



St. Mark's
+
Capitol Hill

Annual Report
to the Parish

February 28, 2025-February 1, 2026

February 8, 2026

17th Edition

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THE 2026 ELECTION

Senior Warden: Alix Pereira
 Junior Warden: Martha Huizenga
 Vestry Class of 2029: : Laura Gladstone, Randy Marks, Bo Ranney
 Diocesan Delegate: Randy Marks

Nominating Committee: Jim Brooks, SW (chair); Martha Huizenga (JW);
 Travis Beaty, Meg Platt, Todd Thorpe (outgoing Vestry)’
 Lea Crusey, Jan Lipscomb (Members of the Parish)
 Rev. Michele Morgan, Rev. Caitlin Frazier

To be elected by the Vestry:

Manciple

Treasurer

Assistant Treasurer:

Clerk

Vestry Counsel

From the editor—to the parish: This is our first attempt at producing an Annual Report since the date change of the annual meeting. While the report is complete, the editor apologizes for formatting and other errors you may detect: reports were still being received when working on the layout. The parish leaders who submitted reports must be commended for their efforts under pressure and will decide if they can do this again! dmb

BY-LAWS
ST. MARK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH +CAPITOL HILL, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Article I Members

101. Members Every person above fifteen years of age is a member of St. Mark's Parish for purposes of an election and has the right to vote if, at some time, in the 12 months preceding an election, that person has made a financial contribution to the Parish AND

- (a) been recorded in the register of the Parish as a member of the Protestant Episcopal Church **OR**
 (b) affirmed her/his wish to be a member in a manner as determined by the Vestry of the Parish.

Article II Parish Meetings

201. Annual Meetings The Members of the Parish will hold Annual Meetings on a date the Vestry shall designate between January 1 and March 31 of each year. At the Annual Meeting of the Parish the members voting must elect the Wardens, Members of the Vestry and a Lay Delegate by written ballot, and will transact such other business as properly comes before them.

202. Notice of Annual Meeting The Rector must give notice of the annual meeting at least one month before the day of the meeting by notice posted on the church bulletin board, in the worship bulletin, and on the parish website. In the Rector's absence or failure to act, the Senior Warden must give the notice. The notice shall specify whether the meeting shall be in-person, exclusively virtual, or in-person and virtual ("hybrid"). If the meeting is partially or completely virtual, the notice shall provide the information necessary to attend the meeting virtually.

203. Quorum Twenty percent (20%) or more of the members of the Parish constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the members of the Parish. If there is no quorum at the meeting, the members present must adjourn. The Rector (or Senior Warden, as appropriate) must give at least ten days notice of the reconvening of the adjourned meeting as required in Section 202.

204. Presiding Officer and Secretary The Rector, or in the Rector's absence or failure to act, the Senior Warden, will call to order and preside at the Annual Meeting. The Clerk will be the Secretary of the meeting. If the Clerk is not available, then the presiding officer will appoint instead a member of the Parish to serve as Secretary of the meeting. The Secretary of the meeting will (1) upon challenge, assist the Vestry to determine who of those present are members, (2) distribute the minutes of the previous meeting, and (3) take and record the minutes of the meeting, including a record of any votes.

205. Special Meetings A special Parish meeting may be called by the Rector, by a majority of the Vestry, or by petition of (50) voting members of the Parish, with at least ten days notice posted on the bulletin board, in the worship bulletin, and on the Parish website. If the special meeting is to consider a change to these By-laws, then at least thirty days' notice shall be given. The notice shall specify whether the meeting shall be in-person, exclusively virtual, or in-person and virtual ('hybrid'). If the meeting is partially or completely virtual, the notice shall provide the information necessary to attend the meeting virtually. The notice also must state the business that the Parish will consider at the special meeting. The notice must state the business that the Parish will consider at the special meeting. No vote may be taken on any business not included previously in the notice.

Article III The Vestry

301. Vestry. .

A. The Vestry consists of the Rector, the Senior Warden, the Junior Warden, and nine Members of the Vestry elected to the Vestry in accordance with section 403. Any priest or deacon who is a full-time salaried employee of the Parish will have a seat on the Vestry, but no vote.

B. Vestry members under 18. Vestry members under the age of 18 may not constitute a majority of the Members of the Vestry, nor may they be included in the computation of a quorum or vote on the acceptance of any contractual obligation of the Vestry.

C. Definition. For purposes of these By-laws, the term "Member of the Vestry" means the nine individuals elected to the Vestry in accordance with Section 403.

302. Vestry Meetings. The Vestry will hold stated meetings not less than once each month from September through June and at other times as the Vestry may determine by resolution. The Rector, the Senior Warden, or one-third of the Members of the Vestry may call Special meetings of the Vestry by delivery of not less than three days' notice to the Senior and Junior Wardens and to each Member of the Vestry.

303. Vestry Quorum Any four (4) elected Members of the Vestry (including the Wardens) constitute a quorum for the transaction of Vestry business. The act of the majority of the eligible voting Members of the Vestry present at the meeting will be the act of the Vestry.

Article IV Election of Wardens, Members of the Vestry, Lay Delegates, and Officers of the Vestry

401. **Eligibility** Candidates for the positions of Wardens, members of the Vestry, Officers of the Vestry and Lay Delegates must be members of the Parish. See section 101 of these By-Laws. In addition, candidates for Lay Delegates and Alternate Delegates must be confirmed communicants of the Protestant Episcopal Church.

402. **Nominations** No later than two months before each Annual Meeting, the Rector (or the Senior Warden in the Rector's absence or failure to act), with the approval of the Vestry, must appoint a Nominating Committee, consisting of the Senior and Junior Wardens, all outgoing Members of the Vestry, and at least two members of the Parish who are not Members of the Vestry. The Nominating Committee will place in nomination at the Annual Meeting at least one qualified candidate for each position of Warden, Member of the Vestry, and Lay Delegate open for election. The report of the Nominating Committee listing and identifying the candidates selected by it, together with the voting procedure, must be posted on the church bulletin board and on the Parish website at least one month before each Annual Meeting (and, if feasible, in the church newsletter). At the Annual Meeting the Nominating Committee will make its report, which action will place in nomination the candidates that it selected. Following the report of the Nominating Committee other nominations may be made from the floor.

403. **Election of Wardens, Members of the Vestry and Lay Delegates** Election of the Senior Warden, the Junior Warden, the Members of the Vestry, and a Lay Delegate is by written ballot (unless unopposed) by a simple majority of the members of the Parish voting at the Annual Meeting. The members of the Parish will elect three Members of the Vestry to serve three-year terms at each Annual Meeting, and may fill any vacancy on the Vestry created by the death, resignation, or removal of any Member of the Vestry before the end of that Member's three-year term. The Members of the Parish will also elect one Lay Delegate to the Regional Assembly and the Convention of the Diocese of Washington, to serve a three-year term, and may fill any vacancy of the three Lay Delegates created by the death, resignation, or removal of any Lay Delegate before the end of that Delegate's three-year term.

404. Tenure and Vacancies

A. Wardens. Except as provided in paragraph D.1, the Senior Warden and the Junior Warden will hold office for a two-year term, which begins at the Annual Meeting in which they are elected and which extends to the Annual Meeting two years hence. The Wardens may be elected to a one-year extension on their term before becoming ineligible to serve in the same office until the lapse of two years after the end of such terms.

B. Vestry. Except as provided in paragraph D.2, Members of the Vestry will hold office for a three-year term, which begins at the end of the Annual Meeting in which they are elected. After a Member of the Vestry serves a three-year term or over one-half of it, that person will not be eligible to be a Member of the Vestry until two years after the end of that three-year term.

C. Lay Delegates. Except as provided in paragraph D.2, Lay Delegates will hold a three-year term, which begins at the end of the Annual Meeting in which they are elected. After a Lay Delegate serves a three-year term or more than one-half of it, that person will not be eligible to be a Lay Delegate until two years after the end of that three-year term.

D. Vacancies.

1. Should a vacancy occur in the office of Senior or Junior Warden by death, resignation,

or removal of the Warden before the end of the Warden's term, the Vestry may elect a Member of the Vestry to fill the vacancy until the next Annual Meeting.

2. Should vacancies occur on the Vestry or among Lay Delegates by death, resignation, or removal of any Member of the Vestry or Lay Delegate before the end of the Member's or Lay Delegate's three-year term, the Vestry may appoint a member of the Parish to fill the vacancy until the next Annual Meeting, when the members of the Parish will elect a member or Lay Delegate to fill the vacancy. The newly elected Member of the Vestry or Lay Delegate may hold office only for the remainder of the term to which he or she succeeds.

E. Eligibility. No person completing five years' continuous service as a Member of the Vestry or as a Warden, or as both, is eligible to serve on the Vestry or as Junior or Senior Warden for two years. Members of the Vestry are not eligible for election as Warden before they complete their terms as Members of the Vestry or they resign from the Vestry.

405. Election of Clerk, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Other Vestry Officers, and Alternate Lay Delegates

A. Officers. At the first meeting of the Vestry after the Annual Meeting, the Vestry will elect by simple majority a Clerk, a Treasurer, and Assistant Treasurers, and such other officers of the Vestry as the Vestry deems the Parish needs.

B. Alternate Delegates. At the first Vestry meeting after the Annual Meeting, the Vestry will elect one or more Alternate Lay Delegates to the Regional Assembly and the Convention of the Diocese of Washington. An Alternate Lay Delegate designated by the Vestry assumes the duties and responsibilities of a Lay Delegate when the Lay Delegate is absent.

C. Terms of Office. All Vestry Officers and Alternate Lay Delegates serve one year or until their successors have been elected and begin to serve. A person may serve three consecutive terms in the same office before becoming ineligible to serve in that office for two years. A person completing five years of continuous service in Vestry offices, including that of lay delegate or alternate, becomes ineligible to serve in any Vestry office for two years.

406. Power to Remove The Vestry may remove any officer elected by the Vestry, with the exception of the Clergy, at any time by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the whole Vestry.

Article V Powers, Duties, Obligations, and Rights of Wardens and Vestry

501. Duties, Obligations, and Rights of Wardens

Senior and Junior Wardens will:

1. serve on the Vestry and generally perform and exercise all duties and obligations as are required by the Vestry, these by-laws, the laws of the District of Columbia, the Maryland Vestry Act of 1798, as in effect in the District of Columbia, and the Canons and Constitution of the Episcopal Church and the Diocese of Washington; and
2. have all rights and obligations of Members of the Vestry.

502. Powers of the Vestry.

A. **In General.** The Vestry has power to do and cause all things to be done that the Parish must do as a corporate body.

B. Specific Powers.

1. Rector. The Vestry has express power to issue calls to the Rectorship of the Parish under the provisions and requirements of the Canons and Constitution of the Episcopal Church and the Diocese of Washington. The Vestry may agree and contract with the Rector on such terms and conditions as it deems reasonable and proper. If there is no Rector, the Senior Warden will administer the Parish.

2. Committees. The Vestry will establish committees that it deems desirable and will establish procedures and guidelines governing the selection and tenure of the committee leaders and members.

3. Audit of Parish Books. At its December meeting each year the Vestry will designate either a Certified Public Accountant or any competent person or persons not directly connected with the financial affairs of the Parish and not Member(s) or Officer(s) of the Vestry to audit the Treasurer's books and records for the then current calendar year.

4. Property. The Vestry may sell, alienate, or encumber any real property owned by the Parish only if:
- a. the Vestry has the consent of both Wardens, at least four (4) Members of the Vestry, and the Rector, except that if there is no Rector in the Parish, the Vestry must obtain the consent of the Bishop of the Diocese of Washington; and
 - b. the Vestry has the consent of the Bishop and the Standing Committee of the Diocese required in Canon 6 of the Episcopal Church and Canon 29 of the Diocese of Washington.

503. Duties of the Vestry The Senior and Junior Wardens and Members of the Vestry serve on the Vestry and perform and exercise all duties and obligations as are, or may be, required by these By-Laws, the Maryland Vestry Act of 1798 as in effect in the District of Columbia, and the Canons and Constitution of the Episcopal Church and the Diocese of Washington. Their duties include:

1. act as judges at the Annual Meeting of the Parish, including deciding any issue concerning the inclusion or omission of any person on the list of qualified voters,
2. manage, control, and direct, with power to sell, alienate, encumber, or transfer all property of the Parish as provided in section 502;
3. elect a Rector, Assisting Clergy, Register, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurers, Alternate Lay Delegates, and other officers that the Vestry needs.
4. provide necessary books and records for the Register, Treasurer, and Assistant Treasurers.
5. file before March 1 of each year with the District of Columbia Government a report showing the purposes for which the tax-exempt property of the Parish was used during the preceding year;
6. make rules and regulations for the government and support of the Parish;
7. exercise the powers of a corporation and body politic as prescribed by the Maryland Vestry Act of 1798, as in effect in the District of Columbia, and the laws of the District of Columbia; and
8. sue and be sued on matters involving the Parish.

504. Duties of the Clerk The Clerk shall be:

1. act as a secretary to the Vestry and at the Annual or special parish meetings; and
2. generally act and perform by the provisions of the Canons and Constitution of the Episcopal church and the Diocese of Washington relating to clerks and secretaries of Vestries and by the laws of the District of Columbia.

505. Duties of the Treasurer

A. The Treasurer will:

1. act under the supervision of the Vestry;
2. except as otherwise directed by the Vestry, have charge and custody of all the monies and valuables of the Parish;
3. be responsible for the keeping of accurate and adequate records of the assets, liabilities, and financial transactions of the Parish; and
4. in general perform all the duties incident to the office of Treasurer and such other duties as the Vestry may assign to the Treasurer.

B. **Vacancy.** In the absence of the Treasurer, or the Treasurer's inability or failure to act, the Treasurer's duties will be performed by an Assistant Treasurer that the Vestry will designate after consultation with the Treasurer

C. **Bond.** The Treasurer and the Assistant Treasurer designated by the Vestry under subsection B must furnish a corporate bond or surety in an amount that the Vestry will determine. The cost of the bond or surety will be paid by the Diocese of Washington, or, if not, by the Vestry.

Article VI Rector

601. Duties. In matters concerning the duties of Rectors or Ministers, the dissolution of pastoral relations, and the filling of vacant cures, the Canons and Constitution of the Episcopal Church and the Diocese of Washington govern the Rector and the Vestry of the Parish.

Article VIII Amendments

701. Procedures. The members of the Parish may amend, modify, or repeal these By-Laws by vote of two-thirds of the members of the Parish voting at any Annual or Special Meeting of the Parish, provided that the Vestry gives notice of the proposed amendment, modification, or repeals by posting the

proposed amendment, modification, or repeal on the Parish bulletin board and on the Parish website at least one month before the Annual Meeting.

702. Effect These By-Laws have full force and effect when the members of the Parish adopt and replace the current By-Laws and supersede any By-Laws of the Parish that may be in effect before the members adopt these By-Laws.

Adopted at the Annual Parish Meeting, April 3, 1964

Amended at the Annual Parish meetings of:

April 16, 1971: 15-year-olds eligible to vote in parish elections (discovered 6/2022)

April 7, 1972: creates committees; limits wardens' terms to 2 years; limits Vestry/wardens' service to 5 years; requires Vestry member complete their term or resign [does not fix a date] before running for warden; diocesan delegate to attend diocesan convocation; revises language when Vestry term changed from 8 members for 4-year terms to 9 members for 3-year terms (discovered 2/8/23)

April 23, 1976 Unknown*

April 15, 1977 Unknown*

April 16, 1982: Art I: removed the \$2 contribution requirement to vote; voided 3/15/15; Sec 301A: Added 'any clergy or deacon at St. Mark's has a seat on the Vestry but cannot vote';

Art. IV.A4: Vestry can direct the actions of the Treasurer (discovered 2/8/23 in Rev. Abernathy's files)

1985: date of annual meeting set: 1st Friday in February or before Ash Wednesday, whichever is earlier

April 8, 1988 unknown*

April 19, 2004: Sec 405B: election of Diocesan Delegates; some 90 minor stylistic changes; 7 changes approved but not identified

April 19, 2009: Sec 201: established new date(s) of Annual Meeting on 2nd, 3rd, 4th Sunday in Lent

March 15, 2010: Sec 101: definition of member

March 26, 2017: Sec 404A: Wardens' term changed from 1 to 2 years with opt. 1-year extension

March 5, 2023: 4 amendments: Sec 201 changed date of Annual Meeting; Sec 202/204 allowing virtual or hybrid meetings; Sec 204/405A/504 changed Register to Clerk; Sec 701 allow bylaw amendments at Special meetings of the Parish

**The dates of amendments but not the content appear in versions of the Bylaws before 2009; no record of the contents has been located*



Parish Banner created by Jacquie Binns and gift to the parish

Proposed changes to the Bylaws
indicated by bold type or, if removal, by striking out those parts to be removed

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(2) The Vestry shall approve the minutes of any Annual or Special meeting or have the next Annual or Special meeting approve them.

205. Special Meetings A special Parish meeting may be called by the Rector, by a majority of the Vestry, or by petition of (50) voting members of the Parish, with at least ten days' notice posted on the bulletin board, in the worship bulletin **or announcements**, and on the Parish website. If the special meeting is to consider a change to these By-laws, then at least thirty days' notice shall be given. The notice shall specify whether the meeting shall be in-person, exclusively virtual, or in-person and virtual ('hybrid'). If the meeting is partially or completely virtual, the notice shall provide the information necessary to attend the meeting virtually. The notice also must state the business that the Parish will consider at the special meeting. No vote may be taken on any business not included previously in the notice.

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402. Nominations No later than two months before each annual meeting, the Rector (or the Senior Warden in the Rector's absence or failure to act), with the approval of the Vestry, must appoint a Nominating Committee, consisting of the Senior and Junior Wardens, all outgoing members of the Vestry, and at least two members of the parish who are not members of the Vestry. The Nominating Committee will place in nomination at the annual meeting at least one qualified candidate for each position of warden, member of the Vestry, and Lay Delegate open for election. The report of the Nominating Committee listing and identifying the candidates selected by it, together with the voting procedure, must be posted on the church bulletin board and on the parish website at least one month **two weeks** before each annual meeting (and, if feasible, in the church newsletter). At the annual meeting the Nominating Committee will make its report, which action will place in nomination the candidates that it selected. Following the report of the Nominating Committee other nominations may be made from the floor.

**Annual Parish Meeting Minutes
February 2, 2025 In Person & Virtually**

CALL TO ORDER: Rector Michele Morgan called to order the 2025 annual Parish meeting at 12:00 PM. Assistant Rector Caitlin Frazier offered the Opening Prayer. Assistant Clerk Ryan Baugh announced that a quorum was met with at least 152 voting members on site and at least 13 attending remotely.

MINUTES The from the 2024 Annual Meeting were approved as read. Michele announced that the Vestry will pass the minutes for this meeting.

REPORTS

1. Treasurer Doug Ammon presented his report noting that the church finished 2024 with a surplus and that the Vestry approved a budget that funded all requests and made significant increases to the diocesan pledge, Music, and Youth and Family Ministries.

2. Caleb Nelson Amaker (Youth and Family Ministries Director) and Meg Platt (Vestry Liaison) presented a brief report.

3. Edna Boone & Holly Kreutter (Board Chairs) presented a brief report about our Service & Social Justice programs.

4. Martha Huizenga (Junior Warden) reported on efforts to maintain the building and to make it safer and more secure.

5. Jim Brooks (Senior Warden) called attention to the Annual Report* and discussed our abundance and the charge to live into it.

NOMINATIONS The members of the Nominating Committee were Senior Warden James Brooks (ex officio); Junior Warden Martha Huizenga (ex officio); Rector Michele Morgan (ex officio); Hank Donnelly, Jan Lipscomb, and Nick Rogers (retiring Vestry members); and Kathleen Frydl (Parish Representative). For the Nominating Committee, Jan Lipscomb and Katherine Buchanan reported that the Committee nominates Jim Brooks for Senior Warden and Michael Knipe, Jan Lipscomb, and Mary Neznok for Diocesan Delegate.

The Committee knew there would be additional nominations from the floor. The following were nominated from the floor to run for the Vestry: Katherine White, Mary Ellison, Ben Flowers, and Joyce DeCerce. Nominations were closed.

The Diocesan Delegate nominees spoke briefly about their interests.

The 2028 Vestry nominees and one proxy (Mary Miller for Ben Flowers, who was ill) and Mary Ellison (via zoom) spoke briefly about their interests and a question that the Nominating Committee posed in advance (their hopes for St. Mark's and for our neighbors).

ELECTIONS Nick Rogers explained the voting process, which was by electronic ballot using ranked-choice voting, with paper ballots available for those who wished to vote that way. Rob Hall moved and Nick Rogers seconded that Jim Brooks be elected Senior Warden by acclamation. The motion carried. Jan Lipscomb was elected as Diocesan Delegate for a three-year term, having received the most ranked choice votes, and Mary Neznok for a two-year term, having received the second most ranked choice votes. Katherine White, Ben Flowers, and Mary Ellison were elected Vestry members.

CLOSING The Rector presented gifts to the retiring Vestry members and Frank Nickerson, Tom Getman, Jane Byrne, and Jason Campbell.

Deacon Thom Sinclair offered the closing prayer.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:39PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Marks, Clerk

Ryan Baugh, Assistant Clerk

2026 ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA *Draft*

February 8, 2026

Opening Prayer

Call to order

Announcement of Quorum

State of the Parish/Leadership Reports

Bylaw Amenments

Elections

 Nominating Committee Chair

 Wardens

 Vestry 3-year term

 Diocesan Delegate

 Nominations from the Floor

 Responses from Candidates

Call for the vote (or) motion

Results of the Elections

Final Acknowledgments

Blessing and Closing

Adjournment

MAJOR ACTIONS OF THE VESTRY February 2, 2025-January 27, 2026

DATE	RA: Rector's Action, SWA: Senior Warden Action, VA: Vestry Action Date of action is listed by year-month-date (2024-03-13=March 13, 2024)
VA-2025-02-02	Elected Treasurer: <i>Douglas Ammon</i> ; Assistant Treasurer: <i>Roy Phillips</i> ; Assistant Treasurer for Special Gifts & Bequests, <i>Frank Nickerson</i> ; Clerk: <i>Randall David Marks</i> ; Assistant Clerk: <i>Ryan Baugh</i> ; Risk Manager: <i>Nick Simons</i> ; Vestry Counsel: <i>Rosemary Harold</i>
VA-2025-02-25	Approved the Minutes of February 2, 2025, Annual Parish Meeting.
VA-2025-02-25	Set the date for the 2026 Annual Meeting for February 8, 2026.
VA-2025-02-25	Approved the 2024 Parochial Report.
VA-2025-02-25	Appointed Patricia Leitner as Manciple.
VA-2025-02-25	Approved Navajoland Trip Fundraiser.
VA-2025-02-25	Approved organ repair work.
VA-2025-03-25	Approved modifications to the 2025 Operating Budget.
VA-2025-04-29	Approved a Navajoland Trip Fundraiser.
VA-2025-05-27	Approved another Navajoland Trip Fundraiser (babysitting).
VA-2025-06-24	Proposed By-Laws amendments for consideration at a membership meeting.
VA-2025-07-22	Established the Music Endowment Fund.
VA-2025-09-23	Appointed Randy Marks as a lay Delegate to the 2026 Diocesan Convention.
VA-2025-09-23	Approved signature authorities for the Endowment Funds held at Vanguard.
VA-2025-09-23	Amended the 2025 budget.
VA-2025-09-23	Approved the transfer of Building Reserve funds for the lighting project design.
VA-2025-10-28	Approved a fundraising effort for hunger programs.
VA-2025-11-18	Approved supporting the postulancy of Jason Campbell.
VA-2026-01-06	Approved a revised Complaints Procedure.
VA-2026-01-06	Approved a youth pilgrimage Shrove Tuesday Fundraiser.
VA-2026-01-27	Approved the 2026 budget.

ANNUAL MEETING ATTENDANCE OF REGISTERED VOTERS		
MEETING	REGISTERED VOTERS	VESTRY REGISTER
March 10, 2012	186	Mary Anderson Cooper
March 13, 2013	166	Mary Anderson Cooper
March 30, 2014	155	Mary Anderson Cooper
March 15, 2015	215	Blair Ford
March 13, 2016	179	Mary Anderson Cooper
March 26, 2017	190	Mary Anderson Cooper
February 25, 2018	No record	Mary Anderson Cooper
March 24, 2019	140	Mary Anderson Cooper
July 12, 2020 ¹	174	Kim Bayliss
March 14, 2021 ¹	176 devices/417	Kim Bayliss
March 27, 2022 ³	108 online	Kim Bayliss
March 5, 2023	64/127 online	Shay Waye
February 4, 2024	140/15 online	Mary Anderson Cooper
February 2, 2025	152 ⁴ /13 on line	Randy Marks

¹Because of Covid-19 shut-down mid-March, 2020, the next two annual meetings were held on zoom.

²The count in 2021 was difficult to manage and should not be considered accurate.

³The 2022 meeting was hybrid and only devices were counted.

⁴The minutes stated "at least" 152 and "at least 13."

VESTRY REPORTS

Senior Warden *James Brooks*

Our community continued to live in a period of abundance during 2025. Despite a challenging environment in our city and in our nation, especially the job losses among federal workers, we experienced growth in pledging members, in average Sunday worship attendance, in Sunday School enrollment, and in programmatic activities. While a series of stress points were ever-present week to week, the community leaned into its calling for hospitality, social justice, faith and compassion.

To sustain our community growth the parish made strategic investments in our building and in our programs for children, youth and families, for music, for outreach beyond our walls, and for hospitality. Thanks to multiple bequests we are repairing the tower doors, installing an upgraded sound system and launching a design process for improvements in lighting. The children's choir has seen significant growth and further expansion is expected. A commitment was made to host a multi-day parish retreat in June 2026 which follows successful retreats in 2025 for families with young children, the centering prayer group, and both the adult and children's choirs.

Finally, we continue to contribute to efforts for the betterment of our city and our world. Whether through the Washington Interfaith Network (WIN), Everyone Home DC, Samaritan Ministry, local food banks, immigrant assistance networks, incarceration ministry, partnerships in Navajoland, and global campaigns to secure peace in war-torn lands, our community resolved to give of our time, talent and treasure.

These are some examples of specific program activities arranged by theme for 2025:

Service to the Community

- Feeding the hungry: collecting soup cans for the Capitol Hill food bank, food bags for Samaritan Ministry, monthly Grate Patrol meals, hot meals for Shirley's Place, and monthly meals for migrants;
- Migrant assistance in conjunction with Migrant Solidarity Mutual Aid: food donations to families, providing accompaniment to court and ICE hearings, post detention care to families whose loved ones have been deported, sorting clothes for respite centers, and being part of ICE "watches" at a food distribution center;
- Support for refugee families in partnership with the Congregation Action Network and Faith in Action such as providing apartment furnishings, bedding and linens and toiletries;
- Incarceration Justice programs to support educational needs of incarcerated youth with learning differences; letter writing campaigns and visits to incarcerated persons; a guest speaker series to build knowledge on the issues which included Maya Chaudhuri, staff attorney, DC Public Defender Service, focusing on individuals eligible for resentencing under Incarceration Reduction Act and Courtney Stewart, Chairman and CEO of the National Reentry Network for Returning Citizens, and the DC Jail Frederick Douglass Project for Justice; Free Minds Book Club and "Write Night" program of shared poetry and reflections by persons who were formerly or still remain incarcerated;
- Justice in Palestine focusing on Palestinian detainees including a "Fasting for Gaza" event/ June;
- The Lenten Mite Box collection in support of migrant and refugee families generated \$3881.85;
- Support for housing, homelessness and poverty alleviation in our neighborhood and city with Everyone Home DC and the Washington Interfaith Network (WIN);
- The Good Friday offering to Al-Ahli Episcopal hospital in Gaza and St. Luke's hospital in Nablus raised \$7,316;
- Hosting the annual victims of gun violence vigil supporting the Newtown Action Alliance;
- A youth trip to Navajoland as well as educational initiatives regarding Indigenous rights and justice issues.

Education and Learning

- Special programs devoted to how people of faith can walk together in a time of disruption, fear and strife including the third iteration of the "Community" class;
- Class: Exploring Our Faith Journeys – finding belonging in a faith community;
- Workshop: Roots of Injustice, Seeds of Change: Towards a Right Relationship with Native Peoples;
- Me and My Chosen Family: relationships outside biological family and how these impact our lives;
- New Women in Transition: discerning a faithful response to life-altering situations;
- Whatever You Believe or Do Not Believe – exploring key parts of Christian faith and tradition;
- A Lenten series How to Pray, led by Rev Patricia Catalano and Jason Campbell;
- The Belongings Class was fully enrolled with 22 spring and 20 in the autumn;
- A four-week class on exploring the Bible enrolled twelve participants.
- "My New Reality - My Life Post-Covid," explored how we connect, work, and live in 2025, sustain ourselves going forward;
- Judgment: Be Ready for the Family Meal at Thanksgiving.

Music and the Arts

- St. Mark's Players presentation of "Metromaniacs", adaptation of a French farce by Piron, "On Your Feet! The Gloria & Emilio Estefan Musical", and "PUFFS, Or 7 Increasingly Eventful Years at a Certain School of Magic and Magic"
- Multiple choral evensong services here and a dozen performances in England as part of a choir tour;
- Performances by The Chiarina Chamber Players, Carson-Newman University A Cappella Choir, the Washington Bach Consort Noontime Cantata Series, Haverford & Bryn Mawr College Chamber Singers and the Khachaturian Trio;
- Three "Sandbox" concerts introducing young children to an interactive music experience.

Parish Life

- Invigorated greeter program and pool of volunteers; an added monthly “Coffee and Connection for “newish” folks to chat with clergy and parish program leaders;
- 20s & 30s program with the podcast “What if Fire is Just Love” with Sister Helen Prejean; the podcast discussion is a monthly gathering as is a monthly brunch;
- 20s & 30s hosted a professional networking event for those facing employment loss or who are in transition;
- A series of Newcomer dinners through the Membership Committee for potlucks and conversation;
- Participation in Capital Pride Parade and Capitol Hill July 4th Parade;
- A “Third Agers” lunch and a Sunday lunch once a month.

Children, Youth and Family Ministry

- Family Ski trip – 30 kids and 29 adults
- Confirmation class – 12 new confirmed persons - 9 youth and 3 adults;
- Review of CYFM strategic planning as part of a regular cycle including a parish forum in June;
- Shrove Tuesday pancake dinner to support the summer youth service project in Navajoland;
- Youth service project (March 29) Anacostia Watershed wild rice seed planting;
- Youth and family participation in the Capitol Hill Classic fun run and competitive races;
- Six youth and three adults summer service trip to Navajoland;
- Seventeen youth choir members on a Memorial Day weekend retreat;
- Hired a new Children, Youth and Family Minister - Lisa Ramish;
- More than 106 children and youth enrolled in Sunday School for 2025-26.

Worship, Prayer and Meditation

- Daily online centering prayer and a special prayer retreat;
- Lenten prayer class: the transformative nature of a disciplined prayer life,
- Worship attendance figures for the year rose to 14,320; up 21% from last year;
- Mid-Lent worship music from Mozart’s “Missa Brevis” accompanied by a string quartet.
- Purchase of new hangings designed by the Altar Guild and crafted by a British liturgical artist
- Installation of the newest acolytes and creation of a Head Youth acolyte

Our Sacred Space

- Significant maintenance of the organ;
- Repair of a stained glass window;
- Repair of the tower doors;
- Commissioning of a new sound system;
- Commissioning of a design study for an improved lighting system;
- Restoration of the nave columbarium

Junior Warden *Martha Huizenga*

Our building is in fairly good shape. In 2025, our property expenses were under budget by 2%. I expect expenses to go up in 2026 especially for utilities and service agreements. We have contracted with vendors who will be helping us maintain our church for the better and create less stress for the Parish Admin and the Junior Warden.

We are still working through the approval process for the FEMA grant we were awarded in 2023 from the Dep. of Homeland Security to improve safety and security in our facility. This project will refurbish the Nave doors, add better door locks and improve access control, accessibility and security for the entire building. We are also working on improved lighting in the Nave as well as repairing the stained-glass clerestory window on the east side of the Nave.

In January we upgraded our sound system. Many of these repairs and improvements are being paid for by the generosity of our beloved parishioners who have left bequests for property improvements. In terms of everyday items, we passed the elevator inspection; made extensive repairs to the nave columbarium wall (which had developed cracks); cleaned and upgraded the organ (See music report);

repaired water damage to the library on the west wall and a window; have done numerous HVAC repairs to the Dance Studio and kitchen; upgraded the canister lights in Baxter Hall and finished the Emergency Response Plan for the church.

I appreciate the help of many people to keep our building repaired and looking good. I would like to thank Jim Pittman (JW, 2019-'22), for his time and work on so many of our repair projects; Samantha White, our Parish Administrator for meeting contractors and making sure things run smoothly, as well as Kenn Allen (JW, 2017-'19) for his guidance and help meeting vendors, and all those on our Fabric Committee, Jim Pittman, Kenn Allen (JW, 2017-'19), Doris Burton (JW, 2015-'17), Charlie Rupp (JW, 1989-'91), Don Gangloff, Michael Summey (JW, 2013-'15), David Wellman (JW, 2019-'21), Janet Vail, Katherine White and Melissa Zimmerman, who step up when needed with historical knowledge and support.

Finance Committee Douglas Ammon, *Treasurer*; Roy Phillips, *Assistant Treasurer*; Frank Nickerson, *Asst. Treasurer for Special Gifts and Bequests*; Elizabeth Becker, Chris Berendes, Katherine Buchanan, Harrison Donnelly, William Jordan, Kristina Keenan, Jan Lipscomb, Lawrence Lokken, Jeb Ory, Meg Platt, and Nicholas Simons, *Members*. Todd Thorpe, *Vestry Liaison*; Annick Milde, *Parish Finance Administrator*; James Brooks, *Senior Warden* Martha Huizenga, *Junior Warden*; Rev. Michele Morgan: Rev. Caitlin Frazier

The Finance Committee is pleased to report that our finances are in good condition, that our church continues to do well both in caring for our resources and positioning ourselves for future growth.

Duties: The Committee generally meets monthly and has the following duties:

- Review our finances every month, with an in-depth, mid-year review and report of its analysis to the Vestry.
- Recommend the annual budget to the Vestry.
- Monitor our financial operations and make necessary policy recommendations to the Vestry.
- Assist and advise the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer(s). Ideally, serve as a source of talent to fill these positions.

Parish Financial Condition (as of December 31, 2025)

Vestry Checking Account: \$330,455

Satellite Organizations Checking Account: \$87,037

Vanguard Accounts: \$3,327,901

Endowment Accounts: \$1,454,089

Reserve Accounts: \$1,873,812

2025 gain in Total Current Assets: \$452,734 (including unrealized gains in Vanguard accounts)

Funding for Endowment Projects: \$68,404

Funding for Reserve Projects: \$162,158

Financial Highlights

The above operating “actuals” ended the year with a net deficit for the budget categories of \$-41,160. The net operating income was \$61,252 considering the non-budget operating income and expenses.

One notable non-budget income was \$103,676 from the Employee Retention Tax Credit.

We received 4 bequests totaling \$27,000 that were added to the Vanguard Building Reserve. Additional revenue of \$243,391 was received and added to the Vanguard Federal Money Maker holding fund the Estate of Raiford Gaffney which included \$500,000 gift from 2024.

The annual performance (Net Asset Value) of the Vanguard Star Fund and Vanguard Federal Money Market Fund was 15.86% and 4.22%, respectively.

Endowment Board funded \$68,404 for non-routine building repairs, Altar Guild, archives, music, arts, scholarships, and organ upgrade projects.

The reserves funded \$162,158 for organ upgrade, lighting design, sound upgrade projects and interim music director.

2025 Financial Results

Operating Budget Categories	Actual	Budget	% of Budget
Income			
Total Pledge Revenue	\$ 970,929	\$ 947,504	102%
Miscellaneous Revenue	\$ 78,648	\$ 77,000	102%
Satellite Organizations Contributions	\$ 15,940	\$ 13,700	116%
Use of Building	\$ 64,857	\$ 60,000	106%
Surplus Transferred from 2024	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	100%
Total Income	\$1,155,375	\$ 1,123,204	103%
Expenses			
Administration	\$ 64,471	\$ 74,500	88%
Total Compensation	\$ 744,449	\$ 727,096	102%
Ministry Outside	\$ 106,900	\$ 97,500	110%
Parochial Ministry	\$ 42,512	\$ 42,720	100%
Property	\$ 237,203	\$ 242,025	98%
Total Expenses	\$1,196,535	\$ 1,183,841	101%
NET OPERATING DEFICIT	\$ -41,160	\$ -60,637	
Non-Budget Operating Categories			
Employee Retention Tax Credit	\$ 103,676		
Other Non-Budget Operating Revenue	\$ 24,320		
Non-Budget Operating Expenses	\$ -25,584		
NET OPERATING INCOME	\$ 61,252		

The table is based on accounting information as of January 22, 2026; excludes \$279,391 bequests revenue moved to reserve accounts; endowment projects, building reserve projects and various "pass-thru" categories.



2026 Operating Budget Categories	2026 Budget
Income	
Total Pledge Revenue	\$ 982,000
Miscellaneous Revenue	\$ 86,250
Satellite Organizations Contributions	\$ 13,700
Use of Building	\$ 70,000
Transfer Employee Retention Tax Credit Balance	\$ 60,000
Total Income	\$ 1,211,950
Expenses	
Administration	\$ 75,800
Total Compensation	\$ 769,684
Ministry Outside	\$ 105,000
Parochial Ministry	\$ 67,300
Property	\$ 260,100
Total Expenses	\$ 1,277,884
NET OPERATING INCOME/ DEFICIT	\$ -65,934

STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE VESTRY

RACE & RECONCILIATION *See the 2024 report for a history of this committee; currently inactive*

STEWARDSHIP Todd Thorpe, Vestry, Rev. Michele Morgan, Rev. Caitlin Frazier

Last year's pledge campaign centered around the theme "Peace Through the Storm" was a success despite entering 2025 with much uncertainty and anxiety because of the incoming Administration's promised significant upheaval, DOGE and buyouts of federal workers.

Our theme was "Peace Through the Storm", chosen by Caitlin to reference the story of Jesus calming the waters. We also utilized this icon "prayed"* by our own Tracy Council. Each pledging individual or family received a magnet with the icon printed on it. We wanted to highlight how St. Mark's has been a place of peace for all of us in this difficult year, but also a place where we find strength and motivation to bring peace to others.

The committee, in consultation with the clergy, decided the focus of the pledge campaign should be on the total number of pledging units instead of a goal of a specific dollar amount. The committee set the ambitious goal of 300 pledging units and, by January 27, 2026, we have received 298 pledges - just 2 short of our goal. This is up from 276 pledges made in the 2025 campaign.

Because of the challenges felt by so many last year, the campaign also focused outreach to members who felt economic uncertainty, encouraging them to pledge \$20.26 as a way to show their continued support and participation in the parish.

Building on the successes from the 2025 campaign, the 2026 campaign also included personal witness of the importance of St. Mark's to individual parishioners, during all three services, during the six-week campaign. The goal this year was to highlight a mix of newer members and established members each sharing their personal stories and email testimonials reprinted in the e-Gospel.

In addition to mailing solicitation letters, the campaign also included email follow ups and phone calls to members of the parish with several volunteers from the parish making calls.

- As of January 27, 2026, the 2026 stewardship campaign results:
- Amount pledged: \$1,035,669 (compared to \$1,023,723 in 2025)
- 298 pledging units (compared to 276 in 2025)

This achievement is a testament to St. Mark's generosity. The funds raised will help maintain the physical needs of our church, and continue to support our ongoing programs and outreach efforts, ensuring that we can continue to serve the wider community.

Membership Committee Jeb Ory, chair; Terri Poxson-Pearson: Vice-Chair

Members: Amber Macdonald, Mary Tarnowka, Jeremy Sierra, Izzie Hirschy, Randy Marks, Caitlin Frazier; Mary Ellison (vestry liaison),

This year was one of the strongest periods of growth and engagement we have seen in recent years, and the Membership Committee was focused on doing one thing well: helping people feel they belong.

14,320 people attend services in 2025, a 21% growth from 2024 attendance, itself up 12% from 2023. Our attendance is not just growing but accelerating.

Sunday school now has more than 100 children registered, requiring the creation of new classes to meet demand. We have a thriving youth group for 6th grade and up, and new tween-focused social justice programming. Meanwhile, the choir is growing with the new introduction of the Community Choir with 30 participants in its inaugural practice, $\frac{2}{3}$ of the participants as new to St. Mark's.

We are also seeing growth in our pledging units. As of December 31st, 2025, we had 276 pledges towards our 2026 pledge goal, up from 235 units in the same period on December 31st, 2024. That is a ~15% increase in pledge units. If the trends continue, we will end 2026 with at least 315 pledge units, 5% over our goal of 300.

The committee focused on building many small, open doors for people to enter and connect. Key initiatives this year included:

Newcomer Dinners, which created meaningful, small-group connections and produced new volunteers for greeters and parish life roles

A Family Retreat, which strengthened relationships among parents and children

Name tags: brought back and easy to wear, which makes it easier for newcomers to be recognized and welcomed

Brought back weekly greeters at the Sunday morning services. Having greeters present each week provides a warm welcome for our increasing number of visitors and newcomers

Updated "membership journey" that helped identify current processes and where to focus more efforts

Fresh visual communications for Advent and Christmas, including banners, signage, brochures, mugs, and pins that made St. Mark's presence clearer and more inviting

Behind these activities is a simple philosophy: community drives growth. People stay not because they scanned a QR code but because they were invited to dinner, greeted by name, or found a smaller group where they could connect.

Looking ahead, the committee is focused on systematizing what works — expanding monthly dinners, Re-launching the Liturgy of Commitment, supporting Claggett, the annual parish retreat to be held June 28th-30th, and improving leadership continuity through a clearer chair-succession model.

Together, these efforts will help ensure that we continue not just to grow but to grow in a way that is both sustainable and spurred on by the divine spark in all of us.

MEMBERSHIP							
Year	Pledge units	Pledges Adults	Child/pledging Members	Visitors	Ave. Sunday Attendance	Baptized Members ²	Communicants/Good Standing ³
2004 ⁴	340						
2005	328						
2006	384						
2007	419						
2008	390					830	
2009	362	534	137	233	291	+31/-5=856 ⁵	654 (536A/128Y) ⁶
2010	379	559	142	399	284	+28/-2=882	676 (541A/135Y)
2011	390	572	143	227	319	+27/-7=902	715 (572A/143Y)
2012	345	513	145	160	296	+22/-25=899	720 (575A/145Y)
2013	335	494	109	76	287	+36/-15=920	740 (580A/160Y)
2104	331	483	103	135	269	+21/-2=939	759 (582A/177Y)
2015	297	430	n/a	n/a	262	+31/-362 =608 ⁷	608 (377A/231Y)
2016	309	443	153	108	274	+13/-3 =618	618 (375A/243Y)
2017	326	463	103	106	279	+25/-7=635	635 (375A/260Y)
2018	331	477	123	155	284	+22/-6=651	651(371A/280Y)
2019	272	520	342	161	284	+26/-15=662	662(520A/142Y)
2020 ⁸	285	414	156	16	291	+20/-21+=570	570(414A+156Y)
2021	248	362	36	86	212	+21/16+=575	570(441A+156Y)
2022	254	356	34	26	172	+5/-11=569	⁹
2023	246	341	0	2	197	+6/-12=563	⁹
2024	258	358	32	182	247	+40/-7=596	⁹
2025	276	375	61	247	276	+61/-7=650	⁹

¹Age 18/younger

² Recorded in the official Parish Register via Baptism, Confirmation, or Letter of Transfer.

³ All baptized members who contribute time, talent, and money to support the life and mission of our community.

⁴ Included as a baseline; numbers from 2004-2007 recovered from an annual meeting document found in archives.

⁵ Plus numbers reflect baptisms, confirmations, reception (from another congregation); minus numbers reflect deaths or transfer to another congregation

⁶ A (Adults) Y (Youth)

⁷The drop in numbers is the result of a 'clean-up' of the parish records done periodically by clergy.

⁸ Reflects shut down of regular services re: COVID-19 pandemic

⁹ This information was not calculated as earlier numbers are thought to be inaccurate. This information will not appear in future reports until accurate numbers can be determined. If not, the column will be eliminated.

COLUMBARIA Penny Hansen, *chapel sales*; Doris Burton, *nave plaques*

The original columbarium was installed on the west wall of the chancel in 1975 and fully subscribed by the 1990s. Niches vary slightly in size and may hold two sets of cremains. This year, cracks in the wall were discovered requiring new supports be installed. Niche plaques are cast bronze. Both fully cast plaques or 'add on' plates are created by Matthews International, a foundry located near Pittsburgh and one of only two foundries on the East coast. The order form lists the choices: the current price of a fully cast plaque is about \$1000 (prices are set by Matthews).

A second columbarium was installed in the Chapel of the Nazarene in 2006. Each niche holds one set of cremains. The plates have standardized lettering and engraving is done by SignCraft of Annapolis. The cost is included in the price of the niche, \$1500. 64 niches remain available.

To order a plaque for the nave columbarium, contact Doris Burton (dmburton21@gmail.com). To purchase a niche in the chapel columbarium, contact Penny Hansen (pennyhansn@aol.com).

COMMUNICATIONS Chris Berendes, reporting; *Live-stream team*: Charlie Rupp, David Deutsch, Christoph Berendes, Elin Whitney-Smith, Matthew Dodge and ,new for 2025, Rosemary Harold, Benjamin Wang, and Eva-Dee Beech.

Over the past 18 months, the website team, which posts web announcements and events to stmarks.net every weekend. We lost two of our four members: Pamela Blumgart (RIP, 2024) and Andrew Stafford (retired to St. Paul, MN 2025).

For the first time in at least seven years, we've added five new volunteers. In addition to spreading out the workload, it's been hugely helpful to get new eyes on this process and to document how we work. We're also grateful for the ongoing efforts of Edna Boone who identified the 72 most prominent pages on our web site, assigned responsibility for each page to appropriate clergy, staff, and parish managers, and now is shepherding the process of reviewing and updating the pages.

We welcome the hands-on efforts of pillar co-chairs for Christian Education (Rita Ossolinski) and Service and Social Justice (Edna Boone) in reviewing and maintaining their information directly and the active and comprehensive partnership of the vestry clerk (Randy Marks) in keeping administrative content up to date. We're also grateful for the improved collaboration with clergy and staff, which has made our weekly posting process smoother and has led to a greater proportion of sermons posted in a timely way.

The Membership Committee continues to step up by reviewing the home page and key other pages from the perspective of "church shoppers" and others new to St Mark's and suggested ways to streamline menus and make text more informative.

The live-stream team continues its work, handling 66 live-streams since January 1, 2025 (regular Sunday worship, special services for Advent and Holy Week, celebrations of life, special parish events and outside groups that need technical support). On a typical Sunday, 12-15 people will be watching the service live, and there are more folks who catch up with the service later in the week.

Since each event requires two volunteers, this amounts to 132 volunteer slots team members filled. We're relieved to report that our team has grown to six parishioners, with two more in training. We're grateful for the support of the four-person team that represents "St. Mark's" and monitors Facebook comments during the Sunday live-stream, for greater collaboration with clergy and staff to ensure that live-stream links are publicized accurately and in a timely way, and for the entire worship team that alerts us to unusual aspects of particular services.

LEGACY LIONS Kenn Allen, *reporting*

Legacy Lions was launched in 2017 as our planned giving program and to recognize those parishioners who have made commitments to St. Mark's in their estate planning. We now have commitments from 78 people.

In 2025, Legacy gifts were received from the estates of Eileen Blumenthal, Rick Warfield, Margaret Wood, and Raiford Gaffney. Raiford's gift ultimately will approach \$1M. With the support of her close friends, Elin Whitney-Smith and Chris Berendes, parish leadership has sought appropriate ways to invest the funds in projects that will strengthen the physical fabric of the church.:

- Installation of a new sound system in the nave (underway)
- Design/install new lighting system in the nave (under review; installation planned for summer)
- Restoration of the exterior nave doors in conjunction with the FEMA-funded security upgrades
- Cleaning the nave ceiling beams (under consideration with work planned for summer)
- New projects in support of improved accessibility so all may come to St. Mark's safely and fully engage.
- Under consideration: improvements to the parking lot, to the lower level exterior doors, and the bathrooms

While there are not yet definitive plans for how any remaining funds would be committed, a new Endowment Fund is likely.

We are most grateful to those who have indicated they have made advance plans for legacy gifts to the parish. Their names are listed at the back of this report.

DIOCESAN CONVENTION '26 Jan Lipscomb, Randy Marks, Mary Neznec, JR Randall (Lay Delegates); Rev's Michele Morgan, Caitlin Frazier, Patricia Catalano (Clergy Delegates)

Bishop Budde opened with her 'state of the diocese' remarks. She described three new congregations being grown with diocesan support: one non-traditional community model in Bowie, one east of the Anacostia, and a wilderness congregation to meet the spiritual needs of those who find deep connection with nature. Bishop Budde's message included the need to care for each other especially in these challenging times of job loss and vulnerability in our immigrant community. This is a time for a call for justice and mercy while acting with a spirit of love, even for those with whom we disagree.

An immigration justice resolution passed with 98% support. The message included priority to uphold principles of dignity, mercy, and justice with principles enshrined in the rule of law with respect to US immigration policy throughout the land:

Dignity not hate, not mass Deportation, no silence

Sponsored by clergy/churches from the diocese and staff from the Cathedral.

"He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." (Luke 4:18-19)

Resolved: that the 131st Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington, as people of faith, honor our baptismal covenant to seek and serve Christ in all persons loving our neighbors as we love ourselves, to strive for justice and peace among all people and to respect the dignity of every human being. Therefore, we reaffirm our support for Migration with Dignity; **and be it further resolved...**

That we oppose U.S. government actions that (1) halt refugee resettlement programs; (2) terminate temporary protected status (TPS) and humanitarian parole for many categories of migrants; (3) sharply restrict migrants' ability to seek asylum; (4) conduct mass arrests of migrants; (5) deport migrants to foreign prisons and countries other than their countries of origin; (6) give the green light to enforcement within houses of worship, schools, and hospitals; and (7) defy U.S. courts by failing to carry out their orders; **and be it further resolved...**

That the Episcopal Diocese of Washington encourage members of the diocese to advocate that relevant governing bodies promote Migration with Dignity by cancelling and repealing these actions and programs and by enforcing existing laws and policies on behalf of refugees, migrants, asylum seekers and displaced persons and enacting new laws and policies guaranteeing their welcome, protection, and integration into our communities; **and be it further resolved...**

That the Episcopal Diocese of Washington offer a Migration with Dignity formation program to engage Episcopalians in this diocese with the plight of refugees, migrants, asylum seekers and displaced persons.

The resolution stressed the importance of both speaking and acting against policies that foster hate, mass deportation, detention, and separation of families. The role of the church is to speak out and not be silent in the face of injustice or disregard of the rule of law unfolding towards our sisters, brothers and children in our migrant communities.

Other business: Rev. Morgan was elected as clergy deputy to the 2027 National Convention to be held in Phoenix.

The Diocesan budget was passed with explanation of the formula used to assess each church's financial contribution. The operating budget is assessed as the overall benchmark and not revenue from building rental or earmarked endowments of individual churches. A full budget report included details that the overall EDOW asset pool increased in part because the market is doing well, increases in revenue from pledges, endowments, and from building use. Overall assets increased by 6% against liabilities.

The understanding is that these are estimated assessments, suggested contributions to diocesan budget. Churches with limited operating budgets, lower membership base and endowments are understood to be given flexibility in capacity to pay versus large, historically more heavily endowed congregations in the EDOW.

Note: the final decision about how much we or any congregation contributes resets with the vestry.

ENDOWMENT *Kim Bayliss, Co-Chair; Karen Wiedemann, Co-Chair, Matt Ossolinski (Architect), Michael Summey (Treasurer), Malissa Zimmerman (Secretary); ex officio members: the Rector, Senior Warden, Junior Warden, Vestry Treasurer.*

The Endowment was created by the Vestry in 2002. It provides a way for parishioners to contribute to the long-term needs of the Church through donations to several funds (listed below). These funds support projects within specific areas of church life including its buildings and grounds. The Endowment does not pay routine expenses or supplement the operating budget, which is supported primarily by annual pledges.

A five-member board, approved by the Vestry, manages the Endowment. Their responsibilities include establishing individual Endowment Funds; accepting gifts, bequests and donations; investing the funds in a diverse and balanced portfolio in order to achieve stable growth; and distributing the fund's assets consistent with the Endowment and the individual fund charters.

Contributions and bequests are currently invested in the Vanguard STAR Fund (VGSTX), which follows a balanced investment approach by placing 60-70% of its assets in common stocks and 30-40% in bonds. It is a low-cost, well-managed fund that is appropriate for the Endowment's moderate to conservative investment goals. During the year 2025, the fund had an annual return of 16% (compared to a return of 17% on our target benchmark).

Each year an amount of each fund available for distributions is calculated based on 5% of the 3-year rolling average of the fund's valuation as of December 31 of that year. Available amounts that are not distributed in a given calendar year accrue and remain available for distribution in subsequent years. The sum of these two amounts—5% of the average fund valuation plus all accrued and undistributed amounts from prior years—constitutes the "distributable amount" of each fund. This method of disbursement computation is the most commonly used method in the non-profit world.

Description of Funds

Building Preservation Fund: Set up in 1998 from sale of the rectory, this fund provides for improvements to church facilities.

Hoitsma Fund: Set up in 1981 through a gift from the Hoitsma family, this fund provides for long-term building improvements not covered by the operating budget. **(General Fund:** This fund receives general bequests and donations to support non-building related projects that further the overall mission of the church.

Verna Dozier Fund: Initially established in 2000 from funds donated, but not needed, for the Dozier

window in the nave clerestory, this fund provides scholarships for college-bound seniors at Dunbar High School. Among criteria for selection is a student essay describing a person who made a deep impression on him/her as he/she was growing up. The Dunbar Alumni Federation (DAF) selects the recipient(s).

Craighill Dance Fund: Set up in 1984 by a gift from the Craighill family to support the St. Mark's Dance Studio, this fund also includes the Beryl Martin Memorial Scholarship Fund for promising dancers.

Arts Fund: This fund was set up in 2002 to receive bequests and donations to benefit the arts at St. Mark's.

Holtkamp Organ Fund: Set up in 1998, this fund provides for the capital needs of the Holtkamp organ. The Music Director requests disbursements.

Music Fund: Set up in 2025, this fund will be available to support St. Mark's music programs.

The Endowment charter also provides that the Endowment should set aside funds every year toward a periodic survey of the condition of the parish properties

2025 Activity; Fund Balances; 2026 Distributable Amounts In 2025, the Endowment paid out a total of approximately \$59,500 for a variety of different projects, including partially funding the cleaning and repair of the Holtkamp organ, supporting children's *Sandbox* concerts and a retreat for the children's choir, funding repairs to a broken clerestory window, completing work on security and evacuation plans and associated staff training, and new embroidered altar hangings.

The following table summarizes all activity (contributions and distributions) in each of the Endowment funds in 2025, as well as the corpus of each fund at December 31, 2025, and distributable amounts in 2026 based on the formula described above.

12/31/25 BALANCE	FUND	2025 ACTIVITY	2026 DISTRIBUTABLE AMOUNT
\$386,232	Building Preservation	\$2,513 paid for consultants to help develop plans to repair and refinish the Nave doors	\$83,478
\$318,151	Hoitsma	\$12,000 donation \$7,020 paid for stained glass repairs	\$75,275
\$190,834	General	\$10,286 paid for finalizing security and evacuation plans and associated training, new embroidered altar hangings, and design and production of the Easter at St. Mark's display	\$35,220
\$ 79,457	Dozier	\$6,000 paid for scholarships	\$10,127
\$327,400	Dance	–	\$105,400
\$ 103,916	Arts Fund	\$4,512 paid to fund <i>Sandbox</i> concerts and a retreat for the children's choir	\$41,103
\$43,120	Organ	\$29,105 to partially fund organ cleaning and repairs	\$2,84
\$ 0	Music Fund	Established	\$ 0

The Endowment Board's email address is Endowment@StMarks.net. If you have questions about any of the Endowment Funds, or you would like to make a contribution, please contact us at this address or contact one of the Board Members.

ADVISORY COMMITTEES *Betsy Athey, Chair*

These have been assisting our clergy, wardens, seminarians and staff since 1975. They are usually composed of a lay convener and 4-6 parishioners who represent a microcosm of our community, are connected to parish life, and serve generally a 2-year term. Each committee supports a leader by offering to be a "sounding board," focusing on issues central to the work and life of the principal and providing feedback as requested. Regular monthly attendance, confidentiality, and the courage to "speak one's truth" are expected.

In February 2025 a new Advisory Committee began its work:

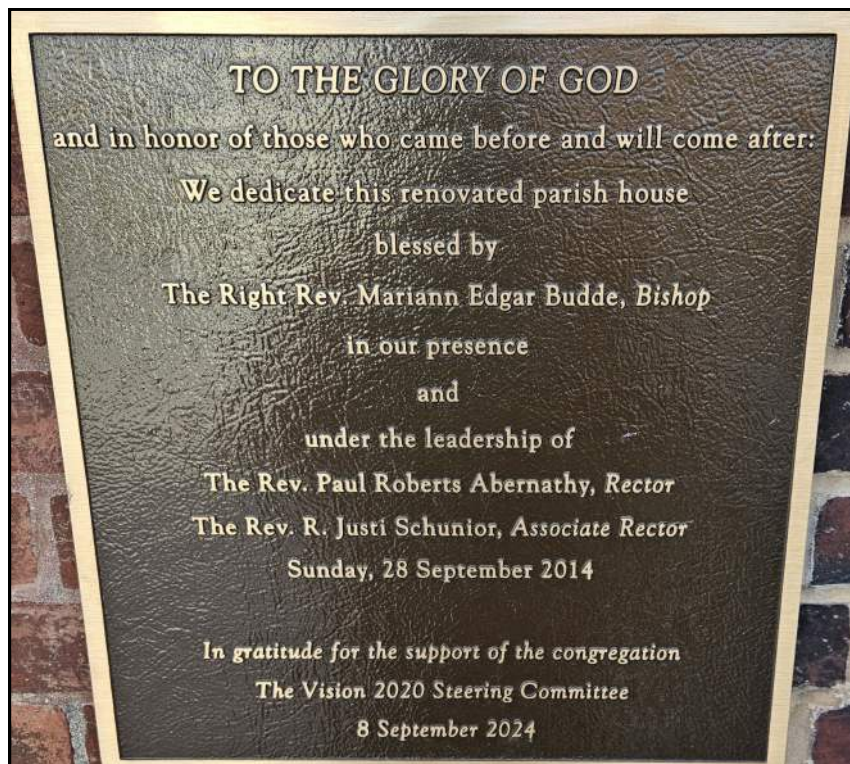
Assistant Rector's Advisory Committee (*Jennifer Cate, Convener*)

If you are interested in being considered to serve on an Advisory Committee, contact the Chair at atheylloyd@comcast.net.

ELDERS *Betsy Athey, Bruce Sherman, Conveners*

This group includes all former Senior and Junior Wardens and Directors of Christian Education. They meet upon the request of the wardens, co-directors, clergy or other parish leaders. An annual dinner for Elders and spouses is held, usually in the spring.

There are currently 53 Elders living in the area and many continue to be deeply involved in church activities. Nationwide, 64 remain in contact. In June, we convened to enjoy our annual dinner. 17 Elders and spouses attended along with Rev. Michele Morgan.



The plaque commemorating the 10th anniversary of the Vision2020 project which expanded the parish house. This year, 2026, marks the 100th anniversary of its construction.



REPORTS FROM THE PILLARS

WORSHIP

*The Worship Committee is inactive. Planning of services is done by the clergy
The coordinators listed held these positions through most of 2025.*

Laying on of Hands; *Adjunct Clergy*; Live-stream *David Deutsch, Charlie Rupp (see report under Standing Committees)* ; Head Verger *Josie Jordan*; Acolytes *Doris Burton (9 & 11:15)*; Co-Sacristans *Susan Ryerson, Doris Burton*; Ushers open; Bread & Wine *Joe Tarantolo (9), Marshall Thorpe (11:15)*; Chalice Bearers *Deacon Tom Sinclair, Matthew Viator*; Readers Guild *Maureen Shea (9), Andrew Stafford (11)*; Morning Prayer *Chris Berendes & Elin Whitney- Smith*

ALTAR GUILD *Susan Ryerson, Doris Burton, Co-Sacristans*

The Altar Guild, a body of 15 active members, has the responsibility to set and strip the altar for Eucharist as well as to care for our brass and silver. Since all the brass was re-lacquered in the past 5 years, this has lifted a major part of our work, leaving only polishing the silver as a regular responsibility.

This year, we completed a major project: the replacement of the paraments (hangings) for Common Time (green). Checking our records, we learned they were a gift of John Terry and, as a kit from Almy, made by Jo Ellen Hayden, dating to ca.1985. We designed a new set to reflect the three areas feeding St. Mark's: Washington, Maryland, Virginia. Doris contacted Jacquie Binns, a noted liturgical artist in Britain, who designed/fabricated our banner. Ms Binns submitted sketches and the guild approved. We approached the Endowment Board for funding since the cost would run about \$2200 and was approved. This summer, with the set complete, Doris collected them from Ms Binns after the choir tour. They were presented and dedicated in October. While the new set, made of beautifully embroidered dupioni silk, will be used during summer/fall, we will continue using the older set during Epiphany since they are wool and appropriate for winter.

We have also accepted the task of preparing for all the silver and brass to be appraised as it has not been done in about 35 years.

VERGERS *Josie Jordan, Head Verger*

A verger's duty is to ensure that the clergy and worship participants have everything they need to fully participate in the service. From distributing bulletins to setting up the sound system and marking the Gospel book, vergers oversee and manage the many people who make each worship service happen. The 2025 Verger Corps had eleven members across the three weekly services. In addition to overseeing all of the 2025 services, members of the verger corps served at eleven memorial services. (*Note: The Verger Corps was founded by Art Engler following the choir's visit to Lichfield Cathedral in 1996. Art noted the efficiency of the services as a result of their leadership and organized the first group in 1997*)

GREENING *is designed/overseen by parish volunteers*

Easter '25: Bridey Heing and Jason Wallis led the effort with day-of support from Hannah Harkey and Claire Cody. Jason and Bridey visited Potomac Floral Wholesale, Linden Lane, Silver Spring on Holy Saturday for flowers and the team decorated early that afternoon. Bridey returned early the following week to clear the flowers and clean up.

Christmas Greening was also led by Bridey Heing and Jason Wallis, with support from Doris Burton, Jason Campbell, and others. Mary Cooper once again installed *Chrisamons* on two trees, and Maureen Shea presided over the set-up of the crèche, created by Betty Foster. The Advent wreath, a gift from Scilla Adams in the 1980s, was located in front of the baptismal font on the new stand.

ACOLYTES *Doris Burton, Coordinator*

The Corps now consists of 8 youths and 5 adults. 6 of the youths serve at 9, 3 at 11:15. In February '25, the 4 new members were installed and Madison Thorpe was named Head Youth Acolyte and presented with a special cross for that position. She serves as a consultant to the coordinator. At the same time, the wood processional cross, commissioned by the late David Mead, former coordinator, was named the Acolyte Cross. New members have been recruited will be trained in March. We also recognized the service of the late Liz Layton who died Dec 2024, and was a faithful and dependable member for many years

CHALICE BEARERS *Rev. Thom Sinclair, Matthew Viator*

This group re-formed after the Covid pandemic with new guidelines for those who serve. Members are volunteers who are trained and serve on rotation. After Rev. Sinclair left (he is now working at the cathedral), verger Matthew Viator took over scheduling and training. Those interested should contact him.

READERS' GUILD *9am coordinator (open); 11:15: JT Spivey*

Those who like to read scripture or prayers during services and are comfortable reading aloud, are welcome to contact the coordinators. Members read on a rotating schedule.

CENTERING PRAYER *Rev. Patricia Catalano (see Adjunct Clergy report)*

MORNING PRAYER *Elin Whitney-Smith, Chris Berendes, co-conveners*

Note:

Laying on of Hands, Ushers, Bread & Wine coordinators do not submit reports.



Jacquie Binns, British liturgical artist who created our banner with one of the new hangings/paraments presented October 2025. This is the lectern fall representing Maryland (Wye Oak, black-eyed Susan, blue crab, Baltimore checker-spot butterfly); the set includes a pulpit fall (representing Washington, DC) and veil (representing Virginia.)

All three include the Mark Olds Cross given to the parish in 1892 by a parish organization of young girls.

Liturgical Services								
Year	Sunday	Weekday	Private Eucharist	Marriages	Burials	Baptisms ¹	Morning Prayer ²	Compline ²
2009	104	21	16	4	2			
2010	144 ³	42	8	5	4			
2011	141	58	9	9	5			
2012	145	54	8	9	1			
2013	133	54	0	10	8			
2014	140	60	2	9	8			
2015	135	46	3	0	8			
2016	156	48	3	4	8			
2017	153	58	0	3	7			
2018	162	63	8	2	7	20		
2019	153	57	6	3	8	n/a		
2020 ⁴	92	3	33	2	3	3	1600 ⁵	300 ⁵
2021	121 ⁶	26	3	3	5	8	156 ⁵	60 ⁵
2022 ⁷	148	40	0	0	11	5	382 ⁸	90
2023	146	5	0	2	12	5	136	00
2024	152	4	4	7	13	12	150	0
2025	144	9	5	3	10	10	136	0

¹Statistics added in 2018

²Services added during Covid pandemic shut-down;

³Reflects the establishment of a 3rd service

⁴Covid shut-down occurred March 12, 2020; number reflects in-person services prior to shut-down

⁵# of services not available; number reflects total attendance; Reflects total attendance over the course of months

⁶In person services resumed June, 2021

⁷Statistics missing from 2022 report; included in 2023

⁸Morning Prayer and Centering Prayer gatherings combined

⁹Compline was eliminated in late 2021

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION Annabelle Swift, *Co-Director 2023-26*; Steve Dalzell, Rita Ossolinski, and Rob Hall, *Co-Directors 2024-2026*

Introduction: In our second year as a co-director team, we continued organizing our efforts by thinking of the four ways adult education fits into our lives: Strengthening us, enlightening us, inspiring us, and comforting us.

The heart of Christian Education is community. This is a reflection of the long-standing, thriving Centering Prayer community, Wednesday Bible study, Meditation Center, 20s/30s group, and others. This year we had several very strong iterations of our Belongings class, another women's retreat, and third round of the Community class, looking at where we are going as a body. Other new offerings explored the ways our community can help individuals deal with life's challenges, whether they are related to

jobs, pandemics, or our own special families.

As Peter Mosley wrote about the Bible Study class, “Our questions, curiosity, and our conversation are fundamental. There is no one interpretation that wins.” This can be more broadly applied to all of the Christian Education program. Our mission is to present a range of educational opportunities that strengthen, enlighten, inspire, and comfort us.

Christian Education Philosophy: The goal of the lay-led Adult Christian Education Program is to provide a variety of open-hearted, innovative, experiential, and creative educational opportunities that connect us through our stories and experiences to each other and to the people who came before us. Each class holds out the promise of openly engaging one another in our life experiences so that, as we worship together, take and teach classes together, and serve the greater community together, we grow and thrive as a spiritual community.

Program Summary:

Artistic Expression (*None in 2025*)

Episcopal Theology

Episcopalian 101 This short course is offered multiple times a year to provide an opportunity to understand the history and theology of the Episcopal Church. In 2025, it was offered in January-February, and April-May. *Leaders: Rev. Michele Morgan, Annabelle Swift*

How to Pray Especially in times of trial, we humans resort to prayer; we ask God for help. However, prayer is much more than asking. During seven Saturdays in Lent, this class discussed various prayer forms that can be used to deepen one’s faith journey and develop a spiritual discipline.

Leaders: Patricia Catalano, Jason Campbell

The Bible: Then and Now is an open and welcoming class that meets for one hour on Zoom, Wednesdays at noon. The class focuses on reading the Bible while being aware of the lenses we use to find the messages biblical writings contain and, therefore, the meanings for us now. Studying contextually the first two chapters of Matthew invited the participants, through allusion, to study Hebrew scripture. Listening to their personal and collective despair and fears evoked by the behaviors of the government invited them to study Lamentations and the strange but natural movement toward doxology. Participants deepened their individual conversation with God and re-ground themselves in their belonging to each other and to St. Marks: wonder and gratitude happening.

Leader: Peter Mosley

Baptism Course for Parents is a facilitated discussion for parents to explore the Liturgy of Baptism and how it relates to their understanding and expectations of parenthood. The course is offered in the spring and fall, and consists of two one-hour sessions.

Leaders: John Edwards and Kate McFadden

Cracking the Bible was about how to approach the sacred texts of Christianity, looking at the history of the biblical canon, literary genres of writings, approaches to Bible study, and more.

Leader: Caitlin Frazier

Whatever You Believe or Do Not Believe was a one-day workshop where parishioners shared what they believe about topics like communion, miracles, and prayer, and how these beliefs make a difference in their daily lives. *Leaders: Bill Jordan and Rebeckah Taylor*

Judgement: Be Ready for Family Meal at Thanksgiving was a two-part class, beginning with an examination of what judgment is, why we judge, what our faith tradition says about judgment, and what it reveals about ourselves. The second session helped participants learn practical tools to reduce harsh judgments and reframe them with empathy and discernment.

Leaders: Edna Boone & Steve Roberts

Centering Prayer and Meditation

Centering Prayer meets almost every morning on Zoom at 8:00am. These sessions explore the early Christian contemplative practice that emphasizes interior silence.

Leader: Rev. Patricia Catalano

St. Mark's Meditation Center Parishioners and members of the community from all backgrounds gather on Monday evenings from 7:30 to 9:00 pm to sit in silence, join in a short dhamma talk, and engage in conversation. The meditation group is non-denominational, loosely based on Theravada Buddhism, and practices insight meditation (or Vipassana). The sangha is unique in being peer-led; every Monday evening is different and depends on who is sitting in the chair to facilitate the evening. Guest speakers in 2025 introduced yoga, qi gong, pilgrimages, and applied Buddhism in their work. Members of the sangha leading sessions often focus on the Buddha's teachings, both the core tenets and Western interpretations of them, and applying them to our daily lives. The group is open to anyone joining on a drop in or more frequent basis, regardless of his/her/their meditation experience.

Leader: Michele Rivard

Life's Journey

My New Reality - My Life Post-Covid began with the observation that since March of 2020, our world has moved into a "new reality" courtesy of the Global Pandemic, challenging us as a Nation, a Community, and most importantly as Individuals. The one-day workshop used this to explore how we connect, work, and live in 2025, and how we sustain ourselves going forward. Questions included how we function in this new world, how our expectations of our lives and ourselves have shifted, and where we find ourselves and each other after experiencing a profound "shaking of the ground."

Leaders: Don Lipscomb and Annabelle Swift

St Mark's Networking Event: In response to the surging challenges in finding and maintaining employment in the DMV area, Christian Education sponsored an informal meeting bringing together those facing these challenges and those who had previously gone through their own job transitions and could offer ideas, advice, or other support.

Leaders: Jilian McGreen and Annabelle Swift

Living Together in Community

Belonging: This five-session course is the successor to earlier ones known as *Confirmation* and, later *Life, Community, and Faith*. While it is especially designed for newcomers considering making St. Mark's their church home, it is appropriate for anyone new to St. Mark's, rejoining, or seeking a deeper connection.

Leaders: Spring 2025: Ryan Baugh, Terri Poxon-Pearson, and Rev. Caitlin Frazier;

Fall 2025: Susan Kyle, Luke Giannini, Rev. Caitlin Frazier

Community, Part III: This was the third in a series of one-day sessions helping participants examine what it means to truly belong to a community, what can make it hard to stay, what holds us together, and what strengthens bonds.

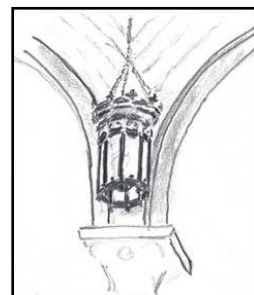
Leaders: Don Lipscomb, Bill Jordan, Lea Crusey

The 20s/30s Fellowship meets for lightly guided discussions about life and faith once a month following the 5 PM service.

Leaders: Jilian McGreen and Annabelle Swift

The New Women's Class: For the second year in a row, a one-weekend retreat was held at Rehoboth Beach, Delaware for a deeper look at the new women we are becoming as we discern our "faithful response" in life-altering situations.

Leader: Betsy Athey



CLASS	ATTENDANCE	LEADERS
ARTISTIC EXPRESSION (not offered in 2025)		
EPISCOPAL THEOLOGY		
Episcopalian 101	32	Rev. Michele Morgan
Wednesday Bible Study Our Bible: Then & Now	6-8 per week	Peter Mosley
Baptism Class for families (spring and fall)	6 (spring) 10 (fall)	John Edwards/Kate McFadden
Whatever You Believe or Do Not Believe	19	Bill Jordan/Rebeckah Taylor
Cracking the Bible	12	Caitlin Frazier
How to Pray	11 per session	Patricia Catalano/Jason Campbell
Judgement	8	Edna Boone/Steve Roberts
CENTERING PRAYER AND MEDITATION		
Centering Prayer	11-12 per session	Patricia Catalano
St. Mark's Meditation Center	20-30 per session	Michele Rivard
LIFE'S JOURNEY		
My New Reality – My Life Post-Covid	12	Don Lipscomb/Annabelle Swift
St Mark's Networking Event	12	Jilian McGreen and Annabelle Swift
LIVING TOGETHER IN COMMUNITY		
Belonging (Spring 2025)	22	Ryan Baugh./Terri Poxon Pearson/Caitlin Frazier
Belonging (Fall 2025)	19	Susan Kyle/Luke Giannini/Caitlin Frazier
20s/30s Faith Fellowship	31	Jilian McGreen/Annabelle Swift
Community	27	Don Lipscomb/Bill Jordan/Lea Crusey
TOTAL ATTENDANCE	229+	

SERVICE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE Co-Chairs: *Edna Boone and Holly Kreutter*

Members: Gabriella Abruzzi, Leslie Allen, Michael Bloomfield, Betsy Hart, Peter Hawley, Seth Ismail, Michael Knipe, Sydney Register, Susan Sedgewick; Ben Flowers (Vestry Liaison)

Affiliated Clergy/Staff: None

Monthly Meetings: Third Wednesday 7:30-9pm.

Shared Drive: https://drive.google.com/drive/u/2/folders/1IQ7r3GG_MwA6Si6eE8u_WiDbiU-H0RuW

Public Webpages: <https://www.stmarks.net/service-and-justice/>

Email: socialjustice@stmarks.net

Mission: We are an open community, welcoming people wherever they are in their faith journey. We celebrate the gifts of God that empower us to engage boldly in the struggles of life and care for others with love, justice, and compassion.

Service and social justice is “how we care for others with love, justice, and compassion.” As the SSJB, we seek to lead the parish in ways to care for vulnerable populations with love and compassion, promote the protection of our natural world, and strive for systemic political, economic, and social equity. With our talent, time, and treasure, and through local and international partnerships, the Board is dedicated to a vision of a hopeful, liberated and reconciled world.

Service and social justice is a dynamic and evolving process. To sustain this work, we use the analogy of a tree: our members’ assets form the roots, drawing nourishment from faith, experience, and generosity. These time and talent assets are channeled through the trunk to serve directly and to service providers that support those in need in order to strengthen organizations and individuals, nourishing and strengthening the wider community.

Vision: The Board is both a catalyst for social justice and a steward of SSJ funds.

Meetings: Meetings are by zoom on the third Wednesday of each month from 7:30-9pm, unless shifted due to holidays or other conflicts. Members address ongoing issues regarding various programs, evaluate funding requests, and provide overall coordination and promotion of the outreach arena. The board attempts to have two in-person meetings each year.

2025 Overview

The SSJ board worked throughout 2025 on our key priorities:

- Maintain nimbleness in our activities and funding as we react to current times and events based on the new administration and increase participation and provide hands on opportunities for parishioners
- February, shifted \$1000 from grant request funds to support a Rainbow Railroad refugee who came into the US in December and whose rent funds were cut off by the new administration
- March, shifted \$1000 from grant request funds to Grate Patrol when the Salvation Army requested a doubling of the sandwiches each month
- Increased the number of meals provided to Shirley’s Place from 1 a year to 3 a year due to increased food insecurity needs in the homeless population
- April: Hosted a migrant accompaniment training session; advertised the need for accompaniment to parishioners April onwards. At least 5 parishioners have joined this work since
- Became aware and acted on new initiatives in the migrant space for: post detention care, care-pooling, ICE watches at St Stephens during its food distribution times, and a bi-weekly prayer watch outside Hyattsville Immigration Court for migrants attending hearings. We had 21 parishioners sign up for this work
- Hosted WIN community organizing training and discussion on the RFK stadium deal
- Increasing parishioner engagement by ramping up SSJ messaging
 - Started all parish monthly SSJ email push to highlight activities
 - Added SSJ Volunteer Opportunities and Events links on all SSJ webpages on the St. Mark’s website. Volunteer opportunities listed on the site have increased from an average of 10 at a time to 20+ at a time
 - Created poster sets highlighting Samaritan Ministries & Justice in Palestine.
- Focused this year’s Lenten mite box project specifically on migrants and refugees, and the daily email

messaging brought current needs to the forefront. We continued to focus on the very real needs through bulletin and verbal announcements during Sunday services. Close to \$3900 was raised in 2025 (up from \$1700 in 2024) and this money was used to support migrants and refugees. This represents an additional 9% in funds allocated to SSJ in 2025 and allowed SSJ to expand its offerings in a significant way.

- Highlighted SSJ each month throughout the year through Mission Moments, Sunday lunch, youth activities, bulletin board presence, and a table in Baxter Hall during coffee hour.
- Purchased and now using St. Mark's stickers to highlight outreach in the community that is coming from St. Mark's.
- Plugged in new parishioners to SSJ activities as requests came into St. Mark's

Continuing the emphasis on youth

- Offered weekly service projects for youth in Lent. Had 20 to 40 kids participate in each project
- Offered a date during the year for youth to make take away bags for its clientele for Samaritan Ministry
- May: Added a grant period specifically for youth that aligned with summer vacation so that kids could concentrate on it.
 - Awarded a \$900 grant to a group of 4 youths.
 - Awarded a second \$600 grant to a youth during the fall grant period.
 - Continued to budget \$1000 to the Youth Supported Ministry. The Catechism III class asked their teacher if they could start an SSJ club. The kids brainstormed ideas re: where they wanted to spend the money and selected three areas. They presented their ideas at the December Mission Moment. They also became involved with the post-detention care family Service and Social Justice is supporting, going to Zoo Lights, and making plans to go ice skating with them in the New Year.

Expansion of SSJ initiatives

- Navajoland Temporary Restricted Funds ran out in 2024. The SSJ Board voted to take it under the SSJ umbrella and gave them \$2000 .
- Justice in Palestine was added and the SSJ board gave them \$1000 .
- With regards to our continuum of charity to service to advocacy to justice activities, increasing efforts related to advocacy and justice
- Migrant work used to be charity and service focused only but the work has broadened to also include advocacy and justice work.
- The addition of Justice in Palestine to the SSJ umbrella also broadened its scope of advocacy and justice.
- Parishioners wrote letters, emails and testified to and met with the DC City Council on the Health Homes Bill, affordable housing, and the RFK stadium deal – making some progress despite the federal government cutting DC's budget.
- Sun-setting arms/activities- worked through a set of criteria to discern and determine when and how best to sunset items that no longer have significant parish engagement

Total SSJ Funding was \$42,500. WIN received an additional \$5000. Also raised 3881.85 during Lent from the Mite Box Project.

FUNDED PROGRAMS FROM THE ANNUAL BUDGET (TOTAL PER ENTITY IN PARENTHESES)

S

Food Insecurity (\$4000)

Salvation Army Grate Patrol :This program brings an evening meal to homeless neighbors 365 nights a year serving more than 3,000 people each month. Volunteers, primarily parents and children, make bag lunches monthly on the 4th Sunday in Baxter Hall. Notably in 2025, the Salvation Army doubled its request for the number of sandwiches due to increasing food insecurity which made the needs greater. <https://www.stmarks.net/salvation-army-grate-patrol>

Samaritan Ministry: created take away food packs in February and September

Good Neighbors Capitol Hill: a coalition of 8 Capitol Hill congregations and unaffiliated friends that support refugee families in Prince George's County, Maryland

Food Justice DMV: an all-volunteer organization dedicated to delivering food and standing in solidarity with thousands of neighbors in the DMV

Capital Area Food Bank : an organization that provides equitable access to food and opportunity to people struggling with hunger and food

Green Lions (\$500) Provided funds to Interfaith Power and Light and Anacostia Watershed
<https://www.stmarks.net/service-and-justice/st-marks-green-lions>

Gun Violence Prevention (\$1000)

The National Vigil for All Victims of Gun Violence. December 10th; helped host the Newtown Action Alliance Foundation's 13th annual National Vigil for All Victims of Gun Violence.
<https://www.stmarks.net/preventing-gun-violence/>

Incarceration Justice (\$3400)

Our mission is to support individuals impacted by the prison system and all the crossroads of injustice we encounter daily. As our country is under siege and many individuals are at risk of detention or deportation, the incarceration justice community is engaged in efforts to protect citizens and marginalized individuals and all those who are subject to injustice. We are actively involved with several organizations, as noted below, and collaborate regularly to support individuals and Justice-related events across the DMV area.

We made space available for the Public Defender Service [PDS] to host a celebration for the early release of over 100 individuals, all convicted of crimes in their teens or early twenties, who became leaders while in prison, and now take on responsible positions in the community to counsel youth who are in detention, serve as violence interrupters in neighborhoods, provide safe passage in dangerous settings, and mentor others as they are released, to assist with a successful reentry after prison. Of note, one member stated that St. Mark's is "like a second home where he comes often" and knows he will be welcomed.

In 2025, our mailing list grew to over 165 (from 100 last year). Participants in our meetings vary from 6 to 130, depending on the event. More than 200 individuals have received support in the last year, through letters to pen pals, visits to the DC Jail via the Frederick Douglass Project, mentoring at the DC Jail for the Debates at the DC Ceremonial Courthouse (2-3 times a year), and gifts to families of incarcerated individuals (food gift cards, school supplies, clothing and blankets). We provided money to over 25 inmate commissary accounts.

Our special events: Guest speakers, Maya Chaudhuri (PDS attorney), Courtney Stewart (National Reentry Network for Returning Citizens), Beauty behind Bars (pop up Art Exhibit) April 5th + 6th, and speakers: James Carpenter and Anthony "Pete" Petty (co-directors of Neighbors for Justice), and films from "More than Our Crimes"

A wonderful addition to our line-up this year was the opportunity to host Judge Zia Faruqui. He works closely with the DC Jail to provide training for the debate team, which we have seen in action against several college debate teams. Judge Faruqui also provides support staff and summer educational to learn computer coding. Our Incarceration Justice group members have supported these initiatives as volunteers.

We hosted the Free Minds Book Club "Write Night" for the third time, to hear poetry readings from incarcerated individuals, and celebrate those who are now home. This is our largest event, with well over 120 attendees.

We are thankful for support from the Service and Social Justice Board which enabled us to donate to Free Minds, the DC Jail, and the Returning Citizens Assistance Network [RCAN]

<https://www.stmarks.net/incarceration-justice>

International Programs (\$2000)

Sustainable Villages Honduras: We provided this donation to help support the work of Roy Lara in Honduras. <https://www.stmarks.net/honduras-outreach-2/>

Refugees and Migrants (\$6300 plus \$3881.85 from Mite Box money collected during Lent)

Committee Members: Kim Bayliss, Lucy Brown, Karen Getman, Andrea Harles, Linda Mellgren, Maureen Shea (*see full report from this committee*)

Challenging Year for Refugees:

2025 was especially difficult for refugees and resettlement supporters due to restrictive government policies and reduced federal funding, which led to the closure of many refugee agencies. Despite these obstacles, refugee families—particularly from Afghanistan—continue to arrive and seek support in the DMV region, where they find better cultural and community resources compared to rural placements.

Difficulties Faced by Refugees:

Many Afghan families initially placed in rural areas struggled with language barriers, lack of familiar foods, absence of mosques, and limited job opportunities, leading to feelings of humiliation and isolation. The DMV area offers a more welcoming environment for these families.

Support Activities:

In 2025, we provided direct support to its sponsored families and others through partnerships with Good Neighbors Capitol Hill (GNCH, now a 501c3 non-profit) and St. Columba's refugee ministry. Assistance included cash for rent, tuition, technology, clothing, baby supplies, food, school materials, and healthcare. Committee members also offered ESL support and built strong relationships with the families.

Community and Organizational Partnerships:

The work was bolstered by grants from the Service and Social Justice Board, gifts-in-kind (such as linens and toiletries), and the final payouts from a three-year Temporary Fund established after the fall of Kabul. We continue to partner with GNCH and other organizations to address ongoing refugee needs in the DMV. The church played a founding role in GNCH and has helped reshape its structure for more effective service. Committee members hold leadership roles within these organizations.

Ongoing Reliance on Volunteers and Donations:

The refugee service efforts remain dependent on the generosity of volunteers and community donations.

Migrants

- volunteers helped with migrant respite and welcome centers and provided a dinner one Thursday a month for migrants.
- We are the supply location for new underwear, shoes and socks for men, women, and children frequenting the free store at a partner church on Capitol Hill. Volunteers took needed supplies to the respite center each week.
- SSJ provided funds to support migrant families at San Mateo who were at risk of deportation, or whose loved ones had been detained/deported.
- Volunteers also helped with accompaniments to court hearings, post detention care for two families who had lost their loved ones to deportation, ICE watches at St Stephens during its food distribution times, and a bi-weekly prayer watch outside Hyattsville Immigration Court for migrants attending hearings.
- Approximately 35 parishioners from St Marks assisted with support to migrants in 2025. Several of them were parishioners new to St Marks this year.

<https://www.stmarks.net/refugee-resettlement-program>

<https://www.stmarks.net/service-and-justice/migrant-support/>

Assistance to Afghan families

Following the withdrawal of the U.S. from Afghanistan in 2021, Bishop Marianne Edgar Budde called on churches to welcome Afghan refugees. Our parish, already engaged with an Afghan family through the work of Good Neighbors Capitol Hill (GNCH), stepped up quickly to sponsor a family. In partnership Christ Church+Washington Parish and GNCH and as well as with the support and guidance of Lutheran Social Services of the National Capitol Area, we helped not only that family but a number of others. Thanks to coordination with the Diocesan Refugee Response Team, we were able to also work closely with St. Columba's and St. John's+Norwood supporting families.

What this report cannot convey is the warmth of the relationships that formed with individuals and families and the gratitude we have felt in playing a part in welcoming them. A pancake breakfast and ice cream social provided special memories for the volunteers and the families together. As we exchanged stories of our lives, shared food and celebrated family milestones our lives have been enriched by these new friendships.

Thanks to dedicated volunteers, donors, and compassionate landlords, the assistance provided ranged from furnishing apartments to guiding families through the intricacies of Medicaid and providing assistance with extraordinary medical expenses. ESL sessions, whether in-person or on Zoom, brought unique opportunities for understanding each other's cultures as well as improving English language skills.

In response to the emergency situation, we established a Temporary Fund that received donations and distributed funds up until an agreed date of November 1, 2025. Significant support also came from in-kind donations and financial contributions from our Service and Social Justice Board, Christ Church+ Washington Parish, Washington Community Church, and GNCH. While the immediate crisis has ended, Afghan refugees continue to need assistance in the DMV. The Temporary Fund is now ended, as required by the vestry, but we will continue to support this important mission in collaboration with GNCH as it begins a new phase as a stand-alone 501(c)(3).

A brief review of the families we have helped and the assistance provided follows:

- Stanikzai Family:* Bilal and Benefsha and their extended families, including his parents and sister, three of his brothers, two sisters-in law, her brother and sister-in-law, plus five children among them. Rental and moving expense assistance, food purchases, medical expenses, apartment set-up, clothing, layette, legal and medical advice, iPads for ESL tutoring, and ongoing ESL tutoring. We note with sadness that one brother remains in a refugee camp in Doha, Qatar.
- Abdullah Azimi family of 7* – Rental assistance
- Barkat and Latifa Azizi and her sister, Malika* - Rental assistance, purchase of a computer, ESL and computer tuition
- Malyar Family of 7* – Rental assistance, kitchen equipment, clothing, school supplies
- Rasooly Family of 5* – General support especially assistance with finding housing
- Tokhi Family of 5* – Rental and clothing assistance and mentoring.

Each of these families and individuals came with their own stories and hopes for their future in the United States. We are inspired by their resilience, courage, and successes as they make this their home.

Responsive Grant Program (\$5000)

In 2025, the (SSJ) Board set aside \$5000 to react to unexpected needs during the year and to give parishioners the opportunity to develop SSJ initiatives through a grant application. We received 2 requests for unexpected needs, which were granted. We also received 6 requests from parishioners, 3 of which were aligned with the stated goal, and 3 others that weren't. We funded the three.

Unexpected Need

- Increased the amount of money for Grate Patrol when the Salvation Army doubled its request for the number of sandwiches in early 2025
- Donated funds to help pay for January rent for a newly arrived refugee, after government funds for refugees were curtailed in early 2025

Funded grants:

- Youth project to provide services to the elderly
- Food Justice DMV to support food insecurity
- Nathaniel Ramish to provide a meal to homeless persons

Social Services/Homelessness/Social Justice (\$10,800)

Everyone Home DC (formerly Capitol Hill Group Ministry) Founded in 1967, Everyone Home DC partners with families, individuals, caring neighbors, government officials, and fellow advocates to end homelessness in Washington, DC. Through a continuum of housing solutions and supportive services, Everyone

Home DC works to ensure that all people in our city can maintain their independence and thrive.

In 2025, our support was further amplified by designating a portion of its giving as a sponsorship of Everyone Home DC's September Challenge, expanding the reach and impact of this citywide fundraising campaign. Parishioners played an active role in supporting including participation in the Good Neighbor Sustaining Circle, in-kind donation drives, attendance at events, and support of the September Challenge and Online Auction, and contributions to the Back-to- School, Thanksgiving, and Holiday Gift Card drives.

16 St. Mark's donors contributed nearly \$1,400 to these drives, helping support 25 families working with Everyone Home DC's Permanent Supportive Housing programs. We provided critical hands-on service at the drop-in Day Center, Shirley's Place on Capitol Hill, which serves nearly 1,000 individuals each year and has seen increased need in the past year. Approximately 40 parishioners—youth and adults—helped Place in March, June, September, and December. Together, our financial support, volunteer service, and parishioner engagement continue to play an important role in helping Everyone Home DC respond to rising need and support our most vulnerable neighbors across the District.

Samaritan Ministry of Greater Washington (\$3,000) - Founded by St. Mark's and other Episcopal churches in 1986, SMGW helps adults in need identify and take the steps to achieve their goals in education, employment, and housing. In 2025, it assisted 4,395 individuals, including 3,540 "Next Step" participants. Sydney Register and Peter Hawley served as St. Mark's representatives to the Ministry's Partner Council. In February, children and adults produced 200 snack bags for program participants. On March 29, 23 parishioners attended the "Next Step Breakfast" featuring Bishop Mariann Budde. In May, parishioners donated 842 toiletry items. In September, we celebrated "Samaritan Sunday," with a display of posters about SMGW and St. Mark's involvement, another snack bag project, and a luncheon at which the Ministry's job readiness trainer spoke. In November, members of St. Mark's donated 18 theme baskets and other items for the Ministry's annual auction, contributing to the \$91,000 raised.

The year ended with a "Drive for Justine" through which parishioners and friends of Justine Novy contributed \$2,242 in her memory to purchase transit and grocery cards for Next Step participants.

<https://samaritanministry.org/>

<https://www.stmarks.net/service-and-justice/samaritan-ministry-of-greater-washington/>

Justice in Palestine (\$1000)

Education: Film Screening. In 2025 SMJP held multiple educational and action-oriented events. One of these included a film screening of "Occupation of the American Mind" in which 25 people from St. Mark's and the broader community watched the film. During that same event, we held a discussion led by a Jewish Voice for Peace activist.

Education and Advocacy: Workshop. We hosted a workshop and lunch called Becoming an Apartheid Free Church in October 2025 for 42 participants from St. Marks and other faith communities. Our group led an interactive activity and discussion on apartheid in the Holy Land and work-shopped how we can become an *Apartheid Free Church*.

Partnership with Families of Palestinian Detainees: Our group participates in a [program](#) piloted by Friends of Sabeel North America to support and show solidarity to the family of a Palestinian, Marwan Ibrahim Maadi, who has been detained in Israeli military prisons without charge for more than 13 years. We are in regular communication with his family via WhatsApp and attend monthly meetings together with other churches who are partnered with other families of Palestinian detainees. We also hosted two card-making activities where parishioners made cards for Marwan and his family, which we shared via WhatsApp. We mobilized members to advocate for the release of the Palestinian American child, Mohammed Ibrahim, who was detained in Israeli prison for almost 10 months.

Art and cultural solidarity: Christ in the Rubble. In December 2025, our group assembled a Christ in the Rubble nativity display during advent in the St. Marks's courtyard, modeled after the Christ in the Rubble display at the Lutheran Christmas Church in Bethlehem. Our youth group supported this activity.

Art and cultural solidarity: Palestine Art Exhibit: In the fall of 2025, we joined with the St. Mark's Arts Council to host an art exhibit in the Nave. The exhibit displayed artwork from young Palestinians from Gaza, Jerusalem, and Jenin, which we made into a mutual aid fundraiser for the artists. We also organ-

ized a card-making activity for our youth to make thank you cards for the Palestinian artists, which we shared directly with them digitally. We hosted an open art exhibit for Parishioners and the public to come learn about the art and the artists. About 20 people attended.

Solidarity: Fast for Gaza: We mobilized 9 members to join the national Fast for Gaza in June 2025. They participated in various ways, giving up something of comfort (like a meal, streaming services, coffee, etc.), and using the time saved to lament and pray for Gaza, stand in solidarity with people of Gaza who have been deprived of all basic comforts for 19 months, and donate the money saved to a family or mutual aid effort in Gaza.

Solidarity: Olive oil Sales: We supported the annual sale of Palestinian olive oil in November and December 2025 to support indigenous Palestinian farmers.

Coalitions and Advocacy: We supported the annual Interfaith Action for Palestine, hosting over a hundred advocates from Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, and other faith traditions at St. Mark's in June and July 2025. Our members are also a part of other Christian and faith-based coalitions that provide direct support to Gaza and faith-based advocacy, including We Feed Gaza, Christians for Ceasefire and Just Peace, and more.

Monthly Meetings: We held 12 monthly Sunday meetings that were open to parishioners, including our 26-person email list, to plan events and other actions. Typically, about 5-15 people attend these meetings on a given Sunday.

Mission Moment Sunday: We shared our activities and purpose on Mission Moment Sunday, October 5, 2025, speaking at all three services.

Youth Development (\$3000)

Bishop Walker School (\$2000): This school for boys is a tuition-free Episcopal school for children from traditionally underserved communities.

<https://www.stmarks.net/st-marks-support-for-anacostias-bishop-walker-school/>

St Marks Youth: (\$1000): The newly-developed Catechesis III SSJ Club chose three organizations to support with the money: Give Purrs a Chance, Migrant Solidarity Mutual Aid, and Zoo Lights and ice-skating tickets for the post-detention care family

Navajoland (\$2000)

Supported the youth trip to Navajoland, summer of 2025, including:

- support to Navajoland youth to be able to participate in planned activities
- additions to St Christopher's facilities
- support funding of local participants to share their skills, stories and experiences
- ensuring affordable participation in the trip for St Marks youth

<https://www.stmarks.net/navajoland>

Marketing (\$500): SSJ Board developed posters of two additional key activities, Samaritan Ministries & Justice in Palestine, and created stickers. These, along with the posters created last year, are used to help keep the parish and wider community informed about the scope of service opportunities.

Refugee Committee *Karen Getman, Reporting; Kim Bayliss, Secretary, SSJW*

Due to the policies of the current government and the dissolution of refugee agencies through slashed federal funding, 2025 has been a challenging year for refugees and for those who have supported re-settlement work. But refugee families continue to arrive despite the vindictive policies which curtailed most all normal immigration from other countries. Many Afghan families want to resettle in the DMV for the familial and cultural supports they find here. Most have been in the States but assigned to rural areas where they had no point of contact who could speak their language. In many of the areas there were no Halal or other familiar groceries available and no mosque anywhere nearby. Often jobs were difficult to obtain so the breadwinner was unable to adequately support the family. That is a great humiliation to men from most of the countries where refugees have been coming. Having been humbled by their circumstances in uprooting their families due to the danger they and their families faced in

their homeland, they have felt unsafe and unwelcome in their new country. The DMV region provides a more welcome space for Afghan families. Some agencies have been able to maintain social workers and a skeletal support staff to assist these new families. Churches like ours and volunteer groups like Good Neighbors Capitol Hill (GNCH) assist by providing welcome.

In 2025, we supported the members of our own sponsored families as well as to others through Good Neighbors Capitol Hill (which is now a 501c3 non-profit) and in partnership with St. Columba's extensive refugee ministry. Cash supports helped families with rent, tuition, purchase of iPads, winter clothing, baby supplies, food supplements, school supplies, medical and dental care and other essentials.

Significant support for our work has come through the grant from the Service and Social Justice Board, the GIK (gifts-in-kind) contributions of bed linens and toiletries as our congregation and others drop items in our vestibule bins, and through a Temporary Fund established after the fall of Kabul. We have now closed the Temporary Fund, but our partnership with GNCH and others continues as the needs of refugees in our DMV region is significant. Our history as one of the founding members of GNCH and commitment to the vision has been an essential factor in helping reshape the organizational structure for more effectively serving refugees.

We continue to rely on the generosity of volunteers and donations for our refugee service.

Kim Bayliss serves as Secretary of the Board/ Karen Getman is Co-chair of Bed, Bath and Toiletry Supplies.

Navajoland Working Group (\$2000) Steve Dalzell, Kit Arrington, Co-Chairs; Jan Lipscomb, Izzie Hirsch-Reyes, Randy Marks, Michael Knipe, Mary Neznek

SSJ grants supported the Navajoland Working Group's expanding effort to make opportunities available for increased awareness and understanding of indigenous culture, history and issues through hosting 40 participants in the Nave for the interactive workshop *Roots of Injustice, Seeds of Change: Toward Right Relationship with Native Peoples*. Collaborating with the Children, Youth & Family Ministry, 6 youth and 3 adults completed the 2nd youth pilgrimage to St. Christopher's Mission in Bluff, UT, part of the Episcopal Church of Navajoland.

ARTS COUNCIL *No convener*

Visual Arts: *Elin Whitney-Smith, JR Randall, Coordinators*

To see the art from all the shows: <https://WatercolorDC.com/AnnualReport2025>

Advent/Christmas/Epiphany ('24-'25): See 2025 report

Lent ('25) *Long and Winding Road*; Organizer: Elin Whitney-Smith. Lent can be seen as a journey, a 'Long and Winding Road'. The challenge for artists was to represent the journey.

Lent('25) *Beauty, Behind, Bars*; Organizer: Jan Lipscomb. The art was produced by incarcerated people. We realize that all aspects of life continue, even behind bars. People continue to live and be human, even though, with sentencing, people outside tend to think that somehow the story stops.

Social Service and Social Justice; Organizers: Edna Boon, Holly Kreutter. Featured the social service work parishioners did. An impressive display and did St Mark's proud.

Pentecost: *Hail This Joyful Day*; Organizer: Elin Whitney-Smith. Pentecost is the coming of the spirit and a return to hopefulness and joy. The artists' challenge was to represent joy.

'Banner Sunday' Organizers: Teachers and Students, Christian Education. At the end of the Sunday school year, classes make banners that reflect learning. These are processed and displayed in the nave.

Kids Art from Palestine: Organizers: Mel Cahill, Lindsey Jones-Renaud. Like the Beauty behind Bars show, this show keeps us from thinking of Palestinians as some kind of stereotype. The art showed us the humanity, as the pain and beauty and the destruction

Fabric Arts: Organizer: Elin Whitney-Smith. There have been fabric art entries in most shows. This one was devoted entirely to fabric art: embroidery, quilting, sewing, knitting and crocheting,

Advent, Christmas, Epiphany '25-'26: Birth, Renewal, Rebirth, Reimagining; Organizer: Elin Whitney-Smith. These periods in the church year are about the birth of Jesus : Advent (waiting, the end of pregnancy, anxiety and anticipation; Christmas (Christ's birth); Epiphany (celebration of birth, and the realization that the world of that particular family, will never be the same. These are played out in our lives as well.

Workshops 2025

God's Holy Darkness: Author talk and workshop. Organizers: Lisa Ramish, Lindsay Jones Renaud. Shari Green (author) spoke via zoom and took questions. The participants were primarily children with a handful of adults. After the talk, we worked on our visions of darkness as a good thing. These were displayed as part of the art show.

Fabric Arts Workshop: 3 sessions; During the show, a workshop to make nativity figures out of fabric for the winter show was held. The participants were enthusiastic, but not have enough time. We had no male figures so continued the workshop in Baxter Hall the next two Sundays. We attracted new people interested when they saw what had been done. We made 22 figures and purchased a camel for the magi and "Eeyore" as Mary's donkey. Many younger participants were girls who wanted to make angels so there are a lot of angels. They are in the nave till Lent.

Capitol Hill Art Walk 2025: September 13 and 14, 2025 from noon to 4:00 pm. This annual event had 76 sites with participants per site ranging from 1 to 16 artists. Our first year with 12 participants: parishioners and community members. We had more than 100 visitors over the two days.

DANCE STUDIO Dot Walker, *Artist Director and Studio Manager*

The Dance Studio was founded in the 1960s by Mary Craighill, a professionally trained dancer who sought use of the former parish hall to provide dance classes to children/adults on Capitol Hill. It was chartered by the Vestry and operates independently, funded by class fees with additional support by an endowment created by its founder.

Dot Walker assumed the position of Artistic Director and Studio Manager became when Rosie Brooks became Director Emeritus, shortly before she passed away. The work is overseen by a Board of parishioners (Stephanie Deutsch, chair) and community adults (parent rep and current/former students) including a Finance manager. The rector and Senior Warden are members as are current teaching staff.

Recital Highlights The annual dance recital successfully took place on June 7, 2025, in the nave.. The recital was exceptionally well attended; once again, we ran out of chairs and were nearly out of standing room. The recital featured performances by both children and adult students, highlighting the breadth and inclusivity of our program. The most recent recital continues to be available on the Studio website, allowing family members and prospective students to view and experience the studio's work and artistic growth.

Summer Dance Program Jessica Sloane and I conducted three summer dance programs serving different age groups:

- June 23, 2025 – Children ages 7–9

- June 29, 2025 – Ages 9½–13

Week of July 14, 2025 – Ages 14 and older

These were highly successful and played an important role in welcoming new students to the studio.

Each session concluded with a short performance for parents and friends, giving students an opportunity to showcase what they learned. In addition, the summer programs generated additional revenue for the dance studio.

Fall Semester Enrollment/Instruction The school-year session began September 8, 2025. Enrollment included approximately 55 children and 20 adults. We welcomed Louisa Mejeur as a temporary teacher to assist with instruction and to promote additional Wednesday classes. Louisa had previously substi-

tuted for us and this arrangement provided a strong foundation for expanding class offerings.

During the semester, several Capitol Hill public schools relocated students to alternate sites, significantly affecting transportation schedules. As a result, class times were adjusted to accommodate the new bus routines and ensure students could arrive on time and receive a full, high-quality class.

Meanwhile, adult enrollment continued to grow, with students participating at multiple levels. An additional adult class was added to provide greater flexibility and options.

Mini-“Nutcracker” December 7, 2025, 15 students performed in our mini-Nutcracker, held in the dance studio. This event was introduced in 2024 as a short, family-friendly performance on a Sunday following church services and designed to welcome young children into the studio environment. This year’s production was especially well attended: it lasted 28 minutes and was enjoyed by approximately 75 parents and children. Special *Nutcracker*- and ballet dancer-themed cookies were shared with the audience, distributed by the students themselves.

Due to the success and strong turnout, it was decided that the 2026 mini-*Nutcracker* may possibly be performed as part of an Open House either in the nave or Baxter Hall. We are currently looking at Friday, November 20, 2026, as the proposed date. As a result of this event, three new students enrolled at the Studio.

Staffing Update Unfortunately, our temporary teacher, Louisa Mejeur, was unable to continue teaching for the second semester, as her family is growing and she is expecting a baby in early March.

Winter Challenges and Studio Operations The second semester began on January 5, 2026, for adult students, with children and teens returning on January 12, 2026. January 17, classes were canceled due to a lack of heat in the studio and the following week, classes were temporarily relocated to another space within the church. Repairs were completed on January 22, 2026, and classes resumed in the studio. January 25, 2026, classes were again canceled due to a major snowstorm. We anticipate resuming classes on Wednesday, January 28.

Financial and Facility Updates Thanks to the generosity of the Mary Craighill Dance Endowment, a request was submitted to the Endowment Board on October 15, 2025, to transfer approximately \$4,385 to the Studio. These funds cover financial aid awarded to ten students between 2023 and 2025.

Financial aid is an important part of our mission and is provided within the community to ensure that students, children and adults who might not otherwise be able to attend dance classes can learn, grow, and develop an appreciation for ballet. This request was approved by the end of the calendar year, and the studio is currently awaiting reimbursement. Additionally, the studio is gathering price estimates for potential new flooring and ballet barres.

Looking Ahead The snow has not slowed our momentum. Preparations are already underway for the 2026 Summer Dance Program,

St. Mark’s Dance Studio continues to look toward the future by:

- Welcoming and nurturing new students
- Providing expanded opportunities for current students through master classes
- Encouraging attendance at live performances
- Sustaining and celebrating the art of dance within our community
- Updating the studio with new flooring and ballet barres where necessary

Witness the beauty of dance by attending the Annual Dance Recital June 6, 2026.

St. Mark’s Players: No report (see Senior Warden’s report for this year’s productions)

Yoga Studio: No report

PARISH LIFE *no coordinator*

Caregivers Support Group Julie Murphy (juliaabbotmurphy@gmail.com) serves as the convener for this group with support from Associate Rector Caitlin Frazier. This group was created in 2020 and met monthly in 2025. The mission is to provide parishioners engaged in the care of a loved one with a safe space to share the challenges endemic to care-giving and, in that sharing, receive affirmation and reassurance. It is open to anyone in our community in need of support as they care for a loved one or friend.

The need for this group came from one parishioner's experience with her elderly mother in assisted living but it quickly became apparent that there were others in our midst who were also struggling to juggle all that is required when a beloved friend or relative requires a high level of care and attention.

Lichfield Link *Doris Burton* Regular communication continues between the Lichfield rep, Pat Empsall, and us. In the Spring, a committee was formed to assist Jeff with plans for the choir visit scheduled for the summer which I was delighted to join. The committee, which met monthly, included Sarah Headley, Cher Stepanek and Doris Burton from the '96 tour and Karen Wiedemann, Nick Rogers, Laura Gladstone, and David Perry. Jeff hired Brent Erstad (from St. John's+Lafayette Square) as organist and several singers to round out the men's sections. Three STM singers joined as did families of some singers—we even had a baby as part of the group with grandparents as sitters. Regular rehearsals began in June and continued several times a week culminating in a "Farewell Evensong" July 20.

The majority of the choir left Aug 1, stopping in Windsor to see the castle before going to St. Alban's, a small city about 30 miles north of London. There, we had the opportunity to 'recover' and sing both Sunday morning service and Sunday evensong at St. Peter's. Monday, Aug 4, we traveled to Lichfield, arriving in a downpour. We were in residence there for the entire week, singing Evensong Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday along with the Sunday morning Eucharist. While several of us had been on the '96 tour, the 'new' members found the formality of the cathedral more than expected.

One additional perk was the presence of the Jubilee Table, a 13-meter table (on tour) made from 5000-year-old black oak (Google for details). Each day began with a rehearsal lasting about an hour followed by a day-trip. These included Coventry Cathedral, The Black Country Museum, and Kenilworth Castle. Thursday was our day off so the majority of the choir traveled to Stratford-on-Avon, the home of Shakespeare. Some saw a play while others enjoyed leisure time in the town. As link rep and having visited Stratford, I took advantage of the afternoon to lunch with Pat and Brian Empsall, my counterpart, and Tony and Anne Barnard who were part of the founding of the link in 1989. The Barnards have retired to the village of Barton-under-Needwood and have a lovely country home with a garden they both enjoy.

Upon returning from each day trip, we rehearsed again until time to vest for Evensong. Friday evening, the Canon Precentor (in charge of liturgy) invited us to his home for wine and the choir sang their regular 'goodnight' song which included the words of a dismissal prayer used at Lichfield (he has left the Cathedral since and there is a call for a new Precentor.) It has also been our custom to present the Cathedral with a gift when we visit: this year's was a map of DC illustrating in great detail the characteristics of streets and neighborhoods created by British artist, Gareth Fuller.

The choir had had a welcome dinner in St. Alban's at Lussman's Restaurant and rounded the week with a farewell dinner in Lichfield at Ego, along with the Empsalls and Barnards. The visit was productive for the singers and helped all realize the value of the experience with several looking forward to another opportunity to tour.

I am delighted to announce Sydney Register, a choir member, has become my co-leader of the link; especially so this means the link will continue through younger generations. We are designing a 9" square for the Jubilee table runner the cathedral is creating.

Widows/Widowers *Mary Cooper, convener* We meet the first Monday of the month via Zoom to share experiences and offer advice and comfort to people who have experienced care-giving and bereavement. Anyone interested in joining should contact Mary (MAcooper3313@gmail.com)

The Verna J. Dozier Memorial Library — Peter Hawley, *coordinator*.

In 2025, we added 25 books, split evenly between the adult collection and that for children and young adults. Of these, eight were purchased and the remainder donated by church members. For adult readers, topics ranged from aspects of spirituality, religious art, and social justice to aging & care-giving, the latter including free booklets from the National Institute on Aging. For children and YA's, topics included Bible stories, world religions, social justice, and environmental issues. The library hosted a Summer Sunday school session exploring ways "to be brave" in following Jesus, drawing on Bishop Budde's "How We Learn to Be Brave" and the children's book "Brave Like Fireweed." For the Third Ager's lunch, we displayed books on issues of aging, spirituality, and care-giving together with a list to take home. Unfortunately, heavy rain in the summer damaged the wall behind the bookcases holding children's books, which had to be temporarily removed.

College of Crustaceans *Doris Burton, reporting*

The College is pleased to announce it continues to annoy as many parishioners as possible. This year, we ticked off 18 parishioners and a former clergy (who shall remain nameless—no one is off limits). We continue to cater to those who don't like crab by offering pizza (which drives the COTY '04 crazy) but anything for a buck. This isn't a cheap undertaking regardless of what we charge...we spent \$1500+ to keep you happy, the feast brought in \$1600 resulting in a whopping \$100 profit for Parish Life--and assume we'll do it again. This year's Crab of the Year is one of the least crabby among us...but that's the way of the college: Julie Murphy (who will, no doubt, try to tame even us.)

Sunday Lunch *Pam Lacey, coordinator*

To promote for fellowship and welcoming newcomers, we offered lunch in Baxter Hall after the 11:15 am service on Sundays in 2025 based on the availability of volunteers. Due to a lack of volunteers, there were no lunches until Fall when volunteers stepped forward to host five times. However, three of those five lunches were hosted by the coordinator. I believe this lack may be because parishioners are not aware that just one or two people can easily host lunch by simply purchasing pre-made sandwiches and salad, etc. It does not have to be an extravaganza or heavy lift.

In the Fall, two volunteers opted to donate the food purchased while others received reimbursement for their costs (\$5-8 per person served) from the church's budget. Most funds came from donations but the budget also pays for help in the kitchen to load the dishwasher which significantly lightens cleanup for volunteers. There was also a free-will basket and QR code for those able to donate to defray the cost. Some even opted to donate enough to cover for others who might have been financially constrained.

Women to Women *Edna Boone, Coordinator* No report as there were no W2W activities in '25.

Lambda Lions *Mitch Wood, Coordinator*

In 2025, our LGBTQ affinity group, Lambda Lions, increased its community presence thanks to a growing cohort of younger, enthusiastic members. In June, about 20 parishioners marched with the "Love Your Neighbor" banner in the DC Capital Pride/World Pride Parade. In September, we participated in the ministry fair and, later that month, held an organizational meeting and identified a potluck dinner, a book drive, and a history project as goals for future programming. In November, we held a candlelight memorial service attended by more than 30 people in observance of National Transgender Day of Remembrance. To join in our work, please email Mitch Wood at mitchw7959@gmail.com or Kelly Dickinson at kellymarie1848@gmail.com. Read a history of parish LGBTQ+ highlights at <https://www.stmarks.net/lgbtq-and-st-marks-history/>.

Archives and Parish History *Kenn Allen, Doris Burton, Mary Cooper*

The team did two significant exhibits in Baxter Hall in 2025. The first was a retrospective on the celebration of Easter in the late 1960s through much of the 1980s. Highlighted were the multi-color helium filled balloons tied to the lid of the baptismal font and distributed at the end of the service and the calliope-led Capitol Hill Easter Parade, sponsored by the Capitol Hill Group Ministry, that kicked off from St. Mark's and picked up participants from other churches as it made its way to Lincoln Park.

The second exhibit of the year was “Signs, Plaques and a Frog,” photos taken by David Deutsch of all those things that are present inside the church and/or in/on the grounds, a total of over 60 images. To date, no one has taken up the challenge of reporting that they have found all of them.

We also did 40 “On This Sunday” features for the weekly emailed Gospel, drawing on our collection of Sunday bulletins from the late 1940s through to today.

In recognition of Pride Month, “On This Sunday” in June celebrated the evolving participation and recognition of the gay community in the life of St. Mark’s. A primary reference was “Timeline of St. Mark’s Journey Toward LGBTQ Inclusion” found on our website at <https://www.stmarks.net/lgbtq-and-st-marks-history/>.

In November, “On This Sunday” featured selected bits from the November 1903 issue of the monthly parish newsletter.



One of the few pieces from the old foyer preserved in the new foyer is this balustrade from the staircase that led to the 2nd floor (the Dance Studio was the original parish hall)



STAFF REPORTS

The crozier of the 6thC pope who sent Augustine to England to begin the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons

RECTOR *The Reverend Michele H. Morgan*

Leading St. Mark's has been both rewarding and challenging. As we conclude 2025, I am grateful for the vitality and faithfulness that define our community. Throughout worship, formation, pastoral care, music, and justice ministries, we see ongoing renewal and purpose. Our congregation is growing, our children are engaged, and our prayers support one another through all seasons.

This year, we offered more services than ever including baptisms, confirmations, weddings, celebrations of life, and community gatherings. Each event reflects God's presence among us. Our liturgies, classes, and outreach have challenged and inspired our staff and volunteers. Serving during this period of growth is a privilege. The activity we experience reflects a thriving parish, with members sharing their gifts and finding new ways to live out the Gospel.

Each week, I witness our active presence through food, advocacy, music, and prayer. This is the church at its best, bringing light, love, and goodness to the world.

Our staff and lay leaders have shown creativity, care, and courage during this transition. We have improved systems, clarified roles, and welcomed new members, ensuring our ministry remains sustainable and collaborative. We are grateful for the leadership of the Rev. Caitlin Frazier and the Rev. Patricia Catalano whose preaching, teaching, and pastoral care strengthen our community. We also thank Ms. Debra Cunningham for her dedication to our children and welcome Lisa Ramish, our new Director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministries, whose enthusiasm is already making a difference. Our operations continue to thrive thanks to Annick Milde and the addition of Samantha White as Parish Administrator.

We are grateful to Judith Rautenberg for her leadership in our music ministry, especially with the children's choirs, Sandbox Concerts, and the new community choir, all of which have brought joy and renewed and new connections. Music continues to unite generations, welcome new voices, and enrich our worship. While we missed Jeff Kempeskie during his sabbatical, we appreciate Mike McCarthy's contributions in teaching the choir in a new way and in leading worship.

I am also grateful for our volunteers, wardens, vestry, and program leaders. Their dedication and creativity make our work possible, and I value their partnership in ministry.

Our stewardship is grounded in gratitude, sacrifice, and transparency. Following a successful annual appeal, we are building on that momentum in 2026 by investing in our programs and expanding our reach within St. Mark's, throughout the DMV, and beyond. Every effort, visible or not, reflects our commitment to being a church that is both rooted and open to growth.

Looking ahead, I believe God calls us to deepen our identity rather than simply do more. Our focus is to build connection, allow for rest, and share joy as part of our discipleship. We are vibrant, creative, and resilient, and it is a privilege to share this journey with you.

I enter the coming year with joy and a commitment: to serve with you, lead with love, and seek God's presence in all aspects of our shared life. May we continue to listen for grace among us, trusting that the Spirit who has guided us will continue to lead us in love.

Thanks to the outgoing Senior Warden, Vestry class of 2026, and Officers

Travis Beaty has been offering steady support and thoughtful leadership. As chair of Parish Life for two years, he brought energy to our community events, making sure we gathered, celebrated, and stayed connected. Whether organizing our parish picnic or handling the details that build fellowship,

Travis has helped us keep our promise to be a welcoming and joyful church. He also shared helpful insights on the Personnel Committee, supporting the hiring and growth of non-

ordained staff, shaping parish policies, and ensuring our employment practices are fair and caring. He played key role in hiring our new CYFM Director and consistently encouraged teamwork. Travis's grace, good humor, and steady presence have been a real gift to our community, and we are very grateful for his service.

Jim Brooks has served as Senior Warden with clarity and grace. In a role that needs steady leadership and quiet wisdom, Jim has been a true partner in ministry. He listened closely, asked thoughtful and sometimes tough questions, and shared a perspective rooted in optimism and practicality. Each week, he helped guide our conversations, plan next steps, and stepped up for the community. His leadership has been a model of calm, clarity, and real care for the parish.

Jim showed what this role means in the Episcopal tradition: being my partner in leadership and the congregation's trusted advocate. He was a sounding board, a truth-teller, and a bridge-builder, always keeping the parish's well-being and sense of the divine at the center. When patience or courage was needed, he offered both. Because of his partnership, the vestry worked more closely together, and I could lead with more confidence and joy. I am deeply thankful for his wisdom, friendship, and steady hand.

We are deeply grateful to **Rosemary Harold** for her faithful service as Vestry Counsel. Her wise and steady guidance, especially as we navigated the complexities of the Raiford Gaffney bequest, kept us grounded, compliant, and out of trouble. She has helped us understand and live into our fiduciary duties with both care and confidence. During the Covid shutdown annual meeting, she came in wearing a mask and kept us in our lanes.

Beyond her legal expertise, Rosemary has provided a steady pastoral presence, reminding us that good governance is also a form of stewardship. Her counsel has strengthened our ability to serve this parish faithfully, ensuring that our decisions reflect both sound legal practice and our shared commitment to our the mission.

Randy Marks has served with distinction and good humor as our Vestry Clerk and as a member of both the Finance and Personnel Committees. In each role, he brought clarity, organization, and a strong sense of responsibility for the parish's well-being. He expanded the Clerk's role by helping Jim and me prepare agendas, reports, and clear communication to the congregation, making sure our work stayed transparent and grounded. His diligence and attention to detail have made our systems stronger and our governance more efficient and accountable.

Beyond his official duties, Randy made a real difference. He met with me each month to help me keep up with vestry responsibilities, offered thoughtful advice, and was willing to ask tough questions when things needed to be clearer. Sometimes, he could be a bit of a thorn in my side, but always in a helpful, faithful way that improved our work and made me a better leader. His steady commitment, good humor, and care for this community have left a lasting impact, and I am very grateful for his partnership in ministry.

I am grateful to **Frank Nickerson** for his careful and diligent work in guiding the acceptance and recording of the recent bequest. Frank approached the process with admirable clarity and attention to every detail, ensuring that the vestry's formal acceptance was properly documented, the funds were deposited and designated in full alignment with donor intent. His steady leadership gave the vestry great confidence that each step was handled transparently and in good order.

Beyond the technicalities, Frank's calm, competent presence modeled what faithful stewardship looks like. He helped us navigate complex procedures with grace, ensuring that both the spirit and the letter of our commitments were honored. His good judgment and integrity have been a real gift to the parish, and his work has strengthened our capacity to receive and manage such gifts wisely in the future.

Meg Platt has been an important member of the Vestry, helping shape our mission and long-term vision with wisdom, creativity, and heart. She has been deeply involved in ministry development, especially in supporting and strengthening our CYFM (Children, Youth, and Family Ministries). During times of change and challenge, Meg stood with our staff and leaders, supported Caleb through tough transitions, and helped welcome Lisa with grace and care. Her insight and steady encouragement made the program stronger and more sustainable for the future.

Meg brought her whole self to this ministry: her faith, warmth, hospitality, and deep commit-

ment to community. She welcomed us into her home for dinners, encouraged conversation and laughter, and even when her own work life became more demanding, she kept showing up fully and faithfully. Her time on the Vestry has been a gift of heart and spirit, and we are grateful for her generous, wise, and joyful leadership.

Todd Thorpe has served faithfully, providing steady leadership and thoughtful care for our parish. As a vestry member, he helped guide our stewardship and finances with diligence and integrity by approving budgets, monitoring resources, and making sure our decisions reflected both faith and fiscal responsibility. His commitment to the parish's well-being showed in every conversation and vote, and his good humor brightened many meetings.

Beyond his formal leadership duties, Todd has shown the quiet generosity that strengthens a community. He checked in with me, brought food, and noticed what was needed, often seeing when I was overwhelmed and stepping in with specific offers to help. His kindness, practicality, and servant's heart have been a blessing to me and to St. Mark's as a whole. We are deeply thankful for his three years of devoted service and friendship in ministry.

ASSOCIATE RECTOR *Rev. Caitlin Frazier*

Serving this community in the tumult and promise of the past year has been my great task and great joy. It is hard to believe that I have already spent 18 months in the role of assistant/associate rector.

This year offered me opportunities to expand into the role of priest as a pastor, priest, and teacher.

As a pastor, I have worked with numerous individuals and families in pastoral care, especially with those in our Caregivers group, which I support quarterly. I have also worked to welcome people who are new to our community, handing out countless welcome mugs and hosting 52 newcomer singles or families for coffee meetings. These meetings help newcomers get plugged into our community. I have also worked to revive the Third Ager community through monthly lunches.

As a priest, I serve the liturgical functions of the church as presider/celebrant and preacher. In our liturgies, I seek to be a faithful midwife of the church's sacraments, balancing a desire for novelty with the deep roots of our Christian heritage. In preaching, I aspire to break open the scriptures in a way that makes them applicable to our lives.

As a teacher, I was able to continue fostering relationships with newcomers through co-teaching the Belonging class in spring 2025 and an assisting teacher of the same class in fall 2025. I also offered a 4-part class on approaching the Bible for those wishing to learn more about approaching our sacred text.

Finally, at St. Mark's I have found a love for the work of stewardship. This year I helped lead the campaign, "Peace through the Storm" which allowed us to recommit to the church while also sharing our stories.

In all things, I labor alongside our rector the Rev. Michele Morgan, who has been an extraordinary conversation partner, mentor, and friend.

ADJUNCT CLERGY *The Rev. Patricia Catalano*

It continues to be an honor and a joy to be part of this community. I have been serving the parish since May 2018 and continue to work as non-stipendiary clergy. In 2025, I served in a variety of roles: priest, preacher, spiritual guide, pastor, and teacher.

Here is the breakdown of my activities between February 2025 and January 2026):

Liturgical role:

- Preached on twelve Sundays from February 2024 to January 2025 and presided or co-presided with Michele and/or Caitlin the Sundays I preached.
- Led a home memorial gathering for Luz Quintana, Carlos Quintana's mother and Susan Kyle's mother-in-law
- Officiated at the wedding of Mary Tarnowka and Lance Minor on November 22. Also prepared

- them for marriage and gave the homily at their wedding.
- Led All Souls' Day Service of Remembrance (Attendance:18)

Centering Prayer: Centering Prayer faithfully continues as a strong online ministry started as an in-person gathering in May 2018. We meet at 8 am for reading, contemplation and fellowship. March 19, 2026 will mark six years that we've been meeting on zoom. Not everyone attends every day, but members alternate in a very organic manner. The total number of days we held centering prayer in 2025 was 248 with a total attendance of 2952, and an average daily attendance of 12.

We have created a prayerful community of contemplatives who engage in functional theology and deep discussions on faith and other matters. Last year we read seven books, as well as various articles and reflections. Over the course of yet another challenging year, our group continues to grow in faith and to support one another pastorally and spiritually as we walk in our journey with God.

Pastoral Care: Michele, Caitlin and I share pastoral duties, which include visiting the sick and other parishioners who are experiencing life challenges or are homebound. We also meet and keep in touch with those who reach out to the clergy for counsel. The clergy keep each other informed of any and all pastoral matters that come our way. We also enlist the help of lay volunteers who feel called to visit and care for fellow parishioners in need. At present, I'm visiting, doing pastoral care and/or spiritual direction with nine parishioners.

Retreats:

- Led two retreats, one during Lent from March 8 through April 19. We met on Saturday mornings to learn about and meditate on various types of prayer. The total attendance for six classes was 67.
- The second one was a Spring retreat focused on Hildegard of Bingen at Holy Cross Abbey in Berryville, VA. It took place from May 30 to June 1, 2025, and twelve attended.

Other:

- Attended Diocesan Convention in January 2025 and January 2026
- Since April 2024, I started volunteering at St. Matthew's/San Mateo+Hyattsville helping Fr. Vidal Rivas with priestly duties and preached on nineteen Sundays. I'm also a point person between St. Mark's and St. Matthew's/San Mateo to coordinate assistance in helping migrant communities.

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC *Jeff Kempskie*

Over the past year, the music program continued to play an important role in worship and parish life. Through choirs, concerts, lessons, and special services and events, music supported the liturgy, strengthened community, and extended the church's presence beyond Sunday mornings.

Chancel Choir enjoyed another strong year, with participation from approximately 46 individuals. In addition to preparing music for regular Sunday services and Holy Week, the choir sang two Evensong services during the winter and spring and undertook extensive preparation for a summer tour to England. Twenty-five choir members, joined by nine additional singers from outside St. Mark's, participated in twelve extended rehearsals (each approximately two and a half hours) in preparation for performances at St. Peter's Church+St. Albans and a week-long residency at Lichfield Cathedral in early August. As part of this preparation, the choir also sang an additional Evensong service in mid-July. A total of 46 people participated in the tour, which proved to be a very rewarding experience. The tour challenged singers musically and deepened relationships within the choir (See Lichfield Link report/Parish Life).

Following an initial rehearsal in late August to launch the fall season, I began a six-month sabbatical. Mike McCarthy, former Canon of Music at Washington National Cathedral, graciously agreed to serve as Interim Director of Music and assumed leadership of Sunday worship and choir rehearsals. To ensure continuity during the sabbatical, Jeff worked closely with Mike in advance to select all hymns, service music, and anthems. The choir also held a mid-September retreat to establish the fall repertoire. During the Advent and Christmas seasons, the choir sang an Advent Lessons & Carols service, collaborated with a brass quintet on Christmas Eve, and, most recently has begun preparing music for an upcoming Evensong service.

Children's Choirs The Treble Singers and Youth Choir continued to grow and flourish under the leadership of Judith Rautenberg. Together, the two ensembles now include 38 singers (19 in each group), ranging in age from 4 to 13. Several participants come from families outside the parish, with some families joining St. Mark's during the year. Both choirs sang at the 9:00 a.m. service approximately once per month.

In May, all 17 members of the Youth Choir (ages 8 and up) attended a Memorial Day weekend retreat in Elkton, Virginia, accompanied by four chaperones. The retreat coincided with the launch of the choir's official logo and t-shirts and included both recreational activities and focused musical preparation for a concert the following weekend. While on retreat, the choir also sang as guests at Emmanuel Episcopal+Harrisonburg (Virginia).

Both children's choirs participated in Saturday retreats in late August and early September that combined intensive rehearsal with community-building activities. They continued to sing regularly at family services throughout the fall. In October, the Youth Choir made a guest appearance at St. Monica & St. James+Capitol Hill and later performed at the December "Carols & Cheer" event. Significant time was devoted to preparation for the Christmas pageant, which again featured *The Christmas Story* by Carl Orff and Gunhild Keetman, with text by Amber MacDonald. Eight professional instrumentalists joined the children's choirs and pageant participants for the performance.

Handbell Choir continued its twice-monthly Wednesday rehearsals under the direction of Katherine Anderson. The ensemble focused on learning new repertoire while steadily developing ringing technique and music-reading skills, all in a collegial and enjoyable atmosphere.

Instruments and Equipment Between May and October, the 1959 Holtkamp organ underwent a major restoration project, including a full cleaning and re-leathering. During this time, various divisions of the organ were temporarily unavailable. The project also included thickening the swell box walls and installing a new motor.

The Steinway Model C piano in the nave, owned by the Chiarina Chamber Players, remains in excellent condition. The Yamaha grand piano in the music studio continues to function very well and has required no repairs. The Baxter Hall piano is tuned twice annually and remains in fair condition. The church's four digital pianos are in good working order, as are the handbells. The harpsichord continues to require minor maintenance before it can be used.

Music Studio Diane Atherton concluded her voice teaching at St. Mark's in June. Piano instruction continued under Anh Nguyen, Sasha Beresovsky, and Saeha Youn, who together taught several dozen students. Judith Rautenberg also continued to offer individual voice lessons and weekly music classes for young children.

Other Music-Related Events We remain a highly sought-after performance venue for chamber music ensembles in the DC area. Last winter and spring, the church hosted multiple concerts by the Chiarina Chamber Players and the Washington Bach Consort, as well as performances by the Smithsonian Chamber Orchestra, the choir of the Washington Metropolitan Gamer Symphony Orchestra, and opera company IN Series. The fall season featured additional concerts by Chiarina and the Bach Consort, along with performances by The Thirteen and the 21st Century Consort.

In December, we hosted the annual "Carols & Cheer" sing-along, and choir members also participated in the Eastern Market Christmas Caroling Marathon.

Judith Rautenberg again organized "Sandbox" concerts, Saturday morning performances designed for families with children ages 0–5. The May program, *A cantar – let's sing!*, featured piano, flute, voice, and the Youth Choir. The November concert, *Together We Are Sound*, included percussion, piano, bass, and two voices. The January concert, titled *Sleigh Ride*, featured violin, marimba, piano, and voice.

YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRY Lisa Ramish, *Director*; Kit Arrington, Denise Oliveira, Mary Miller, Terri Nostrand and Britt Pereira, Leadership Team

The mission of the Children Youth and Family Ministry (CYFM) program at St. Mark's is to:

- Welcome children, youth and their families into loving and trusting Christian community.
- Encourage spiritual growth by teaching the tenets and traditions of Christian faith.
- Practice faith in action by serving those in need in the greater community and beyond.

We are thrilled to say that we have pursued this mission alongside a high number of families. Participation in CYFM programs has soared; Sunday school registrations went from 61 to 104 children, with proportional increases across all age groups, including middle and high school students.

This year also marked an important leadership transition for CYFM: Caleb Nelson Amaker, leader for the past seven years, resigned to attend seminary. We are deeply grateful for his faithful leadership. As former chair of the CYFM board, I was hired as his successor, ensuring continuity of vision and a strong foundation for the program's continued development.

Family Eucharist CYFM hosts this on the 4th Sunday of the month at the 9AM service. Families write and read the Prayers of the People; the Catechesis III class writes the collect, read by one of the students in the class; families act as greeters and ushers; children read scripture, and play a contemplative musical piece during the children's reflection, in addition to the children and youth choirs that sing. And at each family Eucharist, the bulletin cover features art from one of our own. A working group has been meeting quarterly with Michele to exchange ideas about the language and theology of Family Eucharist. Anyone feeling called to join this working group should please speak with Denise Oliveira.

Children's Chapel CYFM maintained this ministry, ensuring continued joy as the congregation grows. Attendance grew this year with a high of 45 kids on September 7, 2025, and typical fall attendance in the high teens. We transitioned to a volunteer-based leadership model, with 5 adults sharing the responsibility for leading chapel each week, and an additional 4 adults providing formal backup support. As always, adult attendees also stepped up informally to ensure a positive experience for all kids.

Next Gen Reflection CYFM continued offering this as an expansion of the worship service designed specifically to meet the needs of our preteen parishioners. The goal of the ministry is to spiritually engage with our 8-13 year-olds in a way that allows them to observe how the teachings and values of the church apply to their lives. Going beyond talking and singing, this group experiences spirituality as a community as they focus on rest, reconciliation, praise and prayer. This year our preteens have learned not only that what they hear in worship service applies to their lives, but also that faith is active and can be constructed and shared in a spiritual community.

Sunday School continues to grow in both participation and vision. Enrollment has increased across age groups, prompting the beginning of conversations about adding two additional classrooms in order to better support our children and teachers. Our program remains rooted in Catechesis of the Good Shepherd for younger students and *Generation Why?* for middle and high school, offering age-appropriate formation that connects scripture, faith, and daily life. This year, we invested intentionally in our teachers through a fall retreat and ongoing professional development, strengthening both the spiritual and practical foundations of the program. Together, these efforts reflect a vibrant and expanding ministry dedicated to nurturing faith in the next generation.

Youth Group Since its re-launch in 2024, this has continued to grow in both participation and purpose. This year, youth served our wider community by raking yards for elderly neighbors in need, making decorations for a community celebration, preparing baked ziti for Shirley's Place, hosting the Shrove Tuesday pancake supper, leading a youth worship takeover, and participating in an anti-oppression workshop with the DC Peace Team. Alongside this, the group built friendships through joyful shared experiences such as a trip to Bubble Planet and a neighborhood scavenger hunt at the parish picnic.

Travel and immersive experiences also shaped the year, including a West Virginia overnight with white-water rafting and a summer trip to Navajoland. Collaborating with the Navajoland Working Group, 6 youth, 2 adults and the Youth Minister were introduced to Indigenous culture and history through

films, a museum visit, and participation in the interactive workshop hosted in the Nave: *Roots of Injustice, Seeds of Change: Toward Right Relationship with Native Peoples*, culminating in a week-long trip in June to visit the Episcopal Church of Navajoland in the Four Corners region, including a long stay at St. Christopher's Mission in Bluff, UT and providing the opportunity to learn from and build a relationship with that community and to experience the unique elements of that beautiful region.

Confirmation We celebrated this milestone with eight youth at the National Cathedral—reflecting a year of meaningful service, deepening faith, and vibrant community.

Holidays CYFM works to provide many different opportunities to allow children to celebrate and reflect during the church holidays. This year, we worked with the Service and Social Justice Board to provide a robust Lenten program. Children took home mite boxes and a booklet with daily reflections. We provided a coin program to help parents get coins for the boxes. We set up weekly service projects in Baxter Hall and a justice lending library. Children of all ages also had the opportunity to work on Lego Stations of the Cross. We had our annual 'Walking After Jesus' Saturday and egg hunt on Easter Sunday.

CYFM launched Advent with wreath making, which had huge attendance in Baxter Hall. We also provided daily Advent reflections. The Christmas Pageant continued its ambitious program of rehearsals, memorized lines and a raised stage. It is our hope to continue all of these traditions in 2026 with increased volunteer support from all generations of the congregation.

Other Programming To facilitate deeper connections with one another and with God, CYFM seeks to offer a wide variety of formal and informal social and faith formation opportunities for our children, youth, and parents. These opportunities vary from thoughtful acts of love, like personalized thank-you notes, dancing at the annual Halloween party, or participating in pop-up crafting or service projects in Baxter Hall. We continue to prioritize intergenerational fellowship opportunities outside of DC through the parish retreat and the annual ski trip. CYFM expanded its reach with a family retreat to Bethany Beach at the end of the summer. CYFM also continues to facilitate community amongst parents when CYFM cares for kids during Parent's Night Out. CYFM is constantly and consistently looking for ways to engage its families in big and small ways.

CYFM also aims to help families get to know the Sunday school teachers. We hosted four Sunday school fellowships in the fall: a playground meet-up for Catechesis I families, a Lego party for Catechesis II families, the Service and Social Justice Club (trick-or-treating to raise money for dogs, *Zoo Lights* with a migrant family) for Catechesis III families and a happy hour for parents of middle and high schoolers.

These are roundels featured in several nave windows:

Left: a roundel prior to cleaning/restoration work done in 2016...Right:(after) the angel heads appeared



LEGACY LIONS 2025

Launched in 2017, LL is our planned giving program, recognizing those parishioners who have made commitments to St Mark's in their estate planning. If you are interested in becoming a Legacy Lion or in learning more about planned giving, please contact the rector.

Scilla Adams

*Betsy Athey & Frank Lloyd**

*Bart Barnes**

*Eileen Blumenthal**

*Janice Brown**

Mary Anderson Cooper

*Joya Cox**

Stephanie & David Deutsch

Kitty Nicholson Donnelly &*

Harrison Donnelly

Linda & Bob Ewald

Karen Falk

*Betty & Wes Foster**

*Raiford Gaffney**

Rob Hall

Penny & Brock Hansen*

Rosemary Harold & Michael Knipe

Tucker & Jack* Harris*

Nadine Hathaway

Peter Hawley

Jo Ellen Hayden & George Meng

Anne & Robert Headley

*Janis Hoffman**

Nora Howell

Linda Huntington

Gale & Wayne Johnson

Josie & Bill Jordan

Keith Krueger

Patricia Latin

*Elizabeth Long**

*Beryl Maloney Lillaston**

Randall David Marks

*Bertha Martin**

Marilyn & Jim Meek*

Winnie & Don* Mosher*

Doris Muller-Burton & Jack Burton*

Rita & Matt Ossolinski

David Perry

Kathryn Powers

*Don Sarles**

David Shaw

Maureen Shea & Kenn Allen

Marilu Sherer

Linda Staheli & David Abramowitz

*James A. Steed**

Joseph Tarantolo

Lil & Arnold Taylor*

Sherrill Taylor

Carol Thornhill

Susan Thompson

Janet Vail

Louise Walsh & Charlie Rupp

*Mary Welker**

Marjorie & David Wellman

Nat White

Gretchen & David Willson

