links for signup or more info, comment regularly (YAY!), add an emoji or share a posting with friends.

MANY THANKS to ALL for your excellent contributions to the advancement of Evangelism in 2023! With your creative content, let’s work together in 2024 to help St. Mark’s GO VIRAL! *Suzanne Long, Chair*

Justice & Advocacy:

“Never forget that justice is what love looks like in public.” Cornel West

After launching in the fall of 2022, this very new ministry at St. Mark’s began in January 2023 by examining these four premises:

- The relationship between faith and politics is crucial for social justice ministry
- The discussion of social justice ministry can be faith-enhancing, healing and life-giving for The St Mark’s congregation and the community we serve
- Effective social justice ministry belongs to the whole church
- It takes time to develop church wide ownership of social justice ministry

With these ideas in mind, on January 22nd we began what became a six-month study, guided by the book *PROPHETIC FAITH: Empowering Social Justice Advocacy as a Congregation* by Trish Greeves. The program consists of seven sessions, and we met about every two weeks over a simple supper to explore why and how we might unite the congregation in understanding that social justice is and should be the business of the church. The study was remarkable, so much so that we have reintroduced a new session for new members and also those who were part of the original group, with the idea that as more members of St. Mark’s join the conversation we will expand the amazingly generous instincts that are already a part of our DNA. If you find yourself called to participate, we will be arranging session three in the near future.

Some things that came out of the 2023 PROPHETIC FAITH study:

We built the Justice and Advocacy display that is designed to encourage conversation among members of the congregation. We will be making further use of this display as 2024 unfolds.

We explored the possibility of holding a book fair in October as part of Banned Books Week. Sadly, we did not have enough time to throw a really excellent event, so we decided to wait and do it right at a later date. Instead, we inaugurated “ST MARK’S READS.” This program is open to the entire community; the plan is to read about a person or issue that will afford more thinking about how we are called to social justice. Our first read was Pauli Murray, and we threw a

“Souper” Discussion Evening which was very successful. Our next book is THE COLOR OF LAW by Richard Rothstein. Themes from this text will be discussed during our 2024 Lenten Study.

We are also planning to have a J&A Bookshelf, making materials available as an in-house library. If you have books that you feel might further our discussion, please speak to Karen Hardison or me.

Any comments or ideas that you might like us to examine, please speak to the chairs.

“Do not be daunted by the enormity of the world’s grief. Love mercy, now. Walk humbly, now. You are not obliged to complete the work, but neither are you free to abandon it.”

Interpretive translation of Talmudic Texts

Penny Adams and Karen Hardison, Co- Chairs

Outreach:

A major Outreach highlight in 2023 was the resumption of two significant ministries that were suspended in 2020 due to COVID.

In February we resumed sit-down breakfast as part of the twice monthly food pantry. Karen Franklin who leads our food pantry mission, along with Mickie Jones and Mandy Cline, who provided breakfast for our restart, lobbied to resume this mission, and coordinated the restart in February. At first we served breakfast once a month, but thanks to additional volunteers, we soon were able to serve breakfast on both Saturdays each month.

Of course our pantry team also continued to hand out groceries and clothing essentials to our friends in need. Many thanks to Jackie Bitler, Cathy Smith and Kent Slonaker, our grocery bag packers. Over the summer we also gave out more than 40 personal care kits containing items donated by the congregation.

Our food pantry is unusual in that we also provide pet supplies. In August we were recognized by the board of directors of Furbish Thrift (a non-profit that benefits pets and their owners) and awarded a \$500 grant to aid us in assisting pet owners. Those funds are in our budget for 2024.

Please sign up or contact Karen if you would like to help out with our food pantry ministry. There are many roles to play and we would love your help.

In April the 12-step recovery group resumed Wednesday night meetings in our Parish Hall. For three years they had been meeting at other sites in the Richmond area, but were very glad to return to St. Mark's, their official home now for almost 40 years. The group has grown. Some nights they have 240 attendees. We purchased many new chairs and a chair cart for their return. We also revamped the program to allow their leaders early access to our building so they could complete the room setup on their own schedule. As before, we provide a host / chaperone each Wednesday. If you're interested in joining that simple but important ministry, please contact Suzanne Long.

For our Lenton mission, we again collected and delivered a truckload of care essentials to ACTS (Area Congregations Together in Service). We have developed a strong partnership with ACTS, a critical Richmond organization assisting neighbors in financial need, bridging them through crises that might otherwise make them homeless.

In October, Father Benjamin and two church members spent a day working on a Habitat for Humanity house in Church Hill. Next fall we hope to expand this mission, perhaps scheduling a St. Mark's Habitat day.

In 2023, through Suzanne Long's leadership we maintained our close partnership with CARITAS. We prepared and delivered two lunches and a dinner to their Southside facility. We got rave reviews for the dinner which included a jumbo hot dog bar, mac and cheese, coleslaw, baked beans, salad, gallons of ice tea and brownies for dessert.

Over the summer, we put out word to the congregation and collected more than 50 backpacks for residents of the CARITAS Healing Place. Each backpack had a notebook, pens, masks, and a small flashlight. Residents will use the backpacks in everyday recovery classes they attend. Our response was so good, we had 25 additional backpacks which we donated to Anna Julia Cooper School and our food pantry guests. Look for more CARITAS missions in 2024.

In August and September and fall we collected school supplies for Anna Julia Cooper School and Side by Side.

VA PrideFest 2023 was held in October at the Bon Secours Training Center. This year four churches in our region combined to sponsor a shared tent. St. Mark's provided volunteers for the event. Many thanks to Malinda and Paul Shane who led the planning for this multi-church event.

We've just completed the annual Christmas Gifts Program. Don and Elizabeth Kyser led our mission again this year. Each year we receive a wish list from elderly and less advantaged neighbors living in Southside District 8. Many live alone with no family members in the area. They ask for simple everyday provisions: winter clothes, jackets, socks, shoes, sheets, towels, blankets, and comforters. Our gifts provide useful items and some holiday cheer. This year we provided gifts to 65 Southside neighbors, including Buddy, a support dog, who asked for a new dog bed and peanut butter treats. Santa's sleigh picked up your gifts in mid-December and they were distributed over the holidays.

We appreciate the overwhelming involvement of our congregation in our Outreach missions. Consider becoming a part of the Outreach team, where you can contribute to shaping, leading, and participating in rewarding missions in the coming years.

CARITAS Initiatives

Lunches for Works

4/21/23 boxed lunches \$400 for 35 people

8/11/23 homemade boxed lunches \$320 for 40 people

Afterworks Dinners

10/25/23 \$425 for 40 people

Special Raises for CARITAS

Backpack Drive \$1700 for 51 backpacks with supplies

Plus \$750 for 25 additional backpacks
for Anna Julia and food pantry guests

School Supplies

Anna Julia \$1000

Side by Side \$500

ACTS Carebags

between \$1500 and \$2000 value

Christmas Boxes

\$8000 - \$10000 for 65 recipients *Ed Street*, Chair

Easter Offering to St. Marc's School, Haiti - \$2425.00

Christmas Offering to Anna Julia Cooper School, Richmond - \$1028.00

Parish Life/Fellowship:

The Parish Life/Fellowship team has been very busy in the past year. Programs dropped during Covid began to come back to life. The Shrove Tuesday Pancake supper returned. We had two “soup and salad” events tied to our Lenten program. A farewell coffee hour for Rev. Judy Davis was followed by a welcome coffee hour for Father Benjamin. Following our expanded Palm Sunday coffee hour, things were quiet for Parish Life over the summer. A summer “goodie box” was sent to our remote parishioners. Things picked up again in September, starting with the “Welcome Back” coffee hour, the Installation Service and celebration for Father Benjamin on September 12th, and then the Parish Picnic at the end of the month. A fall goodie box was sent out to remote congregants in October. November and December were busy with holiday events, and Parish Life hosted several coffee hours. We were very pleased to contribute to the reception for the Ordination to the Priesthood of the Rev. Dale Smith, and to bring back the annual Epiphany Dinner on January 6th of 2024.

One of our on-going projects is organizing the kitchen. We have had several sessions to clear outdated/broken/unused items and to dispose of outdated foodstuffs. Some of our projects for the upcoming year are to organize and label drawers and cabinets, and to replace serving dishes, silverware, and table linens, as our budget allows.

We are continually looking for new ways to celebrate each other, our Parish, and

the church seasons. We would welcome any ideas from the parish. Just let a member of Parish Life know.

In keeping with the goals of the long-range plan we have added some new members, but could always use additional help. If you are interested in joining us, we'd love to have you. 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, or even work with us to implement an idea you have to enhance our life as a Parish. Please let any of the Parish Life team members know. We are always appreciative of any help.

Fred Crowley, Mickie Jones, Amanda Cline, Karen Franklin, Jenn McCauley, Edward Moyer, Gaye Frugard, and Elaine Wittel

Pastoral Care:

One of our core values at St. Mark's is that "We love each other." Pastoral Care is instrumental to doing that, and it blesses both the giver and the receiver. Simply put, Pastoral Care is us putting God's Love into action by caring for each other. And that happens in as many ways as there are parishioners.

It starts with being mindful of each other—noticing when someone is troubled (or reaching out if it is you who is troubled) and following up. Sometimes, there is something concrete we can do to help (e.g., provide a meal, run an errand, bring flowers from the altar, send a note, bring communion). But more often, just listening with compassion (and respect for privacy) is the gift of Love we provide each other. So often, life confronts us with challenges that can't be "fixed." But, having another person "be with," us is a gift from God.

St. Mark's Pastoral Care Committee meets monthly to share information regarding parishioners in need, degree of confidentiality the person wants, how we can help, and who will follow up. In addition, we are in constant communication throughout the month via email with staff and each other, as we become aware of parishioners in need. Cards are sent monthly to all on the parishioner prayer list. (Names remain on the list three months, unless there is a request for extension.). We also focus on our own needs for support, as a group and as individuals, by sharing meaningful readings or experiences.

And we occasionally break bread together.

In support of St. Mark's Strategic Plan, we have increased our numbers (current members Becky Adams, Margie Costas, Karen Franklin, Gaye Frugard, Jeanine Harper, Lisette Johnson, Brenda Sargent, Annette Spanel, Amy Strite). We are organizing an educational forum on advance directives for May 2024. Several of us take communion to parishioners who are unable to come to the altar through our home Eucharistic ministry. We coordinate with Parish Life for delivery of seasonal gifts and meals needed during a crisis, and with Worship for delivery of altar flowers.

Much pastoral care informally happens at St. Mark's among those who know each other well. But, if you feel especially called to this sacred ministry, please let us know—and join with us in living God's Love through our love for each other.

And, please reach out whenever you (or someone you know) feel you (or they) could use the loving support of your fellow parishioners. We bless each other in the giving and the receiving. You can reach out to the Rector, Priest Associate, staff, or any member of the committee.

Becky Adams, Chair

Property: Our Church Property is now 102 Years old:

In addition to the general daily and monthly routine work, maintenance, issues as well as expenses, overall in 2023 we had the opportunity to make some minor impactful improvement projects as follows:

A “Refresh” of the Rector's Office:

Since we were blessed and fortunate enough to have Benjamin Badgett to join us in March 2023 as our New Rector, we took the opportunity prior to his arrival to paint as well as clean the carpet in the Rector's office. In addition, Ralph Stanley donated new window shades for both windows in this office. These minor changes made a huge impact on the look and feel of this office.

EXTERIOR GROUNDS & EXTERIOR MAINTENANCE:

As the Visibility of our Church, Malinda and George Collier were both great assets in helping with the daily items. They were also very helpful with addressing

various exterior visibility/first impression items over the last year.

A Refresh of the CHURCH CHOIR ROOM:

Since we were blessed and fortunate enough to have Amos Goldie and his wife as our Director of Music Ministries, as well as the long-anticipated return of our Church Choir and various Music offering, we took this opportunity to refresh the Choir Room. Both Amos and Malinda were great assets and team members, along with Sanford, with our efforts to provide a brighter, cleaner, as well as a more welcoming and inviting Choir Room for our members.

The Sacristy: Removal & Replacement of the Countertops as well as a much larger New Sink and Faucet:

Communion and the Lord's Table plays a huge role every week in our Worship. As a result, we took the full return of our services this year as an opportunity to invest in our Sacristy. This work was paid for by a member/family of our Church. The work included the removal of the water damaged and worn-out laminate Countertop, Sink and Faucet. All these items were replaced with new Quartz/Stone Countertops along with a much larger stainless-steel sink, sink accessories, as well as a more appropriate large faucet with a spray mechanism.

The Children's Nursery: Removal & Replacement of the Carpet as something which holds both water / moisture damage as well as germs with a waterproof Luxury Vinyl Tile Wood Plank Flooring product:

The Future of our Church is in our Children and young families. As a result, this year we took the full return of our services this year as an opportunity to invest in our Nursery Room Flooring. There was also a freak flooding incident which occurred in this room in September.

This work was paid for by a member/family of our Church. The work included the removal of the water damaged Carpet and the replacement of the Flooring with a Luxury Vinyl Tile – waterproof Wood Plank flooring system along with new Base. Once again, Malinda was a great help and resource for this small, however a very impactful transformation of this room.

Our CHURCH PARKING LOT as an asset:

In spite of the lingering pandemic issues and outfall, we were successful in generating some income by renting out our Parking lot. We have continued our agreement to outsource the marketing and management of our parking lot. City Parking is continuing to market and manage our larger parking lot area, which does not include our smaller “Church Office” parking lot.

Our underlying goal is 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.

Overall, as more events evolve after the pandemic and people start attending major neighborhood area public events, we hope others and the community will utilize our Parking Lot outside of Church Hours to generate even more income for our Church. Some of these events would include:

The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts – any and all overflow events or outdoor events in the gardens can 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.

Property work we hope to accomplish in the Future:

A brief preface as well as some Background Information:

St. Mark’s Episcopal Church is planning for our future by way of determining what should be contemplated or accomplished related to Interior Repairs and/or Renovations to the main Sanctuary areas of our Church. With Benjamin Badgett now on-board as our new Rector, currently Benjamin and the leadership of St. Mark’s is diligently working towards determining both the scope of this endeavor as well as the financial resources that will be needed to accomplish such a major endeavor.

Stay tuned for more exciting news in 2024! *Brent Graves, Chair*

Stewardship:

Though St. Mark's certainly has some particularly generous parishioners, our church is dependent upon the breadth of the pledge base rather than the depth of individual pockets. Several years ago the Stewardship Team decided to underscore this reality by not publicizing the financial goal at the beginning of the campaign, only announcing the number of pledges we hoped to receive. Our aim was and is to affirm that, at St. Mark's, all pledges are valued. The amount of the pledge is less important than the fact of the pledge—the pledge as sign, the pledge as tangible commitment to our common life and work, in Christ.

It continues to be the Team's belief that a broad enough pledge response will naturally lead to a successful campaign, which has again proved to be the case. In homilies and postings we have underscored our long-term stewardship goal: to create a balanced budget without drawing down the church's investment account.

We hoped to raise at least \$355,000 for the 2024 fiscal year and exceeded that goal by \$2,600, bringing us closer to our multi-year goal, and doing so during a challenging period. It is important to remember that the larger the portion of the budget that can be funded by pledge and plate, the smaller the draw on the investment account—and the more secure our financial future will be.

Howard Pugh, Chair

Worship:

The Worship Ministry team's year was both busy & productive. We had the distinct pleasure of working with our interim rector, Rev. Judy Davis, until late in the Lenten season. With her we explored a variety of worship related activities & programs including, but not limited to offering "Ashes to Go" on the Arthur Ashe Boulevard on Ash Wednesday, and "Dinner Church" as our shared Lenten experience.

As Lent drew to a close, we were happy to welcome our new rector, Rev. Benjamin Badgett. For the remainder of the year, the team worked companionably with Benjamin to plan & conduct our services from Lent through Christmas. We did our best to share with him those things St. Mark's has traditionally done, as

well as things we might like to see. Benjamin proved to be a great listener & he had many helpful, relevant questions for the team.

We were especially heartened by a few things the team was able to accomplish:

We grew the team with the addition of Elizabeth Kyser & the return from sabbatical of Elaine Wittel.

The number of acolytes available to serve grew dramatically, in large measure due to the thoughtful efforts of Sanford & Malinda.

We welcomed several new readers & intercessors.

Paul was able to add a verger in Elizabeth Kyser, bringing the number who serve as such to five.

We successfully reinstated the practice of having children/families bring the bread & wine forward from the people to the alter for Eucharist.

We incorporated the lighting of the Advent Wreath into the liturgy throughout Advent thereby highlighting the importance of the wreath & the season, as well as facilitating greater lay participation throughout the season.

We very much look forward to continuing our work together into & through the new year, and of course would welcome anyone who might have an interest in participating in any aspect of this ministry.

Karen Hardison, Chair

Worship Assistants, Altar Guild & Floral Guild

The Altar and Floral Guilds ministries have now fully returned to regular Sundays, Holy Week, Easter and Christmas services for over a year. Hallelujah!

The Floral Guild has developed into a well planned system of involving regular weekly arrangers and additional folks taking on specific parts of special seasonal needs.

Some of these specific decorating aspects are setting up the nativity, placing Advent and Christmas wreaths, exterior garland with lights, floral arrangements for particular areas such as the chapel, narthex, nave windows, and Easter flowering of the cross.

Our smaller easily portable arrangements have been a big hit! After Christmas Eve and morning services every one had been taken to loved ones and friends by our members! This has been happening after regular Sunday services too. Many Thanks to everyone who helps with this important ministry of care and spreading the St Mk's Love!

The Altar Guild working with Rev. Badgett and our Vergers, has refined different aspects of our behind the scenes setting of the altar to help the celebration of the Eucharist to flow more smoothly. As well as supporting the Lay Eucharist Ministry, by preparing the communion kits. Along with our regular cleaning of the chancel, polishing the brass, silver and maintenance of our candles.

We now have 11 active altar guild members, 5 weekly floral guild arrangers and 5 additional who help decorating during big festive times.

Over Advent, Christmas to the Epiphany, the guilds gave over 65 hours of service! Palm Sunday, Holy Week and Easter we are hopping too. And extra folks helped immensely moving the trees and pews! Many Thanks to Everyone!

New members are always welcomed and NEEDED! During ordinary times serving on either guild requires about an HOUR once a month. Usually, a Saturday morning and right after worship. You'll be mentored and work alongside a seasoned person.

Please contact Sanford Eberly, Altar Guild Chair or Pam Piercy, Floral Guild Chair, if interested. *Sanford Eberly, Chair*

St. Mark's Episcopal Church
157th Annual Meeting Minutes
January 29, 2023

Call to Order

Meeting called to order at noon in-person and on Zoom

A quorum was declared by the Interim Rector, Rev. Judy Davis

Opening Prayer

The meeting was called to order by Interim Rector, Rev. Judy Davis

Minutes of 156th Annual Meeting

Motion to approve the 2022 minutes was made and seconded.

The minutes were unanimously approved.

The original minutes were lost so this is a reconstructed copy..

Election of New Vestry Members

Rules of election were explained

Appreciation was also expressed to the Vestry, especially the outgoing members, Ryn Kennedy, Isabel Tucker, and Jeff Dussault. Appreciation for the commitment of the Senior and Junior Wardens and the church staff were also shared.

The three candidates were presented; Scott Pennington, Paul Shane, and Blair McDuff. Their biographies were published in the bulletin.

There were no nominations from the floor.

Three new Vestry were elected

Business Meeting

Suzanne Long, Treasurer acknowledged all the support from the various ministry teams. Suzanne shared about upcoming church beautification projects. Staff changes including an interim rector and the impact on the church budget. Suzanne highlighted the positive impact of pledges and loose plate offering once back in the building.

Questions

There were no questions from the floor

Close of Meeting

After a closing prayer meeting was adjourned at 1:00 PM

Karen Franklin, Register



St Mark's

EPISCOPAL CHURCH

love is our tradition