



THE GOSPEL

According to Saint Mark's | November 2004

CANVASS UPDATE

An Open Letter From Pamela Lacey and Michael Knipe, Canvass Co-Chairs

AS THE CANVASS DRAWS TO A CLOSE, we would like to report our progress to the congregation. To date, many individuals and couples have visited with a fellow parishioner in a canvass visit. Not everyone opted for a canvass visit, but those who did reported that they found it a valuable and even enjoyable experience. By November 5, 225 individuals and couples have pledged a total of \$570,000 in 2005.

Last year's budget totaled \$781,300, and the 2005 budget would be similar. For details, see the canvass web page at: http://stmarks.net/about/financial/2004_budget_final.html.

Our goal is to raise \$800,000 in pledges of financial support for 2005. This would allow St. Mark's to maintain current staffing and programs and give a very modest cost of living increase to our clergy and staff. To reach this goal, we still need to receive \$230,000 more in pledges from the remaining individuals or couples who pledged last year but have not yet made their intentions known for 2005, and from newcomers who have decided they would like to help support their new church community.

It costs about \$1,800 per person (\$3,600 per couple) a year to maintain the building and our current staff and program level. We know not everyone can pledge at that level. But if all would pledge a percentage of their income, even if it is only one or two percent, we could attain our goal and afford to enhance programs for children, outreach, music and all that makes St. Mark's such a vibrant community.

The disappointing news is that, as in the past, only about two-thirds of the congregation have let the community know by the end of the canvass what they plan to give in the coming year. Typically, the remaining pledges dribble in over the course of November and December, causing the Vestry to engage in a guessing game about what the parish income will actually be. This year, please have a heart. Send in your pledge today and save the Vestry from nail-biting.

The St. Mark's canvass for 2005 officially ended on Sunday, November 7. To all who have pledged, thank you very much! To those who have not yet submitted a pledge, please do so right away. It is easy. Either fill out a pledge form and mail it to Susan Block at the St. Mark's office. Or just send her an e-mail at stmpadm@covad.net stating how much you plan to give to St. Mark's in 2005. Forms, the proposed budget, and the canvass sermon message are available on the canvass web page at: <http://stmarks.net/about/financial.html>. †

INSIDE

The Lord's Prayer	2
Rag Dolls	2
The Diocese	3
Parish Pillar	3
Ad Hoc Committee	4
Honduras Haiku	4
Something Brewing	5
Third Age	5
Mission Accomplished!	5

Communications at St. Mark's

by Matt Senger

IN LINE WITH OUR MISSION, St. Mark's invests significant energy in providing various ways to share news, concerns and matters of interest with one another and with those who might be interested in St. Mark's. The methods of choice include our website, newsletter, e-group, weekly announcements and bi-monthly calendar.

Ever since www.stmarks.net was started back in the mid-1990s, it has been an ambitious undertaking to provide a public face for St. Mark's on the web and a rich toolkit for our members. The basic look and structure of the site was developed by Art Engler, John Lineberger and Brian Gluckman. Today, the St. Mark's website contains hundreds of pages of information on our mission, worship and activities.

One of the things initiated more recently was to track usage of individual pages. While such numbers are never entirely accurate because of the way the data are collected, I'd like to share how these numbers break out.

Since we started count
Continued on p. 2



For a good time, see pg. 4

**Communications** *Continued from p. 1*

ing in July 2003, the home page has had just under 12,000 'hits.' After that, the most frequently used sections are the "about St. Mark's" page, the worship page, parish life at St. Mark's, arts at St. Mark's and the index of issues of the *Gospel*.

Sections that are primarily membership oriented, like Christian education, outreach and the weekly announcements, also get heavy usage (each with well over 1,000 hits). On the other hand, items that could be described as "nice to have" are not heavily used—although they are seen by a continuous trickle of visitors.

A different need is fulfilled through the monthly *Gospel*, which continues to evolve with each new set of editors. The *Gospel* appears monthly most of the year and seeks to report on parish events. Probably the biggest change is the move from a predominantly paper-based distribution to distribution on line. Traditional hard copy is still available for those who prefer to have something in their hand and as a hospitality item available at the welcome table.

While the website and the *Gospel* could be described as predominantly one directional, the St. Mark's e-group, <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/StMarks/>, seems to be the primary way about one-third of our members choose to communicate with one another about "hot-button" issues. Usage of the group varies widely (some choosing no mail, others a daily digest, and others individual e-mails).

What strikes me about the e-group is that it appears to be the way we tend to be most frank with one another, something undoubtedly fostered by the fact that the group is unmoderated. At the same time, I believe the "virtual" nature of the exchanges also makes the e-group particularly vulnerable to misunderstandings and unintended hurt. Perhaps this issue leaves room for further reflection. It is certainly not a phenomenon that is unique to the St. Mark's e-group, but common to all groups of this type. †

The Lord's Prayer

by Stephanie Deutsch

No one could have more positive feelings towards New Zealand than I. It's a magically beautiful, lush, exotic and unspoiled place, as I learned during three years of living there as a child and a return visit several years ago.

I also love the Lord's Prayer, the words that I have been saying since childhood and which, increasingly, seem to me the beginning of all prayer, a concise summation of much that I believe and hold dear. But I must admit that I do not enjoy the alternative Lord's Prayer from the New Zealand prayer book and do not like to use it during our worship.

Where tradition gives us simple language of great precision and strength that I (and everyone else) can recite with eyes closed, the New Zealand version is long, wordy and lumbering. We must read it. And in one key place I think it does not actually render the idea of the original. "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us" has become "In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us." This seems to ask for forgiveness without actually acknowledging why forgiveness is needed. Surely we don't need to be forgiven for absorbing hurts from one another, do we?

I prefer, painful as it is, to acknowledge my own trespasses or sins as one version of the prayer actually calls them. At least some of the hurts that people in the world have to absorb come from me. I am not always faithful and kind, generous and good natured. I need forgiveness and in the traditional, much loved words of the Lord's Prayer, I ask for it. I look forward to that on Sundays as an important part of our worship together, and I miss it when these other words are used. †

Rag Dolls 2 Love, Inc.

Have you ever ached for the children who are victims of war? Have you wished there were something you could do to bring a smile to the face of a child who is more familiar with violence than love?

Well, there is something you can do – you can help put hand-made rag dolls into the hands of children in countries ravaged by war, poverty and hunger. Rag Dolls 2 Love, Inc., offers the pattern and instructions for making the dolls and sends the finished ones (over 1,500 so far) to countries like Palestine, Israel, Haiti, Sudan and Iraq. This is a project started by a friend of mine, Mary Page Jones, who is married to the retired bishop of Wyoming. She has spent many years living in Israel and is a good friend of Karen and Tom Getman.

A few of us at St. Mark's interested in reviving our rusty needlework skills are meeting on November 16 to get started making some dolls. When we have figured out how to make these, we'd love to have others join us and learn how. And, of course, we each can continue working on them at home.

Interested? Call Nancy Van Scoyoc to see how you can help. There are many ways to be involved besides stitching – stuffing the dolls, getting materials, using fabric markers, wrapping for shipment, spreading the word to other groups, etc. Check out the website at www.ragdolls2love.org. For further details, call Nancy Van Scoyoc at 703 256-5664 or (cell) 703 201-6682. †



The Diocese and St. Mark's

Back in the mid-80s, it was rare that anyone heard or discussed diocesan affairs, save on rare occasions. Jim Adams was not particularly keen on the "upper echelons." That has changed significantly under Paul Abernathy.

For the record, Paul is a member of the Standing Committee of the Diocese and now also a candidate for clerical delegate to the 2006 General Convention. He served as co-chair of the bishop's search committee and is not at all reticent about being active in diocesan matters.

Enter the laity of St. Mark's. A church of our size qualifies for three delegates to the Diocesan Convention held each January. We rarely hear of convention activities, let alone about resolutions passed, unless they make the evening news. But that is about to change.

At our last parish annual meeting in April, you voted to amend our bylaws to hold our delegates more accountable.

They are now required to stand for election rather than be appointed by the senior warden as they were in the past. Our current delegates, Doris Burton (third year), John Barton and Raiford Gaffney (both first year) will be replaced in rotation over the next three years.

Being a delegate requires attendance at two events: the first is the regional meeting. Held this year on October 23 at St. Patrick's, the meeting attended by wardens and clergy, had three parts: *first*, a Eucharist celebrated by Bishop Chane, who gave a homily with essentially the same content as his presentation at St. Mark's on October 26; *second*, a presentation by George Hunter on his recent book on evangelism,* and *third*, nominations for various positions and consideration of possible resolutions to be presented in January.

John Barton will be a candidate for lay delegate to the Provincial Convention, and Doris Burton will be a candidate for

lay delegate to the General Convention. Also, Peter Byrne is standing for re-election to the Diocesan Council, a kind of vestry to the bishop. We will not be presenting any resolutions from Region 1.

If you know parishioners in other congregations, we ask you to help gain support for our candidates at the January convention. The activities and actions of the diocese may be new to you, so please ask us questions. St. Mark's is moving outside itself with the candidacy of these four. We welcome your interest and support.

** This book's proposal for growing a church is already being implemented in Region 6 (see the most recent issue of Washington Window for details). That part of the diocese includes rural Prince George's, St. Mary's and Charles' Counties...often smaller parishes whose circumstances and needs are quite different from urban and suburban parishes. George Hunter's 12-step proposal is posted on the vestry bulletin board. †*

Parish Life Pillar More Than Holds Up Its End

The Parish Life pillar was begun last year by Senior Warden Penny Hansen as a pilot program. The other four pillars have a narrower focus. Parish Life encompasses publications to social groups (see the Parish Directory for a list of programs and coordinators).

Of its latest ventures, the coffee hour and the Ad Hoc Committee to Have More Fun have been the most visible. But you're about to see our next effort. Starting in November, we will be soliciting ads for the skills you have, professional or otherwise, vacation homes you rent, white elephants you'd like to sell or items you need. *The Lion's Trading Post* will appear in January—but only if *you* patronize it.

There will be a form in the next bulletin and additional forms in the tract racks. Fill them out and drop them in the Trading Post box (location TBA)

or contact Doris Burton by e-mail, dmburton21@aol.com. This will be strictly a service for the use of parishioners only. Help us make it a success! †

Prayer List

Our prayers are requested for these members of our parish family:

*Taylor Adams
Linda Barnes
Paul Bugge and family
Richard Dobson
Verna Dozier
Elissa Feldman*

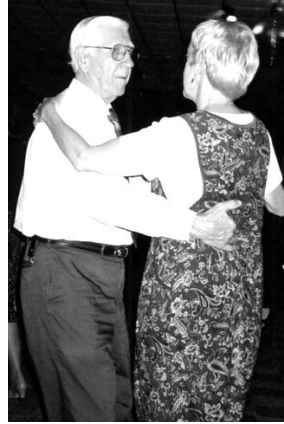
*Karen Gangloff (in Iraq)
Rick Rutherford
Marilyn Stiles
Reed Watts (in Iraq)
Nancy & John Yanish
†*



Is there really an *Ad Hoc Committee to Have More Fun?* And what the heck does it have to do with church?

I'm so glad you asked that question, Virginia! Let's take your second question first: yes, church is essentially about God and worship, but let's not forget "community"! We are a parish community—a religious group sharing our lives, not just worship time. What better way than to "have more fun"? (and, God knows, we can all use more fun!)

Now, Virginia—everyone knows what fun we have at dinner dances, and the parish fair was fun and cracking crabs together is fun, too. But all of those events require work on the part of a dedicated group if they are to happen, people who must also work throughout the event (and, ugh, clean up after). They often miss part or all of the fun everyone else has.



The AHCTHMF is designed to propose fun events where somebody else does the work. For example: 24 folks, of varying ages, trekked up to Blob's Park in Jessup, Maryland, on October 16. All we had to do was drive there, indulge in wurst or schnitzel or sauerbraten, chug down some German beer, flap our arms in the chicken dance and do our best to imitate polka dancing. We howled as the oompah band played rumbas and had a hoot of a good time. None of us had to bake anything or cook or wash a dish—how much more fun can you have?

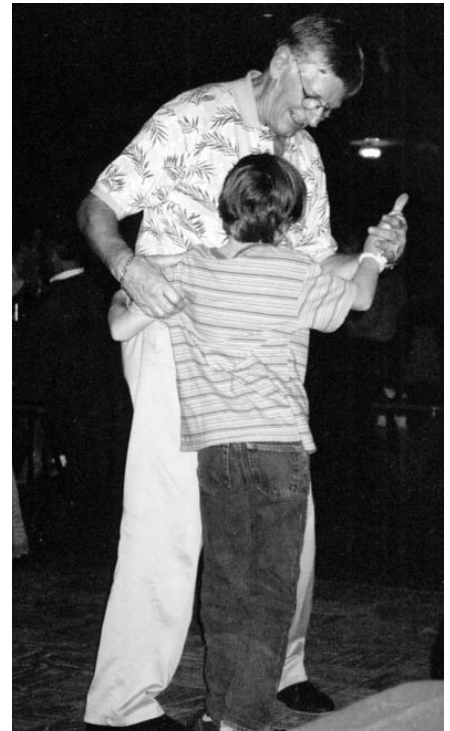
About the same number attended a Baysox game in August—dogs, beer and baseball in the summer and fireworks to boot.

Future events suggested include bowling, ice or roller skating (notice, young whip-snappers, I said skate not blade!), a theatre trip, a parish picnic (off campus). Inexpensive, accessible for anyone. What's YOUR idea? What more could you want? Contact Bart Barnes, George Meng or Doris Burton with ideas—one of us will help make it happen! †



Blob's Park

*Romping
and stomping
and twirling
and whirling!*



Honduras Haiku *by Randy Marks*

I sat on a newly finished pew in Honduras as we each received crosses made of plastic beads. It was a simple thank you. We from St. Mark's Episcopal Church were finishing a week of working, worshiping, playing and laughing with the people of our sister churches. On our 11th trip over 15 years, we renewed our connection to people who showed our wonderful teens that joy can flourish despite poverty. Blinking back tears, I wondered if God was laughing at the irony of our building pews when our Capitol Hill church had removed its pews years ago.†



“The Third Age” Comes of Age at St. Mark’s *by Sara J. Rau*

Call it what you will: Le Troisième Age, the Third Age, Super Sixties (and Beyond), or even Seniors. A new group has been formed at St. Mark’s, and we hope that some of the activities will appeal to those of you who comprise this, *ahem*, “age cohort.”

Initial coordinators are Bill and Sara Rau and Mary Welker. We put together a potluck lunch on September 25, at which people signed up for various activities and also chose issues to be discussed at the Third Age pre-election meeting held October 31.

We plan to convene about three general meetings each year—fall, winter and spring. A committee chaired by Peggy Pecore will decide the nature and focus of each get-together and coordinate the logistical details. Two dates and times have already been chosen: Saturday, January 29 and Saturday, May 21, both held during the day. There is a wild rumor that Bill Rau, Arnold Taylor and their group, the Jammers, may be musical headliners at one of these events. Many other exciting ideas are being vetted by the committee.

The most popular small group activity seems to be a travel club. We will try to chase away the winter doldrums with our first meeting sometime in January or February. We hope members will volunteer to lend their books on particular areas they have visited. We also will encourage reports on various travel agencies, travel insurance companies, airlines and trips members have taken. We may show a video from time to time and perhaps a member’s digital slide show. We also will discuss the possibility of taking some trips together as a group, either domestically or internationally.

We plan to form a writing group, but we have decided to wait a bit so we are not in competition with the journal writing class. Another hope is to inaugurate an oral history project, which will capture the memories of long-time members of St. Mark’s.

I like to quote my stepmother’s formula for successful aging: “Exercise your body, exercise your mind and exercise your social skills.” I might add, “Cultivate a sense of humor and expand your ability to care for others.” We hope that the Third Age program will help us meet all these criteria. Stay posted for further developments. †



If you haven't been to pub lunch lately, you might

SOMETHING NEW IS BREWING

not know that St. Mark’s has its own signature lager beer. St. Mark’s very own Winged Lion Lager was unveiled at the church fair in September. It was so popular that we decided to stock the pub in the parish hall with it on a regular basis.

Winged Lion Lager is brewed by St. Mark’s pub steward Rick Weber and is bottled at the Shenandoah Brewing Company in Northern Virginia. It’s an amber lager-style beer with a full-bodied taste and a clean, refreshing finish. And it is served exclusively in our parish hall during pub lunches.

A new batch of the Winged Lion is being brewed, and Rick says it should be ready in time for Thanksgiving Day weekend. So mark your calendar for November 28 and plan to come to pub lunch after services. If you’re a 9:00 o’clocker, go run errands or browse at Trover Books and come back for lunch at 12:30 so you can try Winged Lion Lager.

Also, Rick is brewing a Christmas ale that should be ready in December. The Christmas ale will be available in 22-ounce bottles, making them perfect holiday gifts for that beer lover on your list. You’ll be able to purchase the ale with pub tickets, and all the proceeds will go to support St. Mark’s. †

Mission Accomplished

by Jack Burton, Junior Warden

Hallelujah!

The tower restoration has been completed on time....on budget!!! Join us on Sunday, November 21, as we offer special prayers of thanks at each service and gather for a parish photo in front of the tower entrance doors between the two services. Nine o’clockers stay a bit late...eleven o’clockers, come early! Gather at 10:40 and be part of our history “as we look toward the future at all the strangers who will come after. We’re on a faith journey with them too.” †